

Job information pack

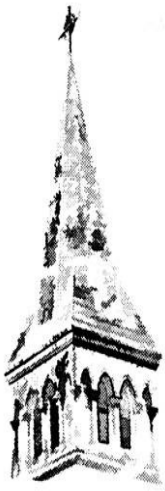
Parish Church of St James with St Peter, Islington, London

DIRECTOR OF MUSIC

A three-year, part-time, role for a gifted musician who will lead the development of music in our mission and worship



Closing date: 27 February 2026



St James with St Peter, Islington
Prebend Street
Islington
London N1 8PF

I am delighted that you have expressed interest in the role of Director of Music at St James'. I hope that the information in this pack is helpful as you consider how you could lead us to develop the musical life and musical mission of our church.

We are looking for a first-class musician who will work with us and with the wider community. You would be coming to a welcoming church, with an excellent, newly-restored, organ and you would play a leading role in our aim to strengthen music as part of our mission in this diverse parish in North London.

This pack give details of the selection process and applications should be sent to stjamesislingtonmusic@gmail.com by 27 February 2026. They should include a covering letter explaining your reasons for applying, a CV (including details of training and/or experience in choral direction) and the names and contact details of two referees.

If you would like an informal discussion about the role before applying, or if you require any further information, please contact me by email at mother.helen@stjamesislington.org.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Mthr Helen Sims-Williams
Vicar, St James' Islington

Background

St James' has stood as a beacon to the life and light of God for 150 years to a patch of Islington that stretches from Angel Station to New North Road and from the Islington Canal to Essex Road. We are friendly and diverse, and seek to make present the love of God in Jesus Christ for all people. Our worship is in the inclusive catholic tradition of the Church of England, centred around the Eucharist.

We are keen to grow as a centre for our wider parish, and we see this new role of the Director of Music as a crucial appointment for the development of our worship, and also as a key way that we can reach out missionally to our community.

Music has always been important to St James'. There is a 2-manual Gray & Davison organ which has recently been extensively restored and was rededicated in May 2022. Details of its specification are available at [Organ-Project-Specification-2023.pdf](#). There is also a historic (1894) Bechstein concert grand piano.

We have a professional organist who is keen to continue in his role, so we are not necessarily looking for an organist, although we require someone who has keyboard skills and the ability to accompany rehearsals.

The purpose of this new appointment is to lead the development of music as part of the life of St James', to reach out missionally to engage all age-groups, especially children, in the local community and to increase the quality of, and local engagement in, music in our worship.

We have a weekly cantor and a small monthly choir. We have developed a list of local volunteer singers and have begun bimonthly Choral Evensongs which have been very popular and which we would want to continue, along with our annual Carol Service. We have also gathered a smaller choir for Complines in Advent and Lent. There is currently a volunteer music administrator.

We have a small group of children - our junior music group - who play twice a year in our main Sunday mass. We would be very keen to develop this group.

We would be keen to support the Director of Music in thinking through the possibility of appointing choral scholars and an organ scholar.

St James' is a popular venue for musicians to rehearse and perform. Acoustically it is very suitable for chamber music, small choirs and solo recitals, and the church is frequently hired out for rehearsals or recordings. Concerts and performances – some in aid of local charities – are regularly held in the church and can draw large audiences.

For over a decade St James' has promoted an annual series of concerts and events in the church under the title of "Islington Proms" [Islington Proms | music | Islington, London, UK](#). Planning is in hand for the next series, in September 2026. The appointee would be welcomed to be involved in the forward planning of the Proms, which is currently the responsibility of a Committee.

As a registered charity (No 1134267) the annual report and accounts of St James' are submitted to the Charity Commission and accessible to the public [THE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF THE ECCLESIASTICAL PARISH OF ST JAMES WITH ST PETER ISLINGTON - 1134267](#).

The Parochial Church Council of St James' has agreed to make finances available to support the engagement and remuneration of a Director of Music for up to 3 years. During that time we would work with the appointee to explore routes to ensuring sustainability of our musical activities. But at this stage the role being advertised is a fixed-term appointment for 3 years, subject to review towards the end of that period.

Role of the Director of Music

We are looking for a Director of Music who will lead in our use of music in the mission, outreach and worship of St James'. Key responsibilities will include:

- (In collaboration with the Vicar and the organist), organising and directing music at the 10am Parish Mass on Sundays, (bi)monthly Evensongs (to be confirmed) and special services (by arrangement), including Holy Week and Christmas.
- Developing a choir to lead worship regularly at St James', arranging and directing choir rehearsals.
- Leading in identifying and exploiting opportunities to engage the local community in music at St James'.
- Building relationships with local schools and children's groups and exploring options for more regular engagement of children in our church music (including the possibility of a children's choir), reflecting the diversity of the local population
- Communicating the musical life of St James' to the local community and beyond, including engagement with musical friends and professional contacts
- Liaising with the Vicar and other colleagues over the planning of all aspects of the Church's music

Person Specification

Essential	Desirable
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sympathetic to the ministry and ethos of the Church of England• Has knowledge and understanding of the place of music in the Liturgy• Strong choral practitioner and experienced in directing choirs• Excellent musical and teaching skills• Keyboard skills (eg for accompanying rehearsals and performances)• Ability to think creatively about involving the community in music• Communication skills to inspire and encourage individuals and groups• Strong interpersonal skills• The ability and willingness to work collaboratively with others, including clergy, parishioners, fellow-musicians, parents and teachers• The ability to lead and teach children	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Graduate level qualification in music or equivalent• Experience in establishing and developing a new choir• Experience of choral work with children• Experience of engaging with community groups and/or schools• The appointee need not be an organist but if he/she were able to support the organist in this role, that would be an advantage

Selection process and timetable

Applications should be submitted by email to stjamesislintonmusic@gmail.com by midnight on Friday 27 February 2026 and they will normally be acknowledged within 48 hours of receipt. Only applications sent to this email address will be considered.

Candidates shortlisted for interview will be notified by Monday 9 March 2026 and arrangements for interview (on or after Friday 13 March) will be made with the shortlisted candidates.

The preferred candidate or candidates will be invited to an audition, rehearsing a small group of singers, at a date to be arranged. We shall tell those involved what will be required for this.

References may be taken up at any point after the shortlisting date.

We would aim to issue an offer of employment as soon as possible after that. The offer will be subject to DBS checks.

Terms and conditions

Duration of appointment

This is a fixed-term, part-time, appointment for 3 years (commencing with the date when the appointment is taken up), subject to review towards the end of that period.

Employer

The employer will be the Parochial Church Council, Parish Church of St James with St Peter, Prebend Street, Islington, London N1 8PF

Management

The Director of Music will report to the Vicar, Rev Helen Sims-Williams.

Normal place of work

The normal place of work will be St James' Church, Prebend Street, Islington, London N1 8PF, but the post-holder will be expected to work more widely in the community and there will be flexibility about options to work at home or elsewhere.

Salary

The post has a salary of £9,000 per annum, subject to any deductions for Income Tax, National Insurance and pension contributions. This sum is exclusive of any external fees for additional services, such as weddings or funerals, which are normally paid by those commissioning the service. There is no additional remuneration for services which are streamed or broadcast, except where the service is a wedding or a funeral.

Hours of work

The normal hours of work will be 7-8 hours per week, including evenings and weekends. It is recognised that some periods are busier than others, and this requirement will be treated appropriately flexibly to reflect that.

Probation

The appointment is subject to the satisfactory completion of a three-month probationary period.

Holiday entitlement

The appointee will be entitled to 45 hours' annual leave per annum. He or she will be expected to be available for work during Holy Week, at Easter and at Christmas.

Pension

St James' does not currently have a pension arrangement, but we would be available to discuss pension options with the appointee.

Termination of employment

During the three-month probation period one week's notice is required on either side. Thereafter the appointee will be required to give three month's notice should he or she wish to resign before the end-date of the fixed-term appointment.

Equal opportunities and safeguarding

St James' is committed to equal opportunities and will not discriminate on grounds of race, nationality, age, sex, disability, marital status, sexual orientation, religion or belief.

Our Safeguarding Policy Statement can be seen at [Safeguarding-Policy-2025.pdf](#). Appointment will be subject to DBS disclosure at the level of Enhanced with Barred Lists and the appointee will be required to take prescribed safeguarding training modules, provided through the Church of England, as soon as possible.