



Initial information about getting married in one of our churches

Congratulations! And thank you for coming to us to ask about a wedding. Marriage is one of the biggest decisions anybody will make in life. It can be the beginning of a wonderful life with the person you love. But the wedding day itself can seem daunting, and making a go of married life is an even greater challenge. We want to do all we can to make your wedding day special, and to help you prepare for a lifetime together.

The Lordsbridge Team of Churches is a group of village churches that work together and share ministers. The Team consists of the churches in Barton, Caldecote with Childerley, Comberton, Coton, Dry Drayton, Great and Little Eversden, Hardwick, Harlton, Haslingfield and Toft. We would love to help you make your day special with a service in one of our lovely ancient buildings.

We hope that this information will answer some of your initial questions. But if you have any questions, please don't hesitate to ask one of the vicars – our details are at the end of these pages – or our weddings administrator on rebeccaherrick@lordsbridge.org.

Who can get married?

Marriage in the Church of England must be between a man and a woman over the age of eighteen years (or over the age of sixteen if you have the written consent of your parents). You must not be married to anybody else, and may not be more closely related than first cousins. You do not need to be baptised or confirmed to be married in the Church of England.

What if one of us is divorced?

We all recognise that a marriage does not always work out as planned. But you, and we, appreciate that marriage, with vows made to each other before God, is a serious step in anyone's life. A Church of England wedding is sometimes available to people who are divorced (and whose previous partner is still alive), and we'd like to make it possible if we can. So if one of you has been previously married we will need to talk with you in some detail to see what might be possible. Please do let us know if you'd like to talk about this.

What if one of us is not a British citizen?

From 1 July 2021, only British or Irish Nationals or any other national with Settled or Pre-Settled status can be married with a reading of the banns (a public declaration of your intention to marry) in all the relevant churches. If you fall outside these categories then you will need to give notice of your intention to marry at a register office and be issued with a Marriage Schedule. We can help guide you through this.

Proof of nationality or immigration status

In line with the Immigration Act 2014 and other more recent legislation after leaving the EU we will need to see "specified evidence" (e.g. a passport) that you are UK or Irish nationals. If you have Settled or Pre-Settled status there you will need to provide evidence via <https://www.gov.uk/view-prove-immigration-status>.

Which church can I get married in?

If you meet the conditions above, you have a right to be married in a church where you have a 'qualifying connection'. This could be your parish church, check on www.achurchnearyou.org to find your parish church if you are not sure. You may also be married in any church where you have been worshipping regularly on Sundays for six months or more and are on the Electoral Roll (i.e. the membership list). And you can normally be married in a church where:

- You used to live in the parish
- Your parents do or did live in the parish during your lifetime
- Your parents or grandparents were married in the church
- You used to attend the church
- You or your parents were baptised in the church.

Note that in the above cases you will also need to have the banns called in the parish church of the parish where each of you lives and we will need the 'banns certificate'.

If none of the above reasons for marrying at a church in the Lordsbridge Team area apply, but you have special reasons for being married here, you may still be able to obtain an Archbishop's Special License, for a legal fee, under certain circumstances.

Calling the banns

Most church weddings take place 'by banns', that is, notification of your intention to get married is read out in a church service in the Church of England parish or parishes in which you live and the parish in which your wedding will take place. In due course, you will need to contact the parishes other than ours to ask for them to read your banns. This takes place within 3 months of your wedding date, so we suggest you contact them 4 months or so in advance of your wedding. If you are not sure which parish you are living in and how to contact the church there you can look up your postcode on www.achurchnearyou.org.

Planning the service

Once the date is booked, you will need to think through a number of details in planning the service. Some things to be considered include:

- Do you wish to use a traditional or a modern service?
(Most couples opt for the modern service)
- Will the bride (or the bride and groom) be 'given away' by parents or family members?
- Which music would you like? This may include hymns, songs, organ and recorded music.
- Would you like to have the bells rung, if they are available?
- Which Bible readings and prayers?
- Will both of you receive a ring, or only the bride?
- Do you want to produce your own printed order of service?

There are many websites with examples of wedding music and Bible and other readings. A good place to start is www.yourchurchwedding.org.

We want the day to be special, and will try to allow you to choose your own way of doing things, provided it is in keeping with a Christian ceremony and with legal requirements. However, if you are not sure we will guide and help with the planning at every stage. We recommend that you discuss your plans with your minister at an early stage so that we can offer you the wealth of our experience in creating wedding services and advise on what is possible in a particular church building.

The minister for your wedding

The vicars across our group of churches work as a team. There is a lead minister or vicar for each church – their contact details are at the end of this note – but we share out weddings between us across the churches and we call on the services of a range of assistant ordained ministers too. This helps us cover for each other during the summer holidays and in case of very busy summer Saturdays! We usually suggest a minister for your wedding in the early spring and, in any case, well before your service so you have a chance to get to know them. If you would like to request a particular minister then do please discuss it with us and we will aim to make that possible.

Flowers, photographs and video

We suggest you look at the church building before you make your plans for flowers. What you can do will differ from church to church depending on whether there are pew ends, flat windowsills or space for pedestals. Please note that no flash photography is allowed during the ceremony and the minister will want to chat with the photographer (and you if you'd like to) before the service to discuss what is possible with camera sightings and angles in that particular building. If you plan to have a video made, please allow only one video camera, and note that you will need to get in touch with us to discuss licenses and copyright needs.

Ancient church buildings

All our buildings are 100s of years old and are listed. This makes them particularly beautiful and characterful venues for weddings. But please be aware in your planning that in colder weather they are difficult to heat, some more so than others, and that occasionally they need repairs and we cannot always know far in advance when this will be. If this happens, we will let you know and will endeavour to ensure that your service is not disrupted.

How much will it cost?

Fees for weddings mainly go towards the costs of the building and of paying towards the overall cost of the minister who also acts as the registrar for your marriage. There may be some extra costs to allow payment of an organist, a verger, extra heating in winter and possibly bell ringers. The statutory fees are set by the Church of England and are fixed nationally and are the same for every Church of England church. The other fees below are set by the individual Parochial Church Councils. Below are the fees for 2024. Both the statutory fees and the PCC fees are reviewed each year and may go up slightly in 2025. An invoice will be sent to you for payment before your wedding.

Statutory fee for marriage service in church	£531
Statutory fee for publication of banns	£36
Marriage document fee	£7.00
Additional utilities including heating (Oct-Apr)	Approx. £50 (depending on church)
Verger	£50
Organist's fee (if we provide the organist)	£100
Bells (optional)	£10- £100 (depending on church)

NB: There will also be a charge payable to another parish if your banns are called there.

The Rehearsal

It is essential that you come to the church for a rehearsal a day or two before the wedding itself. Those who should be there are the bride and groom, the best man and chief bridesmaid, family member(s) who are 'giving away' the bride (and groom), and if possible, the photographer and anyone planning to film a video.

Preparing for married life

The wedding day is only a beginning. The whole of married life lies ahead, and we want to help prepare you for that. We will invite you to marriage preparation sessions in early spring, shared with other couples getting married in that year. Part of this day gives you time to think together, just the two of you, about the vows you will be making and some of their implications, and part of the day will be to give you ideas and to answer your questions about planning the service. ***We strongly encourage you to join in with these important sessions.*** Then later, your minister will want to meet with you as you meet to plan the wedding ceremony together.

How do I apply?

You will need to fill in a registration form, so that we have a record of the full details which will need to be entered on the marriage document. We will also check dates with the church in which you hope to be married. If you need to talk to us about marriage after divorce then we will do this as early as possible and before we confirm the wedding date. Once all that is done then we can book your wedding in.

Please feel free to contact the minister at any stage if you have questions about any element of your wedding. More details about weddings in the Church of England can also be found at: www.yourchurchwedding.org

And one important word of encouragement

A Christian wedding is not just about being in a church or having a particular ceremony. Most importantly, you are not heading off into married life alone. We believe that *God, the source of life and love, wants to be with you!* And we will be praying for you as the wedding day approaches, during the ceremony itself, and for your life together in the years ahead.

Rev'd Claire Robertson,

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