

Pagan Marriage Ceremonies in Scotland



Marriage in Scotland

- **Marriage in Scotland is governed by the Marriage (Scotland) Act, 1977.**
- **Couples can marry at 16 without parental consent.**
- **Forms of Marriage:**
- **Marriages can be civil weddings. These usually they take place in the Registry Office or at another approved location, conducted by a Registrar.**
- **Marriages can be Religious Weddings, conducted by a Celebrant from a specific belief system.**

Legal Status

- **“The Registrar General accepts that the Pagan Federation (Scotland) is an appropriate body for the nomination of Celebrants under the Marriage (Scotland) Act 1977.”**

- Park, Louise, *The Pagan Federation Scotland: Religious Marriage – A Guide for Celebrants.*



An owl leads the wedding party in to the ceremony.

Legal Status



Preparing for a wedding ceremony.

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- Pagans have been able to legally marry in religious ceremonies conducted by Approved Celebrants in Scotland since 2004.
- The Pagan Federation (Scotland) has a Celebrants Co-ordinator who organises the list of celebrants and is the link person between the Registrar General's Office and Pagans seeking a Celebrant to marry them in Scotland.

Who can Marry as a Pagan?



A wedding ceremony begins.

- Any couple – within or outside Scotland - who identify their religious belief as Paganism can be legally married by an Approved Celebrant in Scotland.
- There is no need for a residency qualification.

Required Legal Wording

- *The detail of the ceremony is decided by the celebrant. But the form of ceremony must include, and must be in no way inconsistent with,*
- *a declaration by the parties, in the presence of each other, the celebrant and two witnesses, that they accept each other as husband and wife; and*
- *a declaration by the celebrant, after the foregoing declaration, that the parties are then husband and wife.*
- *(<http://www.gro-scotland.gov.uk/regscot/getting-married-in-scotland/what-form-does-a-marriage-ceremony-take-in-scotland.html>)*



A wedding party, Clava Cairns 2006.

What form of words does a Pagan wedding ceremony use?



Waiting for the sun to rise and marrying at dawn.

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- Celebrants work with each couple to produce an individual ceremony.
- Couples generally write their own vows to each other.
- The legal declarations must be included and spoken aloud in a language understood by those present to witness / conduct the marriage.

What form of words does a Pagan wedding ceremony use?

- Vows are the promises made to each other by the couple about how they will live as husband and wife.
- Couples write their own vows to each other.



Promises made and promises kept.

What is Handfasting?



‘Tying the knot’ as part of a wedding ceremony.

- **Handfasting is the tying together of the couple’s hands.**
- **It is symbolic of their marriage.**
- **The knot is kept and never untied.**

Where Can Pagan Marriages Happen?

- It is the Celebrant who has the approval to conduct the marriage, therefore the ceremony can be conducted anywhere within Scotland - and within reason.
- Many Pagans choose to marry outdoors.



Dawn Wedding, Isle of Lewis 2009

Summary



- **Pagan marriage in Scotland is a religious marriage.**
- **They follow the same legal guidance as other belief systems from the General Registrar (Scotland).**
- **They are legal marriages.**

Further Details

**Guidance from the General Registrar
(Scotland) Office:**

- <http://tinyurl.com/32bgmc>

**To contact a Pagan Federation (Scotland)
Celebrant:**

- <http://tinyurl.com/cn8qll>



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