



INFORMATION PACK

Head Virger

JULY 2025



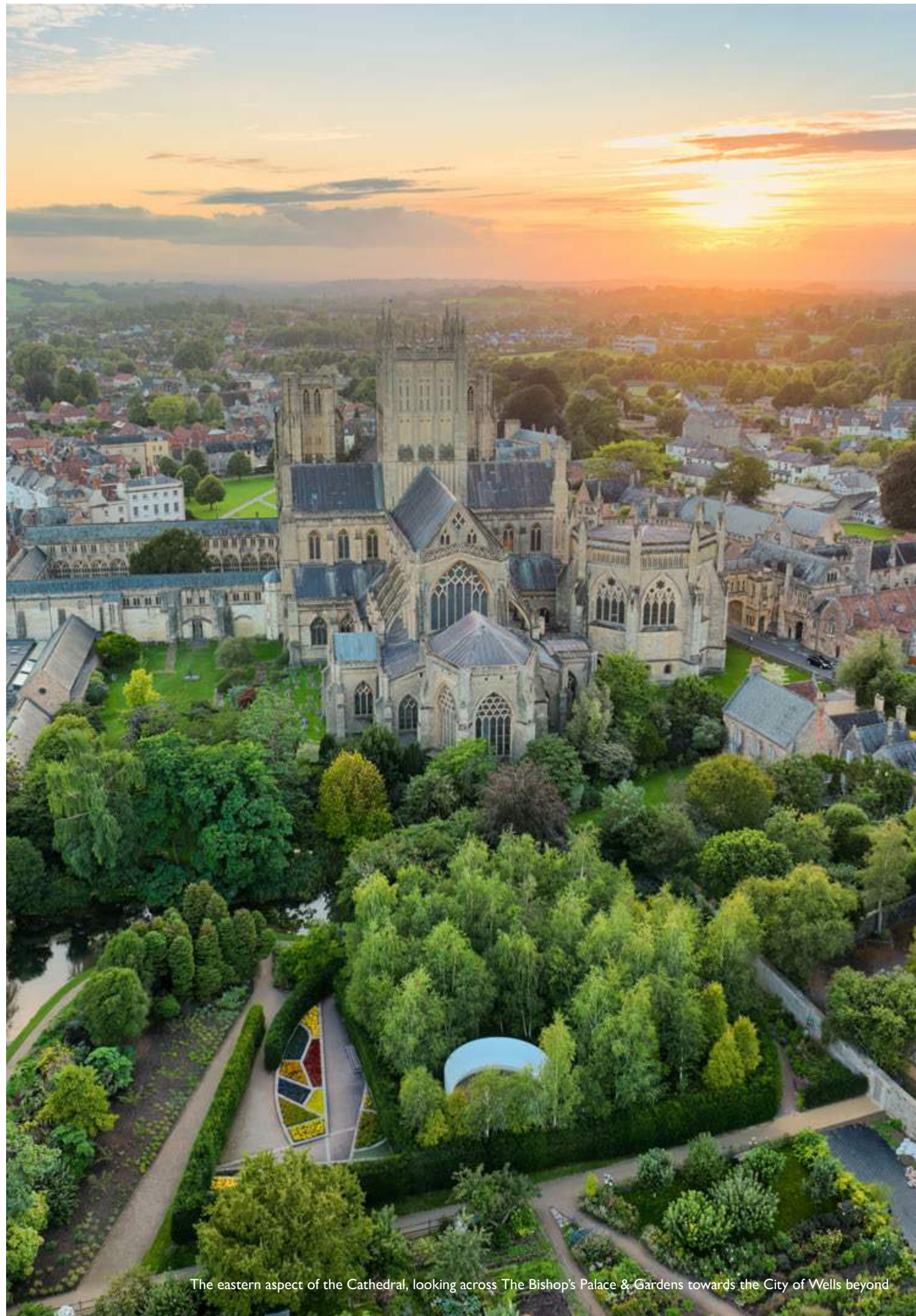
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Head Virger

Virger

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The eastern aspect of the Cathedral, looking across The Bishop's Palace & Gardens towards the City of Wells beyond

Introduction

Thank you for your interest in the post of Head Virger at Wells Cathedral. Wells Cathedral is an iconic building, standing at the heart of—and serving a community of—the Diocese of Bath and Wells, the city of Wells, and the county of Somerset. It is a living, working building which welcomes upwards of 300,000 visitors each year who are drawn to its unique architecture, cultural and spiritual heritage, world-class music, and the daily pattern of worship, which is the primary purpose of the Cathedral. Our Vision is to be a beacon of light and hope, rooted in the transforming love of God, welcoming and serving people, churches, and communities across our Diocese, County, and beyond.

The role of a Virger is a rich and varied one, which provides opportunities to be at the very centre of the life and vision of the Cathedral, and in which no two days are ever the same. Our Virgers are vital to creating a safe, welcoming environment for all who come to the Cathedral, as well as ensuring a smooth and seamless operation for services and events, where the Cathedral team works together to deliver a high-quality offer. The role of the Head Virger is to oversee and enable this team, providing positive line management, care, and conversation between stakeholders.

This application pack will tell you a little more about Wells, the work of the Cathedral, and the role and person specification of a Head Virger. I hope that as you read it, you will find the information helpful and that it will help you to discern whether you might be the person to serve in this role. If you feel that an informal discussion would help you to discern your calling to this role, please do feel free to be in touch with me. If this is a role which appeals to you, then we would be delighted to receive your application.



The Reverend Canon Tim Stevens
Canon Precentor of Wells Cathedral



About Us

The City of Wells

Situated on the edge of the Mendip Hills in the County of Somerset, Wells is one of England's most beautiful and compact cities, built around the beautiful Cathedral of St Andrew. Its picturesque surroundings include a charming market square and high street, the Bishop's Palace, and the magnificent Vicars' Close, Europe's oldest continuously inhabited street.

The Cathedral

Wells Cathedral is one of England's most beautiful and significant Cathedrals, which has been inspiring pilgrims for nearly 850 years. It is the seat of the Bishop of Bath and Wells and the Mother Church of the diocese of Bath and Wells and plays an important role in the cultural identity of Somerset. The Cathedral represents the area's spiritual and cultural heritage and is for many a symbol of local pride, and a place that connects the present-day community to centuries of history and Christian tradition. Wells Cathedral has deservedly gained an enviable reputation for its lovingly maintained Gothic architecture, its world-class music, and its warm welcome to some 300,000 visitors each year, as well as around 150,000 people who come to the Cathedral for services, concerts, and events.

This is a really exciting time to join the team with the delivery of our Vicars' Close project. This major project will restore this internationally significant and unique medieval site which is integral to the history and fine choral tradition of Wells Cathedral since 1348. It will safeguard the future of Vicars' Close and provide an exciting and ambitious new visitor experience and programme of events to uncover and celebrate our heritage, opening six special buildings to the public for the first time with new interpretation will explore the stories of the Close's social, architectural, and musical history and heritage.

Underpinning the life, worship, and ministry of the Cathedral is a diverse organisation which oversees a diverse tapestry of activity. The Cathedral is also a regular host to a number of external organisations who provide concerts, events, and private and public gatherings, furthering our links with the community. Following the implementation of the Cathedrals Measure 2021, Wells Cathedral is registered as a Charity, and is now dually regulated by the Charity Commission and the Church Commissioners. The Chapter is the governing body of the Cathedral and the Chapter members are Trustees of the Charity.

Further details of the Cathedral's life may be found on the Cathedral's website:

www.wellscathedral.org.uk



✠ A Virger leads the procession at the Cathedral Eucharist on Advent Sunday

Job Description

Post:	Head Virger
Key Purpose of Post:	The role of a Virger is an important part of the Cathedral's mission, being the face of the Cathedral to visitors and worshippers on a daily basis. The purpose of the Head Virger is to provide leadership and oversight to the Virger team, in order to maintain the effective functioning of the Cathedral space, offering a warm welcome to all who come, while preparing for services, leading processions, preparing staging and rooms for events, carrying out cleaning and light maintenance, and often to be on hand to manage the first response in a crisis, while upholding with integrity the name and reputation of the Cathedral.
Reporting to:	Canon Precentor
Location:	Wells Cathedral, Cathedral Green, Wells, BA5 2PA
Hours of Work:	Full time, 40 hours a week

Main Duties and Responsibilities:

Management

- To recruit, train, appraise and manage the performance of the Virgers and Cleaners to achieve the highest standards across the Cathedral
- To hold good relationships with other teams across the Cathedral to ensure a good working atmosphere between all parts of the organisation
- To ensure the Virger department is proactive in finding solutions when the need arises, providing the best possible outcomes for all stakeholders
- To foster an environment which lives out our values of being welcoming, caring and respectful to all who come in to the Cathedral
- To hold regular team meetings and individual meetings with all members of the team to ensure a constructive pattern of communication and a knowledge of upcoming demands
- To undertake Performance Development Reviews with all members of the team as per the Cathedral policy
- To maintain the content of and adherence to the Virger Handbook, ensure all that is contained in it is up to date and accurate, therefore aiding future training and the upholding of current standards

- To manage the workload of members of the team, including keeping accurate records of hours worked, holiday booked, and sickness

Duty Rota

- To oversee the planning and execution of the duty rota, ensuring balanced, fair and adequate cover is arranged for all services and events

Opening and Closing Routine

- To be responsible for the opening and closing of the Cathedral, including the preparation of the Morning Liturgy on weekdays and Holy Communion on Sunday, and clearing away after Evensong before closing down the Cathedral
- To take a share on the rota in the opening and closing of the Cathedral

On Call

- To be responsible for ensuring a Virger is on call and available at all times, including out of hours, to ensure emergencies are responded to
- To take a share on the rota for out-of-hours duties

Security

- To be responsible for the total security of the Cathedral and its contents
- To organise duty breaks so that there remains a Virger within the body of the Cathedral at all times
- To remain vigilant whilst discreet to all visitor activity at all times, providing a safe and welcoming space for visitors to enjoy
- To report immediately any suspicious activity to the Canon in Residence or member of the Cathedral Leadership Team for urgent support and future planning

Safeguarding

- Having successfully completed safeguarding training as part of induction, to be the first responder in the Cathedral, providing initial pastoral support to vulnerable adults and children, and overseeing welfare and security concerns and incident management
- To support the Chapter and Cathedral Leadership Team in the implementation of policies and procedures, thus safeguarding all who use the Cathedral
- To ensure safeguarding training is kept up to date for the Virger department

First Aid

- To ensure First Aid training is kept up to date for the Virger department
- To take a share in the duty first aider duties while the Cathedral is open to the public, as well as during specific events and services
- After any incident, to ensure completion of relevant accident report forms

Cathedral Services

- To be responsible for (and when on duty, prepare for) services by:
 - ☒ ensuring all books, vessels and vestments are set out as required
 - ☒ clearing, cleaning and reinstating all elements after the services
 - ☒ supporting services, through the ringing of service bells, leading processions, attending to the needs of the clergy, management of microphones, remaining present, and responding to needs which come to light during services
- To manage the keeping of registers and accurate statistics on attendance at services and takers of communion and to provide this information as and when required
- To ensure a Virger is present at all planning meetings for special services to ensure proper knowledge of and preparation for these services
- To be responsible for the overall care of the vestments, linens and Cathedral treasures and to ensure all staff and volunteers take care when handling them

Concerts and Events

- To work with the Events team, ensuring a Virger is available for planning meetings, so that requirements are well understood and prepared for
- To ensure appropriate Virger cover for all events, in advance for preparation, for the smooth running of the event, and afterwards to clear away, in accordance with health and safety training and policy
- To contribute to, and to understand and fully brief, all planning notes, in order to ensure proper preparation of the Cathedral and/or its precincts as necessary for concerts and any other events or activities as directed

Cleaning

- To be responsible for the day-to-day cleanliness of the Cathedral buildings and tidiness within the main Cathedral building and Cloisters and the formulation of the cleaning and light-maintenance plan
- To take a full part in the routine cleaning and light maintenance of the Cathedral and its associated buildings, including (but not limited to) cleaning floors and toilets, working at high levels from time to time, and assisting in moving furniture
- To be a line manager to the Cathedral's team of cleaners

Budget and Purchasing

- To engage in the budget process and then monitor expenditure against budget
- To ensure adequate stocks of all liturgical and cleaning items in the Cathedral
- To sign off expenditure on a timely basis

Visitors

- To direct and care for visitors and others whilst they are in the Cathedral building or its precincts, in conjunction with the Cathedral's Ministry of Welcome, and having a particular regard to Health and Safety

Communication

- To ensure Virger presence at all meetings you are invited to, so that the department is fully briefed at all times
- To ensure that the Virger diary is up to date and the daily record sheet is completed
- To ensure team meetings are constructive and used to plan for services and events
- To be the conduit between the Cathedral Leadership Team and the Virger department, ensuring the team are kept up to date with all information passed on

Money

- To be accountable for processes relating to the handling of cash and gift aid envelopes to ensure safety and security of our resources—Virgers will never be left alone with money, but are responsible for managing this process

Staff and Planning Meetings

- To ensure the attendance of one of the Virgers at the weekly diary meeting, all staff meetings, and all planning meetings to which a Virger is invited, ensuring actions are advised, recorded, and agreed
- To be present alongside the Senior Virgers at regular meetings with the Precentor
- To be present in person at Cathedral Safeguarding Advisory Panel meetings

Health and Safety

- To oversee the delivery of Health and Safety Policy and procedures and the maintenance of all health and safety records for the Virger and cleaning team
- To act as Deputy Health and Safety Officer in the absence of the Superintendent of Works

General

- To undertake such other duties as the Dean, Canon Precentor, Chief Operating Officer, or the Cathedral Leadership Team may reasonably require

Dress Code/Uniform

- Virgers are required to wear shirt and tie/blouse, dark trousers, and black shoes, and are to present themselves for duty clean and smart—Virgers will be provided with industrial-quality safety shoes and work gloves, hard hat, cassock, gown, cloak, Virger's whites, and overalls

Conduct

- Virgers are the public face of the Cathedral and often provide the most important interaction for visitors in need—Virgers therefore are required to conduct themselves professionally, to seek appropriate support where required, and to manage their conduct in a manner which brings pride to the Cathedral

Person Specification

Qualifications, Knowledge and Experience

Essential

- Educated to GCSE standard or equivalent
- Experience as a Virger in a Cathedral or Major Church
- Experience of team leadership and training
- An appreciation of Cathedral or parish worship and setting up for services
- Experience in a visitor facing role
- Experience in setting up events and floor management

Desirable

- Educated to A-level standard or equivalent
- A working knowledge of Health and Safety issues
- Experience of complaints handling
- Experience of undertaking a variety of cleaning duties
- A thorough understanding of Safeguarding

Skills and Abilities

Essential

- Good communication skills and the ability to maintain positive relationships
- Able to manage and work as part of a team as well as individually and to use own initiative
- Able to multi-task
- Able to work in an organised manner with an attention to detail
- Good time management skills
- Able to undertake physical work (moving furniture, pianos and trolleys, and cleaning)
- Able to work at height (appropriate training will be given) and in confined spaces

Work-related Personal Qualities

Essential

- Able to work in sympathy with the aims and objectives of the Church of England
- Willing to work within the ethos and mission of Wells Cathedral as a Christian organisation
- Able to work as part of a rota and outside of normal working hours with flexible duties, and to manage a team to do the same
- Confident and carry themselves as part of their ceremonial duties
- Discreet, 'on-side', sensitive to the needs of others, and able to maintain confidentiality
- Flexible and adaptable under pressure

- Able to think innovatively and find solutions to issues
- Good attention to detail
- Demonstrable commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people, and vulnerable adults

Desirable

- A committed Christian with a personal connection to the aims and objectives of the Church of England

Additional Specifications

An enhanced Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) check will be required, and the post will be subject to this clearance. All appointments are subject to references and a medical declaration.



Main Terms and Conditions

Employment Status	Permanent												
Hours of Work	Full Time, not less than 40 hours each week, normally 8 hours a day, 5 days per week. Days of the week and precise hours within each day to be agreed. Normal working hours are between 06.45 and 19.15, in shifts.												
Remuneration	Salary of £30,324 to 33,592 per annum depending on experience, payable on the 24th of the month or the earliest and nearest working day thereto.												
Accommodation	The postholder will be required to live in Vicars' Close.												
Discount	A discount of 10% is available in the Cathedral Shop and Café.												
Pension	Defined Contribution Scheme. Contributions as % of salary: <table><tr><td>Age</td><td>Employee</td><td>Employer</td></tr><tr><td><50</td><td>3%</td><td>5%</td></tr><tr><td>50–55</td><td>4%</td><td>8%</td></tr><tr><td>>55</td><td>5%</td><td>10%</td></tr></table>	Age	Employee	Employer	<50	3%	5%	50–55	4%	8%	>55	5%	10%
Age	Employee	Employer											
<50	3%	5%											
50–55	4%	8%											
>55	5%	10%											
Holiday	33 days per annum inclusive of bank holidays. Bank holidays may need to be worked as part of a regular working pattern. The holiday year runs from 1 January to 31 December.												
Location	Wells Cathedral, Wells, Somerset BA5 2PA												
Parking	Parking spaces are available in the Cathedral car park. Cars are parked at the risk of the owner.												
Expenses	All reasonable working expenses will be met in line with Cathedral policy.												
Probation	This post will be subject to a probationary period of 6 months.												
Pre-employment Checks	The post-holder will, during their probationary period, be required to satisfactorily complete learning in Health & Safety and in Safeguarding as deemed by the Cathedral to be relevant and appropriate to this post. The appointment is subject to the satisfactory completion of all pre-employment checks, including an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service check.												



How to Apply

Applications

Closing date: **09.00 on Thursday 4 September 2025**

Our standard [Application Form](#) and [Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form](#) (optional), with a covering letter describing what attracts you to this role, your experience, and how it relates to the opportunities and challenges presented by this position, should be returned to the Human Resources Manager by email: recruitment@wellscathedral.org.uk.

Shortlisting

Shortlisting date: **Friday 5 September 2025**

To ensure the fairness of the selection process, shortlisting will be based upon the information which you provide in your application and assumptions will not be made about your experience or skills.

We will look for demonstrable evidence that you meet the criteria set out in the person specification. Information provided in your CV and covering letter will be viewed by HR, the recruiting manager, and interview panel. All applicants will be notified of the outcome of the shortlisting process.

Selection Process

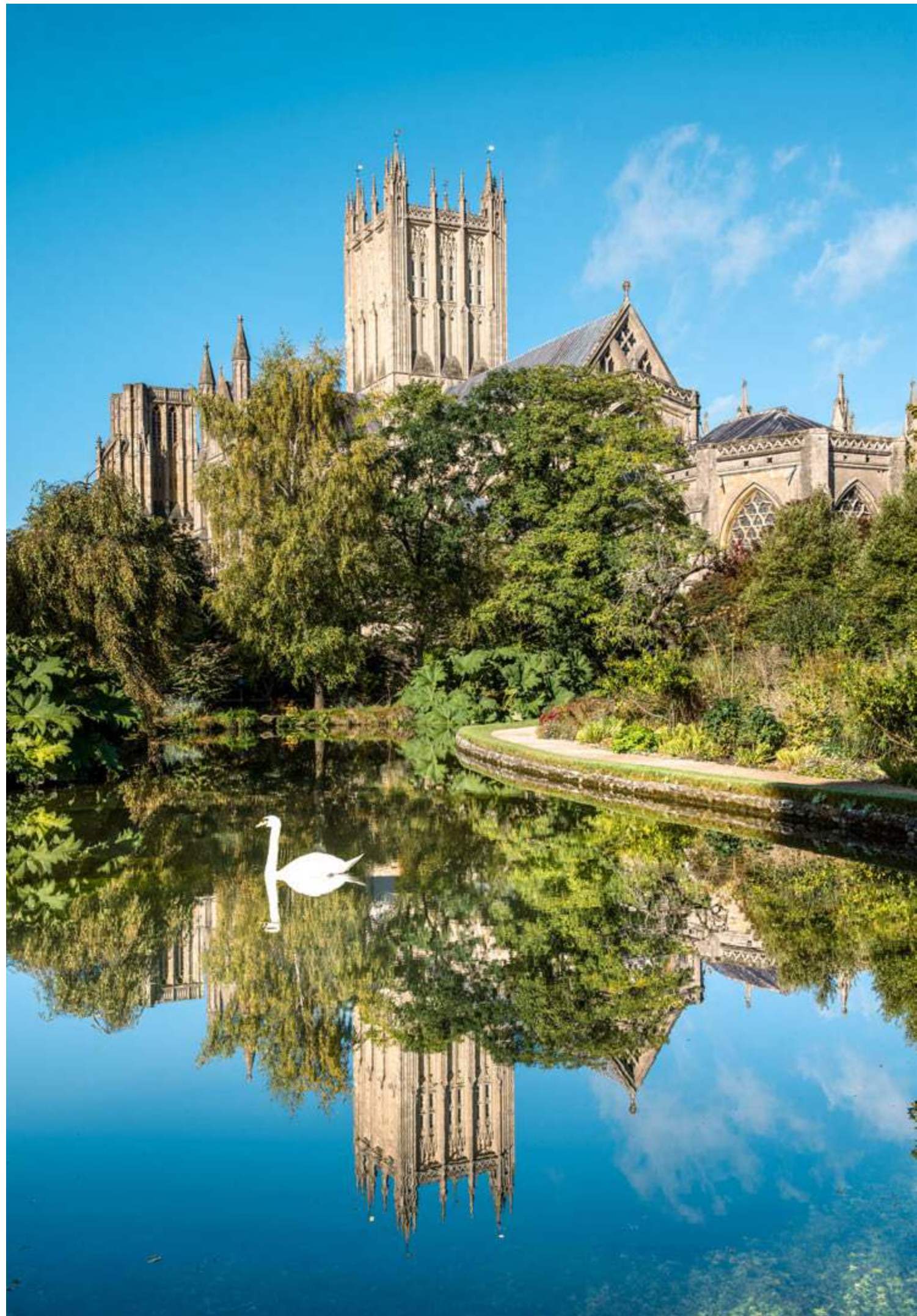
Interview date: **Thursday 11 and Friday 12 September 2025**

Interviewed candidates will be expected to attend Evensong on Thursday 11 September at 17.15 and a reception immediately afterwards. Interviews will take place on Friday 12 September. Accommodation (if required) will be booked and paid for by Wells Cathedral. Further details will be communicated to shortlisted candidates nearer the time.

Further Information

We hope you find this pack provides all the information you need in order to consider your application for this post.

If you have any questions, or would like an informal conversation about the post, please contact the Canon Precentor, The Reverend Canon Tim Stevens, by email to precentor@wellscathedral.org.uk.



Safeguarding

We are committed to the safeguarding and protection of all children, young people, and adults, and the care and nurture of children within church communities. We will carefully select, train, and support all those with any responsibility within the Church, in line with Safer Recruitment principles.

This means that we will:

- Ensure that our recruitment and selection processes are inclusive, fair, consistent, and transparent;
- Take all reasonable steps to prevent those who might harm children or adults from taking up positions of respect, responsibility, or authority where they are trusted by others; and
- Adhere to safer recruitment legislation, guidance, and standards.

Further information can be found in our Safeguarding Policy available on the Cathedral website at www.wellscathedral.org.uk

The successful candidate will be required to complete a Confidential Declaration Form as part of our recruitment process when an offer of employment is made. This form is strictly confidential and, except under compulsion of law, will be seen only by those involved in the recruitment/appointment process. All forms will be kept securely in compliance with the UK General Data Protection Regulation and the Data Protection Act 2018.



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