# Marriage

*at*

## *St Peter & St Paul, Old Brampton*
## *St Lawrence, Great Barlow*

# Your Wedding

## *Introduction*

Congratulations on your engagement! We are delighted that you are considering a church wedding and hope that this booklet will help you with your initial planning for the marriage ceremony. We are here to help you at every stage of the process so if you are not sure whether you can get married in one of our churches or just want some extra information before you decide, please don't hesitate to get in touch - a conversation is often the best way forward and all our contact details are on the back page.

The Church of England (CofE) weddings website also has lots of useful advice and information and we refer to it several times in this booklet:
https://www.churchofengland.org/life-events/your-church-wedding

## *Why get married in church?*

A wedding is one of life's great moments; a day of solemnity, feasting and delight all based upon the making of a public and life-long covenant between two people, declared and celebrated in the presence of God and before witnesses. The marriage ceremony gives you a new legal status and a new stability within which your relationship can flourish and grow.

By choosing to get married in church, you are acknowledging that God is involved, and accepting that God's resources and strength are available to help you. This doesn't mean that you will avoid all the usual ups and downs, but you know that you can look to God for guidance and sustaining love. You will also have the support and encouragement of the church family.

## *Where can I get married?*

- The law entitles you to be married in the parish church of the Church of England parish in which either of you lives. You can check which parish(es) you live in at https://achurchnearyou.com
- You can also be married in a particular church if you can demonstrate some connection with it – for example, if you used to live in the parish; if you used to attend the church; if you were baptised or confirmed there; or if your parents or grandparents were married in the parish.
- You can also be married in a CofE church if you attend worship there regularly for at least six months.
- If one of you is not a UK citizen then additional criteria may apply. Please contact us to find out more.

## *What are the legal requirements?*

Before any wedding can take place in a civil or religious venue, legal preliminaries have to be completed. For most church weddings these consist of the reading of the banns which are a public announcement of your intention to marry.

- Both of you must be aged eighteen or over
- Banns need to be read in the parish church where each of you lives, as well as at the church in which you are to be married (if different).
- After the third reading the priest or warden will give you a certificate to bring to us. We cannot conduct the wedding without seeing this/these.
- It is your responsibility to ensure that the banns are read at the other churches but we will ensure they are read at the church in which you are to marry.
- The banns will be read out in church on three Sundays during the three months before the wedding.

## *How much will it cost?*

The cost of the marriage ceremony in church includes:

- Legal fees set by the state, which cover the publication of the banns and the marriage service
- Charges set by the church covering payment to the verger and any use of the church equipment
- Extra charges if you decide to have the organist, choir, bellringers or use our pew end decorations
- If you are able to give an additional voluntary donation towards the upkeep of the church, it is always welcome. Gift aid envelopes and forms are available, thank you.
- We ask that full payment is made via BACS or cash at least two weeks before the date of the wedding.

The wedding co-ordinator can supply details of current fees and charges – just get in touch.

## *Planning the Wedding Ceremony*

There are plenty of opportunities to involve your family and friends in the service itself, whether reading something or playing music. There is also a time during the service when we pray for you and for your future: whilst we have a template of suggested words for this section you might like to write your own, and/ or ask someone else to write, or to read them.

## *Orders of Service*

Many couples like to produce (or have printed) their own orders of service. These generally includes the words of everything the congregation needs to know i.e. the words of hymns and congregational responses, and it makes a good keepsake afterwards. But please ensure that your order of service is checked by the priest to ensure that it is accurate.

The church has a copyright permission licence which covers the reproduction of most wedding hymns but not all, so please discuss this with the organist.
If you prefer, you can use the church hymn books.

## *What about readings?*

You can have several readings, but we recommend no more than three for the sake of balance. At least one of the readings has to be from the Bible - for suitable examples please visit the CofE website (see page 1) or ask us.
The additional readings could include an extract from a book, a favourite poem, or something that has been written especially for the day.

## *What music should we choose?*

The music choices in a service are entirely up to you, but we'd suggest that you liaise closely with the organist, if you are having one, or the priest as they know what works best in the church setting.

You will need to choose;

- music to be played before the service
- music as the bride walks in
- music during the signing of the marriage document
- music as you depart

It is also usual (but not compulsory) to have two or three hymns during the service and we suggest that you choose ones that your guests will know – again, the CofE website has lots of examples which you can listen to.
It is also possible to play recorded music - please discuss this with us well in advance.

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## *Rings*

One or two?  It's up to you. There are appropriate vows for whatever you decide.

## *Signing of the Marriage Document*

This takes place in the church near the end of the service.  After the signing, the photographer will normally want you to pose for photographs.

## *Photographers and video*

The marriage ceremony is the most important aspect of your special day for which you have spent months or even years preparing. Therefore, in order that everyone gives their full attention to the couple and to the ceremony, we will always ask the wedding guests to turn off their mobile devices before a service begins.

If you have booked a professional photographer there is an expectation that they should remain unobtrusive throughout the ceremony. Flash photography is not permitted except at the signing of the marriage document.

## *Length of the service*

The service in church lasts approximately 45 minutes. Please ignore the old saying that 'a bride should always be late' as it can cause stress and may be interpreted as being rude to your guests- and do remember that there is no toilet in the church! Furthermore, if you are late the service may have to be shortened or even postponed as the priest, bellringers, organist and choir are booked to be there for certain amount of time and may have other services or commitments later in the day in other churches.

## *Confetti*

Biodegradable only please! Your guests are welcome to throw confetti down by the lychgates at either Old Brampton or Barlow, where it makes for a lovely photo.

## *When should we have a rehearsal?*

Usually a rehearsal is held in the church about a week before the ceremony and you need to arrange a convenient date and time direct with the priest who is conducting the service. As well as the priest and the couple, the best man, bridesmaids and whoever is accompanying the bride down the aisle need to be present; all parents, ushers and anyone else who is taking part in the service (e.g. doing a reading) are welcome to attend too. Please bring with you any banns certificates from other churches if you have not already passed them on.

We also recommend that you bring the orders of service with you to the rehearsal after which they will be kept safe for you in church until the big day.

***How you can help us:*** Please keep in touch with us and notify us of any changes in your circumstances so that we can keep our records and contact details up to date. Thank you.

## *What happens next?*

If you would like to explore the possibility of getting married in one of our lovely churches please contact Revd Sarah or Barbara (*details below*) for an initial conversation. Barbara will then help you with all the paperwork, can advise you on the banns application process and will take the booking.

Later, as part of the preparation for your wedding, you will be invited to a special event together with other wedding couples where we talk through the practicalities and there are opportunities to meet with organists and bellringers.

Revd Sarah, or whichever priest is conducting the wedding, will then be in touch for a further conversation and to book the rehearsal with you.

## Our Contact Details

### The Revd Sarah Colver

*Vicar of Old Brampton and Great Barlow*
*and Priest in Charge of Loundsley Green*

Tel: 0797 568 9403 or 01246 203875

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### Barbara Stringer

*Weddings Co-ordinator*

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