



# eco-friendly weddings

VICTORIA SMITH DISCOVERS HOW TO THROW A GREEN WEDDING IN SUFFOLK

Couples are increasingly being mindful of their impact on the world and looking to organise an eco-friendly wedding. This might seem like a daunting prospect, but there is no need to bust your budget or even cut back on style. Low-waste weddings can be stylish and thrifty affairs, embracing vintage themes with pre-loved or sustainable decorations, dresses, and jewellery.

Whether you want your entire day to be green, or just to incorporate a few eco-elements for an ethical flair, everything you need can be found right here in Suffolk.

## THE VENUE

Your venue can actually make the biggest impact as to whether your wedding is eco-friendly or not, so let's start there.

### **Embrace a natural and eco-conscious venue.**

Batemans Barn Weddings in South Elmham offer an entirely green wedding experience with 100% environmentally sound cleaning products, recycled toilet paper, and energy efficient light bulbs. Batemans even use part of their profits for conservation projects including creating new woodlands, restoring ponds and planting wildflowers, so you can have peace of mind while enjoying your special day.

Similarly, Festival Brides have a Tipi venue on the Suffolk/Essex border which is home to 57 different

vulnerable species and fields of wildflowers, enveloping you in nature while you make your commitments to your partner.

### **Choose local and permanent.**

Your wedding doesn't have to be held in a compostable Tipi to make it more planet-friendly. Simply having your wedding at a local permanent building rather than transporting and constructing your venue is a more sustainable option. Suffolk has dozens of beautiful halls and hotels surrounded by nature, from Bruisyard Country Estate near Saxmundham, to Hengrave Hall in Bury St Edmunds.

## THE LOOK

Your dress can feel like the most important part of your wedding, but in reality the majority of wedding dresses are worn for just a few hours and then retired to the back of a wardrobe, never again to see the light of day. This is extremely unsustainable, and contributes to the huge negative impact of the fashion industry on our planet.

### **Choose a pre-loved dress.**

Buying vintage or second-hand can be an amazing eco and budget-friendly option for your day. Suffolk Wedding Dress Exchange in Framlingham has a huge selection of pre-loved and sample size dresses. This option also gives brides the chance to enjoy a stunning designer



dress without the price tag. Alternatively, websites such as Gumtree and Oxfam also have hundreds of second-hand wedding dresses for those on a tight budget.

### Research sustainable designers.

If you aren't keen on going second-hand, you could look for a designer who uses environmentally-friendly materials instead. Bowen Dryden creates fully organic, biodegradable and ethical dresses that can be worn again – not just for a few hours. You can buy the designs from Bud + Boe Bridal in Bungay.

### Champion local artists.

Locally made jewellery can add that certain je ne sais quoi to your look, as well as being more ethical and sustainable. Tony Strowger specialises in breathing new life into old discarded jewellery, creating completely unique pieces. For a truly Suffolk vibe, Sea Coast Silver Jewellery creates handmade pieces by transforming shells found on Suffolk beaches into silver, whilst Louise Sant takes inspiration from her hometown of Aldeburgh to make gorgeous jewellery using bespoke jewels.



### Go glitter or go home.

Face 'n' Glitz Glitter Bar provides completely biodegradable vegan glitter which is perfect for a festival bride wanting to stand out, or as a party

element at the reception. Who said you couldn't be fabulous and eco-friendly?

### THE DECOR

Decorations aren't something to be skipped – they are crucial to the look of your wedding, and can transform your venue into anything from a fairy-tale grotto to Jay Gatsby's mansion. However, there are more sustainable options to consider when it comes to flowers, decor and place settings.

### Choose local and seasonal flowers.

A seasonal bouquet will not only reduce the carbon-footprint of your flowers, but will look more in-tune with the timing of your wedding. Ivy Green Flowers is an eco-friendly florist using seasonal and British flowers, without the use of floral foam (the equivalent to single-use plastic).

HERE ARE SOME FLOWER SUGGESTIONS FOR EACH SEASON:

**Spring:** Tulips, white daffodils, lilac, ranunculus and guilder roses.

**Summer:** Peonies, larkspur, nigella, sweet peas, sunflowers and roses.

**Autumn:** Dahlias, calla lilies, hydrangeas and snapdragons.

**Winter:** Hellebores, berried ivy, jasmine, narcissus and poinsettia.



### **Hire or borrow, don't buy new.**

Hiring items enable them to be reused, rather than be disposed of after your day is over, and the items themselves tend to be more planet-friendly. For example, hiring lanterns instead of buying balloons eliminates the unfortunate ending of single-use plastic piling up in landfills. Moreover, hiring from local businesses offers your community some support they greatly need after losing almost a year of business virtually overnight due to Covid-19.

### **Create your own place names.**

Suffolk benefits from beautiful coastlines, so why not utilise the natural amenities at your wedding by creating place names painted on pebbles collected from the coast? These can also double up as unique party-favours, especially when paired with some local Suffolk cider.

### **THE FOOD AND DRINK**

As a rural county, Suffolk is home to a huge variety of farms producing beautiful produce to feature at your wedding. From locally brewed beer to matured Suffolk cheese, there's something to suit even the fussiest of couples.



### **There's no need to import French wine.**

Keep your alcohol local with famous Southwold brewery and distillery Adnams. The household name produces a huge range of gin, vodka, beer, cider and wine right here in Suffolk. For non-alcoholic options, local juicers High House and Stokes Orchard create delicious soft drinks that will tempt even the biggest wine enthusiasts.

### **Provide a buffet.**

Buffets allow your guests to eat according to their own appetites, meaning there should be less waste than a three course meal, and leftovers can be given out in takeaway bags and eaten the next day. Suffolk Food Hall is the ideal destination to find some locally produced deliciousness.

### **Consider a plant-based or vegetarian wedding.**

We all know that animal agriculture is damaging our precious planet, and it is an unsustainable method of producing food for a growing population. If you don't want to go completely animal-free at your wedding, simply choosing a vegan-friendly cake could be a great option. Moo Moo Cakes and The Little Cake Place in Suffolk create amazing dairy and egg-free cakes, so you don't have to miss out while reducing your carbon footprint.

As beautiful as they are, weddings can create a huge amount of waste and air miles, so hopefully these ideas can help you ditch the guilt and reduce the environmental impact of your big day.



MAIN PHOTO: MONET EVENTS AND WEDDINGS