# Former Vicar Richard Coles Opens Up About Marital Status, Regrets and New Relationship



Reverend Richard Coles, a former vicar at St Mary the Virgin Church in Finedon near Peterborough, admitted his discomfort over publicly revealing that he and his late husband, David Oldham, weren't celibate during their marriage. Coles, 62, who also lost his mother, Elizabeth, earlier this year, was married to Oldham for nine years until David's death in 2019 due to alcoholism.

Coles served as a vicar from 2011 to April 2022, when he retired. In an interview with The Telegraph, Coles expressed regret about his admission, which he said offended many people. He justified his decision to lie about their celibacy, citing the serious consequences, including the potential loss of his job, home, career, and parish.

The Church of England allows same-sex civil partnerships among clergy but requires them to remain celibate. Coles received hate mail following Oldham’s death and has spoken about the difficult decisions gay clergy face.

Coles is now in a relationship with actor Dickie Cant, whom he met on a dating site. The couple has been discussing marriage. Coles, who found it challenging to start dating after David's death, described the experience as similar to "a polar bear waking up from hibernation."

Before retiring, Coles, sometimes referred to as the 'pop star vicar,' appeared on the show "Strictly Come Dancing" in 2017. He retired because he could not justify the Church of England's treatment of homosexuality.