

PETER GIBSON MP



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

July 2021

Dear Constituent

Thank you for your email about marriages.

I share your concerns about the current marriage laws and agree that meaningful change needs to take place. You may be interested to know that when the Government held a consultation on this in 2014, the majority of respondents were in favour of changing the law to allow legally valid non-religious belief ceremonies in unrestricted locations.

I know that the Government wants to reform marriage ceremonies to make sure that there is a simple, fair and consistent legal framework, so that people can have a wedding that is meaningful to them.

That is why the Government announced in June 2019 that the Law Commission will conduct a fundamental review of the law on how and where people can legally marry in England and Wales. As part of the project, the Law Commission will be considering how a scheme could include weddings conducted by humanist and other non-religious belief organisations and where weddings should be able to take place.

The Law Commission's consultation on proposals for reform of the law governing how and where couples can get married closed on 4 January 2021. I understand responses are now being analysed. These responses will inform development of the Law Commission's final policy, to be published in a report with recommendations for Government in the second half of 2021. I understand that the Government will then decide on provision for non-religious belief marriage in light of the Law Commission's recommendations.

I believe that the requirement for venues to be seemly and dignified should be maintained. However, I welcome that, alongside the Law Commission review, outdoor civil wedding and partnership ceremonies in England and Wales are set to be legalised for the first time. This change will take effect on 1 July 2021 and will offer greater choice to couples in a boost to the wedding sector after a very challenging period.

Once again, thank you for taking the time to contact me and if I can ever be any further assistance to you then please do not hesitate to contact me again.

*Yours sincerely
Peter Gibson*

PETER GIBSON MP

Member of Parliament for Darlington

Constituency Office: 34 Duke Street, Darlington, Co. Durham, DL3 7AQ Telephone: 01325 711711

Email: peter.gibson.mp@parliament.uk Website: www.petergibson.org

    @gibbo4darlo