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LONDON W2 4LQ

Greek Cathedral Aghia Sophia

WEDDING CEREMONIES AT THE CATHEDRAL OF AGHIA SOPHIA

ΤΕΛΕΤΕΣ ΓΑΜΟΥ ΣΤΟΝ ΚΑΘΟΛΙΚΟ ΝΑΟ ΤΗΣ ΑΓΙΑΣ ΣΟΦΙΑΣ

GENERAL

- **Dates:** Once we have agreed on a date for the ceremony, it will be entered as a provisional date in the church diary and ***will be held for 14 days***.
- **Payment:** In order to confirm the date, you will need to pay ***a deposit of £200 (see Section 2, PAYMENT INFORMATION)***.

If you do not, your booking will be cancelled automatically. However, should you wish to cancel we would be grateful if you could let us know as soon as possible, so that we make the slot available to someone else.

Section 1: LEGAL REQUIREMENTS & PAPERWORK

It is your responsibility to make the appropriate arrangements well in advance of your wedding at the Cathedral of Aghia Sophia and ***you must do the following***:

1. **Make an appointment to ‘give notice’ at your local Registry Office.** You must sign a legal statement at your local Registry Office to declare that you intend to get married or form a civil partnership known as ‘giving notice’.
 - ***You must have lived in that registration district for the past 7 days.*** You and your partner must give notice separately if you live in different registration districts. You do not have to do this on the same day.
 - ***Giving notice is a legal requirement; without it you cannot get married.*** Your notice of marriage is then displayed for the public to see and anyone can come forward if they know of any legal reason why you should not be getting married.
 - You have to give notice ***at your local Registry Office***, regardless of the location of wedding venue.
 - It has to be done ***at least 29 days before your ceremony***. For example, if you give notice on 1 May, the earliest date you can get married or form a civil partnership is 30 May.
 - You must hold your ceremony ***within 12 months of ‘giving notice’***.

2. Legalising your marriage

Option A: For your religious wedding at St Sophia’s to be legal, you must invite a Registrar from Westminster Council to witness your religious ceremony, and to ensure that it is registered as a legal marriage. Once the ceremony is finished, the bride and groom will need to sign some documents prepared by the Registrar, which legalise the religious marriage. The process takes 5- 10 minutes (on top of the 40-minute religious ceremony). Inviting the Registrar is your responsibility. Please do so by following this link:

<https://www.westminster.gov.uk/registrars/planning-your-wedding-ceremony/religious-ceremonies>

Option B: If you do not wish to have a Registrar attend St Sophia's, you must arrange to have a civil ceremony at your local town hall. The civil ceremony must happen before the religious service at St Sophia's, otherwise we cannot marry you. We will need proof of your civil ceremony well in advance of your religious wedding at our Cathedral. Once again, it is your responsibility to arrange the civil ceremony in good time.

For those from outside the UK

- ***You and your partner must give notice together at a Registry Office in the district where at least one of you lives.***

Unless you both have one of the following: British or Irish citizenship; settled or pre-settled status under the EU Settlement Scheme; an application to the EU Settlement Scheme that you made before 30 June 2021, which you are waiting for a decision on.

3. The Certificate of Non-Impediment (Πιστοποιητικό Αγαμίας)

The Orthodox individual(s) must bring us their Certificates of Non-Impediment, *the earliest six months before the wedding.*

For those baptised in an Orthodox church in the UK, you will need to get your Certificate from the Greek Orthodox church where you were baptised.

For those baptised in Greece or in another country and who have lived in the UK for over 3 years, you can get your Certificate of Non-Impediment from St Sophia. In order to do this, you must arrange a meeting with our priest at the Cathedral.

You must bring:

- ***a copy of your baptism certificate***
- ***your passport***
- ***two witnesses who will need to bring their passports.*** The witnesses do not have to be Orthodox but they ***cannot be close family members or from your partner's family.***

The certificates of non-impediment are only valid for 6 months. If your wedding is over six months away you should not make the appointment yet.

The cost of the Certificates of Non-Impediment is **£20 per certificate (per person)**, payable to the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of Thyateira and Great Britain in advance of your meeting with our priest. The proof of payment will need to be printed and brought to the meeting.

4. Permission to Marry (Άδεια Γάμου)

- Once you have your certificates of non-impediment, our priest will apply to the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of Thyateira and Great Britain on your behalf to grant a Permission to Marry.
- The Permission to Marry costs £60.
- You must pay the charge to the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of Thyateira and Great Britain ***directly by bank transfer before you meet with our priest.***
- The Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of Thyateira and Great Britain account details for the Certificates of Non-Impediment and Marriage License are as follows:

Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of Thyateira & GB,
Metro Bank
Account no:43198369

Sort Code: 23-05-80
IBAN: GB61MYMB23058043198369

Please use the word "Certification" as a reference when making the payment

Please note - These are the bank details for the Archdiocese ONLY for the Certificates and Licence and NOT the Cathedral of Aghia Sophia, NOR for booking your wedding.

Section 2: MIXED RELIGIOUS WEDDINGS

- **If either the bride or groom is not Orthodox, but of another Christian denomination.**
We will need to see their Baptism Certificate. They do not need a certificate of non-impediment if Anglican/Catholic.
- **The Orthodox Church does not perform religious weddings between Christians and non-Christians.**
If such a union is to take place, the non-Christian party must be baptised. Please contact Fr Nephon Tsimalis for catechism classes at archdiocesanprivateoffice@gmail.com

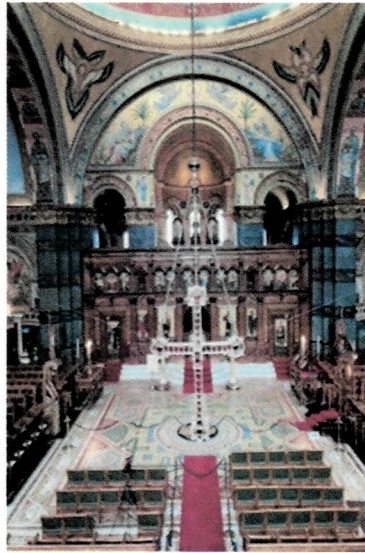
Section 3: PAYMENT INFORMATION

- The cost of a wedding is **£680 for a one-hour slot.**
- To book the Cathedral *for the whole day* to guarantee that no other weddings/baptisms will take place, *the fee is £2,500.*
- *A non-refundable, non-exchangeable booking fee of £200* is required upon confirmation of a wedding date.
- The balance of **£480 (one hour slot)/£2,500 (whole day)** will have to be paid two weeks before the ceremony is due to take place.
- The fees must be paid either by cheque or by bank transfer, **not cash.** If you wish to make an additional donation to the church or clergy on the day, you may do so at your discretion.
- **Choir Fees - An additional charge of £660.**
A deposit of £100 for the Choir must be transferred along with the £200 deposit for the church to the same account (40-05-33, 61506935).

Please note that *musical instruments are not permitted* in Orthodox weddings and liturgies.

- **Lighting the Cross - a £100 fee to have the cross lit with candles.**
Payable directly to the Verger on the day *in cash.*

Both the choir and lighting of the Cross are optional.



For payments of the wedding service and choir, bank transfers must be sent to:

Greek Cathedral St. Sophia
HSBC
Sort code: 40- 05-33,
Account number: 61506935

Please put the date of the wedding as a reference when making an online payment

Cheques must be made payable to the "**Greek Cathedral St. Sophia**".

Please put the date of the booking and your name at the back of the cheque.

Section 4: REQUIREMENTS

- Two conjoined crowns
- Gold bands
- Bottle of koumandaria (sweet dessert wine)
- Wine goblet (optional)
- Two large white bridal candles max.8cm (optional)
- Tray for sugared almonds (koufeta) or rose petals

Best Man/Woman (Koumbari)

Must be members of the Orthodox Church. Non-Orthodox individuals may serve as witnesses but not act as active participants in the marriage ceremony.

Church weddings are NOT permitted:

- From 13th December to 26th December
- On 5th January and 6th January (Theophany)
- On 29th June (Feast of the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul)
- From 1st to 15th August (The fasting period for the Dormition of the All-Holy Mother of God)
- On 29th August (the Beheading of St. John the Baptist & Forerunner)
- On 14th September (the Exaltation of the Holy Cross)

- During Lent, from Forgiveness (Cheesefare) Sunday until Easter Sunday
2025: 2nd March – 21st April,
2026: 22nd February – 13th April
2027: 14th March – 2nd May

- Pentecost and Holy Spirit Monday
2025: 8th/9th June
2026: 31st May/ 1st June
2027: 20th/21st June
- On the two Saturdays of the Souls (Psychosavvata), the first on the Saturday before Judgement (Meatfare) Sunday and the second the Saturday before Pentecost
2025: 22nd February & 7th June
2026: 14th February & 30th May
2027: 19th February & 3rd June

Section 5: ON THE DAY

- ***Wedding times must be strictly adhered to.*** It is understood that sometimes a few minutes' delay is unavoidable, however, couples arriving very late must realise that ***they may miss their turn*** and will have to wait until all other ceremonies are completed.
- ***A late charge will also be applied*** by both the Cathedral and the choir (if it has been booked).
- ***Acceptance of this condition is binding*** on all couples having their wedding at the Cathedral. ***No exceptions will be made***, and the Cathedral will accept no responsibility for the consequences of such a delay.
- ***Strictly no confetti or rice permitted inside or outside the Cathedral.*** Only a small amount of biodegradable rose petals are allowed outside the Cathedral. ***A fine of £100 will be issued if this rule is not adhered to.***

Section 6: PARKING

- There is no on-site parking at the Cathedral, however, there are parking meters on Moscow Road and in the surrounding area.
- Parking is free on a single yellow line or pay and display meter after 1.30 pm on a Saturday and all of Sunday.

If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact the office of the Greek Cathedral St Sophia, tel.: +44 (0) 207 229 7260, email: info@stsophia.org.uk, web: www.stsophia.org.uk
