



# Southwell Minster

THE CATHEDRAL CHURCH OF  
THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

## Head Verger Information Pack





Thank you for your interest in the post of Head Verger. We hope the information pack is useful in telling you about the job but also in describing the uniqueness of Southwell – the smallest cathedral town in England, and its remarkable Minster church which continues to inspire and delight all who encounter it. People comment on the Minster’s beauty, tranquillity and prayerful atmosphere and it is held in much affection by the diocese and local community.

Like all Cathedrals, the pandemic has had a major impact on worship, activity and income and the Chapter is realistic that the next years will be challenging. However, we have much to look forward to, building on the successful completion of the *Leaves* project and set to increase visitor numbers with an opportunity to give a warm welcome and meaningful engagement with how the Minster speaks of faith and hope in Christ in times of change and uncertainty.

Prayer and worship are at the heart of the Cathedral’s life and the successful candidate will have a leading role in ensuring everything is done to standards of excellence and reverence. S/he will also lead a loyal, committed, and experienced verger team and be expected to inspire confidence and professionalism under pressure. The job is full of variety, scope, and although busy will be thoroughly worthwhile, and even fun! The Minster community values the vergers and will make the new post holder welcome.

We will be praying for you as you discern if God is calling you to explore further by applying.

With prayerful best wishes,

**The Very Reverend Nicola Sullivan**  
**Dean of Southwell**

## **Brief history**

The present Romanesque building replaced an Anglo-Saxon Minster church which in turn had been built on the site of an abandoned but significant Roman Villa. St. Paulinus baptised nearby in the River Trent evangelising this part of England in the early 7th century. Later, successive Archbishops of York developed the Palace near to the Minster, strategically positioned as the last stopping off place in the York Province on the Great North Road (now the A1). Southwell became an important seat of ecclesiastical power and influence as a Collegiate Church. Since 1884 the Minster has been the Cathedral church for Nottinghamshire (and, until 1927, East Derbyshire) although some 15 miles northeast of Nottingham. It is arguably the most beautiful 12th century building in England and perfect in its setting. It was one of only a dozen cathedrals mentioned in the Lonely Planet's Ultimate UK Travelist. It is a prayerful place and a spiritual resource to the 307 parishes of the Diocese of Southwell and Nottingham. Daily worship is at the centre of our life. Southwell Minster as cathedral and parish church offers all who come here an opportunity for celebration, learning and discovery.



## **The locality and the market town of Southwell**

The Minster is located eight miles west of Newark-on-Trent and 15 miles north-east of Nottingham. It is the seat of the Bishop of Southwell and Nottingham, who resides next door in Bishop's Manor, and nearby is Jubilee House, the diocesan office. Within the town centre there is a good selection of independent shops, friendly pubs selling traditional ales, cosy cafés and restaurants.

On Saturdays the Market Square hosts a lively market. Southwell has celebrated connections with Cardinal Wolsey, the Bramley apple, Lord Byron and King Charles I! There are self-guided heritage walks through the town, and here is the first ever Union Workhouse, now owned by the National Trust. Nottingham Trent University Campus Brackenhurst is in the parish, offering world renowned animal, rural and environmental studies courses and PhD research to a national and international student body. On site accommodation has recently expanded and the potential to grow the Cathedral/ University partnership is under discussion. In the town there is a wide range of local events including concerts and theatre performances. Southwell is proud of its many festivals including The Gate to Southwell Folk Festival, The Bramley Festival, The Southwell Music Festival (both centre around the Minster) and The Southwell Library Poetry Festival. Schools and pre-school care in Southwell is excellent with many of the school's having a Good or Outstanding Ofsted rating. The Minster Trust for Education (MITRE) Academy was formed in 2018 and includes



the Minster School, Lowe's Wong Infants and Holy Trinity CoE Infant School. All of these factors contributed to Southwell being named among the Sunday Times' best places to live.



### **A working Cathedral**

Apart from the normal round of the daily office and Eucharist, in 'normal times' the Minster is in demand for some 50 or so special services and events of many kinds including ordinations, confirmations, Memorial Services, County and Civic services, school and college services, and presentation and degree ceremonies. Our outward focused ministry with the County and external organisations is essential and we work hard to ensure that all who are hosted in the Minster are welcomed and involved in the planning and delivery of the service. We regularly host art exhibitions and theatre productions, and a series of organ recitals and concerts.



### **Visitor/tourist experience**

We are increasing the resourcing of staff and volunteers to welcome visitors that numbered 55,000 in 2019. Visitor services (welcomers, stewards, honorary chaplains, guides, shop and the verger team) play an important role in the life of the Minster. The welcome extended to each visitor is an expression of the Cathedral's purpose as a place of prayer and Christian worship. We rely heavily on volunteers. Following the completion of the Leaves Project we are aiming to attract 70,000+ visitors a year by 2025.

### **'Leaves' Project: where medieval stone meets living nature**



The £2.5m National Lottery Heritage Fund supported project is centred around the conservation and interpretation of the famous 'Leaves of Southwell' in the Chapter House, but it is much more exciting than just repair of the fabric. A stream of new, multi-disciplinary work over the last ten years has deepened the accepted view of these world-renowned carvings. The three-year programme to deliver the project was delayed due to Covid with the interior work completed in October 2021 and the Palace Garden to open in spring 2022.

### **Partner in Action with A Rocha UK**

We have a new opportunity as the first Cathedral to be a Partner in Action with A Rocha UK and not only talk about caring for God's creation as one of the Five Marks of Mission but do it by a radical shift in how we steward the astonishingly beautiful grounds, gardens and green space around the Minster. This is in the early stages of development, which will

include the placement of interns at the Cathedral, as well as encouraging people to take personal steps of change.



# Southwell Minster Chapter

## Head Verger

### Job Description

**LOCATION:** The Minster

**ACCOUNTABLE TO:** Chief Officer

**SALARY:** £27,807 plus 8.5% pension contribution

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#### CONTEXT

The verger team is responsible for ensuring that all worshippers and visitors to this iconic building are welcomed and engaged, and that services and other events run smoothly. The Head Verger is a senior member of staff who brings dynamic leadership to the verger team, enabling it to fulfil this function. The Verger team (Head Verger, Deputy Head Verger, 1 full-time and 2 part-time vergers) is going through a time of transition and the successful applicant will help to shape and motivate a new team.

#### KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

##### 1: Leadership and Management

- a. Lead, inspire, motivate, line manage and train the verger team to engage and serve all users of the building.
- b. Responsible for management of the departmental budget.
- c. Lead the verger team to maintain and ensure a high standard of liturgical excellence
- d. Compile staff rota to ensure cover for all hours the building is open and that all events and services are staffed. Rota to be planned a minimum one month in advance and any changes agreed with the Chief Officer.
- e. Responsible for Health and Safety in the Cathedral, State Chamber and associated rooms and the surrounding curtilage.
- f. Lead the team to ensure that the Cathedral is a safe space for all those who worship, visit and work within it.

##### 2: Liturgy and Services

- a. Ensure the Cathedral is prepared for all services and related events (including weddings, funerals, civic events and special services).
- b. Act as the Head Verger at services in the Cathedral, particularly special services and to manage the other Vergers as part of these occasions.
- c. To verge the Dean (or senior clergy) on ceremonial occasions,

- d. Working closely with the Canon Precentor to brief sidespersons/volunteers for services and events, in particular in relation to logistical operations and health and safety requirements.
- e. Support the Canon Precentor in planning of special services as required and in provision of all Cathedral worship.
- f. Responsible for sound, video and light systems in the Cathedral and ensure they are in good working order, regularly tested and that the Verging team are trained on how to use and maintain them.
- g. Ensure all liturgical furniture, plate, ornaments and vestments are maintained in the highest order and the inventory is updated as required.
- h. Oversee the ordering and stock control of candles, candle oil, communion wafers wine and other liturgical requirements
- i. Manage the procurement and storage of cleaning supplies and all materials needed for the presentation of services.

### **3: Welcome and Hospitality**

- a. Play a full part in the maintenance of good public relations and treat visitors in a friendly, tactful and helpful manner, being firm when necessary, without giving offence
- b. Work alongside stewards and other colleagues to consistently improve the experience of visitors to Southwell Cathedral
- c. Liaise with Head of Education, tour leaders, and others, to provide excellent experiences for school groups, tourists, and other visitors.
- d. Regularly review visual first impressions of the Cathedral, ensuring these are as positive as possible.
- e. Champion a culture of hospitality and welcome which imbues all that we do as a cathedral community.

### **4: Events and Logistics**

- a. Offer a professional service to all events organisers.
- b. In liaison with the Head of Events, take responsibility for staging and seating requirements for all events, being aware of Cathedral ethos and sensitivities, and health and safety policies.
- c. Be present (or ensure other verger presence) at weekly diary meetings.

### **5: Health and Safety**

- a. Be knowledgeable of, and ensure team are aware of, all Health and Safety policies including major incident, fire safety, first aid and lone working policies.
- b. Ensure training in all these areas is up to date for self and colleagues.
- c. Ensure all relevant fire safety and health and safety records, and accident books, are accurately maintained.



- d. Liaise with fire, police, ambulance services, building personal relationships, and understanding who to call and when.
- e. Responsible for ensuring that the Cathedral is kept in a safe order and that any hazards are reported to the Chief Officer.

#### **6: Maintenance**

- a. Regularly review all systems in the Cathedral including but not limited to heating, lighting, fire and security, taking responsibility for all maintenance checks and management of associated maintenance contracts.
- b. Ensure all records are kept in good order and accessible to Cathedral management, Architect and relevant external bodies.
- c. Participate in annual fire inspection and action any recommendations.
- d. Ensure a full maintenance programme is in place and reviewed regularly with appropriate actions discussed with the Chief Officer.
- e. Ensure the Cathedral is clean and always presented to the highest standards; to ensure there is a robust and sensible cleaning regime in place.
- f. Responsible for the supervision of on-site contractors.

#### **7: Security**

- a. Responsible for the Verger team emptying the money boxes and safe custody of cash.
- b. Constantly pay attention to the security of the building and everyone in it, moving towards problems and taking responsibility to resolve them.
- c. Ensure the Cathedral is adequately staffed during opening hours, supporting and liaising with welcomers, and ensuring no-one is left in a vulnerable position.
- d. Regularly review all processes relating to security (such as key holders, out of hours security processes).
- e. To be part of the team that act as responsible key holders in the event of out of hours incidents such as fire, and intruder alarm activation.

#### **8: General**

- a. To keep the vestries and sacristy in good order.
- b. To ensure all HR processes are adhered to including 'Return to Work' interviews and any necessary performance management tools in conjunction with the Chief Officer.
- c. To be the representative for Southwell Cathedral in the Association of English Cathedrals Head Verger network.
- d. Engage and liaise with the National Guild of Vergers.
- e. All staff and volunteers are expected to demonstrate a commitment to safeguarding the welfare of all children and vulnerable adults, 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 and training commensurate with their role.

## **Person Specification:**

Ability to act according to the Cathedral's core values

### Knowledge and Experience

Essential:

- Understanding of Church of England liturgy and its principles, and empathy with all aspects of its ethos
- Be a communicant member of the Anglican Church or of Churches Together in Britain and Ireland
- A sense of the value of well-ordered worship and its contribution to the Cathedral's wider ministry and mission
- Ability to understand and carry out detailed liturgical and ceremonial duties
- Capable of contributing to the ordered conduct of the liturgy and the Cathedral's various events and activities through being part of the public face of the Cathedral when on duty
- Previous management experience
- Understand the essential principles of Safeguarding in the Church of England
- Good understanding of security and health and safety

Desirable

- Guild of Vergers Diploma
- Previous experience of working as a verger in a Cathedral or large church environment
- Experience of working in an environment where paid and voluntary staff work alongside one another
- Experience of overseeing on-site contractors
- Experience of working in a historic building
- Relevant, up to date Safeguarding training
- First Aid qualified

### Skills

Essential

- Excellent organisational skills, with an ability to plan, prioritise work and meet deadlines
- Ability to work well under pressure
- Ability to initiate, develop and implement good practice
- Strong leadership and management skills, and experience of managing complex events/services
- Understanding of safeguarding issues and practices
- Working knowledge of Microsoft Office – particularly Word and Excel
- Excellent communication skills

Desirable

- The capacity to plan, implement and monitor an agreed budget (or willingness to acquire the financial skills necessary)

## Personal Attributes

### Essential

- Personal qualities necessary to supervise, motivate and enthuse other members of the Verger team
- Tact, diplomacy, courtesy, respect for others, and firmness in dealing with occasionally disruptive people
- Strong communication skills and ability to relate well to a variety of people, to staff, the congregation, volunteers and members of the general public
- Ability to work as a flexible and enthusiastic team member both within the Verger team and across the Cathedral, coupled with an ability to work independently and exercise individual initiative as required.
- Willing to learn new skills and undertake training
- Ability to lift and carry furniture, climb stairs, walk with dignity and stand unaided for significant periods of time. A good head for heights
- Understanding of, sympathy with and willingness to promote the aims and purposes of the Cathedral, its mission and ministry
- Ability to uphold and conform to the requirements of the Cathedral's Safeguarding policies

There is a Genuine Occupational Requirement in accordance with the Equality Act 2010 for the postholder to be a communicant member of the Anglican Church or of Churches Together in Britain and Ireland

### **Supervision**

You will meet regularly as agreed with the Chief Officer

### **Meetings/Communications/Liaison**

To attend Staff and Committee meetings as appropriate and as directed. To liaise internally with staff, volunteers and committee members as appropriate, and externally with a wide variety of individuals and organisations as appropriate.

### **Salary**

£27,807 per annum

### **Pension**

Southwell Cathedral Chapter will pay 8.5% of salary into the pension scheme.

### **Accommodation**

It may be possible to rent a two-bedroom flat in the Archbishop's Palace adjacent to the Minster

### **Hours**

This post is based on working 35 hours per week as part of a rota which will include weekend working.

**Annual Leave**

Annual leave entitlement is 25 days plus three discretionary days, applied flexibly to provide cover, and in addition all statutory public holidays (though these may need to be taken on other than the designated days as appropriate).

**Sickness**

Absence from work due to sickness should be reported on the first day of illness (or as soon as possible) to the Chief Officer. Self-certification is required for one to five days, and a medical certificate is required following six consecutive days' illness.

**Policies**

Adhere to all policies and guidelines of Southwell Cathedral Chapter and work in accordance to our Staff Handbook, and contribute to the Cathedral's work and mission with enthusiasm and understanding. Carry out any other duties as required within the scope of the post.

**Training**

Attend training courses as appropriate both locally and nationally, to enable you to fulfil the responsibilities and duties required. Undertake and deliver appropriate training and support for staff, volunteers, committee members and any external agents as appropriate.

The Christian vision, ethos and principles of the Cathedral underpin all aspects of the way the Cathedral operates. The post-holder must be sympathetic to these Christian principles and values, and support the Cathedral vision and strategy.

**Equality:**

Southwell Minster is committed to creating a harmonious working environment, which is free from harassment and bullying and in which everyone is treated with respect and dignity. It is committed to ensuring that individuals do not feel apprehensive because of their religious belief (including theology or church tradition), political opinion, gender, marital status, sexual orientation, race, age, or disability, or through any inappropriate behaviour towards them.

**Safeguarding Regulations:**

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



Southwell Minster is committed to:

- safeguarding, caring for and nurturing children and young people in the Cathedral and community.
- safeguarding and caring for vulnerable adults in the Cathedral and community.
- informing those involved with children and vulnerable adults in our church of the behaviour expected of them.
- explaining the procedure for background checks of those involved with children and vulnerable adults in the Cathedral.
- protecting adult members of the church from malicious or false accusations of abuse.

**This role requires an Enhanced DBS**

**NOTE:**

The Cathedral intends to review job descriptions annually as part of the staff review process, to ensure that they relate to the role as then being performed or to incorporate whatever reasonable changes that have occurred over time or are being proposed. This review will be carried out by the line manager in consultation with the post-holder before any changes are implemented. The post-holder is expected to participate fully in such discussions and implementation.

Closing Date: Friday 8<sup>th</sup> July 2022

Interviews: Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2022

For further information or an informal conversation please contact Canon Nigel Spraggins, Chief Officer 01636 817285