



The Parish Church of St Botolph, Heene, Worthing

Christian Marriage

We are delighted that you are thinking about getting married in church. Christians believe that marriage is a gift of God. In the marriage ceremony, a couple make a public declaration of lifelong commitment to love each other. The Bible compares love between a husband and wife with the love that Jesus has for his followers. He expressed his love supremely by being prepared to sacrifice himself, even to die for the people he loved. This is an amazing, unconditional love. In marriage, we can try to follow his model by loving each other in a self-sacrificial way, putting our partner's needs before our own. The marriage ceremony gives you a new legal status as husband and wife. Christians believe that marriage is given as the foundation of family life in which children are born and nurtured.

Entering into marriage is a serious matter. As the words of the Marriage Service put it, 'No one should enter into it lightly or selfishly but reverently and responsibly in the sight of almighty God.' Therefore, couples getting married at St Botolph's are usually invited to meet with the priest taking the service on a couple of occasions prior to the wedding (in addition to the wedding rehearsal) in order to talk through what marriage is about and the various aspects of married life. Remember that whilst a wedding lasts just a day, marriage is for life.

*God of wonder and of joy: grace comes from you,
and you alone are the source of life and love.*

Without you, we cannot please you; without your love, our deeds are worth nothing.

*Send your Holy Spirit, and pour into our hearts that most excellent gift of love,
that we may worship you now with thankful hearts*

and serve you always with willing minds; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

(A Prayer from the Marriage Service)

Who can get married at St Botolph's?

You can marry at St Botolph's if:

- 1) One or both of you live within the boundaries of the Parish of St Botolph, Heene, *or*
- 2) One or both of you regularly attend worship at St Botolph's and are on the church's Electoral Roll.

In addition, you can marry at St Botolph's if you can provide documentary evidence of one of the following 'Qualifying Connections':

That one of you:

- has at any time lived in the parish for a period of at least 6 months *or*
- was baptised in the parish concerned *or*
- was 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.

What are Banns of Marriage?

Most Church of England marriages require banns to be read out in church before the wedding can take place. 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. Banns need to be read in the parish where each of you lives (if not St Botolph's Parish) as well as at St Botolph's itself. *You need to arrange with the vicar of the parish(es) in which you live (if not St Botolph's Parish) for your banns to be read there.* You must have your banns read out in church for three Sundays during the three months before the wedding. This is usually done over three consecutive Sundays. As well as being a legal requirement, your banns readings are special public occasions when people in church hear of your intention to marry. At St Botolph's, the banns are read at the Sunday Parish Eucharist which begins at 10am. You're warmly invited to come to the service to hear your banns read, as indeed you're very welcome on any occasion to worship at St Botolph's.

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, the Common Licence procedure needs to be used rather than banns.

Marriage Law and the Immigration Act 2014

In light of the Immigration Act 2014, the Government made changes to the Marriage Act 1949 which affect all marriages in the Church of England from 2nd March 2015. From that date, it is unlawful for the marriage of any person who is not a 'relevant national' to be solemnised in the Church of England after the publication of Banns or by a Common Licence. (A 'relevant national' is a UK national, Swiss national, or a national of a country in the European Economic Area).

A couple who want to get married in the Church of England will need to produce evidence that both of them are British, EEA or Swiss nationals when they apply to have their banns published or apply for a common licence. Banns cannot be published without a member of the clergy having seen specified evidence that both bride and groom are 'relevant nationals'. Please see Appendix A for specified evidence of nationality. As you will notice, where the bride and groom can provide a current, valid UK, EEA or Swiss passport, no further documentation will normally be needed to evidence that they are 'relevant nationals'. However, if the couple cannot produce such passports, points 3, 4, 5 & 6 then apply. You will need to bring the specified evidence (original documents) to the priest, who will then make copies of these to retain for the records.

Where a party is not a 'relevant national', or cannot provide the necessary specified evidence, it may still be possible for them to marry in Church, but they will need to obtain a Superintendent Registrar's Certificate (instead of a banns certificate or Common Licence). Couples in this situation will need to get in touch with the local civil Register Office for further advice about that process.

Please do speak to the Priest-in-Charge for further clarification on any of this.

What about anyone who is divorced, with his or her partner still living?

In 2002, the General Synod of the Church of England affirmed the Church's teaching that Marriage should always be undertaken as a 'solemn public and life-long covenant between a man and a woman'. It recognised the importance of caring for those whose marriages do, regrettably, fail, and it acknowledged that there may be exceptional circumstances in which a divorced person may be married in church during the lifetime of a former spouse. However, the Synod made clear that the decision whether to solemnize such marriages rests with the vicar or priest-in-charge of the parish.

As a matter of principle, the Priest-in-Charge of St Botolph's does not marry divorcees (whose partner is still living) in church. However, he would be pleased to explore with you other options, most particularly the possibility (in appropriate circumstances) of offering a Service of Prayer and Dedication after a Civil Marriage (often referred to as a 'Service of Blessing'). In this service the couple, already married according to Law, bring their union to God in prayer, and the Church prays with them and for them. As the introductory words to the service put it, '...you stand in the presence of God as man and wife to dedicate to him your life together, that he may consecrate your marriage and empower you to keep the covenant and promise you have solemnly declared.'

How much does a Wedding at St Botolph's cost?

The statutory fees set by the Church of England for 2018 are as follows:

Marriage Service	£441
Publication of Banns of Marriage	£29
Certificate of banns issued at time of publication (if applicable)	£14
Marriage Certificate	£4

The following fees for 'extras' are set by the Parish:

Organist	£60
Bells	£80
Verger	£30

A non-refundable deposit of £150 is required at the time of booking the wedding. The remainder of the fees must be paid in cash at least 6 weeks prior to the date of the wedding.

The next step...

If you would like to enquire about getting married at St Botolph's, please contact the Priest-in-Charge, Revd Peter Kane, on ☎01903 339656 or at peterkane@cantab.net.

For further details about Marriage in the Church of England, please go to www.yourchurchwedding.org. This website also contains helpful information on choices of readings and music for weddings.

Appendix A: MARRIAGE BY BANNS OR COMMON LICENCE - SPECIFIED EVIDENCE

Both parties to the marriage must provide specified evidence that they are UK/EEA/Swiss nationals prior to applying for a Common Licence, or prior to the publication of banns.

SPECIFIED EVIDENCE means:

1. Valid (current) UK / EEA / Swiss Passport; **OR**
2. Valid (current) National Identity Card from an EEA country or Switzerland;

If each party can produce one of the above, this is all that is required.

If not, see 3-5 below.

3. Certificate of Registration/Certificate of Naturalisation as a British Citizen from the Secretary of State

AND

one of the documents in section 6 below (to establish current use of name); **OR**

4. IF BORN BEFORE 01/01/1983:

- a. a UK birth certificate

AND

- b. one of the documents in section 6 below; **OR**

5. IF BORN BETWEEN 01/01/1983 and 30/06/2006:

- a. a full UK birth certificate (i.e. a birth certificate that shows parents' full names)

AND

- b. proof that one parent was a British National or proof that they had indefinite leave to remain in the UK at the time of the birth¹

AND

- c. [if relying on the father as the British National, the parents' marriage certificate]

AND

- d. one of the documents in section 6 below.

6. PROOF OF CURRENT USE OF NAME (see sections 3-5 above).

- a. Utility bill (from last 3 months)
- b. Bank or Building Society statement (from last 1 month)
- c. Council Tax bill (from last 12 months)
- d. Mortgage Statement (from last 12 months)
- e. Current Tenancy Agreement; or
- f. Valid full UK Driving Licence or provisional Driving Licence.

7. CHANGE OF NAME (where relevant)

If a party to the marriage has changed their name from that shown on any of the above documentation, he or she must also provide evidence of the change (e.g. deed poll, previous marriage certificate, decree absolute).

¹ eg. British passport which was valid at the time of the birth or parent's UK birth certificate from before 01/01/1983.