Application Pack

Ref: WA191

Lay Vicar (Bass)

Salary £29,426.04 per annum

Permanent – Full time
(notional 40 hours)

Closing Date: 5 January 2023

Westminster Abbey
Contents

• About Westminster Abbey
• Abbey Values
• Music at Westminster Abbey
• Job description and Person Specification
• Working for us
• Equality statement
• Safeguarding
• How to apply
About Westminster Abbey

Westminster Abbey is a major centre for Christian worship, a leading venue for tourism and a treasured part of Britain’s heritage. 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 the House of Kings, 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.

The Dean and Chapter of Westminster defines our Mission in these terms:

- 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.

Our values

As one we serve each other, our visitors and the wider world in all we do with:

- Truthfulness
- Integrity
- Empathy
- Excellence

The Abbey attracts approximately one million paying visitors each year, from all around the world. A large number of people also attend services which take place seven days a week. Daily services are only part of the Abbey’s work, for there are also many ‘special’ services and events throughout the year. Westminster Abbey currently employs around 300 staff in a variety of roles and an even larger number of volunteers.

The Abbey receives no regular income from the State, the Church of England or the Royal Family, and relies on monies raised from visitors to ensure that the building can be properly maintained and remain open as an amenity for all.
Music at Westminster Abbey

Westminster Abbey has one of the few fully professional choral foundations in the world, with a historic musical tradition and an international reputation. At its heart is the Choir of Westminster Abbey. Comprising some thirty boy choristers and twelve professional adult singers (known as Lay Vicars), the Choir plays a central role both in the daily choral services in the Abbey and in the many royal, state and national occasions that take place here.

During Choir Term the Abbey Choir usually sings eight statutory choral services per week. In addition to its core liturgical responsibilities, the Choir also records regularly for Hyperion Records and frequently undertakes high-profile concerts, broadcasts and tours.

The Abbey Music Department exists to provide choral and organ music at all services and public events in the Abbey and St Margaret’s Church, and to ensure that the music performed in and associated with the Abbey is of the highest standard. The director of music and head of the department from January 2023 is Andrew Nethsingha, Organist and Master of the Choristers. He is responsible, with the assistance of his immediate colleagues, for the musical and vocal training of the choristers (all of whom are educated at the Abbey’s unique Choir School) and the department shares with the school responsibility for the recruitment and selection of new choristers. In addition the department is responsible for the Abbey Choir’s programme of extra-liturgical activities, including concerts, recordings and tours, and for the regular series of organ recitals.

The Organist and Master of the Choristers heads a permanent music staff of twenty, comprising the Sub-Organist (Peter Holder), the Director of Music, St Margaret’s Church (Greg Morris – part-time), the Assistant Organist (Matthew Jorysz – part-time) and the Organ Scholar, together with the twelve Lay Vicars and three part-time singing teachers. In addition the department maintains an extensive register of approved freelance singers who sing as deputies with the Abbey’s choirs, and draws on the services of a wide range of external musicians, technicians and specialist consultants. Two full-time members of office staff are responsible for the day-to-day management and administration of the department as well as the planning and delivery of concerts and projects.
Job Description

JOB TITLE: Lay Vicar (bass)

ACCOUNTABLE TO: Organist and Master of the Choristers

KEY RELATIONSHIPS: Sub-Organist, Assistant Organist, Organ Scholar, Lay Vicars, deputies, clergy, vergers, Music Department staff

JOB SUMMARY: To sing as a bass in the Choir of Westminster Abbey, fulfilling the Choir’s schedule of statutory and special services, concerts, recordings, broadcasts and tours to the highest possible vocal and musical standards, and playing a full part in the musical life of the Abbey.

Main duties and responsibilities

These include but are not limited to:

1. Singing at all statutory choral services and rehearsals during Choir Term (or providing a deputy as necessary, subject to the terms of the contract);
2. Participating in the majority of additional Abbey Choir activities including special services, concerts, recordings, broadcasts and tours;
3. Singing solos of appropriate quality as required;
4. Undertaking the necessary advance preparation for all rehearsals and performances (including learning new music as required);
5. Consistently performing to and maintaining the highest musical, vocal and behavioural standards, commensurate with the Abbey’s values and the Abbey Choir’s international reputation;
6. Using and keeping up to date the online attendance register;
7. Booking deputies from the Abbey’s approved list as needed, and briefing and managing them appropriately;
8. Attending regular Lay Vicar meetings with the Organist and Master of the Choristers;
9. Undertaking ongoing professional training and taking care to maintain good vocal health;
10. Managing personal workload to maintain an appropriate balance between Abbey duties and other commitments, ensuring that Abbey work is given due priority;
11. Adhering at all times to the Abbey’s policies, protocols and codes of conduct, with special reference to Safeguarding and Health & Safety matters, and undertaking training as required;
12. Participating as required in the non-performing activities of the Abbey Choir and Music Department, for example attending meetings, auditions, press calls and photo shoots from time to time;
13. Playing a full part in the musical and liturgical life of the Abbey.

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

**POST:** Lay Vicar (Bass)

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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ATTRIBUTES</th>
<th>ESSENTIAL</th>
<th>DESIRABLE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Education / training</strong></td>
<td>• Singing study to an advanced level</td>
<td>• Music Degree</td>
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<td>• Post-graduate qualification in vocal studies or related discipline</td>
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<td><strong>Knowledge / experience</strong></td>
<td>• A proven record as a professional singer of the highest calibre</td>
<td>• Regular professional employment with a high-profile collegiate or cathedral choir</td>
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<td>• Extensive experience of choral and ensemble singing</td>
<td>• Experience of working with choristers</td>
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<td>• Familiarity with a broad range of liturgical music and understanding of the Anglican musical tradition</td>
<td>• Experience and demonstrable profile as a soloist</td>
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<td><strong>Skills / aptitudes</strong></td>
<td>• Exceptional standard of musicianship and technical proficiency</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Wide bass-baritone vocal range of consistent quality and projection</td>
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<td>• Excellent sight-reading skills</td>
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<td>• A good musical ear</td>
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<td>• Ability to perform a wide range of repertoire in different idioms with stylistic fidelity</td>
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<td>• Confident and authoritative solo singing, displaying appropriate artistry and interpretational authority</td>
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<td>• High level of proficiency in ensemble singing, with awareness of balance and tonal cohesion</td>
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<td>• Ability to perform to a high standard and remain calm under pressure</td>
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<td>• Aptitude for team working</td>
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<td>• Ability to balance conflicting priorities</td>
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| **Personal attributes** | • Commitment to the mission and values of Westminster Abbey, and a willingness to take an active part in its musical and liturgical life  
• Commitment to ongoing professional development and maintenance of vocal health  
• High standard of professionalism and personal organisation  
• Enthusiastic and positive demeanour  
• Ability to engage with a wide range of colleagues  
• Suitability to work with children  
• Commitment to achieving an appropriate balance between Abbey commitments and external work |
| **Circumstances** | • Ability to work flexibly and adjust working patterns as required by the Choir’s schedule |

This Job Profile 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 post holder.
Working for us

**Employment Status**
This post is permanent.

**Salary**
The salary is £29,426.04 per annum and is paid on the last Friday of each month. Salary is reviewed annually in January.

**Probation period**
The probationary period for the post is 10 months.

**Working Hours**
The regular hours of work are largely determined by the Choir’s schedule of statutory services. The current schedule of these services is as follows (always subject to alteration):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Service and Time</th>
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<tr>
<td>Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday</td>
<td>Choral Evensong at 5.00pm (rehearsal 4.30pm)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wednesday</td>
<td>said (with occasional exceptions)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saturday</td>
<td>Choral Evensong at 5.00pm (rehearsal 4.00pm)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Sunday                | Choral Matins at 10.00am (rehearsal 9.30am)  
|                       | Choral Eucharist at 11.15am (rehearsal 10.45am)  
|                       | Choral Evensong at 3.00pm (rehearsal 2.30pm) |
| Feast Days            | Choral Eucharist at 5.00pm (rehearsal 4.15pm) |

Variations in schedule apply at certain times of year, notably in Holy Week and the period leading up to Christmas.

In addition to the schedule of statutory duties, a number of special services, concerts, recording sessions, broadcasts and other special events take place each year. The majority of these additional duties attract supplementary fees.

**Attendance**
In general terms the expectation is that Lay Vicars will fulfil at least 60% of all statutory duties and will participate in the majority of additional duties. Absences from statutory duties are subject to certain rules and salary deductions, the details of which are set out in the contract of employment. Certain duties are obligatory (ie Lay Vicars must attend in person and may not field deputies), notably services on Christmas Day and Easter Sunday.

**Annual Holidays**
The contractual holiday entitlement is a minimum of six weeks per annum (including public holidays) at times allocated by the Dean and Chapter. The actual holiday allocation is determined by the pattern of Choir Term dates, which currently allows for holiday periods of approximately 10 days after Christmas, 2 weeks after or around Easter, and 6 weeks in late July / August.

**Training**
Training needs are assessed through the probation period and regular performance reviews. An annual grant of up to £350 is available towards the cost of singing lessons, vocal coaching or other associated training.
Pension Scheme and Life Assurance
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.

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.

Season Ticket Loan
A season ticket loan is offered after satisfactory completion of a probationary period, repayable over 10 months.

Medical Insurance
The Abbey will pay 50% of premiums to join a nominated medical insurance scheme after one year’s employment.
Equality Statement and How to apply

Equality Statement
The Dean and Chapter aim 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 and ensure that you include all relevant information on the form since information supplied in covering letter or accompanying CV will not be taken into account.

You are also advised to 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 ‘Additional Information’ section of the form to tell us how you meet each of the requirements.

As well as your previous work experience, tell us about other relevant experience such as community and voluntary experience. 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.

Applications should arrive no later than 12 noon on Thursday 5 January 2023. Preliminary auditions will take place on Tuesday 17 and Wednesday 18 January 2023. Candidates successful at this stage can expect to be invited to a further round of auditions and interviews on Tuesday 24 January 2023.

Applications received after the closing date cannot be considered and we regret that we are unable to provide feedback to applicants who are not shortlisted.

Selection Process
Shortlisted candidates will be required to attend at least two rounds of auditions. Preliminary auditions will take place on Tuesday 17 and Wednesday 18 January 2023. Candidates successful at this stage can expect to be invited to a further round of auditions and interviews on Tuesday 24 January 2023.
Please note that the selection process may result in the offer of a trial period of work with the choir for one or more candidates before a permanent appointment is made. Such a trial would be offered on an initial conditional fixed-term basis for a period of between two weeks and two months, and would be subject to the full range of pre-employment checks outlined in the Safer Recruitment section of this document.