



Rhosygilwen

Sustainable

Wedding

Guide

Cover photo credit: Sarah Mumford

How to have an awesome eco-friendly wedding

Congratulations! We're guessing if you've downloaded this guide you are a) engaged and looking for a wedding venue, and b) super into the environment and being sustainable.

Alternatively, you could also be a mother or father of the happy couple and looking to help them find somewhere to host their ceremony and evening do.

You have come to the right place. This ebook takes you through logical ideas on how you can make your wedding good for the environment. Fighting climate change is one of the most important things people can do at the moment, and giving your big day tiny

emissions is a surefooted step in the right direction.

So, what are the best ways to make your wedding eco-friendly?

You could carbon offset your celebration, however, it will take years for your trees to grow to the size they can suck in the equivalent amount of carbon.

The best thing to do is make sure your wedding limits the amount of carbon it produces.

Here's how you achieve this.

What is an eco-friendly wedding?

An eco-friendly wedding, also known as green wedding or a sustainable wedding, is a wedding ceremony where the couple actively tries to reduce emissions. These days, an eco-friendly wedding is possible and according to Bridebook, couples are increasingly seeking out environmentally friendly wedding days. Time to join in?

Rhosygilwen is dedicated to minimising the carbon footprint of weddings that take place in our venues. This includes making sure that all of our summer weddings are carbon neutral.



1 Serve Seasonal & Local Food

As food and drink is one of your big day's biggest polluters, a good idea is to choose a caterer that sources their food locally, or even better, grows their own food.

The closer your food is to your plate, the fresher and better it tastes and the lower its carbon footprint is.

In [How Bad Are Bananas](#), carbon data scientist Mike Berners-Lee breaks down the value of seasonal food like this:

100g Local and seasonal carrots: 28 CO2E

100g carrots shipped from Europe: 90 CO2E

The difference is stark. If you have 100 guests, then the seasonal carrots generate 280 CO2E vs 900CO2E for European carrots.

This is why Rhosygilwen prioritises farm-to-table food. The majority of ingredients for your wedding breakfast come fresh from our garden or greenhouses. And, if we can't grow it, we make sure it is sourced locally in Pembrokeshire.

Top tip

To cut down on food waste, we recommend avoiding buffet style or feast style wedding breakfasts. Often these create a lot of waste and it's harder to donate leftovers due to food hygiene standards. Opting for the traditional three-course wedding breakfast cooked to order and made from seasonal or local food is a far better option.

Also, talk to your caterer to see if any uncooked food can be donated to a local food bank or if leftovers can be packaged and eaten later (this can include letting the venue staff take some home!)



2 Look for built-in decor or rent decorations



Photo credit: Kirsy Louise

Decorating your venue can be expensive and use more resources. It also means you have more knick knacks to put away when you pack up. So, why try to hide your venue behind decorations when you could choose a venue that has built-in character or great natural spaces.

If you have a wedding style in mind, make sure the venue you choose meets that style. It might seem obvious but don't choose a barn if you want a Bridgerton-style Regency wedding. If you're going to spend lots of money and time decorating your venue and making it fit your ideal design, then you have probably chosen the wrong venue. Choose a venue that meets your demands without lots of touch up.

This will save you cash and use up less of Earth's resources. It's win-win.

Top Tip

Great things to look out for are old stone walls for a timeless feel or greenhouses for a lush and verdant vibe.



3 Opt for conscious flowers

Bridal bouquets are undoubtedly pretty and the bouquet toss is a major tradition, but freshly cut flowers are not the best for the environment. Especially if you opt for flowers that aren't in season.

Why? Things like pesticides, plastic tags and international shipping can cause a pretty big carbon footprint. According to How Bad Are Bananas, a bouquet of unseasonal flowers can emit up to 32.3kg CO2E.

But don't worry, there are many eco-friendly alternatives for the bouquet and flower arrangements.

For the decorative arrangements, consider using potted plants like orchids or herbs like lavender. You can even use potted trees. You can reuse these at home or put them pride of place on your

patio – see, you've taken a little bit of your wedding home with you.

For the bouquet, you can use seasonal flowers to limit how far your flowers have to travel. Alternatively, you could make a bouquet out of paper or fabric.

If you want to use flowers, we recommend the following for each season:

Spring: Tulips, daisies, daffodils, irises, waxflowers, calendulas

Summer: Sunflowers, peonies, cosmos, jasmine, roses, chrysanthemums, lilies, daisies

Autumn: Pumpkins, cabbage, chrysanthemums, foxgloves, seedpods, violas

Winter: Snapdragons, pansies, waxflowers, poinsettia, hydrangeas, kale, evergreens, holly, calendulas, amaryllis

Top Tips for disposing of flowers

When choosing a florist, work with one that is near your venue. They will know the best seasonal flowers that grow near your venue. It is also worth checking out their sustainability credentials as they might compost your flowers after your celebration. Be sure to ask and make the right arrangements.

Alternatively, you could give the flowers to the wonderful venue staff who have made your day so special. This way they get a second home and a fulfilled life!



Photo credit: Owen Howells

4 Use reusable or recyclable items

Weddings create a lot of waste. Estimated to be about one third of a tonne.

So, it's important for any happy couple to try to limit the amount of waste their wedding causes.

This can be cutting back on excess or just switching out plastic glasses for actual glass.

Just like how you take a reusable cup when heading out for a coffee, you can also make sure you set up your reception room with recyclable or reusable decor. Some eco-friendly decorations include macrame, old books, vintage candle holders, glassware, bunting, ceramics and ribbon.

It is also possible to rent sustainable equipment like straws, glasses and china. If you are having drinks to share, make sure you use metal straws and avoid plastic ones.

In the past, we've seen happy couples set some sustainability rules like "don't buy anything new if we're not going to use it again". They would buy their decorations on websites like [Vinted](#) or [eBay](#) and then sell them after their big day.

Top Tip

If you want an awesome confetti photo, we recommend using biodegradable confetti and biodegradable glitter. If the wind carries away any confetti bits, they will disintegrate and not damage the local wildlife or plants. Better yet, use petals, lavender or herbs. Not only is this better for the planet, but it will also add some great colour to your Exit Toss!

If you want to DIY your bio-confetti, you can dry out some leaves and use a hole punch!





Cover photo credit: Sarah Mumford

5 Have natural wedding favours

Following on from reusable decorations, natural wedding favours are also a great idea to make your wedding sustainable.

We've all been there – been given a wedding favour that leaves you wondering: "Why have I been given this?" Most of the time, wedding favours are forgotten about or deliberately left behind. This adds to your big day's big waste problem.

So, what can you do instead?

Choosing natural based wedding favours will make your guests happy and the planet happy.

These can include:

- Seed bombs
- Plantable menu cards and name places
- Personalised Wildflower seed packets
- Bird seed packets

All of these ideas can be found on websites like [Not On The High Street](#) or [Etsy](#).

Charity Tip

Alternatively, you could donate the money you were going to spend on wedding favours to a charity of your choice. Many charities including UNICEF and the RNLI have wedding favour packages. This is where you donate on behalf of your guests and they get a little card thanking them for their donation on your big day.



Photo credits: Sarah Mumford



Photo credits: Y Mor Photography

6. Get married in the Summer

One of the biggest carbon emitters on your big day will be the energy it takes to light and heat your venue. Getting granny on the dance floor never took so much energy.

One easy way to get around this issue is to get married in the spring/summer months. The hotter seasons mean you don't have to power your venue

for too long and the heat and late nights might even keep some people outside.

We know Spring and Summer are the most popular seasons to get married in, but you'll have oodles of electricity and heating emissions.

Or get married outside

From March 2022 it is possible to get married outside in Wales. This right used to be reserved for Scotland, Jewish or Orthodox weddings, but is now possible for civil ceremonies.

An outdoor wedding will make your carbon emissions lower and the natural light will make your wedding photos pop. All you have to do is take a risk on the notoriously changeable British weather.



Photo credits: Sarah Mumford

Check your venue's power supply

A big and simple thing to check that is often overlooked – find out how your venue is powered.

It will be hard to have a truly sustainable wedding if your venue is powered by fossil fuels. While this is unlikely today, there are more energy-efficient ways of lighting and heating a venue than the national grid.

Like what? Well, the venue could use heat pumps to heat the water and their venue. They could also use their own solar panels to generate electricity.

If they don't generate electricity themselves, make sure they can confirm their supply is from renewable energy sources like solar, wind or hydro.

Top Tip

If the venue takes sustainability seriously, they should have this advertised on their marketing channels. They should also be able to show you some certifications.

8

Use local vendors



Your wedding is a big event and it is a great support to the local area. You might be travelling to your location elsewhere in the UK, getting married in Pembrokeshire when you live in London. However, getting a makeup artist to travel long distances for a 90 minute job isn't the most eco-friendly.

It is a great idea to invest more in the local economy and work with vendors who operate near your venue.

This way, they rack up less miles, emit less CO2 and might even charge you less as you don't have to pick up the mileage bill.

Your venue will likely have a list of recommended suppliers. So, if your venue is eco-conscious, you can bet the local vendors they work with are as well.

In turn, other local vendors will likely recommend other local vendors. The hair stylist might know a good florist for example. As a bonus, a local photographer is going to know the best photo spots.

Tips When Choosing a Local Vendor

Decide how you want a vendor to be sustainable. For example, would you like your makeup artist to only use products not tested on animals? Would you like your florist to only use flowers from the local area instead of importing roses from South America?

Research any potential vendor. Check out their social media channels and their website to see what they prioritise and what is important to them. If you're still unclear, ring them up and see how they respond to your questions.

See how they respond to your requests. If they act indifferent or become displeased at any of your non-mainstream requests, consider waving the red flag.

Contact Rhosygilwen

Rhosygilwen is an eco-friendly wedding venue in Pembrokeshire. We power our venue with electricity from our own solar farm and heat our water with heat pumps.

We generate 2 GWH per year, which saves enough carbon to cover four return flights to USA, and thousands of car journeys. By choosing Rhosygilwen for your wedding venue, you can have a sustainable, zero-carbon wedding.

Email enquiries@rhosygilwen.co.uk for more information or to book a tour.