



Central Telford Parish

Marriage Policy

July 2014

The congregations of the Central Telford Parish welcome all who are seeking to be married in Church or seeking a Service of Blessing after a Civil Marriage and will seek to prepare the couple for both their Wedding Day and the lifelong marriage that is to follow in a manner which is encouraging and loving. In order to clarify the situation regarding the conditions under which a marriage (or re-marriage) may take place within the parishes, the PCC (the Governing body of the Churches) have agreed the following policy.

- ❖ Civil and Canon Law give the right for anyone who can demonstrate a reasonable connection (See Note 1 below) with a Parish to be married in that Parish.
- ❖ In particular cases, a Special Licence or an Archbishop's Licence may be required in order for the marriage to take place in the requested Church.
- ❖ Only one of the couple needs to be able to prove evidence of a qualifying connection.
- ❖ In the event of formal proof being required, the couple will be expected to make the relevant enquiries and bear the cost of any appropriate legal fees that may arise.
- ❖ It is expected that the couple will fully engage with the process of Marriage Preparation, including meetings with the Officiating Minister, Preparation Days and the Rehearsal.
- ❖ In accordance with guidelines laid down by the Bishops of the Church of England, the practice of an individual parish concerning the remarriage of those who have been divorced is deferred to the Incumbent (the Vicar or Rector) of that Parish, in consultation with the Parochial Church Council and, if appropriate, with the Bishop. The practice in the Central Telford Parish is that the remarriage of those who have been divorced may take place if the couple concerned are able to fulfil certain criteria, laid out in the notes below (2).
- ❖ The final decision as to whether a marriage may be conducted in one of the Churches lies with the Team Rector.
- ❖ When a wedding in Church is not able to be offered, the Church will endeavour to offer a service of blessing that is tailor-made for the couple and their situation.
- ❖ The Law does not permit the conducting of same-sex marriage in Church and Church law does not allow for blessings of such relationships in Churches.

Notes

(1) A "Reasonable Connection" is regarded as fulfilling ONE of the following criteria:

- ❖ They were Baptised or Confirmed in either The Central Telford Parish,
- ❖ Their parents or grandparents were married in either The Central Telford Parish,
- ❖ They were Confirmed and the Confirmation is entered in the register of the either The Central Telford Parish.
- ❖ They have lived in one of the parishes for at least 6 months, at some stage in their lifetime,
- ❖ They have worshipped habitually in either The Central Telford Parish for at least 6 months at some time in their lifetime.
- ❖ A parent has lived in the parish for at least 6 months in the applicants lifetime,
- ❖ A parent has worshipped in either The Central Telford Parish for at least 6 months at some time in the applicants lifetime.

(2) Marriage involving someone who has a previous marriage partner still living

As a general rule, a marriage involving someone who has a previous marriage partner who is still living may be possible if the couple concerned are able to accept and work within ALL of the following criteria:

- ❖ Neither partner has been divorced more than once.
- ❖ There has been a significant length of time (usually measured in years rather than months) since the dissolution of the previous marriage (ie the Decree Absolute has been received).
- ❖ The couple's relationship did not contribute to the break-up of the previous marriage.
- ❖ The partner who has been married previously is willing to acknowledge the failure of the previous relationship (disregarding issues of blame).
- ❖ The couple are willing for the Officiating Minister to make appropriate reference to the existence of the previous marriage in the Marriage Service and that this will not present a significant issue of concern or distress for those present at the Service.
- ❖ There are no outstanding issues from the previous marriage concerning custody, access or maintenance of children, which will be affected by the proposed marriage.
- ❖ The couple are willing to engage with the life of the Church.
- ❖ The couple commit to attending the marriage preparation course held in the Parish.

Rev Tim Storey
Team Rector
July 2014