



Background – Union Chapel - inspiring space, inspiring lives

Union Chapel is a unique multi award-winning performing arts venue, most recently voted ‘London’s Greatest Live Music Venue’ by Time Out (2026). We have a global reputation for International cultural events engaging diverse audiences. For over thirty years events have been our lifeblood and income, engaging 123,000+ visitors through 175+ events annually.

“There’s something about coming to Union Chapel. There’s just something that’s kind of left in the walls. You feel it. There’s so much life in every corner. All of that seeps in, and it helps you to give your story”

Union Chapel is more than a venue. A Grade I listed Gothic architectural jewel, with an exciting 200-year-old collection of non-conformist heritage documents, it is also home to charities tackling homelessness, championing social justice, empowering local communities with creative groups, training, and employability programmes for local communities. It is also the home to a working, progressive and inclusive church.

Profits from events substantially support the maintenance of our heritage and vital charitable work with local communities and we are a model of good practice for community engagement.

Job Title:	Archivist
Line Manager:	Head of Conservation and Building Projects
Responsible for:	Archive volunteers. May also have delegated responsibility contractors.
Additional key relationships:	Union Chapel Church, Heritage volunteers, Participation Manager, the Friends of Union Chapel, other Union Chapel staff and volunteers, heritage partners including The National Archives, The National Lottery Heritage Fund, Historic England, Islington Museum, and Islington Local History Centre's Pride Archives.
Salary:	£32,800 FTE (two days £13,120)
Hours:	0.4 FTE (equivalent to two days per week/fifteen hours). Working pattern to be agreed. Occasional weekend or evening working may be required for archive events (e.g. participation in Open House Day).
Benefits:	23 days annual leave + bank holidays (both pro rata) Workplace Pension scheme (NEST), Access to an Employee Assistance Program; Free tickets to gigs and events at the Chapel.
Contract Type:	Part time, Permanent, primarily on-site.
Notice/Probation:	Three months' probation with one week notice from either party On successful completion of probation, three months' notice for both parties.

Purpose of role:

- Lead the care, management and development of Union Chapel's archive and heritage collections.
- Ensure the collection is accessible, well-managed and used to engage audiences through research, interpretation and public programmes.
- Support colleagues, volunteers and partners to use the collection in creative and educational projects.
- Develop policies, systems and funding opportunities that secure the long-term sustainability of the archive.

Role Context

Following the completion of our recent major capital works, the Sunday School Stories, thanks to the generous support of The National Lottery Heritage Fund, Historic England and other funders and individual donors, the space is now open again to the community and we have a dedicated archive store and public Reading Room.

This collection tells tales of Nonconformists and their role in the liberal traditions which continue to shape our contemporary social and democratic institutions and human rights, from social justice, to architecture, religion and music, of the last 200 years.

The collection includes modern material documenting Union Chapel's life as a venue; posters from the very first Big Chill nights and legendary events by the likes of Procol Harum, Patti Smith, The Moth and Emile Sande. But it is full of the everyday too, revealing insights into the lives of local people and their ambitions for a better world.

Union Chapel's Sunday School Stories Project has been a fantastic opportunity to engage a wide range of local people with heritage, while breathing life into a significant and unique historical building.

We want to maintain the momentum and the interest of local people and volunteers in the archive, making sure the collection remains at the centre of future activities, while core work is delivered to maintain the archive, cataloguing it and keeping it open to the public.

Job Description

Duties and responsibilities:

- Continue cataloguing the archive collection in line with recognised archival standards.
- Manage the preservation of the physical and digital archive, including recommending appropriate storage, systems and equipment.
- Recruit, train and support archive volunteers, providing practical experience in cataloguing, collections care and exhibitions.
- Maintain public access to the archive through appointments and a programme of open days.
- Develop and implement policies and procedures for collections management, documentation and preservation.
- Support the delivery of exhibitions, Open House Festival and other heritage events.
- Provide archive research and content for exhibitions, interpretation, digital resources and the Union Chapel website.
- Build partnerships with heritage organisations and contribute to funding applications that support the archive's future.
- Promote the use of the archive across Union Chapel, supporting staff, volunteers and creative projects with research and source material.
- Prepare reports, monitor activity and contribute to evaluation for trustees, funders and management.
- Undertake other duties consistent with the nature of the role.
- Be responsible for the relocation of archive material still stored in various spaces as and when necessary.

Shared Responsibilities:

- Work in accordance with Union Chapel's policies and procedures, including Health & Safety, Safeguarding, GDPR and Equality, Diversity & Inclusion.
- Contribute positively to the wider work of Union Chapel and work collaboratively across teams, representing Union Chapel positively at all times.
- Participate in supervision, training and team meetings.

Support and Supervision:

- Induction and role-specific training.
- Regular line management supervision.
- Opportunities for learning and professional development relevant to the role.

Safeguarding:

Union Chapel is committed to Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and families and expects all staff to share in this commitment.

Job Description Review

This job description is intended as a guide to the duties and responsibilities of the role. It reflects the current requirements of the post but is not exhaustive and may be reviewed and amended from time to time to meet the changing needs of Union Chapel.

Person Specification:

Essential Requirements

- A Postgraduate qualification in Archives and Records Management recognised by the Archives & Records Association (ARA).
- Experience managing archive collections, including cataloguing to ISAD(G) standards.
- Experience of digital preservation and digitisation.
- Experience of working with volunteers and community heritage projects.
- Knowledge of collections care and archive management best practice.
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills.
- Strong organisational skills, with the ability to work independently and prioritise workload.
- Collaborative approach and ability to build effective working relationships.
- Commitment to widening access to heritage and engaging diverse audiences.
- Enthusiasm for the mission and values of Union Chapel.
- Ability to advocate for the archive's best interests
- Strong team worker able to work independently

Desirable

- Experience using Archives Space.
- Experience in arts, culture or community organisations.
- Experience of oral history projects.
- Experience of working with freelancers and external suppliers.
- Knowledge of Islington's history and heritage.
- Knowledge of Nonconformist history.
- Lived experience relevant to Union Chapel's communities.

How to apply

Please submit your CV and a supporting statement (no more than 5,000 characters, around 1.5 pages) covering your interest in the role and how you meet the requirements of the Person Specification.

Applications via CharityJob are preferred at <https://www.charityjob.co.uk/jobs/union-chapel/archivist/1077125?tsId=36>

Additionally, please complete our equal opportunity form at <https://unionchapel.org.uk/work-at-union-chapel> for our EDI monitoring purposes, and email to recruitment@unionchapel.org.uk, using “Archivist EDI” as the title of your email.

You can also apply by emailing your application to recruitment@unionchapel.org.uk, using “Archivist” as the title of your email.

Closing date: Monday 10th August, 10 am

Online first round interviews will take place in the week commencing 17 August

In person second round interviews will be the following week at Union Chapel.

Please let us know if in your application if you are away during that period; if you are shortlisted, we will make necessary arrangements.

Equality and Diversity

We are working to become an organisation that is representative of our local community and want to recruit people from a range of backgrounds who reflect the diversity of our community. We particularly encourage applicants who are currently underrepresented in our board, workforce and wider sector. This includes but is not limited to candidates who identify as being from Black, Asian and other ethnic backgrounds from the global majority, and candidates who identify as being disabled. We also particularly welcome applicants with their own lived experiences of the challenges we aim to address.

Photo credit, Live at the Chapel by James Bridle