

Getting married in Berrow Benefice

All you need to know
for your big day ...



A very warm welcome to you both!

We are really pleased that you have decided to have your wedding ceremony in one of the Churches in our benefice. This booklet aims to give you information on all aspects of your Church wedding, but please do feel free to ask Rev Julie, Rev Anthea or Mrs Mel Roberts further questions – there is really no such thing as a stupid question in this context – particularly at the moment when Covid is making it very hard to plan a wedding.

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As things stand at the time of this version of the guidance (January 2021), we are back in lockdown and wedding services can only be carried out in exceptional circumstances and are limited to 6 people. We have also taken the difficult decision to suspend all services in a church for the month of January which we realise means you won't be able to attend to create a Qualifying Connection – see page 7. We will review the situation at the end of the month in the light of the spread of the virus but hopefully, with the vaccine roll out well underway we will be able to re-start physical services sooner rather than later, but only when we feel it is safe to do so.

Our churches

So, we begin with an introduction to all the churches in our benefice, which all have different things to offer but are all as beautiful as each other.

St Thomas of Canterbury Church (next door to Birtsmorton Court!)



Capacity: 120 (but see below)

Location: WR13 6JS
W3W: [\\material.haircuts.outdoors](https://www.google.com/maps/place/WR13+6JS/@52.01035,-2.27777,15z)
Google: 2P95+3H Malvern
OS: 52°01'03.5"N 2°17'27.7"W

As you will have discovered, our church is the Parish Church for Birtsmorton and one of five churches in the Berrow Benefice. Although we are right next door to the Court, we are not actually part of the wedding venue there, but we do work closely with them.

*At the moment
no regular services are taking place at Birtsmorton due to Covid
Check our [website](#) for updates.*

There are normally only two Sunday Services held in Birtsmorton Church each month. The one at 8:00am is a very traditional Service from the Book of Common Prayer; has no hymns or music and lasts about 40mins.

The 10:00am Service is more contemporary with lots of singing and is usually followed by coffee and homemade cakes!

Please note, Birtsmorton Court is not open on Sundays, so if you need to check out anything about the venue, please do give them a call and make an appointment to see them.

We do not have any toilet facilities at the church, but we do have a key to the facilities at the Court.

The capacity of the church is 120 and for legal reasons we are unable to accommodate more. The choir of 20 can only be booked if you have 80 guests or fewer

St Faith's Church, Berrow



Capacity: 100
Location: WR13 6AX
W3W: [\\tactical.exactly.staining](#)
Google: 2M4X+V4 Malvern
OS: 52°00'24.0"N 2°18'06.4"W

St Faith's has recently undergone extensive renovations and has had a new lighting system installed. It is only five minutes drive from Birtsmorton Court and offers a long drive for the taking of photographs and the throwing of confetti!

Toilet facilities are available in the village hall, next to the church.

The capacity of Berrow is 100.

All Saints Hollybush



Capacity: 70
Location: HR8 1EX
W3W: [\\chief.list.fabric](#)
Google: 2MH6+9M Malvern
OS: 52°01'41.6"N 2°20'18.8"W

All Saints is a beautiful rural church built on the common at Hollybush, with wonderful views of the Malvern Hills. Again, All Saints is only a 5 minute drive to the Court.

It is one of our smaller churches and has a capacity of 70

There are no toilet facilities at All Saints.

St John the Baptist, Eldersfield.



Capacity: 175

Location: GL19 4NP
W3W: [\\ tractor.laying.superhero](#)
Google: XPH4+CW Gloucester
OS: 51°58'43.0"N 2°17'33.9"W

St John is the largest of our churches and is set in the lovely rural village of Eldersfield. St John is the furthest of our churches from Birtsmorton Court, but if you have a large wedding, this is the place to be! Hire an old fashioned double decker bus to ferry your guests to the reception and you are sorted!

There are no toilet facilities at the church, but the owners of Eldersfield Court may be willing to let you and your guests use their facilities in the grounds on application. Please note that Eldersfield Court is not open to the public and is a private home, so wandering around the grounds is not allowed. The Court is right opposite the church.

St John has a capacity of 175

Church of the Redeemer, Pendock Cross



Capacity: 40

Location: GL19 3PL
W3W: [\\ endings.whimpered.strict](#)
Google: XMVM+7G Gloucester
OS: 51°59'35.3"N 2°18'57.9"W

Pendock Cross is the smallest of our churches and generally too small for a wedding. Regular services do take place here (see next section).

Pendock Cross has a capacity of 40 and has no toilet facilities.

Attendance at Services

If you have no qualifying connection to the church (see [next section](#) for what this means) you will need to qualify by coming to Sunday Services once a month for the 6 months leading up to your wedding. You are most welcome to any of the Services in any of the five Churches listed above.

You will find the times and locations of all of our Sunday Services listed on our website, berrowbenefice.org.uk, where we also try to keep you updated with the implications of Covid and the various lockdowns for your wedding.

We, the Berrow Benefice clergy team and congregation, are greatly looking forward to getting to know you over the next few months as you join us for Services. Whichever Service you attend we are all more than happy help and to answer any questions that have about your wedding.

We all love being part of the preparations for your big day and we will do our very best to make it as special for you as it can be.

Legal Stuff

So, now you've decided where you would like to be married, there is some legal legwork we need to do – I know, I know, it's not the first thing that springs to mind when planning your wedding, but it is really important!

Identity

At some point in the run up to your wedding, the person conducting the ceremony will need to verify your identity and nationality. This is most easily done by seeing your passports. If you don't have a passport, we can see your birth certificate and driving license instead.

At the moment we can marry British and EA nationals via banns. However, non EA nationals will need to obtain a Senior Registrar's certificate in order to marry with us – ask us for more detail on this. Also we don't yet know how Brexit will effect EA nationals – we await government guidance.

Qualifying Connection

In order to marry in one of our churches you need to be able to show that you have a qualifying connection to it. If you live in the parish, your parents or grandparents live in the parish, or you were baptised in one of our churches, then that's all you need. However, most of our couples don't, which is why you will need to establish a qualifying connection by attending services regularly by which we mean coming along to a service in any of our churches once a month for the 6 months leading up to your wedding day.

Now, Covid lockdowns have made this a little more challenging, but at the time of writing (January 2021) we are back in lockdown and have decided it just isn't safe to hold services in Church this month. We will review the situation at the end of the month, and our aim will be to re-start services as soon as it is safe to do so. Our advice would be to start coming to services as soon as you are able, simply because we don't know when lockdown might be re-imposed and this way you have got some attendance in the bank whatever happens! Keep an eye on our website at berrowbenefice.org.uk for updates on when and where services take place – or follow our Berrow Benefice [Facebook](#) page.

Banns

Are the legal means by which we get you wed. We read your banns once a month for the 3 months leading up to your wedding, which is why we ask you to fill in a banns application form in order to confirm your booking with us. You will need to get your local parish – ie the Church of England parish you live in – to read them too. They will provide you with a Banns Certificate which your officiating minister needs to have from you – otherwise they will be unable to legally marry you. Banns are only valid for 3 months from the last date of reading, so this is utterly vital, but not something you can get done 6 months ahead – add it to your spreadsheet!

If services are suspended by lockdown, we can get you wed by Common License instead, but we still need you to have established that all important Qualifying Connection.

Here endeth the legal bit!

On to much more exciting stuff like.....

The Order of Service for your Wedding

The order of service is a mixture of the legal and the sacred, some elements of it we must include, to ensure that you are legally wed, others like readings and hymns and music are elements which you can choose. We are happy to answer any questions you may have and create a service which is very personal to you.

Sequence of the Order of Service

This outline is provided to help you with the layout of your service sheet.

Our two vicars carry out their weddings in a slightly different way – all the same elements but in a slightly different order.

The *highlighted items* form the core of the service and the hymns are normally printed out in full.

<u>Rev'd Julie</u>		<u>Rev'd Anthea</u>
The Processional Music		
<i>The Welcome</i>		
First Hymn		
<i>The Declarations</i>		<i>The Marriage</i>
<i>The Reading(s)</i>		Second Hymn
<i>The Address</i>		<i>The Reading(s)</i>
Second Hymn		<i>The Address</i>
<i>The Marriage</i>		<i>The Prayers</i>
<i>The Signing of the Registers</i>		Third Hymn
<i>The Prayers</i>		<i>The Signing of the Register</i>
<i>The Lord's Prayer</i>		
Third Hymn		
<i>The Blessing</i>		
Recessional Music and Bride and Groom lead guests from Church		

Explanatory notes

- See the section on [Music](#) for more information about processional music, hymns and music to be played during the signing of the registers
- See also the section on [Readings](#), of which at least one must be from the Bible, and who will read them

Do make use of the Church of England web site www.yourchurchwedding.org where you can hear music and check out suitable readings.

Once you have decided what works for you, please let your minister know and we will put it all together in a Wedding Service outline and send it back to you for you to make it your own.

The order of service is the scaffolding or structure of your big day. Once you've got your heads around that, you can start making decisions about what music, what hymns and what readings you would like, and we've got some suggestions to help you out, if you need them.



Music for your wedding Service

To make your Order of Service your own you will need to make some decisions about the music and readings.

Music to come in to (processional)

Music to go out to (recessional)

2 or 3 hymns

Music to be played during the signing of the registers.

Organist

We will already have allocated an organist for your wedding. We would always recommend that you have the organist to play for the hymns as this will help your guests to enjoy the singing.

The organist is also happy to play for the entry of the bride, during the signing of the registers and for you to leave at the end of the Service as a married couple. If you want a special piece of music to be played, please supply the sheet music www.sheetmusicdirect.com for the organist to practice in good time.

Please note that if you have a video, the fee for the organist doubles. This is because the Performing Rights Society (PRS) view the video as a professional recording of the musician. We have no control over this, it is a legal requirement.

Other Musicians

Some couples have a string quartet to play for them, or a guitarist, or a singer or some other combination. These work well for coming in, going out and for filling in during the registration, but are not as effective as an organist in leading the hymns.

The more guests you have, the louder the accompaniment needs to be, so musicians can work well for small, more intimate weddings.

Recorded music

Many couples have a CD or mp3 for part of the music. We have a good quality sound system in our churches, so this works well if you have a particular song in mind for the procession and/or recession, or if you want specific songs played during the registration.

Please note that we don't have people available to work the sound system during the ceremony, so you will have to give the job to someone you know. If you are using a CD, it is best to burn the tracks you want onto a special cd so that there's no room for playing the wrong track. We would suggest using an iPod or your phone rather than a CD, but please ensure you have the relevant tracks downloaded as there is no Wifi in any of the churches!

MUSIC

Please bring whatever you are intending to use to the rehearsal for a sound check, along with whoever is going to operate it during your service.

We are here to help, so do talk to us if you are concerned about anything to do with the music.

Suggestions for Wedding Hymns

You will need to select two or three hymns for the wedding service and included below is a list of suggestions from which you may wish to choose. Please do not feel bound by the list. There is also a list of possible hymns on <https://www.yourchurchwedding.org/article/hymns-for-your-wedding/> where you can listen to each one, which you may find helpful. If there are others that you know and like then please discuss them with us.

First Line of Hymn	Preferences	Final Choice
All my hope on God is founded		
All things bright and beautiful		
And did those feet (Jerusalem)		
Be still for the presence of the Lord		
Be thou my vision		
Come down O love divine		
Come to a wedding*		
Dear Lord and Father of mankind		
Give me joy in my heart (Sing Hosanna)		
I danced in the morning (Lord of the dance)		
I the Lord of sea and sky		
Immortal, invisible, God only wise		
King of glory, King of peace		
Lead us heavenly Father, lead us		
Let there be love shown among us		
Lord of all hopefulness		
Love divine, all loves excelling		
Make me a channel of your peace		
Now thank we all our God		
Morning has broken		
O perfect love		
O praise ye the Lord		
O worship the King all glorious above		
One more step along the world I go		
Praise and thanksgiving*		
Praise my soul the King of heaven		
Praise to the holiest in the height		
Praise the Lord, ye heavens adore him		

First Line of Hymn	Preferences	Final Choice
Take my life and let it be		
Tell out my soul		
The King of love my shepherd is		
The Lord's my shepherd		
Through all the changing scenes of life		
To God be the glory		
You shall go out with joy		

* same tune as 'Morning has broken'

Music Choices

The aisles at all of our Churches are rather short, so we've consulted our organist, Giles, and come up with some suggestions for music to come into and music to go out to. The Coming In music is easy to curtail nicely after a relatively short walk down the aisle! We suggest you go onto Youtube and check them out.

However, we also very much welcome your suggestions, either for our organist to play, other musicians to play or recorded music.

Coming In aka Processional

- Trumpet Voluntary – by Jeremiah Clarke
- Arrival of the Queen of Sheba – Handel
- Traditional "Here Comes the Bride" – Wagner – Bridal Chorus from Lohengrin
- Pachelbel's Canon in D
- Elgar Chanson de Matin

Going Out aka Recessional

- Traditional: Wedding March from a Midsummer Night's Dream - Mendelssohn
- Karg-Elert - Nun danket Triumphal March - goes at a nice pace, not too fast but not too slow
- Hornpipe from Handel's Water Music - again, lovely music and nicely paced.
- Handel's Music for the Royal Fireworks IV: La Réjouissance?
- Elgar - Pomp and Circumstance March No. 4 - which would keep it local!
- Walton - Crown Imperial
- Widor's Toccata

Church Choir

This may be something you have not yet considered. From experience, many wedding guests do not sing out or even sing at all. It can be quite dis-heartening.

We have a 'newly re-vamped' choir, under a new leader, who would be happy to come along to your wedding and boost the singing of your hymns. We can wear our robes or not, depending on your personal choice.

We can also help with your choice of hymns and they could be 'tried out' at one of your six monthly visits to Church (if six monthly visits apply to you) Should you need help choosing hymns, please contact our benefice administrator, Mel Roberts, at the Church office. The cost of us helping you is £95 and you can book through Mel.

In this Covid world, we should probably point out that most of our choir members are of a vulnerable age, so best to contact Mel sooner rather than later to ask about availability.

Readings

So, that's the music side of your service sorted, what about the readings? We've got some suggestions for biblical readings, below, but you are also very welcome to have a secular reading – a poem, piece of prose or some song lyrics for example. Here are the biblical suggestions, but do liaise with your vicar who will be able to narrow the choice down for you!

Suggested bible readings suitable for a wedding*OLD TESTAMENT*

1. Genesis 1: 26-28	God creates man and woman
2. Genesis 12: 1-5	Abraham and Sarah's journey
3. Song of Solomon 2: 10-13. 8: 6-7	Winter passed many waters cannot quench love
4. Jeremiah 31; 3-34	A new covenant made by God

EPISTLE

5. Romans 8: 31-35, 37-39	If God is for us who can be against us? Nothing can separate us from the love of God.
6. Romans 12:1, 2, 9-13	Be a living sacrifice and advice
7. Romans 15:1-3, 5-7, 13	Building up our neighbour to live in harmony. Welcome one another.
8. 1 Corinthians 13	Love is patient and kind. The greater of the three is love.
9. Ephesians 3:14-end	Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. The breadth, length, height and depth of love
10. Ephesians 4: 1-6	Bear with each other in love. One Lord, one faith, one baptism God is all, through all, above all.
11. Philippians 4: 4-9	Rejoice in God. The peace that passes all understanding. Whatever is true/honourable/just/pure
12. Colossians 3:12-17	Bear with each other, forgive, clothe with love, peace, thankfulness
13. 1 John 3: 18-end	Let us love one another
14. 1 John 4:7-17	Love is from God and became a living sacrifice.

READINGS

GOSPEL

15. Matthew 5:1-10	The Beatitudes - Blessed are the...
16. Matthew 7: 21, 24-end	The wise man built his house on the rock
17. Matthew 19:4-6	Those whom God has joined together
18. Mark 10: 6-9.13-16	Two become one flesh and blessing of children
19. John 2: 1-11	The Wedding at Cana. Water into wine.
20. John 15: 1-8	Living in the true vine.
21. John 15: 9-17	Love one another as I have loved you.

Flowers

You've decided on the music, you've decided on the readings, what else is there to decide? How about some flowers? Whatever flowers you decide upon, if you marry at Birtsmorton Church do bear in mind that all arrangements are generally transported over to the Court after your service so that they can be dual purpose and enhance your reception as well as your wedding service. We do have guidelines on what works and what doesn't specifically for Birtsmorton Church which follow, but please do ask us for pointers on what works for the other churches too.



Guidelines for Flowers at Weddings at St Thomas of Canterbury with St Peter and St Paul Birtsmorton

The beautiful Parish Church of St Thomas of Canterbury with St Peter and St Paul Birtsmorton has stood for more than 700 years and our experience over a number of years has shown us that the charm and uniqueness of this place of worship is best enhanced and its character preserved by following a few simple guidelines when introducing floral decorations for a wedding.

The Porch

You may have seen pictures of the porch archway covered with flowers. However, because the wet oasis causes damage to the underlying woodwork, this has had to be discontinued. However the gaps between the vertical uprights offer a great deal of scope for trays of flowers, a pedestal may be placed on the right hand side of the door as you face it and there is provision for one small hanging arrangement on the door itself.

The Font

A display placed on top of the font which is just inside the door is particularly effective. We will provide a suitable board and a white cloth to cover the font should you need it.

The Pew Ends and the Candelabras

The candelabras on the pew ends offer an ideal place for flowers. However, no arrangement should be placed on the top of the candelabras as these would interfere with sightlines in the church. Instead, arrangements should be fixed partway down the candelabra stem or at the base. Fixing must be with string or ribbon, not florist's or oasis tape; this is to prevent further damage to the painted finish and to ease removal of the flowers after the wedding. Under no circumstance can the candles in the candelabras be lit.



The Windows

Again, to avoid damage, florist's or oasis tape should not be used to affix floral arrangements in the window spaces.

The Pulpit Area

The space around the pulpit is used during the wedding ceremony and it would not be appropriate to place a pedestal here. However, a small arrangement suspended from the lectern post of the pulpit is very effective. Again, please use ribbon or string rather than florist's or oasis tape.



The Tomb

This offers an ideal place to position an arrangement. However, to preserve this historic monument, the top of the tomb must be protected. Most arrangements are shown to best effect if they are positioned against the wall at the end of the tomb.

The Chancel Area

Because this area is used as a place in which the registers are signed, a pedestal is not appropriate here. Flowers should also not be placed in the windows. However, a small arrangement suspended on string or ribbon from the pew end on the north side of the chancel (the left as you face the altar) is one way flowers may be introduced in this area.

The Sanctuary

This provides the only (and the best) site for a pedestal within the church. The pedestal is most effective when placed in the corner on the south side (the right hand side as you face the altar) of the sanctuary. We do not provide a pedestal stand. In this area, floral arrangements should not be placed on the altar, in the East window or on the William Caldwell tomb. Further, because of the historical significance of the window on the south side of the sanctuary, no arrangements may be placed here.

Introduction and Removal of Flowers

You should aim to have the floral decoration of the Church completed on the day before the wedding – this allows us time to prepare the Church and vacuum the carpet. Similarly, flowers should be removed once the guests have departed – this is particularly important if there is another wedding the following day. Removed flowers can make a useful addition to the reception area or you may wish to give them as gifts to particular guests.

You should be aware that there is no running water in the church and we do not have any facilities for the disposal of rubbish. The latter should be taken away with you.

Flowers can be an important part of the day and arranged sympathetically, they greatly enhance the inherent and natural beauty of the building. For this reason we do not encourage the use of artificial flowers. Moreover, the manner of fixing the floral arrangements to the various parts of the structure and furnishings needs to be done with care as this can be the source of a great deal of damage to the fabric of the building.

Although they may seem irksome, by following these guidelines not only will you achieve the best result for your wedding, you will also be helping us to maintain this beautiful building for future generations.

Rehearsal

So, you've made all the decisions, you've attended six month's worth of services, your banns have all been read – we're nearly there – just the rehearsal to go. This is usually held the afternoon or evening before your wedding day, but we can be flexible on this to suit you and your shift patterns. Here are some guidelines on who should attend the rehearsal, if possible.



Who needs to attend the rehearsal if possible.

- Bride and groom
- Whoever is giving the bride away
- Best man
- Bridesmaids - especially chief bridesmaid
- Flower girls
- Page boys
- Ushers
- Anyone who is doing a reading - to have a practice
- Anyone who is operating music choices
- Witnesses*

To clarify, you will need two witnesses to come forward to sign the registers with you. Traditionally there is one from the brides side and one from the grooms, but they can be anyone you choose to witness your signatures – Mums, Dads, siblings, best man and chief bridesmaid, its entirely up to you but your vicar will need to know in advance in order to pencil them in on the register.

Do remember to bring any music you are intending to have played, orders of service and confetti – we can keep them safe in the Church and you have less to remember on THE day!

Costs

So, everything is set up and ready for your big day – just one sting in the tail – payment.....We don't need a deposit to hold your date for you, but we do ask that you pay your wedding fees a month before your wedding day. Here are the details of the fees for 2021.



There is no doubt that the choices you make about your wedding day can make a huge impact on the total cost. Part of the cost will be for the legal fees, and everyone pays this. There are also optional extras which you can choose or decline, according to your budget

This basic legal fee includes the cost of the vicar, the church, the verger, calling your banns, a banns certificate, the marriage certificate, lighting and all administration.

This required fee has ancient origins and ensures your church can maintain essential services like weddings, christenings, funerals and all kinds of other ministries for you and your community.

Optional extras

The statutory wedding fee doesn't include extras you may choose or decline, such as:

- Having an organist, choir or bell-ringers – these extra staff will all need to be booked in advance. The organist is automatically booked for you, unless you tell us otherwise. Bear in mind that if your wedding is filmed, the cost of the organist doubles to take into account professional performing rights
- Church flowers – some of our churches have a local flower arranger who can help you with the flower displays in church. Rosemarie Bolton at Birtsmorton is particularly good!
- Extra copies of the marriage certificate.

We also ask that all our couples make a voluntary contribution towards the maintenance of the fabric of our church buildings and the upkeep of the churchyard.

COSTS

Fees for your wedding 2021

£514.00	Statutory fee (including vergers)
£90.00 <i>(£180.00</i>	Organist <i>if having a video recording)</i>
£100.00	Voluntary contribution towards the up-keep of our beautiful churches
£100.00	Bells at Birtsmorton
£120.00	Bells at Berrow or Eldersfield
£95.00	Choir

**Please ask your minister to confirm the total before making payment.

Paying by B.A.C.S

Account name: Berrow Benefice Fees

Sort Code: 30-94-14

Account number: 0327 2282

Please use your surname and date of wedding as your reference

e.g *Smith/Jones 25.04.2021*

Please make payment at least a month before your wedding, so that we can confirm receipt of your fees

Thank you and we look forward to meeting you and working with you to make sure your wedding day is a very special and memorable one, and very importantly, one which is very personal to you.



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With thanks to Jen & James Riley for use of the photographs of their wedding at
Birtsmorton Church in October 2020