



Your Church wedding!

For those who would like to be married in the
Avon Valley Churches

(Breamore, Fordingbridge, Godshill, Hale, Woodgreen & Hyde)



St Mary's Church,
Hale



St Boniface Church,
Woodgreen

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WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

Thank you for your enquiry about getting married at St Mary's Church, Hale or St Boniface Church, Woodgreen

This booklet is intended to help you decide whether one of our Churches is the best place for your wedding.

This booklet contains:

- the legal requirements for getting married in a Church of England building,
- information about the wedding itself and
- a list of the fees charged.

Once you have booked a date, you will be invited to meet one of the Clergy, who will explain the process to you, give you a copy of the Marriage Service and a Booklet of Readings, Hymns and Prayers to help you begin your planning, and answer any questions you may have at this early stage.

If you have any questions now, do please get in touch – contact details are on the front page.

WHO CAN GET MARRIED IN A CHURCH OF ENGLAND CHURCH?

To be married in a Church of England Church, you need either to:

- Live in a Parish, or
- Have a Qualifying Connection to a Parish (see *page 5*)

To check the name of your Parish Church, go to www.achurchnearyou.com and type in your Postcode.

If you qualify to get married in a Parish Church, and you are British or EU Citizen, the usual process is to have your **Banns** (a public declaration that you intend to be married) read out in church for three Sundays. You would be most welcome to join the Church community for the service and to hear the banns read.

(If you are not British or an EU Citizen, it is still usually possible to be married here - please speak to us about the different arrangements for the Marriage Preliminaries)

Banns also 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 you live in our Parish this means that the banns are read once but if you live outside of the parish **you** need to contact the Vicar of your local Church to arrange this. The Vicar will then send you a banns certificate which needs to be sent to our Church Office.

They will charge you a separate fee. You must have your banns read out in each Church for three Sundays during the three months before the wedding. This is often done over three consecutive Sundays.

WHAT IF ONE OF US IS DIVORCED (OR BOTH)?

The Church of England believes that marriage is for life. But it recognises that sadly, some marriages do fail. In the Avon Valley Churches we believe that God offers a new start, and so we have a policy of welcoming couples for marriage, one or both of whom have been married before.

We would welcome a conversation with you, talking frankly about your past and your hopes for the future.

Occasionally, a service of prayer and dedication after a Civil Ceremony is appropriate. This doesn't say that it is possible to re-marry in church

I AM A ROMAN CATHOLIC – DOES THAT MAKE A DIFFERENCE?

Not to us; however, if you wish to have your marriage recognised by the Roman Catholic Church, you need to speak with your local RC Priest.

QUALIFYING CONNECTIONS

These are designed to make it possible to get married in a Church where one or both partners have a connection, but neither is currently resident in the parish – it might be the Church where you grew up, or a Church where you currently worship. If you are resident in one of our parishes, you may be married in any of our churches.

These legal 'Qualifying Connections' are:

Either the bride or groom:

- was baptised in one of the parishes;
- or
- had their confirmation entered in a church register book of a church or chapel in one of the parishes;
- or
- has at any time had their usual place of residence in one of the parishes for at least 6 months;
- or
- has at any time habitually attended public worship in one of the parishes for at least 6 months;

Or, a parent of either the bride or groom (*within the lifetime of the bride or groom*):

- had their usual place of residence in the parish for at least 6 months;
- or
- habitually attended public worship in the parish for at least 6 months;

Or a parent or grandparent of either the bride or groom

- was married in that church.

 **NONE OF THOSE APPLY TO ME – CAN I STILL GET MARRIED IN ONE OF YOUR CHURCHES?**

Possibly! If you are not resident in the parish, or you cannot demonstrate a legal qualifying connection with the Church of your choice, then in order for you to qualify to have your wedding there you must attend worship regularly (once a month minimum) for at least 6 months **before you book the wedding.**

 **I DON'T HAVE ANY 'QUALIFYING CONNECTIONS' AND LIVE TOO FAR AWAY TO BE ABLE TO ATTEND WORSHIP.**

If you are not able to satisfy any of the legal requirements (residency, a qualifying connection, or regular attendance) it will not be possible for you to be married here. In this case we will help you to look for a Church where you could get married, and help with any arrangements, or it may be possible to offer you a Service of Blessing of the Marriage, preceded by a civil ceremony elsewhere.

 **WE CAN GET MARRIED IN ST MARY'S CHURCH, HALE OR ST BONIFACE CHURCH, WOODGREEN! WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?**

Please now contact the Church Office (*Contact details on the front page*) to book a wedding date.

Once you have booked a wedding date, one of the Clergy will be in touch to book a date to meet. We will explain the process to you, give you a copy of the Marriage Service and a Booklet of Readings, Hymns and Prayers to help you begin your planning, and answer any questions you may have at this early stage.

Early each year we hold a 'Marriage Preparation Day' to which we invite all those couples planning to marry in one of our Churches in the current year.

We will remind you of the process to prepare for your wedding, and cover some of the practical details that apply to weddings here.

It also provides a relaxed opportunity for you to work as a couple, exploring a variety of wider issues related to marriage today – thinking about marriage, and not just the wedding!

By the time of that meeting, we will know which of the Clergy will be officiating at your wedding, and you will be able to arrange a meeting, to begin the more detailed preparation, this usually happens three months or so before your big day.

You are welcome to get in touch with us if you have any questions any time before (or after!) your wedding – contact details are on the front page.

WHAT HAPPENS IN THE WEDDING SERVICE?

We will give you a copy of the marriage Service when we first meet

Entrance of the Bride

Traditionally, the bride and groom enter the church separately – the groom with the best man before the service begins, and the bride at the time set for the start of the service, on the arm of her father or another relative or friend (does not need to be a man) usually followed by bridesmaids. However, this is not set in stone and the bride may enter alone if she wishes, or the couple may enter together.

Welcome

The priest will welcome the congregation. Your family and friends have an important role to play as witnesses and supporters of your marriage.

At this point (or maybe even before the bride arrives) the priest will usually ask that all mobile phones and devices are switched off for the duration of the service.

The Preface

The priest will read an introduction explaining what Christians believe about marriage. They will also ask, as the law requires, if anyone knows any reason why the marriage may not lawfully take place.

Hymns & Music – We encourage you to choose suitable hymns and music – see pages 9 and 10

Bible Reading and other readings/poetry – see page 11

It is usual to have one or more readings (one of which is usually from the Bible). You may like to ask a friend or family member to participate in your wedding by doing these readings

The Declarations

First you will declare that you are legally free to marry each other. Then you will be asked to promise before God, your friends and your families, that you will love, comfort, honour and protect your partner and be faithful to them as long as you both shall live. The priest will also ask the congregation to declare that they will support and uphold your marriage.

The Marriage Vows

Turning to each other, the bride and groom take each other's right hand and make vows. The couple then exchange rings as a 'sign of their marriage' and a reminder of the vows. The priest will then declare that you are now husband and wife!

Prayers, including Lord's Prayer

In the prayers God's blessing and help is asked for you. There may be a prayer for the gift of children, but every couple will have their own feelings about this, so it's best to discuss the details with the priest. We have a booklet of prayers, and encourage you to choose (or write) your own.

Blessing

The marriage is blessed after you have made your vows and the declaration of marriage is made by the priest. The service ends with words of blessing for everyone.

Registration of the Marriage

After you have exchanged your vows, the bride, groom and two witnesses must sign the register. This is a legal requirement and the priest will give you a copy of the marriage certificate.

WHOM CAN WE INVOLVE IN OUR WEDDING SERVICE?

Bride's Escort to enter with her – usually, but not always, her father

Bridal party – page boys/flower girls/bridesmaids

Best Man/Men for the Groom

Ushers – to welcome your guests as they arrive, hand out Orders of Service, show people to their seats, instruct people how to get to the Reception venue, help to tidy up at the end of the service.

People to do the **Readings/Poems**

Witnesses to sign the Register – 2 adults, usually one from either side of the family – often two parents, or a brother and a sister, or the Bridesmaid and the Best Man – but can be anyone.

Photographer and Video (professional, or just friends?)

Florist see page 13

WHAT ABOUT HYMNS/MUSIC DURING THE SERVICE?

Having the right music can make such a difference to any occasion, especially a wedding. The musicians will do everything they can to get the music right for you. The Choir is available on Saturdays (and possibly during the week) - if you would like them to sing at your wedding just let us know.

Choosing the Music for your Wedding

You will need to think about:

- music to be played before the wedding.
- entrance of the bride
- hymns or songs during the service – we have a booklet to help you
- music for the signing of the register
- exit music

Entrance of the bride - music examples

- Bridal Chorus from Lohengrin Wagner
- Trumpet Voluntary Clarke
- Te Deum Charpentier
- Trumpet Tune Purcell
- Arrival of the Queen of Sheba Handel

Popular Anthems sung by the choir during the signing of the register

- The Lord Bless You and Keep You - Rutter
- Ave Verum Corpus - Elgar
- Lead me Lord - Wesley
- Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring - Bach
- Gaelic Blessing - Rutter

Exit Music ideas

- Wedding Music from A Midsummer Night's Dream - Mendelssohn
- Hornpipe from Water Music - Handel
- Toccata from Symphony No V - Widor

CHOOSING HYMNS/SONGS

Usually there are three hymns (you can have fewer if you wish) but please remember that everyone will be singing them so you need to find something that you like, that means something to you, that fits a wedding service and that people will be able to sing and enjoy. It is a good idea to have the choir to lead the singing especially as it is a larger church.

You are welcome to borrow a hymn book from the church to look through and help you choose (the churches are open during the day).

The Organists are happy to meet you after any Sunday morning service and discuss your needs – it would be handy if you could let us know beforehand via the Church Office (01425 653163) so we can be available for you.

You will also find some excellent resources at
www.yourchurchwedding.org
to get you started.

I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO CHOOSE FROM THE BIBLE?

There are many popular and exciting readings. Read some of them together and see if what they say seems important to you.

Please see our separate booklet with suggested readings for you to use in your wedding.

The Clergy will be pleased to help you choose the right readings for your wedding service. As well as Bible readings, you are welcome to include other suitable readings. Choices have been as diverse as 'Winnie the Pooh' and 'Captain Corelli'!

WHAT ABOUT THE ORDERS OF SERVICE?

Many couples like to have a service sheet for their wedding and many people now either produce these themselves or get friends to help. Our Church Office is also able to have these printed for you - there is a small charge for this – see the Fees on page 15

If you do produce one, you will need to do this after you have talked about your service with the person conducting your wedding. We will provide you with a draft text of the wedding service, and texts of popular bible readings and hymns can be found in our separate leaflet and on the website.

When considering what quantity to print, do bear in mind that the bridal party will need at least 6 copies and the choir and organist will need 15 copies (photocopies are fine).

Whoever is taking your service needs to see a draft of the service sheet **before** it goes to print. Please talk to the priest who is conducting your wedding about this

INFORMATION AND INSTRUCTIONS FOR PHOTOGRAPHERS AND VIDEO OPERATORS.

The Clergy welcome photographers and video operators to weddings in our churches.

Ask them please to remember that they are places of worship and that the clergy are responsible for what happens within them. Please contact the Church Office (01425 653163) if you would like to discuss any aspect of the arrangements for a particular wedding.

- You are welcome to attend the wedding rehearsal to familiarise yourself with our buildings.
- Before the service please make yourself known to the member of Clergy officiating at the Service.
- Still photographs, preferably without flash, may be taken during the Service, and we ask our photographers to be sensitive to the Service, and to keep movement during the Service to a minimum. If you are working with a colleague, usually one remains at the rear of the Church, and one at the front.
- Photographs may be taken during the signing the registers, and the Photographer will be given the opportunity to pose the couple afterwards, if they wish.
- Videos are only permitted from the rear of the Church during the service. The video operator is welcome to record the signing of the registers and the couple leaving the Church.
- The couple are responsible for ensuring that all necessary copyright permissions have been obtained.

Our aim is to ensure that the act of worship in which each couple make their vows is a fitting occasion and we thank you for your co-operation with this.

THE VIDEO-RECORDING COPYRIGHT LICENCE FOR YOUR WEDDING.

You are asked by the copyright licence authorities to contact them directly. They will tailor your licence for you so that you buy one licence for everything you need. This will cover, for example, music recorded at the service and also at the reception.

Please contact them via their website or telephone:

www.prsformusic.com

or

020 3741 4500

Please check with your video-operator before you buy the licence as they may already have a licence that covers your wedding. The licence is expensive enough without you having to pay twice!

If you buy the licence yourselves, please send a photocopy of your licence to the Church Office in Fordingbridge at least a week in advance. If you are covered by your video-operator's licence, please send a photocopy of their licence to the Church Office, again at least a week in advance.

WEDDING FLOWERS.

Hi, I'm Paula and in charge of the weekly flower rota at St Mary's Church, Hale and St Boniface Church, Woodgreen. We always welcome weddings during the year and are pleased to help you with any arrangements for floral displays for your special day.

These displays can be done by relations, family friends, local florist, local flower club and so on – or members of the Church Flower Rotas may be able to arrange them for you.

It is permissible to use the containers, pedestals etc that belong to the church for this purpose. The flowers can then be enjoyed by the congregation in the days that follow.

One thing that I ask is that you must get in touch to enable me to liaise with the flower arrangers, and to organise each rota around the weddings as they happen.

You may also ask for advice and help or discuss what arrangements you would like to make. The flower arrangers give their time voluntarily to ensure our Churches look beautiful, so please give them a ring and ensure their time is not wasted.

I can even meet you in the church or give you the name of local florists, our local flower club etc.

Please contact Paula Downard on 01725 510557

OTHER THINGS YOU MIGHT NEED TO KNOW.

Confetti – *biodegradable* confetti is welcome! Please remind your guests that they should throw it a small distance away from the church door so that it does not blow back into the church building.

Car Parking

Hale – parking is available in front of the church. Please ask guests not to park in front of Hale Park House (unless your reception is being held there).

Woodgreen-you may wish to contact the Village Hall to discuss parking and/or speak to the clergy who can suggest alternatives. You might also like to consider shared transport for your guests.

Access issues – There are accessible toilets at both churches, and access for wheelchairs (although there is a slope between the car park and church at Hale).

If you know of any access issues for any of your guests, do talk to us, and we will advise and help as much as possible.

Heating – during winter months (typically October to March inclusive), we strongly recommend that you book the heating, to ensure the comfort of you and your guests.

HOW MANY GUESTS CAN WE INVITE?

The maximum capacities are :

St Mary's Hale	120
St Boniface Woodgreen	80

The capacities for the other churches in our benefice are as follows, in case you would like to choose one of our other churches to marry in :

St Mary's Fordingbridge	300
St Mary's Breamore	120
Holy Ascension, Hyde	120
St Giles Godshill	60

Fees are to be paid in full no later than one month before the date of the wedding.

Payment may be made online (details are on the invoice) or by cheque, made payable to **Parish of Fordingbridge** and sent to :

The Church Office
The Rainbow Centre
39 Salisbury Street
Fordingbridge
SP6 1AB

FURTHER INFORMATION

You can find lots of wedding information at:

www.AvonValleyChurches.org.uk

and

www.yourchurchwedding.org

We hope that this booklet helps you to prepare for a wonderful wedding day, and please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions, however large or small.