



WORCESTER
CATHEDRAL

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Application Pack

Assistant Alto Lay Clerk (fixed term)

Sept 2026

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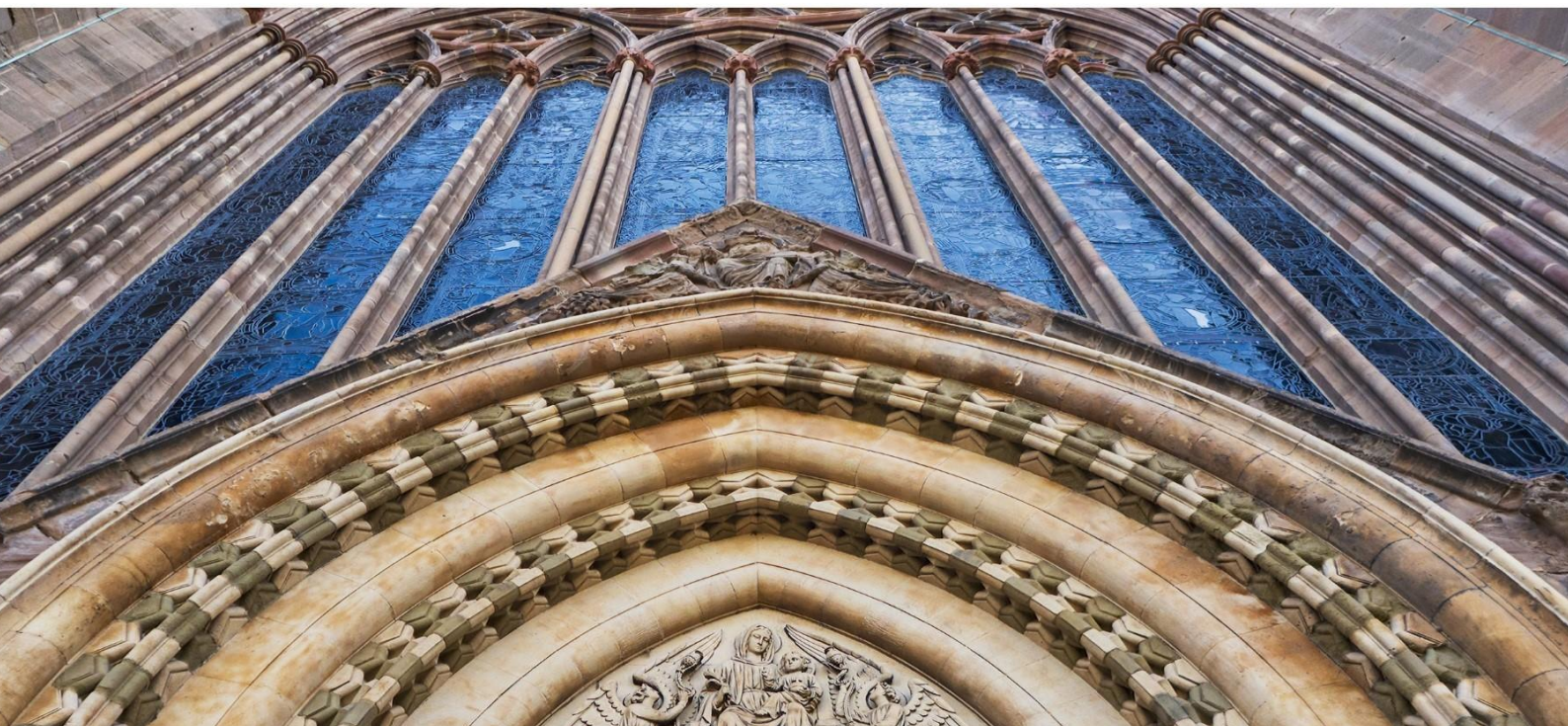
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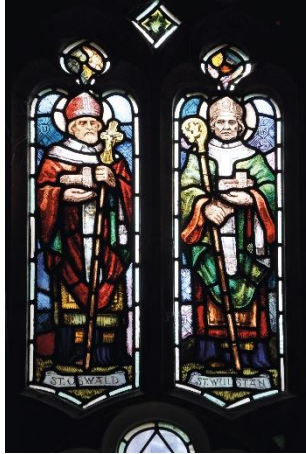
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About Worcester Cathedral



Worcester Cathedral is a magnificent sight as it rises majestically above the River Severn. Worcester has been the seat of a bishopric since the seventh century, and the Cathedral was served by monks until the Reformation. St Oswald and St Wulfstan were among the bishops.

Since the eighteenth century, the Cathedral has been famous for its part in the annual Three Choirs Festival (the 2026 festival will take place in Gloucester Cathedral), the oldest choral festival in existence. Today, the Cathedral is the centre of a vibrant community of clergy and laypeople; offering the praises of God each day, serving the city and diocese of Worcester, and attracting visitors from all over the world.

Our Cathedral community is diverse with over 70 staff and 200 volunteers. We are rightly proud of the tremendous heritage and number of partners we work with across the Cathedral and City to provide a warm welcome to our visitors, to promote learning about the history of the Cathedral, attend our many events and activities and to participate in the worship and music that is at the heart of our Cathedral.

The governance of the Cathedral is the responsibility of the Chapter, which comprises residentiary canons and lay canons with professional expertise. The Chapter is responsible for the strategy, oversight and delivery of the operational plan.

There are a team of Departmental Managers led by the Chief Operating Officer, who meet regularly and work collaboratively to achieve the annual objectives and plan. The Cathedral has a diverse range of income, all of which is either achieved through donations, fundraising, earned income, investment income or other support.



Worcester Cathedral Music Department

Members of the Music Department currently include:

Organist and Director of Music	Mr Samuel Hudson
Assistant Director of Music	Mr Alexander Robson (<i>from September 2026</i>)
Organ Scholar	Mr Zane Soonawalla (<i>from September 2026</i>)
Music Administrator	Mr Alan Sheldon

Regular service timetable:

Monday:	17:30	Evensong
Tuesday:		Morning chorister practice (no Evensong)
Wednesday:	17.30	Evensong (Choral Scholars only)
Thursday:	17:30	Evensong
Friday:	17:30	Evensong *
Saturday:	17:30	Evensong
Sunday:	10:30	Eucharist
	16:00	Evensong
	18:30	Evening Worship (voluntary choir)

* Evensong on a Friday is sung by Principal lay clerks only, and with trebles every other week.



Worcester Cathedral Choir

Worcester Cathedral is justifiably proud of its long and distinguished musical tradition. The current cathedral choir is the direct descendant of the monastic choir which sang in the cathedral virtually since it was founded in 680. Evidence of the music sung in the cathedral during the 12th and 13th centuries can still be found in the cathedral library.

In 1541, King Henry VIII established the King's School to provide the choristers for the newly re-founded Church of England cathedral following the Dissolution of the Monasteries. The choir now comprises both boy and girl choristers who hold scholarships and attend the King's School.

A succession of notable directors of music have illuminated the worship in the cathedral, particularly Thomas Tomkins (appointed in 1596), Jeremiah Clarke (1806), Hugh Blair (1892), Sir Ivor Atkins (1897), Sir David Willcocks (1950), Christopher Robinson (1963) and Donald Hunt (1974). Worcester also has an indelible connection with Sir Edward Elgar (1857-1934) who spent many years of his life in and around Worcester and premièred many works in the cathedral, particularly at the Three Choirs Festival. The cathedral boasts a number of fine organs, particularly the quire organ built by Kenneth Tickell and commissioned in 2008.

The back row of the cathedral choir comprises nine professional lay clerks and three choral scholars. Six of the lay clerks are 'principal' lay clerks (two each of altos, tenors, and basses) who sing at all services during the week, and three 'assistant' lay clerks (one per lower voice part) who supplement the choir at weekends and major festivals. The choral scholarship scheme is designed to encourage young singers (one per lower voice part per year) to become part of the long-standing tradition of cathedral music which is such an important part of our musical heritage, both here at Worcester and nationally.

In addition, Worcester Cathedral is proud to have a voluntary choir (founded in the 1870s), a youth choir (founded in 2021) and a mixed adult chamber choir. The Worcester Festival Choral Society is also based at the cathedral and usually gives three concerts per year with professional soloists and orchestra.



The Role



The role of an assistant lay clerk is to sing in the Cathedral Choir at weekends and at major festivals during the cathedral's year. In a normal week, this involves singing a service on Saturday evening, and two services on Sunday – one in the morning and one in the afternoon. The cathedral choir's term dates broadly follow those of the King's School, with additional duties most notably in the week running up to Christmas and again in the week before Easter (Holy Week).

The standard weekly schedule for assistant lay clerks is as follows:

Saturday	4.30pm rehearsal, with Evensong from 5.30pm – 6.20pm
Sunday	9.45am rehearsal, with Eucharist from 10.30am – 11.45am
	3.20pm rehearsal, with Evensong from 4pm – 4.50pm

Services normally take place in the cathedral; however, the choir does have an active outreach programme in the diocese and so occasionally lay clerks may be requested (with appropriate notice) to sing at other locations. There are also a number of services during the cathedral's yearly calendar for which attendance is mandatory, even if they fall outside regular term times. The choir also participates in concerts, tours, broadcasts and recordings, along with special services such as weddings and memorial services, for which additional fees are payable.

The cathedral lay clerks may also be invited to participate in the Three Choirs Festival, held annually in late July/early August and hosted in the cities of Gloucester, Hereford and Worcester on a rotational basis. Subject to a separate contract from the Three Choirs Festival Ltd., which is an independent charity, participation in the festival also commands an additional fee. The Three Choirs Festival is the longest running non-competitive classical music festival in the world, boasting over 300 years of history, and features some of the world's leading orchestras (the festival's current orchestra-in-residence is the Philharmonia), conductors and soloists. The cathedral choirs of the three cities play a central role in the festival, jointly singing services during the week (including a live Choral Evensong broadcast on BBC Radio 3) and performing their own concert. Lay clerks are also often invited to sing in the Festival Chorus to support performances of large-scale choral repertoire. The festival is to be held in Gloucester in the summer of 2026, returning to Worcester in 2027.



Job Description

Job title: Assistant Alto Lay Clerk (fixed term to August 2027)

Department: Music Department

Reporting to: The Director of Music

Duties and responsibilities:

- To sing in the Cathedral Choir at regular services including Sung Eucharist, Evensong – usually but not exclusively within King's School term time – and on other major occasions in the ecclesiastical year. Typically, these include but are not limited to the Liturgy of Holy Week, Carol Services in Advent and Christmas and Feast Days of the Church as set out in the Music Department calendar.
- To sing at special services as agreed by the Dean and Chapter and the Director of Music (which will attract an additional fee).
- To prepare thoroughly for all music being performed in advance of rehearsals.
- To take part in all scheduled rehearsals as required.
- To prepare fully for solo work in services as required.
- To participate in a Diocesan visit in lieu a cathedral service twice per year.
- To take part in concerts, broadcasts, and recordings (which will attract an additional fee).
- To attend termly Lay Clerks' meetings.
- To arrange for an approved deputy to sing when permission for absence has been sought and granted by the Director of Music (giving at least two weeks' notice).
- To maintain a high level of performance as appropriate to current level of training, in both choral and solo singing.
- To take part in professional development to foster growth in professional skills and knowledge.
- To participate in an annual appraisal process which may include a practical element supported by an external consultant.

Other responsibilities

- To ensure that Worcester Cathedral remains a safe and secure environment whereby children, young people and those who may be vulnerable for any reason are able to visit, or worship.
- To work as an effective member of a close-knit team comprised of full-time music department staff, Choral Scholars, and boy and girl choristers.
- Act as a role model supporting the activities of Scholars, girl choristers and boy choristers.
- Act in a way that respects the sanctity of the Cathedral environment and supports the worship of the congregation.
- Adhere to Cathedral policies as set out in the Cathedral Staff Handbook and agreed policies within the Music Department.
- Undertake any other reasonable duties that the Precentor or Director of Music may require from time to time.

Job Description

Health & Safety

Under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, you must take reasonable care for your own Health and Safety and that of any other person who may be affected by your acts or omissions. In addition, you must co-operate with the Organisation on Health and Safety and not interfere with, or misuse, anything provided for your health, safety or welfare.

Safeguarding

This role requires an Enhanced DBS check.

The Cathedral is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and adults at risk who visit our premises and precinct. All staff and volunteers are expected to actively demonstrate a commitment to a culture of safeguarding by:

- Understanding and adhering to cathedral safeguarding policy and procedures.
- Maintaining professional boundaries and demonstrating behaviour that prioritises safety and wellbeing.
- Taking responsibility for identifying and promptly reporting and safeguarding concerns in line with the policy and procedures.
- Undertaking safeguarding training and fulfilling any specific safeguarding duties required in their role.
- Actively contributing to an environment where everyone feels safe, valued and empowered to raise concerns without fear of reprisal.

Cathedral ID badges must be worn at all times while on duty. Badges are for use by the named individual only.

Person Specification

This section outlines the knowledge, skills and abilities the job holder needs in order to fulfil the requirements of the post.

PERSON SPECIFICATION	
Key Criteria	
Education, skills and experience	Significant experience singing in choral ensembles at a professional level Familiarity with a broad variety of sacred choral repertoire High capability in sight-reading An ability to hold a vocal part on their own An ability to blend into the overall ensemble of the choir while undertaking solo work accurately, confidently, and musically A willingness to act as a mentor to the cathedral's choral scholars A sympathy with the mission and ethos of Worcester Cathedral, and the Church of England A clear understanding of safeguarding and how this relates to the role
Personal qualities	Excellent punctuality and personal presentation, with efficient time management skills Motivation to improve individual performance and a commitment to professional development A desire to become a member of a close-knit team A commitment to maintaining positive working relationships with colleagues, other members of cathedral staff, clergy, and chorister families A desire to represent the choir and cathedral in a positive manner



Working for us

Remuneration

The current salary for an assistant lay clerk at Worcester Cathedral is £4,634 per annum. Payments for additional 'special' services, concerts, recordings, broadcasts and participation in the Three Choirs Festival are in addition to this base salary.

Pension Scheme

All eligible members of staff will be automatically enrolled into the occupational Staff Pension Scheme, operated by Royal London. Contributions will be payable by the member of staff at 4% of basic salary and a 5% contribution by the Chapter. There is also death in service cover offered to all staff. The Chapter may amend the pension scheme at any time.

Professional Development

The cathedral music department takes seriously the ongoing musical development of its professional singers and will encourage this by providing regular feedback and financial support for external vocal tuition. There is a sung element to the cathedral's appraisal procedure for lay clerks.

Staff discount

All employees will receive a 10% discount on purchases in the Gift Shop and Café within the Cathedral.

Employee Assistance Programme

All employees and their immediate family have access to a range of confidential support through our commissioned employee assistance programme.

Post Availability

The post is available from September 2026, for a fixed term of one year, until August 2027.



How to apply

Applications for the post of Assistant Alto Lay Clerk should be sent by post or email to:

Jodie Brookes,
People Administrator,
The Old Palace, Deansway,
Worcester, WR1 2JE

jobs@worcestercathedral.org.uk

Your application should include:

- a current CV and contact details;
- a brief covering letter explaining why you are applying for the post and how your skills and experience match the requirements of the post;
- Details (name, address, telephone number and e-mail) of two referees who would be able to speak about your relevant experience and personal qualities. One must be your current employer (if applicable). References will usually only be contacted if you are short-listed for the post

Should you have any queries about the post, please don't hesitate to contact the Director of Music, Mr Samuel Hudson (samuelhudson@worcestercathedral.org.uk), to arrange an informal conversation.

Closing date: Monday 20th July 2026 at 5pm. Interview dates will be arranged as soon as mutually convenient.





The Chapter Office
Worcester WR1 2LA
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www.worcestercathedral.co.uk



Worcester Cathedral is fully committed to Equal Opportunity policies.