

Getting married in the Quidenham Group

Congratulations on your forthcoming marriage and for choosing to hold the ceremony in one of the six beautiful, historic churches that make up the Quidenham Group. The Quidenham Group Ministry and Administration team are here to help and guide you through all the practical steps that need to be undertaken and considered before the wedding day. Set out below are several questions and answers which, we hope, will be of use to you as you make your preparations for the ceremony.

On reading read through the questions and answers, if there is something that we have not covered, please do not hesitate to contact either Revd Steve Wright on 01953 887183 or the benefice administrator Mrs Jill Moses on 01953 887413 or email jillannm1@gmail.com. We are here to help so please ask if you need to!

Who can/cannot get married in the Quidenham Group

We can marry people of any nationality, Christians from any denomination. We cannot marry same sex couples. You will need to be comfortable with a Christian ceremony.

Will you marry people who have been divorced?

Several of our weddings involve people who have been through a divorce. However, divorce always poses certain questions and you need to discuss these with Reverend Wright. One of the main issues is whether the divorce came about because of your current relationship and have any lessons been learnt from the past that will give strength and guidance for the future. Any application from someone who is still legally married cannot be accepted.

More information about the relevant paperwork we need to see for any divorced bride or groom can be seen further on in the document.

Is it possible to be married by another minister, we know? Can this be arranged?

Yes, this can be arranged for another minister to be involved in the service or maybe even conduct it. Please ask well in advance for details of this and for us to arrange this for you.

Does nationality matter?

No, but there are special procedures required for those of other nationalities. Please ask for details.

We would like to have a civil ceremony and then have a blessing/thanksgiving service in church. Is this possible?

Yes, this is something we can do for you. Again, please contact us to discuss and arrange this.

I am pregnant, what should I do?

The church teaches that sex outside marriage is not a Christian practice and for the good of your marriage we recommend abstinence until the wedding day. If you find yourself pregnant, please tell us and do not be embarrassed. We will try to involve any children in the ceremony by praying for a blessing for you as a family.

About the churches in the Quidenham Group

There are six churches that make up the Quidenham Group and they are as follows:-

St Mary's Banham

St Mary's Eccles

St Martin's New Buckenham

All Saints Old Buckenham

St Andrew's Quidenham

All Saints Wilby

Each of the churches will provide a wonderful architectural backdrop for your wedding.

Parking and disabled access

You can park at all the churches in the group but in some cases the parking is very limited. Most of the churches can offer disabled access but please let us know if you have any disabled guests and we will ensure that access will not be a problem.

Also, if your guest list is high and there are likely to be a lot of cars, please tell us and we may be able to suggest alternative parking near the church.

Planning the wedding

When should I fix a date for our wedding in the Quidenham Group?

Once you have downloaded the application form from the Quidenham Group website and provided all the evidence it requires you to attach and send the form to either Reverend Wright or Mrs Moses, we will then confirm the date to you if Reverend Wright agrees to marry you.

What days do you perform weddings?

All days of the week are available for weddings. Sometimes choosing a non week-end day can be less expensive for the catering, photographer, reception venue etc but the Church of England wedding fee remains the same regardless of the day you choose.

Can we assume we can have the day we want?

No. The day may have been fully booked by other events or the priest may be away for some reason. However, there are other priests in the Quidenham Group who may be able to conduct the ceremony if this is the case. Please check with us and wait until we have agreed a date before you book major expenses like the reception or honeymoon.

Will you help us organise other aspects of the wedding?

We will offer as much advice and support with regard to the church ceremony itself, but you will need to organise items such as catering, flowers, printing etc. However, if you want flowers in church and do not intend to use a professional florist, sometimes the local group of flower arrangers will do this for you. If this is something you might wish to take up, then please speak direct to us about this.

Do we need to meet for marriage preparation?

Yes. We will invite you to meet for a marriage preparation session with other local couples. These are usually held once or twice a year dependent upon the number of attendees.

We are aware that whatever day/date is chosen for this, will not suit everyone because of work or family commitments. If you are not able to attend either of the marriage preparation sessions, then we will arrange an alternative date to meet.

The sessions are informative, fun and thought provoking covering many aspects of your relationship, your strengths and weaknesses, raising a family, financial affairs etc. You will take a lot from the session and enjoy it!

What if we live far away?

For those living in parishes outside the Quidenham Group, we will normally ask that you contact your own local church for marriage preparation. You will need to contact them for the banns in any case – see below.

The Paperwork

What do you need immediately?

First of all, you will need the Application Form for marriage which is available on the Quidenham Group website. We will not take any action or pencil in a date until we have that information.

To satisfy government legislation, we shall need to see proof of your nationality so will need to see a copy of your birth certificate or passport.

If you have been divorced, we also need to see a copy of your decree absolute or if you are a widow/widower we shall need to see the death certificate of your previous husband/wife.

Reading of the Banns

Reading of the Banns in church is notice of your intention to marry and should be organised at least 3 or 4 months ahead of the wedding date. The banns have to be read for 3 consecutive Sundays before the wedding so we advise, do not leave this till the last minute and organise the reading in the last month before the wedding. In the last month before the wedding, there is enough stress anyway, so knowing your banns have been read and the **Banns Certificate** has been sent in, is one less thing to worry about!

We will organise the reading of the banns for you here, but if one or both of you live in a village/town outside the Quidenham Group, then the Banns have to be read in the church of your residence as well. It is your responsibility to organise this with the local vicar – we cannot do the ceremony without it. But if you forget, or if you live abroad, contact us for what to do.

How much are the fees and when do we need to pay?

The details of the current wedding fees are on the [website](#).

The fees for the ceremony and all additional extras should be paid anytime in the six months before the wedding. Please contact us to find out how to pay.

The Wedding Service

What form does the service take?

We follow the standard form for the Church of England.

How long does the service take?

The service will take 30/35 minutes depending on whether you choose to have hymns. We usually allow 1 hour between weddings to allow for time for photographs after the service.

Can we choose our own readings/prayers?

Yes, of course, and in fact we encourage you to do so to put your personal stamp on the service. Some suggested readings are available on the [Diocese of Norwich website](#). At least one reading must be from the Bible, but you are welcome to have other readings if you would like, provided you have agreed them with the vicar.

If, however, you don't want to choose your own readings, the vicar will choose a suitable one. Please also suggest any appropriate prayers you would like included if you so wish.

Can we ask for someone (for example a family member or close friend) to read or pray?

Yes, we encourage this.

Can we choose our own music (hymns, entrance, exit, during the signing of the register)?

Yes, but please make sure your musician can play them or have a CD/Ipod player and someone to work it. In the group we have a large number of hymns on CD, if you choose this option rather than having an organist. Please ask us about this.

We suggest you only have hymns if you know your guests will sing out with gusto!

Can we bring our own musicians?

Yes, of course but please advise them to be at the church early enough to allow them to set up.

Can we write our own vows?

We have to stick with the vows in the standard Church of England service primarily to ensure that the marriage is legal. But if you have any special words that you want to say to each other, please contact us as we may be able to include them at an appropriate point in the service.

Will you set and print the order of service for us?

No, we don't do this, but we can give advice on it. Usually, there is no need for an order of service, but if you really want one, then our advice is to keep it simple! Something like an A5 sheet with the Lord's Prayer and your picture on the front will provide your guests with a lovely reminder of the day they shared with you both.

How many people do we legally need to be at the service?

The legal minimum is the couple plus two witnesses, who again can be of any religious faith but must be aged 18 or over and fully understand what is going on.

Does someone need to give the bride away?

This is traditional and if one of your parents is able to do so, then it's fine. To help calm nerves we do recommend that an escort, whether male or female, should accompany the bride down the aisle.

Can we throw confetti?

Yes, this can be done outside the church but bio-degradable only please!

We suggest avoiding rice as it attracts vermin and rose petals, especially in the church, as they stain floors and sometimes the bride's dress.

How early can we get in to arrange flowers ? (if applicable)

Please contact us direct about this and we will liaise with the churchwardens to ensure the church is unlocked and ready for when your florist needs to be there.

Can we take photos/video during the service?

Yes, but please remind the photographer to ask the vicar on the day what is acceptable.

After the Wedding

When do we get our marriage certificate?

Once you sign the register, you will get one certified copy at the wedding.

Can we get extra copies of the certificates later?

Yes, , but this will incur an additional charge.

Hopefully this comprehensive document will have answered many of the questions you might have about your wedding. Anything else, then please contact us. There is another FAQ page for weddings on the diocesan website:

<http://www.dioceseofnorwich.org/churches/registry/marriage/frequently-asked-questions/>

