

Church of England Marriage Measure

A Measure passed by the General Synod of the Church of England, laid before both Houses of Parliament pursuant to the Church of England Assembly (Powers) Act 1919.

*Ordered by The House of Lords to be printed
30th April 2008*

*Ordered by The House of Commons to be printed
30th April 2008*

£3.00

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A Measure to enable persons to be married in a place of worship in a parish with which they have a qualifying connection and for connected purposes.

BE IT ENACTED by the Queen’s most Excellent Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and Commons, in this present Parliament assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:—

1 Marriages solemnized in churches, etc. in parishes with which a party has a qualifying connection

- (1) A person intending to be married shall have the like, but no greater, right to have the marriage solemnized in a parish church of a parish with which he or she has a connection specified in subsection (3) below (in this Measure referred to as a “qualifying connection”) as that person has to have the marriage solemnized in the parish church of the parish in which he or she resides or which is his or her usual place of worship. 5
- (2) Where a church or other building licensed for public worship has been designated, under section 29(2) of the Pastoral Measure 1983 (1983 No. 1), as a parish centre of worship, this section shall apply to such centre of worship, while the designation is in force, as it applies to a parish church.
- (3) For the purposes of this section a person has a qualifying connection with a parish in which the marriage is to be solemnized if— 10
 - (a) that person was baptised in that parish (unless the baptism took place in a combined rite which included baptism and confirmation) or is a person whose confirmation has been entered in the register book of confirmation for any church or chapel in that parish; 15
 - (b) that person has at any time had his or her usual place of residence in that parish for a period of not less than six months;
 - (c) that person has at any time habitually attended public worship in that parish for a period of not less than six months;
 - (d) a parent of that person has during the lifetime of that person had his or her usual place of residence in that parish for a period of not less than six months or habitually attended public worship in that parish for that period; or 20
 - (e) a parent or grandparent of that person has been married in that parish. 25
- (4) For the purpose of subsection (3)(d) or (e) above “parent” includes an adoptive parent and any other person who has undertaken the care and upbringing of the person seeking to establish a qualifying connection and “grandparent” shall be construed accordingly.

- (5) A person who has the right to have a marriage solemnized in accordance with subsection (1) above shall have the like right to have the banns of that marriage published in the parish church where the marriage is to be solemnised.
- (6) The right to have banns published conferred by subsection (5) above is additional to and not in substitution for the requirements of section 6 of the 1949 Act for banns to be published in the parish church of the parish where the parties to the marriage reside or of each parish in which one of them resides. 5
- (7) Where a marriage is intended to be solemnised in accordance with subsection (1) above following the publication of banns by virtue of subsection (5) above section 11(2) and (4) of the 1949 Act shall apply as those subsections apply to a marriage of which the banns have been published in a parish or district in which neither of the persons to be married resides by virtue of section 6(4) of that Act. 10
- (8) Subject to subsection (9) below, a person who wishes to have his or her marriage solemnized in accordance with subsection (1) above shall provide such information, written or otherwise, as the minister of the parish in which the marriage is to be solemnized may require in order to satisfy himself or herself that that person has a qualifying connection and – 15
- (a) section 8 of the 1949 Act shall apply as if the reference in that section to a clergyman were a reference to the minister, and 20
- (b) the minister shall be under a duty, when considering whether any information provided to him or her is sufficient to satisfy himself or herself under this subsection that the person wishing to have the marriage solemnized has a qualifying connection, to have regard to any guidance issued under section 3 below. 25
- (9) If the minister considers that it is necessary to do so, in order to satisfy himself or herself that a person has a qualifying connection, he or she may require that person to supply or support any information required to be provided under subsection (8) above by means of a statutory declaration.
- (10) Where a public chapel is licensed by a bishop for the publication of banns and the solemnisation of marriages under section 20 of the 1949 Act, this section shall apply as if that chapel were a parish church of the parish or of any parish the whole or part of which is within the district specified in the licence. 30
- (11) In this section “church” does not include a cathedral. 35
- (12) In this section –
- (a) “minister” means –
- (i) where a special cure of souls has been assigned to any priest for the area in which the church where the marriage is to be solemnised is situated, whether in a team ministry or otherwise, that priest, or 40
- (ii) where sub-paragraph (i) above does not apply, the incumbent of the benefice in the area of which that church is situated, or
- (iii) where neither of the above sub-paragraphs applies, the priest-in-charge of that benefice, or
- (iv) where none of the above sub-paragraphs applies, in the case of a team ministry, the vicar, if any, appointed by the bishop to act as rector under section 20(14) of the Pastoral Measure 1983 (1983 No. 1) or, if there is no such vicar appointed, the vicar who has held office for the longest period in that ministry, or 45

- (v) where none of the above sub-paragraphs applies, the rural dean of the deanery in which that church is situated;
 - (b) “parish” includes a conventional district; and
 - (c) any reference to baptism, confirmation, marriage or public worship shall be construed as a reference to baptism, confirmation, marriage or public worship, as the case may be, according to the rites of the Church of England. 5
- (13) Where, as a result of a pastoral scheme or otherwise, a parish has ceased to exist or the boundaries thereof have been altered and a person who wishes to have his or her marriage solemnized in accordance with subsection (1) above can establish a qualifying connection with a place situated within such a parish then, if that place is, at the time when the notice under section 8 of the 1949 Act is delivered, situated within the parish in which the church where the marriage is to be solemnized is situated, that person shall be deemed to have a qualifying connection with that parish. 10
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- (14) In relation to the establishment of a qualifying connection under subsection (3)(a) above by virtue of confirmation the references in subsection (13) above to a place shall be construed as a reference to the church or other place of worship in whose register the confirmation was entered. 20

2 Marriage by common licence

- (1) Notwithstanding section 15 of the 1949 Act a common licence may be granted to a person for the solemnization of a marriage in any church or chapel in which that person may be married under section 1 above and section 16(1)(b) of that Act shall, where a common licence may be granted by virtue of this section, have effect as if it required one of the persons to be married to swear that one or both of those persons has a qualifying connection with a parish within the meaning of section 1(3) above and to state the nature of that connection and section 1(8) above shall apply as if the reference therein to the minister of the parish were a reference to the authority having power to grant the licence. 25
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- (2) Where an application has been made for the grant of a common licence under subsection (1) above section 1(13) above shall have effect as if the reference to the date on which the notice required under section 8 of the 1949 Act is delivered were a reference to the date of the application for the grant of the common licence. 35

3 Guidance

The House of Bishops shall from time to time issue guidance as to the exercise of any functions by a minister under section 1(8) or (9) above or by the authority having power to grant a common licence under section 1(8) as applied by section 2 above. 40

4 Supplementary provisions

- (1) In this Measure “the 1949 Act” means the Marriage Act 1949 (12, 13 & 14 Geo 6 c. 76) and, unless the context otherwise requires, expressions used in this Measure have the same meaning as in the 1949 Act. 45
- (2) Where a marriage has been solemnized –

- (a) in accordance with section 1(1) above, or
- (b) on the authority of a common licence granted by virtue of section 2 above,

it shall not be necessary in support of the marriage to give any proof that either party had a qualifying connection with the parish 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.

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5 Citation, commencement and extent

- (1) This Measure may be cited as the Church of England Marriage Measure 2008.
- (2) This Measure shall come into force on such day as the Archbishops of Canterbury and York may jointly appoint and different days may be appointed for different provisions.
- (3) This Measure shall extend to the whole of the provinces of Canterbury and York except the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man, except that the provisions thereof may be extended to the Channel Islands as defined in the Channel Islands (Church Legislation) Measures 1931 and 1957 or either of them, in accordance with those Measures, and, if an Act of Tynwald or an instrument made under an Act of Tynwald so provides, shall extend to the Isle of Man subject to such exceptions, adaptations or modifications as may be specified in the Act of Tynwald or instrument.

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