

Assistant Organist
Application Pack July 2021



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Introduction

Dear Candidate,

Thank you for your interest in the role of Assistant Organist at Wells Cathedral.

Wells Cathedral is one of the great buildings of Western Europe, and Sir Simon Jenkins has recently described it as the finest Cathedral in England; we are inclined to agree! Many of the 290,000 visitors a year would probably agree too. This is a very special place.

Wells has enjoyed an excellent musical reputation for some decades, due in no small part to the skills, vision, and drive of all in the Music Foundation, both past and present. In a sense, music has spearheaded mission in an organisation which is now eagerly catching up with it.

We have all the usual requirements for such a post, set out in the role and person specification in this pack, but we are also looking for someone who will respond to being part of the whole organisation and relishes collaborative working; someone who will relish being a part of the delivery of world-class music; and above all will embrace the culture of 'happy excellence' we seek in all that they say and do.

Please be aware that we are currently engaged in a consultation about contractual terms for musicians, which may lead to changes to information contained in this pack. If you would like an informal conversation about this, or any other element of the role, please do be in touch with me.

This place is magnetic and beautiful, and the musical offering is equally so. If the role and the setting appeal, we would be delighted to receive your application.

The Reverend Canon Nicholas Jepson-Biddle
Precentor of Wells

Who We Are



Set in the medieval heart of this glorious city, Wells is the earliest English Cathedral built in the Gothic style. The Cathedral has an international reputation and is the recipient of several Tourism Excellence Awards. Known as England's most poetic Cathedral, Wells has deservedly gained an enviable reputation for its lovingly maintained Gothic architecture, its world class music, and its Ministry of Welcome to some 290,000 visitors each year as well as the 150,000 or so people, drawn from local, national and international audiences, who come to the Cathedral for services, concerts, lectures and a wide range of other special events and activities.

Situated on the edge of the Mendip Hills in the County of Somerset, Wells is one of England's most beautiful and compact cities, built around the beautiful Cathedral of St Andrew. Its picturesque surroundings include a charming market square and high street, the Bishop's Palace and the magnificent Vicars' Close, the UK's oldest medieval street still used for its original purpose.

Underpinning the life, worship and ministry of the Cathedral is a diverse organisation where a lot is achieved with modest resources. It oversees and delivers a broad and diverse tapestry of activities which includes a world class choir, a works and estates department, a team of virgers, a library

and archives, a programme of education, learning and outreach, finance, HR and administration functions, volunteer management and trading companies. Funds to support the Cathedral as a place of worship and mission (involving maintaining our buildings, supporting those in liturgical roles, clergy, musicians and lay staff, and enabling the Cathedral buildings to be open to all every day of the year) come from a variety of sources. These include congregational giving, legacies, income from visitors, sums generated by trading activities, income from investments and property, donations from fundraising appeals by individuals, trusts and foundations, as well as through the generous support of the Friends of Wells Cathedral, the Wells Cathedral Trust, the Wells Cathedral Preservation Trust and the Wells Cathedral Chorister Trust.

How we are governed

The Chapter is the governing body of the Cathedral and, with the College of Canons and the Cathedral Council, currently forms the "body corporate" of the Cathedral. The Chapter sets the strategic direction for the Cathedral, and orders its worship and mission. It also has responsibility for care and maintenance for the Cathedral and its estate. Chapter meets formally 11 times a year.



Singing through the centuries

The Choir is at the heart of the worshipping life of the Cathedral and it has always been so. Boys first sang at Wells Cathedral in 909, and the full choral tradition dates back over 800 years. The Vicars Choral and the Organists still all live in Vicars' Close today; making it the oldest mediaeval street in Europe continuously occupied for its original purpose. In 1994 the choral foundation at Wells was enriched by the addition of Girl Choristers and we celebrated their 25th anniversary with a special Evensong, attended by Their Royal Highnesses, the Earl and Countess of Wessex.

Today Wells Cathedral Choir is renowned for the breadth and depth of its musical repertoire, for the quality of its choral music as a key part of the liturgy, and for its wider contribution to the commissioning of new music. With the financial assistance of the Cathedral Commissions Scheme (established in 2006), the Choir has premiered works by some of today's finest composers, including Lord Michael Berkeley CBE, Judith Bingham OBE, Geoffrey Burgon, Bob Chilcott, Jonathan Dove CBE, Gabriel Jackson, John Joubert, Sir James MacMillan CBE, Sir Peter Maxwell Davies CH CBE (former Master of the Queen's Music), Tarik O'Regan, John Rutter CBE, Howard Skempton, Sir John Tavener, Judith Weir CBE (Master of the Queen's Music), and many more. The Choir broadcasts regularly on BBC

Radio 3 and its innovative recordings over the last eleven years for the Hyperion, Regent, Signum, and Resonus labels have won international praise. As well as the liturgical musical repertoire, the choir performs larger scale choral works in concert, with collaborations including the BBC National Orchestra of Wales (Britten War Requiem), Jools Holland and his band (Jools Holland Mass), Wells Cathedral Oratorio Society (Britten St Nicolas and War Requiem), Aled Jones, Dame Felicity Lott, Dame Emma Kirkby, James Bowman CBE, and Wells Cathedral School Chamber Orchestra (at royal gala concerts at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, and St James's Palace, London). In September 2014 the Choristers sang with the Berlin Radio Choir and the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra under the baton of Sir Simon Rattle OM, in a performance of Bach's St Matthew Passion at the BBC Proms. Shortly afterwards they sang with The Script at the ITV Pride of Britain awards, which was screened to an audience of five million viewers.

Tours

The Choir has toured extensively with tours to Paris (2006), the North West of England (2008), Germany (2009), The Netherlands (2010), Scotland (2011), Hong Kong and Beijing (2012), and further tours to The Netherlands (2015, 2019). There is a tour fund and we are currently saving towards the next large tour, which we hope will be to the United States within two years.

The Music Foundation

About the Music Foundation

The Music Foundation normally comprises 18 Boy Choristers, 18 Girl Choristers, nine Vicars Choral, and three Choral Scholars.

The Boy Choristers and the Girl Choristers usually sing separately with the Vicars Choral, but occasionally come together for larger events and tours. All the Choristers are educated at Wells Cathedral School, an independent school and one of the four specialist music schools in England. Pupils at the school are both boarding and day, and the age range is from 4 to 18.

The Music Foundation is under the oversight of the Precentor, the Revd Canon Nicholas Jepson-Biddle, and is under the direction of Mr Jeremy Cole, the Director of Music. He is assisted by the Assistant Director of Music, Mr Alexander Hamilton. The role of Assistant Organist is aimed towards candidates in the early stages of a career in cathedral music who is looking to develop their skills and be a part of the shaping of a modern-day Music Foundation.

The P.A. to the Director of Music is Mrs Melanie Lawlor, who deals with much of the administration of the department. The Chorister Co-ordinator, Mrs Diana Armstrong, is a vital link between Wells Cathedral School and the Cathedral.

The Chorister Vocal Tutor, Mr Andrew Kidd, provides regular, expert vocal tuition to the Boy and Girl Choristers to complement the training they receive in the choir, and to allow them to reach their full vocal potential.

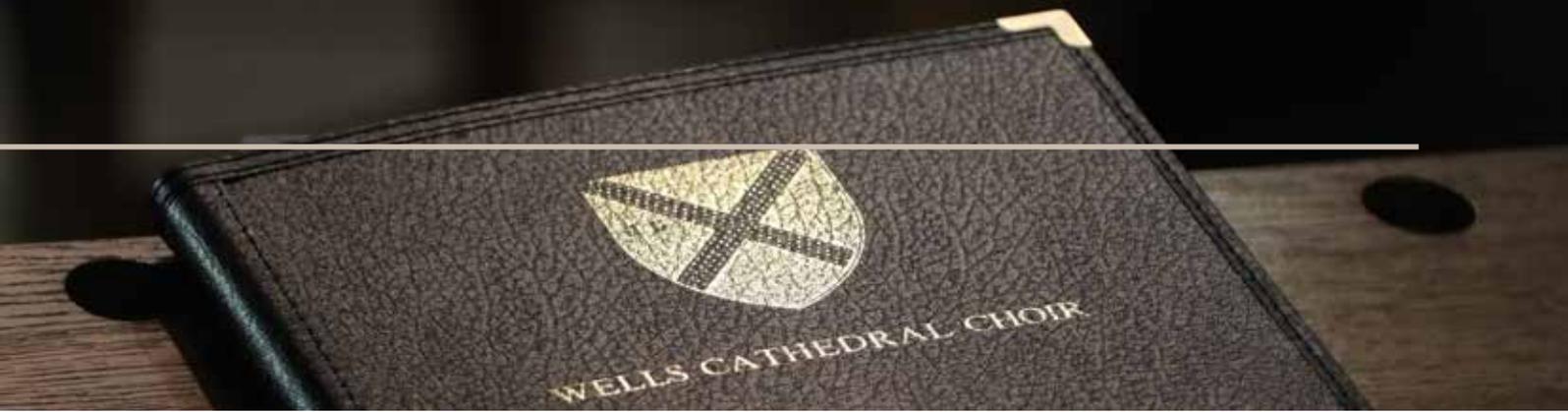
Finally, there are either one or two Junior Organ Scholars, who are normally sixth form students at Wells Cathedral School.



The Vision: Musical Outreach

The Cathedral Chapter believes that choral singing outreach projects should be an integral part of the work of the Music Foundation at Wells, to enable us to be outward looking, to share skills and expertise as widely as possible in the community, and to be creative in instilling a love of music in the next generation of musicians.

We aim to partner with others to offer exciting events, alongside community singing. Further, we plan to use Vicars' Close, the home of all our musicians and the oldest continuously inhabited street in Europe still used for the same purpose, to promote musical learning in innovative ways.



Youth Choir

The Chapter wishes to start a new Cathedral Youth Choir in the Autumn of 2021, to enable a wider range of young people between the ages of 14 and 18 to take part in regular music-making in the Cathedral. The Assistant Organist will likely have some involvement with this new group as part of their career development, which will be tailored to the skills and experience of the successful candidate.

Wells Cathedral Voluntary Choir

Wells Cathedral Voluntary Choir was formed in 1986 to sing services in the Cathedral when the Cathedral Choir was on holiday or performing elsewhere. It is an amateur, mixed voice choir trained to sing liturgical music, although it does occasionally become involved in concerts with a more varied programme. Today the choir sings about 21 services a year in Wells Cathedral. Under the direction of the Assistant Director of Music, the Choir is 'bouncing back' post-Covid, and is auditioning new members. The Assistant Organist's duties will include accompanying the Voluntary Choir.

The Wells Cathedral Oratorio Society

Founded in 1896, WCOS performs major works from the choral repertory with some of the country's leading soloists and orchestral ensembles. With around 160 voices the society gives three concerts a year. It is conducted by the Director of Music.

Concerts are normally in early November, December (an annual performance of Handel's Messiah), and late March. The society also hosts a Come and Sing day each year, normally in May, to which any singers are welcome to study and perform a work from scratch. Chorus rehearsals are on Monday evenings in the Cathedral from September to March and generally follow Wells Cathedral School's term times.

Song Squad & Song Squad Minis

Wells Cathedral Song Squad is open to all children aged 7 to 11 (inclusive), who attend any school. It's great fun and we have found a few Choristers through this route. Song Squad Minis gives younger children aged 5 or 6 (inclusive) the opportunity to sing to a high standard and perform concerts both on their own and alongside the Song Squad. There is no audition for either choir: the idea is to instil a love of singing.



The Organs

The present organ dates back to an instrument built by Henry Willis in 1857 (containing pipework of Samuel Green from 1786). This was enlarged by Harrison and Harrison in 1910 and was substantially rebuilt by them in 1973/4. It now consists of 67 stops – five divisions spread across four manuals. It is an eclectic instrument, equipped for the accompaniment of the choral services in the Quire, and for the interpretation of all periods and styles of organ music.

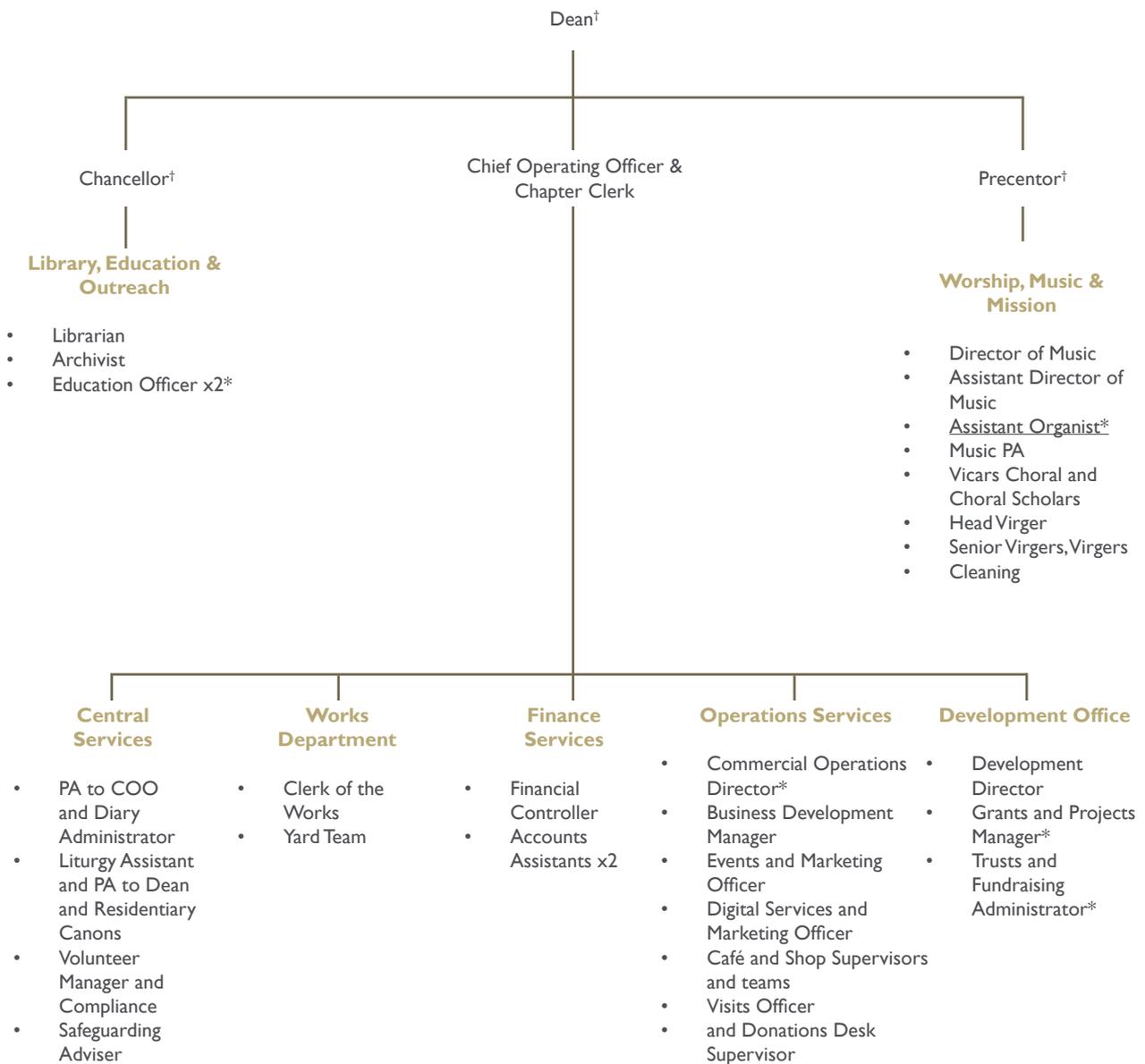
A substantial sum has recently been spent to repair a failing wind reservoir and leaking gusset leather, which has brought about considerable improvements in the organ's speech, and this has significantly reduced excess wind noise in the building.

A recent report commissioned by the Chapter has established that a substantial restoration and overhaul of the organ will be necessary in the next few years. The Friends of Wells Cathedral's 'Grand Organ Appeal' is now underway, and the Assistant Organist will be expected to take a full and active part in this new project.

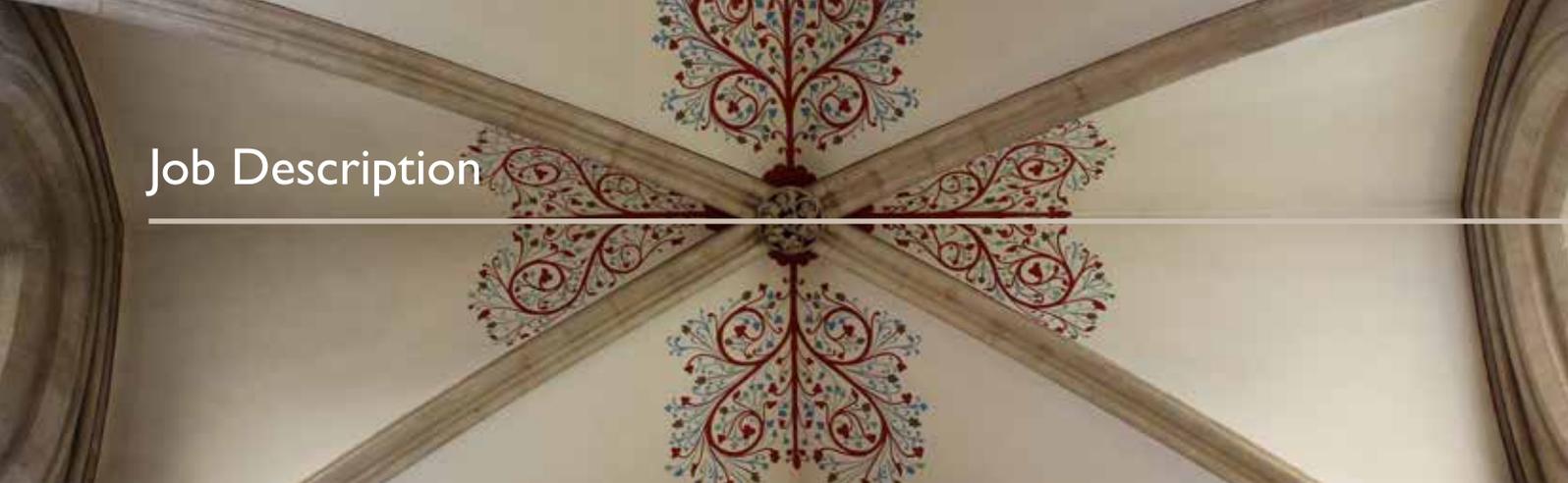
The Chamber Organ is normally kept in the Quire but can be moved around for services and concerts in other parts of the Cathedral. It was built by the Scottish organ-builders 'Lammermuir', and comprises the stops Gedackt 8' (Oak), Nason Flute 4' (Oak and Maple), and Fifteenth 2'25% (Tin). Since its arrival in November 1996, this delightful small chest organ is regularly used for authentic accompaniment of Tudor and baroque music, and is ideal for continuo work.

Organisation Chart

The Cathedral employs a staff team (a mix of full-time and part-time personnel) of approximately 75 people. The current operational structure of the organisation, governed by the Chapter, is shown below:



(† = in Executive Leadership Role)
 (* = vacancy)



Job Description

Post

Assistant Organist

Key purpose of post

The Assistant Organist works with the Director of Music, the Assistant Director of Music, and with other colleagues in the Cathedral (lay and clerical), to ensure the smooth delivery of all liturgical music.

As the Assistant Organist they will play for Cathedral services, rehearse the Choristers, and conduct the Cathedral Choir, all as notified by the Director of Music. They will have some involvement in outreach activities, which may include assisting in the formation of a new Youth Choir for children in school years 9-13. They will be the designated organist to the Wells Cathedral Chamber Choir, which is conducted by the Assistant Director of Music.

Location

Wells Cathedral, Cathedral Green, Wells, BA5 2UE

Reporting to

The Director of Music

Main Duties and Responsibilities

Music

- Work with the Director of Music and Assistant Director of Music in rehearsing and conducting the Choristers and Vicars Choral when required
- Accompany the Wells Cathedral Chamber Choir for all their services in the Cathedral, and for their early August week in residence at a UK Cathedral
- Play the organ at statutory and special services in the Cathedral as required; participate in broadcasts, recordings and concerts as required
- Be responsible for the efficient operation of the Music Library and archives (with the help of a Choral Scholar), ensuring the Cathedral Choir have the music required and to ensure it is put away after use

Communications and Outreach

- Promote Wells Cathedral as a centre of musical excellence within the local area, the diocese and further afield, including internationally
- Have involvement in musical outreach activities (for example Be a Chorister for a Day), working in conjunction with the Director of Music and other colleagues to adopt best practice for the benefit of Wells Cathedral and its choirs
- Take a role in all relevant meetings, internal and external, representing the Music Department as requested by the Director of Music as well as the interests of the Chamber Choir if necessary
- Develop a good working relationship with all Cathedral staff and volunteers supporting fundraising and other initiatives as required

Leadership and Management

- Contribute actively to the maintenance of a safe and suitable working environment in which all in the department can work; ensuring that the Cathedral's Safeguarding policy and Code of Conduct is always modelled and championed
- Work collaboratively with the Director of Music to ensure the effective day to day management and welfare of the choir, including the induction,

direction, training, conduct, safeguarding and discipline of the Choristers, Choral Scholars, and Vicars Choral when engaged in Cathedral duties

- Be responsible, with others, for ensuring the Choristers are led to and from the Cathedral and are both collected and delivered to the designated point at the School. Work with the chorister chaperones to operate the Cathedral's safeguarding policies on a daily basis
- As required, assist in the appointment process of Vicars Choral and Choral Scholars

Policy Development and Administration

- Work with colleagues to develop and review departmental strategy to deliver the Cathedral's musical programme, including commissions, repertoire development, choir tours, recordings, broadcasts, concerts and special events
- Help maintain the departments records and suitable information including those applicable for emergency and safeguarding purposes

General

- Ensure that all work and activities are undertaken in compliance with applicable statutes, regulations and directives regarding Safeguarding, Health & Safety, Fire and Security, including the Cathedral's internal policies and procedures
- Take reasonable care for the health and safety of yourself and of others who may be affected by your acts or omissions at work
- Be accountable for your own development through the performance development review process seeking out opportunities to learn new skills
- Work within the terms of the contract of employment and adhere to the Cathedral's policies and practices
- Perform other duties and tasks as may be reasonably requested by the Director of Music and/ or the Chapter of the Cathedral

Person Specification



Qualifications and Experience

Essential

- Educated to degree level or have equivalent experience
- A highly skilled organist, with a gift for liturgical accompaniment
- Some experience of working with young voices
- Demonstrable experience of recruiting, motivating and training choirs to achieve ‘happy excellence’
- Proven track record of building effective work relationships
- Good knowledge of the Anglican choral repertoire in both traditional and contemporary forms
- Knowledge and understanding of safeguarding and welfare principles for the protection of children and vulnerable adults
- Able to work in sympathy with the aims and the ethos of the Church of England

Desirable

- A post-graduate performing qualification
- A relevant diploma (ARCO or equivalent)
- A choral conductor of ability and experience
- A knowledge of vocal techniques and how to develop young and more mature voices
- Experience of being involved in or in leading musical outreach activities
- A communicant member of the Church of England with an understanding of the ministry of Cathedrals

Skills and Abilities

Essential

- Ability to deliver work on time, to the required quality and quantity
- Ability to grasp the concept of ‘happy excellence’ and work as part of a team to deliver the same
- Ability to build effective work relationships and to exercise good judgement when managing tasks or people – whether employed or volunteer
- Ability to represent Wells Cathedral and Wells Cathedral Chamber Choir at all levels with multiple stakeholders
- Excellent personal presentation, communication and social skills, both oral and written
- Ability to juggle multiple projects, and prioritise their own workload; with good problem-solving skills
- Proven IT skills (Word, Excel, Sibelius etc.)

Work-Related Personal Qualities

Essential

- Has a passion for musical excellence that is both accessible and inspiring
- Has an empathy, warmth and ideally, a pedagogical understanding of children and adults: how they learn and what environment needs to be created for them to flourish
- Understands and will model a culture of mutual respect towards all who work and volunteer at the Cathedral
- Cool under pressure; still smiling and with a lightness of touch that retains or encourages a sense of enjoyment even when things are difficult
- Confident and collegiate, with a willingness to take responsibility for own actions
- Tactful, diplomatic, confidential, discreet and loyal
- Organised and self-disciplined with a flexible approach to hours worked

Main Terms and Conditions of Employment

Hours of Work

An average of 35 hours per week, over term-time (38 weeks) and then additional hours to ensure that accompanying duties for the Cathedral Chamber Choir may be discharged both in term-time and when the Cathedral Choir is on vacation. Hours may be flexible in term-time in order to undertake the required duties. There is one regular day off per week: which will always be agreed with the other organists to ensure cover.

Salary

Salary of £14,830 per annum subject to annual review. This includes payment for holiday, and is payable on the 24th of each month, or the earliest and nearest working day thereto. Further fees for participation (as required) in recordings, broadcasts, concerts, extra services, and other selected events may be payable. Please see “Housing” below for details regarding deductions.

Term

This is a fixed term contract for two academic years, extendable by mutual consent for a further year.

Housing

Accommodation will be supplied by the Cathedral with monthly deductions from pay for rent and bills. The rental deduction will be a significant saving on the market value.

Car Park

A single car park space is provided in the Cathedral car park. Cars are parked at own risk.

Pension

Defined Contribution Scheme. Contributions as % of salary:

Age	Employee	Employer
<50	3%	5%
50-55	4%	8%
>55	5%	10%

Holiday

6.6 weeks inclusive of bank holidays, to be taken outside choir term for which the basic rate of salary will be paid. The holiday year runs from 1 January to 31 December. Annual leave is authorised by the Director of Music.

Location

The Cathedral, Wells

Expenses

All reasonable working expenses will be met in line with Cathedral policy.

Fees

Fees are payable for participation (as required) in recordings, broadcasts, concerts, extra services and other selected events. The Cathedral Chamber Choir will make payment for the activities undertaken in the week of residence at a UK Cathedral.

When the choir is not in residence and the Cathedral Chamber Choir does not require their services, the Assistant Organist shall be at liberty to make his or her own arrangements to undertake recitals or other musical engagements, including independent fee earning. On other occasions the agreement of the Director of Music or the Precentor is required. If an absence is agreed during choir term, the Assistant Organist will be responsible for paying an agreed deputy if another member of the Music team cannot cover the duty

Professional Development

Conference expenses will be paid by prior agreement with the Director of Music.

Probation

This post will be subject to a probationary period of 6 months.

Safeguarding

The appointment is made subject to the receipt of a clear Enhanced Disclosure and Barring (DBS) Check.

Applications

How to Apply

Applications must be received by **12 noon on Friday 23 July 2021**.

Application forms, with a covering letter of no more than two sides of A4 describing what attracts you to the role and what you think you could bring to enhance the musical offering at Wells Cathedral, should be returned to the Human Resources Administrator by email to: **recruitment@wellscathedral.uk.net**.

Shortlisting

To ensure the fairness of the selection process, shortlisting will be based upon the information which you provide in your application and assumptions will not be made about your experience or skills. We will look for demonstrable evidence that you meet the criteria set out in the person specification. Information provided on the application form will be viewed by HR, the recruiting manager, and interview panel. All applicants will be notified of the outcome of the shortlisting process.

Selection Process

Auditions and interviews will take place **Thursday 29 July 2021**.

Further details about final interviews will be communicated at the time, recognising the impact of Covid-19 restrictions. The role will be subject to satisfactory references and a satisfactory enhanced DBS check.

Further information

We hope you find this pack provides all the information you need in order to consider your application for this post.

If you have any questions or would like an informal conversation with the Director of Music about the post, please contact the P.A. to the Director of Music, Melanie Lawlor (**melanie.lawlor@wellscathedral.uk.net**), who will make the necessary arrangements.

Wells Cathedral is committed to the safeguarding and protection of children, young people and adults.

We will carefully select, train and support all those with any responsibility within the Church, in line with Safer Recruitment principles.

This means that we will:

- Ensure that our recruitment and selection processes are inclusive, fair, consistent and transparent.
- Take all reasonable steps to prevent those who might harm children or adults from taking up, in our Cathedral, positions of respect, responsibility or authority where they are trusted by others.
- Adhere to safer recruitment legislation, guidance and standards.

Further information can be found in our Safeguarding Policy available on the Cathedral website.

All applicants are required to complete a Confidential Declaration Form as part of our recruitment process when an offer of employment is made. This form is strictly confidential and, except under compulsion of law, will be seen only by those involved in the recruitment/appointment process and, when appropriate, the nominated safeguarding lead or someone acting in a similar role/position. All forms will be kept securely in compliance with the General Data Protection Regulation within the Data Protection Act 2018.



Discover more online at
wellscathedral.org.uk



Images courtesy of Iain MacLeod-Jones, Jason Bryant, and Jason Budd