**Church of England Wedding Blessings**

***Welcome*** We are always pleased when couples ask for their wedding to be blessed by the church. We appreciate it if your enquiry is made well in advance of the required date to ensure availability of your chosen church, and the first step in securing a booking is to fill in an Application Form, (see the link on the website)

***Legalities*** We are not allowed, under Portuguese law, to perform a marriage, but we are allowed to perform a *wedding blessing* service. A prerequisite is that a legal/civil marriage ceremony has taken place in, for instance the UK, or Gibraltar. Thereafter, the church blessing ceremony is almost identical to an English church wedding. Our Chaplain will wish to meet the couple as soon as convenient to discuss the form and content of the service. The couple may wish to inform their local priest or minister of their desire to marry here and in some cases it will be appropriate for him/her to prepare the couple. The Chaplain must have viewed the marriage certificate, before the wedding blessing can proceed.

***Location*** The three churches in regular use by the Chaplaincy, offer a special attraction (see the ‘Weddings’ page of the website) and here we can offer the full range of features As an alternative and by arrangement with the Roman Catholic Bishop of Faro, we can perform the ceremony in other RC churches in the Algarve, subject to availability and the agreement of the local RC priest. It is also possible to conduct a wedding blessing in other venues e.g. hotel or garden, subject to the Chaplain approving the suitability of the venue for conducting a religious service.

***Form of Service*** The forms of service used are ‘The Marriage Service from Common Worship’, or ‘The Prayer and Dedication after Civil Marriage’. It is usual to have two or three hymns and there should be at least one reading from the Bible and we are happy to advise on these.

***Facilities*** When a wedding blessing, or renewal of vows takes place in one of our churches, we can provide the following:

**St. Luke’s Palhagueira --‐ the only Anglican consecrated Church in the Algarve located in a beautiful rural setting.**

**Organist** – Our resident organist, Mr Stuart Mayes or his deputy, Gemma Page would welcome speaking to you with regard to hymns or any other music you would wish to incorporate into the service.

**Recorded music** – We have the facility to use other music of your choice (Classical, Jazz or Popular) and to play this through the church sound system.

**Choir** – We have an arrangement with the prestigious Canticorum choir (see: <http://coro--‐amigos.com/>)

**Nossa Senhora da Luz – The beautiful church by the beach in the heart of Praia da Luz.**

**Organist** Our professional organist Marion who will be happy to play for you any music of your choice.

**Choir** Our resident church choir conducted by John Dixon our choirmaster. Please contact John to organise all your selected choices of music. His contact details will be given to you with the wedding package when you apply. We also can offer The Western Algarve Choir to sing at your service. Liz Robert's is the choir's conductor and contact details can be found with your wedding package.

**Recorded music** - We are also able to play on our sound system any CDs of your choice

***Fees***  Fees charged for a church wedding blessing are generally, similar to those across the Diocese of Europe, with the current fee being £500 or Euro equivalent, plus travel expenses where incurred. The organist fee is normally €100, but choir and other venue costs are by arrangement with the provider. A deposit is normally required and the remainder is to be paid at the rehearsal or two weeks before the event.

09 August 2015