

A photograph of St Edmundsbury Cathedral in Ipswich, England, featuring its prominent central tower and Gothic architecture, surrounded by lush greenery and a clear blue sky with scattered clouds.

Application pack

Chief Operating Officer

St Edmundsbury
Cathedral





Welcome

"Thank you for thinking of applying for the role of Chief Operating Officer at St Edmundsbury Cathedral. We hope, after reading this application pack, you will decide to send us your application. There follows below some more about us and about the role.

St Edmundsbury Cathedral is situated in the historic market town of Bury St Edmunds, and serves the diocese of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich. It is at the heart of community life, a natural gathering place for worship, reflection, refuge, celebration, mourning, pilgrimage, debate, questioning and storytelling.

Our story begins with the founding of the Abbey in 1020 by King Cnut. He named the Abbey after Saint Edmund, martyred in 869 by the Danes, and to this day Cathedral, Abbey and town carry that name. Over the succeeding centuries, several churches were built within the precincts of the Abbey. The nave of today's Cathedral is the successor of one of those churches, started in 1503. Our Grade 1 Cathedral was further altered from the 18th century onwards, the most recent additions being a new Gothic style tower, cloisters and chapels.

A sculpture by Elisabeth Frink entitled Crucifixion stands by the Treasury steps. The medieval Susanna Window contains Flemish glass and the west window depicts The Last Judgement - a magnificent example of late nineteenth-century craftsmanship. A painting of The Martyrdom of St Edmund by Brian Whelan sits in the Edmund Chapel. The Ancient Library, founded in 1595, has over 550 books mainly dating from the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries; providing a valuable resource for students and research.

The successful candidate will be joining the Cathedral community of this special place at a time of unique challenge and opportunity.

All the usual requirements that you would expect for such a post are set out in the job description which follows. If you think you might be the person we are looking for to join our team, we would be delighted to receive your application."

Dean Re.



Who are we?

St Edmundsbury Cathedral is open for visitors and worshippers seven days a week, all year, providing a sacred space for reflection, prayer and sanctuary. Music forms a large part of activities, with several choirs and numerous musical events throughout the year. Our formal learning programmes are centred round our Learning Hub, in the heart of the Cathedral, where school children enjoy activities linked to the national curriculum, participate in reflective stories designed to encourage youngsters to behave more thoughtfully towards one another, and work with a team of local artists who help them respond to the world through creative art. Community groups such as the Mothers Union and Young Families regularly meet in the Cathedral. We have vibrant membership groups in the Friends of the Cathedral and the Friends of the Cathedral Music. More than 250 Volunteers tend the garden, welcome visitors and assist in our learning and community programmes. We offer 960 regular services a year and around 100 special services.

St Edmundsbury Cathedral Enterprises Limited oversees the Cathedral Gift Shop, 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.

Inclusive Church



We are an Inclusive Church and warmly welcome applications irrespective of gender or sexual orientation. We also encourage applications from Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic, and Global Majority Heritage candidates, who are currently under-represented on the Cathedral team.

Safeguarding

All staff and volunteers are expected to demonstrate a commitment to safeguarding the welfare of all children and adults who may be vulnerable, who are involved with and/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 commensurate with their specific role. The appointed candidate will need to have an enhanced DBS check (including barred list check) before commencing work. Safeguarding training will be provided.



Values

Our values inform how we do things at the Cathedral.

We hold our Benedictine principles close—principles such as love, care, hospitality, and community—and are presenting these values in a way that relates to and can easily be understood in the 21st century. They are about how we work with each other, how we talk about the Cathedral, how we reach out to the whole of Suffolk and beyond, and how we transform ourselves as we grow together.



They are Faith, Welcome, Compassion and Confidence.

- Faith in God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit and God's unconditional love for all people. This is our Christian conviction, and it is what defines and shapes us;
- Welcome to friends and to strangers; to people of all faiths or none; to those with whom we agree and disagree - building a culture of openness and collaboration and generosity across the county;
- Compassion working alongside people in need, expressing love, tolerance and respect through our actions;
- Confidence to challenge wrongs; to be honest about who we are and what we stand for; to be daring in what we do, how we do it and who we do it with.





Role Description

The COO is the Cathedral's principal member of staff and has responsibility for the overall operational performance and administration of the organisation, its assets and its people. Appointed by the Chapter and accountable to them through the Dean, the COO works with the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) to develop and implement strategy and policy, ensure effective governance and compliance, manage the business functions of the Cathedral and monitor its overall progress and development.

Key Responsibilities

Strategic Leadership

- Lead the development of the Cathedral's overall strategy to reflect the Cathedral's Vision and Values.
- Ensure the effective implementation of the Cathedral's masterplan and successfully deliver outcomes through the effective performance management of goals and objectives.
- Secure financial sustainability, achieve growth and optimise the efficient use of resources through effective short, medium and long term planning.

Safeguarding

- Work closely with the Dean, the Cathedral Safeguarding Committee, Chapter Safeguarding Lead and the Safeguarding Officer to develop and deliver the Cathedral's safeguarding strategy.
- Act as a role model in upholding safeguarding policies and embedding a healthy safeguarding culture across Cathedral life.
- Negotiate, implement and continually review the Service Level Agreement with the Diocesan Board of Finance and the Diocesan Safeguarding Officer.
- Ensure compliance with current safeguarding legislation and national guidance, fostering an environment where safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.

Staff and Volunteers

- Ensure recruitment, training and HR management of staff and volunteers adhere to the Safer Recruitment policies of the Church of England and meet the needs of the Cathedral.
- Develop a workplace culture and ethos that reflects the Cathedral's values and enables and empowers staff and volunteers.
- Act as a role model for effective people management, supporting, developing, and constructively challenging others while encouraging continuous professional development.
- Foster a collegiate, open, and collaborative environment across the Cathedral.
- Champion diversity and inclusivity within the Cathedral community, providing opportunity and support for all.



Key Responsibilities Continued

Cathedral Compliance and Operational Management

- Ensure the effective running and forward planning of Chapter and other governance committees, including compliance with the Constitution and Statutes.
- Ensure trustees and others in governance positions are properly inducted and trained including in safeguarding.
- Ensure that the Cathedral meets all legislative regulations and complies with ecclesiastical and charity laws.
- Be accountable for reporting to the Charity Commission and Companies House.
- Work with the Chief Finance Officer to ensure that the strategic plan is supported by a robust, multi-year financial plan aligned with long-term objectives.
- Work with the Visitor Experience Manager to increase income generation, establishing a growth plan with the Abbey of St Edmund, Reborn Project.
- Work with the Architect and Facilities Manager to ensure the Cathedral meets its statutory and legal obligations relating to heritage, ecclesiastical and listed buildings in its care.
- Work with the Facilities Manager to ensure the Cathedral meets its statutory and legal requirements in relation to its properties and responsibilities as a landlord.
- Ensure effective management of Health and Safety across the Cathedral ensuring compliance with statutory legislation and best practice; ensure emergency procedures are up to date.
- Ensure all data is protected and processed in full compliance with GDPR legislation.
- Ensure that the Cathedral is complies with all legal requirements, interpreting and communicating changes in compliance to the Chapter and Cathedral staff.
- Support the Church of England's Net Zero targets and ensure the Cathedral has a plan for reducing carbon emissions; adhering to statutory requirements relating to Net Zero.
- Ensure suitable IT provision is in place, to support Cathedral operations, is secure and regularly review software and hardware requirements.
- Work with the Marketing & Communications Manager to oversee public relations, ensuring appropriate management of reputation, branding, and media activities; act as Cathedral spokesperson as appropriate.
- Review working methods, office accommodation and administration support to ensure arrangements are fit for purpose.
- Promote open and transparent ways of working throughout the administration, with effective communication and engagement at all levels.
- Oversee the effective planning and management of key projects and the implementation of delivery programmes to achieve operational and strategic objectives.
- Support the Dean in managing relationships with the 1327 Club.
- Ensure the effective management, use and future development of all the Cathedral's assets.
- Be responsible for contingency planning, including the management of insurance, disaster recovery and salvage planning and oversee the Cathedral's risk register.
- Develop for approval, maintain and regularly review policy and procedure documents of Chapter and ensuring they are embedded across the organisation.
- Chair staff and management meetings.
- Manage the business operations of the Cathedral in accordance with the values, standards and budgets agreed by Chapter.
- Lead, manage, motivate and empower staff and volunteer teams through effective structures, training and professional relationships.

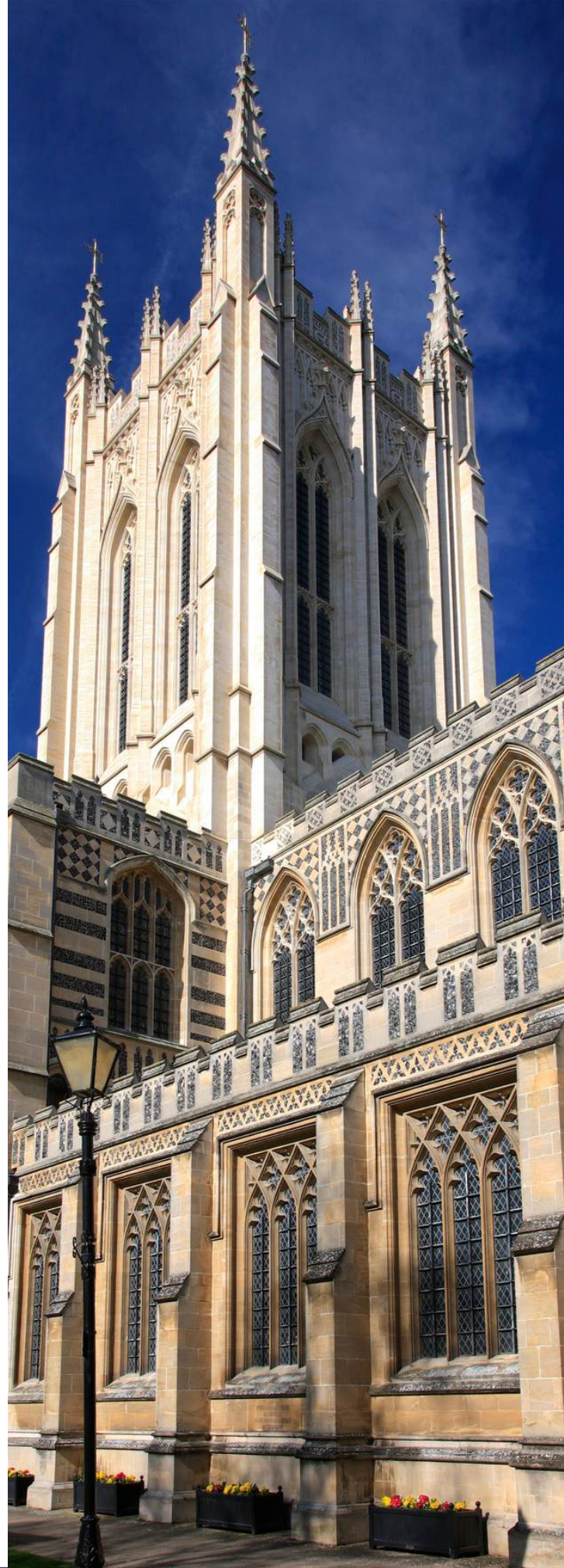


Direct Reports

- Chief Finance Officer
- Cathedral Safeguarding Officer
- Human Resources Officer
- Visitor Experience Manager
- Volunteer Manager
- Marketing and Communications Manager
- Facilities Manager
- Shop Manager
- Pilgrims' Kitchen Manager

Attendance Required at:

- Chapter Meetings
- Finance Committee
- Nominations Committee
- Risk, Audit and Review Committee
- Safeguarding Committee
- Health and Safety Committee
- Information Protection Group
- The Guild of St Edmund Committee
- Forum
- Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM)
- Enterprises Ltd Meetings
- Eco St Eds Committee
- Abbey of St Edmund, Reborn CIO
- Cathedral Administration and Finance Association (CAFA) conferences





Person Specification

Essential Qualities

- A proven track record of strategic leadership with successful delivery of projects and outcomes within an organisation of a similar size and complexity.
- Experience of working at board level or closely with boards.
- Significant leadership capability, with the ability to influence, inspire, and engage the Cathedral Community and external stakeholders.
- An empowering management style that fosters teamwork, trust and collaboration, with a strong understanding of HR best practice.
- Successful experience of leading significant change and of fostering a culture of continuous improvement and development within a complex organisational environment.
- Proven experience in managing operational performance within tight financial constraints in a complex, multi-faceted environment.
- Effective delivery of financial strategy and budget management, demonstrating strong commercial acumen.
- An understanding of safeguarding and the critical role it plays in protecting all people.

Desirable Qualities

- Previous experience as a COO or at a similar senior leadership level.
- An understanding of the complexities in managing wide-ranging cathedral operations or previous experience within a Church of England setting.
- A good understanding of best practice in charity governance.
- Experience of managing a heritage site.
- Experience working with volunteers.
- Experience in safeguarding best practice.

Knowledge and skills

- Ability to understand complex operational issues and develop creative and innovative solutions.
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills, with the confidence to share information effectively at all levels internally and externally.
- Commitment to working efficiently and effectively, utilising technology and software as appropriate.
- Ability to develop and encourage a strong team ethos among staff and volunteers.
- Strong analytical skills and sound judgment.
- Experience of managing budgets.
- Well-developed interpersonal skills, with the ability to engage comfortably with all users of the Cathedral.

Person Specification Continued

Other criteria

- Empathy with the beliefs and ethos of the Christian faith.
- Comfortable working within a team of staff and clergy with a range of different skills and gifts, understanding their different roles and working patterns.
- Commitment to the Cathedral's purpose and vision, and to taking an active role in the Cathedral's community, mission and outreach.
- A satisfactory enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check is required for this post. The appointment is subject to a six-month probation period.

Additional Information

The role requires the post-holder to work occasional weekends, evenings and non-working days, as required for which time off in lieu will be given. The post-holder will undertake such other duties as may reasonably be expected. This document is accurate at time of publication but is subject to regular review and may change in line with the Cathedral's requirements.

To Apply

An application form can be found on our website: stedscathedral.org/vacancies and once complete should be sent to: hr@stedscathedral.org

Closing Date: 9.00 am Monday 3 August 2026

Interviews: Wednesday 12 August 2026





Terms and Conditions

Job Title: Chief Operating Officer

Contract: Permanent

Salary: £65,000 per annum

Hours per week: 35 hours

Annual Leave: 25 days plus 8 bank holidays

Probationary and notice period

In accordance with current Chapter Policy, the post is subject to a 12 week probationary period. After completion of the probationary period the notice period is one month.

Pension

After 12 weeks' service, the post-holder will be auto-enrolled into a pension scheme with the Church Workers Pension Fund.

Policies and Procedures

To be familiar and comply with Cathedral Policies where applicable but in particular the Health & Safety Policy, the Safeguarding Policy and the Cathedral's Social Media Policy.

Other terms and conditions

This is only a summary of the terms and conditions offered and does not replace the wording of the Standard Terms and Conditions which will form the contract between the successful candidate and the Chapter.