HUNTSHAM COURT

Event Planning help sheet

OVERVIEW
We are delighted that you are considering holding your event at Huntsham Court and we pride ourselves in going the extra mile to ensure you have your day, your way. Everyone has a unique and different expectation of how they want their event to run and look, so this guide has been drawn up to outline what we can offer and let you know of some things which we know other people have found very helpful or worked well for them. At the end of the day, we hope you treat Huntsham Court as a home from home and make it your own - it's your day and we are here to ensure it happens exactly how you want it to.

PLAN AHEAD WHERE POSSIBLE
Events are planned from years to weeks before. Caters, bands, entertainers, photographers, florists and cars can get booked up months in advance, so as soon as you have confirmed your dates at Huntsham Court we would recommend you spend some time deciding what you might like and at least provisionally getting services to hold dates for you – that way you can ensure you have options. If you don't know or can't decide we are more than happy to talk to you about what other people have done at Huntsham Court and what works well. We are here to help, but if you would like someone to take all the pressure away you can also hire one of our fantastic event planners if you would like someone to sort every last detail out on your behalf.

EXTRA ACCOMODATION
We have a cottage that is also available to rent that sleeps 6 people across three bedrooms attached to the main house (it is only ever rented as additional accommodation to the main house, never to separately). If you are having a large event involving guests who are not staying at Huntsham Court we also recommend you speak to other local accommodation (see our suppliers page on our website) and ask them to provisionally hold rooms in your name for the dates required until an agreed date. You can then you make a list of all accommodation on hold with their contact details on which you can email or post out to your non-resident guests so they can contact the B&Bs or hotels directly to take up some rooms on hold in your name. After the agreed date they should then release any rooms not booked.

TELL YOUR GUESTS
Often for special events, weddings and parties people send out formal invitations up to three months before. If you are booking well in advance of this people often send out a simple 'Save the Date' email or card, saying that formal invitations will follow nearer the time.

EVENT RUNNING
Every event is different and we have created a guidance template for an example big event. At Huntsham Court though what many clients enjoy is the combination of planned time and downtime so we have also created a guidance sheet for an example 3 day stay which we hope you find useful. Once you have decided how you would like you time at Huntsham Court to feel and what are the big events and quieter times, we would be happy to run through the logistics of ensuring it runs smoothly and fill out the finer details.

PLANNING MEETINGS AT HUNTSHAM COURT
For big events, we recommend that between 12-4 weeks before your event you book a day or afternoon in with us for you to come down. You can arrange to meet caterers, florists, hairdressers and other service providers on site and discuss your event. And we can keep the tea and biscuits flowing. You can also choose which bedrooms each of your guests would like and we can put together a more comprehensive running order and staffing list to suit your

needs. We know some people would rather us arrange everything for them due to distance, time or other commitments, in which case we can offer a more comprehensive 'event planning service' or something in between.

WHAT MAKES AN EVENT SPECIAL?

You know your guests more than anyone and often large events bring together people from different circles of friendship or distant family groups. What many of our guests say is special about Huntsham Court is that house really feels like your home and has enough space to socialize together or have smaller groups doing different things. Often we are told that it's sitting in the Butler's Pantry in your dressing gown having a morning after chat about the amazing night before that makes three day events so special, along with everyone being under one roof the night before to share the excitement. Fundamentally what makes it special is you, so the more you make it your own and feel at home the more your friends and family relax and get into it.

Unlike many historic houses, at Huntsham Court we have furnished the grand reception rooms so that furniture can be easily moved around or cleared to suit your needs. We have enough space that even if you are having a event for 120 guests you will always have a drawing room to relax in as well as a room for a bar and dancing should you want it. Also if you are having caterers we have a second kitchen in the Butler's Pantry which is solely there so you can still make casual meals for children or a cup of tea, or casual drop in breakfasts.

Parties that have travelled from far and wide sometimes book and extra night for a smaller group of guests before the main event so that they can have a more intimate catch up – if you are interested in this option please let us know as it isn't that much more expensive to take an extra night.

COSTS

We know events like these can be costly, but you don't have to have bottomless pockets. At Huntsham Court we have tried to design the house, services and facilities in such a way that you can spend within your budget and still get something extraordinary and very very you. We have a self catered hire price and there are no hidden extras - we charge no corkage, no kitchen use fee for outside caterers and no storage or service fees. We have a network of suppliers that offer different services and whether you are having the most formal dinner or the most casual of buffets – they are all good value and well priced for the services they offer. To that end when you speak to us or meet us at the house, talk to us about what you want and we'll go the extra mile to help you achieve it. We also include in the price use of our banqueting set (chairs, tables, linens, china, cutlery and glassware), but if you would prefer to hire specific items in our supplier network can get hold of almost anything and we can take delivery of it prior to your arrival.

FOOD

The reason that we are self catering is that it means our guests have options and the freedom to have what they want, when they want it and to a standard and budget to suit them. You do not have to use our caterers. The kitchen is yours so if you want to pop and make a sandwich at 4am or cup of tea – help yourself. If you would like staff, cooks, butlers and waiters we can arrange anything from a full compliment of staff for your every whim to just an extra pair of hands to help out - but by renting self catered we're completely flexible and you're not paying extra for anything you don't want. At Huntsham Court we can arrange as little or as much service and staff as you'd like.

Often what people do is have one or two more formal lunches or dinners served and supplied by caterers (especially recommended for events when you have non-residents joining you). Outside of that you get a large supermarket delivery (which can arrive on the morning of your arrival before you get to the house and we can arrange it to be unpacked for you) and you

prepare the food yourself. If you fancy something in between those two options we can also arrange ‘dump and run’ home cooked meals prepared by a local cook who drops prepared meals at the house for you to heat up, or a cook can be arranged to come in and prepare your food. We can also arrange staff to serve and wash up.

HOUSEKEEPING
The house is your home, so if you would like a housekeeper to come round and make beds, or have a turn down service we can facilitate that. Similarly if you would like all the receptions rooms cleaned, or just fluffed in the mornings and tidied from the night before and newspapers delivered before you get up no problem. Some guests prefer the quiet and privacy of being left to their own devices and enjoy the Devonshire quiet and countryside. Whatever suits your needs we’ll do our best to facilitate it.

ADVICE
We know the house inside out and how long it takes to set rooms and move furniture and cater for groups of 40-120 people. Any questions do ask, or any ideas do feel free to run them past us and we can help your event run as smoothly as possible.

THINGS TO DO
There are a myriad of activities you can do at the house or nearby, plus wonderful day trips. We have listed just some of the activities on our “things to do” page on our website but there are always plenty of new things around so if you are looking for something different or not listed do ask. If you would like to arrange an activity at the house do run it past us first too as we can make sure the house is set up for the event to run as smoothly as possible.

PORTER /BUTLER SERVICE
Many guests like the notion of having a person around who knows the house and is there purely to ensure your event runs smoothly, picks up loose ends and assists you – whether it be carrying suitcases upstairs, bringing logs in for the fires, securing the house at night or fixing a last minute problem or task. To that end John is our man who will go the extra mile to make your stay special. He knows the house inside out, is a first aider, and can offer a butler, porter or master of ceremonies service which can be designed to suit your needs. He is happy to meet you when you come to the house before your event to chat through ideas and we highly recommend him.

YOUR DAY, YOUR WAY
It’s not about us it’s about you and we are here to listen and help you achieve the unique event you want.