

21 March 2012

## Church has spent a lot of time encouraging weddings

I READ with disappointment Mrs Vincent's letter about her daughter wanting to get married in the church in Barkham (*The Wokingham Times*, Wednesday, February 29).

Without talking to Barkham I can't say exactly what went on, but sadly she is incorrect about the rules relating to a church marriage and without commenting on her particular situation it is worth pointing your readers towards the current, recently revised rules.

Firstly, if you live in the parish of a particular church you do have an automatic right to get married in that church as you always have done - you can find the parish boundaries of your local parish at <http://www.achurchnearyou.com/>.

However if you don't live in the parish there are a number of other criteria to establish an association with a particular church which are listed at <http://www.yourchurchwedding.org/youre-welcome/more-churches-to-choose-from.aspx> - at its simplest these include having lived in the parish or attended the church currently or in the past, been baptised in the church or even if your grandparents were married in the church.

Looking at my own church in Finchampstead, we celebrated our marriage in the church despite living in Arborfield parish, and a large number of the many weddings that take place in our building are for couples where neither bride nor groom live within

the parish boundaries and who are getting married via a previous association, or by having attended regularly.

Certainly the Church of England at a national level has spent a lot of time over recent years encouraging and supporting church weddings through their Weddings Project, and it is disappointing in this case that Mrs Vincent and her daughter do not seem to have got the right information.

Can I urge her and her daughter to take a look at <http://www.yourchurchwedding.org> and also contact [weddings@churchofengland.org](mailto:weddings@churchofengland.org) who will be only too happy to try and help.

**Richard Peat,  
Arborfield.**