



Application Pack

Ref: WA304

Verger

Salary £34,843.37 per annum

Full-time Permanent
40 hours per week

Advert Date: 26 March 2024
Closing Date: 9 April 2024

Westminster Abbey



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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 on 21st May 1560.

We are a welcoming community, but also complex and multi-faceted, with nearly 600 highly committed employees and volunteers. We have deep respect for the heritage of which we are the custodians, but we evolve continuously to meet the opportunities of the future. In recent times this has included the creation of new departments to focus on transforming our digital presence and delivering a significantly expanded programme of public and community engagement. In addition, our newly created Employee Engagement Forum and Social Engagement Statement is helping us to support and develop our staff and volunteers. We have also reshaped our governance arrangements, including a new Strategic Board to help us navigate the challenges and opportunities of the coming decades.

Westminster Abbey's mission is:

- To offer daily divine Worship to Almighty God and resource the Church in this vocation;
- To serve the Sovereign;
- To proclaim the Gospel to the nation and Commonwealth, celebrating the distinctive witness of the Christian faith and engaging with the public square;
- To provide a safe, welcoming and inspiring environment for all who come to the Abbey;
- To act as responsible stewards of God's gifts.

Our Values:

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

- Truthfulness
- Integrity
- Empathy
- Excellence

Following the State Funeral of Queen Elizabeth II and the Coronation of King Charles III and Queen Camilla, which were broadcast to national and international audiences in their millions, interest in the Abbey is very strong. We attract over a million visitors from around the world every year, and our summers and peak period are incredibly busy. However, we receive no regular income from the State, the Church of England or the Crown, and rely almost entirely on income from visitors.

It is an exciting time to join the Abbey, and we look forward to receiving your application and if successful, welcoming your contribution to the Abbey's history.

Job Description

JOB TITLE: Verger/Sacristan

ACCOUNTABLE TO: Dean's Verger, with a dotted line to the Canons' Verger

ACCOUNTABLE FOR: N/A

KEY RELATIONSHIPS: **Internal:** The Dean and Chapter, Minor Canons, Music Department, Organists and all other Abbey staff, particularly the Visitor Experience team and Volunteers - the Guild of St Faiths, Abbey Guides and Duty Chaplains.

External: worshippers, visitors and members of the general public. All types of Dignitaries, tour guides and teachers who are leading groups.

BACKGROUND: Westminster Abbey is both a place of daily worship, and is one of the UK's leading visitor attractions, welcoming over one million visitors each year. A diverse and lively community work at the Abbey comprising around 300 employees and a similar number of volunteers.

St Margaret's Church is situated next to Westminster Abbey and is under the governance of the Abbey's Dean and Chapter. The church, once a separate parish, is now a Chapel of the Abbey, but it has very significant links with the Houses of Parliament and an important historic relationship with Mr. Speaker and the House of Commons. It holds services for the Parliamentary community, services for schools, charities and other organisations, alongside the part it plays in the Abbey's regular pattern of worship.

JOB SUMMARY: To assist the Dean's Verger and Canons' Verger to prepare all Abbey altars and chapels for worship. To assist the Abbey Clergy in liturgy and duties according to Abbey Ceremonial. To lead verger guided tours of the Abbey with sufficient knowledge to inform visitors on the tours of its history, life and Christian witness.

MAIN DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

1. Liturgy and Worship

- To prepare for the liturgy according to the Rota, carrying out the Dean's Orders and those of the Minor Canons.
- To verge processions and verge dignitaries and others during services.
- Follow the written forms of liturgical requirements for daily services, special services and festivals.
- To look after national and international dignitaries.

Preparation for Services

- Lay out copes and other vestments for the Clergy.
- Prepare altars and other areas for worship within the Abbey.
- Handling of the silver plate and setting out with care as instructed.

1. Sacristy and General

Areas/Chapels of Responsibility

- To care for an area of specific responsibility allocated in the Abbey (e.g. Lady Chapel, St Faith's Chapel, St Margaret's Church) on rotation.
- To assist with the daily care of cleanliness and good order of vestments, linen, silver/plate, candles altar frontals and chapels
- To undertake the task of looking after and arranging the maintenance of the Copes and Abbey Linen.
- To report any defects, maintenance and repair issues to the Canons' Verger and the Dean's Verger

Guided Tours

- To acquire a full working knowledge of the history and life of the Abbey in order to lead Verger guided tours if required.
- To work with Visitors and also to engage and manage the tour they are leading.
- To deal effectively with any issues which arise affecting the safety and security of worshippers, visitors and the Abbey.
- To lead special tours for groups (schools, other organisations and VIPs) as required.

General

- Assist with worship, special services and all events in the Abbey.
- To be appropriately and suitably dressed in black trousers or skirt, black shoes, white shirt and black tie, as appropriate.
- Cassock and ceremonial gown are provided for ceremonial duties.
- To undertake any tasks which may be required by the Dean's Verger or Canon's Verger from time to time.
- To support with sexton duties on an annual rota basis.

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.

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

Skills/Aptitudes/Knowledge/Experience:

1. Knowledge of church liturgy and the liturgical calendar
2. Self-motivated, able to work unsupervised and act on initiative when required
3. Able to work effectively as a member of a team
4. Good communication skills, both verbally and in writing
5. Able to deal calmly and robustly with situations as they arise
6. Ability to be able to operate camera and PA systems for Liturgical Services /Events
7. Experience of working with the public

Personal Attributes & Circumstances:

8. Commitment to achieving the Abbey's mission overall.
9. Understanding of and ability to commit to the role of the Verger within the liturgy of the church. The duties will include administering the chalice at the Eucharist and so it is expected that the successful applicant will be a communicant member of a church that is a member of Churches Together in Britain and Ireland.
10. Able to work weekends, bank holidays and evenings as required.
11. Additional hours may be required

Desirable

Knowledge/Experience:

12. Previous experience as a Verger, either paid or voluntary
13. An interest in history and historical buildings

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 £34,843.37 per annum and is paid on the last Friday of each month. Salary is reviewed annually.

Working Hours

These are 40 hours per week, however the postholder will be required to work hours that suits the needs of the organisation.

Annual Holidays

The full-time holiday entitlement is 31 days per annum, including recognised public holidays, rising to 33 days per annum in the fifth year of service.

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 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.

Uniform

If a uniform and/or Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) is provided, this must be worn at all times.

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.

How to Apply

Please complete our application form as CVs **will not** be accepted.

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 'Supporting Statement' section of the form to tell us how you meet each of the requirements. As well as your previous work experience (including a **full** career history of all employment), 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 9 April 2024. Interviews are scheduled to take place on a date to be confirmed.

We regret that, due to the large number of applications we normally receive, we may only be able to contact or provide feedback if you have attended an interview. We appreciate your interest in our work at Westminster Abbey.