

Suffolk wedding planners: 'Intimate weddings could be the way forward during 2021'

With social distancing restrictions still in place across England, **Danielle Lett** asks if a micro wedding is something you've considered?

Planning a wedding can be stressful enough as it is, and 10 months into the ongoing coronavirus crisis, many couples up and down the country are still unsure about whether their wedding is going to go ahead anytime soon.

With thousands having already postponed or cancelled their big day this year, one Suffolk wedding planner has noticed some couples have taken the decision to drastically downsize their nuptials, in order to comply with the ever-changing restrictions in relation to wedding sizes.

Caroline Gould runs The Wedding Planners alongside Victoria Ewing, and the two have over 15 years' worth of wedding experience between them. The Tuddenham-based duo had nearly 30 weddings in the works this year, and Caroline explains how such an unpredictable year has caused huge amounts of uncertainty for couples across Suffolk.

"We had about 26 weddings in the diary for this year - all of which have been cancelled or postponed for next year, so we've spent a lot of time talking to our couples and trying to help them through the process of postponing



Micro weddings consist of 30 guests or under - could these style of ceremonies become the norm?

a wedding. As it's not something we've done before, we've learnt a lot this year, so it's been interesting to see how couples' attitudes to their weddings have changed.

"We've had a handful of couples who have moved the whole thing, we've got some who have still had a ceremony on their original day and are going to have a bigger party at a later date, and there are some who have changed their plans completely and are downsizing their guestlists. One couple we're working with are going from a 100-guest wedding to a 15-guest wedding and opting for

what we call a micro wedding."

A 'micro wedding' is a ceremony generally defined as having 30 guests or under - and due to ongoing social distancing restrictions, could potentially be the new way forwards.

"What we've found it's come down to a lot of the time, particularly with those couples who have gone for smaller numbers, are now saying how this year has put everything into perspective. They'll say 'I want my mum there, my sister, my close family and if that's all I can have, that's okay because that's who I really want to be with'."

Prior to the pandemic, micro weddings were more uncommon, with the average British wedding usually having around 80 guests in total.

But once a couple decides to downsize their wedding party, they will soon realise they have a lot more room to focus on some of the finer details for their day.

"I think you can make it really special for everyone there - not just the bride and groom. The people we're working with right now who are planning a smaller, more intimate affair are really thinking about their guests, and what they really want on the day. There's so few of them there, so they can be specific with their wants.

"They might want to decorate their table with big, beautiful floral arrangements, and they can because their table isn't as big - so it's not going to be as expensive.

Those kind of special touches for their guests make it really special and memorable for everyone who's there. The overarching theme that comes across from all of our clients is that ultimately they want everyone to have a good time, and with a slightly smaller wedding you really can do that."

With the average wedding costing roughly up to £25,000, Caroline says couples who opt for a micro wedding could easily slash their costs to around £10,000 to £15,000 if done on a per-person cost.

Alternatively, couples could stretch their budget further and afford to put up their guests in hotel rooms.

"There's a number of beautiful, stately homes that are perfect for smaller weddings right here in Suffolk. I remember a lovely, small wedding we helped plan at Bruisyard Hall within the house there - it had an almost house party feel to it, which was perfect for the couple and their guests.

There's a number of stately home venues across the region that can accommodate micro weddings as well, such as Milsoms, Glenham Hall and Butley Prior. You can also do smaller ceremonies in a marquee - the possibilities are endless.

"If the pandemic has taught us anything in the wedding sector, it's the real meaning of a wedding. It's about two people who are in love and declaring that love in front of their nearest and dearest. An intimate wedding could be well the way forward."



Caroline Gould, right, pictured with Victoria Ewing. The two run The Wedding Planners in Tuddenham



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