
Westminster Abbey



Vergers / Sacristans

Job description and person specification



Job description

JOB TITLE:	Verger/Sacristan
DEPARTMENT:	Vergers
POST REPORTS TO:	Dean's Verger, with a dotted line to the Canons' Verger
JOB SUMMARY:	To assist the Dean's Verger and Canons' Verger to prepare all Abbey altars and chapels for worship. To assist the Abbey Clergy in liturgy and duties according to Abbey ceremonial. To lead verger guided tours of the Abbey with sufficient knowledge to inform visitors on the tours of its history, life and Christian witness.
BACKGROUND:	Westminster Abbey is both a place of daily worship, and is one of the UK's leading visitor attractions, welcoming over one million visitors each year. A diverse and lively community work at the Abbey, comprising approximately 300 employees and a greater number of volunteers. St Margaret's Church is situated next to Westminster Abbey and is under the governance of the Abbey's Dean and Chapter. The church, once a separate parish, is now a Chapel of the Abbey, but it has very significant links with the Houses of Parliament and an important historic relationship with Mr Speaker and the House of Commons. It holds services for the Parliamentary community, services for schools, charities and other organisations, alongside the part it plays in the Abbey's regular pattern of worship.

It should be noted that for the purposes of this job description, Westminster Abbey known as 'the Abbey', includes St Margaret's Church.

MAIN DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

1. Liturgy and Worship

- To prepare for the liturgy according to the Rota, carrying out the Dean's orders and those of the Minor Canons.
- To verge processions during services and to verge dignitaries as required.
- Follow the written forms of liturgical requirements for daily services, special services and festivals.

Preparation for Services

- Lay out copes and other vestments for the clergy.
- Prepare altars and other areas for worship within the Abbey.
- Handling of the plate and setting out with care as instructed.

2. Sacristy and General

Areas/Chapels of Responsibility

- To care for an area of specific responsibility allocated in the Abbey (e.g. Lady Chapel, St Faith's Chapel, St Margaret's Church) on rotation.
- To assist with ensuring cleanliness and good order of vestments, linen, silver/plate, candles altar frontals and chapels
- To undertake the task of looking after and arranging the maintenance of the Copes and Abbey Linen.
- To report any defects, maintenance or repair issues to the Canons' Verger and the Dean's Verger

Guided Tours

- To acquire a full working knowledge of the history and life of the Abbey in order to lead Verger guided tours if required.
- To engage with and work with visitors to manage the tour they are leading.
- To deal effectively with any issues which arise that affect the safety and security of worshippers, visitors and the Abbey.
- To lead special tours for groups (schools, other organisations and VIPs) as required.

General

- Assist with worship, special services and other events in the Abbey.
- To be appropriately and suitably dressed in black trousers or skirt, black shoes, white shirt and black tie, as appropriate.
- Cassock and ceremonial gown are provided for ceremonial duties.
- To undertake any tasks which may be required by the Dean's Verger or Canon's Verger from time to time.
- To support with sexton duties on an annual rota basis.

This Job Profile will be kept under review and may be amended by the Dean & Chapter from time to time. Any proposed changes will be discussed with the postholder.

Safeguarding

Westminster Abbey is committed to the safeguarding of children, young people and adults at risk. To prevent them from harm, we undertake appropriate checks on staff and volunteers and require them to complete relevant safeguarding training.

Person specification

This section outlines the knowledge, skills and abilities the job holder needs in order to fulfil the requirements of the post. 'Essential' criteria are those that the job holder absolutely must have in order to do the job. 'Desirable' criteria are those qualities that would be either useful, or an advantage or those which the job holder can be trained to do.

Knowledge / Skills

- Knowledge of church liturgy and the liturgical calendar
- Good communication skills, both verbal and written
- Able to work effectively as part of a team
- Able to deal calmly and robustly with situations as they arise
- Ability to operate camera and PA systems for Liturgical Services / Events

Experience

- Experience of working with the public
- Previous experience as a Verger (paid or voluntary) (*Desirable*)

Attributes / Qualities

- Commitment to achieving the Abbey's mission overall.
- Understanding of and ability to commit to the role of the Verger within the liturgy of the church. The duties will include administering the chalice at the Eucharist and so it is expected that the successful applicant will be a communicant member of a church that is a member of Churches Together in Britain and Ireland.
- An interest in history and historical buildings (*Desirable*)

Circumstances:

- Able to work weekends, bank holidays and evenings as required.
- Additional hours may be required

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