

THE CHURCH



ty of changes to marriage registration systems.

Over the summer there has been a lot of information circulating about the implications of the plans for the electronic registration of marriages included in the Civil Partnerships, Marriage and Deaths (Registration etc) Act 2019.

This legislation attracted most headlines as the law opening the way for mothers' names to be included on marriage certificates for the first time. But it includes a range of other changes to the system of registering marriages and there will be practical implications for clergy, **if and when the details and dates are agreed.**

At present the Government has announced neither the details nor the dates for implementing these changes – and subsequent legislative work is still required. No timeframe is yet in place for this work.

Firstly, the legislation will provide for the name of the mother to be part of the registration documentation – but the exact form this will take has yet to be agreed.

Secondly, you may have read reports that couples will be responsible for taking a 'marriage document' to the local registrar within a very limited timeframe. The form and the timescale are neither agreed nor definite.

Thirdly, you may have read about new form of register for churches as well as the 'marriage document'. The form the church register will take has yet to be decided.

Fourthly, you may have read that all these changes will happen this December. There has been no decision taken about the timeframe and we are still in discussions to agree both the timeframe and the detail of the changes so that they can be effectively implemented for all Church of England clergy.

And last but not least there is no truth in the suggestion that clergy who fail to attend particular training events will cease to be legally able to solemnise marriages.

Updates will be posted on www.churchofengland.org as well as on www.churchsupporthub.org and the website that gives couples planning to marry in church all the information they need www.yourchurchwedding.org will also be updated when the timescale is agreed.

The Church of England continues to welcome couples to be married in the special and significant setting of a church, exchanging unique vows that can only be said in that context, and rejoicing with them on their wedding day. This pastoral ministry remains a wonderful opportunity to build a relationship with a couple and create memories for them and their guests that will last a lifetime.



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