



Residentiary Canon for Learning and Nurture

Recruitment Information Pack
March 2026



Job description



The Bishop of Chelmsford, in consultation with the Dean and Chapter of Chelmsford Cathedral, seeks to appoint a Residentiary Canon for Learning and Nurture at Chelmsford Cathedral. The Residentiary Canon for Learning and Nurture will be a full member of Chapter. This is a full-time appointment.



Context



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 a vivid 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.



Letter from the Bishop

“Thank you for your interest in the post of Residentiary Canon for Learning and Nurture at Chelmsford Cathedral.

The person appointed to this new role will have the opportunity to play an important part in shaping the life of our Cathedral.

Chelmsford Cathedral serves one of the largest and most diverse dioceses in the Church of England, covering Essex and East London. We are home to more than 3 million people representing many socio-economic, ethnic and faith groups and a fantastic variety of cultures and traditions. We have enormous opportunities for mission and service and considerable challenges to face and resolve as we continue to deal with the local, national and global challenges that have a direct impact on our parish churches, schools, chaplaincies and the communities we serve.

Chelmsford Cathedral

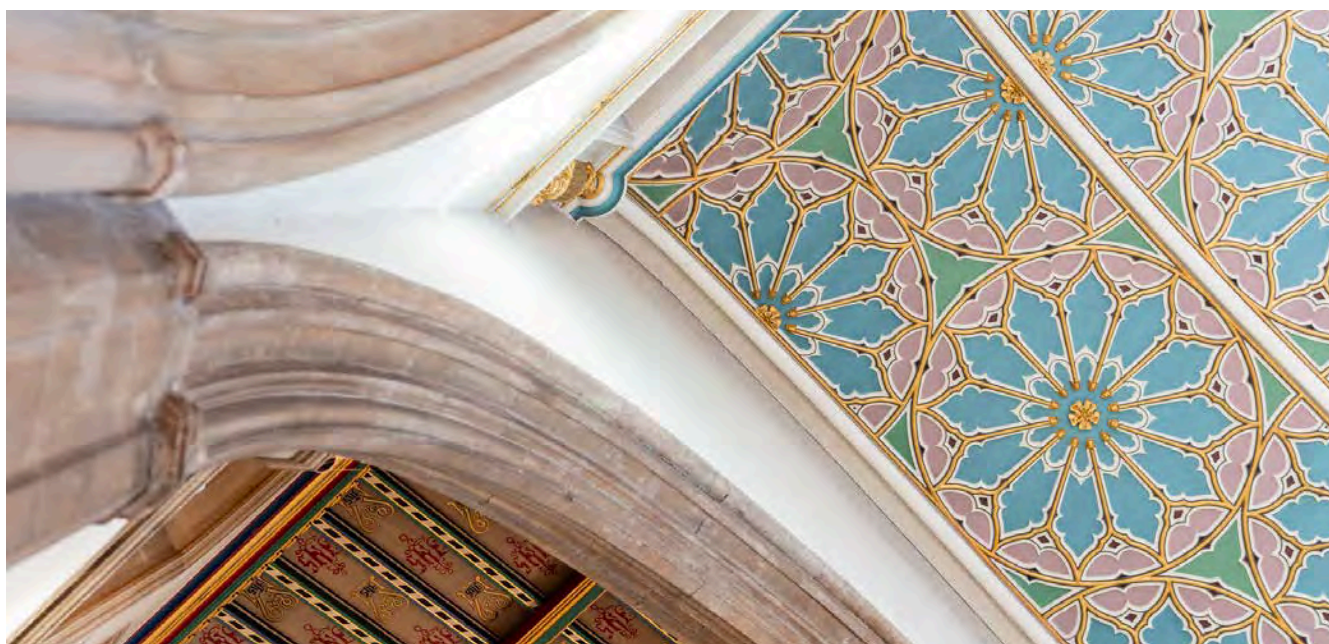
It is within this context, and following a period of listening and discernment that started when I became Bishop of Chelmsford in 2021, that we have sought to articulate our future direction of travel as a Diocese with a focus on **travelling well together:**

- our purpose is to love God and to love our neighbour; to worship faithfully and empowered by the Holy Spirit, witness to the love of God revealed in Jesus Christ as we serve the extraordinarily diverse array of local communities in Essex and East London.
- our approach is to enable and empower parishes and worshipping communities to discern how they are to be God's people in their own very different local contexts and as part of one diocesan family.
- underpinning our approach is an invitation to a way of being articulated by shared diocesan values which might shape how we travel together, support each other and provide mutual accountability.

Since I became Bishop of Chelmsford, I have witnessed people's great warmth and I have seen first-hand, the wonderful things going on in our church communities and at the Cathedral. Anyone joining us does so at a time of challenge, and change and, most significantly, a time of hope as we lean into the future God is calling us towards."

+ Guli Chelmsford

Rt Revd Dr Guli Francis-Dehqani
Bishop of Chelmsford





Letter from the Dean

Thank you for your interest in this role of Residentiary Canon for Learning and Nurture at Chelmsford Cathedral. This is an exciting time to be taking up this role. During the course of 2025 the Chapter and Senior Leadership Team, in consultation with staff, congregation and the wider diocese, have been developing and refining a refreshed vision for the Cathedral, a process which will come to land during the spring and early summer of this year, 2026.

As part of that vision, we have identified three priorities for the Cathedral's mission: Theology and the Arts, Sustainability, and Learning and Nurture. The Residentiary Canon for Learning and Nurture will therefore be taking the lead with that priority, as well as (in collaboration with the Dean and Senior Leadership team) the work for Theology and the Arts.



For this is a role that seeks to develop an imaginative, lively and missional engagement with people of all ages with the life of faith and discipleship. It would be for the Canon to develop schools engagement, overseeing the new role of 'Learning Officer with Children and Family Discipleship'. They will be working with the existing volunteer teams for schools, for our thriving (and indeed bursting at the seams) Junior Church, and for the toddler group Little Robins.

All three of these enterprises have dedicated, knowledgeable and experienced volunteer teams in place but there is real opportunity for creative development – especially for schools engagement alongside the diocesan education team, for community work with teenagers (we will this summer host a creative writing group for teenagers along with Chelmsford Library Services), and for work that extends our engagement with children and families into older age groups and whole-family discipleship needs.

As well as this, the Canon will be involved in leading our thematic programmes of missional and creative engagement with adults (please see the website [here](#) for our latest thematic programme for Lent-Pentecost, Resurrection Journeys). They will plan and oversee our 'Keene Lectures' programme (the Cathedral has resources left to us by the Keene family for theological and faith engagement). With the other clergy, the Canon will design and lead discipleship programmes and explorations of faith, and will work with our lively Events team to present opportunities for the curious to begin to explore the riches of the Christian tradition across the arts.

Chelmsford Cathedral



The Cathedral is abundant in modern devotional artworks of a very high quality, with work, for example, by **Peter Eugene Ball, Beryl Dean, and Mark Cazalet**. The musical and choral focus of the Cathedral is focussed on outreach and accessibility, and there are opportunities there for shared events - such as the recent 'Mass for Peace' created by schools groups as part of our **'Mars: War and Peace' Luke Jerram installation in autumn 2025**.

We have a new and energetic staff team, and a relatively new clergy team, so there is much unfolding and much to do to support and grow our thriving congregations, burgeoning events programme, and revitalised choral tradition. If, through what you have heard and read, you feel called by God to this role, we would love to hear from you.

For an informal conversation with the Dean about the role, please contact Heidi Alderdice at heidi.alderdice@chelmsfordcathedral.org.uk or on 01245 294497.

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read 'Dr. Jessica Martin'. The signature is fluid and cursive.

The Very Revd Dr Jessica Martin,
Dean of Chelmsford Cathedral



Role Specification

As Canon for Learning and Nurture, the successful candidate will:

- take lead the work in discipleship and learning development for the congregation and oversee the development, planning, co-ordination and themed design of the termly outreach and formation programmes (Autumn, Advent-Epiphany, and Lent-Pentecost), working closely with the diocese, the ministry team, and the Events team via the programming group
- participate, with all the clergy team, in congregational development and discipleship and work to facilitate good relationships between congregation and staff and an outward-facing ministry in which staff, congregation and volunteers all share
- oversee safeguarding for the Learning and Nurture programme, representing and taking responsibility for that aspect of the Cathedral's ministry and mission on the Cathedral Safeguarding Committee
- take lead responsibility for work with children and families, including Junior Church, Junior Church Plus, and the toddler group Little Robins, and for whole-family discipleship and spiritual development (see the section 'Context for the Mission and Ministry of the Cathedral' on p.10 for more details)
- have line management responsibilities for the Learning Officer with Children and Family Discipleship and Learning Officer, when appointed, and strategic responsibilities for the development of these ministries, working in close liaison with the Diocesan Education Team and the Church of England Growing Faith agenda
- play a part, with colleagues, in supporting the **Cathedral school** (a state primary school attached to the parish and closely involved with the Cathedral)



Role specification



As member of Chapter and the Senior Leadership Team

- take a full part in Chapter, helping to provide strategic oversight of the Cathedral's governance, values, and unfolding vision
- take a full part in the Senior Leadership Team, to which is delegated from Chapter the strategic planning of the Cathedral's executive responsibilities
- fulfil the role of a Charity Trustee, offering strategic input, support, scrutiny and stewardship
- will play their part in ensuring the Cathedral fulfils its legal and statutory responsibilities, undertaking all activities in accordance with the 2021 Cathedrals Measure
- will lead or contribute to Chapter working groups and statutory committees to deliver against agreed Chapter priorities
- Working, with the whole Cathedral team, to ensure a safe and supportive environment for all in terms of safeguarding culture and priorities
- with the Dean, COO and the departmental and congregational safeguarding assistants, work further to embed the **Church of England's Safeguarding standards** and to live and act by its principles

As Residentiary Canon

- share in residence duties with the Dean and other Canons (Dean, Vice Dean and Canon Precentor)
- commit to the daily worshipping life of the Cathedral, attending and sharing in the leading of Morning Prayer, the daily Eucharist, and Evensong/Evening Prayer on days when you are working and not engaged elsewhere
- attend the regular meetings of the Senior Leadership Team and the Ministry team
- attend all diocesan events to which licensed clergy are invited, such as study and training days
- take a full part, with all the clergy team, in congregational pastoral care, including the welcome and inclusion of new congregation members
- under the leadership of the Vice Dean, officiate at Occasional Offices: baptisms, marriages, funerals
- share in maintaining a strong culture around Safeguarding
- play a full part in the College of Canons
- with colleagues, will reflect theologically on safeguarding within worship and teaching; and work sensitively and creatively to ensure that the voices of victims and survivors are heard

Person Specification



Qualifications

The successful candidate should have:

- a degree in theology or equivalent pastoral qualification
- a demonstrable commitment to continued professional development

Background and Experience

We are seeking a priest colleague who has:

- been in Anglican holy orders for at least six years, and brings maturity and experience to the role
- is committed to the rhythm of the Daily Office, is a person of prayer and is grounded in the life and practice of the Christian faith as the Church of England has received it
- is comfortable in an essentially liberal catholic and liturgical environment
- is effectively and generously collaborative while also showing evidence of individual initiative and leadership
- has a strong track record in establishing positive relationships and facilitating successful partnerships with both internal and external stakeholders
- is committed to fostering a positive safeguarding culture where power is held lightly and shared appropriately, for the benefit of the whole community, with both humility and confidence
- understands and can negotiate the complexities of working with children and vulnerable adults
- has a proven track record in managing staff and volunteers, with an ability to adapt management style to different teams and tasks
- is experienced in pastoral work within a church setting
- is calm, emotionally intelligent, and committed to the spiritual discipline of team working within a praying community

Knowledge

We are seeking a priest colleague who:

- understands the distinctive contribution of Cathedrals to the life and mission of the Church of England and has a strong appreciation of Cathedral worship
- is IT literate and possesses strong administrative skills
- can think, speak and write reflectively, theologically and accessibly on the principles and activities of ministry in a pastoral and missional context
- has the ability to work flexibly and collaborative in a busy and complex environment
- can cope with ministry in an outward-facing context
- will uphold and assist in the further development of the vision of the Dean and Chapter and be supportive of the Diocesan values of Travelling Well Together
- has proven experience of, or potential to develop, skills in senior management either in the church or elsewhere

Context for the Mission and Ministry of the Cathedral



Chelmsford Cathedral is a small parish cathedral with a bright, flexible space, serving a large and enormously varied diocese. It has come through testing times in the last few years, but has built up its confidence and its congregational base under fresh leadership. An important focus for the interim Dean was to foster the core community, and this has borne fruit: an ordinary Sunday would expect to see around 270 worshippers across its four services, with the majority of those attending either the 9.30am parish communion or the 11.15am choral Eucharist and with a strong presence from Junior Church children and families joining the 9.30am service at communion.

There is a growing diversity across a number of different aspects: age, social demographic, ethnicity. There is a significant Farsi-speaking sub-congregation from the Wethersfield asylum-seeker site attending the choral eucharist at 11.15am and participating in Christian instruction. Junior Church is flourishing, with a growing number of children and families, so that a priority for the new Canon will be to facilitate whole-family discipleship and spiritual growth as the children grow older and need richer and more challenging spiritual engagement. Junior Church is already expanding into the monthly 'Junior Church Plus' for families with older children; and there may be a need for creative youth work sooner rather than later.

The St Cedd's Hall, where Junior Church meets, is a space that is getting too small for the volume of children and families attending – a good problem to have! At the same time there is a need for refreshment both in the provision of congregational pastoral care, and in congregational teams as they serve both the Cathedral and the wider community. The diversity is seen more in the worshipping congregation than in those who lead, intercede, read and offer intercession or other ministry.

The Cathedral choirs are burgeoning under the new leadership of the Director of Music, with a large number of new choristers, both boys and girls, and an ambitious outreach programme on the horizon to support choral music not only in the Cathedral but across the diocese.

The work of Learning and Nurture needs building up since the departure of the previous Canon for Education in August 2025, but there is already a closer and more creative relationship with the Diocesan education team which will help to build the Cathedral's offering to schools, both primary and secondary. Schools are not charged for visits currently; nor are the diocesan team charged for using the Cathedral space, as part of our commitment to inclusion and accessibility.

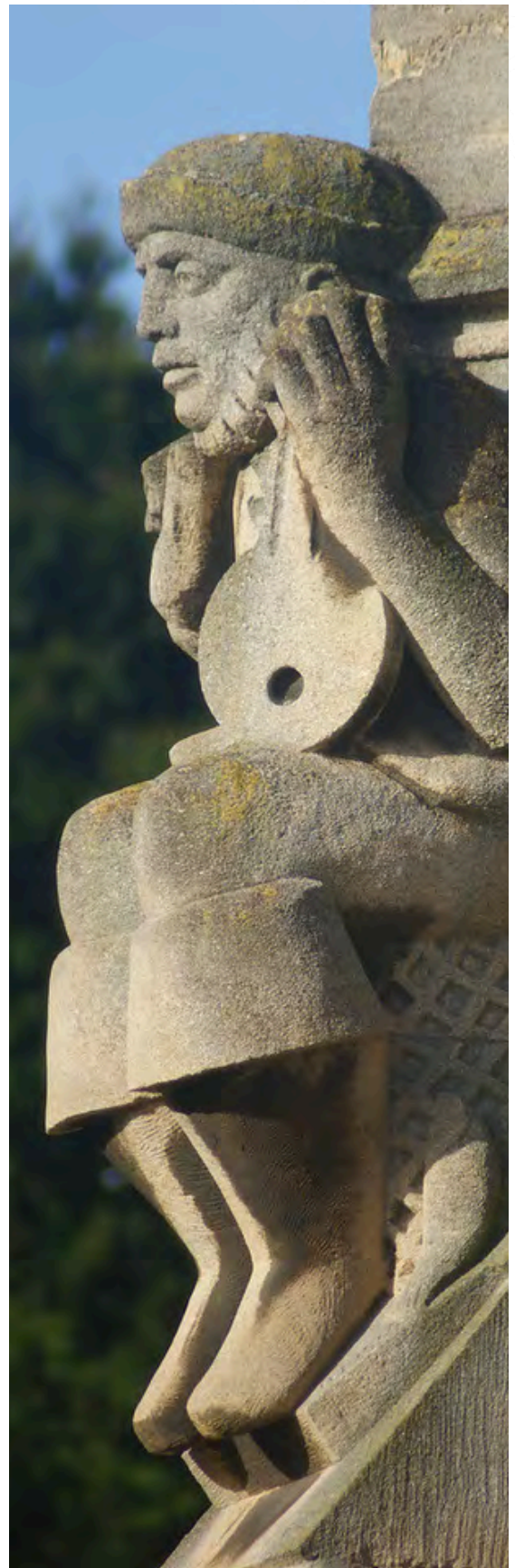
Context for the Mission and Ministry of the Cathedral

Alongside the Cathedral building itself, the Cathedral holds responsibility for the **Chapel of St Peter-Ad-Murum in Bradwell**. This extraordinary and spiritually powerful building dates back to the seventh century, and was founded by **St Cedd**, who built it on the ruins of the Roman fort Othona in about the year 654.

It is the site of the annual **Bradwell pilgrimage**, in which the Cathedral takes part, and is the end-point of the pilgrimage route St Peter's Way, which runs from Chipping Ongar to the Bradwell Chapel. The outreach potential for pilgrimage and spiritual development associated with the Chapel is very great, and there are real opportunities there for the new Canon to develop.

The Cathedral, more or less ever since its conversion from parish church to Cathedral status in 1914, has had the challenge of how it may effectively serve the needs of so large and varied a diocese. There is a tension between its local profile and its wider reach and it is fundamental to its mission and ministry that it balances this tension well.

It is called to serve as widely and effectively as possible its core function as the seat of the Bishop and the service of the whole diocese, and this is basic to its unfolding vision. There is an ambition to resource the diocese in terms of teaching, public square engagement, cultural and missional activity, and spiritual practice, in the pursuit of which the Cathedral has offered an integrated missional programme since autumn 2025 that combines cultural events, teaching and preaching, lectures and discussions, and educational events under overarching themes that follow the arc of the liturgical year. It is this missional programming that would be key to the Canon for Learning and Nurture's role with adult inquirers and disciples.



Background information on the Diocese of Chelmsford

The Diocese of Chelmsford, created out of the Diocese of St Alban's in 1914, is one of the largest in the Church of England. It covers the whole of the county of Essex as well as five East London boroughs: Barking and Dagenham, Newham, Havering, Redbridge, and Waltham Forest. Altogether that is around 1500 square miles, over 500 church communities, and 138 schools. It is divided into three episcopal areas: Colchester, overseen by Bishop Roger Morris, Bradwell, overseen by Bishop Adam Atkinson; and Barking, overseen by Bishop Lynne Cullen, under the overall leadership of its diocesan, Bishop Guli Francis-Dehqani.

It is one of the most diverse of the Church of England's dioceses, and perhaps contains some of the most stark social contrasts: between urban and rural, wealthy and deprived, settled and transient, alongside the widest possible array of political views. It is energetic, a place of renewal; and it is also sleepy Constable country; it contains thriving businesses and trade, and left-behind areas; it is idiosyncratic and profoundly conformist, rebellious and traditional.

Its saint is St Cedd, who travelled from first Northumberland and then Mercia to evangelise the East Saxons (who were to become the people of Essex). Cedd founded monasteries at Tilbury, Bradwell-on-Sea, and Lastingham, where he died of the plague on 26 October in the year 664. The 26 October is known to this day as Essex Day.

The Diocese together holds to the values expressed in its public commitment, Travelling Well Together, and the values expressed within it: awareness of grace; valuing the small, the vulnerable and the marginal; focusing outward; sustaining healthy rhythms; kindness, mutual respect, gentleness and humility; generously collaboration; and finally, being faithful, creative, courageous and open to the unexpected and surprising. To these the unfolding vision of Chelmsford Cathedral is intimately aligned.



Patterns of Worship and Devotional Life



Sunday worship

7.45am Morning Prayer (Common Worship) – in the Cathedral and online.

8.00am Holy Communion (Book of Common Prayer), said.

9.30am Cathedral Eucharist (Common Worship Order 1). This uses congregational music resources, provision through Junior Church for children and families, and regular All-Age worship (around 6 times a year).

11.15am Choral Eucharist (Common Worship Order 1). This is a more formal Choral Eucharist; it offers themed preaching both from the resident clergy and invited preachers from the diocese and further afield as part of the thematic programming.

3.30pm Choral Evensong (Book of Common Prayer). This is also a regular time for an increasing number of diocesan and civic services.

Patterns of Worship and Devotional Life



Weekly Pattern of Offices

The clergy team are committed to daily prayer together, morning and evening, and the ministry and staff team to a weekly pattern of shared devotion through lectio divina on Wednesdays.

7.45 am Morning Prayer (Common Worship). In the Mildmay Chapel and online. There is a significant online community praying with us across the diocese and beyond.

8.15 am Eucharist in one of the Cathedral chapels (Common Worship).

5.15 pm Mondays: Evening Prayer (Common Worship, said), Mildmay Chapel

Tuesdays: Sung Evening Prayer

Wednesdays: Choral Evening Prayer (Book of Common Prayer)

Thursdays: Choral Evensong (Book of Common Prayer)

Fridays: Choral Evensong (Book of Common Prayer)

Saturdays: Evening Prayer (Common Worship, said).

The Eucharist is also celebrated at 10.30 am on Thursdays (Common Worship, said).

The Cathedral Church of St Mary the Virgin, St Peter and St Cedd

Chelmsford Cathedral is one of the smallest Parish Church Cathedrals in England. Until 1914, when it became the Cathedral for the new Diocese, it was simply St. Mary's, the parish church of Chelmsford. There was a Norman church on the site, and very possibly a Saxon one before that, but it was rebuilt in the 15th century. An inscription on the nave, now lost, included the date 1424, although some features, such as the elegant fan arch on the north side of the chancel, are considered to be a decade or two older than that.

The new church is a classic example of East Anglian Perpendicular, with its aisles and clerestory, impressive west tower, and two-storey porch, built mainly of flint but decorated with flushwork. The first major change came in 1800 with the collapse of the nave roof. The damage was repaired by the county surveyor John Johnson, who reused what materials he could, supplemented with artificial Coade stone, seen also on Johnson's Shire Hall.

The restored church was able to provide the first resting place of the coffin of Queen Caroline on its journey from London to Harwich in 1821 for burial in her native Brunswick. Additions were made later in the 19th century by Frederic Chancellor, including the north transept and outer north aisle. Following the church's elevation to cathedral status, Sir Charles Nicholson prepared an ambitious design that would have more than doubled the size of the building. Fortunately this scheme was shelved in favour of a more modest enlargement of the chancel in 1926- 1928, followed by the addition of the vestries on the north side, in turn enlarged in 2003- 2004. The greatest change, however, was the comprehensive reordering of the interior by Robert Potter in 1983-1984. This involved the replacement of most of the existing furnishings with newly-commissioned works, including the patchwork hanging by Beryl Dean against the east wall that picks up the colours of the stained glass in the window above it. This reordering, and the introduction of a number of works of art since then, achieved the transformation of a parish church into a cathedral.

Dr James Bettley JP



Stipend and Housing



The post is held under Common Tenure, at the rate assigned by the Church Commissioners for a Residentiary Canon.

Appropriate housing will be provided for the Residentiary Canon in close proximity to the Cathedral.

Terms and Conditions

This post will be appointed under Common Tenure and, as such, the post holder will be entitled to the following:

- A stipend in accordance with the rates set by the Church Commissioners for a Residentiary Canon
- Housing close to the Cathedral
- Reimbursement of working expenses
- 36 days annual leave in each year
- An uninterrupted rest period of 24 hours in each period of seven days
- Pension provision
- A right to paternity/parental/maternity/adoption leave/care for dependants; and
- Protection against unfair dismissal and the right of appeal to an employment tribunal in cases of capability dismissal
- Access to a grievance procedure; and the right to hold and carry out public duties other than the duties of office (subject to the agreement of the Dean and Chapter)



Additional details

How to Apply

Please use the application form at the end of this pack. The closing date for applications is 5.00pm on 30 March 2026. Interviews will take place on 29 and 30 April 2026

Interview panel:

The Right Reverend Guli Francis-Dehqani, Bishop of Chelmsford
The Very Reverend Dr Jessica Martin, Dean of Chelmsford
Canon Sebastian Harries, Canon Precentor
The Venerable Jonathan Croucher, Archdeacon of Chelmsford
Mrs Lorna Quinn, non-executive Chapter member

Links

[Chelmsford Cathedral website](#)
[Diocese of Chelmsford website](#)
[The Cathedral School website](#)
[Bradwell Chapel website](#)
[Bradwell Pilgrimage website](#)
[Essex Highways link to the St Peter's Way pilgrimage route](#)
[Retreat House Pleshey website](#)

Church of England Application Form

Please submit to Heidi Alderdice (email) by 5.00 pm on 30 March 2026.





The Cathedral Office, 53 New Street, Chelmsford, CM1 1TY
Telephone: 01245 294492

chelmsfordcathedral.org.uk

Registered Charity Number 1207270

