



The Graham Rogers Organ Scholarship

Recruitment Information Pack
2026-2027



About Chelmsford Cathedral

Chelmsford Cathedral, the Cathedral for the Diocese of Chelmsford, stands at the very centre of the county of Essex. As well as serving the whole of that richly diverse county, it also serves East London. A parish church Cathedral (it acquired Cathedral status in 1914), the building is 15th Century; but its interior, vividly and creatively reordered in the later twentieth century, glows with an evocative clarity of rare colour and warmth.

It has been described as a “jewel box of contemporary art” - from the haunting and sombre external sculpture of St Peter by Thomas Huxley Jones to the green and gold of Mark Cazalet’s Tree of Life mural; from the bright ordered geometry of Beryl Dean’s patchwork at the East end of the Chancel to the stark glass etching of St Cedd in the chapel dedicated to him in the north-west corner.

At the heart of both city and county, the Cathedral is a hub for a rich variety of community activity. It’s a space for refreshment, respite and prayer for hundreds of people every day passing through its grounds. It’s a gathering place for schools, for civic events and services (such as the Justice Service and the Mayor’s annual service), for diocesan occasions such as ordinations; and, of course, the great Feasts of Christmas and Easter, where the intimate space of one of England’s smallest Cathedrals is crowded out. Its congregation is thriving and diverse, with a lively junior church, and its liturgical and musical life is flourishing, with a rapidly growing choir of young choristers (boys and girls) as well as adult singers.

The Cathedral is growing its appetite for curating, hosting and theming a variety of cultural and educational events such as concerts, lectures and exhibitions. It is scoping its potential for social action in a busy city where a variety of need presents itself almost daily. And underpinning all that the Cathedral does are the daily services of prayer, song and communion, praying for a city, county, diocese and world in need of peace and compassion.



Context

The Dean and Chapter of Chelmsford Cathedral seek to appoint an Organ Scholar for the academic year 2026-2027. The Scholarship is named after the late Graham Rogers, a benefactor of the Cathedral and its music, and is suitable for a graduate or pre-university gap-year organist, offering a unique learning opportunity to gain experience as a cathedral organist. Working as part of a dedicated and supportive department, the Organ Scholar plays a key role in the Cathedral music department.

The music programme at Chelmsford Cathedral is busy and varied, encompassing regular choral services in the Cathedral with frequent visits to other venues in the area. In past years the Cathedral Choir has performed on BBC 1 and on a number of occasions on BBC Radio 3 and has sung for Her Late Majesty the Queen and His Late Royal Highness the Duke of Edinburgh. Recent concert performances have included collaborations with other groups including Britten Sinfonia and Tenebrae. The Cathedral is on an exciting journey to rebuild the Cathedral's music programme which has been wholeheartedly supported by congregation and staff.

The scholarship normally runs from the beginning of September until the end of the academic year in August and is offered for a period of one year (renewable by agreement). The scholarship takes the form of a part time contract of employment with a salary currently of £15,365, with nearby accommodation provided at reduced rent, in a shared house.

The salary will be reviewed from 1 April 2027, in line with Cathedral policy and the Real Living Wage will be applied during any review. A bursary of up to £750 is provided towards the cost of organ lessons. Your working hours will be 24 hours per week. From time to time, the organ scholar may be invited to play for weddings, funerals and other extra services for which additional fees are normally payable; there are also opportunities to be involved in music within the city and for private teaching.

The organ scholar is expected to attend all Cathedral Services and rehearsals where the Cathedral Choir is present. In addition, there will be opportunities to develop key skills including choral accompaniment, rehearsing and conducting choirs, and playing organ repertoire in recitals and at services, including recitals before the Advent Procession and Festivals of Nine Lessons & Carols. The organ scholar will also normally give one of the Friday lunchtime concerts during the year. Additionally, the organ scholar has primary responsibility for the choir library, ensuring that music is provided for all rehearsals and maintained in a good condition; an eye for organisational detail is useful for this part of the position.

Recent Organ Scholars have gone on to further scholarships or positions at other cathedrals and universities including Royal Holloway, Keble College and Christ Church Oxford and York, Norwich, Newcastle, Peterborough, and St Edmundsbury Cathedrals.

The Cathedral Choir

The Cathedral Choir comprises girl and boy choristers, lay clerks and choral scholars. Choristers are recruited from a variety of local schools, a number of whom later become junior choral scholars while still at school.

The adults of the choir enjoy a friendly and professional working atmosphere and the opportunity to work with the choirs as conductor, organist, or singer is very valuable, especially to someone considering a career in church music.

We hope our organ scholar will have a good sense of initiative and be able to work in a flexible manner, responding to the changing needs of the music department with diligence and good humour. It is possible to combine the scholarship with study at university or conservatoire, although this requires scrupulous organisation to work satisfactorily.



Role Description

The role involves assisting, performing, and conducting at Cathedral services and rehearsals throughout the week. This includes our current schedule:

Mondays:

4:15pm – 6:00pm, Rehearsal for girl choristers

Tuesdays:

5:15pm – 6:00pm, Choral Evening Prayer

Running concurrently with

4:45pm - 6:00pm, Cathedral Young Singers

Wednesdays:

5:15pm – 6:00pm, Plainsong Evensong

Running concurrently with

4:15pm – 6:00pm, Rehearsal for boy choristers

Thursdays:

4:15pm, Rehearsal

5:15pm – 6:00pm, Choral Evensong

Fridays:

4:15pm, Rehearsal

5:15pm – 6:00pm, Choral Evensong

6:00pm – 7:00pm, Adults choir rehearsal

Saturdays:

Occasional commitments as required

Sundays:

9:30am, Sung Eucharist (organ scholar plays)

10:00am, Chorister rehearsal

10:20am, Adults rehearsal

11:15am – 12.30pm, Choral Eucharist

2:30pm, Chorister rehearsal

2:45pm, Adults rehearsal

3:30pm – 4:30pm, Choral Evensong

*The Organ Scholar is entitled to one full day off each week.



Choral Conducting and Singing



We encourage our organ scholars to sing with the adults of the choir from time to time and take the opportunity to conduct the choirs.

THE ORGANS

The Nave Organ is situated at the west end of the Cathedral under the Tower. It is a four-manual instrument with mechanical action built by NP Mander in 1994. The Chancel Organ, also by Mander, is a two-manual mechanical instrument incorporating 19th century pipework by Holdich and Hill. Principally used to accompany the choir, it is widely admired for its warmth of tone, character and versatility. The Nave Organ's Great, Swell, Solo and Pedal divisions are playable via an electric link from the Chancel Organ console.

The organs are generally available for practice in the evening and daytime practice time is booked into the Cathedral diary. Other organs in the city may be available for practice by arrangement. The Cathedral Song School houses a Yamaha Grand Piano which can also be used for practice or teaching.

To Apply

Please fill in the Cathedral application form, including the details of two referees, and send, along with a covering letter, to: samantha.hughes@chelmsfordcathedral.org.uk

The closing date is 12 noon on **Friday 14 November**.

To discuss informally any aspect of the scholarship, please contact the Director of Music, Emma Gibbins: emma.gibbins@chelmsfordcathedral.org.uk or call 01245 294484.

www.chelmsfordcathedral.org.uk

 Chelmsford Cathedral

 @chelmsfordcathedral





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