

# “It’s a lovely church and the building is not too bad either”

THE BENEFICE OF SALCOMBE, MALBOROUGH WITH SOUTH HUISH

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## WEDDING POLICIES

REVISED 2017

**Congratulations on your engagement and thank you for considering us for your wedding. This document is essentially about the values and ethos underpinning the use of this building and the spirit in which weddings are conducted. From time to time there can be misunderstandings and so we have created this set of policies to clarify issues.**

### Ethos



Churches are firstly people not buildings. The buildings you are seeking to have your wedding in are the spiritual home of a living Christian community. The word ‘church’ is by poor coincidence the same word to describe a building and a people. In preparing your service please think about the same courtesy you might have in stepping inside someone’s home. This is not a blank canvas which can be decorated or rearranged without consulting and considering us. Likewise neither are our churches dead spaces that do not evolve over time.

God’s Church is alive and active in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century and our buildings change with that. Though the congregation provide sacred space we are not in the business of bolstering nostalgia. The worshipping congregation therefore holds the absolute right to change the interior and exterior as it sees fitting within the normal planning process. Brides and groom can therefore make no appeal to changes made, seating, colour, lighting, partitioning of spaces, etc. This also includes any scaffolding or emergency work. Church fees in this sense are not contractual and do not bind us to provide the church building as if held in sepia. We do, however, contact couples early if we are making changes and try our very best not to disrupt things.

It may also surprise some at just how busy these buildings are. This is especially the case in Salcombe between Friday and Saturday in which a series of community groups and church activities occur. There is also considerable preparation for Sunday services. Please make arrangements with the office for florists and additional musicians to book time to do their bit. What we do not want is wedding businesses and individuals coming into the church and then getting upset that they have not time to set up.

We always endeavour that all weddings are celebrated at our churches are marvellous occasions which the new couple will look back with fondness. These church buildings are very popular for weddings but as this is primarily a *place of worship* rather than a wedding venue there are limits to what we can and cannot provide. We are happy to negotiate with every couple but would ask for consideration when planning around us. Please do not assume that we can fit in with your reception venue dates. It is not fair on the church if we are *last* in your arrangements. This is also very frustrating with hoteliers and reception venues in the town.

### **The Right to Marry**



A legal right to marry in this benefice is dependent on whether or not you have residence in the benefice. This is called qualification. The vicar currently allows (in the spirit of the law) couples who have a second home, or a parental home here to have their wedding in church. With no legal connection couples should not assume that they will be granted permission. The vicar will suggest that couples seek either a Superintendent's, Common or Archbishop's license. If banns of marriage need to be read in another parish then please make these arrangements yourself and ask for a banns certificate. Without that certificate we cannot legally proceed.

### **Remarriage after Divorce**

In this benefice we have conducted wedding services where one or more of the partners is divorced. This is done at the discretion of the vicar and the ministry team. Additional time is needed to discuss and explore this and please do not assume that a wedding is possible until you have spoken to one of the clergy. If a Common License is needed then this is at the discretion of a local bishop. The Church of England does not permit marriage in church where someone has been divorced twice.

### **Cancellation**

As we are offering a pastoral service there is no pressure to go through with this. There will be no loss of any deposit or coercion by the ministry team if either of you do not want to do this. Freedom is paramount, even at the last minute.

### **Dates**

Please note that there can be absolutely no weddings on Sundays, Christmas Day, Ash Wednesday, Holy Week, Good Friday, Holy Saturday and Easter Sunday. It would be preferred if weddings were not on a Monday. Although the law has changed on the times of wedding during the day this benefice reserves the right to consider what is appropriate.



### **Pencil In Dates**

Please note that you are free to check with the office whether a time and date is available. Until you *see one of the clergy* of the benefice this gives you no rights to that time and date. The Church of England does not permit weddings to be booked without both partners being

seen by an Anglican clergy person in person. This interview cannot be conducted over the phone, email or SKYPE. It is to prevent fraud or a wedding being conducted where there is a serious impediment. After seeing the clergy person please arrange with the benefice administrator to make confirmation.

### **Times**

At our churches the available times on Saturdays are 11am, 1pm, and 3pm. We reserve the right to have three weddings on our premises on a Saturday. Couples should never assume that they will be the only wedding. Neither can couples put pressure on the clergy (or another couple) to hold to their wedding being the only one on that day. It is also unfair to privately approach parish groups and put pressure on them to cancel their meetings if they clash with your preferred dates. These times are set for choir and bell ringer availability.

### **Car Parking**

In Salcombe the car park is closed off for weddings and couples are free to organise who can and cannot use it. The exception to this is the choir, the vicar, vergers and the churchwardens. It is not acceptable to ask the vicar, choir, vergers or churchwardens to move their vehicles so as to improve wedding photographs. Disabled access is available from the office door where there is a ramp.

### **Confetti and High Heels**

If confetti is to be used please use it on the lower car park. Extreme high heels can damage the oak floor. If you know that ladies might be arriving with such heels please purchase from the office heel protectors.

### **Music**



The church seeks to be as inclusive as possible with regards to music. Please bear in mind not all music requests may be possible or tasteful inside our building. CD music can be played but the quality cannot be guaranteed and the operation must be done by an usher with the assistance of the vergers. Generally, during the service we prefer the music to hymnody and/or worship songs.

Permission for visiting choirs should be cleared with us and not assumed.

### **Officiating Clergy**

Where possible the clergy person who has done the wedding preparation also does the wedding. Sickness or holidays may mean that a change of cleric has to be coordinated. Sadly, we can provide no absolute guarantee that you will get the presider you wish.

### **Visiting Clergy**

Visiting Anglican clergy from the UK can preside at a wedding ceremony at the discretion of the local ministry team and the incumbent. In some cases the vicar may deem it more pastorally sensitive to have a visiting Anglican cleric do part of the wedding and not the whole. National church fees are payable irrespective of who does the wedding. Legally non-

Anglican clergy can assist but not preside. Please note that the norm for the address is around 10 minutes. Please do not make arrangements until you first spoken to this office.

### **Use of the Upper Room**

The Salcombe Church has a policy of absolutely no wedding receptions in the Upper Room. However, we have allowed brief drinks gatherings afterwards as long as there is an undertaking to clear up all rubbish afterwards and leave the Upper Room in a good and clean state.

### **Photography and Video**

The current vicar allows *discreet* photography during the services but please check with the actual priest doing the service as some clergy are uncomfortable with photos being taken during the service. Please suggest that your photographer comes to the rehearsal.

Professional video can incur an additional performance fee from some organists. An introductory sheet for photographers is available with this sheet. Essentially we ask that this be discreet and quiet (without noisy clicking and use of flash.) We would also ask that photography be kept to a minimum and that photographers do not wander around the church. When you interview your photographer please do not assume that it alright for him or her to click their way through the liturgy. At no point will the clergy “do something again” for the photos. Neither is it acceptable for the photographer to spontaneously direct the congregation to move, turn or jump.

### **Chairs**

If the chairs are to be arranged in another manner the please let the office know and preferably not at the last minute. Ushers will be expected to help arrange these beforehand and help put them back afterwards with the help of the verger. Chairs are not allowed to be covered. The church is not legally bound to provide seating. In the Eastern Church and in our Medieval period Christians worshipping standing and pews were a much later novelty.

### **Flower Arranging**

Flower arrangements can be a point of *big contention* and we wish to minimize stress on this issue. Naturally, it is wonderful to see the church interior decorated with flowers for a wedding. However, this can become a complicated issue when there is more than one wedding on that day. As stated earlier this church is the home of a living and worshipping community and therefore not simply another wedding venue. So for example, *excessive flower arrangements should be cleared with the benefice office* at least two months beforehand. All floral work should be cleared with the flower captain of the church. The time needed to set up and dismantle flower arrangements needs also to be taken into account, especially if there is another wedding or meeting following. Permission for arrangements in the window bays should be sought. Please do not move children’s artwork without first clearing this with us. Some mounted art work can be particularly delicate.

Flower arrangements for the Sunday services are put in independently of wedding flowers, however if good notice beforehand it may be possible to do something sympathetic to the

arrangement. It is very unreasonable at the last minute to ask our volunteers to drive to far away locations for specifics flower.

**Last Minute Decorations and Musical Rehearsals**

Please note that Salcombe church is sometimes used on Saturday mornings for junior choir rehearsals and occasional conferences. These events must have priority and flower arranging and guest musicians needs work around them. Weddings in late September will also need to clear with the office whether or not clash with Harvest Supper decorations (which take priority.) Floral arrangements for weddings in the last week of Christmas must not impinge on the decorations of the church. During the last two weeks of Lent all flower arrangements must be taken away after the wedding. We suggest that when there are several weddings on one day couples negotiate with each other. No couple should be seen as having a right over the other in this regard.

Please check with the office as to the availability of the church for decorators, guest musician’s, etc. This is a busy building and it cannot be assumed that it is free at any time.

**Special Exhibitions**

These churches reserves the right to have art exhibitions, even if these seem in the opinion of the wedding couple intrusive. Salcombe Church occasionally has art exhibitions. Galmpton Church displays a series Byzantine icons. Malborough has a regular art exhibition space down the north aisle. None of these can be touched or moved. The icons at Galmpton are particularly fragile and touching them could damage work that has taken in some cases months to prayerfully create. Many of these art pieces are delicate and highly precious. Art plays a big part of the churches locally. Some art may be controversial because it speaks out of injustices that take place in the world. (It is easy to get upset about this and forget that the central piece of art that hangs in most churches is of a man on a cross.)

**Conclusion**

Although the above may seem very extensive we are trying our very best to facilitate a **lovely day**. Our main request is that couples dialogue with us and understand the primary function of these spaces is the worship God.



The Vicar and the PCC would ask that you read this policy and sign your name below to indicate that your understanding and cooperation. You should receive a copy of the policy. Many thanks.

\_\_\_\_\_ (Groom)

\_\_\_\_\_ (Bride)                      date \_\_\_\_\_