The details

What are we doing?

We are reviewing the law governing how and where people can marry in England and Wales. The current laws date from 1836 and aren't meeting the needs of many modern couples.

What's our aim?

After a public consultation, we will make recommendations for a reformed weddings law that allows for greater choice within a simple, fair, and consistent legal structure.
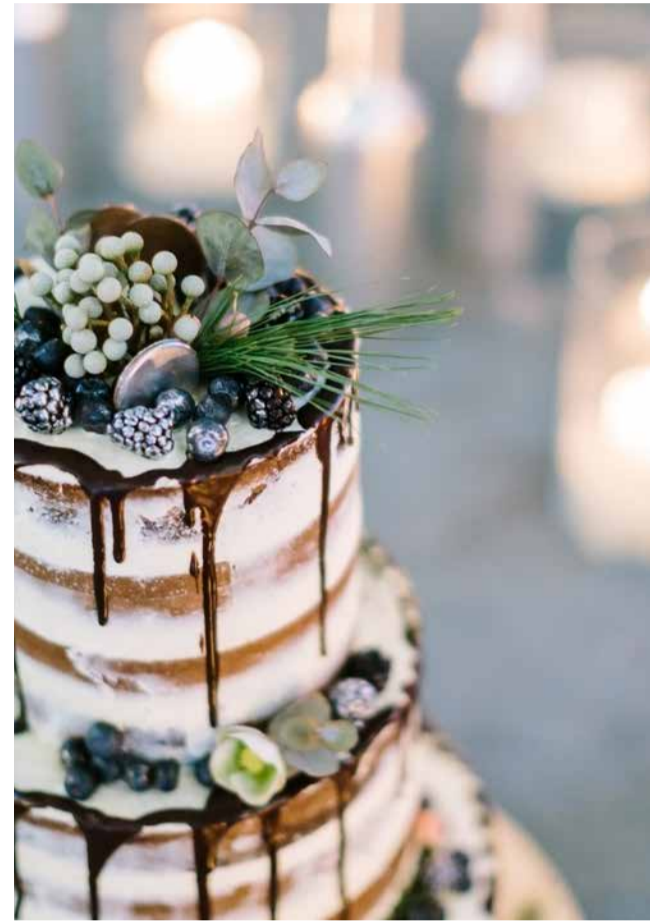
What happens now

Now that the project has begun, we will be meeting with key stakeholders and researching options for reform.

We will then be publishing a consultation paper to seek the views of stakeholders and the public on questions and provisional proposals for reform.

We will conclude by making recommendations to Government.

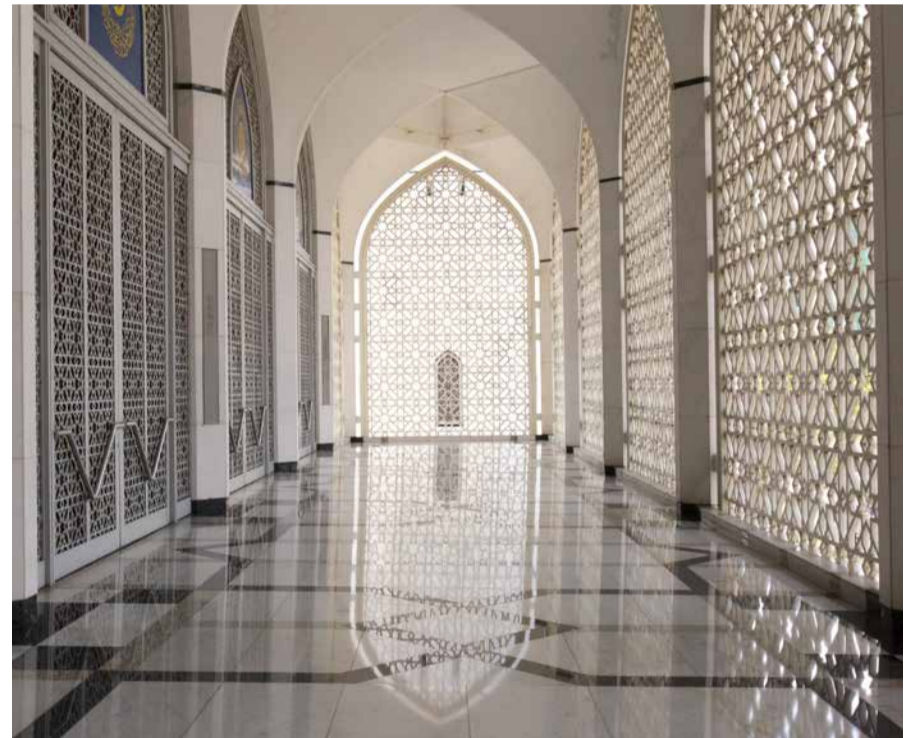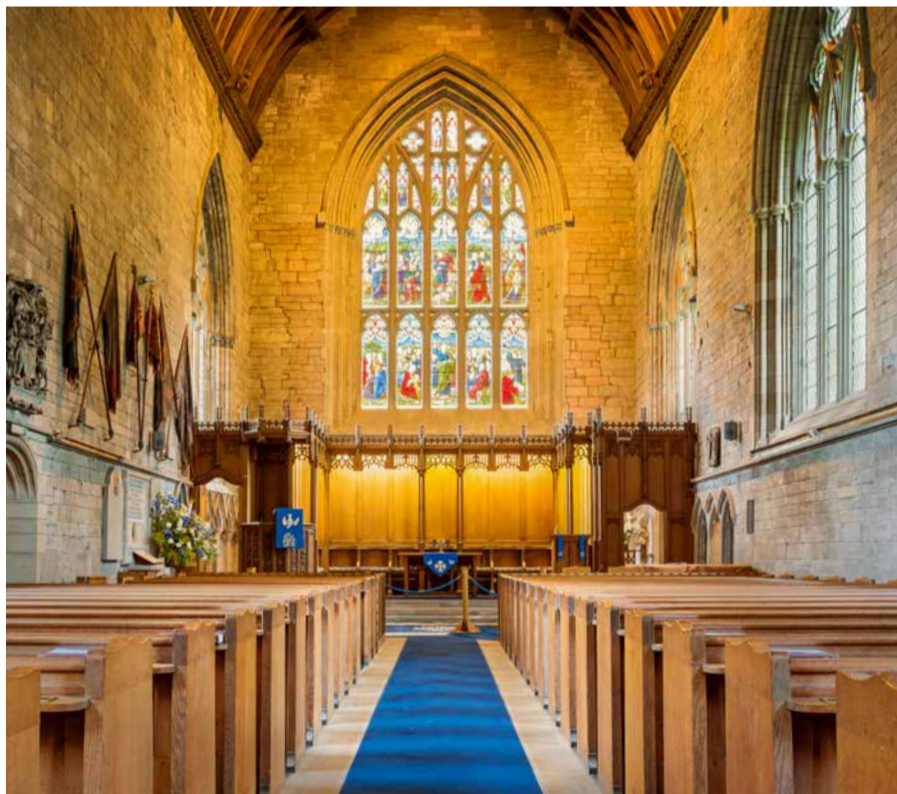The project will last two years.

Currently

There are different ways to give notice for different types of wedding ceremony.
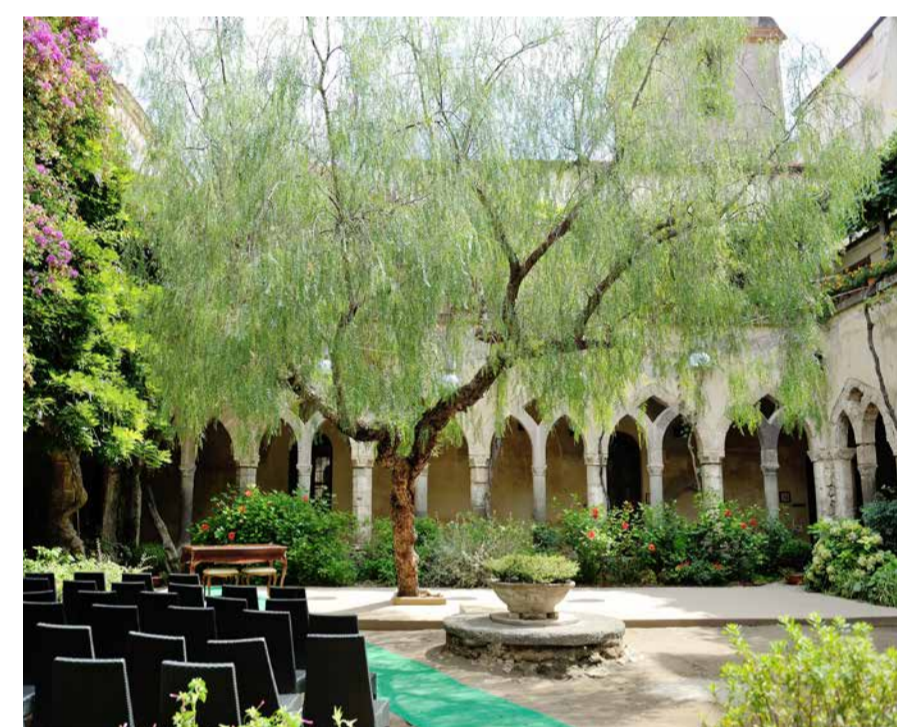
Almost all weddings must take place in certain buildings.

Most couples must say specific words.

A wedding must be either civil or religious.

The law is not clear as to the status of a wedding that was not celebrated in one of the legally authorised ways and some religious ceremonies have not been recognised.

The law is complex and contains different rules about where a wedding can take place, depending on the type of ceremony.

We will consider

Whether everyone getting married should have to give notice to the register office.

Where couples should be able to marry, such as:

• outside
• in a private home
• on board a ship

Options for couples to express their commitment in a way that is more personal to them.

How the law might allow non-religious belief organisations and independent celebrants to conduct weddings (with the decision of whether they should be authorised to do so to be made by Government).

What should be the minimum requirements for a marriage to be recognised by the law, such as:

• giving notice
• the consent of each member of the couple
• signing the paperwork

How to eliminate unnecessary red tape.

Visit the Law Commission website to find out more
www.lawcom.gov.uk/project/weddings/