

St Mary's Parish Church West Moors

Registered Charity No. 1162532



Vicar
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Getting



Married!

Congratulations on your engagement, I am sure you are very excited about getting married and making a public declaration of your love for each other. I hope the information below will be helpful as you plan your wedding day. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to get in contact with me.

Revd Andy Muckle
Vicar

The Legal Bits!

There are certain things that must happen in a church wedding to ensure the marriage complies with both UK civil and church law. These are the main legal points to consider before you begin planning your wedding:

You must be old enough, if you are under 18 years old you will need your parents' consent to marry and by law you cannot be married in the UK until you are 16. Although same sex-marriage legislation is now in force, it remains the case that it is not legally possible for same-sex couples to marry in the Church of England. However, we as your parish church are there for you and you are welcome to come and pray with us or ask us to pray for you, please contact Revd Andy. A Church of England wedding must take place between 8am and 6pm. You have an automatic right to be married in the Parish Church where you live. However, it is also possible to get married in another church if you have a certain kind of qualifying connection with it.

Qualifying Connections

You can marry in a Church of England church if you can show that one of you:

has at any time lived in the parish for a period of at least 6 months, or
was baptised (christened) in the parish concerned, or
is confirmed and your confirmation was entered in the register of confirmations for a church or chapel in the parish (this will usually be the case if you were prepared for confirmation in the parish), or
has at any time regularly gone to normal church services in the parish church for a period of at least 6 months

or

That one of your parents, at any time after you were born:
has lived in the parish for a period of at least 6 months, or
has regularly gone to normal church services in the parish church for a period of at least 6 months

or

That one of your parents or grandparents:
was married in the parish

If none of these apply, then you can qualify by simply attending your chosen church's usual services at least once a month for six consecutive months. If you decide to do this, leave enough time after your attendance for the Banns to be read before your wedding too – about another two months should be enough.

Banns of marriage

Most Church of England marriages will require Banns to be published before the wedding can take place. You won't need to arrange Banns until about four months before your wedding date. Banns are an announcement in church of your intention to marry and a chance for anyone to put forward a reason why the marriage may not lawfully take place. They are an ancient legal tradition and have been read out every week in churches across the land for millions of couples, over many centuries. Banns are the church equivalent of giving notice to the Registrar. Banns are only applicable if you are British, Irish or have Settled or Pre-settled status under the EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS). After your forthcoming marriage is announced, we will say a prayer in church for you. This can be quite special and moving to hear this, so do come along if you can and invite your family and friends.

Banns need to be read in the parish where each of you lives as well as the church in which you are to be married, if that is somewhere else. They are read for three Sundays during the three months before the wedding. This is usually done over three consecutive Sundays but does not have to be. Please fill in a Banns Application form so we can read your Banns (available from the vicar).

If there is not enough notice given for the banns to be read before the marriage is due to take place, or if one or both of you do not live in England (or Wales), the Common Licence procedure needs to be used rather than banns.

If one or both of you is a foreign national, you will be required to go to a registrar office to give notice of your intention to marry and be issued with a Marriage Schedule. If you are unsure, please speak to the vicar.

Guidelines for divorcees

There are special guidelines on marriage in the church if you are divorced. We know for many this is a sensitive subject so please get in contact to arrange a meeting with Revd Andy.

Documents you'll need

All couples will need to show the vicar their passport as proof of nationality. If you don't have a passport, there are other documents which would be acceptable, so ask Revd Andy about this. If either or both of you are divorced, you will need to bring your decree absolute for the vicar to see. You may also be asked to provide evidence of your connection to the church. The vicar will guide you on acceptable documents for your particular qualifying connection.

Getting married at St. Mary's

There is lots to think about as you prepare for your wedding day, so I hope you find the following notes about getting married in St Mary's helpful. There is also some good information available on the Church of England's website dedicated to weddings www.yourchurchwedding.org

Marriage Preparation

The clergy offer marriage preparation, which is normally one or two visits in your own home or at the vicarage. It is a chance for us to plan your wedding service and is fun and thoughtful. It is nothing embarrassing or to worry about we just want to get to know you.

The Marriage Service

Most weddings take place using the modern language version of the Marriage Service. If you would prefer the traditional language version, please talk to the vicar.

Wedding rehearsal

This is usually done on the Thursday evening before a Saturday wedding at 6pm and takes about an hour. The bride and groom are definitely essential; everyone else is a bonus and adds to the fun! It is a good chance to get the giggles over with!

Flowers

Flowers are by arrangement with our church florist (Elsie Harvey 01202 875077). We can provide some excellent floral arrangements for the church to suit most tastes.

Music

Most people require an organist, please let us know as soon as possible so we can book one of regular and very experienced organists. We are happy to help with choices of music and hymns and also the Weddings website above has lots of suggestions. If you wish to use recorded music, please speak to Revd Andy, we have a good Audio system but will need to check that any music plays on it!

Readings

It is normal to have a Bible reading during the service and also you might like to think about other readings or poems that will add to the whole day. We can help you with some choices or again the Weddings website is very good.

Order of Service

Most couples produce an order of service, which makes a lovely keepsake. We will give you all the details and information you require to produce an order of service as part of the marriage preparation.

Photographs

Most couples hire a professional photographer. We aim to work with the photographer to ensure your day is recorded in the best way and without detracting from your experience as you make these important promises to each other.

Confetti

Confetti is fine outside, but please make sure it is eco-friendly.

Videographers

We are happy for the service for you to arrange for someone to video the ceremony, but permission must be obtained from the clergy because of copyright and other legal issues. Professional Videographers will have the necessary copyright licence available to show the clergy.

Signing of the Marriage Document

The signing of the Marriage Document is normally carried out on the altar. It takes about ten minutes, and it is rather nice if music is performed during this interlude. After your marriage, we can return the Marriage Document to the Registrar, or you might like a family member to do this within 21 days. You can then apply for a marriage certificate through the Dorset Council website.

Witnesses

The bride and groom will each require an adult (aged 18 or above) to witness their signature. If you would like more than two witnesses that is no problem but please speak to us so we can make sure the Marriage Document is prepared accordingly.

The Most Important Bit!

The most important thing to remember as you prepare for your wedding is each other and the love you share. We at St Mary's will do our utmost to make your special day run as smoothly as possible. Don't worry about the ceremony, we are there to lead you through it. So, Brides don't get stressed about running late and Grooms we promise we will look after you!

If you have any questions, then please contact the Vicar – Revd Andy Muckle or the member of the clergy team who is taking your wedding.

We all look forward to your special day and may God Bless you as you prepare to be married.

God of love and life

We pray for all couple who are preparing to be married.

***Be with them in their preparations
and on their wedding day.***

***Give them your love in their hearts
throughout their married life together,
through Jesus Christ our Lord***

Amen