

factsheet

Naming the Unnameable: Appointing & Paying your Church Musician

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“Music can name the unnameable, and communicate the unknowable” – Leonard Bernstein

Introduction

Music is the bicycle on which the liturgy rides. Good music, appropriately chosen and well performed, can transform an act of worship, bringing the spoken words surrounding it to life. Music has the capacity to touch our emotions and lift our spirits towards God.

Music is also a valuable mission tool, and a proven method of attracting people of all ages to Church and faith. High levels of attendance at Christmas carol services attest to the role music can play in bringing those of uncertain (or no) faith through our doors. Over and above the requirement for music on Sundays, many churches have successfully explored ways to become cultural centres for music and the arts – through concerts, community choirs, and education programmes.

Churches have a valuable role to play in music education. The establishment of music ‘hubs’ around the UK provides a natural opportunity for churches to become involved with other music education providers in the local area. In some locations, the local church can be one of very few places (or the only place) which offers a structured programme of high-quality music education.

With this in mind, it’s perhaps surprising that music is an area of church life which often receives little strategic thought or financial investment. Data from a recent survey conducted by the University of Reading on behalf of the Incorporated Society of Musicians point to an average hourly rate of about £4.25 for UK church musicians – considerably less than the National Living Wage.

Church Music Future believes that good music requires investment: of time, thought, and money. This investment pays dividends – many churches with good music profit from their investment, with income from concerts, recitals, tours, recordings and much more. And the benefits to the life of a Christian community which good music can bring are incalculable.

This guide is intended for those in the process of, or thinking about, appointing a new church musician; and for those who wish to review their present arrangements for music and musicians.

How will your church's music evolve?

Research within the Diocese of Oxford shows that church musicians tend to stay in their posts, on average, around three times as long as their clergy colleagues. In many cases, the following will therefore be true:

- The person/people responsible for appointing a new musician may not have done so before
- It may be many years since your church gave serious thought to the question, “what do we want from our music?”
- It may be quite some time since the job description, person specification, and salary/remuneration for your church musician was last reviewed

The type and scope of music you have now (and, perhaps, have had for many years) may not adequately meet the needs of your worship and mission, or your congregation and wider community today.

Appointing a new musician (or conducting a strategic review of your church's musical needs) provides an ideal opportunity to think about the whole subject in depth, and to make music more relevant to your church in relation to its present and future needs.

The temptation to simply appoint a new musician to carry on as before; or to be limited by present resources (both people and finance) is strong but should be resisted! Developing a good music programme and recognising its benefits requires a clear vision and long-term strategy.

Implementing ‘change’ in churches can be challenging. Changes to the established routine can be divisive if such changes are not introduced gently and in a consultative manner. Good communication is key.

A strategic way to develop a music plan is as follows:

- Consultation: discussion with clergy, lay ministers, congregation, present choir/music group members, churchwardens, and Church Council is essential.
- Consider those outside the Church too. This is where you will identify your mission opportunities. Does your wider community have a particular musical need that your plan could address? Are there people from outside the church who would be interested in joining a new choir or music group? Could your plan for a new children's choir fit neatly with the music education needs of your local primary school?
- Adopt a ‘can do’ approach. This is an exercise in what you want – identifying the obstacles to achieving the plan is important, but they shouldn't prohibit imaginative and creative thinking.
- A good music plan contains three simple, key elements:
 - What do we have right now?
 - What would we like to have in five years time?
 - What are the steps which need to be taken to get us from ‘now’ to ‘five years time’?
- Consider what would be needed to achieve your plan. What sort of musician will you need? What job will they be required to do? How long will that job take? What might you need to pay?
- Take advice. CMF's advisors have skill and experience in advising churches on their strategic music plans and will be happy to help facilitate the discussions within your church.

How long will the job take?

As is the case with many roles in the Church, what is seen and heard on Sundays is only a small part of the job. This table provides a good summary:

What you think you're paying for	What you're actually paying for
Someone to play/direct some music on Sundays	<p>Someone to play/direct some music on Sundays, plus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hours of rehearsal time with your choir/instrumental group • Hours of personal practice time • Research – listening to and searching out new music suitable for your group(s) • Administration for your church concert/recital series (if you have one) • Preparation of music lists and rehearsal schedules • Arranging music for your choir/instrumental group • Attendance at church meetings • Equipment (and instruments in the case of a worship band) • Sheet music purchased by the musician at their own expense • Transportation to and from church • Telephone/internet bills spent on organising music, rehearsals, meetings etc • Office space/equipment (if your musician works from home) – computer, printer, heating, lighting • Percentage of income that goes towards tax and National Insurance contributions (if self-employed) • Pension (if self-employed) • Unpaid sick leave and holiday entitlement (if self-employed) • The amount of money spent on lessons and training to become the musician he/she is (many thousands of pounds) • Ongoing professional development – attendance at courses, studying for new qualifications etc • Training and experience in related non-musical skills: budgeting, marketing, teaching, outreach, concert management, youth work etc

It's good practice for your job description to include an indication of the hours per week that will be required from your appointee – and essential that you know this if you are to calculate a fair salary. This should include:

- Regular service times, and the usual duration of those services
- Details of any additional services which will form part of the contract (those for Advent and Christmas, Holy Week, Ascensiontide, patronal festival, other feast days etc)
- Regular rehearsal times for choir/instrumental group, and the duration of rehearsals
- Admin time: preparing music lists, rehearsal schedules etc
- Attendance at meetings: regular meetings with clergy and others

If the post involves reversing a period of decline in relation to your choir/instrumental group, or starting up new groups, you will need to allocate some time to recruitment and outreach work. This should also be itemised: eg. 1.5 hours per week creating partnerships with local primary schools. If you wish the standard and scope of your church's music to flourish, allowing some time each week for this kind of development work is not optional: it is essential.

What kind of musician will you need?

What are the musical needs you will want the successful appointee to address? Do you need someone who can direct, inspire, and recruit for choirs? Do you need someone to play for your services? At the organ? At the piano? Leading a group of instrumentalists? Training singers? Something else?

Will the church provide admin support? Or will the appointee need to be an effective administrator? IT literate?

Will that person be an organist? A choir director? An instrumental player? A pianist? A singer? A teacher? Something else?

Some people will be good at some of these things. Some will specialise in one particular area. Few will be equally good at all of them.

So you may consider splitting your post. Particularly where there are choirs involved, it may pay dividends to appoint a Director of Music, and a second person to act as accompanist or organist.

You will also need to consider whether the requirements of post can be met by an enthusiastic amateur, or a seasoned professional – or something in between. There will be many amateur musicians who can play four hymns well on a Sunday morning, if that is all you require. But if you require someone to rebuild or start up a choir, build relationships/partnerships in the local community etc, a higher level of skill, qualifications, and experience may be needed.

Above all, it is important that the post you advertise is realistic in expectations, and that your aims are achievable within the hours worked and budget available. CMF can offer helpful advice here too.

Job Description

The main purposes of the job description are:

- **Attracting the right candidate:** to describe the role in such a way that it presents an attractive prospect and career move for potential applicants
- **Defining the role:** applicants will want to know exactly what is required of them, and the 'reference points' by which their performance in the role will be assessed
- **Reviewing progress:** so that those appointing and supervising the successful postholder have a clear framework against to measure the progress of the appointee through annual reviews etc

A comprehensive job description comprises:

- Job title
- Where the role sits within the church and the wider community
- Who the role reports to and other key relationships within the church
- Key areas of responsibility, and what you expect to be delivered in each of these areas
- Short-, medium-, and long-term objectives
- Scope for career progression (if your last organist has gone off to take up a Cambridge organ scholarship, for example, say so)
- Location – details of local schools/organisations, parish size, community etc
- Remuneration and benefits, including holiday entitlement (see below)
- Culture and identity of your church
- Details of hours to be worked and how that time will be apportioned (as above)

Mistakes to avoid:

- **Using exclusive, rather than inclusive language:** try and avoid specialist terms that will mean little to candidates from outside your own church. Stick to well-recognised language that will appeal to the widest possible audience.
- **Not involving all interested parties:** the most accurate job descriptions are produced with input from all those who will work with or report to your appointee
- **Being unrealistic:** the job description should be an accurate representation of what is required to perform the role well, not an unrealistic 'wish list' that is unachievable within the hours/salary you are offering
- **Using discriminatory language:** inclusion and diversity matter! Again, try to appeal to the widest audience possible, and avoid excluding potential good candidates through the way you write
- **Not regularly reviewing:** churches constantly change and evolve, so for job descriptions to reflect changing requirements, they should be reviewed annually and amended, regardless of whether you are currently seeking a new musician or not.

Person Specification

A person specification details the activities and competencies related to the activities which the job will require. If your job description has been put together well, it should now be easy to identify the:

- Skills
- Abilities
- Experience
- Qualifications
- Aptitudes

which a successful candidate will be able to display.

Be careful to avoid requesting specific qualifications if there are other qualifications and/or experience that might be equally suitable.

Spend time with everyone involved in the recruitment process deciding which criteria are 'essential' and which are 'desirable'. Describing too many criteria as 'essential' will streamline the appointment process, but risks excluding good candidates who could gain relevant qualifications or experience during the course of their work for you.

Use the elements in your person specification to write your job advert. Do not introduce elements into the advert which are not reflected in the person specification.

Employment Status

Whether your appointee is engaged on a self-employed or employed (PAYE) basis is very dependent on local circumstances. CMF advises you to take professional advice on this. A starting point is HM Revenue & Customs' *Employment Status Indicator* which can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/employment-status-indicator>.

For employed posts, you will need to take care over the following:

- **National Minimum Wage:** it will be illegal for you to pay your appointee less than the National Minimum Wage (to become the National Living Wage in April 2016). For 2016/17, this is £7.20 per hour for workers aged 25 or over. For workers under this age, the National Minimum Wage applies as shown here: <https://www.gov.uk/national-minimum-wage-rates>.
- **Equality Act 2010:** you will need to ensure that your job advert, person specification, job description, and appointment process is fair, and that it does not discriminate against anyone on the basis of these 'protected characteristics': age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation. For example, is it really necessary for your candidate to be 'a communicant member of the Church of England'? Could a lapsed Methodist who's a good musician do the job equally well?
- **Pension:** if the salary for your role is in excess of £10,000 per annum, you are required by law to enrol your employee in a pension scheme. Again, take professional advice on this.

- **Tax and NI:** you will need to deduct tax and employer's National Insurance contributions and enrol with the HM Revenue & Customs "Pay as you earn in real time" scheme.
- **Holiday entitlement/sick pay/paternity/maternity leave:** you will need to meet the statutory requirements for these – there is useful advice at <https://www.gov.uk/browse/employing-people>.

If your appointee is self-employed, then CMF advises that – as a matter of good practice – you adhere to the requirements of the Equality Act 2010. Additionally, although there is no legal requirement for you to pay National Minimum (Living) Wage to self-employed musicians, we simply refer you to the following:

- *"The labourer is worthy of his reward" - 1 Timothy 5.18*
- *"This is why the Church of England has backed the concept of the Living Wage – an agreement with employers to ensure that all their staff earn a modest hourly rate that is sufficient for a full time worker to live decently. The Archbishop of York has been at the forefront in arguing for the Living Wage. It represents the basic principle that people are not commodities and that their lives cannot adapt infinitely in response to market pressures. The labour market cannot enable people to live and flourish unless the moral limits of the market are recognised." – Who is my Neighbour, House of Bishops, 2015*

Remuneration/Salary

UK competition law prevents any organisation such as CMF from making firm recommendations as to levels of remuneration for church musicians.

Instead, we offer a set of guidelines based on research from a number of sources:

- Comparable professions within the music and arts sector
- Arts Council guidelines for music and music teaching
- The teaching profession
- The recent ISM/University of Reading survey on organists' fees
- Average rates currently paid to organists, instrumentalists, and choir directors working in various settings, both sacred and secular
- Rates for comparable lay posts within the Church, such as youth workers

Few church musicians would expect to be paid for every single hour spent on private practice; but the 'contact time' in church and all associated requirements of the post must be remunerated. There is a strong element of vocation to church music: most musicians who feel valued and receive a fair salary will often contribute a great deal to the overall life of the church, not just to its music.

Qualifications

There are many different musical qualifications, some of which may be more or less relevant to the post you are trying to fill. This is not a hard and fast set of rules: more a rough indication as to where your candidate sits in terms of qualifications.

- 1 – No formal musical training
- 2 – Some formal musical training to Grade V or equivalent
- 3 – Formal musical training to Grade VIII or equivalent
- 4 – Formal musical training to Diploma level
- 5 – Bachelor Degree in Music and further/Diploma level qualifications
- 6 – Further Degree in Music or associated discipline, and further/Diploma level qualifications

Experience

Experience in music counts for a great deal. The skills of a parish musician are acquired not only through study, but through doing. It is important that your musician's experience within a relevant musical environment is taken into account.

Hourly rate guidelines

SELF-EMPLOYED POSTS

Qualifications →	1	2	3	4	5	6
↓ Years of experience						
0-5	£8.64	£10.51	£12.38	£14.25	£16.12	£18.00
5-10	£11.91	£13.78	£15.65	£17.52	£19.39	£21.27
10-20	£15.22	£17.09	£18.96	£20.83	£22.70	£24.57
20+	£18.52	£20.39	£22.26	£24.13	£26.00	£27.89

EMPLOYED POSTS

Qualifications →	1	2	3	4	5	6
↓ Years of experience						
0-5	£7.20	£9.06	£10.91	£12.77	£14.62	£16.48
5-10	£9.93	£11.79	£13.65	£15.51	£17.37	£19.23
10-20	£12.68	£14.54	£16.40	£18.26	£20.12	£21.98
20+	£15.43	£17.29	£19.15	£21.01	£22.87	£24.73

How to calculate annual salary and holiday entitlement

1. Work out the holiday entitlement for the post using this online calculator:
<https://www.gov.uk/calculate-your-holiday-entitlement>. Enter the number of hours worked per week.
2. Multiply the number of hours worked per week by 52 to give total hours for the year.
3. Subtract the number of hours holiday entitlement calculated in step 1.

4. Multiply the total from step 3 by the relevant hourly rate in the tables above. This gives the annual salary.
5. Divide the hours of holiday entitlement given by the calculator in step 1 by 7 to give the number of days holiday entitlement per annum.

You may wish to decide on the minimum and maximum levels of qualifications/experience for the post, and use the hourly rates above to calculate a salary range.

Whether employed or self-employed, your postholder has a statutory right to holiday entitlement. However, if self-employed, the decision as to whether this holiday entitlement should be paid or unpaid is yours. You may also specify reasonable expectations as to when holiday will be taken, eg. “of which, no more than six days to be taken on Sundays”; or “to be taken outside choir term times”.

For example:

St Herman’s is looking for a musician to work 10 hours per week. It is a self-employed post. Point 3 on the qualifications scale, with 5-10 years of experience is the minimum expectation for applicants.

1. Using the online calculator, based on 10 hours a week, holiday entitlement is 56 hours per annum.
2. 10 hours per week multiplied by 52 = 520 hours per annum.
3. 520 hours – 56 hours holiday entitlement = 464 hours to be worked per annum.
4. 464 hours x £15.65 hourly rate = £7261.60 minimum annual salary.
5. 56 hours holiday entitlement / 7 = 8 days holiday entitlement per annum.

Weddings and Funerals

Wedding and funeral fees vary widely according to local custom. According to the ISM/University of Reading survey, rates are currently:

	<u>Weddings</u>	<u>Funerals</u>
London	£80-£158	£70-£124
Rest of the UK	£70-£119	£55-£80

It is generally considered good practice to allow some flexibility in fees, depending on the musical requirements of the wedding couple or funeral family.

The ubiquity of mobile phones renders the old formula (where fees were doubled for weddings with video recordings) virtually obsolete. Again, it is now good practice to assume all weddings will be videoed and to set fees accordingly.

For a church with many weddings and/or funerals each year, this can be an attractive feature to highlight in your job advertisement – eg. “average income from weddings in 2013-2015: £6,000 per annum” – but make sure the figure you quote is accurate.

However, the potential to earn additional income through weddings/funerals should not excuse the church from paying a fair salary for the other parts of the job.

But we can't afford it!

For many churches, these guidelines will equate to a substantial increase in financial investment in music. As stated earlier, many years can go by without the provision of music and remuneration of musicians being reviewed. These guidelines are realistic in today's market. Please do consider the following:

- A realistic salary which values the contribution the church musician will make may encourage the right candidate to relocate to the area. Thus the field from which candidates can be chosen is likely to be wider than just your own local area.
- There are a number of ways in which churches can raise additional funding for music: the most successful of these is through partnerships. Perhaps your local primary school wants to develop their singing? Could they share the post with you, so that the postholder commits to a certain amount of work in the school, and the school pays for that part of it?
- Have you approached your local grant-making trusts and organisations? A bold vision for musical improvement which benefits both church and local community will often attract such funding.
- Have you considered becoming part of your local music education hub? By becoming part of the local music education offer to young people, you may attract investment.
- Have you asked your congregation? Headline figures can be frightening, so it might be worth working out how much it will cost, per person, per week. "If you can afford an extra £1.50 a week..." sounds far less threatening than, "the church needs to raise £14,000"! This can be particularly effective if the congregation sees the benefits of your music plans not just in worship, but in mission too.
- Does your church have access to unrestricted funds that could be used on a short-term music development project over three to five years? Or restricted funds which could be unlocked for the purpose?
- Have you talked to churches in your local area that have high-quality music provision, and asked them how they found the funding?
- Could a well-funded church music post be more useful to you in terms of mission and outreach than your next curacy or youth worker? Might some existing funds be usefully diverted?
- Does your Diocese have funds for mission projects?
- Have you considered approaching Church Music Future's development and fundraising advisors, who can help you find funding for your music plans?

CMF believes that good music can make all the difference to a church in enlivening and beautifying the divine worship which people offer to God. It can also form a crucial part of a church's mission, growth, and renewal. Recognising the dedication, passion, vocation, qualification, expertise and experience of church musicians, much of whose work takes place behind the scenes, is essential if churches are to play their full part in the artistic and spiritual life of whole communities.

What if my musician wishes to work for free?

Musicians in the fortunate position of being able to donate their time and talent to the church for free can be a godsend. Say yes! But put a contract in place anyway – the only thing that is voluntary is the point at which they volunteer! After that, they are agreeing to undertake a job: and it is wise to draw up an agreement which reflects the responsibilities of both musician and church.

In addition, this can lead – over time – to an idea within the church that music costs nothing. When the present musician leaves, there is often no money with which to pay their successor.

If your musician offers to work for free, it is vital that you pay their salary anyway. This ensures that music remains part of the church's annual budget, so that the cost of music does not come as a nasty surprise next time you appoint a musician. The musician then donates the salary back to the church (Gift Aided – perfectly legal!) – during this time, you can build up a good music fund to help with future musical development within the church.

Advertising your post

Your advertisement should be attractive, brief, and to the point. It should highlight key points – and attractive features of your post – from the job description.

There are many ways to spread the word:

- *Church Times* classifieds – this is where many church musicians look for job adverts. It is quite expensive – but investigate the option where a post is readvertised free if it isn't filled. www.churchtimes.co.uk.
- *Church Music Quarterly* – this periodical is sent to churches affiliated to the RSCM and is cost effective for parishes with a limited advertising budget. www.rscm.com.
- *Rhinegold Jobs* – internet resource. Generally for larger/professional posts in major churches and institutions. www.rhinegoldjobs.co.uk.
- *British Choirs on the Net* – internet resource. Free to advertise. www.choirs.org.uk.
- *Organists Online* – internet resource. Free to advertise. www.organistsonline.org.
- Your diocesan newsletter.
- Facebook/Twitter/other social media. There are many Facebook groups devoted to church music.
- Through CMF. The CMF newsletter (sent by email) carries details of jobs and it is free to advertise.

Interviewing candidates

A good interview process for a church musician will include:

- **Audition at the organ/piano/other instrument:** where this is relevant to the post
- **Rehearsal, taken by the candidate, with your choir/instrumental group:** as appropriate to the post
- **Formal interview:** with interview questions appropriate to the post

Beware of allocating half an hour for organ playing and only ten minutes for the choir rehearsal, if you are appointing a Director of Music. The candidates' ability to relate to the people they will be working with for the next 5-50 (+) years is key and should be a priority for the interview panel.

By contrast, if the candidate's sole role is to accompany the choir, how much will you learn from their playing of J S Bach organ voluntaries? Here, it would be prudent to test their ability to accompany the choir in psalms, hymns, and anthems.

A useful way to assess a candidate's abilities 'in the round' is to invite them to deliver the music for your church on a Sunday. Here, you will be able to assess their musical skills, and their ability to get on well with your musicians, clergy, and congregation.

If you do not have a professional musician within your church, it is a very good idea to seek out someone who can act as a music advisor for your interviews. They will spot things that go beyond "the worship band seems to like him" or "she plays hymns quite well". Many cathedral organists and directors of music are happy to act in this role; CMF advisors can also help or put you in touch with suitable people.

Appointing a candidate

Once you have made your appointment, CMF strongly advises that you and the candidate sign a contract or form of agreement, detailing the role and its requirements/responsibilities.

There are various examples online, or through membership of organisations such as the Incorporated Society of Musicians. Templates should always be adapted to your local circumstances – and legal advice taken now will be of immense benefit in the future.

Many feel this to be unnecessary and, indeed, contracts/agreements are of limited use... when things are going well! It is when things are not going well that the value of a contract/agreement becomes clear.

The contract/agreement should include an indication as to how progress will be measured. In most cases, it is good practice for the appointee to attend a monthly meeting with the clergy or ministry team; and for there to be an annual review. You may also wish to consider a probationary period of around six months, at the end of which progress will be reviewed.

Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults

In line with your Diocesan or group's policy, it is essential that your appointee is asked to complete a Disclosure & Barring Service application prior to appointment, given that the nature of their role is likely to include contact with children and/or vulnerable adults.

Any letter offering the post should make it emphatically clear that the appointment will only be confirmed "subject to DBS clearance".

Summary

If you have not appointed a church musician before (or recently), some aspects of this guide may seem daunting. But the recommendations in this factsheet are tried and tested, and are a recipe for a successful and fruitful relationship with the church musician you ultimately appoint. If problems occur, the framework you have established will enable such problems to be dealt with rather less painfully than if you had not followed these procedures.

CMF advisors are happy to help with any aspect of the above where you need further advice or support. Please do contact us if you have any queries.

This guide has been a large piece of work for CMF and will be constantly updated with any changes to UK employment legislation etc. However, we are keen to hear from you if you have feedback or suggestions about the content.

And finally... good luck! Having selected the right candidate, and having appointed him/her on a secure and fair footing, it is now time to start realising your church's vision for high-quality music!

Church Music Future believes all churches can – and should – have access to good music, regardless of size or resources. CMF's advisers have a wealth of experience in helping churches to develop their music, and work with clergy, musicians, dioceses, partner organisations, and the wider Church to achieve this.

CMF offers:

- **one-to-one tailored guidance to individual churches, clergypeople and musicians, in all matters concerning music, liturgy, mission, and fund-raising**
- **a range of inspirational and practical training events and workshops throughout the UK**
- **free access to a website knowledgebase and blog, where common questions and topical themes are explored**

Church Music Future can help your church. For further details, visit our website at www.churchmusicfuture.com.