



Appointment of the Organist and Master of the Choristers

Closing date: 13th June 2022
Start date: 1st January 2023



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A Letter from the Dean

Westminster Abbey



The place of Coronation, a site of gathering for nations and Commonwealth, a house of memory and memorial and an iconic destination for pilgrims and visitors, the Abbey hardly needs an introduction. However, that fame and significance can mislead. We must never forget that Westminster Abbey is, above all else, a church, a place of prayer. It has been set aside for the worship of God for over a thousand years. At the very heart of our life and mission are the daily services and the music that sustains them.

Appointing an Organist and Master of the Choristers*, we will of course expect to see candidates of extraordinary ability and proven distinction. In the last twenty years (and building on the work of his predecessors) James O'Donnell has secured for the Abbey's music foundation a consistent and unparalleled reputation for excellence that we intend both to sustain and to develop to meet the needs of the coming decades. Because we are a community of prayer and a church serving Sovereign and peoples we also seek a colleague committed to our life and our mission. Our Organist will live amongst us and be a part of us.

I am delighted that you are reading this letter and thinking about the possibility of work and life in Westminster. I thank you for your attention and interest. This is a glorious place, and extraordinary things happen here. I believe that great opportunities and fascinating challenges lie ahead for our next music director. We hope to meet exceptionally talented candidates, who bring with them a sense of excitement that we can share and a commitment to be with us as we shape the future in the power of God's grace.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "David Hoyle", with a long horizontal flourish underneath.

The Very Reverend Dr David Hoyle MBE
Dean of Westminster



* The historic office of "Organist and Master of the Choristers" is open to candidates of any gender, and whilst this document reflects the convention that the two roles have been held in combination, we are open to applications from exceptional choral directors with the ability to lead across the full range of the Abbey's music but who are not organists or would not wish to perform in that capacity.

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 women and men from almost every century of British history: statesmen and politicians, lawyers, warriors, clerics, writers, artists, musicians.

Neither a cathedral nor a parish church, Westminster Abbey (or the Collegiate Church of St Peter in Westminster to give it its correct title) is a Royal Peculiar under the jurisdiction of a Dean and Chapter and with direct accountability to the Sovereign. This relationship with the Sovereign dates back to the origins of the Abbey over a millennium ago, but its current form stems from the charter granted to the Abbey by Elizabeth I on 21st May 1560.

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.

Prior to the pandemic, the Abbey's daily round of worship and annual programme of special services were attended by large congregations and regularly broadcast to national and international audiences in their millions. The Abbey also attracted well over one million paying visitors each year from all around the world.

Worship and music are at the heart of the Abbey's mission, and we sustained the daily offices and Eucharist throughout the pandemic, initially behind closed doors but then progressively reopening for public worship, constantly adapting our practices to ensure the safety of congregations, staff and clergy. Given its centrality to our worship and the unique legacy it represents, the choral foundation and wider music department has been preserved throughout the pandemic, with the Choir School sustaining daily singing for the choristers even while forced to operate virtually for several months. The Abbey choir is now back in full operation and excellent voice. Congregations are returning in ever greater numbers, and we once again have a full schedule of statutory and special services.

Because the Abbey receives no regular income from the State, the Church of England or the Crown, and relies almost entirely on income from visitors, the pandemic posed a significant threat to our finances. We lost nearly £40m in visitor income in the two years following national lockdown in March 2020 and have had to make painful reductions in our staff in most areas other than Abbey music, alongside many other cost reduction measures. The Abbey now employs around 250 staff across a wide range of departments and relies on the invaluable contribution of some 400 volunteers. The stringent austerity measures adopted, combined with the recent strong recovery in visitor numbers and the securing of a substantial long-term loan, have ensured the financial survival of the Abbey, and we now look forward to a period in which we can begin once again to invest cautiously but confidently in developing the Westminster Abbey's mission for the coming decades.

Music at the Abbey



The English choral tradition is judged throughout the world to be an important part of our national heritage and of the spiritual treasury of the Anglican Church, and the Abbey's choir plays a central role in nurturing this tradition nationally and internationally through the excellence of its contribution to our public worship and through an active programme of concerts, recordings, broadcasts and occasional tours.

The Abbey Choir and Music Department form an integral part of the structure and life of the worshipping community of the Abbey. There are eight choral services each week during term time, and the choir's performances at the major national and State occasions taking place here throughout the year are right at the heart of such worship. Over time the composition of the choir has gradually evolved from four boys recruited as polyphony developed to the world-renowned choral foundation of today, with around 30 choristers singing with 12 professional lay vicars under the direction of the Organist and Master of the Choristers and receiving their education in the Abbey's dedicated Choir School.

The Dean and Chapter has a long-standing commitment to introduce excellent opportunities for girl choristers whilst sustaining the quality of experience and performance offered under its unique model of boy chorister development. The intention is to create a separate girls' choir with its own professional lower voices; this would support our ministry in St Margaret's but also perform occasionally in the Abbey. An early priority for the incoming Organist and Master of the Choristers would be to review and agree with Chapter the planned approach to the introduction of girl choristers and to lead its implementation in the near future.

The Organist and Master of the Choristers is supported in his work by three highly talented organists, two administrative staff, the Director of Music for St Margaret's Church and three singing teachers.

In addition to their role in accompanying the choir, the Abbey's organs are used for an extensive programme of concerts and recitals. The grand organ is a fine five-manual Harrison & Harrison instrument, installed for the coronation of King George VI in 1937. The Abbey is also home to the two-manual Queen's Organ (Mander, 2013), which can be found in the Lady Chapel where it is used principally for small-scale services such as weddings and memorials and a five-stop continuo organ by Kenneth Tickell (1995).

The Abbey Song School was constructed in 2015 and comprises a large purpose-built rehearsal space, where most chorister and full choir rehearsals take place, together with two smaller rehearsal rooms. The building is home to Steinway A-S and Boston GP-178 grand pianos and a practice organ by William Drake (2017). It also houses the choir library and vestry facilities.

Our next Organist and Master of the Choristers will be expected to sustain and develop the exceptional legacy of musical excellence established by James O'Donnell and his predecessors, but also to create appropriate strategies to meet the challenges and capture new opportunities arising over the coming decades. This will include realising the Dean and Chapter's ambition to provide girl choristers with excellent opportunities to contribute to the musical life of the Abbey, as set out above, contributing to initiatives to create a significantly stronger digital presence for the Abbey both nationally and internationally, expanding the range of musical performances by the Abbey's musicians and developing the Abbey as a convening space for musical excellence.

Abbey Organisation

The governing body of the Abbey, as laid down in our Statutes, is the Dean and Chapter, which comprises the Dean and four Canons of Westminster, all of whom are Crown appointments. Chapter meets monthly and is supported and advised by the Receiver General, who also acts as Chapter Clerk and Registrar. The day to day management of the Abbey is also delegated to the Receiver General, who, with the support of the Deputy Receiver General, leads the Operations Executive and the Senior Management Forum, which is made up of the Abbey's Heads of Department.

The Abbey functions through a number of legal entities, and some key aspects of its work are supported and orchestrated through committees and steering groups. Despite the structures in place, on a day to day basis the Abbey is a dynamic and collegiate place to work with a welcoming and relatively informal culture, focussed on getting things done.

The Organist and Master of the Choristers reports directly to the Dean of Westminster, and works closely with other direct reports, including the Minor Canon & Precentor, the Headmaster of the Abbey's Choir School and the Receiver General. The postholder contributes to cross-departmental coordination of the Abbey's work through their membership of the Senior Management Forum. He/she is also an Officer of College, an institution dating back to the charter granted by Elizabeth I, which nowadays serves as a forum for key internal and external stakeholders, a visible representation of the Abbey community at the most important ceremonial occasions and the nucleus of its daily worshipping life.

Job Description

Accountable to:	The Dean
Posts directly reporting to OMC:	Sub-Organist, Assistant Organist, Organ Scholar, Director of Music (St Margaret's Church), Lay Vicars (12), Choir and Music Projects Manager, singing teachers (3)
Other posts under oversight of OMC:	Deputy lay vicars and members of the Special Service Choir (c 200, non-staff), Music and Chorister Recruitment Coordinator
Key relationships:	INTERNAL: Headmaster of Westminster Abbey Choir School (WACS), Minor Canons, Receiver General, members of the Senior Management Forum, Director of Music of WACS
	EXTERNAL: wide-ranging, including executives in media and digital recording organisations, heads of institutions providing musical education, festival directors, colleagues in cathedrals and colleges, and leaders of relevant charitable trusts and professional associations.

Note: the title and job description set out here reflect a combined position of Master of the Choristers and principal organist of the Abbey. However, we would welcome applications from exceptional choral directors with the ability to lead across the full range of the Abbey's music but who are not organists or would not wish to perform in that capacity.

Job Summary

- The Organist and Master of the Choristers is the director of music of Westminster Abbey, taking responsibility for the excellence of musical provision for liturgical and non-liturgical purposes within the Abbey (including St Margaret's Church).
- The OMC is head of the Abbey music department, and principal adviser to the Dean and Chapter on musical matters.
- The OMC takes particular personal responsibility for the direction and management of the Abbey Choir, for the training of the choristers and for the development of the Lay Vicars.
- The OMC is the principal organist of Westminster Abbey.
- As a member of the Senior Management Forum and a College Officer, the OMC plays a full part in the wider cross-functional leadership of the Abbey.
- The OMC attends meetings of the Governing Body of WACS.

Main Duties and Responsibilities

These include but are not limited to:

Musical / Artistic Direction and Strategy

1. To ensure that the music performed in and associated with Westminster Abbey is of a consistently excellent standard.
2. To be responsible for the provision of choral and organ music at all services and events in the Abbey and elsewhere, as required by the Dean and Chapter.
3. To be principal conductor of the Abbey Choir and all associated ensembles.
4. To develop and agree with the Dean and Chapter strategies for the future development of liturgical and non-liturgical musical provision at the Abbey.
5. To help realise the potential of the Abbey's presence on digital media.
6. To develop and implement a strategy to provide excellent opportunities for girl choristers.
7. To appoint (or to oversee the appointment of) members of the music department, including adjunct members (such as deputy lay vicars), chairing audition and interview panels and making recommendations to the Dean, as applicable.
8. To provide artistic leadership for all the musicians associated with Westminster Abbey and St Margaret's Church, including the nurturing and development of Lay Vicars and organists and the oversight of visiting musicians.
9. To represent the Abbey's music and musicians in the public arena, including maintaining an international reputation and high profile as a conductor and organist through external professional commitments (as allowed by the contract of employment, and in consultation with the Dean, as appropriate).
10. To strengthen the Abbey's role as a convening space for musical excellence, and to build strategic partnerships with other ensembles, artists and composers.
11. As Organist, to be responsible for the use, care, maintenance and renovation of the organs in the Abbey and St Margaret's Church.

Chorister training and admission

1. To be responsible for the training of the Abbey Choristers in collaboration with the Abbey's singing tutors.
2. To set and oversee the implementation of policies and procedures in relation to chorister recruitment and admission, in close consultation with the Headmaster.
3. To assess and select boys for admission as choristers to the Abbey Choir School.
4. To contribute to the wider musical education of the choristers, in consultation with the Headmaster and Director of Music of the Abbey Choir School.
5. To oversee the successful introduction of opportunities for girl choristers in line with the strategy to be explored and agreed with the Dean and Chapter.

Artistic planning

1. To select and /or approve the music for all services, concerts, recordings etc. in consultation with the Minor Canons and others, as appropriate.
2. To develop, plan and execute to the highest standard an extensive programme of extra-liturgical activities, including concerts, recordings and tours involving the Abbey's musicians.
3. To develop and oversee the work of external soloists and ensembles participating in the Abbey's concert and wider cultural programmes.
3. To commission music on the Dean and Chapter's behalf as appropriate.
4. Through its director of music, to oversee the music of St Margaret's Church.

Departmental Management

1. To direct the operation of the Abbey music department within the strategies, policies and systems determined by the Dean and Chapter.
2. To lead, motivate and manage the performance and development of all music department staff, conducting performance reviews and identifying training needs as required.
3. To oversee the implementation of Health & Safety policy as it relates to the music department and its staff, and areas of the Abbey under music department oversight.
4. To oversee the implementation of Safeguarding and Safer Recruitment policies as they relate to the music department.
5. To oversee the music department's contribution to the Abbey's Risk Register and Business Continuity plan.
6. To oversee the financial affairs of the department and ensure compliance with all financial and budgetary policies and procedures.
7. To ensure the upkeep, maintenance and proper use of all music department resources, including instruments, music library and song school.

Wider Leadership Contribution

1. To contribute to the development and implementation of the overall vision, mission and strategy of the Abbey.
2. To play a constructive and collegiate role in the work of the Senior Management Forum and other relevant elements of the Abbey's governance and management structures.

Person Specification

ATTRIBUTES	ESSENTIAL	DESIRABLE
Education / training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Music degree or senior professional qualification relevant to the post (e.g. FRCO) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Higher degree or evidence of postgraduate study
Knowledge / experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Significant experience of choral conducting, accompanying and training to the highest professional standard • Widely recognised for exceptional musicianship and technical proficiency • In-depth knowledge of church music and organ repertoire • Deep understanding of the Anglican musical tradition and liturgy • Significant experience of choral direction for live broadcasts and high-profile services and events • Considerable experience of working with and training children's voices • An accomplished and recognised performer* as a recitalist and accompanist with a wide repertoire • Experience as director of a professional Choir performing to the highest standard • Demonstrable experience of managing performance standards and performers • Experience in programming and directing concerts and recordings of the highest international quality • Experience of orchestral conducting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Familiarity with commissioning new works • Sound knowledge of singing technique and an awareness of vocal health issues • Experience of arranging and composing liturgical music • Experience of continuo playing
Skills / aptitudes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exceptional conducting and choir training skills, with the ability to direct a wide range of repertoire in different idioms with stylistic fidelity and interpretative authority • Ability to motivate and inspire choristers and adult professional musicians • Aptitude for team working • Aptitude for working with children, including balancing their pastoral needs with musical demands • Ability to perform to the highest standards under a significant degree of pressure, public scrutiny and time constraint 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Highly developed organisational and administrative skills and familiarity with the full range of standard IT programmes, both musical and general 	
Personal attributes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A practising Christian, with a commitment to the mission and values of Westminster Abbey, and a willingness to take an active part in its liturgical life A highly credible leader of musicians operating at the highest level A person with a strong commitment to collegial working and a successful track record of working effectively in a complex multi-functional organisation Ability to step from strategic to operational and from performing to management duties with ease A person with the intellectual power and cultural appreciation to engage effectively in internal and external dialogue across a broad range of issues A person of integrity and discretion, with experience in complex conversations and effective advocacy with external partners/stakeholders An excellent motivator, communicator and role model for the Abbey's musicians and other colleagues, with a high standard of personal presentation and organisation Commitment to ongoing study and professional development 	
Circumstances	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The successful candidate is likely to be an established career musician currently leading a choral foundation or similar organisation of recognised excellence in the UK or abroad 	

*See note preceding Job Summary above

Working for us

Employment Status and Start Date

This post is permanent, and the appointment will commence on 1st January 2023.

Salary

A competitive salary will be offered for this role, with payments on the last Friday of each month.

Probationary Period

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

Working Hours

The postholder will devote as much time and attention as is necessary to the carrying out of their duties. Unless agreed otherwise with the Dean, the Organist and Master of the Choristers is expected to be on duty six days per week, including Sundays, during term time.

Annual Holidays

The holiday entitlement is six weeks per year in addition to bank and other public holidays. This must be taken at times agreed with the Dean, and generally during school holidays. In exceptional circumstances it may be necessary for the postholder to be recalled from holiday at the request of the Dean and Chapter.

Training

On-site training will be provided as required. Any further training needs will be assessed through the probation period and in annual appraisals.

Pension Scheme

All employees can join a Group Personal Pension plan, where the minimum employee contribution is 3% and the maximum employer contribution is 9% (as determined by the level of the employee contribution). You will be auto-enrolled into our qualifying workplace pension scheme after 3 months, if you meet the eligibility criteria.

All employees are covered by death-in-service life assurance, whether or not they choose to join the pension scheme.

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.

Accommodation

The postholder is required to reside in the precinct for the better performance of the role. A house is provided, with utilities provided by the Abbey.

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.

Westminster Abbey is an equal opportunities employer and has recognised that it needs to strengthen the diversity of its leadership, so we are particularly keen to hear from candidates who are from a BAME background and/or can bring diversity of thought to our team.

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 and how you meet the criteria as set out in the person specification. 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. You will also need to specify three referees – two professional and one personal.

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 **noon on 13th June 2022**.

Selection Process and Timetable

Shortlisting is scheduled for 15th June. Candidates will be informed of our decision as soon as possible thereafter. There will be an opportunity for shortlisted candidates to meet key members of the Abbey Chapter and staff for informal discussions on **27th June**, and they will be required to attend for practical assessment of chorister training and choral direction on the afternoon/evening of **30th June**, with panel interviews taking place on **1st July**.

We envisage that we will receive a high number of applications, and we regret that we will be unable to provide specific feedback to those candidates not shortlisted.