



WINCHESTER  
CATHEDRAL



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WINCHESTER



# Residentiary Canon Precentor

Applicant Information Pack

July 2026

## Contents

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3	Welcome Letter
4	Diocese of Winchester
5	Winchester Cathedral
6	Cathedral Governance and Management
7	Calling and Vision
9	Role Description
12	Person Specification
14	Further Information
15	How to apply and timetable
16	Useful Website Links
17	Contact Us

## Welcome Letter

Thank you for your interest in the post of Precentor at Winchester Cathedral. The person appointed to this role will arrive at an important juncture in the Cathedral's life. After a period of turbulence, the liturgical and musical life of the Cathedral has stabilised and become joyful, much thanks to those who have held the posts of Dean and Director of Music on an interim basis. Now that I have begun as Dean and we look forward to welcoming Katherine Dienes-Williams as Director of Music in September, the appointment of the Precentor will complete a period of transition.

There are enormous opportunities in this moment. I have been delighted to arrive in a Cathedral that is in good heart and filled with ambition. At the same time, this ambition will need to find greater definition through the implementation of the Music Strategy, including the development of an endowment fund to support the choral foundation, the development of a renewed Liturgical Plan (the work of which the Precentor will lead), a new Visitor Engagement Plan, and the implementation of the Estates Masterplan. At a higher strategic level still, the Cathedral Chapter proposes to use 2027 as a consultation period on a five-year Strategic Plan covering all areas of the Cathedral's mission, to set direction for the years 2028-2033.

The Precentor, as a member of Chapter, will be a key voice in this strategic thinking, as well as a person capable of delivering major elements of the vision operationally, in partnership with others. You will be a person of grounded faith, committed to the Cathedral's daily round of worship, with a deep love of the Cathedral choral tradition and an understanding of its music; being an able singer would be a significant advantage. At the same time, you will be open to fresh ways of delivering worship, in order that the cathedral might better resource the

mission of our diocese, and to invite those who do not yet engage with the Cathedral into the beauty and life of God. A capacity to imagine how worship might inhabit the space and proportions of the Cathedral building will help in developing liturgy that is missional, hospitable, and transcendent.

Being a team player – a natural collaborator – will be essential. Gifts of patience, diplomacy and a sense of humour will be important in dealing with sometimes difficult conversations and relationships. A desire to invest time in the relationships required to ensure that the music department has a healthy culture will be at the top of the Precentor's heart. A Precentor able to see the good in those who present problems will go a long way to build trust. You will work well with senior colleagues, both lay and ordained, in the Senior Executive Team, and will work closely with a Dean who has liturgical opinions! This is in no way to suggest that I will inhibit the Precentor's creativity and ideas, but nor will I be remote, and I will be engaged in liturgical developments – something that would be important anywhere, but is doubly so in Winchester, given the recent history. The partnership of Dean, Precentor, and Director of Music must be strong and creative.

I am open to having an informal but confidential conversation with you if you would like and would welcome the chance to talk with those considering this post. Please do get in touch my EA Emma Sajo to find a time, on 01962 857205 or email [emma.sajo@winchester.cathedral.org.uk](mailto:emma.sajo@winchester.cathedral.org.uk)

With best wishes,



**The Very Revd Chris Palmer**  
Dean of Winchester

## Information for Applicants

### Diocese of Winchester

The history of Winchester Diocese emerges from the mission of Pope Gregory the Great to spread the gospel and to connect with the people of these islands. In 597 Augustine, a Benedictine monk who was to become the first Archbishop of Canterbury, was sent by Gregory to encourage the British Church to reach out to its Anglo-Saxon neighbours.

Winchester Diocese emerged out of this great Benedictine mission, having been founded by St Birinus who was sent by a later Pope to continue evangelising Southern England. Birinus became the Apostle to the West Saxons. He planted a church in Winchester and, around 650, built Old Minister, the forerunner of Winchester Cathedral.

The contemporary Diocese of Winchester is an exciting and challenging mix of rural and urban, new and old, innovative and traditional. It was founded in 660 AD and has changed and developed consistently over time – and is changing still. We serve a growing population of 1.27 million, of whom over 20,000 regularly attend worship in one of the 375 church buildings across our 255 parishes, led by our 202 ordained clergy, 87 Licensed Lay Ministers and a growing number of lay people commissioned for ministry.

The Bishop of Winchester, the Rt Revd Philip Mounstephen, came to the Diocese in 2024. At the heart of diocesan life lies a story and vision, ‘Walking the Wessex Way’, which offers four lenses through which to build on the ‘legacy of grace’ left by previous generations of the faithful. These are: Serving – Christlike engagement with our communities, bringing peace, hope and reconciliation; Learning – deepening our discipleship as followers of Jesus Christ; Growing – the renewal of the Church as the Body of Christ; and Loving – making the loving presence of Jesus known in our midst, as his body.

See: <https://winchesterdiocese.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/Walking-the-Wessex-Way-Development-of-Strategic-Mission-Ministry-Investment-Plans-January-2025-Version-4.pdf>

The Cathedral enjoys many points of engagement with the life of the Diocese, notably a full week of School Leavers’ Services, with attached workshops, led by the Diocesan Education Team with the assistance of the Cathedral’s Learning Team. In addition to ordination and licensing services, the Cathedral hosts placement for ordinands and connects with parishes and chaplaincies mainly through the College of Canons. The Canon Precentor’s work under the Dean, who is senior priest in the Diocese, will enable the Cathedral to offer both traditional and innovative liturgy to the life of the whole Church, and to act as a resource for other churches.



## Information for Applicants

### Winchester Cathedral

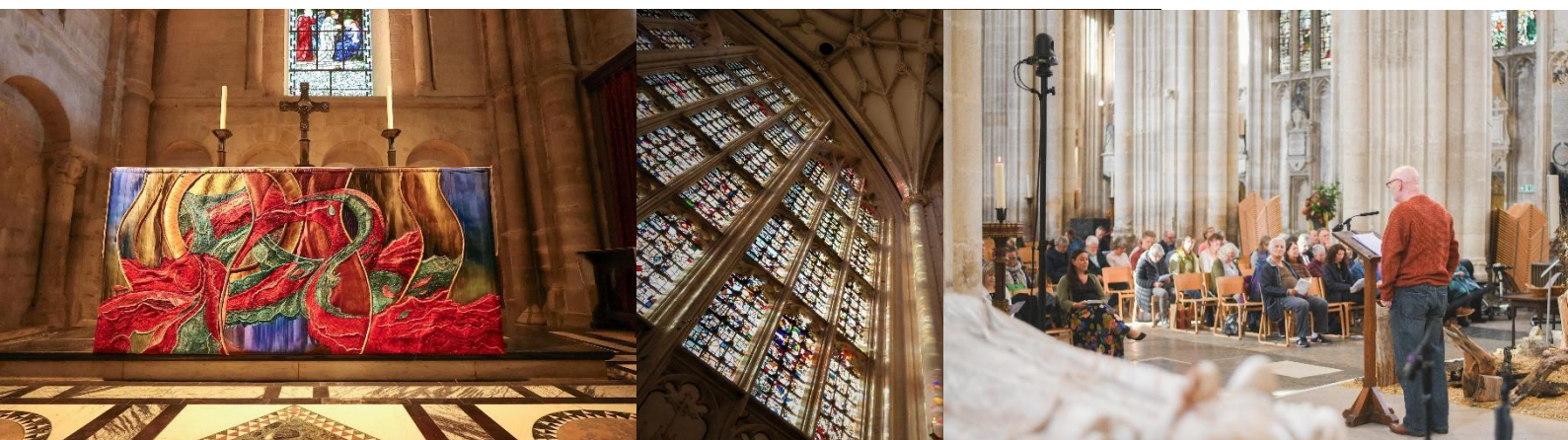
The Cathedral, founded almost 1000 years ago by the Norman conquerors, replacing the earlier Old Minster, is bound up with the history and identity of our nation. Many of the early English monarchs rest here, in a place of honour near the high altar. Medieval Bishops held high office under the Crown, founded Oxford Colleges and shaped the nation. The shrine of St Swithun remains a point of pilgrimage, the start of the medieval Pilgrims' Way. More recently, Lancelot Andrewes, Jane Austen, Mary Sumner and William Walker (who 'saved the Cathedral with his own bare hands') have all played a part in shaping the story of this remarkable place.

This is the home of the Winchester Bible, one of the finest of all 12th century manuscripts and a testament to the significance and wealth of the medieval foundation here.

The building itself reflects the turbulence of history. During the English Civil War Cromwell's forces won the city and destroyed the west window of the Cathedral. At the restoration the window was reassembled from broken glass from around the building. Today this great and unique mosaic represents the vocation of the Cathedral to be a place where we may find beauty and where community can emerge out of brokenness. It calls all seeing it to faith, hope and love.

In 2019 the Kings and Scribes exhibition was opened to share this heritage more widely as part of a much wider project which involved the construction of the Wessex Learning Centre and allowed the repair of much of the east end of the Cathedral. Thanks to the generosity of the Church Commissioners, we have since drawn up a Masterplan of the most significant projects to conserve and develop our resources for future generations. Public consultation is pending and further work is needed to develop the narrative uniting the different elements in a common purpose.

Cathedrals serve local communities, the Diocese, region and also national concerns. In recent years Winchester Cathedral has responded to times of crisis and times of happiness and mourning, such as the invasion of Ukraine, the funeral service for Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II and the coronation of His Majesty King Charles III. In responding to the contemporary world we seek to enable the wider community to appreciate that this is their cathedral. We have also been developing a creative programme by which we engage with new audience over themes of common interest such as justice in Law Week and ecology in Green Week.



## Information for Applicants



From left to right: The Revd Canon Roland Riem, Vice-Dean (retiring July 2026); The Revd Professor Canon Liz Stuart, Non-Executive Member; The Revd Canon Andrew Micklefield, Treasurer; The Revd Canon Tess Kuin Lawton, Missioner; The Very Revd Chris Palmer, Dean; Canon Alan Lovell, Senior Non-Executive Member; Canon Ian Power, Non-Executive Member; Canon Isobel Pinder, Non-Executive Member; Canon Sarah Peppiatt, Non-Executive Member; Professor Canon Anthony Smith, Non-Executive Member.

## Cathedral Governance and Management

Chapter is the sole 'body corporate' of Winchester Cathedral, with its own legal rights and responsibilities. The Chapter, similar to a Board of Trustees, provides strategic leadership and direction.

The Cathedral Chapter is chaired by the Dean, who is appointed by the Crown and is Head of Foundation. The other executive members of Chapter are appointed by the Bishop. After this appointment, these will comprise the Canon Missioner, Canon Treasurer and Canon Precentor as full-time, residentiary canons. The non-executive Chapter Canons, appointed by Chapter, must according to the Cathedrals Measure 2021 be in the majority on Chapter.

The Cathedral Chapter is a vital, praying community at the heart of the Cathedral.

## Information for Applicants

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### Winchester Cathedral - Calling and Vision

Treasuring the rich resources of its heritage, the Cathedral Chapter looks forward with confidence and hope to the future. In consultation with the worshipping congregations, Cathedral volunteers and staff and partners in the Diocese, the developing sense of 'Calling and Vision' document was first published in 2019.

The Vision, underpinned by the Cathedral values of kindness, openness, excellence proved its worth during the challenges of the pandemic:

Winchester Cathedral is called to renew, inspire and unite people in faith, hope and love.

This is our calling:

To be a Christian community of worship, witness and welcome, rooted in Benedictine values and confident of growth

To play a full part in the mission of the Diocese of Winchester and more widely to serve the whole Church of God in Christ Jesus

To be a sign of the Kingdom of God, seeking in partnership with others the unity, peace and justice which is God's gift and will for the world

To nurture Christian faith, hope and learning across the generations, using the abundant heritage of our tradition

To be a diverse community in which people flourish in one body through collaboration, mutual respect and shared celebration

To conserve and develop the buildings, contents and estates in our care.

The arrival of Dean Chris in March 2026 means that a consultative process of revisioning will begin in 2027 in order to allow Chapter to develop a strategic vision for 2028-33.

## Information for Applicants

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### Winchester Cathedral - Calling and Vision

#### Cathedral Values

These are the values that we live by:

#### OPENNESS

...so that all may be renewed

#### EXCELLENCE

...so that all may know God's love

#### KINDNESS

...so that all may find a place

#### Cathedral Priorities

These are the Cathedral priorities:

#### RENEW

Welcome and work with more children, families and young adults  
Build a greener and sustainable future

#### INSPIRE

Deepen worship and refresh learning  
Enliven connection and creativity through heritage and the arts

#### UNITE

Increase diversity and inclusion through wider, bolder engagement  
Promote justice and serve the common good



## Role Description

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### Role description

**Title of Position:** Canon Precentor and Sacrist

**Appointed by:** The Bishop of Winchester

**Responsible to:** The Dean of Winchester

#### Purpose of the role

The Canon Precentor and Sacrist has a dual role, first as a member of Chapter as a charity trustee and second as an executive officer of the Cathedral.

As a priest, the Canon Precentor and Sacrist contributes specific ministries to the executive leadership of the Cathedral.

The Canon Precentor and Sacrist oversees the work of the Liturgy & Music Department. The Precentor ensures in practice that the worship of the cathedral glorifies God, draws people together in a common spirit and meets the needs of outside bodies celebrating and pursuing the common good. It is important that the liturgical life of the Cathedral is actively co-ordinated and balanced with all other aspects of its life, which requires strong collaboration with colleagues, especially with the Dean, who has overall responsibility for the ordering of worship.

The Canon Precentor will work creatively with the Director of Music and the Dean to uphold and develop the best traditions of choral excellence in the service of the Cathedral's mission, and will help discern the strategic vision for the cathedral and particularly our vision for worship, and be responsible for implementing this vision in collaboration with a wide range of colleagues and volunteers.

#### Governance of the Cathedral

As a Chapter member, and therefore a charity trustee, the Canon Precentor and Sacrist has a vital and strategic role to play in the corporate governance of the Cathedral.

As trustee, the Canon Precentor and Sacrist will:

- share responsibility for the governance of the Cathedral, adhering to the codes and policies determined by Chapter to ensure good governance (which includes responsibility for safeguarding)
- participate fully in the Chapter's mission to renew, inspire and unite people in faith, hope and love
- uphold the Objects of the 2021 Cathedrals Measure: to advance the Christian religion, and to care for and conserve the fabric and structure of the cathedral building (and by extension, the estate)

Residentiary Canons are accountable to the Dean, as Chair of Chapter, for their performance as trustee members of Chapter through an annual review led by the Dean.

## Role Description

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### **Executive Leadership and Management**

The Chapter seeks to live and work within the context of prayer and to be at the ‘praying heart’ of the cathedral. Residentiary Canons should comfortably inhabit the existing forms of morning and evening prayer and value the choral tradition which helps to animate cathedral worship. As Residentiary Canons operate with a Bishop’s license, their ultimate accountability is to the bishop through Ministerial Development Review. However, as oversight of Divine Service and the work of clergy are the constitutional responsibility of the Dean, the performance of these duties may be covered in the Dean’s monthly I-I meetings with Residentiary Canons or at informal clergy gatherings.

As a Residentiary Canon, the Canon Precentor and Sacrist will:

- attend the Daily Office as part of Chapter’s commitment to corporate worship, unless taking a rest day, holiday or away on other duties
- carry out canon-in-residence duties on a fair and proportionate basis
- take a fair share in preaching, the celebration of the Eucharist and Occasional Offices
- play a full part in the Chapter’s hospitality and ministry of welcome.
- offer pastoral support and spiritual counsel to those on the Community Roll
- be a member of the College of Canons
- make time for theological study and retreat to inform professional practice and sustain the work of teaching and writing
- play an active role (through appointment or election) in Diocesan work, such as offering liturgical training and creating liturgy for Diocesan events.

Work beyond the Diocese is by permission of the Dean, given the constitutional requirement that ‘at least two full-time equivalent residentiary canons must be engaged exclusively on cathedral duties’.

Within the Canon Precentor and Sacrist’s executive function lie key areas of responsibility:

- Oversee the organisation, development and delivery of the liturgy and music of the cathedral and maintaining standards of excellence
- Line-manage the work of the Director of Music and Custos
- Deliver and develop the Music Strategy 2025-28 in collaboration with the Director of Music - (<https://static.winchester-cathedral.org.uk/app/uploads/2025/09/Cathedral-Music-Strategy-2025.pdf>)
- Revise the Liturgical Plan and oversee its implementation
- Share with Custos in the oversight of the various volunteer sections in his/her department
- Encourage the growth of existing congregations and new congregations by developing a range of apt, timely and missional acts of worship, in consultation with colleagues
- Oversee pastoral offices and ensure that appropriate pastoral care and follow-up is provided
- Ensure the pastoral care of the cathedral choirs and chorister parents.

## Role Description

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As Sacrist the Canon Precentor will:

- be responsible for vestments and frontals, plate and books as used in worship and, in collaboration with Chapter, for their replacement when necessary
- play a full part in the ordering of sacred space and development of sacred symbols, attending the Fabric Advisory Committee as a member of Chapter.

The Canon Precentor will:

- make a regular report to the Chapter about the implementation of their executive responsibilities and plans
- be a member of the Senior Executive Team (SET) and iMeet
- work to progress the vision and values of the Chapter within their areas of executive responsibility
- be responsible for a departmental budget
- work collaboratively across and with all departments of the Cathedral, and with other SET and Chapter members, to plan and realize missional developments
- form professional relationships and networks to discern and develop good practice.

Residentiary Canons are accountable to Chapter through the Dean for their executive functions. The Dean will undertake an annual review of these functions, and the Dean will make a report to the Chapter following their completion as to the effectiveness of the functions being exercised.

## Person Specification

### PERSON SPECIFICATION

<b>Key Attributes</b>	<b>Essential</b>	<b>Desirable</b>
<b>Qualifications</b>		
a priest in holy orders for at least six years	X	
a graduate with sound theological qualifications	X	
<b>Skills and Knowledge</b>		
Proven leadership experience with a track record of contributing to effective governance, including collaborative working at Board level	X	
Strong strategic and organisational skills, with the ability to plan ahead, manage a complex portfolio, and deliver results	X	
Creative and confident in liturgical leadership across a wide range of settings, with good knowledge of Church of England liturgical resources	X	
Able to sing the elements of the offices and Eucharist appropriate to clergy reliably and well	X	
An engaging preacher and teacher with a deep and articulate faith	X	
An aesthetic appreciation and ability to reimagine and develop sacred space for liturgy and mission	X	
Confident user of IT, including electronic diaries and social media	X	
Demonstrate commitment towards Safeguarding, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion	X	
<b>Personal Qualities</b>		
Empathy with Cathedral's vision, mission and values (Openness, Excellence and Kindness)	X	
Committed to personal spiritual formation and to the daily round of public prayer	X	
Strong relational skills, enabling collaborative working and effective	X	

## Person Specification

team building around vision and values inside and outside the Church		
A wise and pastoral presence, able to keep matters in perspective, exercise good judgment, and maintain balance under pressure.	X	
Loves the English choral tradition and knows how to harness it for fruitful mission in a cathedral setting.	X	
Politically astute, good-humoured, and able to balance competing priorities with perspective	X	
Committed to the Church and its parish, diocesan and worldwide mission	X	

## Further Information

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### Appointment

The full-time appointment as a Residentiary Canon under Common Tenure is made by the Bishop of Winchester with the agreement of the Dean and in consultation with the Chapter.

### Stipend

Residentiary Canon Stipend is in accordance with the rates issued by the Church Commissioners for Diocese of Winchester – in 2026/27, £36,730.

### Accommodation

Accommodation is provided rent-free within The Close, S023 9LS, as the nature of the role requires that the incumbent resides within the Close for the better performance of their duties, and is in accordance with the terms set by the Cathedral under Common Tenure. The Cathedral contributes towards utility costs.

### Removal Expenses

The Cathedral will reimburse agreed removal expenses against three quotes.

### Working Hours

The post holder should be flexible in their approach to hours worked as these will be dictated by operational needs and the liturgical calendar. Cathedral Clergy work together to allow one full day off during each week.

### Secretarial Support

You will have up to ten hours a week from an EA who currently also supports the Canon Treasurer.

### Reporting

The Canon Precentor reports to the Dean and will meet regularly with the Dean to assess both formally and informally progress on work and performance. MDR is conducted by a Suffragan Bishop with lay and clergy input. The Cathedral supports a culture of professionalism and mutual accountability, including an induction process which the postholder is expected to follow.

### Training and Development

Training needs identified through review and MDR will be provided for by the cathedral. It is expected that residentiary canons attend an annual conference appropriate to their role and take an annual retreat.

### Annual Holiday

Office holders occupying a full-time post are entitled to thirty-six days annual leave (days that would normally be considered working days), as well as Bank holidays or days in lieu thereof – 44 days in total. This should include a minimum of four Sundays and up to a maximum of six Sundays in each leave year without deduction of the stipend to which the office holder is entitled.

### Pension

Pension provision will be in accordance with the Church of England Pensions Board's Funded Pension Scheme. The postholder is entitled to make Additional Voluntary Contributions from their stipend.

### Expenses

Necessary expenses for the better performance of their duties will be reimbursed on submission of a Cathedral expenses form in accordance with Chapter policy.

### Benefits

Members of Chapter are able to enjoy a 10% discount in the Cathedral Shop and in the Refectory.

## How to Apply and Timetable

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Winchester Cathedral is committed to the principles and processes of safer recruitment. Your personal information will be processed in accordance with GDPR.

Your application form should demonstrate how you meet the criteria set out in the person specification explaining how your skills and experience match the requirements of the role.

Application forms should be sent to: [recruitment@winchester-cathedral.org.uk](mailto:recruitment@winchester-cathedral.org.uk). The closing date for applications is Monday, 22<sup>nd</sup> June, 9am.

Shortlisted candidates will be required to attend for interview on Monday 13<sup>th</sup> and Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> July. The process will include a chance to look around the Precentor's house (8 The Close), a vocal audition, and an interview, including a presentation. There will be an opportunity to attend Evensong as part of the process, and we will suggest that those who choose to do so come to that service in civilian clothes, in order to guard your anonymity; we in no way wish to put candidates on parade. Shortlisted candidates will also be asked to submit a plan for an act of worship prior to interview; details will be sent to those who are shortlisted. Overnight accommodation will be provided.

The panel's preferred candidate will have a Teams call with the Bishop of Winchester on Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> July at 3pm.

The new Canon Precentor will be installed at the Cathedral at Evensong, before Advent if possible.

## Useful Website Links

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### CONSTITUTION AND STATUTES

Winchester Cathedral's Constitution and Statutes may be found here:

<https://admin.winchester-cathedral.org.uk/app/uploads/2023/04/Winchester-Cathedral-Constitution-FINAL.pdf>

### SAFEGUARDING

<https://www.winchester-cathedral.org.uk/get-to-know-us/safeguarding/>

### ANNUAL REPORT

<https://static.winchester-cathedral.org.uk/app/uploads/2025/10/Winchester-Cathedral-Annual-Report-and-Financial-Statements-2024-to-2025.pdf>

### GENERAL INFORMATION

For more information about Winchester Cathedral, please visit the Cathedral website: [www.winchester-cathedral.org.uk](http://www.winchester-cathedral.org.uk)

## Contact us

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