

# St Edmundsbury Cathedral

A beacon of faith, hope and love in Suffolk



**JOB TITLE:** Verger

**LINE MANAGER:** Head Verger and Estates Manager

**TERMS OF EMPLOYMENT:**

**Salary:** £8.67 per hour

**Hours of Work:** 37.5 hours per week

**Annual Leave:** 25 days paid leave per year. This is exclusive of public holidays.

**Contract:** The post is subject to a three month probationary period.

**The Cathedral Church** of St James and St Edmund, Bury St Edmunds, was created in 1914 when the existing St James's Church was selected as the seat of the new Bishop of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich. The Cathedral remains also a parish church. The building was enlarged by Stephen Dykes Bower in the 1960s and its central tower was opened by HRH The Prince of Wales and The Duchess of Cornwall in 2005. New cloisters, chapels and other building works were completed and consecrated in 2009. Further major projects were completed in 2010, namely the installation of the vaulted ceiling and the refurbishment of the Cathedral organ.

St Edmundsbury Cathedral maintains a daily round of worship with the Anglican choral tradition of music at its heart. The Book of Common Prayer and Common Worship are used on a daily basis for routine services and there is a vast range of special services of celebration, thanksgiving and commemoration when local and national bodies and individuals attend. In addition, there are a significant number of secular events such as concerts and art exhibitions on an almost weekly basis. The Cathedral is also a principal destination in East Anglia for tourists and other visitors and also provides a significant educational programme for schools visits.

St Edmundsbury Cathedral Enterprises Limited is made up of The Cathedral Gift Shop, The Edmund Gallery, our Tourist Information Point, Pilgrim's Kitchen (café/restaurant) and our external events facilities.

St Edmundsbury Cathedral is a lively and exciting place in which to work. The completion of major building works has seen the Cathedral grow in size and activity and the place has become busier. The extraordinary variety of people who are associated with the Cathedral and the remarkable diversity of the events which take place here mean that there is much to capture the imagination of the Cathedral's employees, much to be done, and much to enjoy.

## **The Vergers Department**

Vergers play a key role in the daily practical function of the Cathedral as a place of worship and for the many other roles and activities which it serves. The vergers' work is diverse and interesting, and they hold much responsibility.

Vergers have custodial oversight of a substantial complex of buildings: The Cathedral, the Cathedral Centre, the Cloisters, Pilgrims' Kitchen, the Shop, the Edmund Gallery and other ancillary buildings. They prepare for services, events and activities; take an active part in worship; ensure cleanliness and high standards of presentation; are leaders in health and safety; and are a touchstone for a myriad of small practical details. Appreciation and acceptance of the wide-ranging and flexible nature of the vergers' work is important.

This wide-ranging work means that vergers interact with every Cathedral department. Vergers also play an important role in encouraging and engaging with the many volunteers who give vital service and support to the Cathedral. On a daily basis the vergers meet people from all walks of life and a verger is often the first person an individual or group will encounter. All this makes the vergers key

ambassadors for the Cathedral, especially in extending welcome, helpfulness, courtesy, diplomacy, patience and kindness.

The Cathedral is open every day of the year from early morning (in readiness for the first service of the day) until early evening (after the final service of the day). In addition to this, evening events and activities often mean that these hours are extended. Whenever the Cathedral is open a vergers is on duty and it is the responsibility of the duty vergers to open and close the Cathedral and Cathedral Centre accordingly. The vergers department comprises the Head Vergers and Estates Manager, 2 full-time vergers, 3 part-time vergers and 3 Hon. Vergers.

### **Duties for the position of Vergers**

#### **The care of the Cathedral and its buildings**

- Undertake regular daily and weekly cleaning tasks of all areas of the Cathedral, the Cathedral Centre, the Cloisters, the Treasury and other ancillary buildings and ensure it's to a high standard. Undertake specialist cleaning tasks as requested by the Head Vergers and Estates Manager
- To maintain good order in the Cathedral, and all associated areas.
- To communicate all messages and report all defects to the Head Vergers and Estates Manager, so that the appropriate advice or action can be taken, and good lines of communication are maintained.
- Assist with maintenance tasks in the Cathedral and its ancillary buildings. Some examples of this are: changing light bulbs (some at high level); ensuring ground and roof rainwater gullies are free flowing; and DIY tasks such as tightening loose screws, putting up pictures/blinds and oiling locks. Often the vergers will be called to a maintenance issue following which it may be determined that a specialist contractor will be required.
- Always ensure we have Gift Aid envelopes on display and leaflets are topped up in all areas
- Maintenance of votive candle stands that they are always fully stocked and clean.
- Pay careful attention to the internal and external condition of the Cathedral Church and other ancillary buildings and report problems.
- Ascend the ancient Norman Tower to hoist and lower flags and provide access to contractors.

#### **Liturgical**

- To undertake liturgical and sacristy duties for services when on duty. To be Vergers, dressed in cassock and gown, as Cathedral practice requires, and to verge ceremonial processions and services were required.
- To prepare the Cathedral for services, events and for daily activity and return to good order afterwards. Duties can include:
  - Preparing for Holy Communion and serving at weekday services.
  - Caring for and laying out of vestments
  - Caring for and maintaining Altar linen, Altars and Sanctuary areas.
  - Changing Altar frontals according to seasons or festivals.
- For visiting choirs: Greet and settle them in; provide basic refreshments and instruct them in service processions and movements.
- Monitor sacristy supplies and Altar requisites e.g. candles etc. Informing Head Vergers and Estates Manager when stocks run low.

#### **Security**

- Under the direction of the Head Vergers and Estates Manager, working to a rota system, to be responsible for the opening and closing of the Cathedral each day. Duties will include:-
  - Ensuring the Cathedral is secure, clean and in good order, and to promote the highest standards of tidiness and care of the vestries, plate, ornaments, vestments and pews.

- Carry out specialist duties, including the care and operation of the sound and lighting system, the care and operation of the cleaning equipment and the care and operation of the security (CCTV) and alarm system.
- Emptying the donation and votive candle boxes in accordance with the Cathedral's procedures.
- Hold, use and issue keys for the Cathedral buildings according to established procedures.
- At all times during work to keep a vigilant custodial eye on the Cathedral and its buildings.
- Regularly to check the Cathedral and effectively give a 'presence' around the whole site.
- Caring for the good order and security of the Cathedral, which includes being 'on call' including out of hours and attendance in the case of emergency call out

### **Welcome**

- Ensure all visitors and volunteers are treated in a friendly, tactful and helpful manner. If it is necessary to be firm this should be done with discretion and reported to the Head Verger and Estates Manager.
- Ensure, that all signage, notice boards and leaflet displays are kept tidy and up to date.
- To exercise compassion and understanding to all who visit, and particularly those who are vulnerable but without encouraging dependency or compromising security by being away from post
- Ensure that decorum is always maintained within the Cathedral.

### **Health and Safety**

- See that the conditions of work and areas accessible to staff and public are kept in safe order and condition and report any hazards to the Head Verger and Estates Manager (or in their absence to the Administrator).
- Know the positions of all firefighting apparatus.
- All vergers attend professional training courses to become proficient as First Aiders and Fire Marshalls. Other training in health and safety procedures may also be given.
- As a First Aider, attend the scene, take appropriate action and complete the accident book.
- In case of an emergency implement agreed evacuation procedures.
- While on duty to be contactable at all times, particularly through the use of the Cathedral's paging system and vergers' mobile phone.

### **Concerts and Other Events**

- Be available for evening services, concerts and events outside normal working hours in accordance with the rota provision.
- Assist with the setup, removal and re-instatement of furniture and staging for concerts and events and to welcome and assist organisers as required.

### **General**

- Communicate all messages and report all defects to the Head Verger and Estates Manager so that appropriate advice or action can be taken, and in order to keep good lines of communication.
- Perform such other duties as are reasonably requested by the Head Verger and Estates Manager.
- Attend and contribute to vergers' department meetings.
- Attend the full staff meeting (when duty shifts allow).
- Vergers on duty remain on site during working hours unless instructed otherwise.

## **Person Specification**

There is a genuine occupational requirement (GOR) that the verger will be a communicant member of the Church of England or a church in communion with it.

Full training will be given, and the appointment of the right person is more important than previous verger experience.

Because the work of the vergers department covers every day of the year, bank (statutory) holiday working is often required and so these days are scheduled as part of the usual rota. Annual leave is not generally granted at peak times, examples of which are: the Christmas fair (normally near the end of November), the month of December, Holy Week; the Bury St Edmunds Festival (mid-May).

## **Safeguarding**

The appointed candidate will need to have an enhanced DBS check (including barred list check) before commencing work.

Safeguarding training will be supplied.

The appointed candidate will be required to adhere to the Safeguarding Policy and all other Policies of the Cathedral.

## **Essential Qualities**

- A desire to work within a Christian community and to be part of its worshipping life. To understand the Cathedral has various roles from a place of religious worship, a concert venue, exhibition area, dinner venue and a tourist attraction.
- Physical fit as the nature of this role requires you to be able to move and lift heavy items and to work at heights without fear.
- Be able to work unsociable hours, including weekends and evenings.
- A desire to work as part of a team being led by the Head Verger and Estates Manager.
- Be a people person with a positive attitude to colleagues, congregation and visitors.
- Motivated and able to work alone with minimum supervision.
- Attention to detail with the ability to memorise small details and routines.
- Good oral and written communication and interpersonal skills.
- An understanding of the culture of working with volunteers.
- Computer competency in the use of internal email and diary systems.
- Flexible and willing to work overtime and shift work when required.

## **Desirable Qualities**

- Familiarity with worship in the Church of England.
- Familiarity with, or an understanding of, the general work of a verger.

This job description is intended as a working document giving a guideline to the major tasks to be performed. It is to be understood that the post will develop and working practices change in order to meet the demands of new legislation and the expectations of the Cathedral Chapter. The post holder will contribute to and assist with future development for this role.

**Closing date:** 6.00 pm Thursday 2 May

**Interview:** Wednesday 8 May

**Please apply, using the Cathedral's Application Form, to:**

Sarah-Jane Allison  
Administrator - People & Policies  
St Edmundsbury Cathedral  
Abbey House  
Bury St Edmunds  
IP33 1LS  
Email: [HR@stedscathedral.org](mailto:HR@stedscathedral.org)  
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