

# Association of English Cathedrals

Executive Director Job Pack

April 2025



# Welcome

Thank you for considering this role and we hope that you will decide to apply.

The Association of English Cathedrals (AEC) is a support, resource, and advocate for all Church of England cathedrals. We are here to support our cathedrals to flourish today and to be sustainable for future generations.

The AEC was formed in 1990 as an unincorporated association to represent the interests of English Anglican Cathedrals in negotiations with English Heritage about a Cathedrals Grant Scheme. It is now a collaborative network and a strategic resource for all Church of England cathedrals.

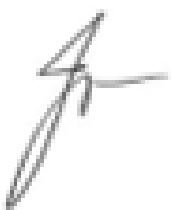
The AEC exists to help raise the profile, and resource cathedrals' with their mission and ministry potential. It seeks strategically to support our cathedrals by networking, storytelling, reflection, advocacy, training and research, so they can witness to the constancy of God's love for all creation in Jesus Christ and offer a perspective on the world we inhabit.

The AEC's role in supporting all Church of England cathedrals is now more important than ever. The majority of English Cathedrals are grappling with a significant funding deficit, placing pressure on their dual role of places of worship and cultural landmarks. The rising costs of maintenance, energy, insurance, compliance and governance have outpaced the income generated from donations, events and limited grants.

Government support has been inconsistent. The recent decision to nearly halve the funding for the Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme from £42 million to £23 million, along with the introduction of a £25,000 cap per building, poses significant challenges for larger projects. To address these financial challenges, more and more Cathedrals are exploring alternative revenue streams. Diversifying income through hosting events, charging entrance fees, and enhancing fundraising efforts are all strategies being explored.

At the same time, the numbers of visitors and pilgrims coming to our Cathedrals rises year on year and our worship attendance numbers are very healthy in their recovery after the effects of the pandemic.

The AEC is seeking an Executive Director to help support and shape the future of the cathedral sector against this backdrop of creative opportunity and challenge. If you have the relevant skills and experience for this role we would be keen to receive your application. If a preliminary conversation would assist you, please feel free to contact me directly.



The Very Reverend Jo Kelly-Moore  
Dean of St Albans  
Chair, Association of English Cathedrals



Liverpool Cathedral © Gareth Jones

# Executive Director

The Association of English Cathedrals is seeking a dynamic and visionary Executive Director to lead the organisation into its next phase of growth and development. As the key leader of the AEC, the Executive Director will bring strategic oversight and support to English Cathedrals, ensuring they are able to thrive in the modern world and celebrating their spiritual, cultural and historical significance.

The ideal candidate will have proven experience in the cathedral sector and an understanding of the unique challenges and opportunities facing cathedrals today. The Executive Director will be an inspiring leader, skilled in strategic planning and fostering collaborative partnerships, with a clear commitment to ensuring the long-term sustainability and relevance of English Cathedrals.

The role is accountable to the Chair of the AEC. Other key stakeholder relationships are the AEC Executive Committee, Deans, Cathedral Chief Operating and Finance Officers, various departments within the National Church Institutions and the Cathedral Administrators and Finance Association (CAFA).

The Executive Director is responsible for the effective and professional delivery of all aspects of the AEC's work. The role contributes to the formulation of, and is responsible for overseeing the implementation of, strategy and plans agreed by the Executive Committee. The post leads and manages the small team of staff and contractors. The permanent staff team comprises the Executive Director, an Administration Officer, a Cathedrals Coordinator for the Cathedrals and Major Churches Support Panel, and two contractors who support our Communications Project. All staff are part time.

The post is an exceptional opportunity to shape the future of the cathedral sector, working closely with Cathedral Deans, leadership teams, and national bodies to create and implement strategies that support the continued growth, sustainability, and impact of these iconic national treasures.



# Key Responsibilities

## Leadership and Strategic Vision

- Support the AEC Executive to think and act strategically to develop long term plans which support cathedrals' sustainability and growth
- Be a strategic advocate for the importance and needs of cathedrals

## Advocacy and Representation

- Monitor and respond as appropriate on behalf of cathedrals to government and other consultations
- Advocating for English Cathedral, liaise with other organisations, including the Churches Legislation Advisory Service, Charity Tax Group, Historic England, the Heritage Alliance, the Historic Religious Buildings Alliance, and the Association of Leading Visitor Attractions, to ensure the role and needs of cathedrals are understood and represented, and cathedrals contribute to and support sector developments
- Commission on behalf of cathedrals research that demonstrates the value of cathedrals, and the range of contributions they make, to government, other external bodies and stakeholders
- Ensure that there is active promotion of cathedrals in traditional and social media

## Sharing good practice

- Build effective working relationships with those working in cathedrals, national church institutions, and other organisations, providing support and advice
- Organise and facilitate meetings and encourage other networking of various groups within cathedrals, as appropriate working with CAFA, so that expertise can be shared and people supported in their work in cathedrals
- Produce, working with CAFA and others as appropriate, guidance and resources to enable cathedrals to function more effectively







Lincoln Cathedral

## **Management**

- Act as line manager/ lead contact for project staff and contractors
- Ensure that such projects as arise from time to time are managed appropriately, working with the Chair, Executive Committee and others to obtain funding

## **Administration**

- Ensure that AEC Executive Committee, Project Boards and Working Groups are properly supported in their governance roles and their meetings are duly minuted.
- Act as Company Secretary for AEC and CAFA, ensuring that records held by Companies House and the Charity Commission are kept up to date, and both charities comply with financial, legal and regulatory requirements.
- Look after the AEC's finances (keeping accounting records, budgeting, issuing invoices, managing bank accounts, making payments, preparing the Annual Report and Accounts and liaising with the Independent Examiner)
- Look after HR, including recruitment, terms of employment and contracts, pensions and payroll.



# The Association of English Cathedrals

The Association of English Cathedrals acts as the representative body for the 42 English Anglican cathedrals. It promotes their role in national and church life, and works to equip cathedrals to fulfil their purpose as the seat of the Bishop and a centre of worship and mission.

The AEC undertakes work centrally that benefits cathedrals, including liaising on behalf of, and advocating for cathedrals with government departments and agencies and Church of England central bodies.

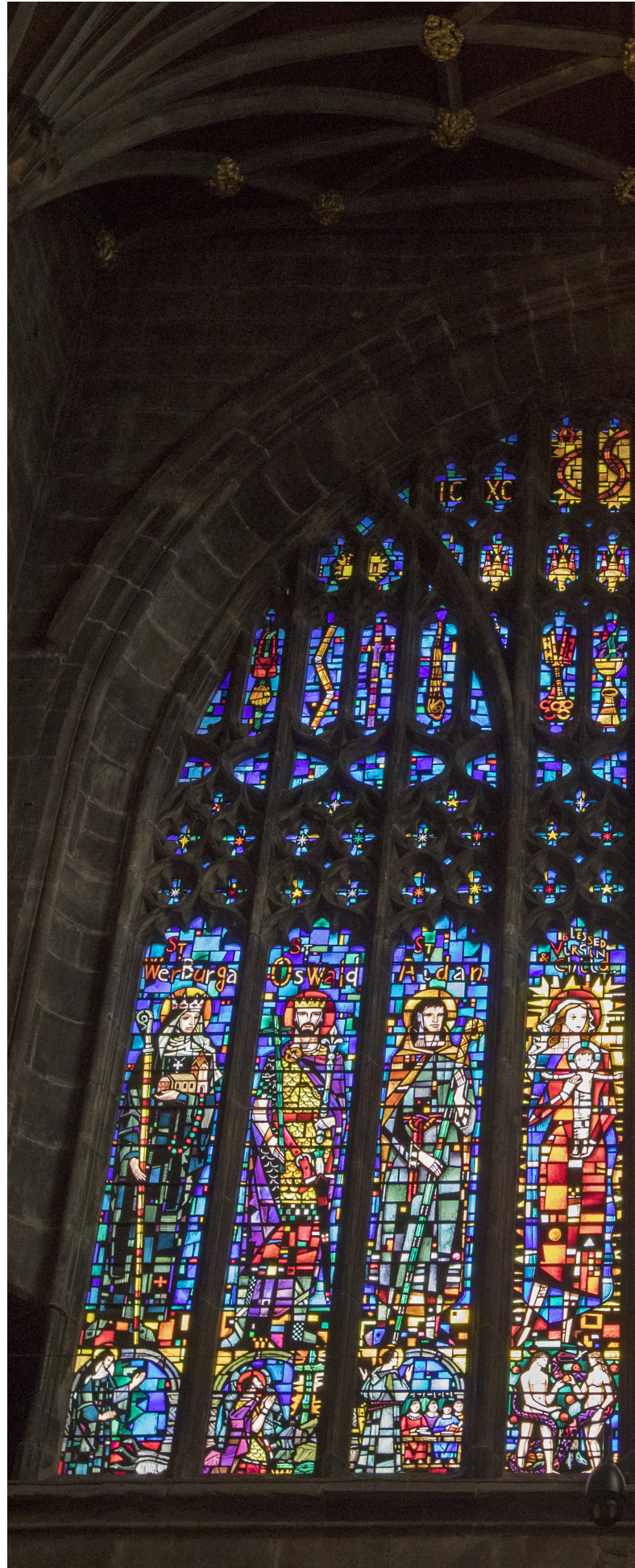
AEC encourages and helps to facilitate the sharing of good practice and other information between cathedrals, issuing guidance on issues affecting cathedrals, conducting research to assist in promoting the national role of cathedrals and to provide information for decision making at a local level, and running projects that benefit cathedrals. The AEC is the vehicle cathedrals use when they wish to work together.

Since being formed in 1990, to represent the interests of English Anglican Cathedrals, the role of the AEC has expanded over the years to include all aspects of better equipping cathedrals, from promoting the church to liaising with the Church of England, government bodies and other organisations and everything in between, to be a better support, resource and advocate for all our cathedrals.

The AEC's activities are overseen by the Executive Committee, a Board of Directors and Trustees, elected by the members. They meet four times a year. The current AEC Chair is the Dean of St Albans. The other members of the Board are representatives from other English Cathedrals and include Deans, Residentiary Canons, COOs, and lay Chapter members.

The AEC has a number of strands of project work to support cathedrals.

The AEC has a long tradition of providing induction training to new members of Chapters. The training brings together people from many cathedrals so those attending can learn from each other as well as from the various sessions which address aspects of trusteeship which are unique to cathedrals. Training is led by a member of the AEC Executive and involves presentations from those with experience of Chapter membership and working in and with cathedrals.







Chester Cathedral

The AEC Communications Project workstream is a dedicated project which aims to highlight and bring to wider attention the quality, range and depth of cathedral ministry, mission and public engagement, raising the profile of cathedrals so that they are perceived as relevant, engaged and worth visiting, and enabling cathedrals to speak as a family. The project team of two, work part-time, one with a traditional media brief and one looking after social media and the website. They promote the role of cathedrals through storytelling and campaigns and provide support to those working in communications in cathedrals.

The AEC's Cathedral and Major Church Projects Support Panel Project aims to support and transform the sustainability and governance of projects in cathedrals and major churches, across a wide range of areas related to buildings and sustainability, by enabling appropriate advice to be given at an early stage to ensure their viability before major commitments are made. This advice is freely given by a panel of experts who volunteer their time. The project is coordinated by two part-time project managers, one for cathedrals and one for major churches.

The AEC also hosts a national Cathedrals Conference every three years. The next is at Bristol Cathedral in 2026.

The AEC works with partner cathedrals including those of the Church in Wales, major churches, the Archbishops of Canterbury and York, the National Church Institutions (including the Archbishops' Council, Church Commissioners and Lambeth Palace), ALVA, Benefact Trust, CCLA, Ecclesiastical Insurance, and relevant ecumenical groups.

The AEC are members of the Heritage Alliance, Churches Legislation Advisory Service and the Charity Tax Group.

[www.englishcathedrals.co.uk](http://www.englishcathedrals.co.uk)



# Person Specification

## Skills/ Aptitudes:

- Excellent influencing skills
- Excellent communication skills
- Excellent networking skills
- Excellent analytical skills
- Excellent computer skills
- Excellent attention to detail

## Knowledge/ Experience:

- A good working understanding of Anglican cathedrals and the Church of England
- Experience of working in a cathedral or church context at a senior level
- Experience of engaging well with a range of stakeholders
- Experience of having coordinated and overseen projects and/or initiatives within complex organisations with a variety of different stakeholders
- Experience of people management, including leading a team comprising both employed staff and contractors and working with volunteers
- Experience of working with and supporting committees or boards
- Experience of accounting/bookkeeping

## Personal Attributes:

- Ability to communicate well with a variety of people, including senior Church figures and expert professionals
- Tact, discretion and a positive attitude to changing priorities and tasks
- Having the drive to overcome obstacles while bringing people with you
- Ability to work well with minimum supervision and meet deadlines







# Terms and Conditions

- Permanent Contract
- Hours of work 17.5 hours a week 0.5 FTE but some flexibility will be required to meet the needs of the job. A willingness to travel on an occasional basis as required, sometimes with an overnight stay
- Salary: £40,000 (pro-rated based on a FTE of £80,000)
- Annual leave 6 weeks plus public holidays, pro rata
- The AEC offers membership of a defined contributions pension scheme operated by the Church Workers Pension Fund (Pension Builder 2014) to which the employer and employee both contribute 4%

# Recruitment Process

Applicants are invited to submit a covering letter, Curriculum Vitae and the names of 2 referees to The Very Reverend Jo Kelly-Moore E: [deanea@stalbanscathedral.org](mailto:deanea@stalbanscathedral.org)

**The closing date for applications is 5pm on 27 April 2025**

Interviews will be held on 6 May 2025

Invitation to interview will be based on the suitability of your qualification, experience and abilities. We are committed to a culture of diversity, equity and inclusion and we welcome and encourage applications from a diverse range of people.

We are committed to providing a welcoming, respectful and safe environment for all and expect all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. Our appointment processes follow the Church of England's Safer Recruitment Practice Guidance.

Appointment is subject to

- Two satisfactory references
- An enhanced DBS criminal record check
- Completion of a Medical Questionnaire
- Confirmation of your right to work in the UK