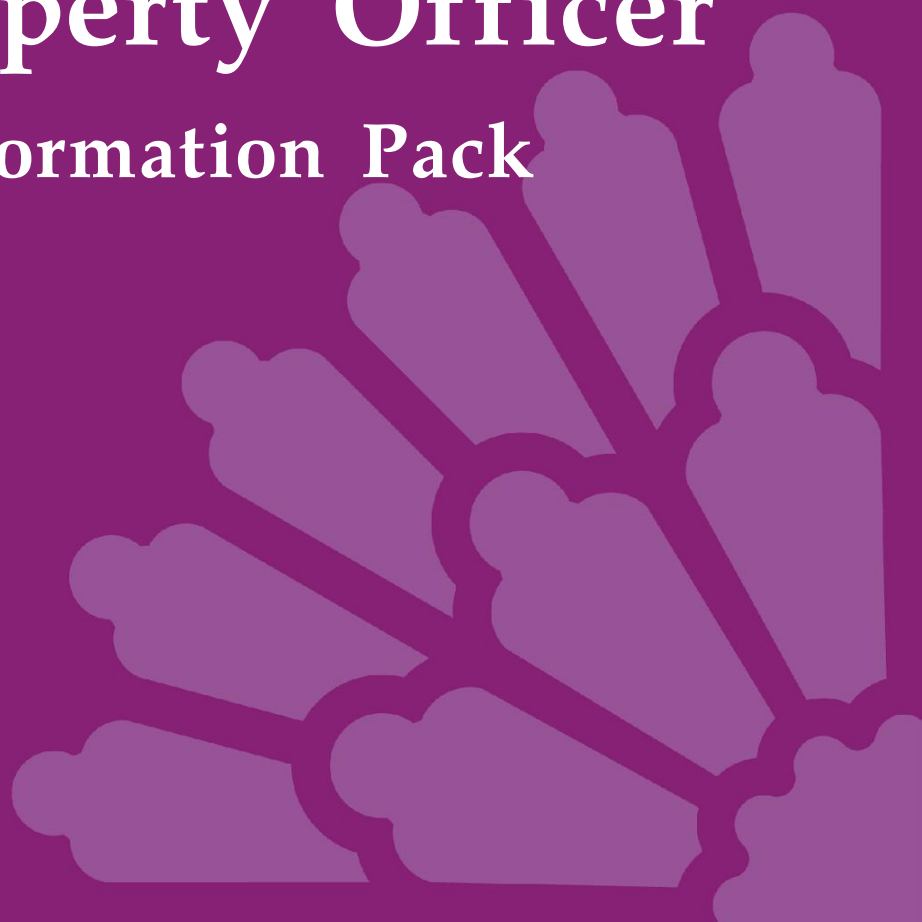




DURHAM
CATHEDRAL

September 2026

Chief Property Officer Candidate Information Pack





Introduction and Welcome

Welcome, and thank you for your interest in applying for the role of Chief Property Officer at Durham Cathedral.

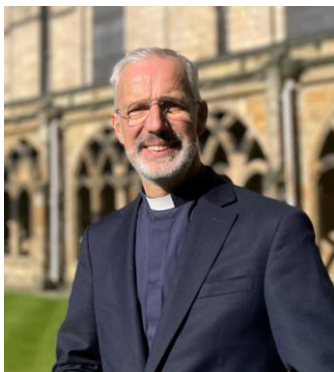
Durham Cathedral is blessed to be a well-known and well-loved centre of Christian worship in the North-East of England and holds a foremost role in regional society and identity. Durham Cathedral holds over 1,300 services a year and welcomes around 400,000 visitors to enjoy all that this place offers. Durham Cathedral is an active and an energetic place, and our people expect to achieve high professional standards in all areas of the Cathedral's life. This is an exciting opportunity to play a key part in the life of this vibrant and historic centre of Christian worship and mission at a significant point in our development.

At Durham Cathedral we are fortunate to act as stewards of one of the foremost and best-loved cathedral buildings in Europe, and a significant heritage estate adjoining it, designated with World Heritage Site status. We take seriously our responsibility to conserve the buildings with which we have been entrusted, as well as having aspirational plans to continue their adaptation to meet present day needs.

Durham Cathedral is at an important stage in developing future plans across all areas of the Cathedral's activity. Our mission statement is: "Inspired by our saints, Cuthbert and Bede, the mission of Durham Cathedral is to offer everyone the opportunity to encounter God and know God's love in Jesus Christ". From this mission we have developed a clear and ambitious vision for the period to 2033 and a strategy to deliver this. Importantly, our vision is enabled by plans to conserve the historic fabric of Durham Cathedral and its surroundings, and to find new, innovative uses for properties and spaces in and around the Cathedral church, in service of our mission.

At this exciting time, we are seeking to appoint an experienced Chief Property Officer to play a key role in the Cathedral's activities, realise our vision, and enable our strategic objectives. We hope you feel as excited by our hopes and plans as we do.

Yours in Christ,



Philip Plyming
Dean of Durham



Guy Sampson
Chief Operating Officer





About Durham Cathedral

Durham Cathedral is today an active place of worship and mission, the home of our much-loved saints, Cuthbert and Bede, and the seat of the Bishop of Durham. As well as serving the people of The Diocese of Durham and the North East, it is a world-leading tourism destination.

As a building the Cathedral is acknowledged globally for its outstanding architecture and its beautiful and dramatic setting, often cited as the finest Romanesque church in Europe. It is part of the Durham World Heritage Site, and the renowned author and former Chancellor of Durham University Bill Bryson called it *'the best Cathedral on planet earth'*.

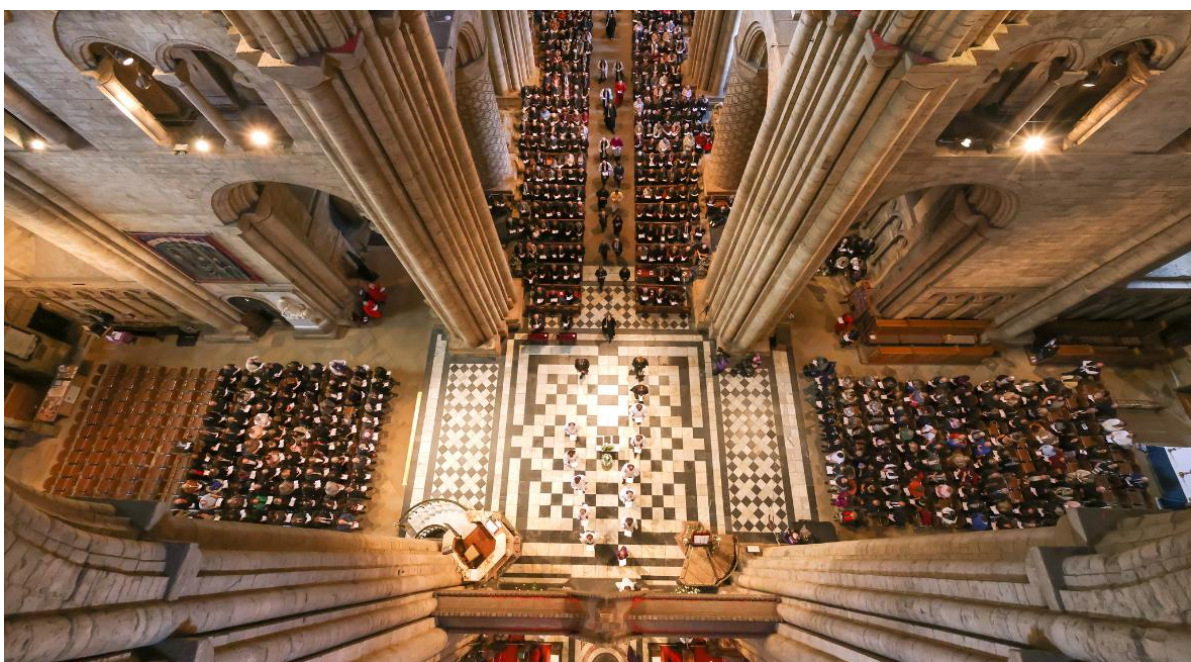
We are stewards not only of our outstanding church buildings, but of world-class historic collections of manuscripts, and works of art. We are active partners with Durham University, and with Durham Cathedral Schools Foundation, where our choristers are educated. We have approximately 115 members of staff, a choir of up to 60 members (including 6 Lay Clerks, 6 Choral Scholars and up to 48 child choristers), and a team of over 470 volunteers.

Above all, Durham Cathedral exists as a place for the glory of God, for whose praise it was constructed over 900 years ago.

Governance is held within the Cathedral's trustee body the Chapter, a body of eleven people (a majority of which are non-exec roles), which is chaired by the Dean.

Overall executive leadership is shared between the Dean (functioning as CEO) and the COO, and the Chief Property Officer will need to work closely with both individuals as well as the Chief Finance Officer. The Executive Leadership Team comprises the residentiary canons, who are executive members of Chapter, and all heads of department, and meets monthly. The Chief Property Officer will need to work in close collaboration with all members of the Executive Leadership Team.

The organisational charts annexed provide further context about these structures.





Durham Cathedral: Our Mission, Purpose and our Values

Our Mission:

Inspired by our saints, Cuthbert and Bede, the mission of Durham Cathedral is to offer everyone the opportunity to encounter God and know God's love in Jesus Christ.

Our Purpose:

Our purpose is to:

- worship God
- share the gospel of Jesus Christ
- welcome all who come
- celebrate and pass on our rich Christian heritage
- discover our place in God's creation

Our Values:

Our values help guide us in recognising how we fulfil our vocation. They reflect the qualities we believe are essential to our life and work as a 21st century Cathedral. We use them to highlight the necessity of working in ways motivated by wisdom, responsibility and ethics.

In all things, we are inspired, motivated and challenged by the Christian faith and the values of the Gospel.

- **Spirituality** - We recognise and respond to God's presence in our world and among us, practising a reflective approach to what we do.
- **Respect** - We recognise the image of God in all human beings, honour their dignity and treat them with courtesy.
- **Justice** - We deal fairly in our personal and collective behaviours, work to the highest ethical standards, and are honest in our speech and behaviour. We think, speak and act with integrity, are professional in our conduct, and are publicly accountable for our actions.
- **Collaboration** - We are a community founded on trust that prizes team working and builds partnerships that contribute to the common good.
- **Sustainability** - We are business-like in our corporate life and prudent in our stewardship of resources. We pursue the sustainability of our operations and environment.
- **Welcome** - We are welcoming and hospitable to all. We show Christian love and care to our guests and those who need our help.
- **Aspiration** - We are an outward-facing cathedral that reaches for the future with energy and courage, and reaches out to our communities in the hope of personal and social transformation.

More information about our Values and Behaviours can be found [here](#).





Vision and Strategy

Durham Cathedral Vision 2033

The mission of Durham Cathedral, as freshly articulated in 2023, is as follows:

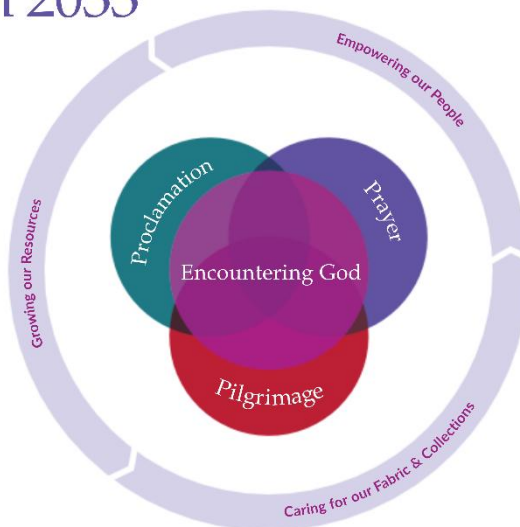
Inspired by our saints, Cuthbert and Bede, the mission of Durham Cathedral is to offer everyone the opportunity to encounter God and know God's love in Jesus Christ

As we look forward to 2033, the 900th anniversary of the completion of the present Norman building, we have committed to following a vision marked by four priorities: Encountering God: Pilgrimage, Prayer and Proclamation.

Specifically, our prayer is that by 2033 Durham Cathedral will be known both locally and internationally as a:

- welcoming and engaging place for people to encounter God
- leading destination and resource for life-transforming pilgrimage for people of all stages of life and faith
- leading centre for the learning and practice of prayer
- leading focus for world engaging discussion, witness and proclamation in the name of Christ

Vision 2033



We have developed an outline strategic plan to implement this vision, and this has been endorsed by Chapter and is being further worked on by all the teams within Durham Cathedral. The enabling priorities which underpin this vision and strategy include money and development.

This is an ambitious and exciting journey which will stretch our faith and require us to call on God for the means to achieve what we believe we are being called to do. However, we are inspired by the past faithfulness of those who have served in our Cathedral and encouraged by what we believe is possible, under God, in the years to come.



Heritage Property at Durham Cathedral

Heritage Property Conservation: Scope

At Durham Cathedral we are committed to delivering an extensive and ambitious programme of heritage property conservation, spanning the Cathedral building itself and across the wider built estate around the Cathedral and across the wider peninsula. The Cathedral's conservation management plan articulates the need for a sustained programme of fabric repair works, to address the effects of weathering and age-related deterioration. This programme represents the continuation of an ongoing, permanent, programme of conservation works, which in recent years has seen significant projects delivered to bring parts of the Cathedral church and surrounding historic estate into good condition.

The themes of the conservation management plan are given focus through the findings of the quinquennial inspection report (QIR), prepared by the Cathedral Architect. The QIR makes recommendations for the scope and extent of fabric conservation works across the Cathedral site, and from this report, plans and costs assessments can be developed to support the bringing forward of conservation projects. At present, conservation priorities across the Cathedral site include significant amounts of stonework repairs, alongside work to Cathedral glazing, historic timberwork, and mechanical and electrical systems. This includes specialist masonry conservation to some of the most architecturally significant parts of Durham Cathedral, such as the Romanesque arch of the main North door, and the Chapel of the Nine Altars, as well as comprehensive fabric repairs to the Cathedral cloisters, one of the most complete and well-preserved medieval cloister ranges in Europe.

Indicative QS costings suggest a present-day value of the planned works in the region of £50-60 Million. This value of work features in and has influenced the Cathedral's wider financial strategy, which has been developed in sight of the need to meet this need. In short, Durham Cathedral has plans to deliver the conservation works needed, in reality!

Adaptation and Innovation

As well as conserving the outstanding historic fabric of the Cathedral and its precincts, we are tasked with making sure it meets present-day needs and expectations. Durham Cathedral has never been a static place throughout its history, and that process of change and adaptation continues today. Vision 2033 gives us a clear sense of how the Cathedral church and other buildings can serve our mission, and empowers us to approach the task of adapting and innovating for our generation.

A recent example of this approach in practice would be the creation of the Cuthbert Centre for Pilgrimage and Prayer as a resource for pilgrims, a key priority under Vision 2033. We are also currently engaged with creating new dwellings in the Cathedral precinct, to support our financial strategy and ensure spaces are used to optimum effect.



This theme of positive change and adaptation necessarily runs throughout our property strategy, be that changes designed to reduce our environmental footprint, to make the Cathedral more accessible to all, or to provide better workspaces, staff and visitor facilities. We need our buildings to help people encounter God, feel welcomed, and be safe, to help our staff and volunteers carry out their roles, and to generate new income.

Spotlight: The Cuthbert Centre for Pilgrimage and Prayer

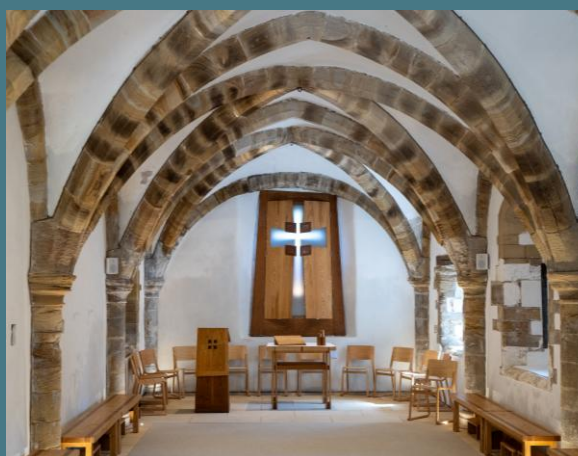
Under Vision 2033, our goal is that Durham Cathedral becomes a leading destination and resource for life-transforming pilgrimage for people of all stages of life and faith. Part of the strategy to fulfil this vision has been the adaptation of an under-used 13th Century chapel, and adjoining rooms, to creation of the Cuthbert Centre for Pilgrimage and Prayer.



The works, completed in September 2026, saw the complete internal renovation of the historic chapel building, with the addition of heritage-appropriate modern lighting and heating, and creation of step-free access. The adjoining spaces were converted into two welcoming hospitality rooms.

The project was managed by the in-house team with technical input from the Cathedral Architect and Cathedral Archaeologist. The works themselves were delivered through a combined team of in-house stonemasons and joiners, working with external contractors for groundworks and M&E systems.

Durham Cathedral has significant opportunity within our wider heritage property estate in the Cathedral precincts. The priorities of Vision 2033 give us a clear framework against which we are able to appraise potential projects through a missional, financial and operational lens, thereby empowering us to take decisions to adapt our heritage properties to meet present-day needs.



Role Summary

We are seeking an exceptional strategic leader to oversee the stewardship, conservation, and development of Durham Cathedral's estate and built heritage. The Chief Property Officer will provide vision, leadership and expertise to ensure that the Cathedral's fabric, precincts and property assets are sustainably managed and developed in support of the Cathedral's mission and the ambitions set out in Vision 2033.

This pivotal role requires a highly experienced property and estates professional with a strong track record of delivering complex conservation, maintenance and development projects. The post holder will combine strategic thinking with practical delivery, balancing the demands of heritage conservation, operational effectiveness, financial sustainability and regulatory compliance within one of the UK's most significant historic and ecclesiastical sites.

The Chief Property Officer will bring substantial technical professional skills in design, planning and procurement of property works, as well as practical experience of project and contractor management. The role involves applying these skills in the context of Durham Cathedral's ambitious programme of capital property conservation and adaptation works.

As a member of the Executive Leadership Team, you will lead the development and delivery of a long-term strategy for the built fabric of the Cathedral and its historic precincts, ensuring that conservation priorities, capital investment and development opportunities are planned and managed effectively. You will oversee major projects from concept through to completion, working closely with the senior colleagues, statutory bodies and professional advisors to ensure the highest standards of conservation, governance and project delivery.





You will provide leadership to the Cathedral's in-house property department, including a team of eight stonemasons managed by the Works Manager, as well as other specialist tradespeople, a team of gardeners, and the Porters and Security team, reporting through the Head of Facilities. The Chief Property Officer will foster a culture of accountability, collaboration and continuous improvement. Through effective management of internal teams, contractors and specialist partners, you will ensure that the Cathedral buildings and site remain safe, resilient, sustainable and fit for future generations.

Acting as a key ambassador for the Cathedral, the Chief Property Officer will build and maintain strong relationships with planning authorities, heritage organisations, public bodies and other stakeholders. You will play a central role in enabling the Cathedral's mission by safeguarding its remarkable heritage while identifying opportunities for innovation, adaptation and environmental sustainability.

This is a unique opportunity for a visionary and accomplished leader to shape the future of a world-renowned heritage site, ensuring that Durham Cathedral's buildings, precincts and property assets continue to serve and inspire communities for generations to come.





Job Description

JOB TITLE: Chief Property Officer

SALARY: The salary for this role falls within the range of £65,000-£79,000.

LOCATION: The role will usually be based at the Cathedral Office at Durham Cathedral, and across the site. Whilst a degree of home-working is expected to be possible, by agreement with the role-holder's line-manager, the position entails significant on-site engagement with colleagues and other members of the Cathedral community, and so it is important that the role-holder inhabits the very spaces over which they will have a significant impact.

HOURS: This is a full-time position. Whilst the full equivalent working hours are usually 37.5 hours per week, the post holder will be required to work those hours that are necessary for the proper performance of the Chief Property Officer duties and responsibilities.

The senior Cathedral staff form part of a Duty Officer rota which include working some bank holidays and weekends (for which a day in lieu is given), to ensure there are senior staff available on site during all periods of the Cathedral's operation. Typically this entails working approximately six to eight weekend days per annum.

The post holder will be expected to take a flexible approach and devote the appropriate working hours as circumstances demand.

RESPONSIBLE TO: The Chief Operating Officer.

RESPONSIBLE FOR: This post has direct line management responsibility for the Head of Facilities and Works Manager.

KEY RELATIONSHIPS: The Chief Operating Officer; The Dean; Residentiary Canons; members of the Executive Leadership Team; members of the Fabric Advisory Committee and Cathedrals Fabric Commission for England, The Cathedral Architect and Cathedral Archaeologist; Conservation Officers; Cathedrals Workshop Fellowship executive, Cathedral staff resident in Cathedral housing; Durham University and the World Heritage Site steering committee.

MAIN DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

The Chief Property Officer will provide strategic leadership for the long-term stewardship of the built fabric of Durham Cathedral and its immediate precincts, ensuring that both are conserved and managed sustainably, and in line with the Cathedral's mission, as articulated in Vision 2033.

The postholder will lead estate master planning and project delivery. While the day-to-day management is delegated, the Chief Property Officer holds accountability for delivery, compliance, productivity, and performance of their team and appointed contractors.

As a senior member of the Cathedral executive, the Chief Property Officer will be expected to assume responsibility for a variety of duties and projects in line with the developing needs of the organisation. The following is a summary of the principal duties, but is non-exhaustive:





Strategic Leadership & Governance

- Lead the conservation and strategic development of the Cathedral and its precincts, including planning for long-term heritage conservation works, and for strategic development and adaptation projects in support of the Cathedral's mission and Vision 2033.
- Specifically, to provide leadership and management to Durham Cathedral's in-house Property Department, taking accountability for delivery of fabric works and the professional management of the team.
- To develop and maintain a forward strategic plan of fabric conservation and development projects, to serve the needs of organisational decision making and governance.
- To lead and contribute to all engagement with property and fabric issues within the Cathedral's senior leadership and governance structures, including within the Fabric Advisory Committee and Executive Leadership Team.
- As a Chief Officer, to contribute to a positive leadership culture and operational environment within Durham Cathedral and to undertake tasks and projects which further support this, such tasks to be discussed and agreed with the Chief Operating Officer

Fabric Conservation and Maintenance

- Oversee the delivery of fabric conservation projects at Durham Cathedral and the Cathedral precincts.
- Commission quinquennial inspections, surveys and long-term maintenance plans, drawing on relevant specialist technical professional advice as necessary.
- Develop specifications and plans of conservation works, working closely with the Cathedral Architect, Cathedral Archaeologist, the Fabric Advisory Committee and where relevant the Cathedrals Fabric Commission for England, and relevant building and heritage professionals as necessary.
- Lead the procurement and contract management processes for significant conservation and maintenance projects, ensuring quality, cost control, and statutory compliance.

Property Development and Sustainability

- Identify opportunities for development and alteration of buildings and spaces in the Cathedral precincts, seeking adaptive reuse and optimisation, supported by viability assessment and financial modelling.
- Lead engagement with relevant authorities to secure statutory approvals, procurement and delivery of projects.
- To have oversight of the Cathedral's progress on its overall journey to reduce its environmental footprint, and to work with the Head of Facilities to develop and deliver projects to progress action in this area.

Operational Leadership, Presence and Delivery

- Maintain a visible on-site presence during working hours, and ensure operational and fabric-related issues are responded to in a timely fashion.
- Monitor and drive the productivity and performance of internal teams and external contractors, ensuring delivery to agreed quality standards, timelines and budgets.
- Ensure department and contractor compliance with CDM, health & safety, and statutory frameworks, promoting and modelling a high health and safety culture within the Property Department.





Collaboration, Culture & Stakeholder Engagement

- Build and maintain strong relationships with Durham County Council, planning authorities, elected representatives, Historic England, and statutory partners.
- Foster a positive and collaborative team culture, supporting professional development and effective integration with all Cathedral departments.

Additional Responsibilities:

- Any other duties as may be reasonably required.
- Act at all times in accordance with the Cathedral's safeguarding policy to ensure that the Cathedral's safeguarding culture is fostered and maintained at all times.
- Complete continued professional development and ensure that the highest standards of professional performance are maintained.
- Ensure compliance with relevant legislation and statutory codes of practice, as advised.
- Participate in the arrangements for performance review and appraisal.
- Ensure that professional skills are regularly updated through participation in training and development activities.

This list is not exhaustive and is intended to reflect your main tasks and areas of work. Changes may occur over time and you will be expected to agree any reasonable changes to your job description that are commensurate with your banding and in line with the general nature of your post. You will be consulted about any changes to your job description before these are implemented.

Safeguarding

The post-holder will be required to satisfactorily complete designated learning both online and in person. This will include online learning in Safeguarding at the 'Basic Awareness' and the 'Foundations' levels and in Health & Safety within the first one week of employment. Following this, the post-holder will be expected to engage in 'Leadership' and 'Senior Leadership' learning in safeguarding, completing this as soon as is possible within three months of taking up the appointment.

Health and Safety

Under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, whilst at work you must take reasonable care for your own health and safety and that of any other person who may be affected by your acts or omissions. In addition, you must co-operate with the Cathedral on health and safety and not interfere with or mis-use anything provided for your health, safety and welfare.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Durham Cathedral is committed to promoting a diverse, non-discriminatory and inclusive community that gives everyone an equal chance to learn, work and live free from discrimination bias and prejudice. Our Equality Policy includes responsibility for all of our people to eliminate unfair and unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity for all and foster good relations.

Confidentiality

Staff must not pass on to unauthorised persons, any information obtained in the course of their duties without the permission of their Head of Department.





Person Specification

Chief Property Officer

This section outlines the requirements and qualities the post-holder needs in order to fulfil the post. These are divided into 'essential' and 'desirable' criteria. 'Essential' criteria are those that the post-holder absolutely must have in order to do the job, i.e. the job cannot be done without those qualities. 'Desirable' criteria are those qualities that would be either useful, an advantage or preferable to have in order to do the job or those which can be trained to do, i.e. the job can be done without those qualities.

CRITERIA: (E) – ESSENTIAL (D) – DESIRABLE

MEASURED BY: (A) – Application form; (I) – Interview;

REQUIREMENTS The post holder must be able to demonstrate:	(E) / (D)	(A) / (I)
Education/Training		
Professional qualification or accreditation, or membership of a relevant body (e.g. RICS, RTPI, CIOB, IHBC, RIBA, AABC, or equivalent), with at least five years' relevant post-qualification experience.	E	A/I
Knowledge and Experience		
Substantial senior-level experience working within the built property sector, with responsibility for the conservation and strategic leadership of highly significant historic buildings or estates, operating within complex statutory and stakeholder environments.	E	A/I
Experience of leading, managing, and developing multidisciplinary teams, including performance management, professional development, and fostering a positive, collaborative working culture.	E	A/I
Knowledge of town planning processes and securing statutory consents	E	A/I
Experience leading the conservation and long-term care of historic fabric, including detailed knowledge and understanding of relevant heritage building and conservation practices, and development of conservation management plans and prioritised maintenance programmes.	E	A/I
Experience leading major capital projects and conservation programmes, from feasibility through design, procurement and delivery, within live and sensitive operational environments.	E	A/I
Strong understanding of the statutory, planning, and regulatory framework relevant to historic estates, including heritage protection,	E	A/I



planning law, CDM regulations, health & safety, and building regulations.		
Skills & Aptitudes		
Demonstrates empathy for, and understanding of, the mission, vision, and values of Durham Cathedral within the wider context of the Church of England	E	A/I
Excellent interpersonal and communication skills - written, verbal and presentation.	E	A/I
The proven ability to develop and maintain key relationships, and inspire trust.	E	A/I
The ability to communicate at all levels using the appropriate media.	E	A/I
Strong influencing skills and the ability to inspire others to embed best practice.	E	A/I
Proven ability to lead and manage internal teams and external consultants and contractors, driving productivity, performance, quality, and delivery.	E	A/I
Ability to detail and specify property conservation and maintenance works, using relevant design tools and systems.	E	A/I
Able to understand and navigate the complexity of working in a large organisation.	E	A/I
Strong financial acumen, including a strength for budgetary management and financial planning within projects.	E	A/I
Circumstances		
Must be willing to work flexibly, including the ability to work outside of normal office working hours when required.		
Ability to travel independently for off-site meetings		



How to Apply

An application form is available to download from the Durham Cathedral website at www.durhamcathedral.co.uk/more/jobs

Completed application forms are to be emailed to HR@durhamcathedral.co.uk

Closing date for completed application forms is 9am on Wednesday 14 October 2026.

Interviews will be held on Tuesday 3rd and/or Thursday 5th November 2026.

Durham Cathedral is committed to safeguarding and protecting the welfare of children and vulnerable adults. Applicants must be willing and able to undergo the relevant pre-employment checks including provision of proof of eligibility to work in the UK, a full and complete employment history (including any breaks in employment) and satisfactory references. This role is subject to a Basic DBS check.

Should you wish to have an initial confidential discussion about this role, please contact Guy Sampson, COO on 07523 269556 or guy.sampson@durhamcathedral.co.uk

We will, of course, respect the privacy of any conversations or expression of interest regarding this post, whether formal or informal.





Statements

- **Equality**

Durham Cathedral recognises that discrimination and victimisation are unacceptable and that it is in the interests of the Cathedral and its employees to utilise the skills of the total workforce. It is the aim of Durham Cathedral to ensure that no employee or job applicant to the Cathedral receives less favourable treatment (either directly or indirectly in recruitment or employment on grounds of age, disability, gender/gender reassignment, marriage/civil partnership, pregnancy/maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation (defined as the protected characteristics in the Equality Act 2020).

- **Safeguarding**

The care and protection of children, young people and vulnerable adults involved in Church activities is the responsibility of the whole Church. Everyone who participates in the life of the Church has a role to play in promoting a Safer Church for all.

Durham Cathedral requires that all of our 'people' who undertake activities on behalf of the Cathedral are familiar with, and comply with, the Cathedral's Safeguarding Policy and Procedures. Durham Cathedral provides all of our 'people' with relevant and appropriate training, as well as access to professional safeguarding services, to ensure that we are all proactive in our approach to safeguarding and, as a minimum, we are compliant with our statutory responsibilities and policy commitments.

Durham Cathedral has adopted the Principles of the House of Bishops on safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and adults at risk who enter Durham Cathedral, which is based on the following six overarching policy commitments:

- Promoting a safer environment and culture.
- Safer recruitment and supporting all those with any responsibility related to children, young people and vulnerable adults within the Church.
- Responding promptly to every safeguarding concern or allegation.
- Caring pastorally for victim/survivors of abuse and other affected persons.
- Caring pastorally for those who are the subject of concerns or allegations of abuse and other affected persons.
- Responding to those that may pose or present a risk to others.

The post-holder will, during their probationary period, be required to satisfactorily complete learning in Health & Safety and in Safeguarding as deemed by the Cathedral to be relevant and appropriate to this post. This will include Safeguarding learning at the 'Basic Awareness' level (online) and 'Foundation' level (online).

Further information about safeguarding at Durham Cathedral can be found via our website: <https://www.durhamcathedral.co.uk/more/safeguarding>.





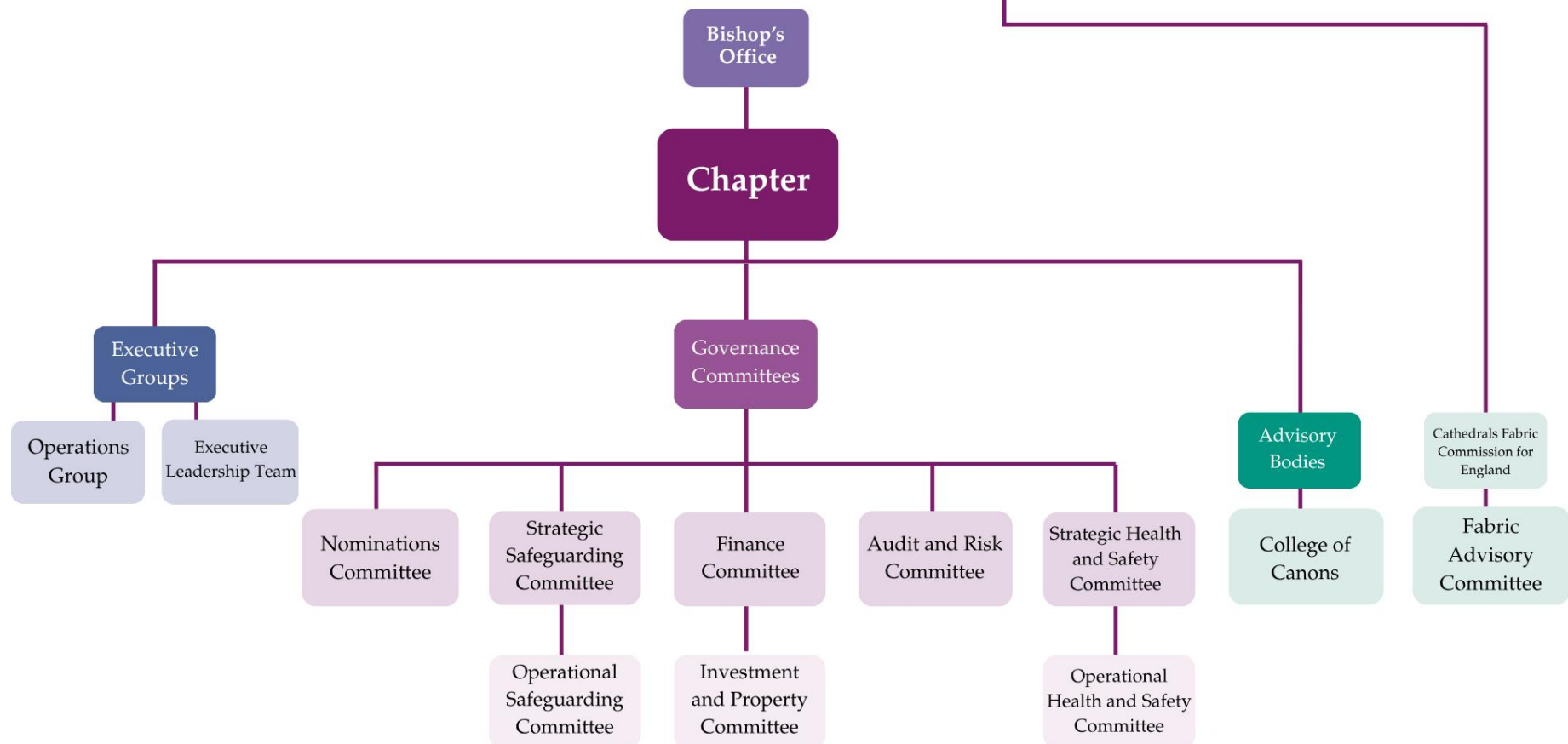
Governance Framework



CHARITY COMMISSION
FOR ENGLAND AND WALES



THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND





Organisational Chart – High Level

