



## Role Description Organ Scholar

Wakefield Cathedral is the iconic location at the heart of our city and district, a site where Christian worship has been offered for at least a thousand years. We are open for free, for everyone, for three hundred and sixty five days a year. Rooted in our rhythm of worship and nurture which is broadly catholic but hospitable to those of other Christian traditions, we welcome people of all backgrounds and beliefs to our many services and events and to our beautiful, light, and peaceful building. We are firmly committed to sustaining and renewing choral worship so the riches of singing, playing, and hearing can be shared now and into the future. This opportunity is made possible by the generous support of the Garrick Charitable Trust. This role will not just support our choral worship but help develop a promising musician, giving opportunities for organ playing and choral conducting, as well as mentoring and support from an experienced team, while contributing to sustainable music-making in churches and communities. We would be really pleased to hear from you.

**The Very Revd Dr Philip Hobday**

Dean of Wakefield

### About Wakefield Cathedral

The Saxon cross that stands at the west end of the Cathedral precinct (the original of which is in the Wakefield City Museum) bears witness to the fact that God has been worshipped at the heart of Wakefield for well over a thousand years; the earliest part of the present building dates from the middle of the twelfth century. When the Diocese of Wakefield was created in 1888 the Parish Church of All Saints became the Cathedral Church for the new diocese and Wakefield was elevated to city status. (Following the establishment of the West Riding County Council in 1889 Wakefield became the county town. The city benefits from some distinguished civic architecture as a result.)

Wakefield Cathedral, with our sister cathedrals at Bradford and Ripon, is now one of the three mother churches for the Diocese of Leeds which came into being on Easter Day 2014. All three cathedrals, co-equal in status, serve the mission of the Bishop and of the diocese as a whole, working closely and collegially. All three Deans are members of the Bishop's Senior Staff Team and of Diocesan Synod and each cathedral has its own honorary canons who are all members of the College of Canons of the whole diocese. Because of the contrasting but complementary nature of our contexts we are able to respond to the remarkable diversity of this young and flourishing diocese in a way that allows cathedral ministry to be owned and valued by parishes in urban, suburban, estate, rural and market town settings. Our spread of geographical location has also enabled the three cathedrals to play a major part in enabling and sustaining the momentum and enthusiasm for mission that has characterised the Diocese of Leeds since its creation ten years ago.

The current Dean of Wakefield, the Very Revd Dr Philip Hobday, took up his post at the start of 2026, and the Canon Precentor, the Revd Canon Dr Kathryn Goldsmith, joined in January 2024.

## The Liturgical Tradition

The cathedral's pattern of worship has been established over many years, and Wakefield is known for its strong catholic tradition. Within that tradition the pattern has gradually evolved and today embraces a wide range of authorised services. The Book of Common Prayer is used for Evensong on weekdays (with the BCP psalms for the day) and on Sundays. On Sundays Common Worship, Order One (contemporary language) is used for the 09.15 Eucharist (the 'Parish Mass', in effect), with a congregational setting led by the choristers or the Voluntary Choir. At the 11.00 Eucharist Common Worship, Order One (traditional language) is used, with a mass setting sung by the full choir. Incense is used at both Eucharists on Sunday morning, at Festival Eucharists and Solemn Evensongs.

Great importance is attached to the careful execution of the liturgy and we are fortunate in our team of dedicated servers, who, with our musicians, make a vital contribution to the effectiveness of the services particularly at the Festivals and during Holy Week, and, indeed the whole year round.

## The Music Department

Wakefield Cathedral Choir has been a central part of the worship and mission of Wakefield Cathedral ever since its elevation to cathedral status in 1888, following on from the already established parish choir. Since its foundation, the choir has always included boy choristers alongside adult lay clerks, and in 1992 Wakefield became only the second English cathedral to introduced girl choristers. Initially the boys and girls sang separately, but in more recent years they have joined forces more frequently, and in September 2023 the two groups were formally merged to create a single treble line. There are now around 15-20 choristers, who sing either by themselves or with the adult lay clerks.

Alongside this choir is Byrd Song, a choir for younger children, and the Cathedral Youth Choir for older teenagers. Both these groups sing services at least once a fortnight and provide opportunities for children and young people to be involved with the cathedral choir from the age of six to eighteen. There are also a number of adult sopranos who sing with the lay clerks on a regular basis as the Consort, and a Cathedral Voluntary Choir. In total, the choirs sing at least six services each week – Choral Evensong on Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Sunday, and two Eucharists each Sunday morning.

In addition to this, the cathedral choir has a vibrant concert programme, including two sell-out performances of Carols by Candlelight each December. The choir has also undertaken numerous choir tours over the years, both within the UK and abroad, with past locations including Poland, Sweden and the USA, and an upcoming tour to Peterborough and Ely in October 2026. The choir has frequently sung on radio and television broadcasts, and has made a number of CD recordings. We are hoping to secure a BBC Radio 3 Choral Evensong broadcast in the not-too-distant future.

The organ is one of very few five-manual instruments in the UK, and dates primarily from 1905 (reusing a small amount of previous pipework), with significant rebuilds in 1951 and 1985. There is also a three-rank continuo chamber organ used for early repertoire, and a two-manual electronic practice instrument located in the chapter house. The cathedral is also fortunate to have use of a Steinway Model C grand piano.

For the entire period from 1888 to 2010 there were only four Directors of Music, and the current Director, James Bowstead, is only the seventh person to hold this position, supported by Alana Brook as Assistant Director of Music. The music department operates under the supervision of the Canon Precentor, the Revd Canon Dr Kathryn Goldsmith.

## Weekly Timetable

The organ scholar will be expected to attend the cathedral at times to be agreed with the Director of Music, depending on their availability and other commitments. The regular weekly timetable of the music department is outlined below:

### Monday (DoM's rest day)

16.30 Youth choir rehearsal  
18.00 Finish

### Tuesday

11.00 Music department meeting

Week A		Week B	
15.45	School collection	15.45	School collection
16.15	Byrd Song rehearsal	16.15	Byrd Song rehearsal
17.00	Youth choir rehearsal (Byrd Song finish)	16.45	Byrd Song tea
17.30	Youth choir Evensong	17.30	Byrd Song Evensong
18.15	Finish	18.00	Finish

### Wednesday

15.45 School collection  
16.30 Chorister rehearsal and probationer/junior training  
17.30 Evensong (most weeks, sometimes Juniors or Seniors only)  
18.00 Finish

### Thursday

Week A		Week B	
15.45	School collection	15.45	School collection
16.30	Chorister rehearsal	16.30	Chorister rehearsal
17.30	Chorister tea	18.00	Choristers finish
18.00	Full rehearsal	18.00	Consort rehearsal
18.30	Evensong sung by choristers and lay clerks	18.30	Evensong sung by Consort
19.15	Lay clerks' rehearsal	19.15	Consort rehearsal
20.30	Finish	20.30	Finish

### Friday (ADoM's rest day)

15.45 School collection  
16.30 Chorister rehearsal (*once or twice a term*)  
18.00 Finish  
  
19.00 Voluntary Choir rehearsal (*about twice a month*)  
20.00 Finish

### Saturday

No regular duties, but occasional extra concerts, festivals or rehearsals

### Sunday

08.45 Rehearsal  
09.15 Eucharist sung by choristers or Voluntary Choir  
10.30 Rehearsal  
11.00 Eucharist sung by choristers and lay clerks or Consort  
12.15 Finish  
  
14.45 Rehearsal  
15.30 Evensong sung by choristers and lay clerks or Consort  
16.30 Finish

N.B. *The Youth Choir sings Sunday services (usually morning) about twice a term.*

## Purpose of post

This role supports the Director and Assistant Director of Music in ensuring excellent music, organ accompaniment and choral direction in Wakefield Cathedral. The Organ Scholar will play a role in the liturgical organ playing in the Cathedral and may assist as appropriate in the training and direction of the cathedral choir. This role may also include taking part in the delivery of the Cathedral's musical outreach to the diocese as well as the supporting and enabling of music making in the cathedral. This role acts as deputy to the Assistant Director of Music when necessary.

Given its nature as a scholarship, this is very much a training role and is intended to support the postholder in gaining the key skills and experience they would need to gain a more substantive role in church or cathedral music in the future, or indeed in another musical field. Within reason, the precise role can be shaped around the aspirations of the postholder but will enable them to gain skills and experience, in particular, in liturgical organ playing and accompaniment, as well as choral training and direction, and the general administrative running of a music department in a cathedral context.

## Accountability

The Organ Scholar will be line-managed by the Director of Music and accountable to the Canon Precentor in respect of their duties within the department. The postholder is accountable to the Dean for all matters relating to the terms and conditions of appointment. Leave is taken in agreement with the Director of Music.

## Principal Duties

The scope of the role can be adapted to suit the needs and interests of the successful candidate, but will be expected to include the following:

- To share with the Assistant Director of Music in accompanying weekday Evensongs, in particular chorister Evensongs on Wednesdays.
- To play for part or all of Sunday services as appropriate, in particular the 09:15 Eucharist.
- To support the Assistant Director of Music in training of probationer choristers.
- Page-turning for the Director or Assistant Director of Music at services.
- Playing voluntaries before or after services as required, and in particular playing before Sunday services.
- For the right candidate, opportunities may be available to rehearse and direct the cathedral choirs in services.
- To participate as appropriate in the cathedral's regular lunchtime recital series, which may include introducing and assisting visiting performers, and giving a solo recital at some point during the year.
- Under the direction of the Assistant Director of Music, maintaining and managing the cathedral's music library, including putting out the correct music for rehearsals and services, sorting and putting music away after services and keeping both the rehearsal room and the library orderly and neat.
- To exercise appropriate pastoral care (including acting as a chaperone and collecting choristers from school for rehearsals) for the choristers, demonstrate a commitment to a strong safeguarding culture at all times, and develop good relationships with chorister parents.
- As appropriate, to take a part in the Cathedral's musical outreach to local schools and to the Diocese.
- Supporting the training of choristers for RSCM ribbon exams.
- To assist with general administrative work in support of the liturgy and music and to attend departmental and other meetings agreed with the Director of Music, Assistant Director of Music and Canon Precentor.

- To liaise with colleagues to plan duties and commitments and to attend cathedral staff meetings if possible.
- To participate as required in recruitment events: voice trials, chorister open days, choir auditions.
- Any other duties and responsibilities as necessary which are commensurate with the grade and post.

## Training and Development

The organ scholarship is very much seen as a training role, and as such there will be a great deal of support for the postholder to develop their musical and personal skills. The role is flexible and broad enough to be adapted to suit the needs of the postholder, who will be offered regular tuition and guidance from the Director and Assistant Director of Music. In negotiation with the Director and Assistant Director of Music, the postholder will be able, and encouraged, to use the cathedral's organs for regular practice.

## Safeguarding

Wakefield Cathedral takes its responsibility for the safeguarding of children, young people and vulnerable adults very seriously and their welfare is paramount in all areas of cathedral life. All clergy, lay staff, and volunteers are properly recruited, screened, trained, and supported. The post-holder will be required to undertake all relevant Church of England safeguarding training, to complete a Confidential Declaration, and to have Enhanced Disclosure with Barring Checks from the Disclosure and Barring Service.

## How to apply

To apply, please fill out the attached application form, including the details of three referees, one of whom should be either your current or most recent employer, or an academic tutor. This form should be returned to James Bowstead, Director of Music by Friday 15 May, ideally by email:

[DoM@wakefield-cathedral.org.uk](mailto:DoM@wakefield-cathedral.org.uk).

For an informal conversation about the role, please contact James Bowstead, Director of Music, either by email as above or by phone (01924 373 923).

## Interview Process

The interview process will take place on a date and time to be agreed. The panel will include members of cathedral staff and a representative of chapter. You will be asked to perform two prepared pieces of organ music as well as sight-reading and improvisation tests.

## Person Specification

### Essential

- A commitment to the development plans of Wakefield Cathedral as set out in the strategic vision.
- Grade 8 organ or equivalent standard.
- An interest in, or up-to-date knowledge of church liturgy.
- A talented musician with abilities as a solo player, accompanist and liturgical organist.
- Sympathy with the values and ethos of the Church of England and the Cathedral, willing to facilitate and support the role of music and musicians in the cathedral's mission and opportunities for children, young people, and adults to explore Christian faith.
- A commitment to helping create a safer workplace and culture, including undertaking all necessary safeguarding training, following all safeguarding policies/procedures, and modelling good safeguarding practice in their own conduct.
- Flexibility towards the development of a wide range of musical and liturgical styles.
- A good communicator who can inspire choristers, professional and amateur musicians alike and who can also relate well to non-musicians.
- A team player, able to encourage collaboration without enforcing undue conformity.
- A willingness to work in locations other than the cathedral site.
- A maturity of character and a good sense of humour.
- An ability to stay calm under pressure.
- A willingness to receive criticism and adapt.
- A keen awareness of context, and ability to regulate behaviour and manner accordingly.
- Commitment to the full inclusion of all, with special regard to age, ability, gender identity, sexuality, religion, economic status, social class, and ethnicity.

### Desirable

- ARCO or equivalent standard.
- Cathedral experience.
- An ability to type-set music.
- An efficient and reliable administrator with a working knowledge of MS Office.
- Experience of using ChurchSuite or another data management system.

## Terms and Conditions

The Organ Scholar is accountable to the Dean for all matters relating to their terms and conditions of appointment and is line managed by the Director of Music.

The scholarship will be tenable for a period of 12 months (September to August) with the possibility for renewal subject to agreement.

The scholarship is only open to candidates who will be aged 18 or over on 31 August 2026.

A computer will be provided for this role if necessary.

Provision of accommodation does not form part of the terms and conditions of appointment.

The honorarium for this post is £2000 pa. The working hours are flexible subject to other commitments and will be negotiated with the postholder, but are likely to be in the region of 10-15 hours per week during choir terms, with scope for additional work as appropriate. This will include work on Sundays and evening rehearsals during the week. It is also hoped that the postholder will be able to attend services and rehearsals outside of normal academic terms, in particular at Christmas and during Holy Week, but this will be discussed with the postholder.

Offer of the position will be subject to satisfactory references and the safeguarding requirements set out above. There will be a probationary period of one month.