

INFORMATION FOR CANDIDATES

ORGAN SCHOLAR 2026-2027



**GUILDFORD
CATHEDRAL**

BACKGROUND

Guildford Cathedral is a sacred space and an open community of people who together engage with God and the wider world, for the common good. The cathedral is a focus and resource for the whole community: a place of daily choral worship, a space for stillness and prayer, a place of pilgrimage, and a venue for concerts, art and education.

Guildford Cathedral Choir is one of the musical success stories of our times. Ever since the Cathedral's consecration in 1961, the Choir has maintained the daily choral service, singing five or six days every week during school terms. For most of this period, the boy choristers have been drawn from RGS prep (formerly Lanesborough) School, taking part in daily morning rehearsals before lessons commence, and then being brought to the Cathedral in a bus for Choral Evensong. In 2003, a group of girl choristers was recruited from a variety of maintained and independent schools, and they now share the weekly singing duties with the boys. Six Lay Clerks, paid professional singers, complete the make-up of the Cathedral Choir. Occasionally, the boy and girl choristers contribute from their respective repertoires at the same service, for example at Christmas, and in Holy Week.

Choral Evensong is sung every weekday except Wednesday, and the Cathedral Eucharist and Choral Evensong are sung on Sundays during term time. There are also special services and concerts to play for throughout the year.

The head of department is the Canon Liturgist, Rachel Young; the Organist and Master of the Choristers is Katherine Dienes-Williams, the Sub Organist is Asher Oliver, and the Organ Scholar for the 2025-2026 academic year is Josef Gaszka.

Guildford Cathedral invites applications for the post of Organ Scholar. The appointment, if ratified following a three-month probationary period, will be for a period of nine months commencing on 1 September 2026 (i.e. ending 31st August 2027), and the successful candidate is likely to be either a recent graduate or a 'gap year' student. They will already play to a high standard and will have experience of choir accompaniment. The main Cathedral organ was refurbished alongside the Heritage Lottery Fund project, and rededicated in March 2018. There is, additionally, an organ in the Lady Chapel, and a piano and digital organ in the Song School, which may be used for practice.

JOB SPECIFICATION

Job Title: Organ Scholar

Accountable to: The Organist and Master of the Choristers (who is accountable to the Canon Liturgist)

Key tasks: During term time:

- to accompany all or part of Evensong on at least one evening a week and on other occasions at the direction of the Organist and Master of the Choristers or the Sub Organist
- assistance at weekday Evensongs and all Sunday services

- attendance at four boy chorister morning practices each week, and attendance at girl chorister rehearsals
- teach probationer choristers at each rehearsal at which they are present
- teach music theory at RGS Prep one lunchtime weekly during term time or as per the schedule and at RGS one lunchtime weekly during term time or as per the schedule
- travelling to RGS Prep on a bus on a Tuesday and Thursday (or other day as per the schedule) at an appointed time of departure, acting as supervising chaperone in accompanying boy choristers to the cathedral after school, keeping orderly behaviour, and supporting the lead choir chaperone in their role
- ensuring choristers (boys and girls) are ready with the requisite music copies and attire and punctually in the right place for rehearsals / services / concerts / all other events – providing spare copies of music as required
- providing daily office assistance in the music department, directed by the Organist, Sub Organist, departmental secretary and / or the Canon Liturgist
- acting as choir librarian for the Cathedral Choir, maintaining the orderly management and cataloguing of the music library, daily music filing, preparing boxes of music for use well in advance, ordering music / photocopying copies as directed by the Organist / Sub Organist
- attending termly chorister parent meetings (evenings) and / or safeguarding training meetings (evenings – usually one a term or fewer)
- creating hymn booklets and other music booklets as required by the Organist / Sub organist
- musically accompanying the Cathedral choir off site at diocesan visits – arranging rehearsal time at the venue
- arranging instrumental music parts as required
- giving two *gratis* organ recitals during the year – one as a ‘coffee concert’, one as a ‘thank you to sponsors’ concert which takes the form of a valedictory recital
- teaching choristers preparing for RSCM examinations as directed by the Sub Organist and / or accompanying their examinations

At other times:

- accompanying the Guildford Cathedral Singers and attending 2-hour rehearsals; this happens approximately 13 times in the year, usually before the start and after the end of choir terms – NB sometimes during Cathedral choir holidays
- occasional opportunities to accompany special services for which additional fees may be paid
- occasional opportunities to sing with or conduct the Cathedral Choir at the discretion of the Organist and Master of the Choristers
- other duties at the direction of Organist and Master of the Choristers, and Sub Organist

The Organ Scholar should expect normally to be available on site during the working day (six days a week), and occasionally at other times, except by negotiation. A valid driving licence is not required, however, if travel mileage is undertaken for work purposes, this can be claimed.

Benefits: Salary approximately £14,874 per annum, paid in monthly instalments
Free single accommodation in a shared house with the lay clerks
Tuition from the Organist and Sub Organist as required / requested
Subsidised organ lessons to the value of £150 annually

RECRUITMENT PROCESS

To apply for this post, please complete the application form and send a covering letter (350 word limit), (please inform your referees that we will be taking up references as part of the shortlisting process, prior to interviews on the advertised date), and a **copy of your CV** to the Liturgy and Music Administrator, Mrs Carolyn Howard-Jones:

liturgymusic@guildford-cathedral.org

Your application must be received by **12 noon on Monday 15 September 2025**. All applications will be acknowledged.

Applicants will be advised of the outcome of an initial short-listing of applicants as soon as possible after the closing date.

Auditions, interviews and a viewing of the shared house will be held on **Tuesday 30 September** – shortlisted candidates will be notified as soon after the application closing date as possible.

Any offer of appointment will be dependent on the receipt of satisfactory references, and an enhanced DBS check.