



ST. ALBANS CATHEDRAL

Head Virger

Recruitment Information Pack

August 2022

St Albans Cathedral exists to glorify God and, inspired by the witness of Alban, proclaim Christ's message of love

Welcome

Thank you for your interest in the role of Head Virger at St Albans Cathedral. We hope you will consider applying.

St Albans Cathedral is a special place. It stands over the place where Alban, Britain's first Christian saint, was buried after giving his life for his faith over 1700 years ago. The Cathedral is a major site of pilgrimage and worship to this day, welcoming people of all ages and from many different backgrounds. It is the oldest site of continuous Christian worship in Britain and home to the shrines of St Alban and St Amphibalus, several world-class medieval wall paintings and an amazing mix of architectural styles that bear witness to many centuries of its life.

The Cathedral is committed to remaining a place of free entry and welcomed over 330,000 visitors in 2021. Revealing our heritage and history to visitors and pilgrims is at the heart of our vision to be a beacon of discovery and inclusive welcome, prayer and reflection, open to all.

The Cathedral is at an exciting point in its journey. The opening in 2019 of a new welcome centre, new learning facilities and new heritage interpretation throughout the Cathedral building has raised its profile and significantly increased visitor numbers. The whole Cathedral community is also committed to a number of key priorities in mission and ministry.

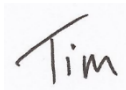
St Albans Cathedral is home to a vibrant and active community, made up of our worshipping congregations, volunteers, staff and many other individuals. It is both a place that holds large scale events and services, and one that encourages more intimate prayer and reflection, combining local and national profile.

Prayer and worship are at the heart of the Cathedral's life and the successful candidate will have a leading role in ensuring everything we do is carried out to standards of excellence and reverence. The Head Virger will play a key role in supporting the planning, organisation, and delivery of the practical arrangements for Cathedral life, through its worship and services and as a place offering holy hospitality to its numerous visitors and across a range of organised events. The job is full of variety, scope, and although busy will be very fulfilling for the right person, and even fun! The Cathedral community values the role virgers play and will make the new post holder welcome.

We will be praying for you as you discern if God is calling you to explore further by applying. Every one of our staff and volunteers each contribute in keeping this place a living place. If you have the relevant skills and experience for this role we would be keen to receive your application.



The Very Revd Jo Kelly-Moore
Dean of St Albans



Tim Fleming
Chief Operating Officer

Head Virger

This is an exciting opportunity to join the Cathedral team as we look to the future post Covid and having recently completed our National Lottery Heritage funded project, Alban, Britain's First Saint, which reveals the importance and story of Alban. We are now able to offer our visitors, pilgrims and those attending services a greatly enhanced experience through improved facilities and interpretation, including a new welcome centre, new learning facilities and a busy events programme to appeal to new and existing audiences, all of which are now back to pre-pandemic activity levels.

The Head Virger leads a team of virgers who support the daily life of the Cathedral. You will take the lead in supporting the effective and efficient operation of all planned worship and events within the Cathedral.

The Head Virger actively supports all of the Cathedral's front of house teams and volunteers in delivering an exceptional welcome to all that come to the Cathedral, whether that be a visitor, someone attending a service, a pilgrim group, a school trip or a major venue hiree. We strive for each and every one of them to have a positive and inspiring experience.

The virger team (currently 1 Head Virger, 3 full time Virgers, 1 part time Virger and 2 Evening Porters) is going through a time of transition with various changes in personnel and so the successful applicant will help to shape and motivate a new team and structure. The team also includes a number of casual staff and works with various volunteers. The Head Virger will need to be a skilled manager who can lead and motivate a diverse team to the highest standard.

This is a complex, demanding and yet rewarding role which requires initiative and the ability to think strategically, at fast pace, and flexibly. The post holder will be expected to recognise this and respond to what is a dynamic role, leading by example.

The Head Virger's line manager is the Director of Property and Fabric, but the nature of the role means you will also work under the supervision of the Precentor for worship and liturgical matters. You will also need to be able to collaborate and communicate effectively with other departments and teams to facilitate the smooth running of the Cathedral's many activities.

Key responsibilities

Leadership and Management

Inspire, motivate, line manage and train the virger team to be able to engage and serve all users of the Cathedral building.

Lead the virger team to ensure the Cathedral is a safe and welcoming space for all those who worship, visit and work within it.

Lead the virger team to maintain and ensure a high standard of liturgical excellence.

Compile staff rotas to ensure the Cathedral is adequately and appropriately staffed during opening hours and that all events and services are appropriately staffed. Rotas to be planned a minimum one month in advance.

Manage the department's budget.

Liturgy and Services

Ensure the Cathedral is prepared and staffed for all services and related events (including weddings, funerals, civic events and special services).

Support the Precentor in the provision of all Cathedral worship and in the planning of special services as required.

Act as Head Virger at principal services and other special services, managing other Virgers as part of these occasions. Virge the Dean (or senior clergy) on ceremonial occasions.

Responsible for sound, video and lighting systems in the Cathedral and ensure they are in good working order, regularly tested and that the virger team is trained on how to use and maintain them.

Ensure all liturgical furniture, plate, ornaments and vestments are maintained in the highest order and the inventory is updated as required.

Oversee the ordering and stock control of candles, candle oil, communion wafers, wine and other liturgical requirements.

Manage the procurement and storage of cleaning supplies and all materials needed for the good running and order of services.

Welcome and Hospitality

Play a full part in the maintenance of good public engagement and treat visitors in a friendly, tactful and helpful manner, being firm when necessary, without giving offence.

Liaise with and work alongside the Cathedral's Day Chaplains, Guides, Welcomers, Shop Supervisors, Education Officer and others to provide excellent experiences for all those coming to the Cathedral either as pilgrims, visitors, school groups or to attend services.

Regularly review visual first impressions of the Cathedral, ensuring these are as positive as possible.

Champion a culture of hospitality and welcome which helps instil all that we do as a Cathedral community.

Work with the Cathedral Safeguarding Officer to ensure the Cathedral is a safe place for members of the public who may be distressed, or who present with issues of mental health or vulnerabilities, and that the virger team responds appropriately.

Events and Logistics

Provide a professional service to all organisers of booked events, liaising with the Cathedral Diary Manager to understand each event's operational and logistical needs in advance.

In liaison with the Cathedral Diary Manager, take responsibility for providing appropriate staging, seating and set-up for all booked events.

Recruit, supervise and manage a team of casual virgers and casual staging crew.

Be present and contribute (or ensure other Virger presence) at planning meetings for major events.

Health and Safety

Ensure the Cathedral's health and safety policies and procedures are followed by ensuring the virger team are aware of and understand all health and safety procedures, including major incident, fire safety, evacuation of the building, first aid and lone working.

Ensure training across these areas is up to date for self and colleagues.

Hold appropriate First Aider qualifications or be appropriately First Aid trained.

Ensure all relevant fire safety and other health and safety records, including accident books, are accurately maintained. Carry out weekly fire alarm testing.

Liaise with fire, police and ambulance services as required, building personal relationships with local crews, and understanding who to call and when.

Participate in the annual fire inspection with the Director of Property and Fabric and assist with the implantation of any recommendations.

Responsible for ensuring the Cathedral is kept in safe order and that any hazards are reported to the Director of Property and Fabric.

Maintenance

Carry out daily maintenance checks as agreed with the Director of Property and Fabric, reporting issues as required.

Carry out other maintenance activities in line with a maintenance programme as agreed with the Director of Property and Fabric.

Ensure the Cathedral is clean and always presented to the highest standards by ensuring there is a robust and appropriate cleaning regime in place.

Ensure on-site contractors sign in and are supervised as appropriate as agreed with the Director of Property and Fabric.

Security

Constantly pay attention to the security of the Cathedral's buildings and everyone in them, taking ownership of problems identified and taking responsibility to resolve them.

Responsible for the virger team emptying all the money boxes and safe custody of cash.

Regularly review all processes relating to security with the Director of Property and Fabric (such as key holders, out of hours security processes).

Be part of the team that act as responsible key holders in the event of out of hours incidents such as fire and intruder alarm activation.

General

Keep the vestries and sacristy in good order.

Ensure all relevant statutory records and service registers are kept in good order and accessible to relevant bodies.

Ensure virger team compliance with all the Cathedral's HR policy and procedures.

Be the representative for the Cathedral in the Association of English Cathedrals Head Virger network.

Engage and liaise with the National Guild of Vergers.

The main duties and responsibilities of the role are outlined as above. This list is not exhaustive and is instead intended to reflect your main tasks and areas of work.

All staff and volunteers are expected to demonstrate a commitment to safeguarding the welfare of all children and vulnerable adults, who are involved with or visit the Cathedral. This will include adherence to policies and procedures, following good practice in relation to their own behaviour and conduct, and undertaking any safeguarding duties and training commensurate with their role.

St Albans Cathedral

As the seat of the Bishop of St Albans and Cathedral church for the Diocese of St Albans, St Albans Cathedral is committed to being a key support for the Bishop's ministry and the mission of the whole diocese. The Cathedral has a vision to grow its presence and impact in the wider community, focussing on social justice, the environment, inclusion and care for those around us. This means working with others; both locally, across the diocese and more widely

The Cathedral's architecture is a blend of many different periods, with the core of the existing Cathedral building dating over 900 years. Conserving and protecting the building is an ongoing challenge, responsibility and privilege.

Music is central to our worship and the life of the Cathedral. We have two of the finest cathedral choirs in the country, a magnificent organ, a busy programme of musical events and concerts, and various voluntary choirs and music groups.

Learning is at the heart of human flourishing and core to both our history and mission. The Cathedral is a nationally renowned centre for heritage and theological learning, delivering a rich programme for schools and adults alike. We seek to offer learning experiences and opportunities to people of all ages, all levels of education, and of all traditions and faiths and none. Our new facilities have provided a whole host of new learning opportunities.

The Cathedral is committed to care for both its buildings and land. The renewal of the exterior areas around the Cathedral building is vital to draw people to us and enhance our built environment. The first phase of this work to improve the area to the east of the Cathedral has recently been completed. Our long-term vision for our precinct and wider grounds, as yet unfunded, is to improve accessibility, care for the environment and creation, maximise community use and enhance the setting of our beautiful Grade 1 listed building.

The Cathedral plays an important role in growing the local economy to support both visitor growth and local residents' engagement with the city of St Albans. Our rich programme of events, concerts, exhibitions and special services all contribute to the delivery of this priority and the Cathedral's financial sustainability.

St Albans Cathedral is an independent charitable organisation and receives no regular direct funding from the Government. It costs £5,000 a day to keep the Cathedral open. Our ongoing financial health is therefore dependent on the continued diversification and growth of our income. This includes income from visitors, donors, grant-making bodies, fundraising, fees, commercial trading and investments.

The nature of who we are means we are very much a people-focused organisation, and it is our people who are the driving force in keeping the stones of our historic building alive. The work of the Cathedral is sustained by around 45 staff and some 600 volunteers. We have a number of part-time workers and encourage flexible working where it is appropriate.

Further information about the Cathedral can be found on our website www.stalbanscathedral.org

Our vision

The story of Alban is a remarkable one. It not only takes us back to the beginning of the Christian faith in Britain and to a time when religious freedom was forbidden, but it is also an astonishing account of standing up for what you believe in. This is the story we want people to know and be inspired by when they visit.

Alban's welcome to a persecuted stranger is a powerful example of courage, compassion and hospitality. He is an inspiration to people of many faiths and none. His values of faith, hospitality, truth and justice are as important now as they ever were. As we often say he is 'an ordinary person who did an extraordinary thing'.

Our Vision 2019-2024 brings our purpose and our mission to life in shaping our current priorities, reflecting the many opportunities arising from the realisation of the Cathedral's Alban, Britain's First Saint project.



We have discerned six key priorities to turn **Our Vision 2019-2024** into action and to underpin the Cathedral's current activities, against which actions are set and monitored.



Person specification

Essential

Work related personal qualities

Be a practising Christian, able to receive Communion according to the rules of the Church of England

Ability to work independently, using own initiative and be held accountable

An empathy and excitement for the Cathedral's purpose, vision and priorities

Ability to work collaboratively with colleagues and stakeholders of different disciplines

Ability to coordinate and prioritise several initiatives and tasks at the same time

Desire to make valued contributions outside of your own area of responsibility

Willingness to work flexibly, including the ability to work outside of normal hours when required

Physically fit and have a good head for heights

Ability to uphold and adhere to the requirements of the Cathedral's safeguarding policies

Able to contribute to the ministry, mission and life of the Cathedral through being an effective ambassador for the Cathedral when on duty

Knowledge and experience

Previous experience of managing teams

Experience of managing complex services and events

Understanding of Church of England liturgy and its principles, and empathy with all aspects of its ethos

A sense of the value of well-ordered worship and its contribution to the Cathedral's wider ministry and mission

Ability to contribute to the ordered conduct of liturgy, and understand and carry out detailed liturgical and ceremonial duties

Understanding of audio-visual equipment and the principles of streaming and recording services and events

Good understanding of security good practice and health and safety requirements

Skills and abilities

Excellent organisational skills with the ability to plan, prioritise work and meet deadlines

Ability and understanding of how to build, motivate, inspire and lead a team

Ability to work under pressure

Ability to initiate, develop and implement good practice

Ability to work closely and flexibly within a small team

Good IT and administrative skills

Excellent communication skills and ability to relate well to a variety of people

Understanding of safeguarding issues and practices

Working knowledge of Microsoft Office – particularly Word and Excel

Desirable

Previous work experience as a Head Virger

Has a Guild of Vergers Diploma

Terms and conditions

- Hours of work: 35 hours per week worked over a 5-day week including some weekends
- Salary: £32,500 per annum
- Annual leave: 25 days plus public holidays
- Pension: The option of joining the Cathedral's qualifying workplace pension scheme (eligible employees will be enrolled in this scheme if you meet the Government's automatic enrolment criteria). After any probationary period the Cathedral currently matches employee contributions up to a maximum of 6% of pensionable pay up to State Pension age
- Location: A beautiful Cathedral setting with the opportunity for flexible working
- Staff discount: A discount in the Cathedral shop and café
- The Cathedral has a selection of 2 and 3 bedroomed properties that may be available to rent at market rate
- Relocation costs may be available

The recruitment process

Applicants are invited to submit an application form and covering letter to Michelle Ovenden, Cathedral Business and HR Manager, by email to michelle.ovenden@stalbanscathedral.org

The closing date for applications is Friday 2 September 2022
Interviews will be held on Monday 12 September

We appreciate we are advertising during a period when applicants may be on holiday. Please get in touch with Michelle Ovenden if you see this advert late and need an extension to the closing date to prepare your application.

Invitation to interview will be based on the suitability of your qualification, experience and abilities.

We are committed to a culture of diversity, equity and inclusion and we welcome and encourage applications from a diverse range of people. We support our staff to manage their time flexibly and to enjoy a good work-life balance.

We are committed to providing a welcoming, respectful and safe environment for all and expect all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. Our appointment processes follow the Church of England's Safer Recruitment Practice Guidance.

Appointment is subject to

- Two satisfactory references
- An enhanced DBS criminal record check and completion of a confidential declaration form
- Completion of a Medical Questionnaire
- Confirmation of your right to work in the UK