MARESFIELD AND
NUTLEY CHURCHES
SEEKING TO KNOW, LOVE AND FOLLOW JESUS

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Thank you for enquiring about the possibility of getting married here at Maresfield and Nutley Churches.

As at least one of you has been married before, I wanted to explain our remarriage policy. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Since 2002 remarriage following divorce has been permitted in the Church of England under "exceptional circumstances" As I am sure you can appreciate, as a Christian minister I want to make sure that any remarriage is in keeping with the teachings of Jesus and the best decision made for all involved.

Jesus teaches that marriage is intended as a life-long union between one man and one woman, in a relationship that points us to the love Jesus has for his church (Matthew 19:4-6, Ephesians 5:31-33).

However, the Bible does acknowledge the reality that relationships break down and is honest about the pain and struggle we often endure in this life. In various places, the Bible indicates that there are circumstances in which remarriage after divorce is permissible, these are:

• Following the death of a spouse
• Being the victim of an adulterous spouse
• Being abandoned against your will
• Suffering significant and intentional neglect at the hands of your spouse This includes physical, spiritual or emotional abuse and actions that lead to basic necessities being withheld.

In these instances, the grieved individual has been left against their will or been treated in such an un-Christlike way as to relieve them of any obligation to stay in that marriage.

If you believe that any of these situations reflect your own, then I would encourage you to arrange a time for us to meet and discuss this further. This will involve arranging at least one meeting where your previous marriage and the cause of its breakdown can be shared.

I recognise that this may be a painful and difficult experience, so please be assured that you can take your time, that we can meet on more than one occasion and that your partner can join you.

On our website, you will find an application form, created by the Church of England, that asks for various details and will form part of our discussion. This should be returned at least 48 hours before the meeting. Following the meeting, I will usually take 48 hours to pray and sometimes (confidentially) taking wise counsel before phoning with a decision.

I apologise that this sounds like a lot of "process" especially when you will be keen to start making plans for your wedding. However, it's important that we take our time and do our best to make the right decision that is in keeping with the teachings of Jesus Christ.

I want to encourage you that, no matter what your situation, there is grace and love on offer from God through Jesus. And, whether or not we are able to marry you in our church, we would love to get to know you and I want to assure you of my prayers for you and would be glad to have the opportunity to meet you.

Kind regards
Rev'd Ben Sear
Vicar of Maresfield and Nutley Churches

A few notes:
It will be necessary to see copies of your Decree Absolute when we meet and if we are able to move forward then I will also need to see proof of your identity in the near future. Either a) a valid passport or b) a birth certificate plus one other proof of the use of your current name, such as Utility Bill or Bank Statement from the past year. I suggest making sure you have these to hand as soon as possible.

If we are able to move forward, we will arrange a handful of meetings in advance of the wedding to go over the paperwork, but also to talk about the service and reflect on marriage itself.