



GUILDFORD
CATHEDRAL

CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER INFORMATION FOR CANDIDATES

SEPTEMBER 2025



CONTENTS

Page 3	Letter from the Dean, the Very Reverend Bob Cooper
Page 4	Chief Operating Officer Job Description
Page 8	How to Apply



LETTER FROM THE DEAN

The Very Reverend Bob Cooper

Thank you for the interest you have shown in joining our community here on Stag Hill.

I was installed as Dean here in January of this year, and as a relative newcomer myself, I would like to share some reflections on these first six months here at Guildford Cathedral, and to look ahead to the exciting journey that lies before us.

The growth we have witnessed in our congregations has been genuinely encouraging. There is a palpable sense of anticipation in our services, and I have been moved by how both long-standing members and newcomers have embraced one another. This growth is not merely about numbers – though numbers matter – but about the direction of our worship, the depth of our prayer life, and the increasing breadth of our mission to serve both our local community and the wider church. It is with this foundation of strength and hope that we are embarking on a comprehensive revision of our Vision and Strategy. This is not something we are undertaking lightly or in haste. Over the coming months, we will be creating multiple opportunities for every voice to be heard – from our youngest choristers to our most senior volunteers, from our dedicated staff to our faithful congregation members. We will also be engaging with the civic, business and academic communities in Guildford and across Surrey. We will be hosting listening sessions, small group discussions, and larger gatherings because we believe that our vision must emerge from the collective wisdom and prayer of our entire cathedral community. I cannot emphasize enough how vital it is that this entire process be surrounded by prayer. We are not simply planning for the future; we are seeking to discern God's calling for this place and these people in the years to come.

I invite you to join us as we navigate this important work together. I am particularly grateful for the excellent partnership we are developing with the Diocese of Guildford. Bishop Andrew and I have established a strong working relationship, and there is a real sense of shared purpose between the cathedral and the diocese. We are not separate entities working in parallel, but partners in the Gospel, each bringing our unique gifts to serve the mission of Christ in Surrey and beyond. This collaboration strengthens both institutions and provides a model for how cathedral and diocese can work together effectively.

However, I would be less than honest if I did not acknowledge the financial challenges we face. Like many cathedrals across the country, we are grappling with the realities of maintaining a historic building, supporting excellent music and worship, and expanding our mission and ministry, all while managing the economic pressures that affect every organization today. These challenges are real and require our sustained attention and creative solutions. We are committed to addressing these issues with both practical wisdom and faithful stewardship as part of our broader Vision and Strategy work. Having read through this Information Pack, I very much hope that you will be inspired to help us as we move forward with faith in Christ.

The Very Rev'd Bob Cooper
Dean of Guildford



CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER JOB DESCRIPTION – GUILDFORD CATHEDRAL

Guildford Cathedral now seeks a new Chief Operating Officer upon the retirement of the current post-holder who has served in this capacity for nearly 12 years.

Our new COO will play an integral role in delivering Guildford Cathedral's mission to be an inspiring place of worship at the heart of the town and the wider Diocese. This individual will be a key member of the Cathedral's senior team, leading all lay staff and holding responsibility for the Cathedral's day-to-day operations. The COO will represent the Cathedral externally to a variety of audiences and partners. Reporting to the Dean and responsible to Chapter, this individual will lead the team implementing the Cathedral's strategies, ensuring effective governance, robust compliance, and inspirational delivery of the Cathedral's practical business and mission. The COO will work closely with the Dean, Chapter, the CFO, the Senior Management Group and other committees.

This is a significant and busy role, spanning all aspects of Guildford Cathedral's functions and purpose, and embracing a wide group of partners and stakeholders. Staff leadership is an important aspect of this role; our new COO must generate a modern and effective working environment, grow, develop and hold accountable our hard-working staff. This individual must ensure that best employment practices are adopted and maintained.

Main duties

- Work with Chapter and the Senior Management Group (SMG) to develop, implement and monitor progress against strategic goals;
- Lead the Cathedral's operation, ensuring it remains aligned with its vision and values;
- Maintain oversight and coordination of the many activities of the Cathedral's operation in collaboration with the Dean and SMG;
- Lead, manage and motivate the Cathedral's staff and volunteers, delegating tasks and duties effectively and holding staff to deadlines;
- In conjunction with the CFO, maintain and strengthen the Cathedral's financial position;
- Represent the Cathedral on external bodies as required, and maintain excellent relationships with these key partners;
- Be aware of, and actively participate in, the life and worship of Guildford Cathedral.



CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER JOB DESCRIPTION – GUILDFORD CATHEDRAL

Leadership

- Lead, manage and motivate the staff team and over 250 volunteers through effective structures, relationships and modes of communication;
- Develop a workplace culture and ethic for staff and volunteers which represents the Cathedral's values and purpose;
- Develop the skills and capabilities of staff through objective-setting, judicious delegation, regular performance and development reviews, and appropriate training and coaching;
- Enable the development of a collegiate, open and collaborative environment across the organisation;
- Champion diversity and inclusion across the community of the Cathedral, providing opportunity and support for staff and volunteers at all levels;
- Engage positively with the Cathedral community, including the congregations, volunteers, local residents and all stakeholders which are key to the Cathedral's life and development.

Governance and Compliance

- Ensure that the Cathedral meets all legislative and regulatory requirements and complies with ecclesiastical and charity law and regulation;
- Take responsibility for all regulatory reporting;
- Enable the effective running and forward-planning of Chapter and its committees, including timely and well-written papers, good record-keeping and the timely flow of information to trustees;
- Working closely with the Dean, keep Chapter informed of its responsibilities for working within robust governance procedures;
- Provide governance support to the Cathedral community;
- With the Architect, Property Manager, and in liaison with the Fabric Committee, ensure the organisation meets its statutory and legal commitments for the buildings owned and managed by the Cathedral.

Safeguarding, Security and Safety

- Work with the Cathedral's Safeguarding Team and the Diocesan Safeguarding Lead to ensure that a culture of safeguarding remains central to all that the Cathedral undertakes. This includes ensuring compliance with all safeguarding legislation, regulation and best practice, that mandatory training is completed on time, and that systems and processes are appropriate for the safety of all who visit and work at the Cathedral;
- Serve as a role model for the Cathedral's safeguarding policies and practices, and facilitate their implementation across all operations;
- Work with the Chief Steward, Chief Guide, Virger team and Property Manager to ensure a positive culture of health & safety and security across the Cathedral.



CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER JOB DESCRIPTION – GUILDFORD CATHEDRAL

Sustainability

- Work with the Head of Property and Facilities to develop achievable strategies to move the Cathedral toward environmental sustainability and encourage sustainable practices across the organisation.

Staff reporting directly to the Chief Operating Officer:

Chief Financial Officer
Head of Commercial Enterprise
Head of Development
Head of Fundraising
Head of Marketing and Communications
Head of Property and Facilities
Head of Schools
Dean's Virger

The Senior Management Group

The operational management of the Cathedral's activities is conducted through the Senior Management Group (SMG), of which the COO is a member. It is chaired by the Dean, and membership includes the Residentiary Canons and the CFO. The SMG meets every fortnight.

Committee Responsibilities

The COO will chair or sit on several committees, both within the Cathedral (for example, attending Chapter meetings, sitting on the Senior Management Group and chairing the Heads of Department meetings) and the Diocese/wider Church of England (for example, the Cathedral Finance and Administration Association meetings). There is a regular drumbeat of weekly, monthly and quarterly meetings.



CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER JOB DESCRIPTION – GUILDFORD CATHEDRAL

Person Specification

The COO will bring a proven and successful track record of *experience* in the following areas:

ESSENTIAL

- Significant leadership and management experience with the ability to inspire, influence and engage teams of staff volunteers and partners;
- Proven experience and ability to manage operational performance with tight financial constraints in a multi-faceted environment;
- Evidence of effective budget management;
- A proven understanding of the complexities in managing wide-ranging responsibilities and relationships;
- An understanding of and experience in safeguarding best practice;
- A track record of working collaboratively with a Board of Trustees (or equivalent), inspiring trust and confidence and building an effective working relationship between trustees and the executive.

DESIREABLE

- Previous COO or similar experience;
- Ideally, some operational experience in a faith-based, heritage or non-profit setting;
- Previous experience of working with volunteers.

KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND PERSONAL QUALITIES:

- The ability to understand a variety of operational issues and find creative solutions;
- A co-operative and empowering management style that fosters teamwork, trust, collaboration and cohesion across all activities;
- Decisiveness, with the ability to prioritise and drive key strategic initiatives;
- Excellent communication skills, both written and oral, in order to effectively and confidently share information at all levels both internally and externally;
- The ability to manage staff in a consistent and even-handed way, modelling collaboration and creating a positive team culture;
- The ability to influence colleagues, other staff outside the line management structure, volunteers and external partners to deliver for the good of the Cathedral;
- The ability to lead, motivate and inspire.



HOW TO APPLY

The salary for this role is £63,000. Our workplace pension plan has employee contributions of 5% and Cathedral contributions of 3%. Holiday entitlement is 25 days per annum plus Bank Holidays.

Please download and complete our application form.

You will find the form here | [Chief Operating Officer Application Forms](#)

Send this form, along with a full CV and letter outlining how you meet the Person Specification of this role in either of the following ways:

By email to dean@guildford-cathedral.org

By post to The Dean, Guildford Cathedral, Stag Hill, Guildford, GU2 7RP

Please send your application by noon on FRIDAY 26TH SEPTEMBER 2025

If you wish to have a conversation before applying, please send an email to deanspa@guildford-cathedral.org by 18th September and we will endeavour to set up a call prior to the application date.

After all applications have been received, we will contact all applicants to indicate our interest in taking their applications forward.

Longlist interviews: We will invite candidates who we believe most closely meet our criteria to meet with Roddy Porter, the Senior Non-Executive Member of the Cathedral Chapter, for a longlist interview on either Friday 3rd or Monday 6th October 2025.

Final interviews: You will hear from us by 13th October as to whether you have been invited forward to final interviews, which will be held on Monday 20th October. If you are not invited to attend final interviews, feedback will be provided.

References: We will ask for the contact details of 2 referees who can speak to your operational and leadership credentials; we expect to be able to speak to one of your referees prior to the final interviews. Please be prepared to share with us these details as we approach the final interview date.



GUILDFORD CATHEDRAL

