



# 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 your 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. Caterers, bands, entertainment, 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.

### FOR WEDDINGS & BAPTISM PARTIES

It is also worth checking with the registrar or church that your preferred date and time is available. The registration rules have changed in the past years so if the local registrar is unable to accommodate the date and time of you would prefer, the neighbouring area registrar can now hold the service instead, subject to their availability, if you contact them directly. Also the daylight rules for registrars have recently changed enabling later services in some areas.

### EXTRA ACCOMMODATION

Other accommodation for extra guests: If you are having a large event involving guests who not staying at Huntsham Court we also recommend you speak to other local accommodation (see our website under the 'suppliers' tab) 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 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, giving the key information and 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 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





# HUNTSHAM COURT



hope you find useful. Once you have decided how you would like your time at Huntsham to feel and what are the big events and quieter times, we would be happy to sit down with you and fill out the finer details.

## **PLANNING MEETINGS AT HUNTSHAM COURT**

We suggest, where possible, that between 12-4 weeks before your event you arrange to come down and spend some time at Huntsham Court. (if you can't, don't worry, as it can all easily be done by email or phone). You can arrange to meet caterers, florists, hairdressers and other service providers on site or nearby and discuss the details of your event. You can also walk around the bedrooms to allocate the right room for each of your guests, decide on table formats for banquets, and agree what furniture you want moved when. It is also worth at this time, putting together a more comprehensive running order and staffing list to suit your needs.

We know some people would rather have assistance arranging everything for you due to distance, time or other commitments, in which case we know some wonderful freelance event planners who know the house inside out who can offer a more comprehensive 'event planning service'. Of course there is something in between, but in any event, we are here to answer all house related questions by phone or email.

## **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 have a cup of tea.

## **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 that is extraordinary and very, very you. We only charge a hire price and there are no hidden extras, such as 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. You are of course also free to find your own suppliers or bring your own chefs and team with you if that suits you better.





# HUNTSHAM COURT



## **FOOD**

The reason that we are self catering is that it means our guests have options and the freedom to have exactly what they want, when they want and without it having to cost a lot. 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 or waiters we can also arrange that, but if you don't ,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 formal fancy 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 know just the person to get in. Similarly if you would like the reception rooms cleaned, or just fluffed in the mornings and newspapers delivered before you get up no problem. Some guests just like the quiet and privacy of being left to their own devices and enjoy the Devonshire countryside. Whatever suits your needs we'll do our best to facilitate it.

## **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 we have a few of local people who will go the extra mile to make your stay special. They know the house inside out and can offer a butler, porter or master of ceremonies service which can be designed to suit your needs. They can meet you, by arrangement, when you come to the house before your event to chat through ideas.

## **OPEN FIRES AND CANDLES**

You are welcome to have these by prior arrangement. We have three open fires on the ground floor and can supply logs if you need them. Similarly you can have candles in the main reception rooms. As a precaution for safety we do have guidelines on fires and candles, and require that if you are having them during large parties you have one of the porters or housekeepers on duty when they are lit to check on them occasionally whilst they do other jobs to help your event run smoothly.

## **CHILDREN**

Many guests who are having children attending an event worry that they will be bored. So far that's never happened. We have lots of outside games in the Butler's Pantry window seat and on our 'things to do' page of the website there are many suppliers who can come and run activities on site. Also we have some highchairs, travel cots and plastic crockery and cutlery. We can also connect sky TV in the Den or Snug Bar if you need or set up a DVD player in any room - a DVD slumber party often goes down well in one of the bedrooms whilst the





# HUNTSHAM COURT



adults have a more formal evening dinner. There are also many local people who are happy to do baby sitting if needed.

## STAFFING

This is completely up to you but what often works really well is:

- Having at least two people around when the bar is busy to keep on top of the glasses, topping up the fridges and ice buckets.
- Any self-catered meal - have at least one or two people around (for every 40 guests) to just help out as even a simple meal for 72 people is a lot of washing up.
- Having a couple of people come in, in the mornings to help with breakfast prep, clearing or just tidying up any loose ends in the reception rooms so they feel fresh.
- On the morning of check out people often have a lay in, so it is worth considering having one or two people in to just help bring any crockery or cutlery down from bedrooms, help find misplaced items, and help with loading cars and luggage. This way you don't have to worry too much about leaving the house and you get the quality time to say proper farewells over breakfast.
- Get the porters in to move furniture around (when it suits you) as they can do it quickly and quietly and it also removes the risk of your guests hurting themselves moving stuff around.

From our experience these are all relatively small costs in the bigger picture but takes a huge weight off the lead guest's mind and makes a massive difference to you and your guest's stay, giving you less time tidying or washing up and much more time to spend on what's important – namely quality time you're your friends and family.

## YOUR STAY, YOUR WAY

At the end of the day, it's not about us it's about *you* and the house, staff and suppliers all adapting to suit your needs. Our team and suppliers are here to listen and facilitate your needs to make sure your event runs exactly how you want.

