



Blessing our community in the name of Jesus for the transformation of all
ST MARY THE VIRGIN, WHICKHAM

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Dear enquirer

Re: Proposed Marriage at St Mary's Parish Church or Gibside Chapel

Thank you for your enquiry about arranging a wedding. A marriage in either the Parish Church or Gibside Chapel is made in accordance with the rites and practices of the Church of England.

In order to explore your enquiry further it will be necessary to meet and ensure that all legal criteria are met and that your chosen date & time is available. We invite all couples seeking marriage to come and speak with us in the first instance. We recognize individual circumstances and needs vary and as far as possible we want to meet your expectations. Generally, I am available every Tuesday evening between 5-30 & 6.30pm, no appointment necessary. You'll find me within St Mary's Parish Church, Whickham NE16 4SH. You're welcome to park on my drive, which you find next to St Mary's, at the top of Church Chare. At this meeting we'll discuss your hopes and your eligibility for marriage. Please bring with you the following:

For identity purposes

We need to see your passports, driving licenses and utility bills/bank statements for both of you. The latter documents should show your current address(es).

If you claim a connection with the parish of Whickham

Some couples who live outside the area may be eligible for marriage in the church or chapel by virtue of a previous connection with the Parish of Whickham.

We will need to see supporting documentation for example, Baptism certificates or Marriage certificates of any parent(s) married at St Mary's or Gibside Chapel, any proof of residency within the parish.

If you have been divorced

We will need to see your decree absolute.

In addition to the original documents for examination, it would help if you could provide photocopies which I may keep.

Hopefully we will be able to take the booking, secured by a non-returnable deposit of £200. If you live some distance away, please ring and we'll have an initial conversation.

Additional information about the Church and Chapel

The Parish church of Whickham is dedicated to **St Mary the Virgin**. It has stood at the heart of the community since the early part of the twelfth century. Local historians believe an earlier wooden building may have pre-dated the Norman built Church. Originally designed and built as a 'two cell' church, the oldest remaining parts are the Chancel arch, along with the three arches of the south side of the nave. We represent an unbroken tradition of Christian witness, worship, teaching and care for the people of Whickham, a tradition that spans 900 years.

Gibside Chapel, an 18th century Palladian Chapel, is part of the historic Gibside landscape garden in the Derwent Valley, and is open to visitors. The National Trust, a conservation charity, cares for it now, but originally it was owned by the Bowes-Lyon family. The Chapel is adorned with delicate and intricate carvings and inside, high quality wooden curved pews and a three-tier pulpit.

Latterly the chapel was in the ownership of the Strathmore family. It was given into the care of the NT and is under the jurisdiction of the Diocese of Durham. The bodies of the Strathmore family are laid to rest in the chapel's crypt.

Yours sincerely

The Revd Barry J Abbott
Rector of Whickham, Chaplain to Gibside Estate
