



Your Church Wedding

Your Wedding Day is going to be one of the best days of your life packed with amazing memories and as you want to marry in the sight of God in our Church I want to make sure the actual service as perfect as possible for you.

Because marriage is a legally binding contract as well as an act of love the law requires that there are certain elements that must be present in any marriage ceremony, the Church of England also requires that certain religious elements to be included in a Church wedding. But that said, it is your day and so most things are possible if you want them.



First things first, here are the legal requirements for Marriage in the Church of England:

You do not have to be a regular churchgoer to get married in the Church of England, neither must you have been baptised.

But to be married in the Parish church you must fulfil one of the following:

- 1.You or a close relative has lived or is living in the Parish.
- 2.If you or a close relative regularly worships or has in the past worshipped at the Church, or is buried in our churchyard.
3. If neither of the above, if you are able to worship with us regularly in the six months before your wedding that counts as well!

There are 3 ways of legally getting married in accordance with the rites of the Church of England:

- 1.The most normal is by publication of banns

This is the most common way. Banns are usually read out in the parish church (or churches) on three consecutive Sundays during the three months prior to the marriage at the church you are being married in and at the churches in the parishes you live in.

By the way it is your responsibility to contact all the parish priests concerned to organise this.

Publication of the banns of marriage means the public announcement by a minister or priest during Divine service that two people wish to marry, and an invitation to anybody who knows just cause or impediment to the union to declare it.

2. By common licence by special licence issued by the Archbishop of Canterbury.

3. By the authority of a superintendent registrar's certificate without licence.

I will be able to let you know the most suitable method according to your particular circumstances.

Once we have agreed on *how* we marry you, I will need a photocopy of your passports as I am now required by law to keep these.

There is a fee to marry in a parish church and our latest fees are attached

To make sure you are legally able to marry we will arrange to meet up in the weeks before the date to talk through the ceremony in more detail and to arrange to have a rehearsal normally in the week before the actual day.

Here are the things you should be thinking about ready for that meeting:



Music

You should think about the hymns you would like. You can have two or three it is up to you. I have hymn books and we can go through them to find the exact version of the hymns when we meet or we can choose them then if you prefer.

It is important to have music for the Bride's entrance and the Couple's departure. The latter is normally always played on the organ, but some couples like to leave to a CD of a favourite song or classical piece.

The music to be played during the signing of the Register. Signing and photos at this point normally takes around 10 minutes, so if you are choosing CD tracks then I suggest three songs/tunes, some people have a "live" soloist or band at this point, or the organist can also play during this time if you would rather and either you can choose the pieces to be played or they can.

There is a charge for our organist.



Readings

What readings would you like?

There is always one Bible Reading and one other that can also be biblical or poetry or prose of your choice.

You will also need to pick two reasonably confident people to read them for you. I can do it if no one else will, but it is much nicer if family members or friends read.



Register

You will need two witnesses to sign the register with you. Again normally this is one person special to each of you in turn, they can be family members or friends, it is again up to you.



The Vows

The Bride to be gets the choice of whether or not she wishes the word obey to be added to love and cherish in your vows. Groom, I am sorry but you just love and cherish regardless.

I can either marry you using both of your Christian names, or just your chosen name, you choose.



Rings

Are you both having rings or is it just the Bride?



Prayers

There are a selection of official prayers, but also Light a wedding candle and can also light a second candle for loved ones who are no longer with us, so do let me know if you would like to do this.



Flowers

You are more than welcome to decorate the church with flower arrangements in the colour scheme of your choice. If you or your families and friends do not want to do these yourselves, then we may be able to ask one or more of our flower arrangers to do the flower arrangements for a wedding. They will need to know the amount you wish to spend and the colours on your arrangements. Should we have two weddings on the same day we ask that the couples choose neutral colours that work for both settings.



Videos and Photographers.

There is a small fee for videos, photographers are no charge. All I ask is that your photographer/videographer talks to me before the wedding so we can discuss the best locations for photos.



Rehearsal.

As mentioned above we will need to have a rehearsal with all the main participants, which is normally the Bride and groom, the bridesmaids, best man, ushers, close family and whoever is doing the readings. This is normally the night before the wedding, if I am available, if not we will arrange another suitable date.



Payment.

We will need to receive the Wedding Fees (see accompanying fee list) at least 2 weeks before the wedding. This is normally as a cheque made payable to “The Astwell Group of Parishes”. We can also accept cash if you prefer, either in lump sums or instalments leading up to the wedding.

Our payments for the organist and bell ringers are in cash. To save you having to remember one more thing on the day, please can you bring the payments for the organist, bells and choir to our meeting or to the rehearsal. Please bring the cash in envelopes marked for each.



Entertainment

If you are planning to have a singer or a musician at your wedding please talk to me about this before booking them. This shouldn't be a problem but it is good to chat through logistics copyright issues first.

We do have a benefice choir that may be available to sing for you, please do ask as early as possible if you are interested in having them.



The Service

You will of course need Service Sheets at your wedding, you can have these done professionally or most computers have great software that allow you to create your own that are as good.

You will need enough for all your guests, plus the bridal party, myself and the organist.

The Front page normally states

"The Wedding of *(then full names of the couple)*"

Then it is a good idea to add the date and either a picture or art work.

It is helpful if you can send me a proof copy before you go to print, as this will stop any confusion for the congregation on the day if the sheet has gone "off piste" for any reason.

The order of service for a Church of England Wedding is laid out below and the bits you need to add are in red.

Bride's Entrance: (*Music*)

Introduction: Rev'd Carole

Hymn 1:

The words to the hymns should be included in the sheet

The Declarations

Readings

(1 and 2) - These can be written out in full or just the titles and author if applicable.

The Address: Rev'd Carole

Hymn 2 optional

The Vows

The Giving of Rings

The Proclamation

The Blessing of the Marriage

The lighting of the Wedding Candle

Hymn 3

Prayers

The Signing of the Registers (*Music*)

The Departure of the Bride and Groom/

Mr and Mrs X (Music)

It is worth adding at the end of the service sheet whether you wish your guests to stay for photos or go straight to the reception etc.

There are a few other things I will need:



Documents

Because of the legalities of marriage if you have been married before there are certain things I will need to see. As well as photocopies of your passports, if you have been divorced I will need to see copies of your decree absolutes. (all of them if you have been divorced more than once)

If your previous partner has died I will need copies of their death certificate.



Cast of Characters:

I will also need the following information:

Who is giving the bride away?

Names and ages of bridesmaids, pageboys etc.

Name of Best Man and your Ushers

It is traditional at the end of the ceremony for the Father of the Bride to process out of the church with the Groom's Mother and the Bride's Mother with the Groom's Father, but divorces and widowhood sometimes make this more complicated. Could you let me know who will be your "Mothers" and "Fathers" on the day.



About you

To make sure my short address in the middle of the service is not too formal I would love to know a little bit about you both, a bit about your lives before you met, how you met and anything special about your relationship and, of course, your hopes for the future.

We can chat this through when we meet up, but if you like you can write some of it down and then give, post or email it to me.



If there is anything else you want or just want to ask please feel free as I said, I want this day to be really special for you

God Bless
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