

# **Application Pack Canon Residentiary & Precentor**



**WORCESTER**  

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**CATHEDRAL**

# Canon Residentiary & Precentor Worcester Cathedral

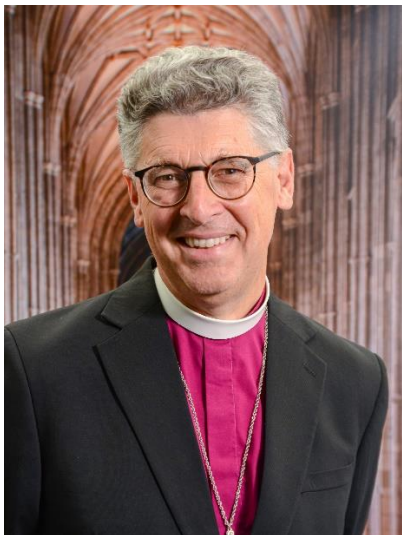
## A MESSAGE FROM THE BISHOP

Thank you for showing an interest in the post of Residentiary Canon and Precentor of Worcester Cathedral. This is a key role in the life of one of England's great cathedrals, at an exciting time as in its continuing commitment to prayer, learning and welcome, we discern together how to bring out of its treasures what is new and what is old.

Worcester Cathedral has a rich history. It was one of the great Benedictine monasteries with an international reputation for music, liturgy, and learning. For centuries it has been the mother church and the seat of the Bishop of this ancient diocese. Today it is a vibrant centre of worship and hospitality which seeks to serve the people of the Diocese of Worcester, and all who come through its doors, in the spirit of the Rule of St Benedict.

Worcester Cathedral is more than a building — it is a living sign of hopefulness, wonder, compassion, openness, and belonging, with worship and prayer at its heart. I hope that you will prayerfully consider whether this is a ministry to which God may be calling you. May he bless you as you do so.

The Rt Revd Martin Gorick  
Acting Bishop of Worcester



The Rt Revd Martin Gorick  
Acting Bishop of Worcester



The Very Revd Dr Stephen Edwards  
Dean of Worcester

## THE APPOINTMENT

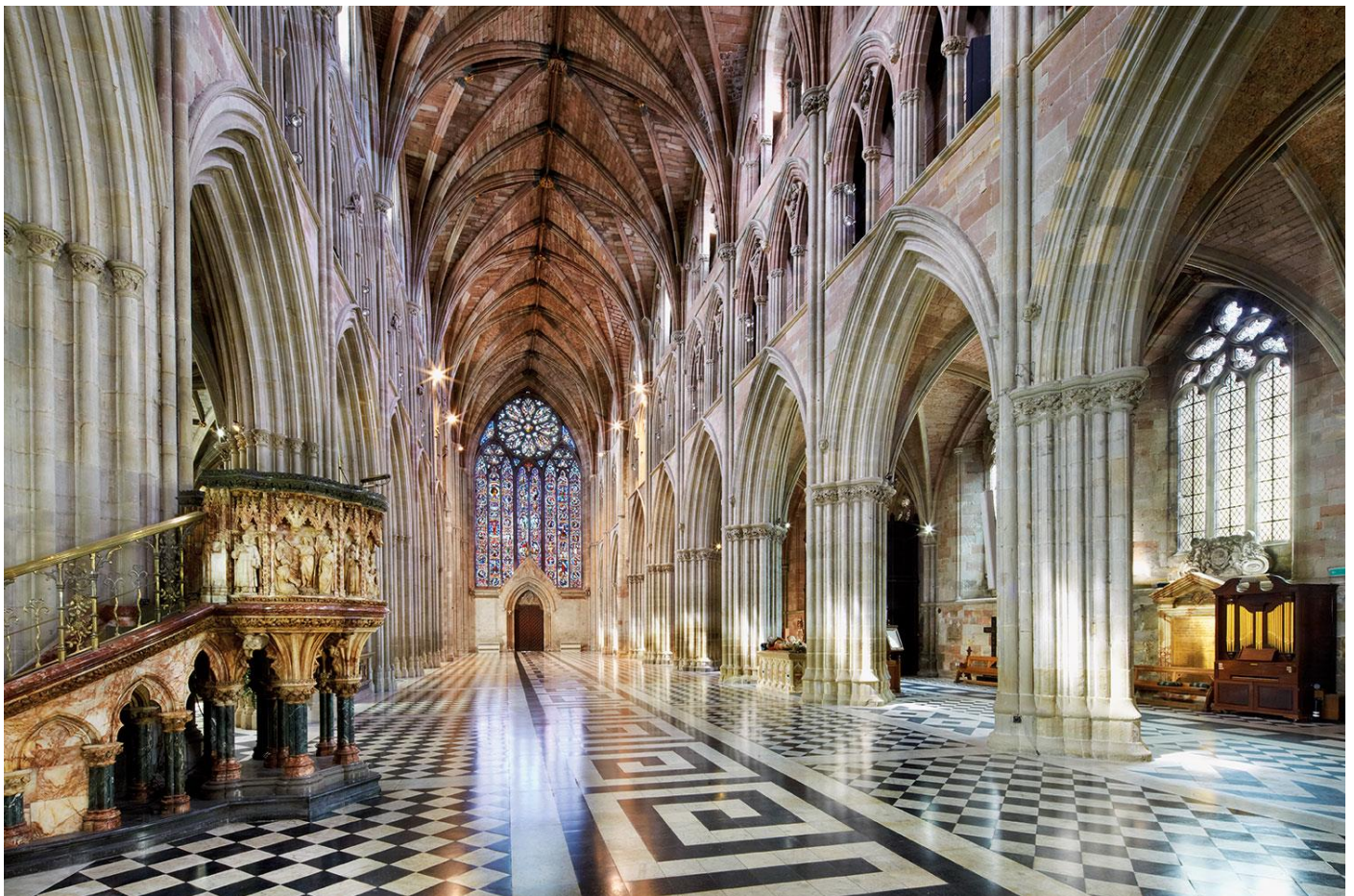
The Bishop of Worcester is seeking a priest to be Residentiary Canon and Precentor of Worcester Cathedral. The person appointed will be responsible for the organisation and development of the liturgical and musical life of the Cathedral and will play a full part in the Chapter and Cathedral community and its contribution to the work of the wider diocese.

The vacant canonry is a Crown appointment, formally made by His Majesty the King. The nomination to the Crown will be made by the Ecclesiastical Secretary to the Crown and the Lord Chancellor, Mrs Helen Dimmock MBE, following a selection procedure conducted by the Bishop of Worcester, and in consultation with the Dean and an advisory group. The practicalities of the appointment process will be handled by the Chief Operating Officer of the Cathedral, Matthew Hall.

The person appointed to the canonry will be a post holder under common tenure within the Diocese of Worcester. They must be a priest of the Church of England or of a church in communion with the Church of England who has been six years complete in holy orders. The appointment is subject to Enhanced Plus Barred Lists DBS Disclosure.

It is hoped that the person appointed will be installed in the Spring of 2026.

The Church of England is for everyone, and it is a priority for us to reflect the diversity of the community the Church serves across the whole diocese. We welcome all applications from interested and suitably qualified people, and particularly welcome applications from those of global majority heritage and people with disabilities and women.



## WORCESTER CATHEDRAL

The view of Worcester Cathedral rising majestically over the River Severn is world famous. There has been a cathedral on this site since the foundation of the bishopric in 681, though the oldest part of the present building is the Norman crypt which was begun in 1084. The shrines of St Wulfstan and St Oswald drew pilgrims here before the Reformation. The Cathedral houses the tombs of both King John and Prince Arthur, the eldest son of Henry VII. The Cathedral witnessed the turbulence of the Reformation (Hugh Latimer was Bishop here) and of the Civil War (Charles II watched the Battle of Worcester from the top of the tower) and had close associations with Geoffrey Studdert Kennedy (Woodbine Willie), the best-known chaplain on the Western Front in the First World War.



At the dissolution of the cathedral priory, Henry VIII re-founded the monastery school as what is now known as the King's School Worcester, a large independent day school for girls and boys which remains an integral and on-site part of the Cathedral foundation. The Chapter nominates several of the governors, and the school chaplain is a minor canon of the Cathedral.

The Cathedral works in partnership with the University of Worcester, hosting the University's graduation ceremonies and jointly holding an annual lecture on public policy and social ethics.

The Three Choirs Festival, the oldest continuing choral festival in the world, at which many well-known compositions were premiered, notably by Elgar and Vaughan Williams, is held in Worcester every three years. The next festival will be in 2027.



The Chapter is the Trustee Body of an almshouse called St Oswald's Hospital, which traces its history from a foundation by St Oswald, bishop of Worcester in the tenth century. Now occupying pleasant Victorian buildings, and situated a mile north of the Cathedral, the Hospital provides homes for twenty or so residents and is managed on a day-to-day basis by the Dean, the Chief Operating Officer of the Cathedral, the Chaplain, and a Warden. The Chapter meets quarterly as the Trustees of the Hospital.

Today the Cathedral welcomes visitors from all over the world. There is a large musical establishment with several choirs. A new organ in the quire was installed in 2008; the nineteenth-century nave organ awaits restoration and repair with some preliminary discussions currently taking place. The work of the Cathedral is supported by a staff of 50, a community roll of 150, 400 volunteers, and the Friends of the Cathedral with a membership of 700. The Cathedral hosts major diocesan and civic services, events for schools and other community groups, concerts, drama and exhibitions. The recently restored and award-winning Undercroft in the cloisters is the Cathedral's heritage and learning centre. The Old Palace, the medieval bishop's palace which lies to the north of the precinct, houses the Chapter Offices, many Cathedral staff, and is developing as an event venue.

We have recently completed the first phase of a magnificent landscaping project that better connects the City and the Cathedral. We are considering a project which will improve visitor welcome and reshape the routes between the City and the river. There are strong relationships with the City, and goodwill in working together to promote tourism across Worcester. In recent years, we have seen visitor numbers rise, but like many cathedrals, we have not seen visitor numbers or worshipping numbers return to pre-pandemic levels. Finances continue to be of concern, and Chapter are testing a range of options to increase income and decrease expenditure.

The Chapter is currently working on a new strategic vision which will be launched towards the end of 2025, building on the current vision which can be found on the Cathedral website. Characterising the Cathedral as 'a place of prayer, learning, and welcome', the current vision statement invites the whole Cathedral community to become:

- A community welcoming everyone to share our amazing heritage.
- A place of breadth and depth in worship and prayer.
- A place of learning, discipleship, and nurture.
- A catalyst for campaigning and raising awareness on the environment and social justice.
- A resilient organisation with stable finances.

## THE CHAPTER

In 2024 the Cathedral became a registered charity, and the members of the Cathedral Chapter are charity trustees. The objectives of the Chapter are to advance the Christian religion in accordance with the faith and practice of the Church of England, in particular by furthering the mission of the Church of England and caring for and conserving the fabric and structure of the Cathedral Church building. The Constitution and Statutes of the Cathedral are available on the website.

The Dean, Dr Stephen Edwards, has been in post since 2024, and before his appointment was Interim Dean, having been a Residentiary Canon since 2019. There is at present one other fulltime residentiary canon in post, Kimberly Bohan who, as well as being Canon Librarian, is also Chaplain to St Oswald's Hospital and the Cathedral Safeguarding Lead.

The principal duty of the Dean is to 'govern and direct the life and work of the Cathedral'. The Residentiary Canons undertake such duties as the Chapter shall determine after consultation with them and shall, 'unless reasonably prevented, be in daily attendance at Services in the Cathedral Church'. (All quotations are from the Cathedral Constitution and Statutes.)

The Dean, Residentiary Canons, and Chief Operating Officer form the Senior Executive Team which is responsible for the day-to-day good management of the Cathedral, operating under the oversight of the Chapter to further the objects of the Chapter and to implement its strategic and operational aims, vision and priorities. Since the implementation of the new Cathedrals Measure



and becoming a charity in 2024, the Chapter is currently reviewing the number of Chapter meetings and its format, as well as considering the future development of the Senior Executive Team including oversight, management, and lead roles. The new Residentiary Canon will join the Cathedral at an important time with the new vision launching late in 2025 and being involved in the development and strengthening of the Senior Executive Team.

## **LITURGY AND MUSIC AT WORCESTER CATHEDRAL**

'Let nothing be preferred to the work of God', wrote St Benedict; and the daily celebration of the Eucharist and of Morning and Evening prayer is the heart of the life of this great Benedictine church.

The Eucharist is sung on Sundays at 10.30 and on weekday festivals in the evening. It is said from Monday to Saturday at 8.00 and additionally on Wednesdays at 1.00. These services all follow Common Worship Order One (Contemporary). The Eucharist is said according to the Book of Common Prayer on Sundays at 8.00 and Fridays at 11.30. Eucharistic vestments are worn at all celebrations of the eucharist, and incense is used on principal feasts. Holy Week is celebrated in full according to Common Worship: Times and Seasons. The current liturgical arrangements are described more fully in the Chapter's Liturgical Plan, a document required and accepted by the Cathedrals Fabric Commission for England, available on the Cathedral website.

Morning Prayer is said according to Common Worship: Daily Prayer every day at 7.30am. The weekday morning services use the different chapels in turn throughout the week. Evensong is sung by the Cathedral choir according to the Book of Common Prayer on Sundays at 4.00 and on other days at 5.30. Tuesdays is the current day off for the Cathedral choir and, unless there is a visiting choir, Evening Prayer is said.

There is a programme of visiting choirs through much of the school holidays; otherwise, Evening Prayer is said. During the school term there is usually an additional Sunday service at 6.30pm, sung by the Cathedral voluntary choir. A variety of liturgical forms and musical styles are used at this service, or it may be the occasion of a special service such as a diocesan Confirmation service, the county Harvest Thanksgiving, or a service in the Week of Prayer for Christian unity.

The Bishop presides at many 'diocesan' services during the year (though every 'cathedral' service is a 'diocesan' service and vice versa), including the Ordinations and the Chrism Eucharist. There are civic services, many carol services for external bodies, and an annual hospice service. The King's School uses the Cathedral twice weekly for assemblies and holds a Eucharist in the crypt once a week.



A new organ was installed in the quire in 2008. The large Victorian organ in the south transept was designed to serve the nave but has laid dormant for some time. The Chapter has committed itself in its strategic vision to the repair or restoration of this organ to work in conjunction with the quire organ.



## LITURGY AND MUSIC STAFF

The liturgy and music staff with whom the Precentor will work comprises the music team and the vergers' team. The Precentor is directly responsible for the music team, led by the organist and

Director of Music, Samuel Hudson, and the Assistant Director of Music, Nicholas Freestone. Administrative support is provided in both music and liturgy. There is a chorister chaperone.

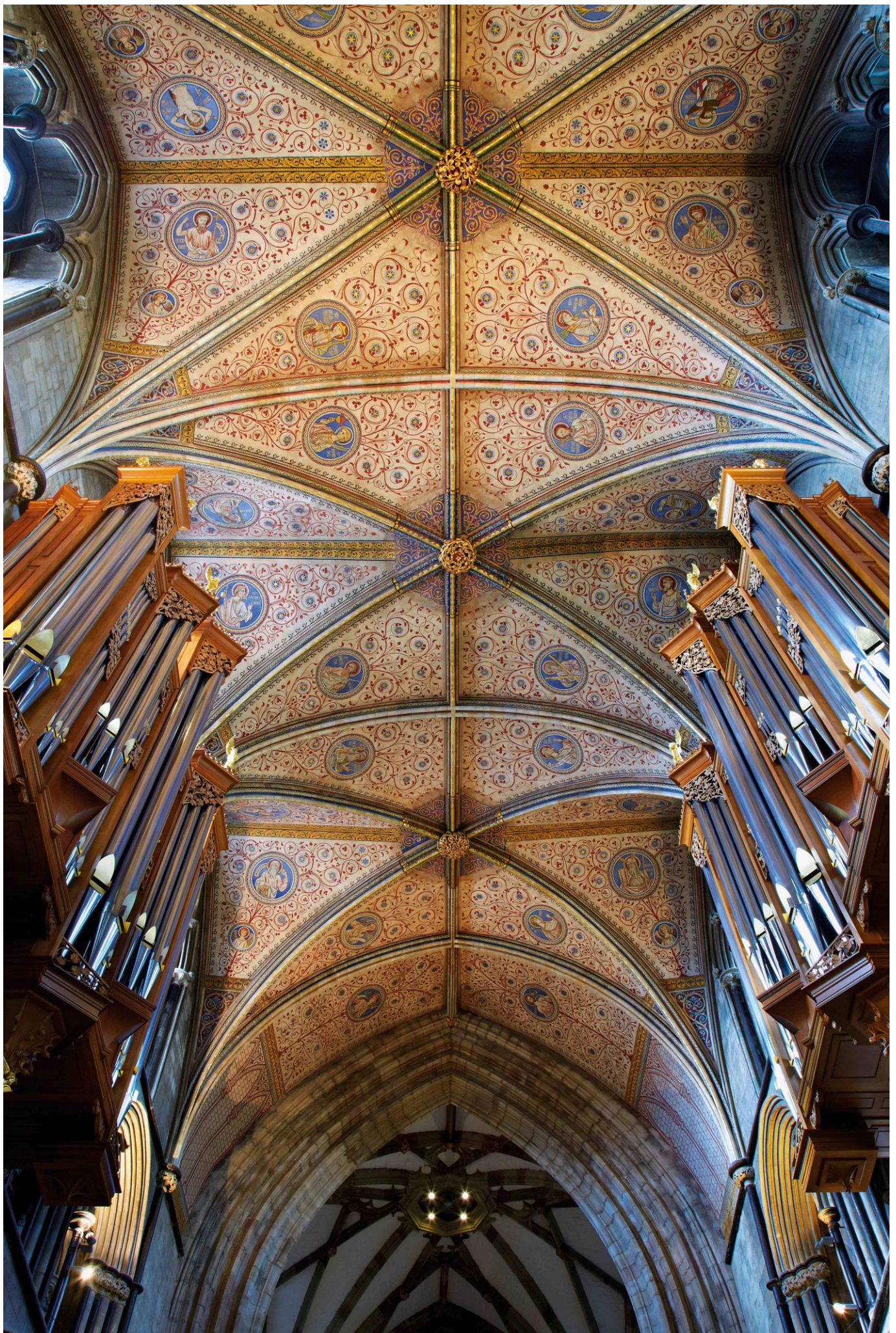
## CHOIRS

The Cathedral Choir comprises boy and girl choristers (all of whom attend the King's School and benefit from a fee remission for the duration of their time in the choir) and a back row staffed by professional male and female lay clerks and three choral scholars. There are six principal lay clerks who sing at all services during the week and at weekends, and three assistant lay clerks who sing at weekends and major feasts only.

In addition, a team of four newly appointed soprano lay clerks have joined the Cathedral Choir to sing at one service per week (usually Evensong on Saturday). This initiative, supported by a Cathedral Music Trust grant, is one of the first opportunities of its kind in the country for professional sopranos to contribute regularly to cathedral music.

The three choral scholars sing at a selection of services throughout the week and assist with the supervision and care of the choristers particularly during morning chorister practice. The organ scholar assists the Director of Music and Assistant Director of Music in directing and accompanying rehearsals and services and is the principal accompanist for the Voluntary Choir and Youth Choir. The four scholars are accommodated in a spacious flat above the song school.

*Image © Michael Whitefoot*



There have been boy choristers at the Cathedral, educated at King's, since 1541. Girls were admitted to the Cathedral Choir in 2006, drawn from a variety of local schools. They originally rehearsed and sang only on Saturdays, with occasional Sunday duties once every term. After an extensive departmental review in 2021, the Chapter agreed to new arrangements to equalise the opportunity for boys and girls in the Cathedral Choir. With financial support from the King's School, scholarships were made available for up to 18 girls, forming two separate treble groups (combined on special occasions) to take an even share of the singing of services in term time. In September 2025, for a variety of reasons, the decision was taken to combine the boy and girl choristers into one group of up to 20 choristers. This has required several alterations to the weekly schedule and has introduced a regular opportunity for adult sopranos to be involved in the Cathedral's music. These arrangements will be reviewed over the course of the academic year.

Alongside this, the Voluntary Choir, founded in 1874 as a choir of men and boys, continues as a choir of boys and girls aged 8-13, drawn from various local schools. They sing at the Sunday 6.30 service, which follows the 'choir church' model; the weekday rehearsal also including a teaching session led by one of the Cathedral clergy bringing together the music, Christian formation, and areas of social justice.

There is also a Youth Choir of boys and girls of 13+, to which cathedral and Voluntary Choir choristers may graduate, and which others of that age may join. In addition, a Chamber Choir was founded in 1998, directed by its founder and a former longstanding lay clerk of the Cathedral Choir, which provides opportunities for amateur adult men and women to sing occasional services and concerts in the Cathedral and elsewhere.

## **VERGERS**

The team of five vergers is led by the Head Verger, James Prior, and works with both the Precentor in relation to the organization of services and with the Dean and Chief Operating Officer in relation to the vergers' wider role in the management and caretaking of the Cathedral.



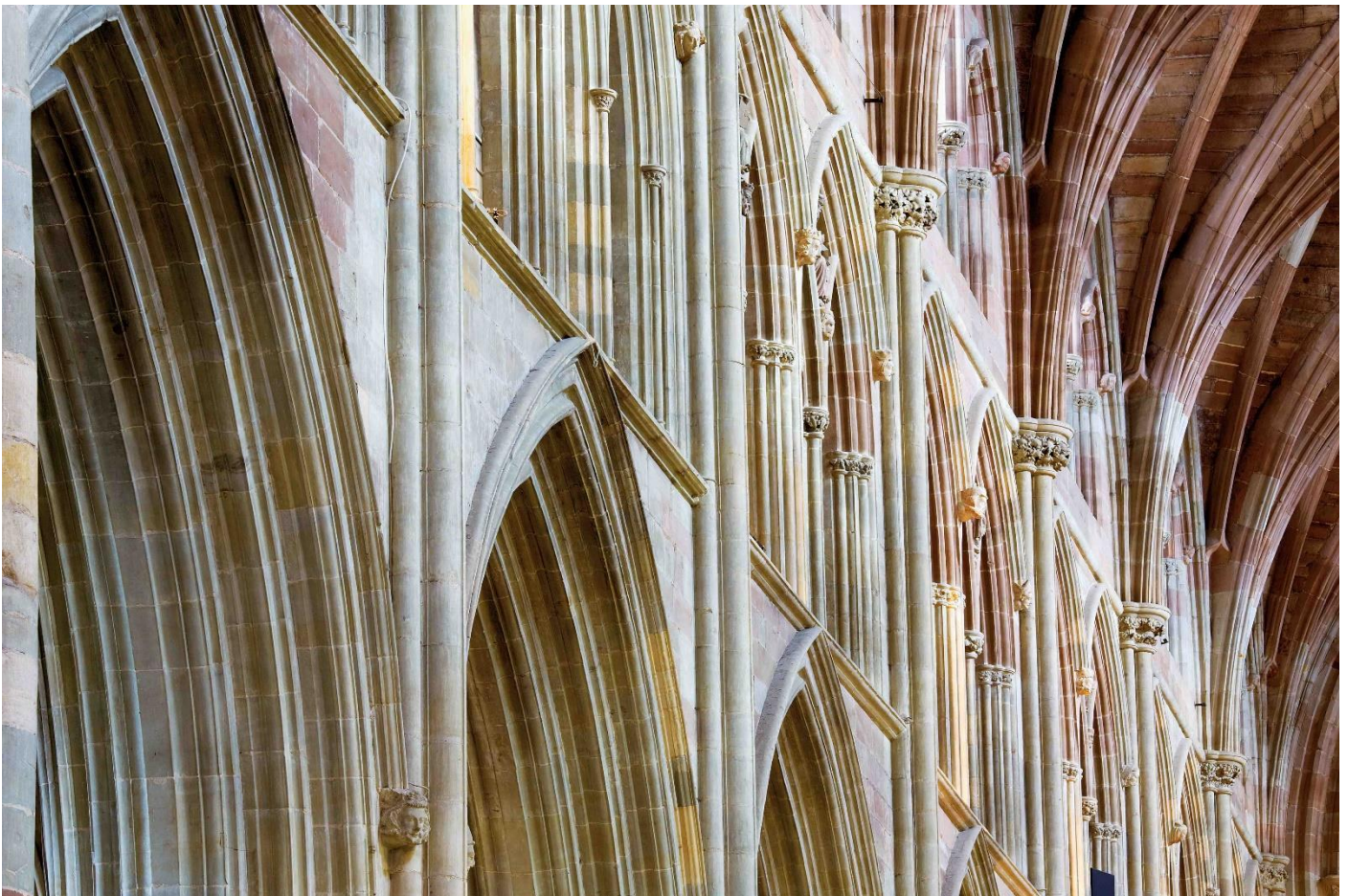
## **CONGREGATIONAL COMMITTEE**

The Congregational Committee was set up in 2023 in response to the new Cathedrals Measure and is chaired by the Precentor. It focusses on the Cathedral's regular worshippers, discussing congregational life and matters of concern. It also makes recommendations to Chapter for the Cathedral's annual Charitable giving to ensure that it is embedded in the worshipping, spiritual and congregational life of the community. The Congregational Committee takes an active part in welcoming new members of the congregations, and has two sub-committees, chaired by members of the Committee appointed by Chapter: the pastoral care group and the social committee.

## **SAFEGUARDING**

Safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults is our absolute priority. All clergy and employees are required to follow the Cathedral's safeguarding policy and procedures, which are in accord with Church of England policies. As one of the senior leaders in the community, the Precentor plays a significant role in setting and supporting safeguarding culture, especially as it relates to the choirs and worshipping community.

Safeguarding matters are a standing item at Chapter meetings, and the Precentor ensures that liaison with King's School takes account of safeguarding protocols.



## Role Description

As a residentiary canon and member of the Chapter, the Precentor will take a full share in the worship, work and governance of the Cathedral, working with fellow members of Chapter, and with Cathedral staff, volunteers, and congregation to further the mission of the Cathedral.

The person appointed will have an enthusiasm for worship which is inspiring, beautiful, ordered, and draws upon the best of the past and the present. They will have a love for the English cathedral choral tradition and should be competent to sing the parts assigned to the officiant at evensong. They should be able to engage intelligently and appreciatively with the Cathedral's musicians. They will be ambitious, not for themselves, but for making the very best of the Cathedral's liturgical and musical resources for the glory of God.

Having said all of that, the person appointed may be someone who has not hitherto thought of themselves as a precentor or a cathedral canon: there is not a 'type' to which the successful candidate will necessarily conform.



There are a number of aspects to the role, which are described below.

### A. General Responsibilities

1. All residentiary canons attend Sunday and weekday services as required by the Statutes and engage in liturgical and preaching duties as directed by the Chapter.

2. They share with the Dean and fellow residentiary canons in the pastoral work of the Cathedral.
3. They share in collective responsibility for maintaining a strong culture around safeguarding.
4. They act as canon-in-residence for an allocated number of weeks in the year with the duties set out in the Chapter's residence policy.
5. They exercise their duties as Trustees in attending and taking a full part in the discussions and decision-making of the Chapter as it fulfils its statutory responsibilities.
6. They are members of the Senior Executive Team which is responsible for the day-to-day good management of the Cathedral, operating under the oversight of the Chapter to further the objects of the Chapter and to implement its strategic and operational aims, vision and priorities.
7. They attend other meetings, events, and services at which Chapter members are expected.
8. They are trustees of St Oswald's Hospital.
9. They contribute to the life and work of the diocese and the wider church.



## **B. Liturgy & Music**

The Precentor will:

1. Be responsible, in collaboration with the Dean, and under the general authority of the Chapter, for the organization and arrangement of all ordinary and special services in the Cathedral.
2. Supervise the work of and act as line-manager to the Liturgy Administrator.
3. Supervise the work of the music team and act as line-manager to the Director of Music.
4. Normally be present when the Cathedral Choir is singing and be the principal cantor of the office at Choral Evensong and be willing to share this ministry with others.
5. Collaborate with and support the Head Verger in the management of the verger team, setting budgets and delivering liturgy, as well as overseeing the pastoral care of the verger team.
6. Be responsible, in collaboration with the Dean, for the development of the liturgy of the Cathedral, for the ordering of liturgical spaces, and for the provision of vestments, furnishings, and other requisites of the liturgy, and for keeping the Cathedral's liturgical plan under annual review.
7. Undertake, in collaboration with clergy colleagues, and with the assistance of the Director of Music, the pastoral care and spiritual formation of choristers, liaising with their families and with the King's School for that purpose.
8. Undertake, in collaboration with clergy colleagues, and with the assistance of the Director of Music, the pastoral care of lay clerks and scholars.
9. Encourage those engaged in the liturgy and music of the Cathedral to see their work in the context of the Cathedral's overall mission. They will encourage good relations between them and other members of the Cathedral staff and community.
10. Collaborate with the Bishop's office, chaplain, and other diocesan liturgical officers for the arrangement of diocesan services; and to promote the contribution of the Cathedral to the liturgical and musical life of the diocese and the wider church.
11. Work with the safeguarding lead in the Cathedral and in the King's School to ensure best practice in all aspects of safeguarding.
12. Be responsible for the selection, training, rehearsing (and, where appropriate, spiritual formation and pastoral care) of all who exercise a liturgical function in a voluntary capacity, including visiting priests, licensed readers, stewards, lesson readers, intercessors, servers, and Eucharistic ministers.
13. Be responsible, with the assistance of the Director of Music, for the selection and briefing of visiting choirs, and for arrangements for their welfare and welcome.

14. Collaborate with the vergers' and service teams in all aspects of their work that relate to the arrangement of services.
15. Be responsible, with the assistance of the Director of Music, for the liturgy and music budget, and work collaboratively with the Chief Operating Officer on all aspects of liturgy and music finance and administration.
16. Take an active share, in collaboration with the fundraising team, in generating income for the core costs of the music team and the Cathedral as a whole.
17. Be the Chapter representative to the Choristers' Association and work collaboratively with other bodies with an interest in the music of the Cathedral: The Three Choirs Festival, the Worcester Festival Choral Society, the Friends of Cathedral Music, and the Royal School of Church Music.
18. Participate (as negotiated) in national bodies relating to the ministry of Precentor.



### **C. Congregational Life**

The Precentor will:

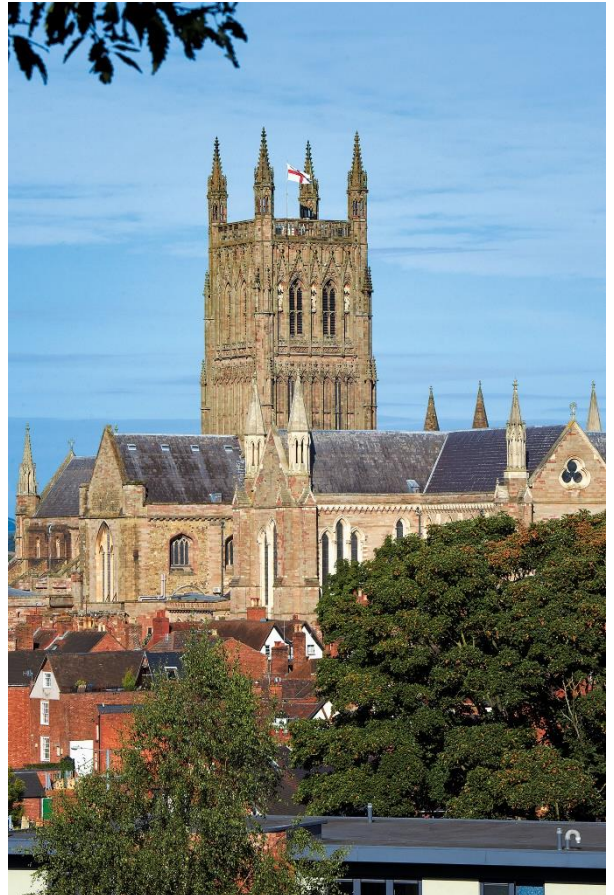
1. Chair the Congregational Committee and support its work especially in welcoming newcomers and incorporating them into the congregation and the life of the Cathedral.
2. Take the lead on congregational development, connecting worship, outreach and pastoral care.
3. Co-ordinate the arrangements for baptisms, marriages, funerals, memorial services and other pastoral liturgies.

4. Supervise the work of the Minor Canon for Eco-Spirituality in relation to Worship in the Garden and Sacred Garden.
5. Enable all involved in the offering of worship to take their role and place within it confidently and effectively.

## Person Specification

The Precentor will:

1. Be a priest of a least six years standing in holy orders and ordained in the Church of England or a church in communion with the Church of England and with the right to work in the UK.
2. Be a person committed to the mission of the Cathedral within the diocese and the wider church, nurtured by the Cathedral's round of prayer and worship, spiritually resilient, imaginative and pastorally competent.
3. Be able to draw on the rich history of Anglican liturgical practice, having a good understanding of liturgy and being able to translate this imaginatively and sensitively into acts of worship. They will be able to preside at the liturgy with a natural and welcoming dignity, which is appropriate to the occasion. They will be painstaking in the preparation of services and have an eye for detail and have good IT skills.
4. Have a good general knowledge of music, especially of the English choral tradition, and be able to draw on the best of contemporary music in the service of the liturgy. They will be able competently to sing the relevant parts of the liturgy. They will have an appreciation of the work of professional musicians and a concern for their welfare.
5. Be an effective communicator, in both the spoken and the written word, and be a thoughtful and engaging preacher.
6. Be a team-player, willing to contribute to the thinking and responsibilities of the Chapter and to implement its policy. They will be able to work well with all sections of the Cathedral staff and community and balance competing demands within an exciting yet demanding



place. They will have demonstrable ability in team-leading, administration and management of budgets.

7. Demonstrate an active understanding of safeguarding and the implications for their role.
8. Demonstrate experience of, or potential to develop, skills in line management and trusteeship either in the church or elsewhere.
9. Demonstrate experience of, or potential to develop, skills in performing a collaborative, senior executive role in the senior management team of a complex, multi-faceted organisation.

## **TERMS AND CONDITIONS**

The appointment is that of common tenure under the Clergy Terms of Service Measure. Enhanced DBS disclosure will be required for this appointment.

For the better performance of duties accommodation will be provided within the Cathedral precinct; a spacious five-bedroom house, No. 2 College Green, with its own garden. There is a large study. There is no garage, but available parking on College Green.

The stipend (paid by the Church Commissioners) is that for a residentiary canon (currently £34,321 pa). Agreed removal and resettlement costs will be refunded. Council tax, water rates and buildings insurance are paid by the Chapter.

Agreed working expenses are reimbursed by the Chapter on production of receipts.

The Dean and residentiary canons take a weekly day off (that is, a clear period of 24 hours and normally the same each week) which is free of all cathedral duties. The choice of day needs to be related to days off taken by the Dean and other residentiary canons, and the needs of the music team. In recent years the Precentor's day off has been Tuesday, however alternative arrangements may be possible.

The Dean and residentiary canons take it in turns to be 'in residence' throughout the year. This is arranged in weekly units according to a rota, providing a constant liturgical presence as well as a point of daily reference for vergers and office staff. During weeks of residence the weekly day off is covered by a colleague.

The Dean and residentiary canons take 36 days holiday each year. Within this allocation are included no more than six Sundays and the 'inside of weeks' following Christmas and Easter. The annual leave year begins on 1 January each year. Holiday times are negotiated between the Dean and residentiary canons to ensure that the requirements of residence are met.

## **HOW TO APPLY**

Applications should be made using the [Application Form](#).

Any queries about the application process can be directed to the Chief Operating Officer at [matthewhall@worcestercathedral.org.uk](mailto:matthewhall@worcestercathedral.org.uk)

The closing date is **12 noon on Monday 27<sup>th</sup> October 2025.**

Candidates are invited to pay particular attention to how they meet the person specification.

The interview process for shortlisted candidates will be held on **Monday 10<sup>th</sup> and Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> November**. Those invited for interview will be asked to prepare for an exercise in relation to liturgy, to preach a brief sermon to the panel, and to take part in a singing test.

Those interested in the post are welcome, if they wish, to have an informal discussion with the Dean. To arrange this, please email [thedeansoffice@worcestercathedral.org.uk](mailto:thedeansoffice@worcestercathedral.org.uk)