



THIRTY THIRD ANNUAL CONFERENCE

20 March 2021

10.00am – 4.00pm

A VIRTUAL CONFERENCE VIA ZOOM

THE SOLEMNIZATION OF MATRIMONY: PAST PRESENT AND FUTURE



The Ecclesiastical Law Society will meet virtually on 20 March 2021 for its Annual Conference which will consider issues concerning the solemnization of marriage. These will include the covenantal and contractual nature of marriage from an historic perspective; the legalities of marrying in accordance with the rites of the Church of England today whether by banns or licence; and the proposals for reform emerging from the Law Commission's ongoing review of marriage law in its *Weddings Project*. There will also be an exploration of the pastoral opportunities arising from Anglican weddings.

Bookings can be made [here](#) on the Society website. The necessary Zoom links will be provided a few days before the Conference.

Free to Members; £5 for non-members.

SPEAKERS:

REBECCA PROBERT



Professor of Law at the University of Exeter and currently working on the Law Commission's Weddings project. This paper will trace the history of marriage law reform and explain how we ended up with a set of laws that are highly restrictive, inconsistent, and complex, and why reform is needed.

NICK HOPKINS



Professor of Law at Reading University and Law Commissioner. This paper will set out the Law Commission's proposed scheme and the principles that underpin it and identify and discusses key issues that have emerged in the public consultation.

RUSSELL SANDBERG



Professor of Law at Cardiff University. His research interrogates the relationship between law and the humanities, with particular expertise in Law and Religion and Legal History. This paper takes a step back to outline three shortcomings with the current law on marriage: (1) the unregistered religious marriage issue whereby religious weddings take place that do not comply with the Marriage Act and so are not legally binding; (2) the number of weddings conducted by humanist and independent celebrants that do not come under the Marriage Act and so cannot be legally binding on their own; and (3) the increasing numbers of cohabiting couples. These three problems overlap: in all three, the concern is that there are no State law remedies available if the relationship breaks down.

SANDRA MILLAR



Head of Life Events for the Church of England.