



Why Choosing a Licensed Wedding Venue Makes Planning Easier



Planning your wedding is one of the most exciting chapters of your life—but let's be honest, it can also feel a little overwhelming. Between choosing the perfect venue, finalising the guest list, sorting outfits, and juggling timelines, it's easy to get lost in the details.

And somewhere along the way, you might find yourself asking:

“What exactly is a licensed wedding venue—and do I really need one?”

If you're unsure what that means or how it affects your plans, you're not alone. In this blog, we'll explore what a licensed venue is, why it matters, and why choosing one—like Riverside Marquee—can make your wedding day smoother, simpler, and even more special.

What Is a Licensed Wedding Venue?

In England and Wales, a licensed wedding venue is a location that has been legally approved by the local council to host civil marriage or civil partnership ceremonies. This means you can have your legal ceremony—officiated by a registrar—at the venue itself, rather than needing to go to a registry office or church.

To be licensed, the venue must meet specific criteria, including:

- A permanent structure with a fixed address
- Public access for inspection
- A designated ceremony room or space
- Compliance with safety and accessibility standards

So, if you want to legally marry at your chosen venue (and not just have a symbolic or celebrant-led ceremony), it must be licensed.

Do You *Need* a Licensed Venue?

It depends on the type of ceremony you want. Here's a quick guide:

Ceremony Type	Licensed Venue Required?	Who Can Officiate?
Civil ceremony	Yes	Registrar (from local council)
Religious ceremony	No (must be in a registered place of worship)	Religious official
Celebrant-led	No	Independent celebrant (not legally binding)
Legal + celebration split	No (legal part done separately)	Registrar + celebrant

Why a Licensed Venue Is Worth It

While some couples choose to separate the legal and celebratory parts of their wedding—perhaps marrying at a registry office and then hosting a symbolic ceremony in a barn or woodland glade—there's something undeniably convenient and meaningful about doing it all in one place.

Here's why a licensed venue is a smart choice:

- **One Location, One Celebration**

No need to coordinate multiple venues or travel between sites. You can say "I do," toast with loved ones, and dance the night away—all under one roof.

- **Less Admin, More Joy**

Licensed venues often liaise directly with the local registrar, helping you manage the legal side of things with ease. That's one less thing on your to-do list.

- **Legal and Recognised**

Your ceremony is official, binding, and recognised by law—without needing a separate appointment at a registry office.

- **Flexibility and Personalisation**

Just because it's licensed doesn't mean it's rigid. Many licensed venues offer flexibility to tailor your ceremony and celebration to reflect your style, values, and vision.

When an Unlicensed Venue Might Work

Of course, there are reasons some couples choose unlicensed venues:

- You want a symbolic or deeply personal ceremony
- You've fallen in love with a non-traditional space (like a tipi or private garden)
- You're planning a destination wedding or elopement
- You prefer to separate the legal and emotional parts of the day

These are valid choices—but they often require extra planning, travel, and coordination.

Why Licensed Venues Like Riverside Marquee are Ideal

As a fully licensed wedding venue, Riverside Marquee offers the best of both worlds: the legal formality of a registrar-led ceremony and the creative freedom to design a celebration that's uniquely yours. Whether you envision a classic affair or something more unconventional, Riverside Marquee provides a beautiful, flexible setting where your entire day can unfold effortlessly.