

Michael Ludwig our Business Systems and Procedures Manager indicates:

Whilst **Martin Gover** has indicated that it would be ideal for Brides and Grooms to postpone their date to their pencilled in date, it is so that they can plan ahead in the comfort of knowing that they have a long while to then plan the day based on how they originally would have envisioned it, not least to ensure that they have a day actually firmed up, ensuring that guests are able to make the date. It was, of course merely a recommendation that you could follow.

However, our Business Systems and Procedures Manager **Michael Ludwig**, has yet to be advised when the re-opening of Hospitality businesses will be and indeed as to “how this will affect or impact your actual wedding”. The issue of course we have is that the regulations are supposed to be around 4<sup>th</sup> July, for England with Wales probably following a few days after. Today Mark Drakeford indicated that with 3 deaths in Wales on Saturday he can start to review the relaxation of the lockdown rules

In a week’s time, the Welsh Government will announce the next changes to lockdown rules here in Wales. Like all four of the UK Governments ministers in Cardiff are legally obliged to review the restrictions every three weeks meaning the next decision day is Thursday 18th June. The First Minister is expected to announce any changes the following day. The Welsh Government has insisted on keeping to the three week cycle in order, it says, to give people and businesses a pattern and timescale to work with.

As guidelines had not been announced a month before 4<sup>th</sup> July, there was simply not enough time to prepare the Castle and bring back staff to clean/stock and ensure we had guidelines in place (not least there are no guidelines to follow) so we had to taken the decision to “postpone all of Julys events”.

As we are NOT yet a month from August and with no guidelines or definite rules/regulations in place we have this quandary as to what advice we can give to our Wedding Clients, not least what to suggest in regards to postponing their dates.

Therefore we have the angle that in order to full plan ahead so that your Wedding is booked for a date that you want, it was suggested by Martin Gover that you postpone your date to a new date or to a previously pencilled in date – this, is the “recommended view” However, if it is safe to do so and we can hold your wedding in such a manner that you, as our Wedding Clients can enjoy your day, then the opinion is that we can do this – but, this of course is ONLY if the law allows us to do so and if it can be done in a safe manner observing any social distancing rules.

This does not change therefore from what is on the website such that it is a recommendation that you can move should you wish, however the link below advises her <https://www.craigynoscastleweddings.com/coronavirus.html> the comments that I have made, **indicated below in red.**

Martin Gover added the bold to our [www.craigynoscastleweddings.com](http://www.craigynoscastleweddings.com) homepage:

**12/06/2020: With 'social distancing' measures now likely to continue through the summer months of 2020, we are now recommending all August 2020 Weddings to postpone to a new date. Our recommendation is to postpone to Summer 2021.**

As for September 2020 weddings, we are asking all weddings to now give us their 'pencilled in' forward date ready to move their date into Summer 2021. Ideally postpone completely into 2021 now, as winter 2020 is getting quite full and we have no confirmation about the winter months of 2020 being OK anyway. If you want to 'hold' your September 2020 date, just in case things do change by then (as well they might), you can hold September still, and give us your 'pencilled in date' for Summer 2021.

This will enable all August dates to move to a new date now, as we understand 'social distancing' measures in Wales will likely remain in place in August, and all September dates should be ready to move (by pencilling in new dates as we recommend). The pencilling in system and 'rolling forward' of dates is explained on our coronavirus page and will continue as necessary until 'social distancing' measures are lifted sufficiently to allow a normal wedding to take place. It remains our view that a 'normal' and happy wedding event cannot 'work' as our customers would wish, under social distancing rules, while guest safety is paramount.

Remember that if you are allowed to have a Ceremony Only wedding on your original wedding date, the theatre will be offered free of charge but with no 'event' as such. This is to allow you to legally be married on your original wedding date if you wish to and if the Government permits you to. Then you would hold your full wedding event on the postponed date and use a Celebrant for the postponed full 'Wedding Ceremony' with all guests present. In effect you are separating out the 'legal part' from the 'Wedding Ceremony' and postponing the main Wedding Ceremony and Event to the later date. How to do this is all explained on the [Coronavirus page](#).

*Michael Ludwig, our Business Manager, offers his opinion as of 12/06/2020:*

- *"If restrictions in Wales are lifted so that Hospitality business can re-open (based on current "rumours"), I believe there will be too many regulatory issues surrounding social distancing, wearing of facemasks and lowering of numbers so that you can't have the number of guests planned. Along with complex rules about evening meals and breakfasts, this may make the wedding less enjoyable than anticipated, not least you may not be able to have the guests that were originally invited. **If it were me**, I would be looking to seriously plan for an alternative date and check and confirm with other suppliers, still keeping maybe August and September as a back-up, in case things may go ahead then. We will of course keep all our customers advised and currently the earliest that we think an announcement will be made will be 21st June (for England) and 28th June (for Wales). I personally believe that from 4th July, the hospitality industry could open to serve take-away drinks in gardens on a self-service basis, with some customers being served outside. **We though are choosing NOT to open at all in July** and will make further announcements on August and beyond as soon as more information is available. Rules may be relaxed further – they may well say in July, you can only do X, Y and Z, but come middle of July, may say that you can now do X, Y and Z along with A, B and C."*

Not least as my comments indicate "we are UNAWARE how social distancing will affect the wedding scene in July, and if they will be relaxed further in August – so all we can say, IS we will be able to do weddings in August should customers wish – BUT, within the rules of the social distancing and hospitality guidelines – BUT personally MY view is that I don't think that weddings will go along the lines as our wedding clients have planned them – because social distancing may not have eased sufficiently.

However, I am reluctant today to simply close the Castle in August incase the guidelines allow events to go ahead – whereas in July we HAVE to close as we have insufficient time to stock up, plan, clean, maintain and get this in order to meet the as un yet unknown regulations unlike shops who were given 3 weeks notice – not least NOT shops in Wales are yet to be allowed to be opened.

My thought process therefore would be that customers can if they choose to do so, “keep the August date they have” but would suggest that they also have a pencilled in date as a back up. What we don't wish to do is to find that a wedding cannot legally taken place as lockdown rules have not been relaxed and then a wedding client has no firm pencilled date that suits.

This is re-iterated in Martin Govers advice

“While we are unaware when any restrictions are to be lifted, we now advise August 2020 weddings to pretty much resign themselves to moving their date (rather than leave everything far too late). You should pencil in an alternative summer 2021 date (**but for now you may choose to retain your original 2020 August date in place as well, just in case**). Should current restrictions be lifted you may still be able to marry at the Castle on your original August or September 2020 date but we are no longer confident social distancing will be removed in time. The 14 day air-travel quarantine is also an unexpected new factor affecting some guests' ability to attend a wedding”

We believe that some form of announcement will be made at least on 18<sup>th</sup> June, and then again 3 weeks later – certainly by 9<sup>th</sup> July we will know something more definite.

The following amendment applies

“August weddings will shortly be contacted by our Wedding Manager **to ensure that you have pencilled in back up date and to advise you of any options in place.**

We will however wait until the next Government Announcement. You can for now 'pencil in' (reserve) a new date first, then check with the Registry Office and other suppliers (particularly DJ, Photographer, Cake Maker and Wedding Cars) to check their availability on the new date. You can then 'confirm' the new date to us and we enter your new date on the Wedding Calendar.

We will of course be in touch regularly and post updates once we are aware of what these rules are and in what way they will affect any weddings not least also indicating any time scale that we believe this will take.