



# **Planning a Wedding in the Wye Reaches Group of Churches**



## **Congratulations!**

We are delighted that you are looking to have your wedding service in one of our churches!

With years of experience, we will do all we can to make sure your special day is as joyous and memorable as possible. That includes supporting you in the preparations, both organisationally as well as emotionally and spiritually.

Marrying in church is personal, meaningful, and spiritual just as you want it to be. Churches are special, historic and unique places to get married in – the prayers, promises and the whole service of celebration become part of your marriage, on the day itself and beyond.

## **Purpose of this guide**

All our churches are in an outstanding area of natural beauty and as such we receive many wedding requests from across the country. Therefore, we thought it might be helpful to have some general information for you – excepting that no two weddings are ever the same.

It is worth remembering that the wedding services and practises have to confirm to certain legal legislation that we need to ensure that you follow.

The Vicar is trained to help you every step of the way in the planning and preparation, and will be able to answer a lot of the information in this guide in much more detail.

## **Who may get married?**

The following persons may not be married:

- Persons under the age of 16.
- Persons who are in a pre-existing marriage or civil partnership which has not been legally dissolved.
- Couples related with certain relationships by blood or adoption.
- Persons who do not have mental capacity to understand the nature of the vows and declarations that they will make.

You may be married in one of our churches between 8.00am and 6.00pm – depending on the availability of the church and the Vicar.

### **How do we begin the process**

The first step is to contact the Vicar and talk with them about your plans and thinking.



If you are a “Relevant National” (British or Irish Citizen; or have been granted EU Settlement Status) you will need to complete our Wedding Application form and return it to the vicar. The application form can be found on our website (under ‘Life Events’ and ‘Weddings’).

If either of you are “non-Relevant Nationals” and wish to marry in one of our churches, you must give notice via civil preliminaries and obtain a superintendent registrar’s schedule before you meet with the Vicar. We will happily give you the contact details to do this.

### **Paperwork that the Vicar will require**

At the first meeting the Vicar will need to see copies of paperwork relating to your citizenship to prove that you are a “Relevant National”.

The Vicar will need to see (and take photocopies) of the following original documents:

- A valid UK Passport

If you do not have a valid passport the Vicar will need to see (and take a photocopy) of the following:

### **Couples born before 1<sup>st</sup> January 1983**

- A full UK birth certificate showing their parents details
- one of the following:
  - utility bill dated no more than three months before the date on which notice of marriage is given;
  - bank or building society statement or passbook dated no more than one month before the date on which notice of marriage is given;

- council tax bill dated no more than 12 months before the date on which notice of marriage is given;
- mortgage statement dated no more than 12 months before the date on which notice of marriage is given;
- current residential tenancy agreement;
- valid driving licence in the name of the person giving notice of marriage.

### Couples born after 1<sup>st</sup> January 1983

- A full UK birth certificate showing their parents details
- one of the following:
  - utility bill dated no more than three months before the date on which notice of marriage is given;
  - bank or building society statement or passbook dated no more than one month before the date on which notice of marriage is given;
  - council tax bill dated no more than 12 months before the date on which notice of marriage is given;
  - mortgage statement dated no more than 12 months before the date on which notice of marriage is given;
  - current residential tenancy agreement;
  - valid driving licence in the name of the person giving notice of marriage.
- Evidence of either of their parents' British citizenship or settlement status at the time of the birth (e.g., a passport describing the relevant parent as a British citizen, or indicating that s/he then had indefinite leave to enter or remain
- Their parents' marriage certificate (if British citizenship is claimed through their father).

### A "Natural Qualifying Connection"

To be married in one of our churches, legally their needs to be a 'natural qualifying connection' with one of our churches. This connection is established through one of the following ways:

- One or both of the couples were baptised in the church.



- One or both of the couples have lived in the parish for not less than six months.
- One or both of the couple have habitually attended public worship in that parish for not less than six months.
- One of the couple's parents has had their place of residence in that parish (while the couple have been alive) for a period of not less than six months; or
- A parent or grandparent has been married in that parish.

If none of these applied to you, you will both need to attend the church that you wish to get married in, once a month, for a minimum of six times to make a connection. Please do factor in enough time to be able to do this before your Wedding Day.

### **Legal Wedding Banns**



In addition, before you can be married in church UK Law requires wedding banns to be “called” by the Vicar of the parish that you currently live in and the parish that you intend to be married in.

**Banns of the parish Anglican church in which you live in** - you will need to contact your parish Vicar and arrange for the banns to be read three times. They will typically be done over a three-week period but may take longer if the church doesn't have weekly services.

The vicar will then give you a certificate. This needs to be passed to the Vicar of the church you are being married in before the day of your wedding. Regrettably, without this document your marriage can not take place.

**Banns at the Anglican church you will be married in** - the Vicar of the church that you are getting married in will read your banns over three Sundays.

We suggest that you will need to allow one month, after your qualifying connection has been made, before the day of your wedding service.

### **Meeting with the Vicar**

Normally the Vicar will look to meet with you three times before your wedding. This allows you:

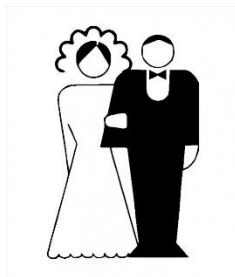
- To provide all the information that is legally required for your wedding service to take place.
- To talk about your wedding service; and put together the service that you would like to have.
- To get to know the Vicar and for them to get to know you.
- For you to be able to ask any questions that you may wish.

In addition, there will be a wedding rehearsal that takes place on the day before the wedding and normally takes around 45 minutes. The rehearsal is normally attended by:

- Bride and Groom.
- Best Man.
- Matron of Honour/Bridesmaids.
- Ushers.
- Witnesses.
- Parents (if they want too).

The date and time of the rehearsal will be agreed at the first meeting with the Vicar.

### **Your marriage certificate**



At your Wedding Service you will sign (with your witnesses) a marriage document/schedule which will be sent to the local County Hall within 21 days of the wedding by the Vicar.

This is then used to create your marriage certificate, which can then be collected by you (or a nominate person) after the wedding.

### **Witnesses**

Legally you will need to nominate a witness, who is present at the marriage, and signs the Marriage document/register to confirm that the wedding took place and testify in court as to what they have seen and heard during the service.

You need a minimum of two witnesses but can have up to six should you want them.

There is no minimum age, but the witnesses need to be able to understand what it is taking place.

### **Frequently Asked Questions**

We are often asked the following questions and thought it might be helpful to provide you with the following information:



#### **What music can we have?**

There are usually two or three hymns sung during a wedding service. This website gives you a selection of hymns that are most popular:

<https://www.yourchurchwedding.org/article/hymns-for-your-wedding/>

#### **How do we book an organist?**

The Vicar will be able to help you book an organist if you would like this for your wedding day. Or you may use an organist that you know (however, it would be sensible to book for them to practise using the church organ before the day).

Equally, we will advise you on the churches sound systems (where they exist) should you want to bring your own music, MP3s, PA system etc.

#### **What readings may we have?**

A Church of England wedding must have at least one reading from the Bible and you can also include other readings or poems. This website gives you a sense of most popular bible passages although you can speak to the Vicar about others that you might like to include:

<https://www.yourchurchwedding.org/article/bible-readings-for-your-wedding/>

#### **What is the role of the witness?**

A witness is present at the marriage and signs the Marriage document/register to confirm that the wedding took place and testify in court as to what they have seen and heard during the service.

You need a minimum of two witnesses but can have up to six should you want them.

There is no minimum age but the witnesses need to be able to understand what is taking place.

### **Does getting married automatically change our names?**

The simple answer is no. You will need to contact all the organisations you use to manually do this.

### **Signing off the Order of Service:**

It is important that before you have your orders of services printed that you ask the Vicar to sign this off.

### **Can we have confetti?**

We permit biodegradable confetti providing it is used outside and as the couple have left the porch of the church.

### **Can we have a photographer at the wedding?**

Yes, you can. But as this is a spiritual moment, we ask that photographers respect the ceremony and the work from the rear of the church.

### **Can we have the wedding filmed?**

Yes, this is possible.

### **Are there any rules on flowers?**

No, flowers and decorations can really personalise a wedding. It is important to liaise with the Vicar to ensure that the church is available/open when flowers are put in place.

We do ask that green sponge/Oasis is not used because it isn't biodegradable.



## **What is the normal shape of a Wedding Service**

Please remember that this is just a template but some couples find it helpful to have as they work with the Vicar to plan their service

### **Entrance of the bride**

*Piece of music*

### **Welcome & Opening Prayer**

The Revd XXX

### **Hymn title**

Full words of 3 or 4 verses

### **Preface & Declarations**

### **1<sup>st</sup> reading**

*Example: 1 Corinthians 13 read by ...*

### **Hymn title**

Full words of 3 or 4 verses

### **2<sup>nd</sup> reading**

*Example: Sonnet 18 by William Shakespeare read by ...*

### **Address**

### **The Marriage**

### **Hymn title**

Full words of 3 or 4 verses

### **Prayers**

These conclude with the Lord's Prayer:

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name;  
thy kingdom come; thy will be done; on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses,  
as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into  
temptation; but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom,  
the power and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

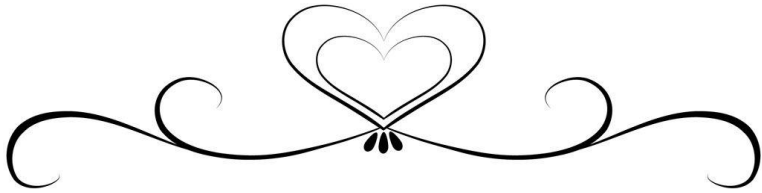
**Blessing**

**Signing of the Register**

*Piece of music*

**The couple depart**

*Piece of music*





[wyereaches.org](http://wyereaches.org)

