



Blyth Valley Parishes

Getting Married Here 2025

Can we get married in the Blyth Valley?

Congratulations on deciding to get married! We welcome applications for ceremonies in any of our parish churches if either one of you or your parents has lived, or worshipped in any of them for six months. You may also apply to marry in one if your parents or grandparents were married in any of them, or if either of you were baptised or prepared for confirmation here. (Pastoral Measure Notice due.) Further, we welcome applications from people who have been married before. We may have a slightly extended initial interview to check you are ready to take this step at this time.

How do we get the ball rolling?

When you contact the office, the Rector, Dominic, will arrange to meet you. We'll then check the legalities of your request and collect any details we need to keep in touch and to complete the Marriage Document. This may include proof of identity and nationality. The Mothers' Union traditionally sends a congratulations card, do say if you'd like that. People seeking re-marriage must also bring the relevant Decree Absolutus or Death Certificate and be prepared to honestly address together:

What does marriage mean to you?

What have you learned from any previous relationships?

How are past hurts being dealt with?

How are any children being included?

What do others think of your marriage plans?

How should we prepare?

We encourage regular attendance at worship in the parish where you are to be married. Ideally this will be from the time of application until the wedding – even if this is not a requirement to establish a 'qualifying connection'. This will enable you to get to know the Christian community where you are marrying so we can support you in and beyond your preparation.

May we hear our Banns being read?

Normally, early in the three-months before your wedding we have to ask congregations both in the parishes where you are to marry and where you live if they 'know a legal reason why you may not marry'. This Publishing of Banns takes place on three consecutive Sundays at services across the group. Many couples make a special effort to attend to hear their Banns being published. It costs £37, payable to the local Parochial Church Council. If you don't live where you are to be married the Minister taking the service here will need a Certificate of Banns proving that they have been read in your home parish. There is a charge of £19, payable to that Parochial Church Council.

Will we need a Common Licence?

Only if you have a legal connection with any parish in our group but there's not time for Banns, or your address is likely to change when they're being read. Then you'll need a Common Licence instead. The other reasons are: if one or both of you are British but live abroad; live in the UK but your home is not in England or Wales; or are a national of a country outside the European Economic Area.

To get one you will have to 'swear an oath' in person in England in the presence of James Hall, for time and change of address. He is the Diocesan Registrar 01473 406270. It will cost around £200.

If either of you is a Non-EEA National you have to complete civil preliminaries. In this case we need your Superintendent Registrar's Certificate before booking a marriage in our churches. Contact Ipswich Register Office 03456 072050.

Costs:

£646 by bank transfer or cheque to the relevant PCC

Includes (Diocesan and Parish fee combined):

£544 nationally set fee for marriage and
£37 nationally set fee for Publication of Banns
and standard option
£65 locally agreed fee for Verger

but not non-standard locally agreed fee for such options as:

£95 Organist (RSCM Amateur, Substantial)
£250 Five/six bells rung after the service (if church has them)
£55 Heating October to April
£20 WiFi
£50 Livestreaming (where wi-fi available)

Minister's travel

Flowers may be chargeable

The Blyth Valley Churches office deals with all official papers, based in St Mary's Church, Halesworth.

Planning

The Rector, or other minister, will arrange to meet again about three months before the wedding. This time we will talk about your choice of music, hymns, the Bible reading and other readings. We will check that the Best Man, the person 'giving away', the witnesses, flowers, photographer, organist and other details are in hand. We will also read through the words we'll use in your service. We can provide an outline to help you prepare an Order of Service, if you are having one. Having said all this, try not to let the arrangements take the edge off your special day.

Finally

The day before, or as near then as is convenient for us, we will have a walk through. You must bring any remaining payment. It is ideal if everyone with a role attends: Best Man, the person giving away, readers, Maids of Honour, Witnesses and so on. The minister will double-check the details for the Marriage Document.

On the day

Our advice is to stop take a breath and take in the sights, sounds, smells, tastes and sensations each step of the way through this hopefully once in a lifetime experience. Above all enjoy it!

Passport for honeymoon

It is possible to have your passport made out in your married name prior to the wedding. You will need to collect form PAS PD2 from the Post Office and bring it to the minister to sign. Do leave enough time for the Passport Office to process your application.

The future

We would also suggest you follow the example of marking your anniversaries by coming back to one of our regular Sunday services on that special occasion.

Finally, don't forget that if ever you need a listening ear, specific prayer or a ceremony of celebration we would love to hear from you.