

# Oxford Diocesan Registry



Winckworth  
Sherwood

## **Marriage Registration Changes – 4 May 2021**

As you are aware, the Registration of Marriages (Amendment) Regulations 2021 came into force on **4 May 2021**. From that day forward, you should no longer use the Marriage Registers or Marriage Certificates currently held in your church.

### *Closure of Marriage Registers*

You should shortly receive communications from your local civil Register Office in relation to closing Marriage Registers and returning registration stock to them. Please look out for this information because it will contain stickers for your Registers and other pertinent details. They will also provide information about how couples can pay for and obtain their Marriage Certificates.

**NB** Even though you will still have marriage registers and certificates in your care, ***you should not use them for any weddings which take place from 4 May onwards.***

### *Marriage Documents and Marriage Schedules*

Please note when a Marriage ‘Document’ is used and when a Marriage ‘Schedule’ is used:

- *Marriage Document*

If a couple can get married by **Banns**, **Common Licence** or **Special Licence** (i.e. ecclesiastical preliminaries), clergy or parish administrators will need to produce a **Marriage Document**.

You will complete the Marriage Document based on the ID documentation (passports, evidence of address, paperwork about any previous marriages and qualifying connection etc) and marriage application form (as updated) provided by the couple.

The Marriage Document will be signed and witnessed during the marriage service in the same way as current marriage registers.

The local civil Register Office will not be involved in this process until after the wedding.

Once a marriage has taken place, the officiating minister will be responsible for delivering the signed Marriage Document to the local Register Office (in the Registration District where the marriage takes place) although it can be delegated.

The civil Register Office will then issue a Marriage Certificate directly to the couple on payment of the £11 fee.

- *Marriage Schedule*

If a couple has to be married following **civil preliminaries** by serving Notice at their local civil Register Office (either because they are non-EEA nationals up to 30 June or, post 1 July, EEA nationals without Settled or Pre-Settled Status or non-EEA nationals without Settled Status), the local civil Register Office will issue a **Marriage Schedule** for the couple (the equivalent of a Superintendent Registrar’s Certificate).

You will still need to see couple's documentation (passports, evidence of address and paperwork about any previous marriages) and ensure that they have a qualifying connection with your church but they will need to serve Notice at the civil Register Office so that a Marriage Schedule can be issued and sent to you.

The Marriage Schedule will be signed and witnessed during the marriage service in the same way as current marriage registers.

Once a marriage has taken place, the officiating minister will be responsible for delivering the signed Marriage Schedule to the civil Register Office (in the Registration District where the marriage takes place) although it can be delegated.

The civil Register Office will then issue a Marriage Certificate directly to the couple on payment of the £11 fee.

### *Marriage Document now available*

A **type and print** version of the **Marriage Document** is available on the LRSA website ([www.lrsa.org.uk](http://www.lrsa.org.uk) – log-in details previously provided). It is also available on the Life Events Diary website ([www.lifeeventsdiary.org](http://www.lifeeventsdiary.org)) for those who use the website.

### *New Information Required for Marriage Document*

The main changes to the information required in the Marriage Document are (i) **date of birth** rather than age and (ii) **Mother/Father/Parents name surname and occupation** rather than just father's details. Please keep this in mind for forthcoming weddings so that you have these details and can record them in the Marriage Document.

A numbering system has also been included in the Marriage Document, as set out in the accompanying notes to the Marriage Document. For those of you in multi-parish benefices or in parishes with more than one church, you may need to adopt a system which enables you to identify easily which church the wedding took place in. Perhaps using the first two or three letters of a parish name followed by numbers or part of your Saint's name followed by numbers.

### *GRO Guidance for completing the Marriage Document*

There are PowerPoint presentations (both with and without narration) and a Word version of the narration on the LRSA website ([www.lrsa.org.uk](http://www.lrsa.org.uk) – log-in details previously provided) for those who would like further guidance about how to complete a Marriage Document both before and during the marriage service.

### *GRO Guidebook for the Clergy*

The new version of is now available at the link below:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-for-the-clergy>

### *Marriage Application form*

Many of you may have your own marriage or banns application forms which you use to obtain details relating to couples' marriages, however, a revised Marriage Application form, which reflects the new information required for the Marriage Document, can be found at the link below:

<https://churchsupporthub.org/download/welcome-forms-new-design/>

## *Register of Marriage Services*

The Marriage (Keeping of Records in Churches and Chapels) Regulations 2021 came into force on 4 May 2021. This means that parish churches and church buildings which are licensed for marriages are legally required to have a **Register of Marriage Services** in order to maintain a local record (though not a legal register) of all marriages taking place in the building from 4 May. A printed Register of Marriage Services is available via this link: [Register of Marriage Services - Hardback \(chpublishing.co.uk\)](http://chpublishing.co.uk).

The information contained in the Register of Marriage Services should be the same as that contained in the Marriage Document or Marriage Schedule, including the name and surname of each of the witnesses.

## *Marriage Certificate*

From 4 May, Marriage Certificates will be issued by the civil Register Office only, whether the marriage has taken place using a Marriage Document or a Marriage Schedule.

Clergy will no longer be authorised to issue Marriage Certificates. No fee should be charged by 'the church' or PCC to a couple for a Marriage Certificate. The Parochial Fees Table, fees form and fees information for couples have been updated to reflect this change (please see this link: <https://www.churchofengland.org/resources/clergy-resources/life-events-parochial-fees-and-guidance>).

The fee of £11 will now be payable direct to the civil Register Office, and details about how couples can obtain a Marriage Certificate will be sent to you by your local Register Office so that you can pass these onto couples.

We understand that you have been somewhat overloaded with information since the Government's announcement, however, we hope this note clarifies a number of the questions we have been receiving, even after the GRO's recent Q&A session. No doubt further queries will be raised after 4 May but hopefully the GRO's updated Guidebook for the Clergy will provide more practical advice going forward.

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