



**THE PARISH
OF HESWALL**

A Church for the whole community



Marriage in Church after Divorce

(additional information for enquiring couples)

The Church of England teaches that marriage is for life. It also recognizes that some marriages sadly do fail and, if this should happen, it seeks to be available for all involved. The Church accepts that, in certain circumstances, a divorced person may marry again in church during the lifetime of a former spouse.

If you are thinking about asking to be married at St. Peter's Heswall you should in the first instance arrange to discuss this with the Rector, Revd. Martin Cannam. He and other clergy in the Parish of Heswall are willing to marry a divorced person in some circumstances. They will ask you to complete a short form provided by the Church of England that asks for a few details about you that will help them get to know your circumstance and wishes. Please note, that apart from your personal circumstances you still need to establish one of the 6 connections with St. Peter's that enable anyone to be married in this Parish.

Having received these details from you a member of the Parish clergy team will arrange to meet you both. They will want to listen to your stories and get to know you better. On this occasion (or if more appropriate at a second meeting) they will want to talk openly with you about the past, your hopes for the future and your understanding of marriage. You and your intended spouse should therefore be prepared to consider some questions. You are advised to reflect beforehand on the issues they raise – and should be prepared to answer them honestly.

- What does marriage mean to you?
- What have you learned from your previous marriage?
- Has there been healing of past hurts?
- If you have children, how are they being looked after?
- What do others think of your marriage plans?
- When did your new relationship begin?
- Have either of you been divorced more than once?
- Are you wanting to grow in the Christian faith?

To this meeting you will also need to bring with you your decree nisi, your decree absolute, and any other documentation necessary to support your connection with St. Peter's.

Having talked these things through together the Rector will ask you to reflect yourselves on the conversation by writing a simple letter setting out your past experiences, your reasons for wanting to be married at St. Peter's and your hopes for married life together. Although the decision whether to marry you at St. Peter's rests with the Rector he may wish to consult other members of the Parish clergy and churchwardens; in some cases he may also consult the Bishop of Chester before reaching a decision; your letter will help to do this.

The Minister will arrange to meet you again to convey a decision to you. It is always our hope that we can come to mutual agreement about how to proceed. It is our intention to reach this decision within 2 – 3 months of your first enquiry. During this time we would encourage you to attend Sunday worship at St. Peter's as we pray and talk together.

If it is not possible for your proposed marriage to take place in church, then St. Peter's may be able to offer a Service of Prayer and Dedication following a civil marriage, or the Minister may agree to attend a civil marriage ceremony.

If the Rector does agree to conduct your marriage service at St. Peter's you will be invited to take part, with other couples, in the Parish Marriage Preparation Day. This usually takes place one Saturday in January or February. After this the Minister allocated to take your marriage service will meet with you to plan the details and to rehearse with you before the big day.

Our Commitment to you

The process this leaflet describes reflects the Church's commitment both to lifelong marriage, and to taking seriously your wish to marry in church. You may be certain that your application will be received and considered with dignity, care and loving concern. Whether or not you proceed to marriage in church, your clergy and your local church are available to offer you guidance and support as you proceed on life's journey.

What now?

Having read this information, if you wish to make arrangements to meet the Rector then please contact the Parish Office 0151-342-3471 or office@heswallparish.co.uk

Revd. Martin Cannam
Rector of Heswall
January 2016