



BLACKBURN
CATHEDRAL

CATHEDRAL VIRGER



March 2024

Welcome from The Dean, the Very Reverend Peter Howell-Jones

Thank you for your interest in the position of Cathedral Virger here at Blackburn Cathedral. We are seeking a diligent and enthusiastic person with the drive, attributes, and skills to contribute to the daily work of the Cathedral.

We are working towards being a Cathedral that has values rooted in the person and life of Jesus Christ and in the community that he builds which we summarise as: proclamation, joy, love, and self-giving service. We hope to appoint a Cathedral Virger who will support and promote these values.

Our website www.blackburncathedral.com will provide you with a glimpse of who we are as a community.

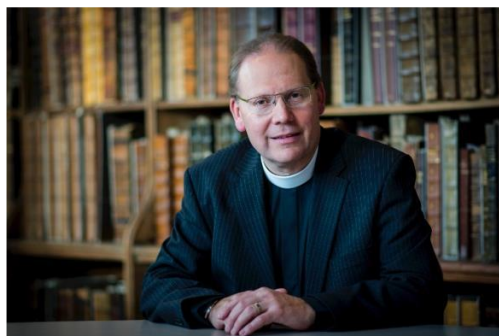
If you would like to speak further, please contact Pauline Rowe, Executive Assistant to The Dean on 01254 845301 to arrange a phone conversation.

Once again, thank you for your interest.

With every blessing,



The Very Reverend Peter Howell-Jones
Dean of Blackburn



Background Information

Blackburn Cathedral is one of England's newest cathedrals, yet it is one of the country's oldest places of Christian worship. Blackburn Cathedral is a living community of prayer and worship, a centre of excellence in Church Music, education and community engagement and plays a key role as the Mother Church of the Diocese of Blackburn serving the Christian and wider community across the whole of Lancashire. It is also the most prominent of Blackburn's heritage assets and tourist attractions, and a key cultural venue for Blackburn and the wider county of Lancashire.

Blackburn Cathedral is set in a multi-faith urban context which has recently undergone significant renewal and development. The creation of a new Cathedral Close with a mix of spaces has provided a greater sense of place and focus within the town, including the adjoining Cathedral Square which provides a gathering place and a location for numerous public events throughout the year.

Blackburn is an increasingly diverse town, with positive and creative partnerships. The Cathedral sees itself as a significant partner in the life of the town and is seeking to develop partnerships further during the next few years, positioning itself as a Cathedral for the whole borough and indeed the County.

Blackburn Cathedral is a truly remarkable building. Reference to a church on the site is made in the Domesday Book, compiled in 1086, though other sources – the Saxon Chronicle among them – would seem to support the long-held belief that a church dedicated to St Mary can be dated to the year 596.



The Cathedral Church we know today is a development of the 1820-26 design built by John Palmer, when Blackburn emerged as the fulcrum of the industrial revolution. The early nineteenth century church was extensively rebuilt after a fire in 1831, and the bulk of it survives in the present structure as the western tower, nave and side aisles.

A century later, William Temple, then Bishop of Manchester, chose Blackburn as the focus for a new diocese. The church of St Mary was chosen to be the new cathedral and an extension scheme by William Adam Forsyth sought to take the building a stage further. Work started in 1928, and halted in 1941 during World War II, began again with a reduced budget in 1951 but never finished Forsyth's plans, which included a central tower of dominating Gothic proportions.

In 1962, Laurence King was appointed architect. His design for a concrete central corona reduced the building's Gothic emphasis and was made ready for its eventual consecration in 1977.

Vision, Purpose and Values

Our Vision, Purpose, values and critical projects can be found on our website: https://blackburncathedral.com/single/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/BC_strategy.pdf

Job Description

Job Title: Virger
Line Manager: Head Virger

Role Responsibility

The duties within the Virger Team are wide ranging. They include participation in the daily round of regular services and special services and their preparation; acting as site supervisor and point of contact for the many concerts, special events and exhibitions that take place throughout the year; contributing to the management of a safe and welcoming environment for all; and looking after the security of the site including daily un-locking and locking-up routines.

The Virger Team consists of The Head Virger, two further full-time Virgers and volunteer Virgers when required and available.

The post-holder will be expected to work with a number of other key staff, including the Chief Operating Officer; Canon Missioner; the Director of Music; the Operations Manager; Education Officer; and volunteers as necessary.



Key Responsibilities

1 Care of the Cathedral Building and its Precincts

- To have responsibility, when on duty, for the opening and unlocking in the morning, or for the closing and locking-up at night, of the Cathedral and precincts;
- To share with the other members of the Virger Team, the responsibility for internal and external maintenance and running of the Cathedral and precincts;
- To undertake specialist duties including care and operation of the sound system and equipment; the audio visual system and live streaming system;
- To undertake the care and operation of cleaning equipment; the operation of the heating system; the security and alarm systems;
- To undertake cleaning and basic decorating as directed by the Dean's Virger, its associated buildings and the precincts;
- To ensure the safe custody of keys, the security of the Cathedral and its associated buildings;
- To maintain liaison with the Police, Blackburn with Darwen Council, and Blackburn BID with regard to public services, security and maintenance of Cathedral Square and the Green;
- To work with the Chief Operating Officer and Operations Manager, to attend to all matters to do with residential property on site;
- To undertake non-specialist maintenance including the changing of high level light bulbs, gutter clearing, and similar using ladders / cherry picker as appropriate;
- To be available to be called to attend out of normal working hours in the event of an emergency or problem (e.g. fire / break in etc.).

2 Liturgical Duties

- To be a Virger on formal occasions, dressed in cassock and gown, participating in processions and virging at Cathedral services in accordance with the traditions and accepted practices of Blackburn Cathedral;
- To be on duty on Festival Days and other important occasions as required;
- When on duty, to virge and assist at Morning and Evening Prayer / Evensong; weekday Eucharists and other occasions as required;
- To prepare books; altars; vestments and vessels as required for services;
- To help ensure the maintenance of sacristy supplies and altar requisites, e.g. candles etc.;
- In an emergency (in the absence of any clergy), to conduct Morning or Evening Offices. Full training will be given;
- Provide liturgical and sacramental support to the Canon Precentor, Dean and other clergy, helping them to fulfil their priestly functions;
- In collaboration with the Canon Precentor, to be responsible for the repair and maintenance of vestments, robes and liturgical furnishings;
- To administer the Chalice at services of holy Communion (Eucharist) as required

3 Ministry of Welcome

- To provide a warm and encouraging welcome to visitors as and when required, making sure that all visitors are received in a friendly, tactful and helpful manner. When it is necessary to be firm, this should be without giving offence;
- To maintain harmonious working relationships with other departments who work in the Cathedral including the Music and Education departments, the Cathedral Café, Administration and Finance, Events and volunteers;
- To support the work of the volunteer staff including Welcomers, Education Volunteers, Cathedral Guides and other volunteers when required;
- To exercise compassion and understanding to all who visit the Cathedral, and particularly those who are vulnerable but without encouraging dependency or comprising security by being away from post;
- To ensure that the Cathedral Notice Boards and leaflet displays are kept tidy and up to date.

4 Concerts and Events

- To help with setting up and removal of all contents and furniture as necessary for concerts, events and services (including staging), and for their reinstatement afterwards;
- To act as site supervisor during events and as point of contact for event organisers prior to, and during the events. Many of these events take place in the evenings and involve resetting the Cathedral after the event has finished, ready for the next day's Morning Services;
- To be aware of the activities in the Cathedral diary and be able to problem solve and deal positively with late changes to programme effectively.

5 Security

- To keep a vigilant eye on the Cathedral and its precincts with regard to security, making regular checks on the buildings and helping to maintain a visible staff presence across the site as necessary;
- To ensure the safe custody of keys and the recording of keys and security fobs issued;
- To ensure all valuables and money are looked after according to agreed procedures and instructions, including regular emptying of alms boxes and votive candle offerings, handing collection money and its safe storage when required;
- To assist in the maintenance of good order throughout the Cathedral and its precincts and ensure that decorum is maintained within the Cathedral at all times.

6 Health and Safety

- To personally comply with health and safety requirements and to ensure that all staff, volunteers, visitors and contractors to the Cathedral do likewise;
- To ensure that all areas of the Cathedral and its precincts which are accessible to staff, visitors and contractors are maintained in a safe manner and that any hazards or defects are reported to the Dean's Virger and Operations Manager;
- To have knowledge of the positions of all firefighting equipment and their safe and appropriate use in an emergency;

- To have knowledge of emergency procedures including building evacuation and contact routines;
- To undertake first aid training and be willing and able to apply first aid as required; to undertake risk assessments for activities taking place in the Cathedral as required;
- To ensure the accident records are properly maintained.

7 Safeguarding

- To undertake regular safeguarding training and to be fully conversant with the Cathedral's Safeguarding Policy and personally to comply with it;
- To be vigilant in observing and reporting concerns relating to any Safeguarding matter.

8 General

- To hoist and lower flag as specified on special occasions from the West Tower;
- To attend Virger Team meetings;
- To perform such other duties as directed by the Head Virger; Canon Precentor; Operations Manager or the Chief Operating Officer;
- To act flexibly within the small team running the Cathedral, providing cover for colleagues on occasion, including, dealing promptly and courteously with any in-coming queries, by telephone, email or face to face.

Person Specification

Requirements	Essential (E) Desirable (D)	Measured by: A – Application D – Documents I – Interview R - References
Qualifications		
Literacy and numeracy skills	E	D
English and Maths GCSE (or equivalent) A-C grades	D	D
Be a practising Christian, able to receive Communion according to the rules of the Church of England	E	A
Skills		
Physically fit as the role is physically demanding at times and involves standing for long periods; manual handling activities and the movement of furniture and other heavy objects	E	A / I
Ability to work at height without fear	E	A / I
Aptitude to understand and use technology and in particular the Cathedral alarm system and sound system	E	A / I
Excellent attention to detail when ensuring that vestments and linens are in good order, that the Cathedral is appropriately chaired and that the silver is cleaned regularly	E	A / I
A calm authority with the ability to take charge in challenging situations	E	A / I
Good people skills and personal impact, with the ability to engage with and influence a variety of different people.	E	A / I
Excellent communication skills – both verbal and written.	E	A / I
Ability to pro-actively develop relationships and opportunities in a sensitive and appropriate manner.	E	I
IT competent	E	A
Ability to work closely and flexibly within a small team.	E	A
Ability to take initiatives and adapt.	E	A
Experience		
Previous experience as a Virger	D	A / R

Requirements	Essential (E) Desirable (D)	Measured by: A – Application D – Documents I – Interview R – References
Knowledge		
A working knowledge of the Church of England and the Christian faith.	D	A / I
A knowledge and understanding of protocol with regard to services and worship	D	A / I
A knowledge of technical areas, i.e. lighting; PA system; heating; fire alarm system; and similar	D	A / I
Attitudes		
Honesty, integrity and strong values. The appointee needs to be able to work comfortably in a faith-based organisation and be sympathetic to, and supportive of, Christian values.	E	I
A wholehearted commitment to the success of the Cathedral.	E	I
Flexible and adaptable under pressure.	E	I
The willingness to work flexible hours on occasion, with periods of considerable intensity, as required.	E	I
Self-organisation and the ability to balance own work load.	E	I
Discretion and sensitivity to others.	E	A / I



Terms and Conditions of Employment

The employer is Blackburn Cathedral on a permanent contract and the post holder will be responsible to The Head Virger.

As a key lay employee of the Cathedral the post holder is expected to work such hours and times as are necessary for the proper performance of the job. In view of the nature of the role and the work and mission of the Cathedral this will require some flexibility and will include some evening and weekend working, as well as attendance at some significant Cathedral services.

Salary

£20,148 per annum, depending on skills and experience.

Place of work

Blackburn Cathedral, Cathedral Offices, Cathedral Close, Blackburn, Lancashire, BB1 5AA.

Hours

The hours of employment are 40 hours per week, on a flexible rota including Sundays, weekend, evening, late night working and overnight on call duty on a rota basis. On occasion, reasonable overtime working will be required which will be credited by time off in lieu.

Accommodation

At present, this post comes with rent-free accommodation for the proper performance of your duty at Cathedral Close. This situation is subject to regular review and has the potential to change in the future.

Probation

The position is subject to a three-month probationary period, during which the appointment may be terminated by either party with one month's notice. After the successful completion of the probationary period the notice period is four weeks' notice on either side.

Benefits

28 days' holiday per year plus UK Bank Holidays.

Entitlement to join the Cathedral pension scheme with the Chapter contributing 5% of gross monthly salary.

Employee Assistance Programme (EAP).

Expenses

Reasonable working expenses will be met in line with Chapter policy, and reimbursement will be in accordance with our expenditure policies where all expenditure is required to be pre-approved.

Office and Administrative Support

A desk is provided within the Virgers' office.

Equality Statement

The Dean and Chapter recognise that discrimination and victimisation is unacceptable and that it is in the interests of the organisation and its employees to utilise the skills of the total workforce. It is the aim of the organisation to ensure that no employee or job applicant receives less favourable facilities or treatment (either directly or indirectly) in recruitment or employment on grounds of age, disability, gender, marriage/civil partnership, pregnancy/maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation.

The Recruitment Process

Applications

To apply for this post, please submit the following:

- A completed application form;
- A cover letter which addresses the appointment criteria described in the person specification, explaining how your skills and experience to match the requirements of the role.

Completed applications should be sent to: pauline.rowe@blackburncathedral.co.uk

Closing date for applications

12 noon on Wednesday 27th March 2024.

Selection process

Shortlisting will take place on Monday 8th April 2024 and candidates selected will be invited to interview on Monday 29 April 2024.

Any offer of appointment will be dependent on the receipt of satisfactory references and an appropriate DBS clearance.

Organisational Chart

