

## **Practical guidance for weddings**

If you are due to get married in the coming months, we recognise that this may be a time of great concern.

It will be possible for your wedding to go ahead with minimal numbers in attendance, or if you wish to rearrange your day, we will do everything we can to help you do so.

The following advice is provided for those planning weddings, either who wish to go ahead or to find an alternative date in the future.

### **Before the wedding**

It is advised that meetings between the couple and the priest are held by telephone, skype etc rather than face-to-face. If meetings can only be held in person, social distancing guidance will be followed.

This should also be communicated to anyone in the wider circle of friends, family or colleagues in advance who may wish to attend. Sadly, those over the age of 70 and those with an underlying health condition are strongly discouraged from attending any in the present circumstances.

### **Planning the wedding**

While wedding services may continue, numbers attending the ceremony in church will need to be strictly curtailed to the legal minimum, which is the priest, bride, groom and two witnesses.

Where family relatives or friends are unable to attend given the restrictions on numbering, churches will be happy to explore ways to allow others to join the service, either through platforms such as Skype, or recording the service to send at a later date to anyone unable to attend.

Where no audio link can be achieved, an order of service could be sent either by email or post.

Apart from the bride and groom, the physical distance should be observed as far as possible.

The priest does not have to touch the rings to bless them, nor does he or she have to touch the couple's hands as part of a prayer or blessing, so it is possible for the service to proceed as normal.

No additional church personnel will attend the service, for example, organists, vergers or sound system operator etc.

If a couple wishes to cancel their wedding, then any fees or deposit paid to the church will be refunded in full, and if the couple wishes to postpone, the church will work with them to find a suitable future date wherever possible.

Where it has not been possible for marriage banns to be read because of restrictions to public services, [a Common Licence or Special Licence may be appropriate](#). The priest will be able to help you to ensure you have what is necessary.

For those going ahead with their wedding, it could be possible to have a blessing at a future date with more friends and family in attendance. Prayers can also be said during the service for any who are unable to attend.

### **During the wedding**

Everyone attending the service must adhere to [Government guidance on social distancing](#). Please follow the directions of the officiant if you are attending a service.

While naturally those present may wish to shake hands or hug, all present should refrain from doing so in light of guidance on physical distancing.

### **After the wedding**

In keeping with the recommendations to limit social gatherings, there should not be a reception or other gathering after the marriage; this should be arranged at a future date once Government advice permits.

We will do our best to explain any changes or delays which may be an inevitable consequence of the current restrictions, but we are here to support you and to ensure your wedding can go ahead or be rearranged to a suitable date in the future.

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From [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) guidance for churches, FAQs](#), dated Friday 20 March at 11:40. Check the official page for any subsequent changes.