



*Update January 2021*

*Happy New Year and we're sure you will join us in wishing for a more positive and happy 2021 and beyond.*

*We wanted to provide an update as to where we understand things are and how we plan to approach things in 2021.*

### **Where weddings are at for 2021**

Like everyone we do not have a crystal ball and remain highly frustrated by the lack of signposting by the Government for weddings. Engagement and focus on weddings from the Government increased through November and December and it has significantly changed the rhetoric behind the scenes.

Obviously there are varying predictions being made on rates of vaccinations, testing and the impact on lockdowns. The 'political will' is undoubtedly there to drive these forward and release measures quickly. Key focuses seem to be the end of February and Easter in terms of the vulnerable elements of the population being vaccinated.

However, we appreciate there remains a great deal of uncertainty around exact timings and what different levels of vaccinations mean in terms of potential restrictions - neither of which are particularly helpful for yourselves planning such a significant day.

### **Our approach for 2021 weddings**

In the early part of 2020 when the crisis hit we worked on an eight week rolling window for weddings as the worst case scenario for when we would make final decisions on each wedding. Through the latter part of 2020 and over the winter we extended this to a three-month window. Given the more positive signposting behind the scenes and our expectations that a lot will change over the next couple of months, we intend to move back towards an eight week rolling window.

We realise under normal circumstances that two months is not long before a wedding but in the current climate with the situation changing all the time - both with regulations and with the science/tests/vaccines being worked on to combat Covid - it is unrealistic to predict the future any further ahead.



As we're sure you can appreciate, we have to be fair and consistent to all couples while also protecting our business and our affiliated suppliers. It also means our future availability is there for those whose weddings are affected by any restrictions (as well as new business) and acts as a reassurance to everyone that they are not missing out in a rush for dates.

So far, we have offered couples with weddings booked up to Feb/March 2021, the option to postpone free-of-charge up until the end of March 2022, our year end.

We know a lot of couples may be keen to move to a prime date in 2022 or beyond but we just can't sustain moving all 2020 and 2021 bookings to 2022 key dates and putting a line through 2020 and 2021 - especially when there is nothing definite to say we won't be able to host as normal by May.

We appreciate what a stressful time this is for all our couples and that your wedding is the most significant day of your lives. We are so appreciative of the relationship we have had with our couples to date as well as their positive attitudes.

We wanted to reassure you all that we will continue to do as much as we can - please don't panic. We are here to work with you to find a solution and realise there is no 'one size fits all'. We are not, for the avoidance of doubt, expecting couples to go ahead with 15 people under the current contract, unless you want to and we would adapt accordingly. We created new packages for those who did want to go ahead with smaller numbers from September to December 2020 and will continue to work on various alternatives to fit in with any restrictions, if required.

### **Background - The Wedding Sector**

The wedding sector has been hit very hard, with more restrictions than other hospitality and event settings coupled with less support. Often grants for local businesses did not apply as we were 'open' but limited to weddings for 15 despite no evidence that it was high risk to hold the event in a covid secure environment socially distanced which we had space to do. Obviously for this reason few couples wanted to go ahead and many venues have not held an event since March 2020.

Many wedding suppliers are suffering and carry on-going overheads. Often they are not eligible for support, and it is a sad fact that most of the wedding sector are self-employed or company directors who have missed out on financial support. They are



also unable to diversify to other projects as there is still the contracted work in the pipeline and the need to support couples.

Similarly, we have still had about 40% of our operating costs during the restrictions, with still having to maintain the venue, meet the unavoidable bills and rolling services and, most importantly, support our couples! We have also left gaps in future availability to accommodate possible postponements should couples need to rearrange dates. The Tier 4 restrictions preventing new viewings and possible bookings is also damaging.

We want to reassure that we are here to support you and help you plan and are acutely aware that you have savings tied up with Copdock Hall. However, we also wanted to explain why we are asking you to please be patient with your decision making due to the impact it has on not just us but also your other wedding suppliers involved in the big day.

If we allow you to move your date well ahead of time by choice, it could seriously affect your suppliers. We are and will remain very conscious of that.

*Many thanks again for all your support and we look forward to the resumption of proper weddings here at Copdock Hall. If you have any doubts or concerns, please contact us to discuss further. Please use email as the first route of contact as phones are not currently being manned all the time.*

*Wishing you a very Happy New Year!*

*Best wishes Diane, Ian and the Copdock Hall Team*