

The Government plans to introduce a new system of registration for marriages, including church weddings, in England and Wales.



It is anticipated that the new system will replace traditional marriage registers with a new “marriage document” to be signed by the couple at the wedding and lodged with the local register office.

Although no date has been set for implementing the new system, representatives of the Church of England, together with the Church in Wales and the Faculty Office of the Archbishop of Canterbury, have been in discussion with the General Register Office on how it will be introduced.

It is expected that the General Register Office will provide training and information for clergy. Details will be announced as soon as possible.

The Revd Dr Malcolm Brown, the Church of England’s Director of Mission and Public Affairs, said: “We are in close discussions with the General Register Office, who are working hard to ensure that the change in the system of registering marriages is as smooth and seamless as possible.

“I want to reassure clergy and couples planning a marriage that we are absolutely committed to making the new system work within the context of a Church of England marriage service and the GRO has promised to provide training and comprehensive user-friendly information for clergy.

“We are currently in discussion with the GRO about the exact shape that will take and will update clergy as soon as the details have been finalised.

“Although no firm date has yet been set for the introduction of the new system we are aware of the desire to implement it as soon as possible.

“A church wedding is a very special day where unique promises are made before God and in the presence of friends, family and the wider community in a timeless setting, marking the beginning of their married lives together.”

Notes

The question of changing the status of Clergy as marriage registrars has not arisen and the situation will remain the same as it is currently.

