Application Pack

Ref: WA085

Minor Canon and Sacrist

Stipend: 29,756.46 per annum

Full time – Permanent (five year fixed term)

Closing date: 10 May 2021
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April 2021

Appointment of Minor Canon and Sacrist

Offering divine worship publicly and daily is fundamental to the Abbey's mission. It is worship that sustains the Abbey's rich and complex life.

The two Minor Canons (Precentor and Sacrist) share in the offering of the opus Dei. They exercise responsibility for organising both the statutory daily services, details of which are found on the Abbey website, and the many special services that are an essential feature of the Abbey's mission. They exercise this responsibility subject to the authority of the Dean, as Ordinary, with whom they enjoy a close working relationship.

In the recent past, special services have included a celebration of the centenary of the burial of the Unknown Warrior and services of thanksgiving for prominent public figures (such as Lord Heywood), in addition to the annual pattern of services for Commonwealth Day, ANZAC Day, Florence Nightingale, Civic Sunday, Battle of Britain and Remembrance Sunday.

The vacancy occurs through the appointment of the Reverend Mark Birch, as Precentor, when the Reverend Christopher Stoltz, became Chaplain of Haileybury School in early 2020.

There is one BCP Eucharist a week (on Sunday at 8) and BCP Evensong daily. Other services draw on the provision of Common Worship, with Bible readings generally taken from the NRSV. Eucharistic vestments are worn. The Sung Eucharist is celebrated at the High Altar, with the use of incense on Principal Feasts and Holy Days.

Minor Canon appointments are subject to ten months’ probation, for an initial period of five years with a possible extension, by mutual agreement, of up to two years.

A detailed job description and person specification follow, together with a statement of the terms and conditions attached to the post. The Minor Canon’s post is a demanding one in a busy place of worship. It is a key role in the day to day life of the Abbey and is strongly supported by the Dean and Chapter. Appropriate training is available.

Potential applicants are welcome to telephone or email The Reverend Mark Birch for an informal conversation.

The successful applicant will take up the post as soon as possible.
About Westminster Abbey

Above all else, the Abbey is a church, a place of prayer and praise and holy ground at the heart of the nation. It is also a treasured part of Britain’s heritage and a leading venue for tourism. The Abbey has occupied a central place in the celebration of great events for the nation and remains one of the most beautiful architectural masterpieces in Britain.

A living Church, Westminster Abbey is where the coronation of Kings and Queens has taken place since 1066, and where many of the Kings and Queens of England and of the United Kingdom are buried. Principal among them is St Edward the Confessor, King of England from 1042 to 1066, whose shrine is at the heart of the Abbey Church. Beside and around them are buried or commemorated many of the great men and women from almost every century of British history: statesmen and politicians, lawyers, warriors, clerics, writers, artists, musicians. Westminster Abbey is a Royal Peculiar, and the Dean and Chapter of Westminster are directly responsible to the Sovereign.

Westminster Abbey’s mission is currently stated as:

- To serve Almighty God by offering divine Worship daily and publicly;
- To serve the Sovereign by daily prayer and by a ready response to requests made by or on behalf of Her Majesty;
- To serve the nation by celebrating the distinctive witness of the Christian faith; by upholding the place of religious faith within national life; and by active engagement with Parliament, Whitehall and others in positions of public service;
- To serve all pilgrims and visitors to the Abbey, and to maintain a tradition of hospitality.

Following the appointment of The Very Reverend Dr David Hoyle as Dean in November 2019, the Dean and Chapter have begun a review of the Abbey’s priorities for its ongoing mission.

Prior to the pandemic, the Abbey attracted well over one million paying visitors each year, from all around the world. A large number of people also attended services which take place seven days a week.

Because the Abbey receives no regular income from the State, the Church of England or the Royal Family, and relies almost entirely on income from visitors, the pandemic hit us hard. The loss of income has been a serious issue, and Chapter had to make a series of adjustments to its financial strategy whilst also responding to the new requirements for safety in places of worship. We had to enter into a painful process of reducing the number of staff, alongside many other cost reduction measures. We have adapted effectively, and we now anticipate a gradual recovery in numbers coming to the Abbey for worship and tourist visiting over the coming months and years. However, we expect that we will continue to live in a culture of financial stringency for some time.

Worship and music are central to the priorities set by the Dean and Chapter; we kept the Abbey open for public worship throughout the latest lockdown and are now gradually resuming our programme of choral services.

The Abbey employs around 300 staff in a variety of roles and also relies on over 400 volunteers.
Job Description

JOB TITLE  Minor Canon and Sacrist

ACCOUNTABLE TO  The Dean, through the Minor Canon and Precentor

RESPONSIBLE FOR:  The Brotherhood of St Edward (servers), The Guild of St Faith (needle-workers), the Westminster Abbey Company of Ringers (as Superintendent of the Belfry).

KEY RELATIONSHIPS:  Two editorial/administrative assistants, The Organist and his colleagues, the Event Management Department, Vergers and the Receiver General.

BACKGROUND:  Westminster Abbey defines its main mission as the worship of Almighty God. In addition to hosting services of national and international significance, it maintains a daily pattern of worship, with some 30 services a week in the Abbey Church, St Margaret's Church, and the Chapel of St Mary Undercroft in the Palace of Westminster.

JOB SUMMARY:  Subject to the authority of the Dean as Ordinary, and in collaboration with the Minor Canon and Precentor, to organise and participate in the worshipping life of the Abbey.

MAIN DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

1. Officiating at Matins and singing Evensong, providing suitable prayers at each, and from time to time preaching and celebrating the Eucharist

2. Preparing congregational service booklets for all Sunday and weekday services and ensuring that all the necessary material is available for all services within the Abbey Church, St Margaret’s Church, and the Chapel of St Mary Undercroft

3. Planning and shaping special services, in collaboration with the Precentor, overseeing the printing of service papers, producing ceremonial notes, rehearsing participants and overseeing ceremonial on the day of the service

4. Liaising with the Abbey clergy in order to draw up rotas for presidents at the Eucharist, officiants at the Offices and readers

5. Collaborating closely with the Precentor and the administrative assistants

6. Maintaining the highest possible standards in his/her own singing

7. Serving as Warden of the Guild of St Faith (volunteer organisation responsible for the making and repair of vestments and other fabric)

8. Serving as Warden of the Brotherhood of St Edward (volunteer servers drawn from Old Choristers)

9. Serving as Superintendent of the Belfry, chairing all formal meetings of the Westminster Abbey Company of Ringers and liaising between the Ringers and other Abbey departments.

10. In close liaison with the Dean’s Verger, providing direction and support to the department of vergers with respect to their role within the liturgy and other ceremonial
11. Playing a full part in the worshipping and community life of the Abbey and undertaking other duties as required by the Dean

12. Sharing in pastoral duties towards Abbey staff, Oblates, volunteers and regular worshippers in collaboration with clerical colleagues

Westminster Abbey is committed to the safeguarding of children, young people and adults at risk. To prevent them from harm, we undertake appropriate checks (including the relevant level of criminal record check) on staff and volunteers and require them to complete relevant safeguarding training. This post requires an enhanced level criminal record check.
Person Specification

This section outlines the knowledge, skills and abilities the job holder needs in order to fulfil the requirements of the post. 'Essential' criteria are those that the job holder absolutely must have in order to do the job. 'Desirable' criteria are those qualities that would be either useful, or an advantage or those which the job holder can be trained to do.

**Essential**

**Education:**
- To degree level or equivalent

**Skills/Aptitudes:**
- Excellent liturgical singing, including the ability to maintain pitch securely
- Excellent oral and written communication skills
- Excellent organisational skills
- Ability to work to deadlines
- Excellent ICT skills, with attention to detail, to produce printed materials of the highest quality
- Aptitude for team working

**Knowledge/Experience:**
- At least three years’ experience in full-time stipendiary ministry in the Church of England or in a Church in Communion therewith
- Sound working knowledge of Anglican liturgy and of the practice of the Church of England
- Knowledge of the Anglican choral tradition
- Experience of officiating at Choral Evensong
- An ability to reflect on the opportunities and challenges of working in a collegial environment

**Personal Attributes:**
- An ordained priest of the Church of England or of a Church in communion therewith
- A priest in good standing
- Calmness under pressure

**Circumstances:**
- The post-holder is required to live within the Abbey precincts
- The post is subject to enhanced DBS clearance.

**Desirable**

**Education:**
- A higher theological or musical qualification

**Skills/Aptitudes:**
- Skills in designing special services

**Knowledge/Experience:**
- Experience of people management
- Experience of working in a large church
- Knowledge of ecumenical and inter-faith working

This Job Description will be kept under review and may be amended by the Dean & Chapter from time to time. Any proposed changes will be discussed with the postholder.

April 2021
Working for us

Employment Status

This post is permanent (5 year fixed term with a possible two year extension).

Stipend

The stipend for this appointment is currently £29,756.46 per annum and is paid on the last Friday of each month.

Probationary Period

The appointment is subject to a probationary period of ten months.

Accommodation

The Minor Canon will be required to live within the Abbey precincts, for the better performance of his/her duties. A house is provided rent free for this purpose. The Dean and Chapter will meet all charges in respect of Council Tax and utilities (excluding private telephone charges); the private element of this constitutes a taxable benefit.

Working Hours

The working hours will be those which are necessary for the proper performance of the Minor Canon’s duties. One day off in each calendar week is given; the actual day to be taken may vary from time to time.

Annual Holidays

The holiday entitlement is six weeks (36 working days) with pay every calendar year, in addition to bank and other public holidays. Minor Canons may be required to work on certain public holidays, in which case a day off in lieu is given.

Training

On-site training will be provided in all aspects of the job. Any further training needs will be assessed through the probation period and in annual appraisals.

Pension Scheme

The Dean and Chapter will contribute to the Church of England Pensions Board at the applicable rate.

Medical Insurance

The Dean and Chapter will pay 50% of premiums to join a nominated private medical insurance scheme after one year’s employment.

Staff Discount

All employees receive a 20% discount on purchases from the Westminster Abbey shop and a 30% discount on purchases from the Benugo outlets, which serve refreshments.
Equality Statement, Safeguarding and How to apply

Equality Statement
The Dean and Chapter aims at all times to recruit the person who is most suited to the job. Recruitment will be solely on the basis of the applicant’s abilities and individual merit as measured against the criteria for the job. Qualifications, skills and experience will be assessed at the level that is relevant to the job.

We will ensure that our shortlisting, interviewing and selection procedures avoid discrimination in any way, including on grounds of age, disability, gender, marital status or civil partnership, race, nationality or ethnic origins, religion or belief and sexual orientation.

Please return the Equal Opportunities Monitoring form with your application. This will help us monitor our recruitment practice. The form will not be seen by the people making the selection decision.

Safeguarding
Westminster Abbey is committed to the safeguarding of children, young people and adults at risk. To prevent them from harm, we undertake appropriate checks on staff and volunteers and require them to complete relevant safeguarding training. Offers are subject to a relevant level of criminal record check, receipt of references satisfactory to Westminster Abbey, right to work in the UK, proof of professional qualifications and medical clearance, which may include a medical assessment from the Abbey doctor.

How to Apply
Please complete our application form as CVs will not be accepted.

Please read the Job Description and Person Specification carefully and think about how your experience, skills and abilities help you to meet the requirements listed in the Person Specification.

Use the ‘Personal Statement’ section of the form to tell us; your reasons for applying for this post, how you meet the criteria as set out in the person specification, and your thoughts about how you will take forward some of the challenges and issues set out in the Job Description.

Clear information on how you meet all the requirements of the job, with relevant examples, will help us with shortlisting, and we may not be able to shortlist you for interview if you do not provide this.

Please email your completed application to: applications@westminster-abbey.org If you are unable to email your application, please telephone the Human Resources department on 020 7654 4863.

Applications should arrive no later than 9am on Monday 10 May 2021.

The singing test will be conducted before shortlisting for the final interview. This will take place in week commencing 17 May 2021.

Final interviews will take place on Monday, 7 June 2021.

Westminster Abbey is an equal opportunities employer, and this post is subject to a genuine occupational requirement.

We regret that, due to the large number of applications we receive, we are only able to contact you or provide feedback if you have been shortlisted for interview. We appreciate your interest in our work at Westminster Abbey.