



Volunteer Application Pack

Ref: VOL012

**Volunteer Role: Honorary Steward
(Usher Volunteers)**

Closing Date: 13 June 2024

Westminster Abbey



Contents

- [About Westminster Abbey](#)
- [Abbey Values](#)
- [Volunteer Role Summary and Person Specification](#)
- [Volunteering for us](#)
- [Safeguarding](#)

About Westminster Abbey

Above all else, the Abbey is a church, a place of prayer and praise and holy ground at the heart of the nation. It is also a treasured part of Britain's heritage and a leading venue for tourism. The Abbey has occupied a central place in the celebration of great events for the nation and remains one of the most beautiful architectural masterpieces in Britain.

A living Church, Westminster Abbey is where the coronation of Kings and Queens has taken place since 1066, and where many of the Kings and Queens of England and of the United Kingdom are buried. Principal among them is St Edward the Confessor, King of England from 1042 to 1066, whose shrine is at the heart of the Abbey Church. Beside and around them are buried or commemorated many of the great women and men from almost every century of British history: statesmen and politicians, lawyers, warriors, clerics, writers, artists, musicians.

Neither a cathedral nor a parish church, Westminster Abbey (or the Collegiate Church of St Peter in Westminster to give it its correct title) is a Royal Peculiar under the jurisdiction of a Dean and Chapter and with direct accountability to the Sovereign. This relationship with the Sovereign dates back to the origins of the Abbey over a millennium ago, but its current form stems from the Charter granted to the Abbey by Elizabeth on 21st May 1560.

We are a welcoming community, but also complex and multi-faceted, with nearly 600 highly committed employees and volunteers. We have deep respect for the heritage of which we are the custodians, but we evolve continuously to meet the opportunities of the future. In recent times this has included the creation of new departments to focus on transforming our digital presence and delivering a significantly expanded programme of public and community engagement. In addition, our newly created Employee Engagement Forum and Social Engagement Statement is helping us to support and develop our staff and volunteers. We have also reshaped our governance arrangements, including a new Strategic Board to help us navigate the challenges and opportunities of the coming decades.

Westminster Abbey's mission is:

- To offer daily divine Worship to Almighty God and resource the Church in this vocation;
- To serve the Sovereign;
- To proclaim the Gospel to the nation and Commonwealth, celebrating the distinctive witness of the Christian faith and engaging with the public square;
- To provide a safe, welcoming and inspiring environment for all who come to the Abbey;
- To act as responsible stewards of God's gifts.

Our Values:

As one we serve each other, our visitors and the wider world in all we do with:

- Truthfulness
- Integrity
- Empathy
- Excellence

Following the State Funeral of Queen Elizabeth II and the Coronation of King Charles III and Queen Camilla, which were broadcast to national and international audiences in their millions, interest in the Abbey is very strong. We attract over a million visitors from around the world every year, and our summers and peak period are incredibly busy. However, we receive no regular income from the State, the Church of England or the Crown, and rely almost entirely on income from visitors.

It is an exciting time to join the Abbey, and we look forward to receiving your application and if successful, welcoming your contribution to the Abbey's history.

Role Summary – Abbey Guide

ROLE TITLE: Honorary Steward

ACCOUNTABLE TO: Directly: Chief Honorary Steward

Indirectly: Head of Event Management and Marketing

JOB SUMMARY: To welcome, seat and bid farewell to diverse congregations at regular and special services throughout the year, in a warm and dignified manner that reflects the Dean and Chapter's desire that our visitors should always encounter the generous hospitality of God and easily prepare themselves to appreciate and join in our worship.

MAIN DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

Duties

- Be available for duty at no fewer than 5 regular services each quarter (Matins, Eucharist, and Evensong); attending for at least 3 Sundays out of every 13
- Be available for duty at no fewer than 2 special services each quarter, irrespective of the day of the week
- Be available for duty for as many services as possible at Eastertide, at Edwardtide (mid-October), and at Christmas
- Report for duty at least ten minutes before service briefings
- Attend briefings with an informed understanding of the ceremonial notes (these are sent a couple of days in advance of each service)
- Assist vergers with papering as required
- Bid farewell to the congregation at the end of each service and collect service papers and items that have been left behind
- Manage entry of invited guests to post service receptions as required
- Assist the Events and Marketing department (which includes Protocol) with labelling seats as required
- Assist with the Collections of Alms as required.

General

- Be familiar with all areas of the Abbey and its history
- Be familiar with Abbey policies such as evacuation, health & safety, security, etc.
- Lead by example acting as a team member at all times
- Have up to date knowledge and be able to recognise members of the Cabinet and HM Opposition, in order to direct them to their seats at services with a timed arrival
- Have an up to date knowledge and be able to recognise civic representatives, in order to lead them to their seats at services with a timed arrival
- Attend training sessions whenever required
- Report to the Senior Steward in charge of a service upon arrival for duty and before leaving the Abbey

-
- Respond to requests for quarterly rotas as soon as possible upon receipt, and no later than the closing date indicated, stating availability
 - Respond to requests for the Special services rotas as soon as possible upon receipt, and no later than the closing date indicated, stating availability
 - Allow time in one's personal life to provide extra support as required at services at Eastertide, Edwardtide, and at Christmas
 - Be personally responsible for finding a replacement steward in the event of not being able to attend a service, communicating the change to the Protocol department, to the Senior Steward in charge and to other colleagues on duty for those days, in a timely manner
 - Notify Protocol and the Senior Steward in charge immediately of any sudden changes in circumstances which may mean non-attendance at a service
 - Notify the Senior Steward in charge of any service in the event of illness so that a replacement may be found

Person Specification

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

Essential

1. A commitment to support the Abbey's mission and values and a belief in or an understanding of and sympathy for the Christian faith.
2. Punctilious attitude.
3. Proven good communication skills including excellent written and spoken English.
4. Proven ability to multi-task and follow instructions diligently.
5. Well-presented and "look the part" to be an ambassador for the Abbey.
6. Proven ability to work under pressure and to be firm but kind in approach.
7. Proven ability to work with staff from different departments and be a good team player.
8. Proven ability to take the initiative when circumstances demand and to be self-motivated and "people aware".

NB. Due to the security aspects of the role, as well as the health and safety requirements regarding dealing with fire alerts or other emergencies; Honorary Stewards must be able to move quickly, when necessary; be able to retrieve items from the floor; and be capable of being on duty without a break, for several hours at a time, at some of the special services.

Desirable

1. Good all-round general knowledge, knowledge of current affairs, knowledge of key figures in Government, the Royal Family, and figures of eminence in senior Cultural, Arts, Educational and Civic positions.
2. To be aware of the rites of the Anglican Church.
3. Willingness to take on duties at short notice as required by the Heads of Event Management and Marketing, and Protocol.
4. General aptitude for noting when duties need to be exercised even if they are not contained in the Ceremonial notes.

This Role Description is kept under review and may be amended by Westminster Abbey from time to time. Any proposed changes will be discussed with the role holder.

Regular assessments and/or interviews of all Stewards are carried out by the Chief Honorary Steward, aided by Senior Steward colleagues and the Head of Event Management and Marketing.

The Recruitment Process

If selected for interview, the recruitment process is as follows, leading to an appointment as a probationary Honorary Steward:

Recruitment stages

1. The interview of about 45/60 minutes will be held at Westminster Abbey, 20 Dean's Yard SW1P 3PA, at a time and date that is mutually convenient to the candidate and relevant Abbey colleagues. It is chaired by the Chief Honorary Steward, accompanied by the Head of Event Management and Marketing.
2. After interview, the Head of Event Management and Marketing, and the Chief Honorary Steward, will make a recommendation to the Receiver General and the Dean of Westminster Abbey for ratification of the volunteer appointment.
3. Subject to ratification, the Head of Event Management and Marketing then appoints Honorary Stewards for service on the Active List, subject to receipt of satisfactory volunteer checks, including references, a basic level DBS criminal record check and completion of Safeguarding Training, which will need to be maintained in accordance with the Abbey's volunteer procedures.

Post appointment as a Probationer

New Honorary Stewards are issued with an extensive Handbook and are required to attend an Abbey Orientation session. Further Onboarding, will be provided by the Head of Protocol, who will explain relevant procedures, including dress code, training requirements, security, and the required volunteer checks.

Subject to satisfactory induction (depending on when in the calendar year the volunteer commences their volunteer role and Abbey duties, the new starter will be formally installed. This will involve the volunteer declaring his/her Undertaking, prior to formally being Admitted into the Fellowship of the Collegiate Church of St Peter at Westminster, at the annual Corporate Communion, held every year in late November or early December. The Service is usually held in the Lady (Henry VII) Chapel, immediately prior to the Honorary Stewards AGM and Reception in the Jerusalem Chamber.