

Frequently asked questions – Wedding Receptions

- **Will there be any other events taking place on the same day as our wedding reception?**
There are two function areas in the John Godber Centre. The Ground Floor Byron Suite and the upstairs Portland. Both areas have their own function bars which are for the use of the event in the function room only (Portland has private use of the Upstairs Ben's Bar and Ground Floor Suites have private use of the Downstairs Byron's Bar) Your wedding coordinator will be able to advise what other events are taking place in the Centre on the date of your reception.
- **What time will the evening need to finish? How long can we hire the room for?**
Our packages include the bar open to 11pm and all guests, decorations and caterers need to be vacated from the room by 11.30pm. Should you require a late bar or longer to vacate the room please speak to the Centre Team. The late bar is £50 to midnight and room hire to 00.30am.
- **Are we allowed to light candles in the evening?**
Unfortunately, due to our smoke detectors the use of candles in the premises is not permitted, electric candles are a suitable alternative. Smoke and haze machines are also not possible for this reason, and we ask entertainers not to use snow/bubble machines in the venue.
- **Is there parking? Can guests leave their car and pick up in the morning so they can have a drink at the reception?**
There is a public car park at the rear of the building that is free to use after 6pm. Guests can leave cars overnight, but it is at their own risk and charges apply from 7am – 6pm Monday to Saturday. We can provide a permit for those leaving cars overnight to 10am the next day (Sunday is free car parking) The pay and display car parking charges are - 0-2 hours is 50p, 2-4 hours is £1 and full day parking is £3. The car park is owned and managed by St Mary Magdalene Church, which is a registered charity. There is no parking in the bays directly behind the Centre, these are reserved for the Church and Centre staff, however suppliers may use this space to unload, and we can provide a parking permit which is available from reception.
- **Where are the toilets? Are the accessible for the disabled/elderly?**
There are toilets on the first floor for users in the Portland and there are toilets on the ground floor for users in the ground floor Suites. There is also a disabled toilet on both floors.
- **Are we allowed to bring decorations? Balloons, table decor, put banners up with blue tack/pins?**
Couples are welcome to bring their own decorations and be creative with the space. Your wedding co-ordinator will be happy to discuss your reception vision with you and help with any queries in your planning. Party poppers, confetti balloons, paper confetti, and candles are unfortunately not permitted in the rooms as decorations. Decorations can be put up with blue tack but not pins, glue dots or sellotape that will damage the walls. All decorations do need to be removed from the room at the end of the evening, which includes chair covers and decorations supplied by external companies as the spaces are used the next day. We advise caution when arranging balloon displays and linen supplies from decorators that additional sprays which can make the floor slippy and hazardous for guests are not used. *Please let any suppliers/family/friends know this prior to the wedding reception.*
- **Is there a separate space for elderly/others to talk away from loud music?**
The bar areas are separate to the main function rooms however after 9pm children are not able to be in the bar areas due to license conditions but can remain in the main function room.
- **When will we have access to start setting up the reception area with our decorations etc.?**
For full day hire access is from 9.30am, for evening receptions access is from 6pm. For evening receptions, it is possible to hire the room earlier subject to availability.
- **Do you have examples of table plans/ room set up – Can we design our own?**
Your wedding coordinator will be happy to discuss your set up plans, but we do have set plans available to help with your planning. We can also make suggestions to plan for extras such as photo booths, chocolate fountains, sweet carts etc.

- **Are we able to collect everything the day after the wedding?**
The main room does need to be cleared of all items the day of the wedding as the rooms are used the next morning. It may be possible to provide space for items to be stored overnight but are subject to availability so please speak to your wedding coordinator who can discuss this with you. All items would be left at your own risk and the Centre is not liable for any damages or losses. Presents and cards are requested to be removed the same evening.
- **What are the bars prices like? Are bar staff included in price? Can we bring our own drinks (corkage charge)?**
Only drinks provided by the Centre can be consumed on the premises, so we don't offer a corkage charge or dry hire. The Centre's prices are not Wetherspoons prices but are not as expensive as hotels. A pint of larger is currently from £4.30 and a glass of wine is £4.50 for a 175ml (please ask for the current price list as prices do increase in line with supplier increases) Bar staff are included in our packages to provide drinks service and drinks packages can be arranged for arrival and toast drinks.
- **Are children allowed to come to the reception? What time do they have to leave the premises?**
Children are welcome in the Centre however they are not permitted in the bar area after 9pm due to our licence and should be supervised at all times by a responsible adult as the venue does have other events taking place. Children are welcome in the function room until the end of the reception.
- **Can you make our wedding announcements, or will you need to provide someone?**
The Centre team can announce the happy couple in or liaise with the DJ to do this. We now have a PA system with microphone which can be hired for background music and speeches should you prefer your DJ to only be here for the evening reception.
- **What is included in the cost?**
All our packages outline what is included in the packages but please ask should you require a written breakdown or if you would like a bespoke package creating for you. Glasses are included in our drink's packages for wine and toast drinks and crockery and cutlery can be hired.
- **Are table linen/table decorations/chair covers included or can we hire our own company to provide them?**
You are welcome to provide your own linen, decor and chair covers and be as creative as you wish however, please be aware the Centers suppliers include us removing them at the end of the night. Please ensure your supplier is aware they will need to return to remove these items at the end of the evening, it is not possible to leave them overnight and need to be removed by the end of the hire time. Setup of the décor by suppliers is from 9.30am on the morning of the reception, it is not possible to do the night before/earlier due to other events taking place in the rooms. We can ensure the quality of our suppliers; some cheaper suppliers do supply lower quality products unfortunately so do check references of any external suppliers to avoid disappointments. It may be possible to arrange for suppliers to collect larger hired items (such as sweet carts) at 8am the next morning but this is only by prior written arrangement.
- **Can we bring our own entertainment?**
The Centre packages include our preferred DJs who we have used on many of occasions and are good reliable DJs. They know the Centre facilities, noise policies and represent our high customer service levels. You are welcome to use your own entertainers, we have met some great ones, but they are requested to work within our requested noise levels, and it is the hirers responsibility to check their insurance and PAT testing certification. All equipment needs to be removed from the venue the same evening and by the end of the room hire time.
- **Can we bring our own catering?**
Yes. Our packages include the kitchen for caterers or family to use and we can provide catering for you if you wish to add to your package or provide details of our preferred caterers for hot food. We do ask for the caterers contact details and it is the hirer's responsibility to check food hygiene ratings and insurance for catering provided in the venue. Anyone using the kitchen is asked to complete our food hygiene hire form.
- **Taxis. Is there a preferred taxi company?**
Ideal Cars are the local taxi company however we no longer have a preferred supplier. We recommend guest's book their taxi in advance. It is often difficult to get a taxi at the end of the night and the room and premises would need to be vacated by the agreed time, so we recommend advising guests to book a taxi in advance.
- **Payments**
Our bars do now have a card machine for use during receptions and we also take cash. Payments for packages can be made by cash, cheque or bank transfer not card.