

The Parish Church of Saint Mary the Virgin, Henley-on-Thames
The Parish Church of Saint Nicholas, Remenham

2024 Wedding Information

Congratulations on your engagement! We have prepared the following notes to help you with the preparations for your special day, and to make sure that everything goes according to plan. They have been compiled as a result of years of experience – usually of things going wrong! – so please read them carefully and keep them safe for easy reference.

The Legal Requirements

Banns of Marriage are ‘called’ on the first three Sundays of the month preceding your wedding.

If either or both of you live outside these two parishes, then you **must** have your banns called in the parish in which you live as well. Similarly, if either or both of you habitually worship in another Church of England church and have your names on the Church Electoral Roll there, your banns must be called there also. If your banns are called elsewhere than in St Mary’s or St Nicholas’, then again you **must** obtain a certificate from that parish priest confirming that banns have been called.

This is an essential legal preliminary and failure to ensure that your banns have been called in the correct parishes, or failure to produce the Banns Certificate, will mean that we cannot proceed with the wedding.

It may be that you are being married by **Ordinary Licence or Archbishop’s Licence**: in either of these cases banns do not have to be called at all, anywhere. You will be made aware of the fact if this is the case.

If either of you are foreign nationals, please mention this to the Rector at the earliest opportunity as there may need to be a different legal process.

If either of you have previously been married, and your former spouse is still living, please mention this to the Rector at your first meeting; it is not always possible to marry couples under such circumstances.

If **any** of the details you gave to the Rector when you first booked your wedding change, it is **vital** that you inform him of such changes. Again, failure to do so could jeopardise the legal preliminaries to your wedding.

Please also note that any alterations to your service, or any other detail, can only be received from you yourselves and not from a willing parent or friend. Cancellation of a wedding can **ONLY** be done by letter, signed by one or other of the parties concerned.

Not a “venue” ...

It is important to recognise that a church wedding is not like hiring a venue for a wedding. A church is a place of worship for the local community and inside the church are all sorts of things that are important to that community. Please do not “tidy up” the church in advance of your wedding ceremony; if there is something you would particularly like to be moved or removed for aesthetic reasons, **please speak to the Rector or churchwardens first**; and if anything is moved, please

ensure that it is put back where it was found. Please communicate this to family members who may be inclined to act without asking – you probably know who they are (without wishing to be unkind, mothers of the bride have in the past been particularly vulnerable to this temptation!). Above all, **please do not tidy away gift aid envelopes and pens** from the pews. If your guests choose to make donations to the church, as quite often happens, we can usually reclaim the tax through the gift aid scheme, greatly increasing the value of the gift to us at no cost to the giver. This doesn't work if the gift aid envelopes have been tidied away. We depend on such donations to maintain our churches.

Flowers

At Saint Mary's: you must contact Mrs Blanche Williams. You have the choice of doing the flowers yourself, or paying a professional florist to do them. Whichever choice you make, Mrs Williams will be able to guide you in the positioning of the arrangements, and in gaining access to a water supply. Please note that we do not give permission for 'pew-end' arrangements under any circumstances. Similarly it is not permitted to have a flower girl scattering petals before the bride as she walks down the aisle. Confetti, which must be biodegradable, can only be thrown in the churchyard and not at the church doorway.

At Saint Nicholas': you must contact Mrs Penny Whitfield. You have the choice of doing the flowers yourself, or paying a professional florist to do them. In either case, Mrs Whitfield will speak to the arrangers about the positioning of the arrangements, access to a water supply and the availability of the church keys. Please note that we do not give permission for pew-end arrangements under any circumstances. Similarly it is not permitted to have a flower girl scattering petals before the bride as she walks down the aisle! Please get permission specifically to have arrangements on the Lych gate, as this may not be appropriate at some times of the year. Confetti, which must be biodegradable, can only be thrown in the churchyard along the pathway and not at the lychgate.

At either church: please take account of the size of the church – it is easy to have arrangements which are too big for St Nicholas' and too small for St Mary's! Especially at St Nicholas', please remember that the church is in regular use each week and flower arrangements should not be so large or so positioned as to cause an obstruction. We ask that at least one of the pedestals is left behind. Couples are obviously free to take the rest to the reception. Additionally, ask if there is another wedding on the same day as it may be that couples can share the (not inconsiderable) costs of flowers.

Order of Service

You are asked to check with the priest taking your wedding before printing your service sheets. You will have been provided with an outline of the service – please keep to it! There are usually two readings, in which case one **can** be from a secular source. One reading at every wedding **must** be from the Bible, and you are asked to check any other reading you might wish to use. Also, please ensure that you have spoken with the Director of Music about your choice of hymns etc. Please also check the words of hymns, and their source – some American websites have much the same hymn but with syllables left out, so they become un-singable to the usual 'English' tune.

It is sadly the case that many people take what they see in films and on television as being the norm for weddings. It isn't necessarily so!

Rehearsal

The rehearsal date and time will be set by you and the priest taking your wedding. Please ensure that everyone who needs to be there is there at the right time, as sometimes we can have more than one rehearsal in an afternoon or evening. If one is necessary, you can give your Banns Certificate from another parish to the priest at this time.

At the rehearsal, we need to have, obviously, the bride and groom; also the best man, whoever is 'giving the bride away', at least one (and preferably all) of the bridesmaids, and at least one of the ushers. We will go through the entire service so that you have at least some idea of 'what comes next.' Sometimes it is helpful for readers to have a chance to practise their readings using the church sound system.

Please do not bring your entire extended families to the wedding rehearsal, and if refreshments are to be imbibed that evening, please arrange the wedding rehearsal to take place first!

The usual arrangement is for the priest to lead the bride down the aisle, with the bridesmaids coming behind the bride. Sufficient room is left between the priest and the bride to ensure the priest does not get in the way of the photographs. The official photographer must stay in one place, agreed beforehand with the Rector, throughout the service (apart perhaps from the entrance of the bride). He/she may also come into the Sacristy where we sign the marriage document but must not take any photographs at all until the signing is complete – it is illegal to photograph the signing. A notice will be given out at the start of the service asking the congregation not to take photographs until the bride and groom return down the aisle at the very end of the service; to turn off mobile phones; and the regulations regarding throwing confetti.

Marriage Preparation

Your marriage preparation will be carried out by Fr Jeremy. There are three sessions on Sunday afternoons, and you will have the opportunity to meet and talk with other couples getting married in our benefice.

Fees explained

We ask that you pay your church fees by bank transfer at least one month in advance of your wedding day. Please email Fr Jeremy when you have made the payment, with the following details: date of payment, amount, and the name of the account from which the payment is being made.

Fr Jeremy will send you a breakdown by email, together with the bank details for the correct church. The fees are paid to the parish church, and we then pass on the funds owed to the Diocese – you do not need to make a separate payment to them.

The current fees are as follows – there may be some variance depending on individual circumstances, but this is the starting point:

Calling Banns of Marriage	£36.00	goes to the Parochial Church Council
Marriage Service	£290.00	goes to the Parochial Church Council
	£241.00	goes to the Diocese of Oxford
Organist's fee	£250.00	
Verger's fee	£70.00	
Total	£887.00	

If you are married between 1 October and 31 March an additional £100 is charged for heating the church.

At St Nicholas Remenham, an additional £100 is added to book the [parish hall](#) which is next door to the church, for the day of your wedding: **this is essential for parking and toilets.**

At St Mary's, additional fees are payable if you wish to have the bells rung – this is negotiated directly with the bellringers.

An additional fee is payable should you choose to have the choir – please contact the Director of Music for the current rates. If the service is being recorded, please bring this to the attention of the Director of Music, as it has implications for the fees charged.

If you are married by Licence, the Banns Fee is not charged (though there is a much larger fee for the Licence).

If you are having a Service of Prayer after a Civil Ceremony, the Banns fee is not charged.

Please note that these fees are reviewed each year by the Church of England and by Parliament, and usually revised upwards.

Marriage Certificates are no longer issued by the church. You will need to apply to the appropriate Register Office to obtain a certificate. If you are married at St Mary's it is Tidmarsh Lane, Oxford, and for Remenham Wokingham Civic Offices.

Contacts

Bells (St Mary's only) Caroline Leeming 01491 575237

Flowers (St Mary's) Blanche Williams 01491 573545

Flowers (St Nicholas, Remenham) Penny Whitfield 0118 9402119

Music (both churches) Sebastian Thomson 07739 712783

Parish Hall (Remenham – essential for parking and toilets) Claire Fletcher-Hobbs
claireisafletcher@gmail.com

and finally....

Please do not hesitate to contact us with any questions you might have; and please remember that we expect to start your service on time – there might be another wedding following it. Brides, please note!!

We will do everything we can to make your wedding service everything you want it to be, and to take as much of the hassle away from it as we can.

Father Jeremy Tayler

rector.hwr@btinternet.com

Parish Office Email: Office.hwr@btinternet.com

Telephone 01491 577340