

# Complete Wedding Planning Handbook

Free Wedding Planning Resource

Created by Farlow Your Heart

This handbook was created to help couples feel organised, calm and confident throughout the wedding planning process. Inside you'll find practical wedding planning advice, ceremony guidance, reception timeline examples, speech structure ideas, vow-writing prompts and planning checklists designed to make your wedding feel less overwhelming and more enjoyable. Whether you're planning a relaxed elopement, modern city wedding or full reception celebration, this guide is designed to help you build a wedding day that genuinely feels like you.

*"The best weddings aren't the most perfect ones — they're the ones that feel genuine, relaxed and full of connection."*

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# Wedding Planning Timeline

## 12+ Months Before

- Choose your wedding date
- Book your venue
- Book your marriage celebrant
- Set your wedding budget
- Create your guest list
- Research photographers and entertainment

## 6–12 Months Before

- Book major vendors
- Choose wedding attire
- Send save the dates
- Plan ceremony structure
- Start thinking about vows and speeches

## 3–6 Months Before

- Organise seating plans
- Confirm styling details
- Choose ceremony music
- Book transport
- Arrange final fittings

## Final Month

- Confirm vendor timings
- Prepare vows and speeches
- Pack wedding emergency kit
- Prepare marriage paperwork
- Finalise guest numbers

# Wedding Budget Tips

Wedding budgets can vary enormously, but one of the best ways to reduce stress is to decide early what matters most to you as a couple. Some couples prioritise photography. Others care more about food, entertainment or having an incredible ceremony experience.

- Prioritise the areas that matter most to you
- Leave room for unexpected costs
- Track deposits and payment due dates
- Ask vendors exactly what's included
- Avoid comparing your wedding to social media

# Typical Wedding Ceremony Structure

Every ceremony is unique, but most modern ceremonies include a variation of the following structure:

- 1 Guest arrival
- 2 Processional / entrance
- 3 Celebrant welcome
- 4 Story or introduction
- 5 Readings or rituals
- 6 Legal wording
- 7 Personal vows
- 8 Ring exchange
- 9 Declaration of marriage
- 10 Signing of documents
- 11 Presentation of the couple
- 12 Recessional

Tip: The best ceremonies feel personal and natural. Don't feel pressured to include traditions that don't genuinely reflect you as a couple.

# Sample Wedding Reception Timeline

Time	Event
5:00 PM	Guests seated
5:15 PM	Couple entrance
5:30 PM	Dinner service
6:45 PM	Speeches
7:30 PM	Cake cutting
7:45 PM	First dance
8:00 PM	Dance floor opens
10:30 PM	Last drinks

Tip: Build buffer time into your reception wherever possible. Weddings almost always run slightly behind schedule.

# Speech Order & Reception Flow

There's no strict "correct" speech order anymore, but this is one of the most common modern formats:

- MC Welcome
  - Parents Speech
  - Maid of Honour / Best Person
  - Best Man
  - Couple Speech
  - Cake Cutting
  - First Dance
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- Keep speeches concise and engaging
  - Aim for 3–7 minutes
  - Focus on genuine stories rather than trying to be overly funny
  - Practice beforehand

# Wedding Vow Writing Guide

The most meaningful vows usually sound natural, honest and personal — not perfect.

- What do you love most about your partner?
- What small moments define your relationship?
- What promises genuinely matter to you?
- What has your relationship taught you?
- What are you excited about in your future together?

## **Example opening:**

“From the moment we met, you’ve made life feel calmer, lighter and more meaningful. I promise to continue choosing you through every stage of life...”

# Questions To Ask Wedding Vendors

## Photographer

- How many weddings have you photographed?
- What is your turnaround time?
- Do you help guide posing?

## Celebrant

- How personalised is the ceremony?
- What support do you provide throughout planning?
- Do you also offer MC services?

## Venue

- What time can vendors access the venue?
- What's included in the package?
- Are there noise restrictions?

# Final Week Wedding Checklist

- Confirm all vendor timings
- Pack rings and paperwork
- Steam wedding outfits
- Prepare vows and speeches
- Confirm transport
- Pack emergency items
- Hydrate and sleep well
- Remember to enjoy the experience

The goal isn't perfection. The goal is to celebrate your relationship surrounded by the people you love most.

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## **Farlow Your Heart**

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Marriage Celebrant & Wedding MC

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