



Terms of Engagement and Person Specification Organist & Choir Leader (hereafter referred to as 'Organist')



Terms of Engagement

Context

The church of St Helen's, Wheathampstead, Hertfordshire, is looking for a new organist, as our young organist leaves us to further his studies. Ours is a thriving church and music is central to our worship.

Duties of the organist

The Organist plays the organ and directs the choir for all major services: the 9.30 am Communion service each Sunday (replaced by Parish Praise once a month), plus services to celebrate major festivals. S/he also has the option to play at occasional weddings, funerals and baptism services. S/he is expected to conduct an hour's choir rehearsal during the week, currently 7.30-8.30 pm on Thursdays, and to lead a short unaccompanied choir rehearsal in the vestry, starting about half an hour before the Sunday 9.30 service. The 9.30 service involves playing introductory music for 5 to 10 minutes before the service, accompanying the choral communion setting (at present Thorne's Mass of St Thomas), extemporising at appropriate moments, accompanying 5 hymns, conducting or accompanying the choir for one short anthem, and playing an organ voluntary at the end. The organ is available for practice when the church is not otherwise being used (most afternoons & evenings) – but see 'the organ' below.

Remuneration

The organist receives a fee payable monthly in arrears for fulfilling the above duties (plus the opportunity for additional fees for weddings, baptisms and funerals – see below). The monthly fee is reviewed every two years.

The Choir

St Helen's has an enthusiastic and competent 4-part robed choir of mixed ability, with some good strong voices and sight-readers. As some older members have expressed a wish to retire in the foreseeable future, others have recently joined or are being recruited (aiming for 4-5 in each part). All are interested in being helped to perform well and learn new repertoire.

The Organ

St Helen's possesses a small but effective 2-manual and pedal pipe organ, constructed by Hill, Norman and Beard in 1968. This is being renovated and restored to first class order by FH Browne and will be back in service in early June 2016. It is tuned twice a year. We also have a good-quality digital baby grand Clavinova (with the facility for recording and playback) which is used for more modern worship, and as a back-up in the absence of the organ.

Music

We use *Ancient & Modern Hymns and Songs for Refreshing Worship* as the choir hymn book. For the anthem we frequently use *Anthemns for Choirs 1 & 4* supplemented by separately published anthems (of which we have a large collection), plus seasonal anthems (eg from *Advent Carols for Choirs*, and *Carols for Choirs 1 & 2*). The organist may liaise with the rector to choose the hymns and other music for service. We are also open to developing a wider range of music in services, with a trend towards introducing some more modern 20th and 21st century hymns and worship songs.





Person Specification

The Organist must be able to:

- play the organ and accompany the choir and congregation to a high standard
- rehearse, conduct, lead and develop the choir
- work collaboratively with the Rector and other ministers
- have experience of church services and be familiar with hymn settings and the liturgy
- help choose appropriate hymns, anthems and organ music to suit the liturgy

The Organist is also encouraged to:

- be open to exploring fresh ways of using music to enhance worship.

Further information

Additional services

In addition to the weekly 9.30 Sunday service, other services in which the Organist is involved (usually with the choir) are as follows (all at St Helen's, usually with the choir):

Ash Wednesday • Maundy Thursday • Good Friday • Easter Sunday 8am (no choir, 2 hymns)

Relatives' Remembrance service (a Sunday pm in May) • Remembrance Sunday

Christingle (2 services) • Advent Carols (evening) • Traditional service of lessons and carols

(usually last Sunday before Christmas) • Christmas Eve Crib Services (2) • Christmas Eve

Midnight Communion • Christmas Day 8am (no choir, 2 carols) • Christmas Day 9.30 • Christmas

Day Praise at St Peter's Church (11.15am)

Occasional Offices (and additional fees)

The Organist has the right to be asked first to play for Church Funerals/Memorial Services, Weddings, and stand-alone Baptism services. Where the Organist is unable to play, a suitably competent deputy may be substituted and will receive the fee payable.

For these occasional offices, the Organist is expected to consult with the family prior to the service (well in advance if possible) to advise and guide their choice of music. When a Choir is requested to sing at such services (usually weddings and very occasionally funerals) the Organist organises and rehearses them (within the usual weekly rehearsal).

For playing at occasional offices, the Organist receives fees (usually added to the usual monthly fee and due for review in 2016):

Weddings (average 6-12 per year) - £86 (plus £32 if a video recording is made)

Funerals (average 8 per year) - £60

Baptisms (occasional by special arrangement; fee paid only when baptisms are separate from the normal Sunday service) - £60

Holidays

The Organist will be entitled to six Sundays (and weekday rehearsals) off per calendar year.

Holidays, however, may not be taken at Christmas or during Holy Week. In addition, the Organist may as necessary substitute a deputy to cover his/her duties for up to six (6) Sundays per year; such deputies must be fully competent, and, apart from holidays, will be remunerated by the Organist.

Safeguarding Young people and vulnerable adults The parish has a Safeguarding policy in place to which the Organist must adhere and **the post is subject to an enhanced CRB disclosure**





Equal Opportunities St Helen's and St Peter's PCC is an equal opportunities employer.

UK local resident The Organist must already have the right to reside and work in the UK and live within easy reach of Wheathampstead.

Other (non-essential) opportunities of the role

Developing our Worship The organist has the opportunity (if they wish) to join the Worship Development Group, a sub-group of the PCC, which aims to enhance worship in all our services in a variety of ways – including different services (possibly a monthly evening service, including Taizé) and different music, possibly with other instruments. Services are also held in St Peter's (Gustard Wood) (using an electric piano), we are involved in Churches Together services (max 2-3 per year), and since our Rector is also the current Rural Dean, we are hoping for more liaison with other local churches.

We would also like church music to become an increasingly important part of our outreach through events such as carol singing in the community, and continuing to develop our strong links with the local musical community (including concerts and recitals, and possibilities to liaise with other instrumentalists) and with the 4 local primary schools (the Church school, the other state primary, and 2 single-sex private schools).

To apply or for more information

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St Helen's Church, Wheathampstead

St Helen's is a friendly church with a growing congregation of all ages, and a young Rector, Richard Banham. The building is a beautiful 13th-14th century construction with interior carvings and monuments from all ages. The village of Wheathampstead has a population of approximately 7,000. St Helen's (in Wheathampstead) together with St Peter's (in nearby Gustard Wood) have an electoral roll of nearly 190. Average attendance at our weekly 9.30 Communion service is currently 105 adults and 22 children and at our monthly 11.15 Family Service 32 children and 27 adults. We have a diverse congregation with people from many different backgrounds. The rich musical life of St Helen's and St Peter's churches plays an important part in our worship and in the mission of the church.

Our Mission - *what the church is here for, its purpose*

**“Living and working for the glory of God
in Wheathampstead and beyond”**

Our Vision – *where we see ourselves in five years' time*

In 2018 St Helen's and St Peter's will be:

- Vibrant centres for Christian service
- A community growing in Christian maturity
- Deepening our connection with God through worship

The PCC has identified four **Strategic Priorities** for further development in the next 3-5 years:

- A. More **groups and teaching**, such as all-age bible study, prayer and alpha, as well as re-starting a youth group
- B. **Mission and outreach** by providing **practical and pastoral support** around the village
- C. **Developing our worship** with more variety and something for everyone
- D. Completing our **extension and re-ordering** (Project 21)

Our Values – *what influences and motivates us*

As followers of Jesus, inspired by God's amazing Love:

- We **welcome**, care for and value everyone
- We are here to **serve** the whole village community
- We all **play our part** in the life of our church
- We **share** the Good News of **Jesus** Christ with all
- Our Christian **faith impacts** every aspect of our lives

