



INFORMATION PACK

Choral Scholarships

SEPTEMBER 2026 – JULY 2027



A view through the Scissor Arches and Grand Organ towards the glorious Jesse Window © Nick James LRPS ◀

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► The Quire and Grand Organ of Wells Cathedral © Nick James LRPS

Introduction

Thank you for your interest in a Choral Scholarship at Wells Cathedral.

We have vacancies for Alto, Tenor, and Bass Choral Scholars to start in September 2026. The aim of our Choral Scholarship programme is to provide experience and training in a professional choir, in preparation for going onto further study, or to enter the singing profession.

This application pack will tell you a little more about Wells, the Cathedral, and its Music Foundation, as well as outlining the role and person specification of a Choral Scholar.

Wells is a magnetic and beautiful place, and the musical offering is equally so. If you have any questions which are not answered in this pack, please do feel free to be in touch to arrange an informal discussion. If the role and the setting appeal, we would be delighted to receive your application.



The Reverend Canon Tim Stevens

Canon Precentor, Wells Cathedral



► Looking West across the Gardens of the Bishop's Palace to the Cathedral and the City of Wells beyond

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.

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



► The Schola Cantorum



► The Vicars Choral and Choral Scholars



► Wells Cathedral Choir lead a beautiful candlelit Carol Service



► Primary Musical Outreach



► Wells Cathedral Chamber Choir

The Music Foundation

How We Are Organised

The Music Foundation currently comprises a choir of Boy Choristers and of Girl Choristers, nine Vicars Choral, and three Choral Scholars. The Boy and Girl Choristers currently sing separately on one occasion each during the week, and at other times together or alongside the Vicars Choral. All Choristers are educated at Wells Cathedral School, an independent school and one of the four specialist music schools in England. Pupils at the school are both boarding and day, and the age range is from 3 to 18.

The Director of Music leads the Music Department, and is supported by the Assistant Director of Music and Organ Scholar. The Music Foundation is overseen by the Precentor.

The Music Department Co-ordinator deals with much of the administration of the department. The Chorister Co-ordinator is a vital link between Wells Cathedral School and the Cathedral. The Chorister Vocal Tutor provides regular, expert vocal tuition to the Boy and Girl Choristers to complement the training they receive in the Choir.

Finally, there are usually either one or two Junior Organ Scholars, who are normally sixth form students at Wells Cathedral School.

The Vision: Musical Outreach

In 2020, the Cathedral Chapter adopted choral singing outreach projects as an integral part of the work of the Music Foundation at Wells, to ensure that we are outward looking, share skills and expertise as widely as possible in the community, and are creative in instilling a love of music in the next generation of musicians. The outreach leaders are under the direction of the Director of Music but formulate their own programme.

We partner with others to offer compelling and exciting events, alongside community singing. Further, we have ambitious plans to use Vicars' Close to raise awareness of the long tradition of choral music in this place, and to engage tourists and other groups with the joy of making music today.

Overall, our aim is to provide a musical education for talented children — irrespective of parental means — and an opportunity for the broader community to engage with music for both physical and mental well-being. The benefits to the community and potential Choristers are innumerable, and through this vision the Cathedral will enable the next generation of high-calibre singers needed to secure the future of Cathedral music.

Wells Cathedral Choir

The Choir is at the heart of the worshipping life of the Cathedral and always has been. Boys first sang at Wells Cathedral in 909, and the full choral tradition dates back over 800 years. Most Vicars Choral and the Organists still live in Vicars' Close, making it the oldest medieval street in Europe continuously occupied for its original purpose. In 1994, the Choral Foundation at Wells was enriched by the addition of Girl Choristers, and we marked the 30th anniversary of the Girl Choristers in 2024 with a series of celebratory events.

Today, Wells Cathedral Choir is renowned for the breadth and depth of its musical repertoire, for the quality of its choral music as a key part of the liturgy, and for its wider contribution to the commissioning of new music. With the financial assistance of the Cathedral Commissions Scheme (established in 2006), the Choir has premiered works by some of today's finest composers, including Michael Berkeley, Judith Bingham, Geoffrey Burgon, Bob Chilcott, Jonathan Dove, Grayston Ives, Gabriel Jackson, John Joubert, Cecilia McDowall, James MacMillan, Peter Maxwell Davies, Tarik O'Regan, John Rutter, Anna Semple, Howard Skempton, John Tavener, Judith Weir, and many more.

The Choir has been praised for its innovative recordings for the Hyperion, Regent, Signum, and Resonus labels. As well as the liturgical musical repertoire, the Choir performs larger scale choral works in concert, and performs regularly with orchestral musicians from Wells Cathedral School's specialist music department.

Schola Cantorum

The Schola Cantorum is formed from professional sopranos who are booked on a project-by-project basis to sing services in the Cathedral alongside the Vicars Choral. The Schola Cantorum only rehearses directly before services, and usually sings when the Choristers are unavailable.

Song Squad

Song Squad is open to all children aged 4 to 11 (inclusive), who attend any school — presently, more than ten local schools are represented. Song Squad aims to offer fun and relaxed singing opportunities to local children, and the chance to sing alongside the Cathedral Choir in termly Evensongs, as well as perform in concerts and at other events.

Recently, Song Squad has collaborated with the Melody Makers of Bath Abbey, Bath Abbey's equivalent choir. Although not its primary function, a number of Choristers have joined the Cathedral Choir, having progressed through Song Squad. There is no audition: the hope is simply to instil a love of singing. The Leader of Song Squad reports to the Director of Music but formulates their own programme.

Primary School Musical Outreach

Primary School Musical Outreach has taken place since April 2022. Each half term, our Director of Primary Musical Outreach visits three or four primary schools within the Diocese,

offering singing workshops to children in KS1 and KS2. The projects have culminated in massed lunchtime concerts in the Cathedral, where each school has showcased what they have learned and also combined with the other partner schools, and the Cathedral Choristers, in a range of repertoire. Recent concerts have included a performance of *The Daniel Jazz*, a climate-themed concert under the installation of *Gaia* by artist Luke Jerram, and a literary-inspired programme, entitled *From Page to Stage*. To date, around 1000 children have taken part in the programme. Primary Musical Outreach at Wells Cathedral is generously supported by Wells Cathedral School. The Primary Outreach Leader reports to the Director of Music but formulates their own programme.

Youth Choir and Secondary School Musical Outreach

Started in January 2024, the Youth Choir is a free programme open to all secondary school-aged children (11 to 18) with weekly meetings on Wednesday evenings. The group sings in termly Evensongs, as well as for special occasions — most recently, the installation of the new Dean of Wells, The Very Reverend Toby Wright. The Youth Choir Director also leads Secondary School Musical Outreach, a scheme that was created in order to help the Cathedral achieve its outreach vision in response to the decline of musical provision in state schools. It is hoped that this will be extended to create new outreach projects involving children from across the Diocese in workshops held in parish churches and as part of the Vicars' Close Project. The Youth Choir Director reports to the Director of Music but formulates their own programme.

Wells Cathedral Chamber Choir

Originally established in 1986 as Wells Cathedral Voluntary Choir, the Chamber Choir was launched in September 2021, and is an amateur, mixed-voice choir trained to sing liturgical music, though it also sings occasional concerts with a more varied programme. Recently, the Choir performed during the Sound of Wells Festival, singing alongside the Cathedral Choir in John Rutter's *Gloria* and in the first performance of a new commission by Grayston Ives. The Choir has a particular draw for experienced singers looking to engage with liturgical music on a regular basis. The Choir rehearses weekly on Thursday evenings, sings around 30 services a year in Wells Cathedral, and also undertakes an annual residency, usually at another Cathedral. The Choir is directed by the Assistant Director of Music.

Wells Cathedral Oratorio Society (WCOS)

Founded in 1896, WCOS performs major works from the choral repertoire with some of the country's leading soloists and orchestral ensembles. With around 160 voices, the society gives three concerts a year. Concerts are normally in early November, December (an annual performance of Handel's *Messiah*), and late March. The society also hosts a Come and Sing day each year, normally in May, to which any singers are welcome to study and perform a work from scratch. Chorus rehearsals are on Monday evenings in the Cathedral from September to March and generally follow Wells Cathedral School's term times.



► Choral Scholars in the Cloisters



► The Vicars Choral



► The medieval Vicars' Close



► Wells Cathedral Oratorio Society

About the Role

The Cathedral offers three Choral Scholarships to Alto, Tenor, and Bass singers who are keen to gain experience of singing in a professional cathedral choir and to develop their abilities as solo and ensemble musicians. The roles are offered for one year, with the option to extend to two years by mutual consent.

The Scholarships are most suited to those of graduate age, and are ideal preparation for those who wish to continue their studies in singing at a conservatoire, or enter into a career as a professional musician. The positions also serve as an excellent opportunity for Choral Scholars to develop their general musicianship and explore other musical interests. Previous Choral Scholars have gone on not only to sing, but to take up careers as organists, conductors, composers, teachers, and more.

Choral Scholars sing alongside the nine Vicars Choral at all services sung by the Cathedral Choirs. An allowance is given for singing lessons, which are often (but not always) taken with one of the Vicars Choral.

Choral Scholars share accommodation with the Organ Scholar in the medieval Vicars' Close, which — alongside its claim to fame as the oldest continuously-inhabited street in Europe — boasts a thriving and supportive community.

The position offers financial remuneration of £7,830 for the Scholarship before deductions, apportioned over 11 months in equal instalments (inclusive of holiday). Additional fees are paid to Choral Scholars for singing at weddings, funerals, and concerts. Choral Scholars are invited to sing, in a supporting capacity, with Wells Cathedral Oratorio Society, for which they are remunerated separately for rehearsals and concerts.

There are usually other opportunities to supplement income with work in the secular side of the Cathedral's operation, for those who wish. This is encouraged so that a holistic appreciation of the work of a Cathedral is gained; this extra work can attract remuneration in the region of £10,000 per annum. Previous Choral Scholars have also worked at Wells Cathedral School.

Weekly Schedule

Monday	0755–0855	Chorister rehearsals and vocal tuition
	0900–0930	Senior Choristers continue rehearsing
	1620–1730	Boy / Girl Choristers rehearse
	1630–1705	Boy Choristers and Vicars Choral rehearse
	1715–1800	Vicars Choral rehearse and sing Evensong
Tuesday	0755–0855	Chorister rehearsals and vocal tuition
	1620–1630	Boy Choristers warm up
	1630–1800	Boy Choristers and Vicars Choral rehearse and sing Evensong
	1645–1815	Wells Cathedral Song Squad
	1815–1930	Wells Cathedral Youth Choir
Wednesday		Usually clear of regular duties
Thursday	0755–0855	Chorister rehearsals and vocal tuition
	0840	(WCS Week A only) Senior Choristers attend Assembly
	1620–1630	Girl Choristers warm up
	1630–1800	Girl Choristers and Vicars Choral rehearse and sing Evensong
Friday	0755–0855	Chorister rehearsals and vocal tuition
	1620–1730	Boy / Girl Choristers singing for weekend services rehearse
	1620–1630	Boy / Girl Choristers singing for Friday Evensong warm up
	1630–1800	Boy / Girl Choristers and Vicars Choral rehearse and sing Evensong
Saturday	1500	Ranks for Boy / Girl Choristers for 1515 rehearsal
	1630–1800	Boy / Girl Choristers and Vicars Choral rehearse and sing Evensong
Sunday	0900	Ranks for Boy / Girl Choristers for 0915 warm up
	0945–1145	Boy / Girl Choristers and Vicars Choral rehearse and sing the Eucharist
	1315	Ranks for Boy / Girl Choristers
	1325–1405	Boy / Girl Choristers rehearse
	1415–1600	Boy / Girl Choristers and Vicars Choral rehearse and sing Evensong

Major Festivals and Special Services

Occasionally, there is a change to the standard pattern of weekly services — any changes to the schedule are communicated in good time. Major festivals and special services which fall outside the standard pattern of services include the St Andrew's Day Eucharist (which falls on or close to St Andrew's Day), the Advent Carol Service, two Cathedral Carol Services, three Christmas Candlelight Concerts, Evensong and Midnight Mass on Christmas Eve, Sung Eucharist and Matins on Christmas Day, Evensong on Monday or Tuesday, and Wednesday of Holy Week, Evening Eucharist on Maundy Thursday, Matins and the final hour of the 3-hour devotion on Good Friday, the Easter Vigil on Holy Saturday, Eucharist, Matins and Evensong on Easter Day, Ascension Day, the Dedication Festival, Ordination Services, and not more than six other services during the year, one of which is the Diocesan Choral Festival. Attendance is also required for all rehearsals prescribed for these services.





► The Iconic Scissor Arches surround the Tower Crossing

Job Description

Post	Choral Scholar
Key Purpose	To take your part in the services and concerts — detailed in the schedule listed in the application pack — including all necessary rehearsals. The duties may be varied from time to time after consultation by the Chapter and the Choral Scholar.
Reporting to	Director of Music
Location	Wells Cathedral, Cathedral Green, Wells, BA5 2UE
Main Duties and Responsibilities	• To prepare for and sing at services as part of the Cathedral Choir on four weekdays and at weekends • To sing in concerts, on recordings, and for other events as required by the Director of Music, all of which are planned and notified in advance • To assist in the Music Library for one hour per week, and to chaperone Chorister rehearsals on alternate Sundays • One Choral Scholar may be invited to take on the role of Assistant Choir Librarian — an additional £150 is paid three times per year • One Choral Scholar will assist the Mistress of the Robes, by taking responsibility for the management and tidy order of the Vicars Choral and Choral Scholar vestments — a small fee of £30 per term is currently paid • Attend and participate in training courses as directed, including safeguarding • Uphold the Cathedral's values and code of conduct • Adhere to Wells Cathedral's policies and procedures, treating any safeguarding issues with the highest priority



Person Specification

Qualifications, Knowledge, and Experience

Essential

- Demonstrate a good level of ability and experience as a choral singer
- Good ability in sight-reading
- Capable of singing up to three Sunday choral services and weekday Evensongs on a regular basis

Desirable

- Education to degree standard
- Experience working in a cathedral/church music environment
- Experience of singing music of various styles from across the choral repertoire

Skills and Abilities

Essential

- Good organisational and interpersonal skills
- Excellent team working skills, with the ability to work collaboratively
- A musician who is keen to improve and learn, and to experience different styles of choral music

Work-related Personal qualities

Essential

- Punctual, reliable, with a positive outlook, and integrity
- A person who is stimulated by the high expectations of those around them
- Flexibility in response to changing circumstances and a positive approach to innovation
- The ability to work well within a team
- Approachable, open, and honest
- Takes responsibility for own personal development

Desirable

- A communicant member of the Church of England

Main Terms and Conditions

Hours of Work

Throughout the duration of this appointment, you will normally be required to work an average of 18 hours a week during Choir term time. This includes the normal term pattern of Wells Cathedral School (usually 34 weeks) and an additional 2 weeks to cover the period up to and including Christmas Day, and Palm Sunday to Easter Day.

Salary

Salary of £7,830 for the duration of the fixed-term contract. This includes payment for holiday and is apportioned equally over 11 months payable by monthly instalments in arrears on the 24th day of each month. Further fees for participation (as required) in recordings, broadcasts, concerts, extra services, and other selected events are also payable.

An additional professional development allowance of £250 per year (September–July) is provided for singing tuition and any other training that may be required and agreed with the Director of Music.

There may be additional opportunities for work within other departments of the Cathedral in agreement with the Director of Music.

Term

The role of Choral Scholar is offered as a fixed term contract as part of a paid internship. The term of employment will be from Saturday 5 September 2026 until Friday 2 July 2027.

Accommodation

Shared accommodation will be provided at 10 Vicars' Close, Wells, in which the postholder is required to reside during term-time in order to perform their duties. Basic furniture is provided.

Each month, approximately £166 will be deducted from salary for the payment of rent, council tax, water rates, and Wi-Fi. All other bills are the responsibility of the Choral Scholars and Organ Scholar to pay directly. The Scholars are required to keep the property (including the gardens) in good order.

A deposit of £150 is payable before the house is occupied; this will be refunded if the house is left in a satisfactory condition at the end of the contract.

Parking

Parking is available in the Cathedral car park for up to one vehicle. Cars are parked at the owner's risk.

Pension

Defined Contribution Scheme. Contributions as % of salary:

<i>Age</i>	<i>Employee</i>	<i>Employer</i>
<50	3%	5%
50–55	4%	8%
>55	5%	10%

Holiday

6.6 weeks per annum inclusive of bank holidays, to be taken outside of the Choir term for which the basic rate of salary will be paid.

The holiday year runs from 1 January to 31 December. Annual leave is authorised by the Director of Music.

Location

The Cathedral, Wells

Expenses

All reasonable working expenses will be met in line with Cathedral policy.

Probation

This post will be subject to a probationary period of 3 months.

Safeguarding

The appointment is made and continues subject to the receipt of a satisfactory Enhanced Disclosure and Barring (DBS) Check.



► Vaulting in the tranquil Chapter House © Nick James LRPS

How to Apply

Applications

Application must be received by **Sunday 2 November 2025**.

Applicants should provide a completed [Application Form](#) and [Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form](#) (optional) to the Human Resources department by email: recruitment@wellscathedral.org.uk.

Applicants are also asked to provide a music file (mp3 or WAV), no longer than 3 minutes, of themselves singing in a solo context. Files should be conspicuously labelled, e.g., *Sam Smith - Tenor*, and attached to email submissions.

Shortlisting

Shortlisting will take place on **Tuesday 4 November 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 on the application form 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

The selection process will take place in Wells on **Tuesday 11 November 2025**.

Further details will be provided to shortlisted candidates. The appointment will be subject to satisfactory DBS clearance and references.

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 with the Director of Music about the post, please contact the Music Department Co-ordinator, Melanie Lawlor, by email to melanie.lawlor@wellscathedral.org.uk.



► The High Altar Cross

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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