

Organist and Director of Music

Role Description & Information



Introduction

All Saints' Church, Ascot is looking for an energetic and skilled musician to continue the exciting developments in music which have been enhancing the worship of our congregation over recent years. The position has become vacant because the current post holder has been appointed as Director of Music at St Andrew's, Sonning. The successful applicant should be able to take up the position as soon as possible after 1 September 2015.

Parish of Ascot Heath

Ascot Heath is a diverse suburban context of some 9,000 residents, with good rail and road links to London, Reading, and Guildford. All Saints' Church, together with the Chapel of St Mary & St John in North Ascot, has an electoral roll of 229 and average Sunday worship (across three services) usually numbers around 130. All age groups are represented within the congregation. All Saints' Church building celebrated its 150th birthday in 2014. The worship tradition of the parish is modern Catholic and traditional in style, though we like to think that we give a 21st-century welcome to everyone from whatever background. The principal service is the Sunday morning Parish Mass at 10.30. The congregation is representative of our local population. About 60% of the congregation is made up of parish residents; the other 40% comprises members who travel from neighbouring villages because they prefer the style of worship and the warm community at All Saints.

Music at All Saints

The Senior Choir

The long-established Senior Choir currently numbers 20 members (10 sopranos, 5 contraltos, 2 tenors and 3 basses). The singers are neither auditioned nor paid, but are very loyal and keen and a great asset to the church. Many also perform other duties – churchwarden, deputy warden, PCC members etc. In addition to preparing a weekly anthem plus psalm and hymns on all but the first Sunday of the month, the choir works in the first few months of the year towards the Holy Week concert, and in the last few months for the Advent and Christmas carol services. Occasionally they sing at neighbouring churches: at Sunninghill or South Ascot for Ascension Day, and Priestwood for Corpus Christi, and once a year at a roving Deanery Evensong in September. The choir usually sings carols at nursing homes and over the past few years several members have joined in the Ascot Priory Carol Concert. Occasional other concerts are well supported. Socially, there are curry nights in July and a Christmas get-together.

The singers willingly turn out, as far as they are able, for weddings and funerals and provide their services gratis. Robes are provided by the parish, but these are now old and were originally intended for boys and men, so the ladies have either 'made do' or ordered their own robes.

The repertory includes anthems both traditional and modern, and the library is well-stocked and ordered by a competent choir librarian.

The Junior Choir

The Junior Choir currently numbers 18 (16 girls, 2 boys), aged between 7 and 12. They are very keen, quick and eager to learn. Attendance at rehearsals and services is good. They sing at All Saints Together services (the main mass on the first Sunday of the month), join in weddings, the Deanery Evensong, and services at Easter, All Saints' Day, and Christmas. Older choristers join in the Holy Week concert. Choristers attend the RSCM 3-day Easter course at Abingdon and the Young Voices Festival at Salisbury in November, for which considerable preparation is required at practices beforehand. The RSCM Voice for Life scheme is followed and several have earned ribbons; more recently, however, it has been difficult to find time needed to work through all the tests. Several are at the standard for the Bronze award. Occasionally the Junior Choir performs its own concerts. The Junior Choir members are paid a small sum per attendance (minimum requirement of one service attended per month) quarterly in arrears, according to experience. The payment is arranged by the church's banker. Social events are organized by both the DoM and choir parents periodically.

The Junior Choir at All Saints is the only one in the deanery, and is an excellent source for growth in the church – members regularly act as servers; many are or were in the church youth group; their parents are often drawn into the church's life through the Junior Choir.

The Band

The Band, which accompanies the All Saints Together services on the first Sunday of the month, plus one carol service, the Christmas Eve Crib Service, and occasional other services, currently comprises nine members (violin, flute, oboe, bassoon, trombone, keyboard, accordion, bass guitar, and drums) in addition to the DoM at the piano. The band's work currently stretches to hymns/songs and a congregational mass setting and occasional music before and after services, but the standard of players is high and the camaraderie excellent.

The Organ and Pianos

The organ is a four-rank extension instrument, now 50 years old. The main diapason rank was never extended down the extra octave so the bass must be used creatively. The instrument is tuned three times a year, and historic fundraising has left c. £6k in the organ fund. The blower was recently repaired. Forthcoming works will need to include the reeds, where the contacts are deteriorating, and the console will need some attention (to pedalboard, replacing felt to manuals, and the swell pedal). The instrument is not going to attract a concert organist, but it works well and rarely plays up.

The new Alison grand piano is a great asset and has enhanced rehearsals and services over the past couple of years, as well as giving the opportunity to present professional concerts and to use the church building for piano lessons and examinations. An excellent new Clavinova keyboard is also now in place in the choir vestry for use in rehearsals.

Schedule of Services/Practices

The Junior Choir rehearses on Thursday evenings in church (6.30–7.30), and the Senior Choir rehearses directly following (7.30–9.30), except on weeks in which the following Sunday is an All Saints Together service, when the band rehearsal takes place instead on the Friday evening. There is always a pre-service practice, at 9.45 am.

The table overleaf lists the regular pattern of monthly services and usual musical elements:

Sunday of the month	Morning (10.30am)	Evening (6.15pm)
First	ALL SAINTS TOGETHER <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o <i>Band</i> o <i>Junior Choir</i> o <i>Simple congregational mass setting and hymns led from the piano</i> o <i>Anthem</i> 	
Second	PARISH MASS (CW) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o <i>Congregational mass setting</i> o <i>Three hymns plus one/two communion hymns</i> o <i>Responsorial psalm and alleluias</i> o <i>Choir anthem</i> o <i>Opening and closing voluntaries</i> 	EVENSONG AND SERMON (BCP) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o <i>Ferial responses</i> o <i>Canticles and psalms to Anglican Chant or to simple settings</i> o <i>Three hymns</i> o <i>Opening and closing voluntaries</i>
Third, Fourth, Fifth	PARISH MASS (CW) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o <i>Congregational mass setting</i> o <i>Three hymns plus one/two communion hymns</i> o <i>Responsorial psalm and alleluias</i> o <i>Choir anthem</i> o <i>Opening and closing voluntaries</i> 	

Special Services

Some midweek feasts and holy days are celebrated with hymns and an anthem. This normally includes Ash Wednesday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, Ascension Day, Corpus Christi, and Christmas services. Sometimes these services are shared with other local parishes, and musical co-ordination is shared with other churches.

Director of Music: Role Description

The Director of Music

- o will direct practices, and direct and accompany the music at sung services, subject to holiday entitlement;
- o will work to further the musical education of choristers and help choir members of all ages to enjoy their musicianship;
- o will prepare the first draft of the music list, either termly or monthly, for consideration by the Incumbent;
- o will arrange the diary for both Senior and Junior choirs and the Band;
- o holds a position of pastoral responsibility within the choir. Good communication and administrative skills are essential;
- o will work to attract new members to the choir;
- o will accompany music at pastoral services for an additional fee including weddings (approx. 6 p.a.), funerals (approx. 12 p.a.) and memorial services – a list of deputies is available;
- o will ensure that Junior and Senior Choir social events are arranged throughout the year;
- o will prepare the music lists for the congregation at Evensong;
- o will order and provide copies of new music as required;
- o will arrange for deputies to cover his/her duties when taking annual leave or unavailable;

- o will be responsible for the regular maintenance and tuning of the organ in collaboration with the Incumbent and Churchwardens;
- o will work with the clergy, PCC and congregation to continue to develop a rich diversity of styles of music, helping everyone to find ways of connecting with God through worship;
- o will play a leading role in reviewing the worship life of the parish over the coming 24 months;
- o will serve as the parish's lead for music and worship arts in the deanery;
- o will be supportive of and enthusiastic towards the mission of All Saints' Church and the parish as a whole;
- o will be a communicant member of the church; and
- o will be a supportive and enthusiastic member of All Saints' Church.

Person Specification

	ESSENTIAL	DESIRABLE
Qualifications		CertRCO, ARCO Good honours degree in music or related subject or extensive experience
Experience	Previous experience as musician/organist/singer Experience of choral directing Experience of working with children and young people Commitment to continuing professional development	Experience of using the RSCM Voice for Life training scheme Experience in fundraising
Knowledge, skills and abilities	Ability to play organ and piano to a high standard Good communication and administrative skills in leading and co-ordinating choirs of volunteers Knowledge of a breadth of church music and liturgy Ability to recruit and retain children and adults as choir members and singers and instrumentalists Ability to manage teams of people and to develop their talent and potential Vision for the place of music in the growth and outreach of a mission-shaped church Commitment to Christian discipleship	Willingness to engage in planning liturgies and service structures Ability to collaborate and work empathetically with other church groups e.g. children's and young people's groups and holiday club Well developed organisational, interpersonal and presentational skills Ability to accompany a choir without a conductor

Contract Details

The Organist and Director of Music is accountable to the Rector and will be employed by the Parochial Church Council of All Saints' Church. The employment contract will be in accordance with current UK legislation and canons of the Church of England.

The salary will be paid monthly in arrears in the range recommended by the RSCM for a Director of Music between the Category B and Category A range. The salary will be reviewed annually. RSCM recommended fees for other services will be paid, and reviewed annually between the Director of Music and the Incumbent.

The Director of Music is entitled to six weeks of holiday per year in consultation with the Incumbent. Holiday should not be taken over the Holy Week, Easter and Christmas periods.

The Director of Music may use the organ for private practice whenever the church is not otherwise in use, subject to scheduling.

The Director of Music may use the organ (and, where applicable, the piano) to give lessons and pupils may use it for a reasonable amount of practice, provided the times of those lessons do not impinge upon other uses of the church or cause disturbance to neighbours.

Child Protection

The appointment is subject to an enhanced DBS disclosure. The Organist & Director of Music will adhere to and support the Parish Safeguarding Policy.

Hopes and Expectations

The outgoing postholder has held the position for a total of 28 years, and has made a very happy and positive impact on the life of the congregation and wider parish over that period. During his tenure, the original boys' and men's choir has been replaced with two choirs – Senior and Junior – and in particular the musical education of local children through participation in the Junior Choir has become a hallmark of All Saints' life. It is very much hoped that the successful applicant will continue to build on these developments, as well as take a leading role in securing the future of music both traditional and contemporary in parish life in the following ways:

- Together with the Incumbent and steering group, reviewing the music and worship across the whole parish's life, especially in relation to the monthly All Saints Together services.
- The growing choir is now reaching a size that the combined choirs sometimes overflow the choir stalls. It is hoped that the successful applicant will have creative ideas for continuing recruitment within the confines of our small building.
- The choir robes are in need of replacement and repair. It is hoped that the successful applicant will have the vision to standardise the choir wardrobe and be involved in the necessary fundraising.
- The parish's musical life is a major interface with our local community for outreach and evangelism. It is hoped that the successful applicant will seek to further this desire, to the glory of God and in the service of his church.

Further Details and Application

Applicants should provide a *Curriculum Vitae*, a covering letter explaining why you believe you are suited to this post, including how you believe you meet the essential and desirable elements of the person specification (see above), and the name and addresses of two referees (one of whom should be your present employer and, if you work in a church, the Incumbent). The successful applicant will be required to demonstrate their eligibility to work in the UK. Applications should be submitted to:

The Revd Dr Patrick Gilday
The Parsonage,
King Edwards Road,
Ascot,
Berkshire,
SL5 8PD.
curate@all-saints-ascot.org

Shortlisted candidates will be invited to interview at a mutually acceptable time/date. Candidates will be asked to play a hymn and to play an excerpt of a voluntary of their choice. Candidates may also be asked to direct members of the choir in practice for about 20 minutes. The exact nature of the audition and music used will be notified when candidates are asked to attend.

If you have any questions about the position or the application process these may be directed to the curate (curate@all-saints-ascot.org).