

Weddings at St Mary the Virgin West Moors - Important local information and checklist.

Once you have booked a firm date through the Parish Administrator (Ann Mace 01202 870680) here are a few things to do and consider (as if you haven't got enough!)....

1. Flowers are by arrangement with our church florist. We ask you to make contact with Doreen Mulford well in advance, with a view to a discussion on floral design and budget. Due to experience of problems of gaining access to the church (which unfortunately has to be kept locked when not in use), suitability of arrangements and their fixing in our historic protected building and the need to provide flowers for normal worship services on Sunday, we do not normally agree to allow external florists. There is a longstanding tradition of good quality floristry in the church and we are sure we can meet most expectations. Contact Doreen on 01202 893276 to arrange.
2. Choice of music and hymns/songs is in conjunction with the clergy, who are happy to offer advice on selection; you may like to look on the national weddings website for inspiration. Please organise this well in advance and especially if you require our organist (most do) and/or the church choir - contact Valerie Robertson 01202 871824 to book. They need to put your date in their diaries well in advance.
3. The clergy offer marriage preparation which is normally a two hour session with the couple. This is fun, thoughtful and definitely not embarrassing. Those who have done it would testify to its merit. This needs to be organised very early on. You'll be too busy near to the date!
4. A link to the full text of the Marriage Service is provided on this website and may be used for your order of service. Please add your choice of hymns (normally two or three) and readings etc. and email a draft to the clergy for feedback. We can produce your order of service for a small fee. The ceremony lasts between 35 and 50 minutes. Allow at least 40 minutes afterwards for photography.
5. There must be at least one Bible reading from the New Testament of the Holy Bible. The clergy are able to advise – you will find various popular texts on the national weddings website. Other literature/poetry is fine as long as it is not heretical or profane. Choose a good reader who is used to public speaking. The reading(s) must be approved by the clergy and the sermon will be based upon it/them.
6. There is no in-house music system, so the playing of pre-recorded music must be by your own portable equipment. There are legal issues associated with the public performance of copyright songs/music which are your responsibility (such as pop songs). The church has permission for the use of regular Christian hymns/songs and traditional wedding music. You can listen to most hymns on the national church website.
7. A wedding rehearsal is normally done on the Thursday evening before a Saturday wedding at 6pm and takes an hour. The bride and groom are definitely essential; everyone else is a bonus and adds to the fun!
8. Most couples exchange rings, so girls get your man a ring. Girls don't promise to obey their husbands these days...(sorry guys)! The Groom should note that he must be sober for the service otherwise the law forbids the wedding taking place! Brides, please don't get stressed if you're running a bit late!
9. Photography – no flash and it should be unobtrusive – it is a church service. Most couples hire a professional photographer. Confetti is fine outside, as long as it is eco-friendly – definitely NO plastic!
10. Permission to video the ceremony must be obtained from the clergy because of copyright and other legal issues. This is not generally understood; please ask for explanation from the clergy. Professional Videographers will have the necessary copyright licence and will have to show it to the clergy.
11. Our Verger will open and close the church and prepare before the service. This includes helping your Ushers with correct procedures and receiving early and late guests on the big day. Contact Dorothy Laver on Tel 896171 to arrange with her. She'll also help with disabled, infants, toilets, etc.
12. The signing of the marriage registers is normally carried out in full view, on the altar. It takes about ten minutes and it is rather nice if music is performed during this interlude. Have you musical friends or family? Otherwise the organist will play if requested. The bride and groom will each require an adult (18+) to witness their signature. This might be parents, or the best man and chief bridesmaid. This is a way of involving other family and friends in the ceremony. Choose thoughtfully, dad's are the traditional choice.

That's all – if you're unsure contact me. Revd. Andrew Rowland 01202 893197 ajwrowland@tiscali.co.uk