**Unconventional**

*Option to play music as your guests wait for your ceremony to begin. Music can be live (for example you could make arrangements for a small choir or soloist to sing, a string quartet to play or a harpist to perform) or recorded (in which case you may like to create a play list of contemporary love songs, classical traditional wedding music or the scores to your favourite films).*

*Consider how you would like your ceremony to begin. Would you like to enter the ceremony room together or have a more traditional entrance with one of you waiting for the other? Would you like anyone to accompany you, for example parent/s, sibling/s, bridesmaids, groomsmen? Would you like a particular piece of music to be played or would you prefer to enter the room more informally to a round of applause?*

Good morning/afternoon Ladies and Gentlemen. My name is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and I am the Deputy Superintendent Registrar, of the City of Westminster. I have the privilege of conducting todays wedding ceremony, alongside my colleague \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ who will be creating the legal and historic record of this marriage.

On behalf of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, I would like to welcome you all here to share their special day with them. This marriage ceremony provides the opportunity to bring friends and family together in one place in celebration of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ happiness. However, if anyone present knows of any lawful impediment as to why this marriage should not take place they should declare it now.

Before exchanging wedding rings,\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, would like to invite you to partake in a very old matrimonial tradition – the warming of the rings. If you are unfamiliar with this custom, when the rings pass into your care please hold them for a moment, making a silent wish for the future this couple will share. When returned to\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, it is believed that these rings will contain in their precious metals something that is all the more precious – your well wishes and pledge of support for their union.

*Suitable place to incorporate up to two paragraphs summarising your relationships progression to marriage. You may like to include: when and where you met, shared experiences, and significant occurrences, such as the birth of children/blending of families. For example: “As many of you know, A and B’s love story has been twenty years in the making! They met as lab partners in high school and though for A it was love at first sight, for B it wouldn’t be until they reconnected at their 10 year high school reunion that she realised she had found her Mr Right.“*

*Suitable place for a reading. This could be a favourite childhood poem, extract from a book, quote or song lyrics about love/marriage, or poem written especially for the day about the two of you.*

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**,** before you are joined in matrimony I have to remind you of the solemn and lasting character of marriage, and of the nature of the vows that you are about to make to each other today. **Marriage according to the law of this country is the union of two people voluntarily entered into for life to the exclusion of all others.** More than this, marriage marks the beginning of an important chapter in your lives and is intended to provide love, friendship and support on your journey through life together.

I am now going to ask you bothto make a sincere and truthful declaration that to the best of your knowledge there is no lawful impediment why you should not be joined together in marriage.

Groom/Bride, please repeat after me:

**I do solemnly declare – that I know not – of any lawful impediment – why I, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, may not be joined in matrimony – to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.**

*Suitable place for a second reading*

*Option to include either a Sand Ceremony or Stone Ceremony*

*Sand Ceremony: Please provide two or more glass vials each containing a different coloured sand (number dependant on how many people you would like involved in the ceremony, maximum of six) and an additional larger glass vial with stopper capable of holding all the sand. Symbolism of different coloured sands: Black = strength and protection. Blue = loyalty and harmony. Brown = devotion and the blending of families. Green = health and fertility. Grey = patience and understanding. Orange = passion and fidelity. Pink = affection and friendship. Purple = sharing and support. Red = passion and perseverance. White = co-operation and independence. Yellow = prosperity and longevity.*

*Stone Ceremony: In advance please provide those guests you would like involved in the ceremony (maximum of six) with a polished stone and ask them to write their name and a word signifying their wish for your marriage on the stone in permanent ink, such as love, happiness, health, strength, wealth, success, family, luck, friendship, patience etc. In addition, please provide a decorative glass bowl that is just large enough to contain all the stones, as well as a stone for each of you enscribed with your own wish for your marriage.*

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, have chosen to affirm their commitment with a sand/stone ceremony, which may be new to many of you.

*Sand Ceremony:* Their relationship is symbolised through the pouring of these individual vases of sand into one. By blending these sands together, we are recognising the importance of blending two families together. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ the colour of the sand represents your hopes for your marriage. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ you have chosen\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ for \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_you have chosen\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ for \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

I ask you both now to pour your sand into this third vase. As you do so the sands will mix together as a visual representation that the bond of love and respect that you share can never be divided.

*Stone Ceremony:* An Irish marriage tradition dating back to ancient times, was for wedding guests to be given small stones to cast into the water while making a wish for the couple’s future. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, have each enscribed a stone with one word that captures their hopes for their marriage. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, I invite you to both cast your stones into this water as a symbol of this sacred tradition and as you do so please say aloud this word.

*Sand/Stone Ceremony:* \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ you have bound your lives together as a couple, but it is also fitting to celebrate and acknowledge the importance of your friends/family/children to your relationship, so at this time I would like to invite your witnesses/parents/children to come forward to add/cast their sand/stones.

*Sand Ceremony:* They too have selected the colour of their sand…

*either:*

…to reflect their wishes for your future. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ has chosen \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ for \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ etc.

*or (for children):*

…with \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ being \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ favourite colours.

*Stone Ceremony:* If I could ask you each in turn to share the word that reflect your wishes for \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ future.

*Sand/Stone Ceremony:* \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ I now present to you your first gift to one another as husband and wife/wife and wife/husband and husband. May it be a treasured reminder of your wedding day and of the support you have of so many of those close to you. *(Please remember to bring a box and bubble wrap to protect your glassware.)*

*Suitable place for a second reading*

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ if I could ask you to turn and face one another. Many cultures place great importance on the hands of a couple entering into marriage. With our hands, we affect the things that surround us and shape our lives. Our hands can be considered a representation of who we are through what we choose to do.

I ask you now to join hands as a symbol of the union that you are making today. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ these are the hands of your best friend, that are holding yours on your wedding day as you promise to work together to build your future. In times of struggle may your hands always reach out to join in support; and in times of joy may they join in celebration, just as they do now.

It is fitting that I now ask:

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, do you take \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to be your wife/husband; and do you promise to remain true to her/him for the rest of your lives together?

*Answer:* I do *Repeat for Bride/ Groom*

*Option to include personal vows. These can be romantic and earnest or humorous but heartfelt. Please either:*

* *Have these written on a piece of card for you to read from if you would like to surprise one another on the day. For example, “I am so grateful you came into my life because…”*
* *Include them within this script if you would like your registrar to ask you to confirm your vows. For example, “Will you both continue to prioritise spending time as a family and save even faster for that trip to Disneyworld you have promised \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_?”*

*“We will!”*

* *Email them separately to the register office if you would like to surprise each other by writing one another’s vows. For example, “Do you A promise to take B a cup of tea in bed every morning?” - written by B.*

*“Do you B promise to let A watch football undisturbed without hoovering in the background?” - written by A.*

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ the moment has now come for you to make your marriage vows. As these words are spoken you will legally become husband and wife/wife and wife/husband and husband.

Groom/Bride, please repeat after me:

# I call upon – these persons here present – to witness that I, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ – do take thee \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ – to be my lawful wedded wife/ husband. I promise to cherish and care for you - to trust you and be honest with you - to stand by you and support you – now and always.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ we have now come to the giving of rings, which is the ancient and traditional way of sealing your marriage vows. These rings represent the promises you have willingly exchanged. They reflect the commitment those words inspire and all your hopes and dreams for the future.

Groom/Bride, please repeat after me:

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ , I give you this ring – as a sign of our love and marriage – and as a symbol of all that we share.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, we hope that you will think back on today often and be reminded of the strength of the commitment you have made to each other. You are two people with one life ahead of you. May it be filled with love and happiness.

It is with the greatest of pleasure that I now declare you husband and wife/wife and wife/husband and husband. Congratulations, you may kiss (the bride).

*Signing of the marriage register / schedule followed by ceremony close. Option to play music as you and your witnesses sign and as you and your wedding party exit the ceremony room.*