



***St Mary Magdalene, Great Hampden***



GETTING MARRIED AT  
GREAT HAMPDEN

## Welcome to St Mary Magdalene, Great Hampden!

First of all, congratulations on your engagement! Whether you have recently got engaged or are actively planning your special day, we're delighted that you are thinking about getting married at Great Hampden.



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It is a beautiful and ancient church, and you are following in the footsteps of brides and grooms who have been getting married here for many centuries - Christian worship has taken place here since the thirteenth century, with a continuous record of marriage ceremonies dating from 1577.

We believe a church wedding is the best way to begin your married life, whether or not you go to church often. The vows you will make can only be made in church. It is a special and proper place to consecrate your love, ask for God's blessing and take this important step in your life together.

We will work with you to make your day personal to you as a couple. If you have children, they can be involved too. You have lots of choice over readings, music, flowers, and all the other things that will make your wedding a unique occasion - and a true reflection of your love for each other. We hope that this booklet is of help to you, and we look forward to celebrating your wedding day with you and send our warmest good wishes as you prepare for the day.

*Wherever you are in the process, please feel free to contact the Rector by phone or email if you have any questions or concerns-we want you to enjoy the preparation almost as much as the wedding day itself, so please don't get stressed!*

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## How It Works

Firstly, contact the Rector or Church Secretary to find a suitable date. At this point you will need to pay a non-refundable £50 deposit to secure your wedding date.

The next step will be to arrange an initial meeting with the minister who will take your wedding. For weddings booked a year in advance, this may mean waiting until the Autumn before we know which minister is taking your wedding. At that first meeting, we will begin to discuss the service with you. We will outline some of the choices and decisions you can make about the structure and content of the service. We'll talk through the legal process by which couples get married in church - it is different to a civil wedding. In nearly every case, it is pretty easy to arrange. We'll talk through the various costs and options that you have. We'll also set a date with you for a second meeting to talk more in depth about the service.

By about four months before the wedding date, we should have a fair idea about the content of the service - the readings, hymns and music.

After we've planned your service, we talk in more detail about what it all means and what it is all about. We focus on the vows you make to each other: these are the heart of the service. Church is the only place you can make promises this big to each other. By making these promises in church, you invite God, who is loving and caring, to help you keep them.

The rehearsal takes place before your wedding - usually on the evening two days before the wedding. It can be an emotional occasion, but the real purpose is to help you feel relaxed and ready to enjoy the big day.

## The Legal Stuff

### Getting Married by the Reading of Banns

The simplest way to get married in church is by what is called "the reading of banns". This simply means that notice of your marriage is announced at the main Sunday Service three times in the months leading up to your wedding. This must happen in both St Mary Magdalene and the Church of England Parish Church where you live.

To find out which parish you live, visit [www.achurchnearyou.org.uk](http://www.achurchnearyou.org.uk) and enter your postcode.

## Who can get married by Banns?

Being married by banns is the best legal preparation if you are both British Nationals living in England.

At least one of you will also need a qualifying connection with St. Mary Magdalene Church, Great Hampden. There are many of these including:

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- 1. One of you lives in Great Hampden or Prestwood parishes.*
  - 2. One of you is on St Mary Magdalene, Great Hampden's or Holy Trinity Prestwood's electoral role.*
  - 3. One of you was baptised at St Mary Magdalene or Holy Trinity, Prestwood.*
  - 4. One of you was prepared for confirmation in either church.*
  - 5. One of you has, at any time, lived in either parish for at least six months.*
  - 6. One of you has, at any time, habitually attended normal church services in either church for at least six months.*
  - 7. One of your parents has lived in either parish for six months.*
  - 8. One of your parents has habitually attended normal church services in either church for at least six months.*
  - 9. One of your parents or grandparents was married in either church.*
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If you are married by the reading of banns, your minister will let you know when they will be read. Make sure you are there to ensure they are read out!

## What other legal paths are there?

There are other legal paths to a church wedding. If one of you is a foreign national, or resides abroad or for good reasons cannot make a qualifying connection, then you must talk to the minister early on. We will help you to find the most appropriate route.

## What about a Wedding Blessing?

Sometimes couples will have a civil ceremony followed by a wedding blessing. There are lots of reasons for this, and it is often a good solution when people from

different cultures or countries get married. A wedding blessing doesn't contain any legal elements of a wedding, but it does contain all the spiritual elements of vows and rings and is every bit a church wedding!

## Things to Think About

### Can we involve our children?

Many people getting married will have children and want to involve them in the wedding. There are lots of different ways to do this. The main thing is to make sure everybody is comfortable and happy with what's happening. Tell the minister early on that you'd like to involve your children in the ceremony, and then you can think through the best way to do that for your wedding.

### Getting married after a divorce

It has been possible for people to get married in church after a divorce for some time. If you have been divorced, the minister will need to see your original decree absolute. As with every couple, the minister will want to get a sense from you both of your journey to where you are now.

### One of us isn't a British National. Does that change things?

It's important for you to be sure your marriage will be legally recognised in your home country, if that isn't the UK. Getting married here doesn't automatically confer any right of residency. It is generally a simple matter to work out the best route to marriage if you aren't a British National.

Every case is different, so make sure you raise this with your minister at the start.

## Flowers



Flowers are often an important part of the wedding day. There is a lot of scope to decorate the church. You can bring in outside florists or do the flowers yourself. It is important that you tell us what flowers you will be having. To do this, please contact Margaret Gray on 01494 489840 or email [marggray@btinternet.com](mailto:marggray@btinternet.com)

Margaret will also be able to give you good advice as to what will work well in the Church.

## Altar Flowers

It is traditional for wedding couples to provide altar flowers. At Great Hampden, this means the two displays either side of the silver cross on the shelf behind the altar. Your marriage is blessed at the altar, and these flowers are always left in the church for the Sunday service. Please let us know if you would like our help with these flowers.



## Other Flowers



You can have pedestals of flowers and other types of arrangements too, and often couples ask an usher to take these to the reception - which helps to save some money! You can borrow the church pedestals for your arrangements, but they must stay in the church. You are welcome to dress the candelabra and windowsills, but in a church like ours we cannot have flowers attached to woodwork or stonework (you can secure with

paper covered florist wire).

Because our centre aisle pews date from 1600, pew-end decorations can only be used if proper pew-end hangers are used (without tape or blue tack) and the decorations do not require watering.

Don't forget to arrange for any flowers other than the altar flowers to be removed sometime during the week following your wedding. Alternatively, removal can be arranged for you at a small fee.

## Readings

You can have as many readings as you like. At least one should be a Bible reading, and the others can be chosen from anywhere - or written for the occasion. As with all the choices you make about your wedding day, it is important to think about what is important to you as a couple and to reflect on what you want to say about each other on this special day.

## Music

There is a lot of choice over the music you choose for your wedding. Generally, couples will have an organist, and many have other music as well. You can be traditional or modern. Some brides know that they want to come into church to the Wedding March, but others have come into pieces like *Here Comes the Sun* played on the piano. As you plan the music for your wedding, our organist and Director of Music, Sam Laughton, will work with you to make the most of the resources you have chosen. You can contact Sam on 01494 488548 or email the secretary on [secretary@htprestwood.org.uk](mailto:secretary@htprestwood.org.uk).

## Singers

Sam is also director of the Elysian Singers, an award-winning chamber choir that has appeared on numerous occasions on radio and television, together with all the major London venues. We are delighted to be able offer a mixed-voice group of 8 singers from the choir to sing suitable music and lead the hymns at your wedding at a typical fee of about £600 (dependent on repertoire). Please speak to your minister if you would like to explore this option further.

We are also very lucky to have strong relationships with some excellent young professional singers who are recent post-graduates from London Music Schools such as the Royal Academy of Music and the Guildhall School of Music. Couples can book between one and four singers (or more) for their wedding.

You can have any style of music at your wedding, not just religious or classical. Couples have had versions of *It Must be Love* by Madness, Bette Midler's *The Rose* and *The Prayer* made famous by Andrea Bocelli and Celine Dion.

## Other Musicians

We can accommodate most musical requests! Other instrumentalists we have used include harpists, flautists and brass. You can use your own musicians too. The church organist has the right to play at all church services where there is music so if you choose not to use the organist, 50% of the organist's fee is still charged.

## The Hampden String Ensemble

At the heart of the Hampden String Ensemble is the Hampden String Quartet. Formed in 2006 by four students of the Royal Academy of Music, two of whom grew up in the village, the Quartet has gone on to establish itself as one of the

area's foremost chamber groups. All members of the Quartet won prizes for chamber music at the Royal Academy, including the Sir John Barbirolli Prize and Max Pirani Award. The Quartet gives regular concerts in London as well as at Great Hampden Church and performs frequently at weddings.

Together with colleagues from leading professional orchestras in London, the Quartet formed the Hampden String Ensemble in 2008. Couples can book any number of the group for their wedding. Their most popular repertoire for string quartet includes classical string works by Haydn, Mozart, Schubert, Mendelssohn and Tchaikovsky; wedding favourites including Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring, Air on a G String, Trumpet Voluntary and the Wedding Marches by Mendelssohn and Wagner; classical arrangements of works such as The Nutcracker, and The Flower Duet; and arrangements of popular tunes such as Yesterday, Anything Goes, My Funny Valentine and A Nightingale Sang in Berkeley Square.

## Music at the Reception

Very often couples want to have music at the start of their wedding reception. If at Hampden House, the musicians we book for your wedding can also play or sing then. An hour is usually ample as your guests arrive and have their first drink! It may be possible for the musicians we've arranged for you to play at other reception venues by arrangement.

## Other Options

### Photography & Video

Photography and video can be a very important part of the day. Both are allowed in the service.

If you are thinking of having a professional video made of your wedding, please tell us early on (a minimum of 14 days before the wedding). Great Hampden is a small country church with limited space for professional video equipment. Remember that having a professionally recorded video will generally increase all musicians' fees by 50%. Once the videographer has been agreed, the musicians fee will be added to the invoice.

## Church Imagery

We have beautiful photograph files of Great Hampden or a church painting image which can be provided to you for your order of service or wedding stationary. For a small license fee, you can obtain these images and use them as often as you like.

## Wedding bells

There are three bells in the tower. They are rung as the bride and groom leave the church and the guests follow them into the churchyard. There is a small fee for having the wedding bells.

## Candelabra

There are six candelabra that can be placed in the pews and choir stalls. Each has three oil candles. There is no charge for their use and they can be decorated.

## Confetti

Please feel free for your guests to throw rose petals or bio-degradable confetti in the churchyard after the ceremony.



## Church People

If you have any questions or problems, don't hesitate to contact the minister who will be taking your wedding. There is also a good team of people who will help make your wedding at Great Hampden a special and meaningful day, giving you the best start to your married life.

## The Rector

Any questions or problems don't hesitate to contact Deiniol!

*Deiniol Heywood | 01494 866530 | [rector@greathampden.org.uk](mailto:rector@greathampden.org.uk)*

## The Verger

The verger is a very important person! A member of the church, they will get everything ready on the day, help your ushers and clear up afterwards. The verger is assigned a few months before the wedding and will contact you in due course.

## Ushers

We recommend you appoint at least 3 people to be your ushers. They will be on hand to assist your guests before your wedding and need to arrive one hour before your wedding starts. We provide notes as to what their duties will include. Your head usher should also come to your rehearsal to familiarise themselves with the church, the car parking arrangements and to meet the verger who will assist them on the day.

## Florist

Make sure you tell us what flowers you will be having and talk to Margaret for good advice on how to decorate the church. If you're not having your own flowers, we will provide neutral flowers for the niches.

*Margaret Grey | 01494 489840 | [marggray@btinternet.com](mailto:marggray@btinternet.com)*

## Music

Sam will work with you to plan the music for your wedding.

*Sam Laughton | 01494 488548 | [music@htprestwood.org.uk](mailto:music@htprestwood.org.uk)*

## Administration

Any queries with fees, reading of banns or other legalities should go to Lorna who will work with you to make sure your wedding goes smoothly.

*Lorna Crook | 01494 863805 | [secretary@htprestwood.org.uk](mailto:secretary@htprestwood.org.uk)*

## Fees & Charges for 2025

Statutory Fees (includes fee for Banns)	£581.00
Donation to the Church towards its general upkeep	£300.00
Verger	£65.00
Heating (October – April)	£65.00
Organist	£190.00
Organist release fee (if not using our organist)	£95.00
Singers and other musicians (per performer)	£190.00
plus reception (per performer) <sup>1</sup>	£60.00*
Musicians' videography surcharge (50% of their fee)	from £85.00

## Other Options

Altar flowers (if not providing your own)	£60.00
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Order of service (if not providing your own)	£70.00
Wedding Bells	£75.00
Church imagery license fee	£40.00
Recording of service (fixed camera position)	£60.00
Streaming of church service	£65.00

An invoice will typically be prepared 8 weeks prior to your wedding with payment due 4 weeks prior. Cheques are to be made payable to Great Hampden PCC.

No one is excluded from the life and ministry of our church for financial reasons. Weddings can quickly become costly affairs. In any case of financial need, please speak to the Rector or the minister arranging your service.



## About Us

St Mary Magdalene, Great Hampden is your parish church serving Great Hampden in the Chiltern Hills. We come to church every Sunday at 11.15am.

Here we are invited to celebrate God's love for all people, rest in his presence and go out empowered to live our everyday lives.

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## Contact Us



[greathampden.org.uk](http://greathampden.org.uk)

[secretary@htprestwood.org.uk](mailto:secretary@htprestwood.org.uk)

01494 863805

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