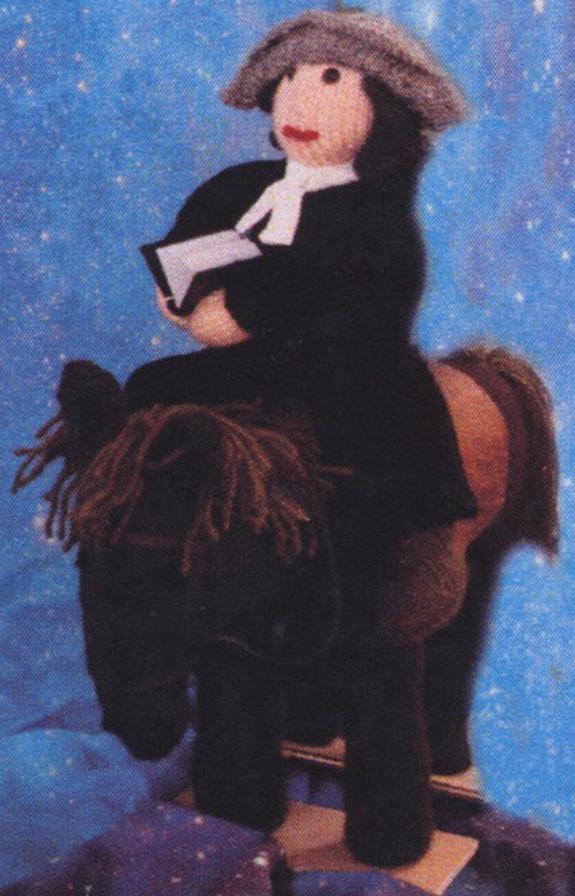


PROPERTY MATTERS

ISSUE 23 – November 2019



The World is My Parish

Sponsored by



This document is being sent to the following people, within the Connexion, who are registered on the connexional database: district Chairs, superintendent ministers, district property secretaries, circuit property secretaries, church property secretaries, district treasurers, circuit treasurers and church treasurers.

PROPERTY MATTERS

Issue 23 – November 2019

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Front-page photograph: The Knitted Bible exhibition, which includes 33 scenes from the Bible, was displayed at Trinity Methodist Church, Barton-upon-Humber last autumn. Alongside knitted people and animals depicting biblical events, from the creation to the resurrection of Jesus Christ, there were vital scenes from the life of John Wesley. The cover image is *The World is my Parish*, representing Wesley's desire to share the gospel across the world.

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Introduction

Greetings,

As you may know, since the report by the working party to Conference in 2018, there has been a significant enhancement of property support for Managing Trustees based within the Connexional Team.

There have been a number of recent additions to the team. Alison Olugunna has been appointed as Director of Property Development and Leslie Mathews as Property Support Officer, both based at Methodist Church House. Stephen Hetherington (formerly of Methodist Action North West) has been appointed as Director of Property Support. He will be based in Manchester.

At Methodist Church House, the facilities functions have been under review and there is now a Front of House Manager who will cover facilities, reception, the post room and Health and Safety.

At the same time, the position of Connexional Property Coordinator came to an end on 31 October. I joined the Connexional Team in January 2015. The work was always varied and challenging and I was pleased to enjoy not only the support of the team here but also that of the wider Connexion. In my time, I met many of you and enjoyed our conversations. I would like to thank you all for the friendship, support, help and advice that you have given to me over that time.

I wish you all the best for the future as you continue to use and look after the buildings for the mission of the Church.

Best wishes

Richard Farmery

Connexional Property Coordinator

Tel: 020 7467 5190

Email: fpc@methodistchurch.org.uk

Connexional Team update

Online suite of applications update

<https://online.methodist.org.uk>

> ANNUAL RETURNS

The Annual Returns site opened for data entry on 1 September 2019.

New features on the site:

- **Welcome tab:** to access downloadable returns forms, help and guidance.
- **New property types:** now includes the categories 'Ancillary property' and 'Land'. Please note that quinquennial inspections are required for Methodist-owned land as well as buildings.
- **Addition of properties:** When a new property is added to a church record, the Property tab will turn amber even if the return has been submitted.
- **Insurance:** Insurance details are now located within the Property tab. There is no separate Insurance tab.
- **Submission:** Users can now unsubmit the return if, for example, additional details need completing. Anyone with Update Property permissions will get a notification when this happens.
- **Returns status:** The status of returns can now be identified as 'Not started', 'In progress' or 'Completed'. For circuit returns, filters can be applied to display the status of a group of returns at the same time.
- **District and circuit returns:** These are now directly visible and accessible to users with the appropriate permissions, once they have logged on. For more information, please check the guidance.
- **Home button:** A red 'Online portal' button in the top left corner takes users to the Online Suite welcome page.

Guidance and permissions:

- To help with user queries, we have added the church and circuit checklists to the Schedules and Forms page of the Property section on the Methodist Church website:
www.methodist.org.uk/for-ministers-and-office-holders/property/schedules-and-forms
- Please note that if you are based in a circuit that has merged with another, or are a minister who has moved stations, your online suite permissions may need to be updated.

Frequently Asked Questions about annual returns: www.methodist.org.uk/returnsfaqs

> STATISTICS FOR MISSION

The statistics for mission site is now open for data entry, **until 31 January 2020**.

- The 2019 collection largely follows the same format as last year, with the exception of how **Local Ecumenical Partnership (LEP) membership** is recorded. Joint or ecumenical members were not previously counted as part of the Methodist membership figure; they are now **included**. If you see an amber **warning message** indicating that membership numbers are not adding up or are significantly different from last year, you can ignore it.
- Please ensure that your church has the **correct pastoral contact** listed. Changes to this can be made in the **Church Profile tab** at any time.
- A new feature is the **Digital Archive tab**, at circuit level, which lists former societies that have either ceased to meet, become a class of another or merged to form a new church. Please do get in touch to help us keep this information up-to-date and give **better visibility to classes and mergers**.
- **Guidance and downloadable forms** are available on the Statistics for Mission site, as well as on the statistics pages of the Methodist website:
www.methodist.org.uk/about-us/statistics-for-mission/online-data-entry
- **Web addresses:** Church, circuit and district pages are now located within the Welcome tab. The previous Circuit and District profile tabs have been removed.
- **Downloadable data:** The spreadsheet generated from the 'Download data' link within the district and circuit office holders' tabs will not only display those office holders operating at district or circuit level but also all the other office holders within that particular district or circuit.

Frequently Asked Questions about Statistics for mission: www.methodist.org.uk/about-us/statistics-for-mission/faqs

> CONTACT US

Help and guidance documents for all applications of the online portal can be accessed and downloaded via www.methodist.org.uk/onlinesuite. Latest updates on **technical issues** can also be found on that page.

Contact email addresses:

- Property Consents: consents@methodistchurch.org.uk
- Annual Returns: returns@methodistchurch.org.uk
- Statistics for Mission: statisticsformission@methodistchurch.org.uk

Frequently Asked Questions webpages:

- Property Consents: www.methodist.org.uk/consentsfaqs
- Annual Returns: www.methodist.org.uk/returnsfaqs
- Statistics for Mission: www.methodist.org.uk/about-us/statistics-for-mission/faqs

Other updates

Connexional Property Strategy

On 2 May 2019, the Connexional Property Strategy was launched at Central Hall in London. A 15-minute summary of the day can be found [here](#).



To download a copy of the strategy or to watch the full version of the sessions, please visit www.methodist.org.uk/property/strategy

Connexional Team updates

The new Director for Property Support, Stephen Hetherington, and the new Property Support Officer, Leslie Matthews, are now in post. Stephen is based in Manchester and Leslie in London. The Property Support function will include production of a programme of events and training of Managing Trustees and District Property Secretaries (DPSs) to support them with implementing the Connexional Property Strategy. Please email property@methodist.org.uk for further information and support or visit www.methodist.org.uk/property/contacts

Website updates

There are a few changes to note on the www.methodist.org.uk/property pages

Starting a Property Project

www.methodist.org.uk/for-ministers-and-office-holders/property/starting-a-property-project/

The Evangelism & Growth and the Property Support teams have been working together on linking mission for the church with property. There are two useful steps for your church to work through:

1. The [Mission Planning toolkit](#) gives guidance and ideas to help a church write a mission plan.
2. The downloadable [Church Property Profile](#) will help Managing Trustees conduct a thorough evaluation of the potential uses of their property.

The [Starting a Property Project](#) page also has a useful flowchart of the key steps to take when considering a project. And there are links to a free resource that was created collaboratively by several Christian communities, called [Crossing the Threshold](#). For more information, please visit

www.methodist.org.uk/for-ministers-and-office-holders/property/starting-a-property-project/

Panel of Surveyors

If you have used one of the panel of surveyors, we would be most grateful if you could fill in a [feedback form](#) about your experience. The link for the form can also be found at

www.methodist.org.uk/property/surveyors

Repairs and Maintenance

If you need help to find a contractor, the [Maintenance Booker](#) from the National Churches Trust may be of assistance. In addition, the [Building Conservation](#) website has information on craft skills, conservation products and specialist services.

Conservation

Advice and Guidance

Fire safety

Following the fire at Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris, we thought it may be prudent to include some very useful fire safety advice for historic churches. You can read it here: historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/fire-safety-for-traditional-church-buildings/fire-safety-traditional-church-buildings/

Free publications from the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings

Take a look at this [new downloadable series of advice notes](#) that give practical help on some common building repair issues. Topics include: controlling damp in old buildings, gypsum plaster floors, and slate roofs in the South-West and the East Midlands. You can also find dozens of helpful articles on our [searchable knowledge base](#).

Automatic door time locks

Ecclesiastical has published new guidance on automatic door time locks. Automatic locks are increasingly used where churches are kept open for daytime visitors but are often unattended. Automatic locks can ensure security at night. www.ecclesiastical.com/documents/Automatic-door-time-locks.pdf

Historic England and our churches

Historic England has published its Heritage 'At Risk' register for 2020. The up-to-date Places of Worship at Risk page can be accessed at: historicengland.org.uk/advice/heritage-at-risk/buildings/caring-for-places-of-worship/. You can also find a short film marking 20 years of Heritage at Risk: www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q9ZKmUeVU0s

In addition, Historic England has updated some of its Places of Worship advice webpages. These now replace the publications *New Work to Historic Places of Worship* and *New Uses for Former Places of Worship*. The new pages provide advice, guiding principles and sources of further information for those planning to make changes to historic places of worship, or who are considering new additional uses. The links to the updated pages are:

- Making changes to places of worship: historicengland.org.uk/advice/caring-for-heritage/places-of-worship/making-changes-to-your-place-of-worship/
- New and additional uses for places of worship: historicengland.org.uk/advice/caring-for-heritage/places-of-worship/new-uses/

Stir to Action – the new economy, communities and churches

The community development organisation Stir to Action offers a range of information for churches interested in helping to transform their local economy. They have ideas on community engagement; community ownership; and setting up a cooperative, social enterprise or community space. See their toolkit: www.stirtoaction.com/?p=1069

Of Interest

Brand updates

The National Lottery Heritage Fund (formerly the Heritage Lottery Fund) and the National Lottery Community Fund (formerly the Big Lottery Fund) have both been given refreshed brand identities, having changed their names over the last 12-14 months. Both their logos incorporate the recognisable crossed fingers.

Newsletter for organ advisers and interested others

The Institute of British Organ Building (ibo.co.uk) has started a free quarterly newsletter, containing technical and topical information, intended for organ advisers and others with an interest in their work. To sign up, email caerus@ibo.co.uk and ask to be added to the mailing list.

The Oxford Centre for Methodism and Church History has launched a new online collection

It contains roughly 10,000 images of Methodist churches throughout Britain!

www.flickr.com/photos/britishmethodistbuildings/albums?fbclid=IwAR01_AanFj9hK8d4yEUf7IkzI4rIPuHI1uSSt3NUHP9G9GVJxcWhy-S8dCI

Opportunities for camping in churches

'Champing' has taken off as a way to raise funds to save ancient buildings and open church doors to the community. www.theguardian.com/travel/2019/jan/26/give-us-this-day-daily-bed-camping-in-church?CMP=share_btn_link

Ecclesiastical have updated their advice on metal theft

Ecclesiastical report that: 'Lead, copper and stainless-steel roof coverings, roof flashings, copper lightning conductors and lead rainwater pipes have all been targeted. While world demand for metal remains strong, their scrap value will continue to be high – making them an attractive target for thieves – and churches will continue to face this problem for the foreseeable future.' Visit their website for top tips and downloadable [guidance notes](#) on preventing theft of metal.

www.ecclesiastical.com/risk-management/church-metal-theft/

Follow in the footsteps of pilgrims as Welsh churches and chapels come into the spotlight

As part of a new, Exploring Sacred Wales project, 500 of the country's historic churches and chapels are to become a key part of Wales' tourism offer by May 2020.

All the places of worship are to be featured on www.explorechurches.com, the UK's church tourism hub, which will highlight their fascinating histories, art and architecture, as well as giving location information, opening times and details of special events. All of the sacred spaces are along and around The Wales Way: www.visitwales.com/inspire-me/wales-way

As part of Exploring Sacred Wales, tourists can book online for any of five 'experiences', themed around Welsh place and history; and newly commissioned photography and films will further encourage visitors to discover Wales' world-class sacred heritage.

The 'Exploring Sacred Wales' project is being run by the National Churches Trust in collaboration with Visit Wales, Addoldai Cymru, Cadw and other national partners. It has received funding through the Welsh Government Rural Communities – Rural Development Programme 2014-2020, which is funded by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development and the Welsh Government.

Right Up Your Street: Faith's response to loneliness

As the focus of a Government strategy in 2018 and a national campaign since June 2019, tackling loneliness has become a political priority. This report from FaithAction highlights some of the ways in which faith groups are tackling loneliness and isolation. It analyses the key features of their work and calls for more links between faith groups and other organisations, as part of a national drive to end loneliness.

www.faithaction.net/working-with-you/tackling-loneliness/

Funding

Government scheme to regenerate village halls

On 5 April, a £3m fund to improve village halls was launched by the Government. More than 10,000 village halls across the country 'provide vital hubs for communities to connect, collaborate and celebrate'. The scheme, administered by Action for Communities in Rural England (ACRE), will fund up to 20% of eligible costs towards refurbishment and alteration of buildings – from improvement works to new meeting rooms. It offers a minimum grant of £10,000 and a maximum grant of £75,000.

acre.org.uk/our-work/village-hall-improvement-grant%20fund

Listed places of worship can already apply to the Government Land & Property Services scheme for a guaranteed 20% grant (to give them VAT relief), and this scheme may provide an opportunity for unlisted places of worship to apply for a similar amount. This grant has been extended until March 2021.

National Churches Trust – Grant Programme 2019-2023

A leaflet on the new Grants programme 2019-2023 is now available and contains very useful information on How to Apply and by when. We shall include this on the Conservation section of the Methodist Church website or alternatively please contact conservation@methodistchurch.org.uk for a copy.

Rural Community Energy Fund

This is a £10m programme that supports rural communities in England to develop renewable energy projects that provide economic and social benefits to the community. The grants are aimed at organisations such as rural sports clubs, rural schools and churches.

The Government is encouraging new applications for feasibility grants of up to £40,000 for green initiatives, including solar battery storage and wind, hydro and geothermal heat projects. Viable proposals will be considered for further grants of up to £100,000 for business development and planning applications.

www.gov.uk/guidance/rural-community-energy-fund

Grants for roof alarms

Grants of £1,000 are available to historic churches for roof alarms from Allchurches Trust. [See if your county or diocese is eligible.](#) www.nationalchurchestrust.org/news/grants-help-prevent-lead-theft

Spaces to connect

Community organisations across England that are looking to improve spaces where people can connect and cooperate can now apply for grants of up to **£50,000** from Space to Connect – the Co-op Foundation’s £1.6m partnership with the Government. www.coopfoundation.org.uk/funding_support/space-to-connect/

Request for examples

The Conservation Office is compiling examples of completed alteration or repair works made to our listed buildings. Please send images of your church, for use on our website, with a brief explanation of the works, to conservation@methodistchurch.org.uk. Please also indicate who owns the copyright.

TMCP – legal matters

Locked In or Locked Out?

Managing Trustees selling land or buildings are often asked by a potential buyer to allow them time to undertake various investigations before they are in a position to exchange contracts. Such an arrangement may be documented in an Exclusivity Agreement or a Lock Out agreement.

The advantage to the buyer is clear; they have a period of time to organise their funding and carry out searches and surveys knowing there is no chance they will be gazumped. However, the benefit to the Church is less clear. If presented with such a request for exclusivity what should Managing Trustees do?

1. Speak to their solicitor.
 - Ask for advice on exactly what the request would mean to the Church.
 - Is it a four-week period for searches and funding or is it time to apply for and obtain planning permission?
 - Is the buyer offering to pay a fee for the exclusivity period? If not, why not?
2. Speak to their surveyor.
 - Ask for advice on the property market and the proposed terms of the exclusivity period. Is it reasonable in the circumstances?
 - What does the surveyor advise is the likelihood of other offers being received for the property?
 - Should the Managing Trustees agree to take the property off the market entirely during the exclusivity period or instead agree not to 'deal with' any other interested parties?
 - Are there any site-specific complications, such as the existence of Japanese knotweed? Is the property listed or in a Conservation Area?
 - Would any of these factors affect the surveyor's advice?
1. Be mindful that selling agents receive commission when property is sold. They have a clear interest in securing a sale. Selling agents may not be aware of the duties upon Managing Trustees set out in relation to Model Trusts and charity law. A surveyor that is not connected to a selling agent may be more impartial when giving advice.
2. What do Standing Orders and the Model Trusts say?

Model Trust 16 requires Managing Trustees to obtain the 'best price' when disposing of an asset. Managing Trustees should consider whether the buyer's request represents the best deal and price for the property. Will the surveyor be able to provide the required 'best price' and adequate marketing certificate?
3. What are the requirements of charity law?

As charity trustees, the Managing Trustees must comply with their statutory duties. These include an overriding duty to act in the best interests of the charity and to achieve the best terms for the sale of the property.

 - The surveyor should advise whether, to secure the best price, the property should remain on the open market until exchange of contracts.

- As prudent trustees, Managing Trustees will need to consider whether it is in the best interests of the Church to agree to an exclusivity period. To help the Managing Trustees reach a decision, professional advice is key.

What happens next?

If, having taken professional advice, the Managing Trustees consider it is in the best interests of the charity to agree to enter into an Exclusivity Agreement, the following steps should be taken:

1. Any Exclusivity Agreement or Lock Out Agreement should always be in writing. It should be treated in the same way as a contract for sale. It should always be drafted by the Managing Trustees' solicitor and reviewed by TMCP.
2. If the buyer offers to draft any documentation to save the Managing Trustees costs, beware! It can take longer to amend an agreement drafted by a buyer's solicitor than to have the Managing Trustees' solicitor draft the agreement. Bear in mind the panel of solicitors understand the requirements of the Methodist Church and charity law, which a buyer's solicitor will not. Perhaps the solution is to agree that the buyer will pay the Managing Trustees' legal and surveyor's fees as part of the deal for agreeing the exclusivity period.

What can go wrong?

If the buyer wants to apply for planning permission during the exclusivity period and this is refused, then potentially the property is blighted. This could mean the buyer does not proceed or, indeed, that having planning permission refused devalues the property, making it more difficult to sell.

While an Exclusivity Agreement is being negotiated and is in force, the property remains the responsibility of the Managing Trustees. They must continue to insure, inspect and maintain the property.

Managing Trustees require clear advice on their obligations under the Exclusivity Agreement, so that they know what they have to do once the exclusivity period starts and can be sure only to agree to obligations they can fulfil. In some cases, Managing Trustees have been asked to sign Exclusivity Agreements that seek to make them liable for the buyer's costs and losses if they do anything in breach of their contractual obligations.

Managing Trustees should be clear – the buyer should not be allowed into physical occupation of any property before a sale is completed. If access is required to prepare drawings, for example, the buyer or their representative should always be accompanied by the Managing Trustees or their agent. Does the Managing Trustees' solicitor recommend a separate licence agreement setting out the terms of any access?

Managing Trustees should be aware that a Lock Out or Exclusivity Agreement is not the same as a contract for sale. When the exclusivity period comes to an end, both parties can walk away. Managing Trustees should consider what would happen if the buyer did not proceed.

If you have any questions in relation to the guidance in this document, please contact TMCP Legal (Legal@tmcp.methodist.org.uk). TMCP's Legal Officers can offer additional guidance and support to help Managing Trustees in this situation.

Residential Tenancies – Keeping Up To Date

Landlord and tenant legislation is ever-changing, making it essential for Managing Trustees who let out residential property to keep up to date with what action they need to take to fulfil their statutory responsibilities as a landlord. Managing Trustees are encouraged to refer to the Guidance Note:

'Residential Tenancies (Legislation Update), available on the [Residential Tenancies page of the TMCP website](#). This provides a summary of important changes made during 2019 that Managing Trustees need to be aware of.

A ban on 'no fault' evictions – England

There was a great deal of publicity earlier this year, when the Government announced its consultation on plans to abolish 'no fault' eviction. Managing Trustees should not be alarmed as at this stage, the Government is only consulting on the proposal and the law has not been changed. However, the Church will need to keep this under review to help it decide, at a strategic level, when Assured Shorthold Tenancies (ASTs) continue to be appropriate. As is often the case with residential tenancy matters, Scotland and Wales are ahead; the law has already changed in Scotland to give residential tenants much greater security and TMCP has recently contributed to a similar consultation in Wales.

At this stage everything is very much in the air and any repeal of section 21 of the Housing Act 1988 (under which landlords can serve two months' notice on their tenant at the end of the fixed terms to terminate the tenancy) is likely to be accompanied by other saving provisions and a package of reforms – including changes to the Section 8 eviction process, which currently only allows landlords to evict tenants if one of very few specified 'grounds' can be proved. It is worth noting that section 21 is often used for ease but there are other ways that landlords (including Managing Trustees) can end tenancies, notably the grounds for possession set out in Schedule 2 of the Housing Act 1988. While some of these rely on the tenant being at fault, not all of them do and it is likely that the Government will strengthen those grounds that do not rely on tenant fault.

The Church generally uses ASTs to ensure that properties are occupied when they are temporarily not required for use as Manses. The Church relies on the flexibility to end such a tenancy if a property is required for a new Minister or if there is a decision to sell or use the property for other purposes. The consultation will be kept under review to see whether the Church will continue to be able to terminate ASTs (after the fixed term) and assess how easy this will be under the alternative procedures.

The main change is that Managing Trustees would not be able to evict tenants for no reason or without telling them why.

Managing Trustees should be aware that any legislative changes are likely to take some time. Commentators suggest that any abolition of section 21 is unlikely to be in force before late 2020 at the earliest.

If you have any questions in relation to the guidance in this document, please contact TMCP Legal (Legal@tmcp.methodist.org.uk).

Data Protection One Year On

The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) has now been in place for more than 12 months. The stream of emails from every company you have ever dealt with asking for consent may have stopped... but data protection continues to be a hot topic.

TMCP have just finished delivering the series of 'One Year On' full day training sessions aimed at data champions. TMCP are very grateful to all those Managing Trustees who were able to attend and to the five firms on the Methodist Panel of Solicitors who generously hosted the training events at their offices. This is

part of a continuing programme of data protection training. TMCP will publicise details of future training opportunities on the TMCP website. Following the training, Managing Trustees are also encouraged to check the TMCP website for updates to the guidance, template documents and for copies of the slides.

In the meantime, please ensure that you are familiar with the following guidance and documents that have been produced or updated over summer 2019:

- [Processor Record for Managing Trustees –www.tmcp.org.uk/about/data-protection/resources/standard-documents-and-forms/processor-record](http://www.tmcp.org.uk/about/data-protection/resources/standard-documents-and-forms/processor-record)

The template 'Processor Record' is for use by all Managing Trustee bodies to show their compliance with the data protection legislation. The template has been updated following the data champion training sessions and a 'worked example' is now available to help Managing Trustees complete their record.

- [Shared Churches and Data Protection Focus Note – www.tmcp.org.uk/about/data-protection/resources/guidenotes/shared-churches-and-data-protection](http://www.tmcp.org.uk/about/data-protection/resources/guidenotes/shared-churches-and-data-protection)

The Focus Note looks at who should be the data controller when Methodist Managing Trustee bodies (usually a Local Church Council or Circuit Meeting) are party to a sharing agreement and/or are in an ecumenical relationship.

- Updated [Data Protection Frequently Asked Questions – www.tmcp.org.uk/about/data-protection/resources/faq](http://www.tmcp.org.uk/about/data-protection/resources/faq)

The FAQs have been updated and new FAQs added to answer some of the questions that have arisen since the original FAQs were prepared.

Refer to the new FAQs on Consent (FAQ 2); Directories and Plans (FAQ 3); Records (FAQ 9) and Data Security (FAQ 10), including: Does the consent have to be given via the Consent Form? And: Do we need consent to produce the Preaching Plan and can we share this with third parties?

Please refer to the resources available on the Data Protection page of the TMCP website – www.tmcp.org.uk/about/data-protection, sign up to receive notifications of new and updated data protection resources via TMCP's News Hub, and contact dataprotection@tmcp.methodist.org.uk if you have any general data protection questions.

Methodist Insurance

Methodist Insurance Church Volunteer Awards

Methodist churches up and down the country rely on an army of volunteers who give their time and dedication to look after church buildings and make sure the worship and outreach continue. Our awards are designed to celebrate those extraordinary people who give so much.

Commenting on the Church Volunteer Awards, the Revd Paul Davis, Chair of the Business and Development Committee at Methodist Insurance said: "Church volunteers are the backbone of the church community. They do not ask to be thanked, but quietly undertake vital tasks for the benefit of their church and its community. The dedication and support that they provide should be celebrated."

Our new-look website

Have you seen our newly refreshed website? It has a clean and fresh style, which will make it easier for you to find the information you need. If you can't find the information you need, do call our team who will be happy to direct you to the right place.

Call us on: 0345 606 1331
www.methodistinsurance.co.uk

We would like to hear what you think of our new site. You can email comments and feedback to **enquiries@micmail.com**

Cyber advice for Churches

Cyber-crime is on the rise and criminals are finding increasingly sophisticated ways to attack computer systems and extract valuable data. At Methodist Insurance, we want to alleviate your concerns about cyber-security and help protect you and your church against an attack.

What are cyber-risks?

Cyber criminals have many sophisticated techniques to access data and information, for financial gain and to commit fraud. The most common methods include:

- **Ransomware** – where an attempt is made to extort money from you by preventing access to your computer system or files until a ransom is paid, most of which is delivered via malicious emails.
- **Phishing** – the fraudulent practice of sending emails purporting to be from reputable organisations in order to induce individuals to reveal personal information, such as passwords and financial information.
- **Speare phishing** – the practice of sending emails ostensibly from a known or trusted sender in order to induce targeted individuals to reveal confidential information.
- **Smishing** – this works like phishing and is carried out via text messaging.
- **Vishing** – this also works like phishing and is carried out using voice technology, ie phone or voicemail.

What can your church do to protect themselves?

Some churches may feel vulnerable to cyber threats, as they have little knowledge of the correct and safe procedures to protect their finances. We are here to help and have included a list of some of the simple actions you can take:

- **Educate/train staff** – all staff should be wary of unsolicited emails, particularly those that ask for a prompt response. Educate your staff on what types of information are sensitive or confidential and highlight their responsibilities to protect it.
- **Malware protection** – make sure you use appropriate firewall, anti-virus and anti-spyware software and keep virus/spyware definitions up to date. This allows the software to recognise and protect against the latest threats to your network
- **Password protection** – ensure your mobiles, laptops and computers have strong passwords and try to change them on a regular basis.
- **Destroy before disposal** – don't just delete files or reformat hard drives, as data can still be restored. Instead, use software designed to permanently wipe the hard drive or storage device.

Did you know?

The Government also provides free online training,¹ which can be accessed by your employees and volunteers.

You can learn more about the threats posed by cyber-crime and find more detail about how to defend your church and data by reading our cyber-security guidance notes and FAQs. For more information, please visit our website: www.methodistinsurance.co.uk/cybersecurity

Improvements to your legal expenses cover

Employment-related disputes are one of the most common, and often most costly, claims made under a legal expenses policy. To provide you with additional support to handle employment-related disputes, we have recently improved the cover available for legal expenses under your church policy.

The recent change is to the 'reasonable prospects of success' condition for civil claims in your legal expenses cover. Currently, a solicitor must believe that there is more than a 51% chance that your defence will be successful, and if this changes at any point during the claim, then the cover you have will end for that claim.

From your next renewal, this condition will no longer be required. In future, for any valid claim you make for a dispute with an employee or former employee, we will continue to provide legal support until the conclusion of the dispute, regardless of whether the case looks to be in your favour or not. This change will be made automatically on your next renewal, for all church policies, and it may be available for other policies you hold with us.

To find out more about this cover, please call our team on **0345 606 1331**.

Remember! Legal advice helplines, for legal advice on a range of matters, are included within your insurance policy. This includes advice on employment issues such as redundancy. Visit www.methodistinsurance.co.uk/legalexenses

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/cyber-security-training-for-business>

Is your church ready for winter?

With the colder weather around the corner, now is the perfect time to give your church a check over and complete some basic preparation and maintenance to help reduce the risk of problems over the winter.

Check your pipes

A small fracture in a pipe can leak significant amounts of water, damaging masonry, plaster, carpets and other contents.

- Ensure the boiler and heating system are serviced annually.
- If you have a frost thermostat, check it is working correctly.
- Make sure you know where to turn off the water supply.
- Consider insulating internal water pipes with pipe lagging, reducing heating costs and helping to prevent pipes from freezing or bursting.

Clean the gutters

Falling autumn leaves can quickly cause blockages in gutters and downpipes which, if not removed, can cause water damage to the building.

- Clear the gutters through the autumn. Take appropriate precautions to ensure you do this safely, or arrange for a contractor.
- If you find any blockages, arrange for a local contractor to clear it out.

Create a snow-day plan

Ahead of the cold weather, get a plan in place for making your church safe in the event of snow and ice.

- Create a list of those able to clear ice and snow or put grit/salt down when needed, and plan how best to contact them to make sure it is done.
- Stock up on the essentials, such as grit and salt, and put them in an easily accessible location.

Prepare temporary heating

If your heating fails, you'll need a suitable alternative. We recommend using electric-convactor or fan-assisted heaters with thermostatic cut-outs. These are the most suitable of the temporary options, though precautions should still be taken when using them, including not leaving them unattended, and using them in a safe place away from combustible materials.

- Work out who will be responsible for arranging this ahead of time and plan where you will source a heater too.

Whatever challenges the elements may throw at you, make sure you know who to call and what to do during an extreme weather event. For more information about protecting your church, please visit www.methodistinsurance.co.uk/coldweather or call us on 0345 606 1331 to talk to our dedicated team.

Dates for your diary

Getting Off on the Right Foot

Capsticks Solicitors, in partnership with the Connexional Team, TMCP and a panel of surveyors, invite Managing Trustees to our upcoming Methodist Property Projects' 'Getting Off on the Right Foot' seminar.



The seminar will cover:

- **Connexional Matters:** Hear from Louise Wilkins and Alison Olugunna about the Connexional Property Strategy, Mission Plans, and the support and resources available to Managing Trustees.
- **Legal issues:** First steps on a project, assembling your professional team, charity and Methodist law and policy requirements, presented by Capsticks and TMCP.
- **Surveyors' hints and tips:** Quinquennials, Qualified Surveyor Reports and the lifecycle of a project, by Bruton Knowles.
- **Managing Trustee's experience:** reflections on property matters.

Places for the seminar are allocated on a first come, first served basis, so do book early to ensure a place.

London Monday 25 November 2019, 1.45pm registration, 2.00pm-5.00pm seminar followed by networking drinks at Capsticks, 1 St George's Road, Wimbledon, London SW19 4DR

To book a place, please send an email to events@capsticks.com.

Listed Buildings Advisory Committee (LBAC) dates

Deadlines for receipt of papers for future LBAC meetings

Deadline circulation date

2 January 2020

31 March 2020

16 June 2020

Meeting dates

21 January 2020

21 April 2020

7 July 2020

Please note that the deadline for circulation of papers to the LBAC is three weeks before the meeting date. However, for new projects there is also a legal requirement to consult on your project with external bodies (which takes a statutory period of 28 days) before the LBAC submission date.

Where applicable, please ensure you allow sufficient time in your planning for both of these stages. .

If you require any further information about these or other conservation matters, please contact the Conservation Officer, Joanne Balmforth, on 0161 235 6739 or email conservation@methodistchurch.org.uk

Booking for the following training is now OPEN!

Historic Religious Building Alliance's 2019 BIG UPDATE is taking place on Wednesday 11 December

This is your chance to keep up to date with what's happening to secure the future of historic religious buildings, and to chat to others with similar interests and concerns. The only event of its kind, it's friendly, lively, and informal, combining short talks with time for questions and discussion. Details of speakers and information on how to book will be published shortly.

www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/historic-religious-building-alliance-big-update-2019-tickets-76290022511?aff=ebdssbdestsearch

Faith in Maintenance: this is a FREE award-winning course from The Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings

Participants will find out how traditional buildings were constructed, how they work, how they can decay, and how to spot and tackle common problems. There will an overview of managing maintenance – how it fits with parish responsibilities, the role of the professional adviser, health and safety and other crucial issues. The practical session will introduce church surveys and maintenance plans, with practical group exercises.

This workshop is running on the following date:

Saturday 21 March 2020, 10:00am-4:00pm, The Church Hall, St Peter and St Paul, Wisbech PE13 1HP

Booking and contact:

Holly Isted, Historic Church Buildings Support Officer, Tel: 07948 350211 or 01353 652705

Email: Holly.isted@elydiocese.org

This document is being sent to the following people, within the Connexion, who are registered on the connexional database:

- ✓ District Chairs
- ✓ Superintendent ministers
- ✓ District property secretaries
- ✓ Circuit property secretaries
- ✓ Church property secretaries
- ✓ District treasurers
- ✓ Circuit treasurers
- ✓ Church treasurers

If you are aware of other people who may not have access to the internet, email or a computer, could you please provide them with a copy of this document.

If you know of people who would like to subscribe to the *Property Matters* email newsletter, please forward this copy and ask them to visit www.methodist.org.uk/signup

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Contact us

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0345 606 1331

Monday to Friday 8:00am-6:00pm (excluding Bank Holidays).
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You can email us at

enquiries@micmail.com

Or visit

www.methodistinsurance.co.uk

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