

CEILIDH PLANNING GUIDE



This document is useful for those who have never planned a ceilidh before, and might want a little guidance. It addresses issues relating to the **venue**, your **guests**, and the **band**.

This is not “must read” information for clients, but is simply available as a useful resource.

VENUE

1. Size of venue

It may seem like a simple thing, but it's worth ensuring that you have the right size of room for the number of guests you have invited! In the ideal venue, your guests will make up at least 80% of the venue's maximum occupancy. Should space be limited, it's worth discussing this with us beforehand and we can advise on a line-up that suits your venue.

2. Size of dance-floor

We've played ceilidhs in a variety of venues with varying sizes of dance area. A spacious dance floor is great to have, but you might be surprised at how little space is needed for a ceilidh. Should the floor area be limited, the band will ensure that things don't get too crowded by offering to play two “rounds” of the dance. If there is no dancing space, we can also supply a band to provide a less participation-based performance.

3. Seating arrangements

While it might seem obvious, we strongly recommend having your guests seated in the same room as the entertainment, if at all possible. Should there be a large gathering area (e.g. a lounge or bar area) elsewhere in the venue, it can be difficult to get people dancing, especially if the caller can't see the guests he is addressing!

If your aim is to have a more low-key approach, then we are able to work with that: we'll adjust the sets to include more background music for when there are no dancers in the room. Please let us know before settling on this format!

When arranging the seating for a ceilidh, it's good to give people a **clear view of the band**, and **easy access to the dance-floor**.

GUESTS

1. Invitations

When advertising or sending out invitations to your event, why not include the name or logo of the band? It can be helpful to do this as it gives your guests a more specific idea of what to expect, and it can also raise the profile of your event by naming the group who are performing.

2. What to wear

For weddings particularly, it's worth letting people know there will be a ceilidh, since they can plan their outfits accordingly. There is no official dress-code for ceilidhs: it can be as formal or informal as you like. The band will dress in smart black. Tartan waistcoats are banned!

3. It's getting hot in here...

For summer events, it's worth checking whether the venue has air-con, and if not, it might be worth hiring in a few industrial fans if windows can't be opened. Phew!

4. Food & drink

Guests will appreciate a light buffet supper as part of the entertainment, particularly if you have evening-only guests at a wedding. Also, you could check with the venue about putting jugs/bottles of ice-water on the tables, too.

BAND

1. Size of stage

The stage area (where the band set up) should be about 8 feet (240cm) front to back if your band includes drums. For width, allow 6 feet (180cm) per person. Disco/lights: allow another 6 feet. Should you have concerns about the band area, contact us to check.

2. PA system/lights in venue

Some venues provide in house PA systems for speeches, others for bands. It's worth checking this as we may be able to discount your price if suitable PA/lights are already provided.

3. Access times

We require around 1 hour to set up the band. Should your event be running behind schedule, we will try to be as quick as possible to make up for this. Please note it is VERY helpful if we are able to sound-check in an empty room. If your venue allows the guests to congregate elsewhere, the floor-manager should co-ordinate with the band for inviting the guests back into the main room. While it is often necessary to soundcheck briefly with guests in the room, the more time the band have to soundcheck, the better we will sound!

Should you require us to set up earlier in the day for a supplementary fee please contact us to arrange this.

4. Awkward access issues

Some venues are very difficult in terms of access. In these circumstances, please check with the venue whether the band has limited access to the stage, and whether they can arrange assistance with the moving of equipment (e.g. a trolley or porters)

5. Interval time

Allow around 10 minutes per contracted hour for a break (e.g. a 3-hour ceilidh would include a 30-minute break). This also allows sufficient time for a buffet or refreshments, and for dancers to catch their breath! The band will check what time you wish to have the break and will arrange the set-list accordingly.

6. Rider

The band don't have an official "rider". For longer evenings, it's always appreciated if you are able to arrange some refreshments for the players. Statistics prove that in 100% of cases, well-fed musicians perform better than hungry ones...