

Getting Married at St George's Church Wrotham



Congratulations on your engagement, and on your decision to get married.

We are delighted that you would like your wedding to take place at St George's Church, Wrotham. We do hope that all your wedding preparations will go well, and that you will be able to build a strong marriage and to know God's richest blessing on your relationship.

We appreciate that it is a big day for you as a couple and that the occasion involves a great deal of preparation. Our aim is to serve you as best as we can, and to help you prepare smoothly for the day.

There are also several aspects of planning your wedding in St George's Church, and we have prepared some notes to help you. If you have any questions at any time, please do not hesitate to ask our administrator in the first instance

Administrator - Jane

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If you haven't come across it already, there is an extremely good resource online that we encourage you to use to help in your preparations. You will find this at www.yourchurchwedding.org and click on "Planning Your Ceremony".

You will find that there are several excellent resources on the website to help you think about and plan your wedding. As well as all the information on the Your Church Wedding website, there are also several aspects of the service which are specific to St George's.

QUALIFYING TO BE MARRIED AT ST GEORGE'S

Anyone who is resident within the parish boundaries has a right to be married at St George's, so long as there is no legal impediment. Being baptised is not a requirement.

It is also possible to get married at St George's if you can show a qualifying connection to the church.

A qualifying connection is if at least one of the following criteria is true for one of you:

- One of you lives in the parish
- One of you is on the Church Electoral Roll
- One of you has lived in the parish for at least 6 months
- One of you has habitually attended church services in the parish for at least 6 months
- One of you was baptised (christened) in the parish
- One of you was prepared for Confirmation in the parish
- One of your parents (after you were born) has lived in the parish for at least 6 months
- One of your parents (after you were born) has habitually attended church services for at least 6 months
- One of your parents or grandparents was married in the parish
- You have been granted a special licence to be married in St George's

MARRIAGE AFTER A DIVORCE

At St George's we understand that some marriages fail, and we try to help people rebuild their lives in new relationships. If you have been divorced and would like to discuss the possibility of being married for a second time in church, please do not hesitate to speak to the Rector.

MEETING UP

There are a number of meetings between you as a couple and the Rector before the day of the wedding.

- (i) The initial meeting to book the wedding and talk with the Rector about all that is involved.
Please bring your passport (or other proof of identity) to this meeting as this is now a legal requirement to prove your identity, together with proof of your current address.
- (ii) A meeting, about 4 months before the wedding, at which we go through the legal requirements of the marriage (including arranging for the Banns to be read). We also go through the marriage service and discuss the order of service, including the hymns and readings etc.
- (iii) A rehearsal for the wedding which usually takes place in the church during the week before the wedding. It is usually essential for the couple, the best man, and the person with whom the bride is coming in, to be present. It is helpful for at least one bridesmaid and one of the ushers to come to the rehearsal as well. Close family, such as parents, usually like to be there, and they are welcome. Do remember that the rehearsal is not the wedding, so it is best to keep numbers to a minimum.

LEGAL MATTERS

Most weddings take place after the Reading of Banns. The reading of your Banns take place at the beginning of our main morning service on 3 Sundays within 3 months of the wedding. They do not have to be consecutive Sundays, but we usually do read them on 3 consecutive Sundays of the month for simplicity. Although you do not have to be present, we always say a prayer for couples getting married and being there helps to make your wedding in church more personal for you.

If either or both of you do not live in the parish of Wrotham, your Banns will also have to be read at the parish church in the parish(es) where you live. You will need to go and see the minister of that church to arrange this. Once they've been read, that church will issue you with a certificate which the Rector must receive before your wedding can take place.

Nothing needs to be done about this until about 4 months before the wedding as the Banns of Marriage are only valid for 3 months. We cover this at our meeting 4 months before the wedding.

ARE YOU A FOREIGN NATIONAL?

If either of you is not a national of the UK or Ireland and doesn't hold Settled or Pre-Settled Status under the EU Settlement Scheme, having a Church of England wedding will involve some different paperwork.

The law regarding marriages of nationals from outside the UK and Ireland changed in 2021. Nationals from other countries who don't have Settled or Pre-settled Status under the EU Settlement Scheme must have a Superintendent Registrar's Marriage Schedule (SRMS) to go ahead. The only exception to this is if a Special Licence has already been granted.

To apply for an SRMS, the bride and groom must have been resident for seven clear days within a registration district in England or Wales before giving Notice of their marriage at the Register Office.

After receiving an application for an SRMS, the Registrar enters the details in a book which is open to public inspection and also displays a notice for 28 days at the Register Office. If no legal reasons to delay or prevent the marriage going ahead are shown within that time, a Superintendent Registrar's Marriage Schedule can be issued.

For couples where one or both of the parties has limited immigration status or are not here legally, the civil registrars will be required to refer their marriage notice to the Home Office for potential investigation. To allow time for the investigation, the Home Office may extend the notice period to 70 days. Those with indefinite leave to remain, or a marriage visitor or fiancé(e) visa will be exempt from this referral and investigation process.

If one or both of you is a foreign national, it is vital that you talk about this with the Rector at the earliest opportunity.

FEES

The fees for Marriage are set down in law and are statutory for all Church of England churches.

However, locally we charge a fee for the vergers, who are essential to ensure the smooth running of the service, and, if your wedding takes place from October to April, there will be a fee for heating. There are also fees for bookable extras e.g. Use of the Organ including the services of our resident Organist, Bellringers, Choir, recording fee and flowers. Once the wedding date has been booked, we ask for a non-refundable deposit which will be deducted from the final balance due one month before the wedding. Fees are reviewed annually - see the separate sheet for the current year's fees.

THE CHURCH

The address of the church is High Street, Wrotham, Kent TN15 7AH. There is no car park for the church, and your guests will have to park carefully in the roads surrounding the church.

There is level access to the church via a tarmac/partly cobbled path from the High Street next to Church House. There is an accessible toilet at the back of the church suitable for wheelchair users.

FLOWERS

Please contact Pauline (01732 886156) to discuss the flowers for your wedding. She is extremely experienced and professional, and you will find her very helpful both in supplying the flowers and in providing excellent arrangements suitable for the occasion.

BELLS

If you book the bells, the bellringers will ring after the service as you leave the church.

THE CHOIR

We are usually able to provide a choir for weddings.

PHOTOGRAPHS

We are happy for your photographer to take photos of the wedding service. However, during the service photographers must not wander around, and may only set up where the minister agrees. No flash may be used at any time.

VIDEO

We do allow a video to be made of the wedding service for private use. A recording fee will apply, usually 50% of the fee for use of the organ/organist.

Please be aware of copyright law – it is up to the couple to have the correct permissions in place. Please see the information provided on the Church of England website.

<https://www.churchofengland.org/life-events/your-church-wedding/planning-your-ceremony/filming-wedding#:~:text=Your%20wedding%20may%20also%20be,public%20event%20like%20a%20wedding>

As with photographers, the video operator must not move around during the service and must only be based where the minister agrees.

ORDER OF SERVICE

Couples usually provide a service sheet on which are printed the order of service and the hymns. We have a separate information sheet about what wording to include, but an outline order of service is as follows:

The Entrance of the Bride (Processional Music)

The Welcome

Hymn

The Preface and Declarations

When the minister asks the congregation: Will you, the families and friends of N and N, support and uphold them in their marriage now and in the years to come?

Please reply: We will.

The Collect

The Marriage
The Blessing of the Marriage
Reading(s)
Address
(Hymn)
Prayers
The Lord's Prayer
Hymn
The Dismissal and Blessing
The Signing of the Marriage Document
The Exit of the Bride and Groom (Recessional Music)

A draft order of service is usually produced by the Rector after discussion with you about the content of the service. We recommend that once your order of service has been prepared ready for printing, you send it to the Rector for him to check it through before printing.

MUSIC FOR YOUR WEDDING

There are usually 3 hymns to be sung during the wedding service, which are all played by the organist, who is also able to play music for the entrance of the bride and for the exit of the couple at the end of the service. The organist can also play during the signing of the registers, as well as advise you on all the music in the service. Please contact our organist, Neil on concert@wrothamchurch.org to discuss your requirements.

We encourage traditional live church organ music to be used. If you require a piece of recorded music, there is a good sound system and it is possible to connect an iPad, iPhone, or smart phone. If you do want to play recorded music, you will need to provide someone competent to oversee playing your music. Please bring the recorded music to the rehearsal.

SIGNING OF THE MARRIAGE DOCUMENT

At the end of the service, you will be required to sign the Marriage Document that has been prepared for the marriage service. The bride signs in her maiden name. You will need to choose two witnesses who will also need to sign the registers. We suggest one should be from the groom's side and one from the bride's side. The witnesses are usually either two parents or the best man and chief bridesmaid, but you can choose anyone. There is no age restriction (as long as they understand what they are doing!).

The church no longer issues a marriage certificate, it must be obtained from the local register office, in the days after the marriage has taken place.

USHERS

Ushers act as hosts. They should arrive at least thirty minutes before the wedding, greet guests, hand out the order of service, and make sure people sit in the right places. Ushers should remind guests to turn off mobile phones and other electrical devices and be seated themselves before the bride's arrival. They should make sure nothing is left behind after the service.

CONFETTI

Confetti is permitted, but only outside the church porch. Confetti must be made of natural rose petals only.

ONLINE RESOURCES

As mentioned earlier, the Church of England has a very helpful online resource which we encourage you to use to help plan the service. It

contains ideas and suggestions about hymns, readings, and many other aspects of the service.

You will find the website at www.yourchurchwedding.org and click on “Planning Your Ceremony”.

FOR YOUR NOTES