

## Registrar update

Dated 20 June 2020

The following information was provided to Diocesan Synod members at an informal virtual gathering last Saturday. This information was correct at time of publication but as the current pandemic situation is ever evolving we must stress referring to the CofE website for up to date information [www.churchofengland.org](http://www.churchofengland.org)

### 1) Covid-19 update:

- a. **Access to churches:** we're gradually seeing the relaxation of restrictions and the ability to open churches for private prayer and to conduct small funerals, subject to conditions. These have all been well documented in the Bishop's weekly briefings, but please contact Parish Support Office if you need any further support.<sup>i</sup>
  - b. **Marriages:** are still not permitted but I have a build-up of applications for July onwards. If any of you have any in the pipeline, please remember that, for now, they can't be by banns and will need to be by Special or Common Licence. Would you please be in touch with Natalie Hutchinson, Registry Clerk ([nh@ewlaw.co.uk](mailto:nh@ewlaw.co.uk)) if you have not already done so? Bear in mind, in particular, that, if there's been a previous divorce, there are extra forms which need to be completed when it's by Common or Special Licence, so please don't leave it until the last minute. We're getting everything ready and approved but not charging or issuing the Licence until we know the wedding can go ahead.<sup>ii</sup>
- 2) **General Synod Elections update:** thankfully, these have now been postponed for a year. Our present GS reps will continue for an extra year, so filling our casual vacancies last year was definitely worthwhile.
  - 3) **Churchwardens/APCMs:** to remind you that there was a Bishop's Instrument dated 20 March 2020 which extended the time for holding the Annual Meeting of Parishioners to appoint churchwardens and the APCM to 31 October 2020. That still stands and, so far, we don't know if that will need to be extended but it is kept under constant review. In the meantime, existing churchwardens continue in office, as do deanery and PCC reps, unless they wish to resign. Please note that churchwardens resign by giving two months' written notice to the Bishop, though shorter notice can be accepted. If any completely new churchwardens were appointed before lockdown and need to be sworn in, would they please be in touch with the Registry.
  - 4) **Deanery Synod representatives:** originally, Deanery Synod secretaries still had to give details of deanery synod members to the Diocesan Secretary by 1 July this year. This was because deanery synod members formed the electorate for the General Synod elections. As they have now been postponed, there's no need for the information to be supplied.

*Since this meeting the Government announced the following on Monday 22 June 2020:*

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<sup>i</sup> Churches will be permitted to open for worship from 4 July 2020 but we are still awaiting guidance from Government and CofE.

<sup>ii</sup> As of 4 July 2020 weddings with up to 30 attendees will be permitted but we are still awaiting final guidance from Government and CofE.