

Paperwork to meet Civil requirements

The following notes are offered for guidance only. All details should be checked on the Government website, e.g. http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/RightsAndResponsibilities/DG_10026937, or with the local Register Office.

Notice of marriage

The 'notice of marriage' replaces what was formerly commonly known as the marriage licence. It is the responsibility of each couple to obtain the necessary 'notice of marriage'. A notice of marriage is a legal document required by the Marriage Act 1949 - without it the marriage may not proceed.

It is a legal requirement to give notice of marriage and, once given, your notice of marriage is displayed on the notice board at the register office for a period of fifteen clear days. Your notice of marriage is valid for 12 months.

Where to give notice

You both need to go to your local register office to give notice of your intention to marry. No one else can do it on your behalf.

The register office for marriages at Our Lady's, St John's Wood is
Westminster Register Office, Westminster Council House,
Marylebone Road, London, NW1 5PT

Residency requirements

You can get married in England and Wales as long as you have both lived in a registration district for at least 7 days immediately before giving notice of marriage.

If you are subject to immigration control, you will need to produce documentary evidence to the superintendent registrar to confirm that you satisfy the eligibility requirements. To find out if you are subject to immigration control please see the Immigration and Nationality Directorate website or telephone 0870 606 7766.

Documentation required

You need to show the superintendent registrar documentary evidence of: your name; your age (the minimum legal age for getting married in England and Wales is 16 years of age but written consent may be required for anyone under 18 years); your nationality (ideally in the form of your passport)

You will also be asked to provide evidence of your address and evidence of the ending of any previous marriage or civil partnership.

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life than this ! aka Paperwork & Marriage

Introduction

In preparing for marriage there are many things to attend to. The most important is continuing to find time for each other, and for helping one another to prepare for the new way of life you are both committing to. But there are other things to be done too. And one of these is making sure you have got all the paperwork right.

In many cases the procedure is very simple and straightforward. Sometimes things can be more complicated. Help is always available from one of the priests of the parish, should you need it.

To prepare for a wedding in a Catholic church, in England and Wales, you will need to deal with

1. The civic authorities – giving notice of your intention to marry
2. The church authorities – to obtain permission for your marriage to be celebrated in a Catholic church

Papers for the Church

Preparation of papers

The person responsible for the compiling of marriage papers is the priest of the parish where the Catholic party or both of the parties are resident.

When the marriage is to take place outside that parish, the parish priest will forward the completed papers to the diocesan chancery for forwarding to the church where the marriage is to take place.

A. Basic Papers

Proof of baptism

All Catholic parties are required to obtain a new baptism certificate from the church where they were baptised. This must be dated within six months of the date of the proposed wedding. This certificate will give evidence of baptism, but if fully annotated will also give details of Confirmation and of any notes regarding marriage within the Catholic Church.

These certificates can be obtained from the church where the baptism was celebrated. When writing to the church (which is generally preferable to ring-

ing or just turning up) please give your full name, and date of birth and date of baptism. If you cannot confirm the exact date of baptism please indicate the date of baptism as closely as possible. It is courteous to enclose a stamped, addressed envelope.

Non-Catholics who are baptised can simply provide their original baptism certificate or a newly issued copy from their church of baptism.

Photocopies of baptism certificates are not acceptable.

Proof of Confirmation

Catholic parties who have been confirmed should provide a certificate of confirmation. This will generally be included on the baptism certificate, as details of confirmation should be advised to candidates' parish of baptism. If they are not, then application should be made in writing to the church of confirmation, giving the approximate date of baptism. Again, it is courteous to enclose a stamped, addressed envelope.

Letters of Freedom

Both parties need to provide written evidence of their freedom to marry.

The Diocese requires this to be done by means of a Statutory *Declaration of Freedom*. Blank Statutory Declarations can be obtained from the parish office, and should be signed before a Commissioner of Oaths, or Solicitor.

A Statutory Declaration should also be used by any non-Catholic or any unbaptised party to a marriage.

Certificate of completion of Marriage Preparation course

A certificate must be provided to confirm that the couple has attended a recognised Marriage Preparation course. The priests of the parish can advise as to the forms of marriage preparation presently available.

B. Additional paperwork is required

- When a marriage is proposed between a Catholic and another Christian
- When a marriage is proposed between a Catholic and a non-baptised person, (including those professing another faith)
- When a Catholic seeks to marry in a non-Catholic church
- Where either party has been previously married or has entered into a Civil Partnership
- If the marriage is to take place in a parish where neither party is resident

Should any of these circumstances apply to you, the priest who is advising you will confirm what additional paperwork needs to be provided.

C. Parish and Diocesan fees

Parish fee

The parish levies a standard charge of £50 to cover the costs of costs related to the preparation of marriage papers. (Payment should be made by cheque payable to 'Our Lady's Church')

Diocesan fee

An additional single charge of £30 is levied by the diocesan chancery should it be necessary for it to deal with any marriage papers – for example, the granting of dispensations, or forwarding papers to another diocese. (Payment will be requested when the papers are to be first forwarded to the chancery, and should be made by cheque payable to 'WRCDT')

If paying either of these fees presents a difficulty to you, then please don't hesitate to mention it to the priest who is handling your paperwork.

Other Costs

Please note that the fees above are levied to cover administrative expenses. They are additional to any fees related to the wedding service itself. When a wedding takes place at Our Lady's such additional fees include:

- 1. Fee for the Authorised Person.** The Authorised Person is required to witness the wedding on behalf of the Local Authority/Civil Registrar, and prepares your Marriage Certificate. The statutory fee for his/her services is £40.
- 2. Copyright fees.** Copyright fees are generally incurred when reproducing music and texts in a service leaflet, or any audio/video recording. Guidance regarding this can be found on the parish website. The responsibility for conforming with the copyright legislation lies with the couple themselves and any agents they employ.
- 3. Church fees.** The church fees proper, which are a payment to the parish for the service of the priest and the use of the church. There is no fixed church fee, although a minimum of £150 is suggested.