

**STRATEGIC REVIEW OF SACRED MUSIC IN THE  
MISSION OF WESTMINSTER CATHEDRAL**

25 September 2020

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## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

The review panel is grateful for the considerable generosity and good spirit of those who offered oral or written submissions to support the review, without whom this work would not have been possible.

The panel extends its thanks particularly to Mrs Rebecca Goode for her excellent administrative support, including during several weekend days when interviews were conducted.

## FOREWORD

*“The musical tradition of the universal Church is a treasure of inestimable value, greater even than that of any other art.”<sup>1</sup>*

It was a privilege to be asked by Cardinal Vincent Nichols to conduct a review of sacred music in the mission of Westminster Cathedral – truly a treasure of inestimable value. And it was a pleasure, in consequence, to interview some of the UK’s foremost church musicians and composers, alongside the senior clergy with whom they serve. We will cherish equally our memories of interviewing educators and wider professionals, of hearing from Lay Clerks, current and former choristers and their parents, and of being allowed to explore and gain insight into the world from which that treasure grows.

ii. Cardinal Vincent commissioned our work in the context of some public debate about recent changes in arrangements for producing sacred music. In reality, as we came to learn, Archbishops of Westminster have been preoccupied with structures and relationships concerning the Choir ever since its foundation, and this is simply the moment when our generation’s Cardinal has found it necessary to intervene. We were grateful for the Cardinal’s wisdom in giving us terms of reference that, we hope, enabled us to explore and make useful recommendations on a range of interlocking issues.

iii. In January 2020, none of us had anticipated that we would come to offer our recommendations in the context of the considerable social and economic impact of the COVID-19 emergency, including the emergency’s impact on the financial position of the Church. We believe that first-class sacred music is a very considerable asset in Westminster, akin to or of even higher worth than Bentley’s great building. We also believe that our recommendations are consistent with achieving a stable financial footing for sacred music, and that they stand on their merits even in this, new context. If our recommendations are accepted, those charged with implementing them will need to make even more careful judgements about timescales and returns on investment; however, we believe that is consistent with the more strategic, planned and structured approach to sacred music we recommend.

Robert Arnott  
Leslie Ferrar  
Monsignor Mark Langham  
Andrew Reid

Westminster, September 2020

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<sup>1</sup> Sacrosanctum Concilium, 112.

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

1. In January 2020, we were commissioned by the Archbishop of Westminster, Cardinal Vincent Nichols, to recommend the *“steps needed to strengthen the role played by sacred music, as well as the structures and clarity of roles required for the continued development of the contribution of music to the mission of the Cathedral, within the network of relationships between the Cathedral, its Music Department and Westminster Cathedral Choir School”*. In developing our recommendations, we were invited to take a ten-year view.
2. Cardinal Vincent provided staff and logistical support to the panel. Apart from being interviewed as part of our work, to reinforce its independence he set the review at arm’s length.
3. Over the course of around three months, we conducted 57 interviews and received written submissions in the names of 136 people; contributors and organisational affiliations are listed at Annex D. Additionally, we reviewed various documents made available to us by the Diocese of Westminster, by Westminster Cathedral and by Westminster Cathedral Choir School. Production of our report has taken longer than envisaged because it coincided partially with the period of the UK’s emergency response to the COVID-19 virus.

### **Findings and recommendations**

4. There is high regard and affection for the musical tradition and Choir of Westminster Cathedral, and the historical quality of music-making, from both religious and secular musical perspectives. That is testimony to the talent, passion, effort and dedication both of current and previous generations of musicians, and equally of the Cathedral’s clerical and lay community. We find no reason why Westminster Cathedral and its Choir should not sustain the highest standards of sacred music and musicianship, building on those foundations.
5. However, we conclude that enduring success should be nurtured and safeguarded through clearly expressed strategic intent, effective systems of governance and planning, clarity of individual accountabilities, and intentional, assured concertedness of collective effort. Those are not in place currently.
6. Whilst building blocks exist, success relies too heavily on unwritten, shared assumptions, and on people of good will making things work without the benefit of clear goals, structures and processes to support them. Without urgent and sustained attention, that does not offer a secure basis for Westminster Cathedral’s musical future to be as prodigious as its past.

### **Vision**

7. Consistent production of sacred music of the highest quality relies upon concerted effort amongst a large number of people and the organisations

to which they belong. We conclude that such effort would be supported significantly by an explicit statement of the purpose and role of sacred music in the Cathedral's mission. A statement or *charter* would offer a clear reference point towards which convergent effort might be directed.

- **Recommendation 1:** the Cardinal Archbishop should set a high ambition for the quality and reach of sacred music. The Cardinal should establish a charter, locating sacred music in the mission of the Cathedral, amongst the Cathedral's governing documents.

### **Strategy**

8. Concerted effort is more straightforward if there is a common strategy, supporting aligned decision-making. In the context of Westminster Cathedral, its sacred music and its Choir School, we recommend that the Archbishop establishes a standing Committee to support him and his successors in creating, maintaining and executing a rolling, multi-year strategy and strategic plan for sacred music.

- **Recommendation 2:** there should be a multi-year strategy for sacred music, refreshed each year, setting out the ambition and how that would be achieved, and its financial underpinning.
- **Recommendation 3:** a Committee should be established to develop and maintain the strategy, and to give non-executive, strategic oversight to its execution.

### **Governance**

9. At executive level, we conclude that concerted effort should be strengthened through greater clarity of roles, responsibilities, accountabilities and processes. Such improvements in governance should be subject to quinquennial review.

- **Recommendation 4:** there should be a framework document setting out responsibilities, accountabilities and inter-relationships between the Diocese of Westminster, Westminster Cathedral, its Music Department and the Choir School in relation to the commissioning and provision of sacred music.
- **Recommendation 5:** there should be clear and aligned role descriptions and lines of accountability for those charged with the commissioning and provision of sacred music, including for the Administrator, Precentor, Master of Music and the Headmaster of the Choir School.
- **Recommendation 6:** the role of the Precentor should be strengthened, to support the worship of the Cathedral and the work of the Cathedral's Music Department with high-level liturgical and musical expertise.
- **Recommendation 7:** the Chief Operating Officer of the Diocese, the Cathedral finance team, and the Bursar of the Choir School should put

in place arrangements to make costs and budget-setting transparent. The Music Department should be more clearly identified and treated as a cost centre within the Cathedral Parish accounts and within the Diocesan chart of accounts; it should be funded, in the longer term, by the existing restricted charitable fund. This will require urgent, active fundraising to increase the available funds.

- **Recommendation 8:** there should be clear and separate responsibility and accountability for safeguarding choristers when they are at school and when they are in the care of the Cathedral (and Music Department). There should be robust policy and processes for handover between the two.
- **Recommendation 9:** the Cathedral should develop a workforce plan for adult staff involved in creating sacred music, encompassing recruitment and retention alongside development and support of individuals.
- **Recommendation 10:** pursuing a five- to ten-year fundraising plan, an endowment should be created to secure the long-term financial stability of sacred music.
- **Recommendation 11:** there should be quinquennial review of the governance and accountability arrangements in relation to sacred music.

### ***Music Department***

10. The strength of the Cathedral Music Department is crucial to continuing success in providing sacred music at the highest standard. Located within the overall strategy, plans and resourcing, we conclude that the Music Department merits particular support.

- **Recommendation 12:** the Master of Music's responsibilities and lines of accountability should be set out clearly, reporting to the Administrator. Those should include responsibility for preparing a multi-annual business plan for the department.
- **Recommendation 13:** a programme director should be appointed to bring organisational leadership capability to the department alongside musical excellence.

### ***Choir School***

11. Within the overall vision and strategy for sacred music, we conclude that the role and approach of the Choir School would benefit from greater clarity.

- **Recommendation 14:** the Governors of the Choir School should prepare a multi-year plan to meet the requirements of the strategic plan for sacred music. That should be embedded in the spirit and operational objectives of the School.

- **Recommendation 15:** alongside the Administrator, the Precentor should be a governor of the Choir School *ex officio*. The Master of Music should attend meetings of the Governors.
12. Membership of Westminster Cathedral Choir offers tremendous potential to musically and academically gifted Catholic boys from all backgrounds. They have the chance to immerse themselves in the musical life of the Cathedral at a professional standard and to use the Choir, and their Choir School education, as a jumping-off point towards success in high quality secondary and tertiary education.
- **Recommendation 16:** chorister places should be located within the charitable mission of the Catholic Church. Recruitment should be vigorous and wide-ranging, should be pursued jointly by the Choir School and the Music Department, and should be benchmarked against the approach of other UK musical institutions of international renown.
13. Even for the most gifted children, the highest standard of musicianship requires near-continuous practice, adequate preparation, and the team- and musicality-building experience of tours, recording and public performance. That must be balanced by the social and welfare needs of choristers, who are young children.
- **Recommendation 17:** adjustments should be made to the boarding arrangements, so as to find a different balance between the number of times the choristers sing at Mass, the amount of rehearsal time available, and the benefits gained from weekly time in the family home. Specifically, choristers should sing Mass before leaving for home on Friday and should return to the Choir School on Saturday evening.
  - **Recommendation 18:** the reinforced Music Department should organise an annual programme of concerts, recording and tours, planning those on a multi-annual basis in line with the strategic plan.



## 1. THE ROLE OF SACRED MUSIC IN THE MISSION OF WESTMINSTER CATHEDRAL

**Recommendation 1:** the Cardinal Archbishop should set a high ambition for the quality and reach of sacred music. The Cardinal should establish a charter, locating sacred music in the mission of the Cathedral, amongst the Cathedral's governing documents.

### **The Cathedral is insufficiently explicit about why it has music**

14. A large number of people are involved in, and a far greater number benefit from, or have opinions about, sacred music at Westminster Cathedral. However, we did not always find clear expressions of purpose: Why have music at Westminster? Why go to the trouble and expense of aiming for a particular type or standard? Indeed, even amongst those with close involvement in the liturgy and the music, frequently our sense was of the role, type and standard of music being assumed implicitly, rather than being chosen and worked for explicitly.
15. Against that backdrop, the strength of Westminster Cathedral's tradition is evident. Year-on-year, music of the highest standard has been produced, fitted integrally within the liturgy. But we also heard about structural instability since the Cathedral's foundation. We developed a strong sense that continuing success had depended heavily upon individuals and individual interventions, countering periodic perceptions that high quality music may be anachronistic, merely 'nice to have', or unsustainable.
16. However, Cardinal Vincent also told us of his additional aspirations, firstly that high quality music should have a stronger presence beyond those liturgies supported by the Choir currently; and secondly that the congregation should be supported strongly to achieve a higher standard of music-making in those elements of solemn liturgy where it sings: Implementation of this review created an opportunity for musical renewal throughout the breadth of the Cathedral's worship, and there was a risk that questions of sacred music could be associated too narrowly with questions of the Choir and the services it supports.
17. Westminster Cathedral's challenge is exacerbated by its position in being seen by many as 'mother church' of English and Welsh Catholicism, regardless of whether that is its formal role or has been the intention of its own Archbishops. Principally, the Cathedral is the site of the bishop's seat in his diocese; it also has a role as parish church of the Cathedral parish, with the Administrator fulfilling the role of parish priest for the Archbishop. Furthermore, the Cathedral has projected onto it a role in giving cultural leadership. And, to the extent there is one, many would argue it is the UK's 'national' Catholic church, reinforced by its being the focus for major ecclesiastical events and the backdrop of news coverage in relation to the Catholic Church.

18. Together with casting a long ecclesiastical shadow, Westminster has led the world – drawing on the Anglican cathedrals’ retained heritage of choristers and professional choirs – in the rebirth of sung Catholic liturgy and Westminster’s celebrated choral style, which is also viewed as a benchmark and inspiration by choirs including those in the Anglican tradition.
19. Thus a challenge for Westminster Cathedral, in considering whether and why to have music and – if so – in what way and at what price, is being clear about the extent to which it is acting as a national church, or an international cultural asset, or as a diocesan cathedral in a big city.
20. We conclude that many of the episodic challenges associated with music-making at Westminster Cathedral – and complexities in the relationships between the Cathedral, the Diocese, the Cathedral Music Department and the Choir School – have stemmed from insufficiently clear expression of *why* Westminster Cathedral has sacred music, and what that aims to achieve. Without such expression, there is no ready point towards which to align, or to take as reference in brokering compromises.

### **Why have music?**

21. Our terms of reference invited us to consider how to strengthen the role played by sacred music. To that end, we interviewed and received written submissions from Catholic clergy, from their Anglican counterparts in institutions with major choral traditions, from composers and musicians, educators, and from an expert academic sociologist. Our question was what one might hope to achieve through having sacred music, including at the highest standard?
22. Essentially we heard two responses:
  - a. *Worship* – production of sacred music is a form of praise to God and of prayer, including communion with one another; and
  - b. *Numinosity* – music evokes a sense of the divine, offering “a *window into the mind of God*”.
23. Thinking specifically about Westminster and its heritage, we were invited to reflect on music as the temporal equivalent of Bentley’s architecture, interacting with the liturgy in real time to offer both praise and a transcendent experience of God.
24. Within the Catholic Church, the tradition of sacred music, particularly Gregorian chant and polyphony, has a special place. “*The musical tradition of the universal Church is a treasure of inestimable value, greater even than that of any other art.*”<sup>2</sup> At Westminster, that musical tradition,

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<sup>2</sup> Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1156.

through its excellence and beauty, “*adds delight to prayer, fosters unity of minds and confers greater solemnity upon the sacred rites.*”<sup>3</sup>

25. A number of interviewees spoke of Westminster as a custodian of the universal Church’s musical tradition and as a beacon or exemplar of the standard that can be achieved. Sustaining that level of excellence is to accept a national and international role – which includes representing part of the Church’s and the UK’s cultural heritage – which we would commend but which should be a matter of conscious choice.
26. We listened to a sociologist of religion who reminded us that great churches and cathedrals, like Westminster, reach beyond their local congregation to a wider, and often non-church-going, public. In that context, sacred music has a particular role in “*meeting people where they are*”, allowing them an experience of the transcendent, and an encounter with the divine.
27. Likewise, the precentor of a major Anglican cathedral told us how music offers as a way of, “speaking [or hearing] without words”. This conveys music’s ability to go beyond words, expressing what words cannot say or for which any particular words would be inadequate or unhelpful. In such a way, the sacred liturgy at Westminster Cathedral goes beyond mere words to a sacramental encounter that makes real a deeper experience. More than bare emotion, it is an authentic encounter with the sacred, raising our hearts and minds to a higher level and opening ourselves to God’s activity. In the context of Westminster Cathedral’s role in the Catholic Church in England and Wales, we conclude that high quality sacred music provides a means for Christ to reveal himself even to those who are not used to listening for him.
28. Westminster Cathedral’s choir comprises choristers alongside adult singers: We heard about the beneficial educational aspects of bringing up young people within this religious, liturgical and musical tradition.
29. Alongside discussion of the highest standards of chant and polyphony, we were reminded that whilst the Choir supports a proportion of Westminster Cathedral’s daily and weekly worship, the majority of services are celebrated by priest and people, sometimes additionally with cantor and organist. In the context of our review, such services should also receive focus.
30. Finally, we heard arguments that the high quality of sacred music at Westminster Cathedral was its own justification, which should be preserved simply because it exists. While recognising the power of exquisite music to touch even the most estranged soul, we conclude that the creation of sacred music cannot be separated from its role within the

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<sup>3</sup> Sacrosanctum Concilium, 112.

mission of the Cathedral. The Church considers that sacred music has a “*ministerial function in the service of the Lord.*”<sup>4</sup>

31. *Sacrosanctum Concilium* offers justification for high artistic ambition, instructing that, “[t]he treasure of sacred music is to be preserved and fostered with great care. Choirs must be diligently promoted, especially in cathedral churches, ...”<sup>5</sup> and recording that, “... members of the choir also exercise a genuine liturgical function. They ought, therefore, to discharge their office with the sincere piety and decorum demanded by so exalted a ministry and rightly expected of them by God’s people ... .”<sup>6</sup>

### **A charter for sacred music**

32. In our deliberation, we were struck by several points. Firstly, that the great majority of our interviewees and correspondents – even those closely involved in the life of Westminster Cathedral and its music – seemed concerned predominantly with the *how* and possibly the *what* of sacred music, and rarely with the *why*. Secondly, that such questions became conflated readily with questions of the Cathedral’s temporal role and purpose. Thirdly, that lack of guiding clarity had contributed significantly to uncertainty of priorities amongst people involved in the liturgy, production of music, and preparation of choristers. We conclude that these points reflect systemic weakness, requiring fundamental response.

33. Taking together the exhortations of *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, the role sacred music offers in worship and in evangelisation, and our observation on insufficiently explicit clarity of purpose, we recommend that the Cardinal Archbishop should set down a ‘charter’ for sacred music amongst the governing documents of the Cathedral.

34. Ideally such a charter would be short and concerned with *why* and *what*, rather than *how* – the latter necessarily changing with context – so as to offer current and future generations an orientation point, or statement of strategic intent, to guide aligned thinking and planning. We offer a draft charter at Annex A.

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<sup>4</sup> *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 112.

<sup>5</sup> *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 114.

<sup>6</sup> *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 29.

## 2. A STRATEGIC APPROACH TO SACRED MUSIC

**Recommendation 2:** there should be a multi-year strategy for sacred music, refreshed each year, setting out the ambition and how that would be achieved, and its financial underpinning.

**Recommendation 3:** a Committee should be established to develop and maintain the strategy, and to give non-executive, strategic oversight to its execution.

35. Sacred music of the highest quality – located within the mission and supremely the liturgy of Westminster Cathedral – is the fruit of substantial effort spanning a range of human and organisational agents. Those agents primarily include the Administrator of the Cathedral – who is essentially, the Cathedral’s archpriest – the Precentor, the Master of Music and Music Department, the Choir School and its Headmaster, and the Diocesan administration.
36. Both on a daily basis and from one part of the year to the next, those agents need to know where they are headed. Such knowledge permits daily, semi-independent decision making that is aligned, and helps organisations to plan well and make trades-off.
37. Our interviewees told us about structures and processes that are in place to support day-to-day decision making. However, the various agents do not have a mechanism to agree jointly their strategic intent – balancing the requirements of each – nor a medium-term plan by which to achieve that. Particularly in view of any ambition that the Cathedral’s music should be of a standard recognised internationally, strategy-making and refreshment should include routine mechanisms for drawing upon external expertise.
38. Likewise, there is no forum in which to surface and resolve misalignments or tensions early, increasing the risk that these grow into serious difficulties.

### **A multi-year strategy for sacred music**

39. We conclude that there should be a clearly enunciated, multi-year strategy for sacred music, refreshed each year, setting out the ambition and how that would be achieved, and its financial underpinning.
40. For example, taking a six-, twelve-, twenty-four- and thirty-six-month view, such a strategy would set out the ambitions for liturgical music – encompassing both Choir and congregation – including any live-streaming, broadcasting, educational or other outreach, concerts, tours and recording. It would consider the human and other inputs required for those, and how those would be generated, alongside assumptions about income and expenditure and how those would be managed.

### **A committee on sacred music**

41. To support the Cardinal Archbishop with a sufficiently broad range of expertise, we recommend that he appoints a non-executive Committee on Sacred Music (we have suggested membership and terms of reference at Annex B). The Cardinal Archbishop would involve the Cathedral Administrator and Choir School Authorities in establishing such a Committee. Aligned, concerted effort would also be enhanced through strengthening and giving clearer prominence to the overall leadership role of the Cathedral Administrator.
42. The Committee should be charged with preparing (i) a clear statement of strategic intent, aligned with the *charter* for sacred music, and (ii) a rolling, three-year plan by which that intent would be achieved. The Committee should meet at least quarterly.
43. The Committee should comprise an experienced lay chair, appointed by the Cardinal and reporting to him, and should include the Administrator and the Precentor of the Cathedral, the Master of Music, the Diocesan Chief Operating Officer, the Chair of Governors and the Headmaster of the Choir School, lay members of international renown in the field of sacred music, such as at least one director of music of a comparable foundation<sup>7</sup>, and lay members with experience of strategic governance and of creation and sustenance of cultural capital.
44. The Cardinal may find it convenient for the Committee additionally to oversee implementation of wider recommendations in this report, perhaps over the course of 12-18 months.

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<sup>7</sup> By “comparable foundation”, we mean ecclesiastical settings of high international renown for the quality of their liturgy and sacred music – such as Westminster Abbey, St Paul’s Cathedral or King’s College Cambridge – that share many of the organisational experiences, context and demands of Westminster Cathedral.

### 3. GOVERNANCE, STRUCTURES AND ACCOUNTABILITIES

**Recommendation 4:** there should be a framework document setting out responsibilities, accountabilities and inter-relationships between the Diocese of Westminster, Westminster Cathedral, its Music Department and the Choir School in relation to the commissioning and provision of sacred music.

**Recommendation 5:** there should be clear and aligned role descriptions and lines of accountability for those charged with the commissioning and provision of sacred music, including for the Administrator, Precentor, Master of Music and the Headmaster of the Choir School.

**Recommendation 6:** the role of the Precentor should be strengthened, to support the worship of the Cathedral and the work of the Cathedral's Music Department with high-level liturgical and musical expertise.

**Recommendation 7:** the Chief Operating Officer of the Diocese, the Cathedral finance team, and the Bursar of the Choir School should put in place arrangements to make costs and budget-setting transparent. The Music Department should be more clearly identified and treated as a cost centre within the Cathedral Parish accounts and within the Diocesan chart of accounts; it should be funded, in the longer term, by the existing restricted charitable fund. This will require urgent, active fundraising to increase the available funds.

**Recommendation 8:** there should be clear and separate responsibility and accountability for safeguarding choristers when they are at school and when they are in the care of the Cathedral (and Music Department). There should be robust policy and processes for handover between the two.

**Recommendation 9:** the Cathedral should develop a workforce plan for adult staff involved in providing sacred music, encompassing recruitment and retention alongside development and support of individuals.

**Recommendation 10:** pursuing a five- to ten-year fundraising plan, an endowment should be created to secure the long-term financial stability of sacred music.

**Recommendation 11:** there should be quinquennial review of the governance and accountability arrangements in relation to sacred music.

45. In an interview, Cardinal Vincent expressed clearly his understanding of the priorities that give shape to the life of the Cathedral and all involved in its mission. The first and overriding priority is the service of God, in everything that is done. It is this that demands the best that we can give. Secondly, there is the fulfilling of the mission of the Cathedral to be a beacon of Catholic life and practice in the heart of London. Thirdly, a crucial part of the mission of the Cathedral is the provision of sacred music

to enhance and enrich both the worship of God and the expression of faith. Fourthly, in the perspectives of this Review, there is the essential part played by Westminster Cathedral Choir School. Each of these is in service of the next. This chapter is concerned with organisation in support of that clarity.

### **Clarity of roles and accountabilities**

46. Our experience is of people working at their best and most productively when individual roles and accountabilities are clear, where goals, expectations and planning assumptions are explicit, and where individual responsibilities and accountabilities align in pursuit of a common vision and purpose.
47. Whilst there is reasonable clarity within component organisations in the commissioning and generation of sacred music, we heard that the relations between them are less clear cut. That can lead to tensions as well as to inefficiency.
48. We conclude that there should be greater clarity both at organisational level and in relation to individual posts. At organisational level, a framework document should be drawn up setting out responsibilities, accountabilities and inter-relationships between the Diocese of Westminster, Westminster Cathedral, its Music Department and the Choir School in relation to commissioning and provision of sacred music. That should include describing optimal arrangements for regular collaboration. Annex C offers a draft framework document.
49. Likewise, at the level of individual leadership and management posts, we conclude there should be clear and aligned role descriptions and lines of accountability for those charged with the commissioning and provision of sacred music, including the Administrator, Precentor, Master of Music (who should be line-managed by the Administrator) and the Headmaster of the Choir School.
50. Additionally, the Precentor's role should be strengthened. High level descriptions of the respective roles of the Master of the Music and the Precentor – who both contribute in a major way to the musical and liturgical life of the Cathedral – are suggested in paragraph C6 of Annex C. Through frequent contact, the Precentor and Master of Music should each ensure that their work is complementary, and both should be aligned in high intent for the standard of music and liturgy at the Cathedral, and supportive of the high-level professional aspirations of the music. Both Master of Music and Precentor should be managed by the Administrator.

### **Finance**

51. Sacred music of an internationally high standard requires significant expenditure. It is also capable of generating some revenue, through concerts, recordings and the like, where those are planned carefully. Furthermore, we were told that it can attract charitable and philanthropic



donations. Westminster's sacred music has benefited from both explicit and hidden cross-subsidies.

52. In tandem with organisational and role clarity, we conclude that financial planning and processes in relation to sacred music should be clear, transparent and ring-fenced. That would enable each stakeholder to understand and be clear about choices and trades-off, including in relation to value for money. Alongside creating clearer accountability for good financial planning and cost-effectiveness, we understand that would also enhance the attractiveness of Westminster Cathedral's sacred music as a beneficiary of major philanthropy. In any event, setting sacred music on a sustainable financial footing should be a core objective, as early as possible within the ten-year horizon of our recommendations.
53. To that end, the Chief Operating Officer of the Diocese, the Cathedral finance team, and the Bursar of the Choir School should put in place arrangements to make costs and budget-setting transparent. The Music Department should be more clearly identified and treated as a cost centre within the Cathedral Parish accounts and within the Diocesan chart of accounts; it should be funded, in the longer term, by the existing restricted charitable fund. This will require urgent, active fundraising to increase the available funds – the fund is not endowed well currently, and certainly insufficiently to support repercussive and enduring expenditure. The Master of Music should exercise efficient and effective use of money within his or her personal objectives, and be held accountable for that within normal systems of line management.
54. With the goal of securing financial stability for sacred music in the long term, the Diocesan and Cathedral finance teams should procure specialist fund-raising expertise – in concert with the Master of Music – and develop and implement a five- to ten-year approach to fund-raising and establish an endowment.

### **Responsibility and accountability for safeguarding children**

55. Whereas it is clear that the Choir School maintains effective systems and processes for safeguarding choristers currently – including whilst they are in transit, in the Song School and in the Cathedral – we conclude that locates responsibility and accountability in the wrong place whilst children are in the care of Cathedral staff. Inevitably, it causes one organisational entity to perceive accountability and responsibility for the actions of another. That risks tensions in operational decision-making and should be remedied.
56. The Cathedral and its Music Department should be responsible and accountable for safeguarding choristers whilst they are under its supervision and tutelage, both within the Cathedral precincts and in relation to recordings, concerts and tours. There should be a clear and documented process for hand-offs with the Choir School, which is a separate entity from the Cathedral for the purposes of charity and wider civil law. The Cathedral's responsibility and accountability should be set

out clearly in amended agreements with parents of choristers – alongside the continuing responsibility and accountability of the Choir School, during time at school – and with statutory authorities. Operationally, the Cathedral may choose to commission particular arrangements from the School, but without confusing where responsibility and accountability rests.

57. Continuing Professional Development for the Master of Music and any relevant assistants should include pedagogical training to support effective musical tutelage, behavioural management, and wider safeguarding of children. The Cathedral should consider commissioning periodic assurance from external experts in relation to safeguarding arrangements.

### **Workforce plan for sacred music**

58. The ability to produce sacred music relies on the professional skills and availability of highly competent musicians and wider staff. Furthermore, some roles require significant leadership and management expertise, and are very exposing for individuals.
59. We conclude that there should be a workforce plan, aligned with the strategic plan. That should address the capacity and capability requirements in the Music Department, including questions of recruitment, development, retention and turnover. There should be defined systems of pastoral support and for whistleblowing. Terms and conditions should be benchmarked every three years against comparable institutions performing at the highest standard, and should be reflected in formal contracts. Routine performance rights should rest with the Cathedral, with any gainshare beyond that, for example from commercial activities, benchmarked and set out clearly.
60. Pastoral support and structured Continuing Professional Development should also be set in place for the Cathedral Administrator, reflecting the significant leadership and management responsibilities of that post and any ambition to develop those further.

### **Quinquennial review**

61. It is good practice that arrangements such as these should be reviewed formally, for example every five years. That creates an opportunity to step back and consider what is working or needs amendment, in a way that is separated from particular strengths or areas for development amongst those who happen to be in post at any particular time. We recommend a process of quinquennial review, ideally under non-executive oversight by the Committee on Sacred Music that we propose.

## 4. THE MUSIC DEPARTMENT

**Recommendation 12:** the Master of Music's responsibilities and lines of accountability should be set out clearly, reporting to the Administrator. Those should include responsibility for preparing a multi-annual business plan for the department.

**Recommendation 13:** a programme director should be appointed to bring organisational leadership capability to the department alongside musical excellence.

62. The purpose of the Music Department is to provide excellent sacred music, in accordance with the charter and strategic plan presuming those recommendations are accepted. As its leader and lead professional musician, the role of the Master of Music is to support the Music Department – the Assistant Master of Music, Organ Scholar, Lay Clerks, Singing Teacher, and choristers – in achieving outstanding repertoire and musicianship, ideally fostering a deeper love and appreciation of music.

63. The Music Department and its team have a role of significant importance in strengthening the Cathedral congregation's appreciation of and participation in good quality music-making, including during those services at which the Choir is not present.

64. The Lay Clerks are professional adult singers, line managed by the Master of Music, who provide a high standard of vocal ability and training, and many have distinguished themselves elsewhere in the musical profession. The Master of Music provides a point of contact for the Lay Clerk's vestry, both in relation to issues for the workforce plan (section 3, above) and on contribution to the programme of the Cathedral Choir.

65. Again, Sacrosanctum Concilium is pertinent, "... *members of the choir ... exercise a genuine liturgical function. They ought, therefore, to discharge their office with the sincere piety and decorum demanded by so exalted a ministry and rightly expected of them by God's people. ... [They] must ... be deeply imbued with the spirit of the liturgy, each in his own measure, and they must be trained to perform their functions ...*"<sup>8</sup>

### **Master of Music**

66. Particularly in the context of an ambition for outstanding sacred music, the Master of Music will always be a key senior appointment for the Cathedral. The Cathedral will look for candidates of musical renown and vision, who are eminent in their field, able to combine leadership and musicianship in building on the success of their forebears.

67. As part of our research, we interviewed a number of Masters or Directors of music. We conclude that the role and position of the Master of Music

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<sup>8</sup> Sacrosanctum Concilium, 29.

would be enhanced by setting out the responsibilities and line of accountability clearly; at high level, those are suggested in paragraph C6 of Annex C. The Master of Music should be line-managed by the Administrator, thus being positioned clearly within the senior team of the Cathedral. To help foster enduring alignment, the Master of Music should attend Governors' meetings of the Choir School routinely, *ex officio*.

### **Multi-year business plan**

68. The Master of Music should be invited to develop a multi-year business plan for their department – in line with the strategic plan and inter-linking, for example, with the workforce plan – that they should present to the Committee on Sacred Music. That is an opportunity to give concrete expression to their vision and provide the basis for delegated income and expenditure budgets.
69. Whilst the apogee of the Department's role is the liturgy, it should also maximise the Choir's role in evangelisation. To offer a glimpse of God, and the Cathedral's worship, to a wider audience, there should be (i) tours and concerts, (ii) routine live-streaming of the Mass and other sung services, alongside periodic radio broadcasting, building on what has been learned during the COVID-19 emergency, and (iii) regular recordings by reputable production companies.
70. The Music Department business plan should give explicit consideration to developing musicality and musical expression amongst the Cathedral congregation, in addition to its focus on professional musicianship and the Choir. From the perspective of professional expertise and resources, we see those foci as complementary although not wholly overlapping. For example – reflecting both the stipulations of *Sacrosanctum Concilium* and the fine historical tradition at Westminster Cathedral – we recommend preserving the integrated and musically internally-consistent approach in sung, Solemn Masses. Congregationally-sung Masses and other services should be enhanced alongside those – with staffing and financial resources allocated for this purpose, within an expanded overall envelope – raising both the quantity and the standard of music overall.
71. The Music Department should have an explicit role in educational outreach – especially for schools within the Diocese, and other organisations that might benefit from its expertise. That would support evangelisation, a stronger place for sacred music within the education curriculum, recruitment of choristers, and inspiration of children towards musical or ecclesiastical careers. One of our interviewees suggested that a revitalised Music Department could be charged with development of “*sacred music meets devotion meets assemblies meets participation meets musical educational curriculum and products.*” A role of the Committee on Sacred Music would be to assure appropriate balance of focus and effort, in line with the strategic plan.
72. The Music Department should be set on a sustainable financial footing.

### **Programme director**

73. Revitalisation of the Music Department, and design and implementation of a programme of concerts, tours, recordings, broadcasts, evangelisation and outreach, is a very significant task managerially. It also depends upon many of the external relations and organisational skills associated with events management. It would not be reasonable to expect a Master of Music to discharge this role alongside the task of overall leadership and musicianship.
74. Reporting to the Master of Music, an experienced programme director should be appointed, who should also support development and implementation of the wider business and workforce plans. The post-holder would likely need administrative support that could be shared with the Master of Music.

## 5. THE CHOIR SCHOOL AND CHORISTERS

**Recommendation 14:** the Governors of the Choir School should prepare a multi-year plan to meet the requirements of the strategic plan for sacred music. That should be embedded in the spirit and operational objectives of the School.

**Recommendation 15:** alongside the Administrator, the Precentor should be a governor of the Choir School *ex officio*. The Master of Music should attend meetings of the Governors.

**Recommendation 16:** chorister places should be located within the charitable mission of the Catholic Church. Recruitment should be vigorous and wide-ranging, should be pursued jointly by the Choir School and the Music Department, and should be benchmarked against the approach of other UK musical institutions of international renown.

**Recommendation 17:** adjustments should be made to the boarding arrangements, so as to find a different balance between the number of times the choristers sing at Mass, the amount of rehearsal time available, and the benefits gained from weekly time in the family home. Specifically, choristers should sing Mass before leaving for home on Friday and should return to the Choir School on Saturday evening.

**Recommendation 18:** the reinforced Music Department should organise an annual programme of concerts, recording and tours, planning those on a multi-annual basis in line with the strategic plan.

75. *Laudate, pueri Dominum! – Praise the Lord, ye children!*<sup>9</sup> – is the motto of Westminster Cathedral Choir School. The School is justifiably proud of its long history of offering praise through musical excellence in the Cathedral. The School is equally proud of the quality and breadth of education it offers, and its nurturing support to its pupils. The School's high standards are reflected in the educational outcomes of its pupils and in inspection reports by the Independent Schools Inspectorate<sup>10</sup>.

76. By law, the Choir School is a distinct charity, serving its own charitable objects:

The advancement of Roman Catholic religion and the advancement of education in the Roman Catholic tradition and in particular (but without limiting the foregoing) to educate children in church choral music and to conduct for the purpose the Westminster Cathedral Choir School.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Psalm 113:1.

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.choirschool.com/downloads/WCCS-ISI-Inspection-Report-Nov-2018.pdf>

<sup>11</sup> Source: Charities Commission.

77. We heard that challenges common to cathedral choir schools, save those with access to substantial financial endowments, are (i) having a school of sufficient pupil roll to make it possible to deliver a broad curriculum efficiently and effectively, and (ii) securing sufficient income, from fee-paying parents, to run a school in general and to support financially the boarding places of choristers whose families may not be able to pay full fees. Specifically in relation to Westminster Cathedral Choir School, we also heard that Central London independent preparatory schools have moved, increasingly, to a “through school” model in which children join at nursery age and remain with the same school at age seven.
78. We were told that Cardinal Basil Hume had acted to address the first two of those challenges through expanding the Choir School to be a fee-paying day preparatory school – providing sufficient pupil roll and overall income to secure the viability of the School in offering high quality, subsidised boarding places to choristers. The Diocese acted recently in addressing the third challenge, incurring significant cost in creating a pre-prep school to act as the Choir School’s ‘feeder’ in the years to come.
79. We also heard about the breadth of choice of schools available to fee-paying parents in Central London, and the importance of the Choir School being able to attract such parents on the basis of the academic and wider education the School can offer.
80. Our terms of reference included making recommendations on, *“strengthen[ing] the role played by sacred music, as well as the structures and clarity of roles required for the continued development of the contribution of music to the mission ...”* Within that context, we conclude that those charged with governance of the Diocese and the Choir School have pursued sound, legitimate strategic choices in positioning the Choir School to offer fee-paying places – for high quality, academically selective education – as a means to provide sufficient breadth of curriculum, and sufficient organisational and financial critical mass, to make possible educating children in church choral music, from families of all financial backgrounds.

### **Multi-year plan to meet the requirements of the strategic plan for sacred music**

81. Our recommendations envisage renewal and a step-change in the ambition and vigour of sacred music at Westminster. They also envisage a more strategic and concerted approach, maximising the combined strength of the various organisational and individual agents.
82. Westminster Cathedral Choir School is a flourishing, successful institution. It has a key role to play in contributing its energy and dynamism to more strategic and concerted approaches. Sacred choral music and the Choir are its ultimate rationale for existence.
83. We conclude that the Governors of the Choir School would be supported, in that endeavour, through preparation of a multi-year plan for musicality

aligned with the strategic plan for sacred music; in particular, that would assist the Governors in sustaining focus on supporting the choristers and the Cathedral Choir. We anticipate that the Governors would seek advice from the Committee on Sacred Music on assurance of the plan.

84. A number of interviewees and correspondents raised the question of whether the Choir School should conceive of itself as a 'local' or a 'national' school, in relation to excellence in sacred music. Whilst this question sometimes became bound up with questions of boarding arrangements for choristers, we conclude that principally it is a question of the School's charism.
85. A concerted approach with the Cathedral – placing unified emphasis on achieving and sustaining musical excellence and outreach – would seem certain to shape the School's charism to give it much of the musical vibrancy and character of a 'national' school. We conclude that we do not need to make specific recommendations here; however, the Governors will wish to consider whether to give voice explicitly to questions of charism within the multi-year plan that we are recommending.
86. Directors of Music in equivalent institutions, musicians in other roles and former choristers told us about the importance of (i) performance and (ii) touring and recording. For example, the Director of Music and the Precentor at a major Anglican place of worship each told us about the particular boost in focus and performance quality achieved by boy choristers as a result of liturgical, concert or recording performance (as compared with practice), which they attributed to the specific character of boys. They emphasised the importance of regular, frequent performances during the week – at least six in a typical week – and of major feasts in the liturgical year, secular concerts and recordings towards which to aim.
87. Similarly, many interviewees spoke of the marked improvement choirs achieve through touring together: Such periods of intense teamwork, frequent performance and camaraderie help choirs to achieve their very best, through improvements that are sustained when a choir returns home. The Choir School emphasised correspondingly the possibility of concerts, tours and recordings as being important in the attractiveness of the School, especially to potential choristers and their parents. Taking these points together, we conclude that an ambition for concerts, touring and recording should be an important element in both the overall strategic plan and in the multi-year plan for the School.
88. Given what we heard from leading musicians in equivalent institutions, following their appointment, the incoming Master of Music will also wish to take stock of the adequacy of existing rehearsal arrangements, particularly the amount of rehearsal time overall, and whether any changes need to be made.
89. In the context of embedding close alignment in thinking between the Cathedral, its Music Department and the School, we would see additional



value in encouraging the Music Department to pursue its programme in part for wider educational benefit in the Choir School.

### **Recruiting choristers and their position within the mission of the Church**

90. For their virtuosity and musical power, we were told that professional choirs, in which the high parts are sung by boys, rely principally upon the training, experience and more developed musculature of boys in their senior two years. Whilst younger boys also contribute, being trained is a central part of the role in earlier years.
91. Including to allow for attrition, we learned that Westminster Cathedral Choir needs to recruit at least six probationer choristers in each year, in order to maintain sufficient strength amongst its future senior ranks. It was clear to us that preserving adequate supply of new, probationer choristers is a prerequisite for continuing success in creating sacred music using a choir of boys' and men's voices at Westminster.
92. We were also told that enlisting enough applicants to fill probationer places, with boys of sufficient musical and academic ability, has been challenging during recent years; we heard divergent views on the causes of that.
93. Fully or partially-funded chorister places offer musically gifted children an academic and musical education they would be unlikely to secure otherwise; indeed, we understand that no candidate chorister has been refused a place, in recent times, owing to lack of funds. Interviewees also told us about choristers being '*living stones*' in the fabric of the Cathedral; and, self-evidently, membership of the Choir brings deep immersion in the liturgy and daily life of the Cathedral. In this context, we reaffirm the necessity for recruits to be drawn from the Catholic community.
94. We heard from many interviewees – across a range of Catholic and Anglican institutional backgrounds – about the applicability of choristers' professionalism and ethos to a wide range of careers and roles in later life, including well beyond music. That is of considerable societal value, both as a means to social mobility and in offering to society young people benefiting from substantial musical training and wider professionalism.
95. In the context of the strategic plan and revitalising sacred music in Westminster Cathedral, we conclude there is scope for growing improvement in the prospects for probationer recruitment. Enlisting the reinforced Music Department, the Master of Music, and the Diocese alongside the School in the recruitment effort, we see no reason why a well-executed campaign should not be successful in generating at least six, high-potential appointees each year.
96. That conclusion is reinforced in the evidence we took from comparable Anglican institutions operating at the highest level. They reported finding recruitment challenging, requiring constant vigilance, but that successful recruitment was entirely possible, nonetheless. We were told that the

smaller proportion of Catholic families in the general population makes recruitment more difficult; however, we conclude that can be overcome through vigorous and imaginative effort.

97. We should underline, however, that this effort cannot be left to the School alone: both the strategic plan and the corresponding school plan need to have recruitment and replenishment as a significant area of focus for all of the agents involved in creating sacred music. To support that focus, we recommend furthermore that there should be collaborative thinking and benchmarking with equivalent ecclesiastical and artistic institutions involved in recruitment and training of gifted children.

### **Boarding**

98. We received many submissions in relation to boarding arrangements for choristers, and also paid significant attention to this issue during our interviews.

99. Sending children to board is a very significant choice for families – often impacting siblings, as well as parents – and is a central element in deciding whether to choose a choir school; it has substantial impact on the freedom of action, way of life and future direction for choristers, as well as the amount of time they can spend with their families; and running a boarding regime successfully requires significant leadership focus and financial expenditure, no matter how that is funded. We conclude that the design and execution of an appropriate boarding regime depends on finely balanced decisions.

100. To provide context for our conclusions, we believe it is worth drawing out why one might provide a boarding regime for choristers. We learned about three elements:

- a. Intensity of choral and musical life – the energising, focusing, total immersion that can be offered to a musically-gifted child, much of whose time can be consumed in a combination of performance and practice, as part of a like-minded community, alongside benefiting from the wider curriculum. One of our interviewees likened shared participation and resulting camaraderie to membership of a monastic or military community;
- b. Availability of time – music at the highest level demands time both for performance and for practice. Members of residential choirs preserve focus and energy, and avoid time involved in travelling, which enables them to fit requisite practice within what is a reasonable day for a child;
- c. Practicability for parents – to sing at a sufficient quality, choristers need to practice or perform at least twice a day, excluding any rest days. Choristers are also growing children, who need education, friendship and time for other activities and

hobbies. Boarding offers scope for choristers to fit those activities into their day whilst avoiding their parents needing to transport them.

Particularly in London, where adults' average daily commuting is around 80 minutes, practicability is an important factor. And for families from outside the Home Counties, who might consider Westminster Cathedral Choir School, boarding offers the only realistic solution.

101. We had a chance to visit the high-quality residential accommodation provided for Westminster choristers, and heard about the pastoral support boys are offered.
102. We looked at the range of boarding arrangements at comparable institutions and concluded that a diversity of arrangements is in place; musically speaking, the essential concern was ensuring that choristers secured sufficient rehearsal and performance time.
103. We heard about perceptions of the impact the boarding regime has on the Choir School's attractiveness – especially in relation to the question of whether boarding should be termly or weekly – and the conclusion that probationer recruitment had improved significantly, following a change to weekly boarding. And some parents told us their children had more energy and were happier through being able to spend time at home on a regular basis. We support strongly the ambition for choristers to enjoy such time at home with their families.
104. Following several years of declining recruitment, we were told that probationer recruitment is now markedly more buoyant. This was attributed, in particular, to recent, corresponding changes from termly to weekly boarding. Seven new probationer choristers had joined in September 2019, which we understand is the highest in quite some years. Twenty-three boys had applied for voice trials in September 2020, and five new probationers were due to join the Choir in September 2020.
105. We heard counter-arguments from people who told us that a weekly boarding regime in effect made the Choir School unavailable to choristers from beyond London and that it risked eroding *esprit*. We were told that the change in the Choir School's boarding regime had diminished the quality of the Choir's singing, although we noted other environmental changes the choristers had experienced at around the same time which may also have affected their performance.
106. Thinking towards the future, whilst we can see that boarding changes have been followed by material up-swing in recruitment, other, significant factors also influence the Choir and Choir School's attractiveness and familial decision-making. Given that complexity of drivers, we conclude that it would be unsafe to attribute changes in recruitment patterns only to changes in boarding patterns: future planning should take account of the

full range of factors influencing families' decision-making, and ensure those are each addressed, rather than resting too narrowly on questions of boarding.

#### *Weekly boarding pattern*

107. We reject as misguided the highly polarised debate about boarding patterns. World-class music depends upon factors which are broader and more sophisticated than the issue of boarding patterns taken by itself. Furthermore, as we heard from a range of expert interviewees, boarding is a means to an end: what is crucial is to ensure that choristers achieve the right amount of rehearsal and performance time, and can capitalise on that through being happy and sufficiently rested, focused and working together well as a team. The following recommendations are calibrated carefully to achieve that.

108. Since September 2019, Westminster choristers end their week and travel home from school at 4.30pm on Friday afternoon, and return to school at 9am on Sunday morning to prepare to sing Mass at 10.30am. Importantly, we heard universally from musicians – across the full range of institutions and individuals from whom we received help – that such a regime is very unlikely to provide sufficient practice or performance time across the week, nor bring choristers back to school in a sufficiently rested and settled state, ready to sing to the highest standard for the major liturgy of the Cathedral's week. We found those arguments compelling.

109. This is an example of the kind of question, flowing from high ambition for the quality of sacred music at Westminster Cathedral, that a charter and strategic plan would help to guide. To strengthen generation of sacred music, we recommend that adjustments be made to the boarding arrangements in relation to Fridays and Sundays.

110. In relation to Fridays, we recommend that choristers older than years 4 and 5 should leave for home later, after singing Mass on Friday afternoon. In the context of London working patterns, we foresee that a later departure on Friday afternoon may also be helpful to some parents. Suitable flexibility in arrangements for Year 4 and 5 choristers could be offered to parents with older sons in the choir. This change would bring the benefits of both adding to the number of sung Masses and increasing the number of 'performances' sung by the choristers each week.

111. Focussing on sung Solemn Mass on Sundays, we recommend that all choristers should return to the Choir School at 6.30pm on Saturday night for rehearsal. In our judgement, that would support choristers in being rested, focused and suitably rehearsed. Akin to footballers coming together the night before a big match, that would strengthen *esprit* and the sense of personal investment in the morning's performance; and it would ensure timely bedtime and a calm start on Sunday morning. As an additional benefit, we also believe this arrangement would help choristers to avoid excessive tiredness going from Sunday into Monday and their school week.

112. We have given considerable thought to the question of return to school on Saturday night versus Sunday morning. Our judgement is that this question lies at the tipping point between creating outstanding music at the highest level and music which is merely good: We see the additional benefits, in relation to rest, focus and esprit, being of the essence.
113. We believe such adjustment should be sufficient for excellence, even though some interviewees contended that full, termly boarding offered the only solution musically (with an additional benefit of exposing choristers to the Marian liturgy on Saturdays). The Master of Music and the Choir School would need their plans to take best advantage of the extended week this recommendation would make available; clearly introducing these adjustments would also take time to implement, in the context of families' and the Choir School's arrangements for the present school year. Following these changes, the Committee on Sacred Music, including its musical experts, should be asked to keep the situation under review, judging whether the revised arrangements are effective and successful, or whether any further adjustment in training or boarding might be needed.
114. In the context of high quality sacred music existing to support the most solemn occasions liturgically, we heard support that the Choir should continue to attend the Cathedral on Saturdays from time to time (for example to support Diocesan ordinations or other significant events in the life of the Cathedral). We recommend pursuing that approach within each year's schedule, for which appropriate arrangements, such as full weekend boarding, should be put in place.
115. Finally, we considered the argument that there should be termly boarding, in the spirit of a 'national' school and to permit boarders from across the UK or internationally. We have addressed the question of a 'national' school elsewhere. We are unconvinced by arguments that our suggested timetable of weekly boarding need have a negative impact on the national and international radius of the Choir's catchment.
116. Particularly in the context of a revitalised strategy, we are confident that bespoke arrangements could be put in place for any, small number of boys whose keenness for membership of Westminster Cathedral's choir was outmatched by their distance to travel. For example, conceivably sources of charitable support could enable the Choir School to offer flexibility in practical arrangements for families from further afield.

## 6. IMPLEMENTATION

117. Whilst there was some vociferous publicity in the media about particular issues in relation to sacred music at Westminster Cathedral, we were grateful for Cardinal Vincent's wisdom in drawing our terms of reference sufficiently widely that we felt able to see a broad picture.
118. During our commissioning and from interviewees, we heard there had been complexities in the generation of sacred music from the time of Westminster Cathedral's foundation, necessitating periodic intervention by successive Archbishops. We share Cardinal Vincent's ambition that a holistic set of recommendations, whilst not eliminating the risk of complexity in the future, should help achieve greater stability and more secure sacred music.
119. To that end, we are recommending a set of changes that are significant and mutually interdependent. Success will depend on sustained leadership and management, and concerted effort equally from the Cathedral, the Music Department, the Choir School and the Diocese. There should be an implementation plan, with a target to complete implementation by eighteen months following acceptance of our recommendations.
120. A single, named person should be charged by the Cardinal to lead implementation of the plan, working closely with the Committee on Sacred Music we have recommended, including presenting the plan, its milestones, success measures and progress reports periodically.
121. Implementation may incur some one-off costs, alongside a small increase in repercussive cost in the Music Department. But implementation should also help place sacred music on a predictable and secure financial footing; that would also position it well in looking for philanthropic and commercial income. We foresee that the investment case will be strong, albeit timings and other assumptions will need particular attention in the context of recovery from the COVID-19 emergency.

## ANNEX A – DRAFT CHARTER FOR SACRED MUSIC

**Recommendation 1:** the Cardinal Archbishop should set a high ambition for the quality and reach of sacred music. The Cardinal should establish a charter, locating sacred music in the mission of the Cathedral, amongst the Cathedral's governing documents

### Theological context

A1. The command '*Sing unto the Lord*' runs through all of Scripture as part of the call to worship and glorify God. Such a bidding is part of the proper human response to God's self-revelation, for since our communication with God transcends the limitations of human speech, it calls on music to express itself.

A2. Encountering God challenges us to respond to the best of our abilities; artistic endeavour in the Bible is portrayed as a participation in God's creativity. Just as a proper attitude to creation invites awe and wonder, the prerequisites for sacred music include, '*awe, receptivity and a humility that is prepared to serve by participating in the greatness which has already gone before*'.<sup>12</sup>

A3. Within the Catholic Church, the tradition of sacred music, particularly Gregorian Chant and Polyphony, has a special place: '*The musical tradition of the universal Church is a treasure of inestimable value, greater even than that of any other art.*'<sup>13</sup> The eminence of that musical tradition is underscored and celebrated particularly in cathedral choirs, through which, '*the treasure of sacred music is preserved and fostered with great care,*' ensuring that this music '*adds delight to prayer, fosters unity of minds and confers greater solemnity upon the sacred rites*'<sup>14</sup>.

A4. St Paul advises the faithful to, '*sing psalms and hymns and inspired songs to God,*' in gratitude for the message of Christ that they have received.<sup>15</sup> The musical tradition of great cathedrals is fully honoured through encouraging religious singing by the faithful at appropriate times, so that they may fulfil their liturgical role and express their devotion in song.<sup>16</sup>

A5. In this way, the fostering and creation of music to the highest standard constitutes a crucial and powerful part of the mission of the cathedral, which is to be a sign of – and an instrument to build up – the Body of Christ in diocese, city, nation and beyond.

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<sup>12</sup> Pope Benedict (Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger), *The Image of the World and of Human Beings in the Liturgy and its expression in Church Music in A New Song for the Lord*, pp141-63.

<sup>13</sup> Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1156.

<sup>14</sup> Sacrosanctum Concilium, 114, 112.

<sup>15</sup> Col. 3:16.

<sup>16</sup> Musicam Sacram, 15, 16.

## Charter

A6. The Choir of Westminster Cathedral is recognised as one of the finest in the world, corresponding to its founder's desire for a '*perfect rendering of the liturgy*'<sup>17</sup>. Westminster Cathedral Choir is famous worldwide for its distinctive tone and remarkable repertoire which are '*witnesses to the beauty of holiness*'.<sup>18</sup> Since its foundation in 1901, it has occupied an exclusive and enviable position at the forefront of English choral music, uniquely continuing the celebrated medieval tradition of English cathedral music within a Catholic setting,

A7. The musical tradition of Westminster Cathedral accordingly constitutes a treasure unique in sacred music, expressing the human need to praise God to the highest of our abilities. Like the architecture within which it resounds and by which it is shaped, that music is part of the fabric of the Cathedral and forms a necessary or integral part of the sacred liturgy. This musical heritage gives Westminster Cathedral an exceptional opportunity to advance the evangelising mission of the gospel, both through promoting and affirming its own tradition, and by providing a focus for other means of communicating the gospel, particularly through promoting and encouraging high standards of musical participation by the faithful.

A8. Westminster Cathedral Choir is fully engaged in the liturgy, not an occasional contributor. Accordingly, the integrity of the choral tradition it represents should be respected, by both clergy and congregation, when celebrating the liturgy. At the same time, the standards it sets should stimulate other forms of music in the Cathedral, so that these may express the praise of God to the highest degree.

A9. Westminster Cathedral Choir and its heritage are cherished as a permanent part of the Cathedral's life, essential to its being as its architecture and its artwork, and complementing and supporting its sacramental and evangelising mission in making real an encounter with God. Care must always be taken so that its continuing role in enhancing the liturgy is, '*carefully encouraged*' and that we recognise our, '*special responsibility to preserve and enhance the musical tradition of this Cathedral in order to give honour and glory to God, and to raise people's hearts to him.*'<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Cardinal Vaughan, Allocution to Westminster Diocesan Synod, 1902.

<sup>18</sup> Pope Benedict, Sermon at Westminster Cathedral, 2010.

<sup>19</sup> Cardinal Hume, *The Voice of Westminster Cathedral* (posthumous), 2000.



## ANNEX B – COMMITTEE ON SACRED MUSIC – DRAFT TERMS OF REFERENCE

**Recommendation 3:** a committee should be established to develop and maintain the strategy, and to give non-executive, strategic oversight to its execution.

### **Context**

B1. The musical tradition of Westminster Cathedral ... constitutes a treasure unique in sacred music, expressing the human need to praise God to the highest of our abilities. Like the architecture within which it resounds and by which it is shaped, that music is part of the fabric of the Cathedral and *forms a necessary or integral part of the sacred liturgy*. This musical heritage gives Westminster Cathedral an exceptional opportunity to advance the evangelising mission of the gospel, both through promoting and affirming its own tradition, and by providing a focus for other means of communicating the gospel.<sup>20</sup>

### **Purpose**

B2. The Committee on Sacred Music, reporting to the Archbishop of Westminster through its chair, exists to develop and maintain the strategy by which the ambition of the Charter is secured. Furthermore, it exists to give non-executive, strategic oversight to its efficient and effective execution.

### **Membership**

B3. The Committee should comprise an experienced lay chair, appointed by the Archbishop, and should include the Administrator and the Precentor of the Cathedral, the Master of Music, the Diocesan Chief Operating Officer, the Chair of Governors and the Headmaster of the Choir School, lay members of international renown in the field of sacred music, such as at least one director of music of a comparable foundation<sup>21</sup>, and lay members with experience of strategic governance and of creation and sustenance of cultural capital.

B4. Members of the Committee are not remunerated, although reasonable expenses can be paid; the Committee does not hold a budget.

B5. The Committee on Sacred Music can create *ad hoc* and standing sub-committees, in support of its work, with the agreement of the chair.

B6. The secretariat is provided by the Diocese of Westminster.

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<sup>20</sup> Excerpt from Annex A, draft Westminster Cathedral Charter for Sacred Music.

<sup>21</sup> “Comparable foundation” means ecclesiastical settings of high international renown for the quality of their liturgy and sacred music – such as Westminster Abbey, St Paul’s Cathedral or King’s College Cambridge – that share many of the organisational experiences, context and demands of Westminster Cathedral.

### ***Work of the Committee***

B7. The Committee meets at least quarterly; it prepares an annual report to the Archbishop, alongside any additional reports on particular themes. The Committee has the following, standing tasks:

- 1) Preparing a clear statement of strategic intent, aligned with the Charter;
- 2) Preparing and maintaining a three-year, rolling strategic plan by which that intent would be achieved;
- 3) Within the strategic plan, making recommendations and overseeing the steps by which a stable financial underpinning can be achieved for creating sacred music of the highest quality;
- 4) Receiving reports from the various agents involved in creation of sacred music at Westminster as a means to providing non-executive oversight of implementation of the strategic plan;
- 5) Making reports and recommendations to the Archbishop, from time to time, on progress against the plan and on any other improvement to sacred music in support of the mission of Westminster Cathedral;
- 6) Quinquennial review of the accountability and governance arrangements for creation of sacred music at Westminster.

B8. Additionally, the Cardinal Archbishop has invited the Committee to oversee implementation of recommendations made by the Strategic Review of Sacred Music in the Mission of Westminster Cathedral 25 September 2020, and to provide quarterly reports to him on progress.

B9. The role of the Committee on Sacred Music does not supplant accountability or line management arrangements of the various agents involved in creating sacred music. However, it is the Archbishop's expectation that those organisations and their employees should each play their complete part, collaborating fully with the Committee in securing the strategy.

### ***Transparency***

B10. The Committee's list of members, its minutes, reports and recommendations are published routinely on the website of the Diocese of Westminster.

## **ANNEX C – DRAFT FRAMEWORK DOCUMENT SETTING OUT RESPECTIVE ORGANISATIONAL ROLES**

**Recommendation 4:** there should be a framework document setting out responsibilities, accountabilities and inter-relationships between the Diocese of Westminster, Westminster Cathedral, its Music Department and the Choir School in relation to the commissioning and provision of sacred music.

### **Purpose, status, and relationships in this Framework Document**

C1. People work at their best and most productively when roles and accountabilities are clear, where goals, expectations and planning assumptions are explicit, and where contributing responsibilities and accountabilities align in pursuit of a common vision and purpose.

C2. To that end, this *Framework Document* sets out the respective responsibilities, accountabilities and inter-relationships between the Diocese of Westminster, Westminster Cathedral, its Music Department and the Choir School in relation to the commissioning and provision of sacred music. The Framework Document does not seek to define any of those organisations' wider roles or accountabilities.

C3. The Framework Document should be read within the ambition and principles set in the *Charter for Sacred Music* and alongside the personal responsibilities and accountabilities of those charged with leading contributing organisations. This Framework Document is adopted by the Archbishop of Westminster. The Committee on Sacred Music may recommend revision of the Framework Document from time to time.

### **Strategy and strategic plan for sacred music**

C4. The strategy and implementation plan is set multi-annually by the Archbishop on the advice of the Committee on Sacred Music. This Framework Document exists to set out and bind in alignment the various organisations that contribute to the production of music (below), and that are accountable individually and severally for securing the strategy.

### **Contributing organisations**

C5. Sacred music of the highest quality is the product of joint endeavour between Westminster Cathedral, Westminster Cathedral Music Department, Westminster Cathedral Choir School, and the Diocese of Westminster.

### **Organisational responsibilities**

C6. In the context of the Charter and of producing sacred music, respective organisational responsibilities are as follows:

- (i) *Westminster Cathedral* – has eight responsibilities:
  - 1) within the mission of the Church, setting explicit theological and teaching intent for any particular service or series of services of worship;
  - 2) commissioning music as part of such services or series;

- 3) providing appropriate leadership, liturgical and logistical support to enable the highest quality of music to be achieved in services;
- 4) playing a full and active role in supporting the development and success of the Music Department and the Choir, including in relation to live-streaming, broadcasting, choral and organ concerts, recordings and a healthy programme of chorister recruitment;
- 5) collaborating actively with the Music Department in increasing the extent and quality of musical engagement and production amongst the congregation of Westminster Cathedral, especially in relation to those services at which the Choir is not present;
- 6) equally, collaborating with the Choir School to support it in playing an active part in the life of the Cathedral;
- 7) making arrangements and being accountable for safeguarding choristers when they pass from the Choir School into the care of the Cathedral;
- 8) setting the delegated budget for the Music Department, on a multi-annual basis, in line with the strategy.

The Administrator is charged by the Archbishop with leading the Cathedral's life, worship, and programme. As such, he is accountable for the Cathedral clergy and staff in delivering the Cathedral's responsibilities in this Framework Document. In those responsibilities, the Administrator is supported by a lay and a clerical expert, each reporting to him:

- the Master of Music, who is a church musician of high renown and who combines three roles: Firstly, as the Archbishop's principal music advisor. Secondly, as lead musician in the Cathedral, director of its professional Choir and curator of the organs. And thirdly, as a member of the Cathedral's senior team sharing in responsibility for the Cathedral's wider success;
- the Precentor, who is the member of the College of Chaplains with liturgical duties, and who possesses a degree of musical expertise particularly in relation to sacred liturgy. The responsibilities of the Precentor are: to support the worship of the Cathedral and the work of the Cathedral's Music Department with high-level liturgical and musical expertise; within the College of Chaplains to work collaboratively with the Master of Music as supporter of their work and critical friend; to uphold the key strategic importance of excellent liturgy and music in the Cathedral's life and mission, including music at non-choir liturgies and planning diocesan events at the Cathedral; to contribute at a high level to the work of the Committee, in support of the Cathedral's Choir and music; and, to provide a Choir School Governor with a suitable level of experience.

- (ii) *Westminster Cathedral Music Department* – Led by the Master of Music, as principal musical adviser and lead musician, who is accountable for the Department’s eight responsibilities:
- 1) providing apposite, holistic and internally coherent repertoire by which the theological and pedagogical objectives of Cathedral services are enabled with sacred music of the highest standard;
  - 2) recruiting, developing and deploying both professional musicians and choristers to the highest standard;
  - 3) having particular regard for the musical and wider development of choristers and their welfare whilst they are engaged in musical enterprise, including through day-to-day operation of defined safeguarding protocols and through putting in place regular face-to-face and other channels in support of a direct relationship between choristers’ parents and families and the Music Department, as well as with the School;
  - 4) supporting both the evangelising mission of the Cathedral, and development of musicianship and esprit in the Choir, through organising programmes of broadcasting, concerts, recording and tours by the Choir;
  - 5) developing the engagement in and contribution of the congregation of Westminster Cathedral to sacred music;
  - 6) engaging with the Education Department of the Diocese of Westminster in the development and sustaining of the sacred musical curriculum amongst diocesan schools (including to encourage chorister recruitment);
  - 7) collaborating with the music department of Westminster Cathedral Choir School as a resource in its provision of the fullest musical curriculum to all of its pupils;
  - 8) being mindful of the responsibility of the Music Department in contributing to the fundraising and financial stability of the Cathedral’s music.

Supported by Diocesan infrastructure, the Music Department operates its own workforce plan and budget within the Administrator’s scheme of delegation and line management.

- (iii) *Westminster Cathedral Choir School* – accountability to the Diocesan Trustees rests with the Governors and with the Headmaster, who exercises executive leadership. The responsibilities of the Choir School are:
- 1) to encapsulate and drive the Choir School’s focus on musicality, within the Strategy for Sacred Music, via its own multi-year plan;
  - 2) to provide engaged and well-motivated choristers to the Music Department for production of sacred music in the Cathedral, for broadcasting, concerts and tours, and for corresponding development and practice;
  - 3) to lead recruitment of new choristers, with active participation and the full support of the Cathedral and Music Department;
  - 4) to engage actively in the life of the Choir and the musical life of the Cathedral, through strong participation and representation at musical events;

- 5) to celebrate the role of the choristers within the School community;
  - 6) to sustain the welfare and safeguarding of choristers whilst in the School's care, backed by effective handover with the Cathedral's corresponding processes.
- (iv) *Diocese of Westminster* – the primary responsibilities of the Diocese are to foster a strong enabling environment and to provide material logistical support. The Diocesan Chief Operating Officer is the lead official accountable for those, supported by the Director of Finance. Particular responsibilities include:
- 1) providing routine finance and HR support to enable effective budgetary and personnel management;
  - 2) procuring and leading specialist fundraising support, to secure the ambition of setting the Music Department on an endowed and financially-secure foundation;
  - 3) supporting both a strong contribution by the Music Department to Diocesan schools' sacred musical pedagogy and the programme of chorister recruitment, through its Education Department;
  - 4) providing supporting protocols and infrastructure for safeguarding choristers whilst in the care of the Cathedral Music Department;
  - 5) in its own business plan, setting out realistic assumptions about support for securing the Strategy for Sacred Music.

### **Coordinating activities**

C7. It is for each leader to direct his or her own organisation's activities in mutual support of the Strategy for Sacred Music. In that context, the following points are strong recommendations.

C8. It is the responsibility of each leader to set a collaborative tone, such that their staff reach out readily to offer help and advice to one another routinely and across boundaries. Leaders may wish to arrange meetings and informal events to strengthen relationships between members of their organisations.

C9. The Committee on Sacred Music meets at least quarterly and is the place at which implementation of the Strategy is tracked. Each contributing organisation has membership of the Committee. Leaders may wish to meet, around the time of Committee meetings, to take stock of progress and align next steps.

C10. In view of the daily and termly life of the Cathedral and the Choir School, the requirements of the liturgical calendar, development of music and the Choir, and the teaching and welfare of choristers, leaders or their delegates may also wish to formalise the existing practice of regular meetings, giving tactical attention to each of these themes.

## **ANNEX D – LIST OF CONTRIBUTORS**

D1. We were grateful for a wide range of oral and written contributions, particularly for the openness and generosity of interviewees from non-Catholic institutions and from well beyond the ambit of the Diocese of Westminster; intentionally, the review was open to written submissions without constraint. Whilst we believe this annex is complete, we apologise for any inadvertent omissions.

### **Interviewees, some of whom also wrote**

His Eminence Cardinal Vincent Nichols	McElroy, Christopher
Alder, Stephen	McHugh, Linda
Auger, Lucy	McLaughlin, Neil
Baumann, Paul	Milne, Revd James
Barlow, Christopher	Morrell, Nicholas
Berkeley, Julian	Morris, Hugh
Berkeley, Lord Michael	Nethsingha, Andrew
Bowes, Elaine and Jeremy	O'Donnell, James
Brown, John	Okwulu, Jenny and Martin
Camoletto, Paolo	Quinney, Robert
Carwood, Andrew	Roberts, Peter
Dienes-Williams, Katherine	Roberts, Peter
Foulds, Charles	Robinson, Nicholas
Gallagher, Fr Andrew	Saunders, Benjamin
Graham, Edward	Sherrington, The Rt Revd John
Grahl, Steven	Smith, Madeline
Hall, The Very Revd John	Stevens, Peter
Hannigan, Peter	Stolz, Rev Christopher
Hedges, The Very Revd Jane	Studzinski, John
Heminway, David	Toyne, Professor Peter
Hill, David	Trenier, The Revd Canon Andrew
Hoyle, The Very Revd David	Tuckwell, Canon Christopher
Humphrey, Fr Daniel	Walker, Robert
Hyde, Daniel	Weir, Judith
Ison, The Very Revd David	Williams, Mark
Keay, Nicholas	de Winter, David
Kennedy, Mark	Woodhead, Professor Linda
Larter-Evans, Simon	

### **Written submissions**

Allwood, Peter	Marc de Livet, Christian
Ambler, Tim, and three others	McHugh, Linda
Andrew, Rosemary	Mohan, Tom
Anonymous	Negri, Loretta and Robert
Arkwright, Philip	Neil Chippington
Arthur, Bernice and James	O'Dwyer, Eamonn
Bessem, Tambi and James	O'Flynn, Adeline and Conor
Bloomfield, Simon	O'Reilly, Graham
Bowes, Jeremy	Ogden, Mary-Jane
Brockie, Canon Michael	Ora, Rosemary
Carter, Maaike	Orrell, Clare
Clapham, John	Parker, Dr Andrew
Clark, F.	Phillips, Nicholas and Mrs
Coleman, Revd Ian	Pinsent, Catherine
Connolly, Bennie	Pott, Alexander

Duffy, Terence  
 Duggan, John  
 Erhardt, Professor Tassilo  
 Evans, Trevor  
 Fancott, Louise  
 Ferros, Mr and Mrs  
 Finch, Kate  
 Fraser, Keith  
 Gaunt, William, and eight others  
 Gough, Sarah  
 Hamblen, Valerie  
 Hammond, Anita and Marc  
 Healy, Bruno  
 Hickman, Catherine  
 Hogg, Mervyn  
 Holmes, Anne and Michael  
 Hopkins, Guy  
 Kennedy, Mark  
 Kenyon, Sir Nicholas  
 Little, Vanessa  
 Lloyd, Simon  
 Lusby, J  
 Lyon, Flora

Risso-Gill, Tamara and Edward  
 Rowntree, Dr John P  
 Russill, Patrick  
 Saunders, Benjamin  
 Selvaratnam, Dr Kukan  
 Sharpe, Robert  
 Skinner, Fr Gerard  
 Society for the Protection of Westminster  
 Cathedral Choir  
 Sparke, Kiersten  
 Stoner, Stephanie and Andrew  
 Thorold, Mary  
 Traynor Bucknall, Fiona and Richard  
 Treloar, Gregory  
 Verri, Simone  
 Vine, Mathew  
 West, Mathilda and Toby  
 Westminster Cathedral former chorister  
 families, in the names of 40 individuals  
 Wilson, Thomas  
 Woodhouse, John  
 Woolley, Professor Robert

## Organisational Affiliations

D2. Interviewees and correspondents reported organisational affiliations as follows:

Ampleforth Abbey  
 Barbican Centre  
 Buckfast Abbey  
 Carmelite Priory, London  
 Cathedral Organists' Association  
 Choir Schools' Association  
 Conference of Catholic Directors of Music  
 Christ Church, Oxford  
 Douai Abbey  
 Ensemble William Byrd and Ensemble  
 Vocal de Pontoise  
 Friends of Cathedral Music  
 Genesis Foundation  
 Guildford Cathedral  
 Grace Dieu School  
 King's College, Cambridge  
 King's School, Canterbury  
 Lancaster University  
 Lay Clerks' Vestry, Westminster Cathedral  
 Liverpool Metropolitan Cathedral of  
 Christ the King  
 London Oratory  
 Magdalen College, Oxford  
 Metropolitan Chapter of Westminster  
 Cathedral  
 New College, Oxford

Norwich Cathedral  
 Oxford Choral Foundation  
 Roman Catholic Diocese of Westminster  
 Royal Academy of Music  
 Royal College of Music  
 Royal School of Church Music  
 St Anne's Cathedral, Leeds  
 St Benedict's House, Dunstable  
 St John's College, Cambridge  
 St Mary's Cathedral, Sydney, Australia  
 St Paul's Cathedral, London  
 St Paul's Cathedral School, London  
 Shrewsbury Cathedral  
 Society for the Protection of Westminster  
 Cathedral Choir  
 Southbank Sinfonia  
 Stonyhurst College  
 Wells Cathedral School  
 Westminster Abbey  
 Westminster Abbey Choir School  
 Westminster Cathedral  
 Westminster Cathedral Choir School  
 Westminster Cathedral Interfaith Group  
 Westminster Cathedral Parents' Association  
 Westminster School  
 Winchester Cathedral

*We wish to record especially the legacy and labours of Canon Christopher Tuckwell, Administrator of Westminster Cathedral, who died on 26 June 2020. Requiescat in pace.*