



Marriage Act 1949

1949 CHAPTER 76 12 13 and 14 Geo 6

PART II U.K.

MARRIAGE ACCORDING TO RITES OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

Modifications etc. (not altering text)

C1 Pt. II applied by [Sharing of Church Buildings Act 1969 \(c. 38\), s. 6\(2\)](#)

Preliminary

5 Methods of authorising marriages. E+W

[^{F1}(1)] A marriage according to the rites of the Church of England may be solemnized—

- (a) after the publication of banns of matrimony;
- (b) on the authority of a special licence of marriage granted by the Archbishop of Canterbury or any other person by virtue of the ^{M1}Ecclesiastical Licences Act, 1533 (in this Act referred to as a “special licence”);
- (c) on the authority of a licence of marriage (other than a special licence) granted by an ecclesiastical authority having power to grant such a licence (in this Act referred to as a “common licence”); or
- (d) on the authority of [^{F2}a marriage schedule] under Part III of this Act.

[^{F3} Subsection (1)(a)] of this section shall not apply in relation to the solemnization of [^{F4}(2) any marriage mentioned in subsection (2) of section 1 of this Act.]

[^{F5}(3) In a case where one or both of the persons whose marriage is to be solemnized is not a relevant national—

- (a) subsection (1)(a) shall not apply unless the banns are published in accordance with section 14 (whether or not the banns are also published otherwise);
- (b) subsection (1)(c) shall not apply.]

*Changes to legislation: There are currently no known outstanding effects
 for the Marriage Act 1949, Part II. (See end of Document for details)*

Textual Amendments

- F1** S. 5(1): s. 5 renumbered as s. 5(1) (2.3.2015) by [Immigration Act 2014 \(c. 22\)](#), **ss. 57(2)(a)**, 75(3); S.I. 2015/371, art. 2(2) (with art. 5)
- F2** Words in s. 5(1)(d) substituted (4.5.2021) by [The Registration of Marriages Regulations 2021 \(S.I. 2021/411\)](#), reg. 1(2), **Sch. 1 para. 2** (with Sch. 2)
- F3** Words added by [Marriage \(Prohibited Degrees of Relationship\) Act 1986 \(c. 16, SIF 49:1\)](#), s. 1(4)(6), **Sch. 1 para. 3**
- F4** Words in s. 5(2) substituted (2.3.2015) by [Immigration Act 2014 \(c. 22\)](#), **ss. 57(2)(b)**, 75(3); S.I. 2015/371, art. 2(2) (with art. 5)
- F5** S. 5(3) inserted (2.3.2015) by [Immigration Act 2014 \(c. 22\)](#), **ss. 57(2)(c)**, 75(3); S.I. 2015/371, art. 2(2) (with art. 5)

Modifications etc. (not altering text)

- C2** S. 5(3)(a) excluded (31.12.2020) by [The Immigration and Social Security Co-ordination \(EU Withdrawal\) Act 2020 \(Consequential, Saving, Transitional and Transitory Provisions\) \(EU Exit\) Regulations 2020 \(S.I. 2020/1309\)](#), reg. 1(2), **Sch. 5 para. 3**
- C3** S. 5(3)(b) excluded (31.12.2020) by [The Immigration and Social Security Co-ordination \(EU Withdrawal\) Act 2020 \(Consequential, Saving, Transitional and Transitory Provisions\) \(EU Exit\) Regulations 2020 \(S.I. 2020/1309\)](#), reg. 1(2), **Sch. 5 para. 4**

Marginal Citations

- M1** 1533 c. 21.

[^{F6}5A] **Marriages between certain persons related by affinity.** **E+W**

No clergyman shall be obliged—

- (a) to solemnize a marriage which, apart from the [Marriage \(Prohibited Degrees of Relationship\) Act 1986](#) [^{F7}or the [Marriage Act 1949 \(Remedial\) Order 2007](#)], would have been void by reason of the relationship of the persons to be married; or
- (b) to permit such a marriage to be solemnized in the church or chapel of which he is the minister.]

Textual Amendments

- F6** S. 5A inserted by [Marriage \(Prohibited Degrees of Relationship\) Act 1986 \(c. 16, SIF 49:1\)](#), s. 3
- F7** Words in s. 5A inserted (1.3.2007) by [The Marriage Act 1949 \(Remedial\) Order 2007 \(S.I. 2007/438\)](#), arts. 1(1), 2(b) (with art. 1(2))

[^{F8}5B] **Marriages involving person of acquired gender** **E+W**

- (1) A clergyman is not obliged to solemnise the marriage of a person if the clergyman reasonably believes that the person's gender has become the acquired gender under the [Gender Recognition Act 2004](#).
- (2) A clerk in Holy Orders of the Church in Wales is not obliged to permit the marriage of a person to be solemnised in the church or chapel of which the clerk is the minister if the clerk reasonably believes that the person's gender has become the acquired gender under that Act.]

Changes to legislation: There are currently no known outstanding effects for the Marriage Act 1949, Part II. (See end of Document for details)

Textual Amendments

- F8** S. 5B inserted (4.4.2005) by [Gender Recognition Act 2004 \(c. 7\)](#), s. 26, **Sch. 4 para. 3**; [S.I. 2005/54](#), art. 2

Marriage by banns

6 Place of publication of banns. E+W

- (1) Subject to the provisions of this Act, where a marriage is intended to be solemnized after the publication of banns of matrimony, the banns shall be published—
- if the persons to be married reside in the same parish, in the parish church of that parish;
 - if the persons to be married do not reside in the same parish, in the parish church of each parish in which one of them resides:

Provided that if either of the persons to be married resides in a chapelry or in a district specified in a licence granted under section twenty of this Act, the banns may be published in an authorised chapel of that chapelry or district instead of in the parish church of the parish in which that person resides.

- (2) In relation to a person who resides in an extra-parochial place, the last foregoing subsection shall have effect as if for references to a parish there were substituted references to that extra-parochial place, and as if for references to a parish church there were substituted references to an authorised chapel of that place.
- (3) For the purposes of this section, any parish in which there is no parish church or chapel belonging thereto or no church or chapel in which divine service is usually solemnized every Sunday, and any extra-parochial place which has no authorised chapel, shall be deemed to belong to any adjoining parish or chapelry.
- (4) Banns of matrimony may be published in any parish church or authorised chapel which is the usual place of worship of the persons to be married or of one of them although neither of those persons resides in the parish or chapelry to which the church or chapel belongs:

Provided that the publication of banns by virtue of this subsection shall be in addition to and not in substitution for the publication of banns required by subsection (1) of this section.

Modifications etc. (not altering text)

- C4** S. 6(3) applied (with modifications) by 2008 gsm 1, s. 1A (as inserted (1.6.2013) by [Church of England Marriage \(Amendment\) Measure 2012 \(No. 1\)](#), **ss. 1(1)**, 3(2); 2013 No. 1, art. 2)

7 Time and manner of publication of banns. E+W

- (1) Subject to the provisions of section nine of this Act, banns of matrimony shall be published on three Sundays preceding the solemnization of the marriage [^{F9}during either the principal service or both the principal service and another service].

*Changes to legislation: There are currently no known outstanding effects
for the Marriage Act 1949, Part II. (See end of Document for details)*

- [^{F10}(1A) In subsection (1) of this section “principal service” means the service at which, in the opinion of the clergyman or other person who, under section 9 of this Act, has the responsibility for publishing banns of matrimony, the greatest number of persons who habitually attend public worship are likely to attend.
- (1B) Where banns of matrimony are published on a Sunday during both the principal service and another service, both of those occasions shall be deemed to be the same time of asking for the purposes of the form of words referred to in subsection (2) of this section.]
- (2) Banns of matrimony shall be published in an audible manner and in accordance with the form of words prescribed by the rubric prefixed to the office of matrimony in the Book of Common Prayer [^{F11}or set out in section 2 of the Church of England Marriage (Amendment) Measure 2012.], and all the other rules prescribed by the said rubric concerning the publication of banns and the solemnization of matrimony shall, so far as they are consistent with the provisions of this Part of this Act, be duly observed.
- (3) The parochial church council of a parish shall provide for every church and chapel in the parish in which marriages may be solemnized, a register book of banns made of durable materials ^{F12}..., and all banns shall be published from the said register book of banns by the officiating clergyman, and not from loose papers, and after each publication the entry in the register book shall be signed by the officiating clergyman, or by some person under his direction.
- [^{F13}(3A) A register book of banns must be marked as follows—
- (a) every place of entry is to be numbered consecutively from the beginning to the end of the book on each side of every page, beginning with the number one;
 - (b) every entry is to be divided from the following entry by a printed line;
 - (c) every entry must contain—
 - (i) the names of the parties to the marriage,
 - (ii) the parish or other place where each party to the marriage resides, and
 - (iii) the dates on which the banns of matrimony in respect of the marriage were published.]
- (4) Any reference in [^{F14}subsection (3)] to a parochial church council shall, in relation to an authorised chapel in an extra-parochial place, be construed as a reference to the chapel warden or other officer exercising analogous duties in the chapel or, if there is no such officer, such person as may be appointed in that behalf by the bishop of the diocese.

Textual Amendments

- F9** Words in s. 7(1) substituted (19.12.2003) by [Church of England Marriage \(Amendment\) Measure 2012 \(No. 1\)](#), **ss. 2(2)(a)**, 3(2)
- F10** S. 7(1A)(1B) inserted (19.12.2003) by [Church of England Marriage \(Amendment\) Measure 2012 \(No. 1\)](#), **ss. 2(2)(b)**, 3(2)
- F11** Words in s. 7(2) inserted (19.12.2003) by [Church of England Marriage \(Amendment\) Measure 2012 \(No. 1\)](#), **ss. 2(2)(c)**, 3(2)
- F12** Words in s. 7(3) omitted (4.5.2021) by virtue of [The Registration of Marriages Regulations 2021 \(S.I. 2021/411\)](#), reg. 1(2), **Sch. 1 para. 3(2)** (with Sch. 2)
- F13** S. 7(3A) inserted (4.5.2021) by [The Registration of Marriages Regulations 2021 \(S.I. 2021/411\)](#), reg. 1(2), **Sch. 1 para. 3(3)** (with Sch. 2)

Changes to legislation: There are currently no known outstanding effects for the Marriage Act 1949, Part II. (See end of Document for details)

F14 Words in s. 7(4) substituted (4.5.2021) by [The Registration of Marriages Regulations 2021 \(S.I. 2021/411\)](#), reg. 1(2), [Sch. 1 para. 3\(4\)](#) (with Sch. 2)

8 Notice to clergyman before publication of banns. **E+W**

[^{F15}(1)] No clergyman shall be obliged to publish banns of matrimony unless the persons to be married, at least seven days before the date on which they wish the banns to be published for the first time, deliver or cause to be [^{F16}delivered to him—

- (a) a notice] in writing, dated on the day on which it is so delivered, stating the christian name and surname and the place of residence of each of them, and the period during which each of them has resided at his or her place of residence [^{F17}, and
- (b) specified evidence that both of the persons are relevant nationals.

(2) In this section “specified evidence” means evidence that is in accordance with regulations made under section 28G.]

Textual Amendments

F15 S. 8(1): s. 8 renumbered as s. 8(1) (2.3.2015) by [Immigration Act 2014 \(c. 22\)](#), [ss. 57\(3\)\(a\)](#), 75(3); S.I. 2015/371, art. 2(2) (with art. 5)

F16 Words in s. 8 substituted (2.3.2015) by [Immigration Act 2014 \(c. 22\)](#), [ss. 57\(3\)\(b\)](#), 75(3); S.I. 2015/371, art. 2(2) (with art. 5)

F17 Words in s. 8 inserted (2.3.2015) by [Immigration Act 2014 \(c. 22\)](#), [ss. 57\(3\)\(c\)](#), 75(3); S.I. 2015/371, art. 2(2) (with art. 5)

Modifications etc. (not altering text)

C5 S. 8 applied (with modifications) (E.) (1.10.2008) by [Church of England Marriage Measure 2008 \(No. 1\)](#), [ss. 1\(8\)\(a\)](#), 5(2); 2008 No. 2, Instrument made by Archbishops

C6 S. 8 applied (with modifications) (18.3.2010) by [Marriage \(Wales\) Act 2010 \(c. 6\)](#), [ss. 2\(8\)\(a\)](#), 6(2) (with s. 1)

9 Persons by whom banns may be published. **E+W**

(1) Subject to the provisions of this section and of section fourteen of this Act, it shall not be lawful for any person other than a clergyman to publish banns of matrimony.

(2) Where on any Sunday in any church or other building in which banns of matrimony may be published a clergyman does not officiate at the service at which it is usual in that church or building to publish banns, the banns may be published—

- (a) by a clergyman at some other service at which banns of matrimony may be published; or
- (b) by a layman during the course of a public reading authorised by the bishop of the diocese of a portion or portions of the service of morning or evening prayer, the public reading being at the hour when the service at which it is usual to publish banns is commonly held or at such other hour as the bishop may authorise:

Provided that banns shall not be published by a layman unless the incumbent or minister in charge of the said church or building, or some other clergyman nominated

*Changes to legislation: There are currently no known outstanding effects
for the Marriage Act 1949, Part II. (See end of Document for details)*

in that behalf by the bishop, has made or authorised to be made the requisite entry in the register book of banns of the said church or building.

- (3) Where a layman publishes banns of matrimony by virtue of this section the layman shall sign the register book of banns provided under section seven of this Act and for that purpose shall be deemed to be the officiating clergyman within the meaning of that section.

10 **Publication of banns commenced in one church and completed in another.** E

- (1) Where the publication of banns of matrimony has been duly commenced in any church, the publication may be completed in the same church or in any other church which, by virtue of [^{F18}the Mission and Pastoral Measure 2011], has at the time of the completion taken the place of the first-mentioned church for the purpose of publication of banns of matrimony either generally or in relation to the parties to the intended marriage.
- (2) Where the publication of banns of matrimony has been duly commenced in any building which by virtue of a reorganisation scheme under [^{F19}the Mission and Pastoral Measure 2011], ceases to be a parish church or, as the case may be, ceases to be licensed for marriages, the publication may be completed in such other building, being either a parish church or a building licensed for marriages, as may be directed by the bishop of the diocese to take the place of the first-mentioned building for the purposes of the publication of banns.

Textual Amendments

- F18** Words in s. 10(1) substituted (1.3.2019) by [Church Property Measure 2018 \(No. 8\)](#), s. 53(2), **Sch. 1 para. 2(2)**; S.I. 2019/97, **art. 2**
- F19** Words in s. 10(2) substituted (1.3.2019) by [Church Property Measure 2018 \(No. 8\)](#), s. 53(2), **Sch. 1 para. 2(3)**; S.I. 2019/97, **art. 2**

Modifications etc. (not altering text)

- C7** S. 10(1) amended by [Pastoral Measure 1983 \(No. 1, SIF 21:4\)](#), ss. 29, 32, 40, **Sch. 3 para. 14(1)**
- C8** S. 10(1) modified (1.7.2012) by [Mission and Pastoral Measure 2011 \(No. 3\)](#), s. 112(3), **Sch. 3 para. 12(1)** (with ss. 100, 105(4), 107, 108(6), Sch. 8); 2012 No. 1, art. 2

11 **Certificates of publication of banns.** E+W

- (1) Where a marriage is intended to be solemnized after the publication of banns of matrimony and the persons to be married do not reside in the same parish or other ecclesiastical district, a clergyman shall not solemnize the marriage in the parish or district in which one of those persons resides unless there is produced to him a certificate that the banns have been published in accordance with the provisions of this Part of this Act in the parish or other ecclesiastical district in which the other person resides.
- (2) Where a marriage is intended to be solemnized in a church or chapel of a parish or other ecclesiastical district in which neither of the persons to be married resides, after the publication of banns therein by virtue of subsection (4) of section six of this Act, a clergyman shall not solemnize the marriage unless there is produced to him—

Changes to legislation: There are currently no known outstanding effects for the Marriage Act 1949, Part II. (See end of Document for details)

- (a) if the persons to be married reside in the same parish or other ecclesiastical district, a certificate that the banns have been published in accordance with the provisions of this Part of this Act in that parish or district; or
 - (b) if the persons to be married do not reside in the same parish or other ecclesiastical district, certificates that the banns have been published as aforesaid in each parish or district in which one of them resides.
- (3) Where banns are published by virtue of subsection (3) of section six of this Act in a parish or chapelry adjoining the parish or extra-parochial place in which the banns would otherwise be required to be published, a certificate that the banns have been published in that parish or chapelry shall have the like force and effect as a certificate that banns have been published in a parish in which one of the persons to be married resides.
- (4) Any certificate required under this section shall be signed by the incumbent or minister in charge of the building in which the banns were published or by a clergyman nominated in that behalf by the bishop of the diocese.

Modifications etc. (not altering text)

- C9** S. 11(2) applied (E.) (1.10.2008) by [Church of England Marriage Measure 2008 \(No. 1\)](#), **ss. 1(7)**, 5(2); [2008 No. 2](#), Instrument made by Archbishops
- C10** S. 11(2) applied (18.3.2010) by [Marriage \(Wales\) Act 2010 \(c. 6\)](#), **ss. 2(7)**, 6(2) (with s. 1)
- C11** S. 11(4) applied (E.) (1.10.2008) by [Church of England Marriage Measure 2008 \(No. 1\)](#), **ss. 1(7)**, 5(2); [2008 No. 2](#), Instrument made by Archbishops
- C12** S. 11(4) applied (18.3.2010) by [Marriage \(Wales\) Act 2010 \(c. 6\)](#), **ss. 2(7)**, 6(2) (with s. 1)

12 Solemnization of marriage after publication of banns. E+W

- (1) Subject to the provisions of this Part of this Act, where banns of matrimony have been published, the marriage shall be solemnized in the church or chapel or, as the case may be, one of the churches or chapels in which the banns have been published.
- (2) Where a marriage is not solemnized within three months after the completion of the publication of the banns, that publication shall be void and no clergyman shall solemnize the marriage on the authority thereof.

13 Publication of banns in Scotland, Northern Ireland or Republic of Ireland. U.K.

Where a marriage is intended to be solemnized in England, after the publication of banns of matrimony, between parties of whom one is residing in England and the other is residing in Scotland, Northern Ireland or the Republic of Ireland, then, if banns have been published or proclaimed in any church of the parish or place in which that other party is residing according to the law or custom there prevailing, a certificate given in accordance with that law or custom that the banns have been so published or proclaimed shall as respects that party be sufficient for the purposes of section eleven of this Act, and the marriage shall not be void by reason only that the banns have not been published in the manner required for the publication of banns in England.

*Changes to legislation: There are currently no known outstanding effects
for the Marriage Act 1949, Part II. (See end of Document for details)*

14 Publication of banns on board His Majesty's ships. E+W

- (1) Where a marriage is intended to be solemnized in England, after the publication of banns of matrimony, between parties of whom one is residing in England and the other is an officer, seaman or marine borne on the books of one of His Majesty's ships at sea, the banns may be published on three successive Sundays during morning service on board that ship by the chaplain, or, if there is no chaplain, by the captain or other officer commanding the ship, and, where banns have been so published, the person who published them shall, unless the banns have been forbidden on any of the grounds on which banns may be forbidden, give a certificate of publication.
- (2) A certificate issued under this section shall be in such form as may be prescribed by the Admiralty and shall, as respects the party who is an officer, seaman or marine as aforesaid, be sufficient for the purposes of section eleven of this Act, and all provisions of this Act (including penal provisions) relating to the publication of banns and certificates thereof and all rules required by section seven of this Act to be observed shall apply in the case of banns published under this section subject to such adaptations therein as may be made by His Majesty by Order in Council.

Marriage by Common Licence

15 Places in which marriages may be solemnized by common licence. E+W

- (1) Subject to the provisions of this Part of this Act, a common licence shall not be granted for the solemnization of a marriage in any church or chapel other than—
 - (a) the parish church of the parish, or an authorised chapel of the ecclesiastical district, in which one of the persons to be married has had his or her usual place of residence for fifteen days immediately before the grant of the licence; or
 - (b) a parish church or authorised chapel which is the usual place of worship of the persons to be married or of one of them.
- (2) For the purposes of this section, any parish in which there is no parish church or chapel belonging thereto or no church or chapel in which divine service is usually solemnized every Sunday, and any extra-parochial place which has no authorised chapel, shall be deemed to belong to any adjoining parish or chapelry.

Modifications etc. (not altering text)

- C13** S. 15 excluded (E.) (1.10.2008) by [Church of England Marriage Measure 2008 \(No. 1\)](#), **ss. 2(1), 5(2)**; [2008 No. 2](#), Instrument made by Archbishops
- C14** S. 15 excluded (18.3.2010) by [Marriage \(Wales\) Act 2010 \(c. 6\)](#), **ss. 3(1), 6(2)** (with s. 1)

16 Provisions as to common licences. E+W

- (1) A common licence shall not be granted unless one of the persons to be married has sworn before a person having authority to grant such a licence—
 - (a) that he or she believes that there is no impediment of kindred or alliance or any other lawful cause, nor any suit commenced in any court, to bar or hinder the solemnization of the marriage in accordance with the licence;
 - (b) that one of the persons to be married has had his or her usual place of residence in the parish or other ecclesiastical district in which the marriage is to be

Changes to legislation: There are currently no known outstanding effects for the Marriage Act 1949, Part II. (See end of Document for details)

solemnized for fifteen days immediately before the grant of the licence or that the parish church or authorised chapel in which the marriage is to be solemnized is the usual place of worship of those persons or of one of them;

^{F20}(c)

[^{F21}(1A) A common licence shall not be granted for the solemnization of a marriage mentioned in subsection (2) of section 1 of this Act unless—

- (a) the person having authority to grant the licence is satisfied by the production of evidence that both the persons to be married have attained the age of twenty-one; and
- (b) he has received a declaration in writing made by each of those persons specifying their affinal relationship and declaring that the younger of those persons has not at any time before attaining the age of eighteen been a child of the family in relation to the other.]

^{F22}(1B)

[^{F23}(1C) A common licence shall not be granted unless the persons to be married deliver to the person granting the licence specified evidence that both of the persons are relevant nationals.

(1D) For that purpose “specified evidence” means evidence that is in accordance with regulations made under section 28G.]

(2) [^{F24}Subject to subsection (2A) of this section] if any caveat is entered against the grant of a common licence, the caveat having been duly signed by or on behalf of the person by whom it is entered and stating his place of residence and the ground of objection on which the caveat is founded, no licence shall be granted until the caveat or a copy thereof is transmitted to the ecclesiastical judge out of whose office the licence is to issue, and the judge has certified to the registrar of the diocese that he has examined into the matter of the caveat and is satisfied that it ought not to obstruct the grant of the licence, or until the caveat is withdrawn by the person who entered it.

[^{F25}(2A) Where in the case of a marriage mentioned in subsection (2) of section 1 of this Act a caveat is entered under subsection (2) of this section on the ground that the persons to be married have not both attained the age of twenty-one or that one of those persons has at any time before attaining the age of eighteen been a child of the family in relation to the other, then, notwithstanding that the caveat is withdrawn by the person who entered it, no licence shall be issued unless the judge has certified that he has examined into that ground of objection and is satisfied that that ground ought not to obstruct the grant of the licence.

(2B) In the case of a marriage mentioned in subsection (2) of section 1 of this Act, one of the persons to be married may apply to the ecclesiastical judge out of whose office the licence is to issue for a declaration that, both those persons having attained the age of twenty-one and the younger of those persons not having at any time before attaining the age of eighteen been a child of the family in relation to the other, there is no impediment of affinity to the solemnization of the marriage; and where any such declaration is obtained the common licence may be granted notwithstanding that no declaration has been made under the said subsection (1A).]

(3) Where a marriage is not solemnized within three months after the grant of a common licence, the licence shall be void and no clergyman shall solemnize the marriage on the authority thereof.

Changes to legislation: There are currently no known outstanding effects for the Marriage Act 1949, Part II. (See end of Document for details)

- (4) No surrogate deputed by an ecclesiastical judge who has power to grant common licences shall grant any such licence until he has taken an oath before that judge, or a commissioner appointed under the seal of that judge, faithfully to execute his office according to law, to the best of his knowledge, . . . ^{F26}.

Textual Amendments

- F20** S. 16(1)(c) omitted (27.2.2023) by virtue of [Marriage and Civil Partnership \(Minimum Age\) Act 2022 \(c. 28\)](#), s. 7(1), **Sch. para. 1(2)** (with s. 8); S.I. 2023/88, reg. 2 (with regs. 3-17)
- F21** S. 16 (1A)(1B) inserted by [Marriage \(Prohibited Degrees of Relationship\) Act 1986 \(c. 16, SIF 49:1\)](#), s. 1(4)(6), **Sch. 1 para. 4(a)**
- F22** S. 16(1B) repealed (1.3.2007) by [The Marriage Act 1949 \(Remedial\) Order 2007 \(S.I. 2007/438\)](#), arts. 1(1), **3(a)(i)** (with art. 1(2))
- F23** S. 16(1C)(1D) inserted (2.3.2015) by [Immigration Act 2014 \(c. 22\)](#), **ss. 57(4)**, 75(3); S.I. 2015/371, art. 2(2) (with art. 5)
- F24** Words inserted by [Marriage \(Prohibited Degrees of Relationship\) Act 1986 \(c. 16, SIF 49:1\)](#), s. 1(4)(6), **Sch. 1 para. 4(b)**
- F25** S. 16(2A)(2B) by [Marriage \(Prohibited Degrees of Relationship\) Act 1986 \(c. 16, SIF 49:1\)](#), s. 1(4)(6), **Sch. 1 para. 4(c)**
- F26** Words repealed by [Statute Law \(Repeals\) Act 1975 \(c. 10\)](#), s. 1(1), **Sch. Pt. VI**

Modifications etc. (not altering text)

- C15** S. 16(1)(b) modified (18.3.2010) by [Marriage \(Wales\) Act 2010 \(c. 6\)](#), **ss. 3(1)**, 6(2) (with s. 1)
- C16** S. 16(4) amended by [Statute Law \(Repeals\) Act 1975 \(c. 10\)](#), **s. 1(3)**

Marriage under [^{F27} marriage schedule]

Textual Amendments

- F27** Words in s. 17 cross-heading substituted (4.5.2021) by [The Registration of Marriages Regulations 2021 \(S.I. 2021/411\)](#), reg. 1(2), **Sch. 1 para. 4** (with Sch. 2)

17 **Marriage under [^{F28} marriage schedule].** **E+W**

A marriage according to the rites of the Church of England may be solemnized on the authority of [^{F29} a marriage schedule] in force under Part III of this Act in any church or chapel in which banns of matrimony may be published [^{F30} or in the case of a marriage in pursuance of section 26(1)(dd) of this Act the place specified in the [^{F31} notices of marriage [^{F32} and (if so specified) in the marriage schedule]] as the place where the marriage is to be solemnized]:

Provided that a marriage shall not be solemnized as aforesaid in any such church or chapel without the consent of the minister thereof or [^{F33} (wherever the marriage is solemnized)] by any person other than a clergyman.

Textual Amendments

- F28** Words in s. 17 heading substituted (4.5.2021) by [The Registration of Marriages Regulations 2021 \(S.I. 2021/411\)](#), reg. 1(2), **Sch. 1 para. 5(a)** (with Sch. 2)

Changes to legislation: There are currently no known outstanding effects for the Marriage Act 1949, Part II. (See end of Document for details)

- F29** Words in s. 17 substituted (4.5.2021) by [The Registration of Marriages Regulations 2021 \(S.I. 2021/411\)](#), reg. 1(2), **Sch. 1 para. 5(b)** (with Sch. 2)
- F30** Words inserted by [Marriage Act 1983 \(c. 32, SIF 49:1\)](#), s. 1(7), **Sch. 1 para. 2(a)**
- F31** Words in s. 17 substituted (1.1.2001) by [1999 c. 33, s. 169\(1\)](#), Sch. 14 para. 3, **6(b)**; [S.I. 2000/2698](#), art. 2
- F32** Words in s. 17 substituted (4.5.2021) by [The Registration of Marriages Regulations 2021 \(S.I. 2021/411\)](#), reg. 1(2), **Sch. 1 para. 5(c)** (with Sch. 2)
- F33** Words inserted by [Marriage Act 1983 \(c. 32, SIF 49:1\)](#), s. 1(7), **Sch. 1 para. 2(b)**

Publication of banns and solemnization of marriages during disuse of churches

18 Publication of banns and solemnization of marriages during repair and rebuilding of churches. E+W

- (1) Where any church or chapel in which banns may be published and marriages solemnized is being rebuilt or repaired, and on that account is not being used for divine service, banns of matrimony which could otherwise have been published therein and marriages which could otherwise have been solemnized therein may be published or solemnized, as the case may be,—
 - (a) in any building licensed by the bishop of the diocese for the performance of divine service during the disuse of the church or chapel, being a building within the parish or other ecclesiastical district in which the disused church or chapel is situated; or
 - (b) if no building has been licensed as aforesaid, in any such consecrated chapel as the bishop of the diocese may in writing direct, being a chapel within the said parish or district; or
 - (c) if no building has been licensed as mentioned in paragraph (a) of this subsection and no direction has been given by the bishop under the last foregoing paragraph, in a church or chapel of any adjoining parish or other ecclesiastical district, being a church or chapel in which banns may be published and marriages solemnized.
- (2) Any fees paid in respect of marriages solemnized by virtue of paragraph (b) of the last foregoing subsection in a consecrated chapel specified in a direction given by the bishop of the diocese under that paragraph shall be applied as the bishop, with the consent of the incumbent of the disused church or chapel, may in writing direct.

^{F34}(3)

Textual Amendments

- F34** [S. 18\(3\)](#) omitted (4.5.2021) by virtue of [The Registration of Marriages Regulations 2021 \(S.I. 2021/411\)](#), reg. 1(2), **Sch. 1 para. 6** (with Sch. 2)

19 Publication of banns and solemnization of marriage where church injured by war damage. E

Where an order made by the Church Commissioners under section three of the ^{M2}Diocesan Reorganisation Committees Measure, 1941, (which enables orders to be made deferring the restoration of churches injured by war damage) is in force as respects any church, banns of matrimony of persons entitled to be married in that

*Changes to legislation: There are currently no known outstanding effects
for the Marriage Act 1949, Part II. (See end of Document for details)*

church may be published, and marriages of such persons may be solemnized, in such other church, chapel or place of worship within the diocese as the bishop of the diocese shall in writing direct.

Marginal Citations

M2 1941 No. 1.

Licensing of chapels for publication of banns and solemnization of marriages

20 Licensing of chapels for publication of banns and solemnization of marriages for persons residing in specified district. E+W

- (1) Subject to the provisions of this section, the bishop of the diocese in which a public chapel is situated may—
 - (a) if he thinks it necessary so to do for the due accommodation and convenience of the inhabitants of any district; and
 - (b) if the ^{F35} . . . incumbent of the church of the parish in which the public chapel is situated have signified their consent under their respective hands and seals, authorise by a licence under his hand and seal the publication of banns and the solemnization of marriages in that public chapel between parties both or either of whom reside or resides within a district of which the limits shall be specified in the licence; and any such licence may include such ^{F36} . . . particulars as the bishop thinks fit.
- (2) Notwithstanding anything in the last foregoing subsection, the bishop of the diocese may grant a licence under this section without the consent of the ^{F37} . . . incumbent of the church of the parish in which the public chapel is situated after two months notice in writing given to the ^{F37} . . . incumbent by the registrar of the diocese:

Provided that where any ^{F37} . . . incumbent who refuses or withholds his consent to the grant of a licence under this section delivers to the bishop under his hand and seal a statement of the reasons for which the consent has been refused or withheld, no licence shall be granted by the bishop until he has inquired into the reasons contained in the statement.
- (3) Where a bishop grants a licence under this section without the consent of the ^{F37} . . . incumbent, the ^{F37} . . . incumbent may, within one month from the grant of the licence, appeal to the archbishop of the province who shall hear the appeal in a summary manner, and shall make such order confirming, revoking or varying the licence as seems to him expedient.
- (4) Any licence granted or order made under this section may at any time be revoked in writing under the hand and seal of the bishop of the diocese with the consent in writing of the archbishop of the province; and the registrar of the diocese shall notify the revocation in writing to the minister officiating in the chapel concerned and shall give public notice of the revocation by advertisement in some newspaper circulating within the county in which the chapel is situated and in the London Gazette.
- (5) There shall be displayed in some conspicuous part of the interior of any chapel licensed under this section the words “Banns may be published and marriages may be solemnized in this chapel”.

Changes to legislation: There are currently no known outstanding effects for the Marriage Act 1949, Part II. (See end of Document for details)

- (6) Every consent of a ^{F37} . . . incumbent delivered under subsection (1) of this section, a copy of every notice given by the registrar of a diocese under subsection (2) of this section, every statement of reasons delivered by a ^{F37} . . . incumbent under the said subsection (2), together with the bishop’s decision thereon under his hand and seal, every order made by an archbishop under subsection (3) of this section and every revocation and consent made or given under subsection (4) of this section, shall be registered in the registry of the diocese.
- (7) The district specified in a licence granted under this section may be taken out of more than one parish; and where any such licence specifies a district taken out of more than one parish the expressions ^{F37} . . . “incumbent” shall for the purposes of this section mean the ^{F37} . . . incumbent, ^{F37} . . . , of the church of every parish out of which the district so specified is taken.
- [^{F38}(7A) In the case of a benefice to which a suspension period within the meaning of the Mission and Pastoral Measure 2011 applies and for which a priest in charge has been appointed, this section has effect as if each reference to the incumbent were a reference to the priest in charge.]
- (8) In this section the expression “public chapel” means any public chapel with or without a chapelry annexed thereto, or any chapel duly licensed for the celebration of divine service according to the rites and ceremonies of the Church of England, or any chapel the minister of which is duly licensed to officiate therein according to the rites and ceremonies of the Church of England.

Extent Information

E1 S. 20(7) does not extend to Wales; see s. 80(3), Sixth Sch.

Textual Amendments

F35 Words repealed by [Patronage \(Benefices\) Measure 1986 \(No. 3\)](#), ss. 34(3), 41, **Sch. 5**

F36 Words in s. 20(1) repealed (1.7.2011) by [Ecclesiastical Fees \(Amendment\) Measure 2011 \(No. 2\)](#), ss. **4(3)**, 6(2); 2011 No. 1, art. 2

F37 Words repealed by [Patronage \(Benefices\) Measure 1986 \(No. 3\)](#), s. 41, **Sch. 5**

F38 S. 20(7A) inserted (1.3.2019) by [Church of England \(Miscellaneous Provisions\) Measure 2018 \(No. 7\)](#), ss. **3**, 17(3); S.I. 2019/67, art. **2(1)(b)**

Modifications etc. (not altering text)

C17 S. 20 applied by [Sharing of Church Buildings Act 1969 \(c. 38\)](#), s. **6(2)(b)**

21 Authorising of publication of banns and solemnization of marriages in churches and chapels of extra-parochial places. **E+W**

- (1) Where any extra-parochial place has belonging to it or within it any church or chapel of the Church of England, the bishop of the diocese in which the church or chapel is situated may, if he thinks fit, authorise in writing under his hand and seal the publication of banns and the solemnization of marriages by banns or licence in that church or chapel between parties both or either of whom reside or resides in that extra-parochial place.
- (2) Every authorisation given under the last foregoing subsection shall be registered in the registry of the diocese.

*Changes to legislation: There are currently no known outstanding effects
for the Marriage Act 1949, Part II. (See end of Document for details)*

Modifications etc. (not altering text)

C18 S. 21 applied by [Sharing of Church Buildings Act 1969 \(c. 38\), s. 6\(4\)](#)

*[^{F39}Issue of marriage document after publication of
banns or the grant of a special or common licence*

Textual Amendments

F39 S. 21A and cross-heading inserted (27.3.2021 for specified purposes, 19.4.2021 in so far as not already in force) by [The Registration of Marriages Regulations 2021 \(S.I. 2021/411\)](#), reg. 1(4)(c)(7)(a), [Sch. 1 para. 7](#) (with [Sch. 2](#))

21A Issue of marriage document after publication of banns or the grant of a special or common licence **U.K.**

- (1) This section applies to a marriage solemnized—
 - (a) after the publication of banns,
 - (b) on the authority of a special licence, or
 - (c) on the authority of a common licence.
- (2) Before the solemnization of the marriage, the clergyman who is to solemnize the marriage must issue a document, or ensure a document is issued and provided to the clergyman, in any form, and with any content, that may be prescribed.
- (3) The document issued under subsection (2) is to be known as a “marriage document”.
- (4) The clergyman must retain the marriage document until it is delivered to a registrar in accordance with section 53D(2).]

Miscellaneous Provisions

22 Witnesses. **E+W**

All marriages solemnized according to the rites of the Church of England shall be solemnized in the presence of two or more witnesses in addition to the clergyman by whom the marriage is solemnized.

23 Benefices held in plurality. **E+W**

Where two or more benefices are held in plurality under the ^{M3}Pastoral Reorganisation Measure, 1949, the bishop of the diocese in which the benefices are situated or, during a vacancy in the see, the guardian of the spiritualities thereof, may in writing direct where banns of matrimony of persons entitled to be married in any church of those benefices may be published and where marriages of those persons may be solemnized:

Provided that—

- (a) nothing in this section shall deprive a person of the right to be married in any church in which he would have been entitled to be married if no directions had been given under this section; and

Changes to legislation: There are currently no known outstanding effects for the Marriage Act 1949, Part II. (See end of Document for details)

- (b) a person may be married in a church in which he would have been entitled to be married as aforesaid notwithstanding that the banns of matrimony have, by virtue of this section, been published only in some other church.

Modifications etc. (not altering text)

- C19** S. 23 extended (with modifications) by [Pastoral Measure 1983 \(No. 1, SIF 21:4\)](#) ss. 27, 29, 40, Sch. 3 para. 14(4)
- C20** S. 23 extended (with modifications) (W.) by [Marriage \(Wales\) Act 1986 \(c. 7, SIF 49:1\)](#), s. 1
- C21** S. 23 applied (with modifications) (1.7.2012) by [Mission and Pastoral Measure 2011 \(No. 3\)](#), s. 112(3), [Sch. 3 para. 12\(4\)](#) (with ss. 100, 105(4), 107, 108(6), Sch. 8); 2012 No. 1, art. 2

Marginal Citations

- M3** 1949 No. 3.

24 Proof of residence not necessary to validity of marriage by banns or common licence. **E+W**

- (1) Where any marriage has been solemnized after the publication of banns of matrimony, it shall not be necessary in support of the marriage to give any proof of the residence of the parties or either of them in any parish or other ecclesiastical district in which the banns were published, and no evidence shall be given to prove the contrary in any proceedings touching the validity of the marriage.
- (2) Where any marriage has been solemnized on the authority of a common licence, it shall not be necessary in support of the marriage to give any proof that the usual place of residence of one of the parties was for fifteen days immediately before the grant of the licence in the parish or other ecclesiastical district in which the marriage was solemnized, and no evidence shall be given to prove the contrary in any proceedings touching the validity of the marriage.

25 Void marriages. **E+W**

[^{F40}(1) A marriage shall be void in any of the following cases.]

[^{F41}(2)] [^{F42}Case A is where any persons] knowingly and wilfully intermarry according to the rites of the Church of England (otherwise than by special licence)—

- (a) [^{F43}except in the case of a marriage in pursuance of section 26(1)(*dd*) of this Act,] in any place other than a church or other building in which banns may be published;
- (b) without banns having been duly published, a common licence having been obtained, or [^{F44}a marriage schedule] having been duly issued under Part III of this Act ^{F45}...; or
- (c) on the authority of a publication of banns which is void by virtue of ^{F46}... subsection (2) of section twelve of this Act, on the authority of a common licence which is void by virtue of subsection (3) of section sixteen of this Act, or on the authority of [^{F47}a marriage schedule which is] void by virtue of subsection (2) of section thirty-three of this Act;
- (d) in the case of a marriage on the authority of [^{F48}a marriage schedule], in any place other than the church [^{F49}building or other place specified in the

*Changes to legislation: There are currently no known outstanding effects
for the Marriage Act 1949, Part II. (See end of Document for details)*

[^{F50} notices of marriage [^{F51} and (if so specified) in the marriage schedule]] as the place where the marriage is to be solemnized].

- [^{F52}(3) Case B is where any persons knowingly and wilfully consent to or acquiesce in the solemnization of a Church of England marriage between them by a person who is not in Holy Orders.
- (4) Case C is where any persons of the same sex consent to or acquiesce in the solemnization of a Church of England marriage between them.
- (5) In subsections (3) and (4) “Church of England marriage” means a marriage according to the rites of the Church of England.]

Textual Amendments

- F40** S. 25(1) inserted (13.3.2014) by [Marriage \(Same Sex Couples\) Act 2013 \(c. 30\)](#), s. 21(3), **Sch. 7 para. 4(2)**; S.I. 2014/93, art. 3(k)(i)
- F41** Words in s. 25 renumbered as s. 25(2) (13.3.2014) by [Marriage \(Same Sex Couples\) Act 2013 \(c. 30\)](#), s. 21(3), **Sch. 7 para. 4(3)**; S.I. 2014/93, art. 3(k)(i)
- F42** Words in s. 25(2) substituted (13.3.2014) by [Marriage \(Same Sex Couples\) Act 2013 \(c. 30\)](#), s. 21(3), **Sch. 7 para. 4(3)**; S.I. 2014/93, art. 3(k)(i)
- F43** Words inserted by [Marriage Act 1983 \(c. 32, SIF 49:1\)](#), s. 1(7), **Sch. 1 para. 3(a)**
- F44** Words in s. 25(2)(b) substituted (4.5.2021) by [The Registration of Marriages Regulations 2021 \(S.I. 2021/411\)](#), reg. 1(2), **Sch. 1 para. 8(2)(a)** (with Sch. 2)
- F45** Words in s. 25(2)(b) omitted (4.5.2021) by virtue of [The Registration of Marriages Regulations 2021 \(S.I. 2021/411\)](#), reg. 1(2), **Sch. 1 para. 8(2)(b)** (with Sch. 2)
- F46** Words in s. 25(2)(c) omitted (27.2.2023) by virtue of [Marriage and Civil Partnership \(Minimum Age\) Act 2022 \(c. 28\)](#), s. 7(1), **Sch. para. 1(3)** (with s. 8); S.I. 2023/88, reg. 2 (with regs. 3-17)
- F47** Words in s. 25(2)(c) substituted (4.5.2021) by [The Registration of Marriages Regulations 2021 \(S.I. 2021/411\)](#), reg. 1(2), **Sch. 1 para. 8(3)** (with Sch. 2)
- F48** Words in s. 25(2)(d) substituted (4.5.2021) by [The Registration of Marriages Regulations 2021 \(S.I. 2021/411\)](#), reg. 1(2), **Sch. 1 para. 8(4)(a)** (with Sch. 2)
- F49** Words substituted by [Marriage Act 1983 \(c. 32, SIF 49:1\)](#), s. 1(7), **Sch. 1 para. 3(b)**
- F50** Words in s. 25(2)(d) substituted (1.1.2001) by 1999 c. 33, s. 169(1), Sch. 14 paras. 3, 7(c); S.I. 2000/2698, art. 2
- F51** Words in s. 25(2)(d) substituted (4.5.2021) by [The Registration of Marriages Regulations 2021 \(S.I. 2021/411\)](#), reg. 1(2), **Sch. 1 para. 8(4)(b)** (with Sch. 2)
- F52** S. 25(3)-(5) substituted for words in s. 25(2) (13.3.2014) by [Marriage \(Same Sex Couples\) Act 2013 \(c. 30\)](#), s. 21(3), **Sch. 7 para. 4(4)**; S.I. 2014/93, art. 3(k)(i)

Changes to legislation:

There are currently no known outstanding effects for the Marriage Act 1949, Part II.