

Filming weddings, baptisms and funerals

We are often asked about filming and recording of weddings, baptisms and occasionally funerals.

Minister's Decision

It will be for the minister to decide whether to permit any filming during a service, and his or her decision is likely to be based on past experience (to do with intrusiveness or disruption of the service), and any particular tradition that has grown up in the church itself. Some clergy refuse altogether; others permit a 'free for all'; some have no policy and react differently to each request. There is no fundamental rule other than that all services of worship should be conducted with appropriate decorum, and the churchwardens have power to intervene in the event that a service is being disrupted.

Clear Policy

It would be sensible for clergy and PCCs to agree a clear policy, and for this to be made known to all those who come to services where filming and recording might be appropriate.

In formulating a policy, please bear in mind the following:

- Photographing identifiable people should not be permitted without their consent (or, in the case of children, the consent of their parents or guardians). Please see the House of Bishops' Parish Safeguarding Handbook at <https://d3hgrlq6yacptf.cloudfront.net/61f2fd86f0ee5/content/pages/documents/20211011-doc-parish-safeguarding-handbook-aug-1929369089614.pdf>
- Recording live performances (including choir singing, organ voluntaries, bell ringing, and so forth) gives rise to copyright issues on the part of the performers, whose consent should always be obtained prior to the recording being made.
- Musical works themselves (including some hymns and most modern hymn tunes) are subject to separate copyright issues
- Poetry and other literary elements are also likely to be subject to copyright, and publishers' consent may be needed – even in the case of modern works found on the internet

Further Guidance

There is helpful guidance on the Church of England Website, 'Your Church Wedding', at <https://www.yourchurchwedding.org/article/filming-a-wedding/>, but ministers are at liberty to

adopt a more restrictive approach if it is believed this is the right thing to do, either generally or on a particular occasion.

Drones

Filming using drones is also becoming more popular so please see our separate guidance note about this.

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