



## THE CHURCH OF ST. PETER & ST. PAUL, SHOREHAM

*Patrons: The Dean and Chapter of Westminster*

### Marriages at St Peter & St Paul Shoreham

We are delighted that you are interested in being married in our beautiful Church.

Weddings have been celebrated here for over 900 years, so you will be part of a long tradition. These notes are designed to guide you through the process but please do ask us if you have any questions.

Preparation for marriage takes about eight months. There are legal requirements that need to be satisfied before a marriage can take place. As the Established Church, the Church of England gives a person, with no former partner still living (for further information about this please read below), the right to be married in the parish church where they are resident (you must have lived there for six months or more). However, you can marry at a church which is not your local parish church if you can prove a qualifying connection to the church you wish to be married in. These include:

- One of you was Baptised or prepared for Confirmation in the parish
- One of you has lived in the parish for six months or more
- One of you has at any time regularly (at least once, but preferably twice a month) attended public worship in the parish for ideally for a year but for not less than six months before your Banns are read. A register is kept of attendance at our Services to satisfy this legal requirement. Please note that you must have satisfied this qualification *before* your Banns are read so you will need to start attending our Services at least eight months before your wedding
- One of your parents has regularly attended public worship there for six months or more in your lifetime
- Your parents have lived in the parish for a period of at least six months since you were born
- Your parents or grandparents were married in the parish

If you have a qualifying connection you will be required to provide evidence for this. If this involves searches in registers, you may be required to pay a fee for this.

If either of you have been divorced, it may still be possible for you to be married in Church but there will be additional forms to complete and we will need to see your Decree Absolute. Please contact us for further details.

If you are to be married at a Registry Office, you can celebrate your marriage with a service of blessing in the Church (see fees below).

There are legal requirements for the wedding itself:

- Your Banns will be called three times in the three months leading up to your wedding during the main Sunday Service at St Peter & St Paul. If either of you do not live within the Parish of St Peter & St Paul, your Banns must also be called in the Church of England parish in which you live, three times in the three months before your wedding. Confusingly this is not always the church you are nearest to. Please visit [www.achurchnearyou.com](http://www.achurchnearyou.com) to locate your parish Church. Please contact your local parish priest to arrange for your Banns to be read. You must give the certificate, that they will give to you, to the Vicar of St Peter & St Paul to prove this has been done. If the Bride and Groom live in different parishes, the Banns must be called in both Parishes.

- The wedding may take place on any day of the week, except Sundays and other principal feast days, and must be between 8am and 6pm
- It must be according to the authorised rights of the Church of England
- There must be at least two witnesses
- If one of you is under 18 years, the written consent of your parents or guardians is required
- We do not conduct usually wedding services during Lent or Advent (unless there are exceptional circumstances)
- You will both need to show the Vicar your passport and another form of identification and give her a copy of both of these documents. If either of you are not a UK passport holder, you will need to consult [www.gov.uk/marriages-civil-partnerships](http://www.gov.uk/marriages-civil-partnerships) to check what documentation you will need to be married in the UK
- You will both need to show the Vicar one proof of ID (passport/driving licence) and one of residence (eg utility bill) and give her paper copies
- If you are divorced or your marriage has been dissolved. The Vicar will need to see your decree absolute and keep a copy of this
- The Vicar, or person officiating at your wedding, will meet with you on an informal basis, to talk to you about the meaning of marriage and to plan the Order of Service. Your Order of Service must include certain elements must approved by the Vicar before it is printed

Please be aware that these checks of ID, Residency and Marital Status are a legal requirement and without them the marriage cannot take place. Please make sure that all your documents show the same address (and remember it is an offence to have a driving licence not showing your current address).

### **Registration of your wedding**

The procedures for the Registration of Marriages have changed: The Signing of the Registers no longer take place during the Marriage Ceremony but, rather, a Marriage Document (or Marriage Schedule if either of you are not UK passport holders) is filled in prior to your wedding and then signed and witnessed during your Ceremony. Bridal couples generally ask their parents/step parents to witness their wedding but anyone of your choosing, so long as they are over 18 years old, can be a witness. We suggest you ask between two and four people to be witnesses. On our Booking Form, we ask for your parents (both living and deceased) and (if applicable) step parents, names and occupations which we are required to send to the Local Registry Office. Please let us know if this information is difficult for you to supply. If either of your parents are retired, please put their previous occupations with retired in brackets afterwards. We will send the Marriage Document (or Marriage Schedule) to the Local Registry Office who will then issue your Certificate of Marriage (they will charge for this Certificate). Please see advice on [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk) about changing names on passports following a wedding including obtaining a post-dated passport with a change of surname (you must remember to book any holidays in the names that are on your passports). St Peter & St Paul will issue a Form of Acknowledgement following your Service but this is not a legal document. Please let us know if either of you are not UK passport holders. The names that you Banns are read in must be the same names that we will notify to the Local Registry Office Registers.

### **Flowers**

You are welcome to provide your own flowers for pedestal arrangements, window sills and pew ends. Please note that if you will be taking your flowers away after your wedding, you **must** leave one pedestal arrangement in front of the screen so that the church has flowers in it for the Sunday service. This is because our flower arrangers will not be able to access the Church around your wedding to install our usual floral arrangement. Please could you arrange for any other flowers left in the Church after your wedding to be taken away in the week following your wedding.

