



Mid-Wyedean Churches

The Church of England serving Coleford, Broadwell, Staunton
Clearwell, Newland & Redbrook and surrounding areas.

YOUR WEDDING



FIRST CONTACT

Hello! If you have decided that you would like to investigate the possibility of having your Wedding Service in one of our Churches or if you are simply looking at different possibilities – welcome! We would love to talk to you about the options open to you.

On the next page you will find details about getting married in Church, but the first thing to say is that we at the Mid-Wyedean Churches will be delighted to help you through the process. We believe that by choosing to get married in God's house, openly acknowledging His presence and asking for His blessing, your married life together will start in the best possible way.

We value greatly both the connections we have with local couples looking to marry in their local Church and also the new friends we make in welcoming visitors who choose to marry here because of their choice of Reception venue, for example, or maybe because of family history. Whatever your circumstances please contact the Parish Office at office.midwyedean@gmail.com or 01594368849. This is attended between 9am and 4pm Monday to Thursday. Outside this please contact one of the Parish clergy. We are here to help.

WHO IS ALLOWED TO MARRY IN OUR CHURCHES?

For most people this is quite a simple question to answer but there are some legal complications in some cases and there may be an occasional issue from the Church's point-of-view.

If you are both 16 or 17 with your parents' permission to marry or if you are 18 or over and both wish to marry then we can start looking at the details. If you currently live in the Parish (that's anywhere in the Parish of the Mid-Wyedean Churches, not necessarily close to the particular Church - *check our website www.mid-wyedeanchurches.co.uk for details of the Parish area*) - you are entitled to marry in Church (but please see the paragraph below about the remarriage of divorcees). You are also entitled to marry here if you yourself or your immediate family have a connection with the Parish (for example, if you were Baptised in one of our Churches or if your family members have been buried here). *Please see www.yourchurchwedding.org for full details.*

If you have no real personal or family connection with the Parish then you need to establish what is called a "Qualifying Connection". This is normally done by attending worship regularly within the Parish for a period of six months before your Banns are called, usually in the month before the date of the Wedding. We understand "regularly" to mean at least once a month. Many couples choose to do this so that they can be married by Banns (the simple way, explained later). If you live away from the Parish we will normally arrange to meet after Church on Sunday morning so that you don't need to make separate journeys.

For couples where one or both people are not UK nationals and do not come from an EU country you will need to arrange for a Superintendent Registrar's Certificate but the qualification rules remain the same. You may also need to provide more detailed evidence of identity and nationality.

Finally, if one or both of you are divorced our policy is that we are prepared to remarry you in Church under most circumstances but this will require a conversation with one of the Clergy and a sight of the Divorce Absolute documents.



BANNS AND LICENCES

BANNS

For three weeks in the three months before your Wedding date, during the main service of the Church where you intend to marry and also the Parish Church of your home address, your intention to marry will be read out in Church. Your home Church will give you a certificate to confirm this (called the Banns Certificate – it will cost you £43 in 2018) and you must bring this to the person who is officiating at your Wedding. This gives you the legal right to be married.



COMMON LICENCE

This is issued by the Diocesan Registrar to couples who are unable to marry by Banns. It involves visiting the Registrar (usually in Bristol, but Gloucester is also a possibility) and swearing an affidavit together. It will cost you around £180 and you will still need a Qualifying Connection.

ARCHBISHOP'S LICENCE

Forget it! Rarer than hen's teeth, you may read about this but it is granted in very rare circumstances, normally involving a life or death situation.

NON-EU NATIONALS

Since March 2nd 2015 if you are not an EEA national you cannot marry by Banns or by Common Licence. You will need to obtain a Superintendent Registrar's Certificate. This is not a Church issue but in order to help the following web address may be of assistance <https://www.gov.uk/marriage-visa/overview>. You will still then be able to marry in Church with us.

HELPFUL DETAILS

We recommend that you take some time to look together at the following website:- www.yourchurchwedding.org

Here you will find an outline of a “typical” Wedding Service, although it is important to say that there is really no such thing! Every Wedding is unique and we try hard to make sure that the Bride and Groom feel this to be so.



There are many choices to make which help to make the service unique, such as what music to include in the service, how many and which hymns to have (it isn't compulsory to have any!), which readings to include (the only rule is that there must be at least one reading from the Bible) and, in many cases, what prayers you would like to include. Looking at these on the website will help you when we chat about them at our meetings. Some elements are fixed, though, such as the wording of the vows.

We believe that it is very important to build a close relationship with each couple, even though in some cases we are unlikely to meet frequently after the Wedding. It is normal for us to have three “formal” meetings, in addition to those occasions when we bump into each other as you attend services. At the first meeting we fill in the necessary legal details and discuss the Wedding (this may happen at the Parish Office). The second meeting is for us to firm up the arrangements for the service. The third meeting is very much dealing with the words you will exchange. There will then be a rehearsal in Church, probably the evening before the Wedding, just to put your minds at rest regarding what is going to happen and how it will all work. Easy! Nothing to remember or learn – which is important, because we wish you to relax into a meaningful Wedding ceremony.

There are a few details about who “we” are on the next page.

WHO WILL OFFICIATE – ie, MARRY YOU?



We will let you know who is available as early in the process as we can, but it is obvious that if you make your original booking a long time before the event we may not be able to let you know then. Even Vicars have holidays!

The Vicar is the Reverend Sarah Bick. If you live locally and have not expressed a wish to be married by another Priest you may well find that it is Sarah who will take your service and prepare with you for the big day. Sarah became our Vicar in 2013. One big advantage you will have if it is Sarah is that she has a beautiful singing voice!

Our Associate Minister is the Reverend Alan Wearmouth. Alan has responsibility for our Wedding Ministry in the Mid-Wyedean Parish. He taught locally for 34 years so knows a lot of people in the area; this may be a good thing but if anyone feels that it would be strange to be married by one of their ex-teachers you only have to say and we will make alternative arrangements. Alan is retiring at the beginning of May 2019.

Another colleague whom we ask to take some Weddings for us is the Reverend Barry Coker, a retired Parish Priest, and we are very grateful for his help. We are also able to call upon two or three other retired Priests in the area to help us out if you would like your Wedding on a date when Sarah and Alan can't make it; we will always do our best to accommodate your choice of date.

Of course, it is a good idea to register your intention and the date as soon as you are clear about your wishes.

Please remember – if you want to discuss anything just contact us as detailed at the beginning of this pack.

HOW MUCH WILL IT COST?

These days the cost does not tend to rise much year on year. The bulk of the cost is set by law and is the same in any Church of England Church.

Churches are then able to add extra charges, all of which are optional (although the cost of the Verger is only optional if you intend having a very small Wedding, due to Health and Safety considerations). For 2018 the costs are as follows:

£470 - Legally set fees

£ 78 - Organist & use/maintenance of organ*

£ 31 - Verger & candle fund*

£ 38 - Heating*

£ 70 - Bells at St.Peter, Clearwell*

£100 - Bells at All Saints, Newland and All Saints, Staunton*

The fees for the Organist, Verger and Bells are transferred by us direct to the people concerned; the Church gains nothing from them.

The heating charge represents the cost of heating the Church for all Weddings during the year divided by the number of Weddings we expect. This means that we don't charge huge amounts for Winter Weddings and nothing for Summer Weddings. All fees marked * are optional.

The cost for a "normal" Wedding at Clearwell, for example, with bells is £692.

It is important to note that the fee for a Registrar's attendance at an external Wedding venue on Monday to Thursday is £465, Friday is £510, Saturday is £535 and on a Sunday is £590. This entitles you to the Registrar's attendance and a certificate – nothing more.



SOME HELPFUL GROUND RULES/FAQs

We always aim to say yes to requests from our Wedding couples and we hope that you will find us very easy and helpful to deal with. Occasionally a situation occurs which causes us concern so in order to try to avoid any disappointment let's put a few of them here in the form of FAQs.

Are we allowed confetti?

You certainly are. All confetti must be bio-degradable – most is these days – so please ask guests to avoid using the metal glittery bells and hearts, etc, which are really designed as table decorations. We suggest that at Clearwell you throw the confetti in the avenue of yew trees between the Church and the Castle mainly because it makes for wonderful pictures but also because wet confetti causes a slip hazard on the rather steep steps at the main entrance.

Does the Church provide flowers?

I'm afraid not except for very basic "ordinary" arrangements. We don't have a Wedding arrangement facility. You are welcome to bring in your own florist or "do it yourself". You are also welcome to use our pedestals but please pay very careful attention to Health and Safety (for example, lifting, stretching, causing slip hazards by dropping water, etc.) when arranging displays. Handrails need to be left clear for their intended use, please.

We (and our insurers) recommend that nothing is placed above head height. Please note that we do not provide steps or ladders and do not recommend their use in any of our Churches. If you do arrange for displays please understand that it is also your responsibility to remove them and to dispose of them after the Wedding unless you have made arrangements to leave them in Church to be enjoyed. Many couples find that the interior of St Peter's, Clearwell does not need to be enhanced by the addition of lots of flowers.

May we bring our own musicians?

You are very welcome to do so. If you bring your own organist our arrangement (common to most Churches) is that our Church organist will still be due their fee. You will need to agree the positioning and participation of your musicians with the person taking your service.

The Bride is always a few minutes late, right?

Yes but it's best if you aim to arrive on the dot because this way the service runs smoothly to time. You will always enter the Church after the nominal start time and in any case we never bundle you in – it's always a case of waiting for you to be ready. If you're on time the bellringers, if you have them, can time their ringing and it's not fair to them or to the other people involved to keep them for a long time after the service ought to have finished.

We hope that these few notes might be of help to you and look forward to making your big day truly special. We aim to be a partner in your Wedding, not a business.