



# PROPERTY MATTERS

ISSUE 1 – NOVEMBER 2012

This document is being sent to the following roles within the Connexion who are registered on the Connexional database: Superintendent Ministers, District Property Secretaries, Circuit Property Secretaries, Church Property Secretaries, District Treasurers, Circuit Treasurers, Church Treasurers

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the first edition of 'Property Matters', the on-line successor to *Property Points*. We are hoping to publish the newsletter up to four times a year and include contributions from each of the property related areas within the Connexional Team.

We have also added a section "News from the Connexion" which includes an article on rating matters. We hope to include in future editions, relevant articles from around the Connexion on matters which either affect or will be of interest to all readers, and look forward to receiving submissions from you.

Coming soon....

We are in the process of preparing guidance for works to property in a Conservation Area & to Listed Buildings.

A small group comprising representatives from across the Connexion met to discuss the Property Schedules and look at ways in which these could be improved to provide a more useful and relevant document, reducing repetition, and available to complete on-line.

We hope to include further details of these and any other initiatives in future editions.



It would be helpful to receive suggestions for topics you may want to see addressed in the document, and also any feedback you may wish to give.

Please contact the Connexional Property Co-ordinator:

*Julie Robinson-Judd*

Tel 0207467 3524

Email [cpc@methodistchurch.org.uk](mailto:cpc@methodistchurch.org.uk)

With all good wishes,

Julie Robinson-Judd

Connexional Property Co-ordinator

*If you would like to subscribe to 'Property Matters' email newsletter please visit*

[www.methodist.org.uk/signup](http://www.methodist.org.uk/signup)

## 2. TECHNICAL INFORMATION

Please note that the following Technical Information will be published on our website:

<http://www.methodist.org.uk/ministers-and-office-holders/property/technical-and-conservation/technical-information-leaflets>

### 2.1. SEPTIC TANK LEGISLATION & GUIDANCE

Many rural churches which are situated away from mains drainage and sewer pipelines have to rely on septic tanks for their disposal of waste water etc. There are strict guidelines for types of septic tank systems or packaged treatment plants that can be installed and where they can be located.

Up until April 2010 a consent to discharge was required by the Environment Agency but this has now been replaced by permit to discharge as part of the environmental permitting programme 2nd edition (EPP2). Exemption forms (available from your local water company) are available for sewage treatment plants discharging 5 cubic metres per day or less into surface water (the equivalent of a population of 27) or for septic tanks and packaged treatment plants discharging 2 cubic metres per day or less into groundwater (the equivalent of a population of 11).

The requirement to register small domestic sewage discharges from septic tanks and small sewage treatment plants, has changed in England, as a result of regulations made in 2010 by the Department for Environment, Food and

Rural Affairs (Defra) and the Welsh Government, as part of the implementation of the European Union Water Framework Directive. Registration was considered to provide the lightest touch approach to meet legal obligations; the requirement to register small domestic sewage discharges from septic tanks and small sewage treatment plants, has changed in England; The requirement to register was a result of regulations made in 2010 by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) and the Welsh Government, as part of the implementation of the European Union Water Framework Directive. Registration was considered to provide the lightest touch approach to meet legal obligations.

It is important that Church Councils are conversant with the Environment Agency's "Regulatory Position Statement 116 for details of registration and penalties for non-registration – registration is required by January 2012.

Specialist guidance on the specific requirements and location for the installation are recommended; every site and situation is different and a specialist

contractor should visit site before site specific recommendations are made, site visits may also be required by the relevant agencies prior to permission being granted for certain installations.

General guidelines include:

- Septic tanks should have a capacity below the level of the inlet of at least 2700 litres (2.7 cubic metres) for up to 4 users. The size should be increased by 180 litres for each additional user.
- All sewage treatment plants now for sale must have been tested and hold the EN 12566-3 2005 Certificate
- Septic tanks should be sited at least 7m from any buildings, and preferably down slope and downwind.
- The soakaway must be a minimum of 10 metres from a watercourse, 15 metres from a building and 50 metres from a borehole or spring.
- Where they are to be emptied using a tanker, they should be sited within 15m of a vehicle access and at such levels that they can be emptied and cleaned without hazard to the building occupants and without the contents being taken through a dwelling or place of work.
- The soakaway must be designed to BS6297: 2007 and all percolation test results must be submitted.
- Soakaway drains must be constructed in the aerobic soil layer, i.e. within 700mm of ground level.
- If the discharge is to a soakaway, a sampling chamber must be provided before the soakaway.
- Septic tanks may also be constructed in brickwork, concrete, or reinforced concrete, roofed with heavy concrete slabs. Brickwork should be of engineering bricks and be at least 220 mm thick. The mortar should be a mix of 1:3 cement:sand ratio. In-situ concrete should be at least 150 mm thick of C/25/P mix
- The inlet and outlet of a septic tank should be designed to prevent disturbance to the surface scum or settled sludge and should incorporate at least two chambers or compartments operating in series. Where the width of the tank does not exceed 1200 mm the inlet should be via a dip pipe.
- To minimise turbulence, provision should be made to limit the flow rate of the incoming foul water. For steeply laid drains up to 150mm the velocity may be limited by laying the last 12m of the incoming drain at a gradient of 1 in 50 or flatter.
- The inlet and outlet pipes of a septic tank should be provided with access for sampling and inspection
- Septic tanks should be provided with access for emptying and cleaning. Access covers should be of durable quality having regard to the

corrosive nature of the tank contents. The access should be lockable or otherwise engineered to prevent personnel entry.

It is recommended that Church Councils as Managing Trustees examine the building and drainage regulations and visit the [Environment Agency](http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/homeandleisure/118753.aspx) website for further information:  
[www.environment-agency.gov.uk/homeandleisure/118753.aspx](http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/homeandleisure/118753.aspx)

Also of use and with detailed explanation of the requirements are:

[www.wte-ltd.co.uk/wastewater\\_legislation.html](http://www.wte-ltd.co.uk/wastewater_legislation.html)  
[www.ukseptictanks.co.uk/septic-tank-regulations](http://www.ukseptictanks.co.uk/septic-tank-regulations)

Further information on the design and requirements can be found at:  
[www.theseptictankcompany.co.uk/septic-tank-regulations](http://www.theseptictankcompany.co.uk/septic-tank-regulations)

## 2.2. PROTECTING YOUR CHURCH AGAINST THEFT OF METAL

Metal theft continues to be a very serious challenge for many Methodist Churches. As well as stealing metal, thieves are causing damage to the fabric of the building during the course of the theft. Internal furnishings are also at risk of being damaged as a result of rainwater penetration that can occur before the theft is discovered.

The level of risk churches face is different in each case. Security protection doesn't need to be expensive and there are a number of common sense and practical measures that can be taken to reduce the likelihood of metal theft, such as:

- Engaging with your local community - joining the local Neighbourhood Watch scheme and asking the church's neighbours to keep a watchful eye out for anything suspicious. This can be a big help that costs nothing. Encourage the churches neighbours to report any suspicious activity by calling the police immediately.



- Using SmartWater, a forensic property marker and painting at least a fraction of each metal surface with SmartWater. By displaying the signs you may deter potential thieves. You must make sure that your kit is registered with SmartWater; because it can also help with an investigation should a theft still occur.

To read some SmartWater success stories where its use has led to a conviction visit the SmartWater website:

<http://pug.smartwater.com/Media-Centre/Success-stories-2.aspx>

- Considering installing a roof alarm system. The Methodist Insurance approved alarms have been trialled on churches in a number of metal theft hot spots and have proved to be a successful deterrent.

Methodist Insurance has a dedicated theft of metal page on the website with advice on how best to protect your church. There is a useful risk assessment tool to help you gauge your church's risk level. We also have a set of theft of metal guidance notes with simple steps you can take to protect your church. The notes also contain information about the Alliance to Reduce Crime against Heritage (ARCH), a voluntary national network, which will take forward initiatives to tackle heritage crime and galvanise local

### **2.3. FIRE SAFETY REGULATIONS** Error! Bookmark not defined. **2006**

The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 came into effect in October 2006 and ALL Church premises are required to carry out a Risk Assessment inspection for all their buildings.

To find out more download a copy of the guidance note: "Fire Risk Assessment Principles for Church Premises" on the website:

<http://www.methodist.org.uk/static/rm/fireriskassessment.pdf>

Further information is also available from Methodist Insurance:

action as part of the Heritage Crime Initiative.

To find out more, download a copy of the guidance notes or the risk assessment by visiting the theft of metal page on the website:

[www.methodistinsurance.co.uk/your\\_church\\_metaltheft.htm](http://www.methodistinsurance.co.uk/your_church_metaltheft.htm)

and guidance note:

[http://www.methodist-insurance.co.uk/Images/2392%20MIC%20TOM-6pp%5B5%5D.qxd\\_MIC%20TOM-6pp.pdf](http://www.methodist-insurance.co.uk/Images/2392%20MIC%20TOM-6pp%5B5%5D.qxd_MIC%20TOM-6pp.pdf)

English Heritage Guidance on Theft of Metal webpage:

<http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/about/news/guidance-theft-metal-churches/#>

<http://www.methodistinsurance.co.uk/Images/ME553%20MIC%20Church%20Guidance%20Notes%20-%20Fire.pdf>

It is essential that any proposals to modify or extend a Church should always be considered along with the other areas of the building, so that the whole premises are considered together for fire safety precautions.

Churches and Circuits are reminded that the fire precautions provided in church buildings should be to the standards required by the Local Fire and Rescue Fire

Authority, who have the power to inspect premises at any time without warning.

*Colin Domville MIFire E*

*Tel 01704 875 597*

*Email [cbdomville@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:cbdomville@blueyonder.co.uk)*

For further information and advice can be obtained from our Fire Precaution Adviser

#### 2.4. CHUBB FIRE LIMITED - FIRE EXTINGUISHER SERVICE CONTRACT

##### **National Accounts Division Manchester**

The Fire Extinguisher Service contract for Churches operated by Chubb Fire National Accounts has been extended for a further 3 years from 1st April 2012 – 31st March 2015.

The basic unit price is still £6.25, with a one off charge of £1.50 per Service Visit. Given that there has not been a price increase since 1994 this is still excellent value for money from a Blue Chip company. All other existing prices have been held for the three years.

Churches should ensure that when dealing with Chubb they are on the **National Account Contract** as agreements with Chubb Local offices can be more expensive.



For further information and advice can be obtained from our Fire Precaution Adviser

*Colin Domville MIFire E*

*Tel 01704 875 597*

*Email [cbdomville@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:cbdomville@blueyonder.co.uk)*

#### 2.5. MEMORIALS IN CHAPELS

When a chapel closes one of the difficulties facing the trustees is what to do with memorials.

We generally advise that Managing Trustees contact other churches in their area to see if they will take them. Some parish churches have been accommodating in the past and have housed memorials taken from Methodist churches.

The problem is compounded when there is



a war memorial. If your chapel is closing and you have a war memorial then Trustees should contact the War Memorials Trust, the Imperial War Museum or the Royal British Legion for advice.

#### **War Memorials Trust**

42a Buckingham Palace Road  
London SW1W 0RE  
Tel 0300 123 0764  
Fax 0300 123 0765  
Email [info@warmemorials.org](mailto:info@warmemorials.org)

#### **The Royal British Legion**

199 Borough High Street  
London SE1 1AA

Tel 020 3207 2100  
<http://www.britishlegion.org.uk/about-us/contact-us/contact-us-form/general-enquiries/legionline>

#### **IWM London**

Lambeth Road  
London SE1 6HZ  
Tel 020 7416 5320  
Fax 020 7416 5374  
Email [mail@iwm.org.uk](mailto:mail@iwm.org.uk)

### **3. GOVERNANCE**

#### **3.1. CHARITY REGISTRATION**

All Methodist charities in Scotland and Shetland are now registered. In England and Wales all Methodist churches, circuits and districts with a gross annual income of over £100,000 per annum need to register with the Charity Commission. Methodist charities with an income under £100,000 per annum continue to be excepted from registration. This exception is provided by the Statutory Instrument 2007 No 2655.

#### **Other Jurisdictions**

In the Isle of Man religious charities are currently exempt from registration.

There is no Charity Commission in Jersey and therefore no requirement for Methodist bodies in Jersey to register.

In Guernsey, the Methodist Church – Bailiwick of Guernsey Circuit has registered. All local Methodist churches in Guernsey will need to register with the Registrar of Non Profit Organisations if their gross income is £5,000 or over per annum or they have gross assets and funds of £10,000 or over.

Under Gibraltar's charity law any building that is *exclusively* used as a place of meeting for religious purposes is exempt from the need to register. Legal advice should be obtained by any Methodist body in Gibraltar who are unsure whether or not they should be registered with the Charity Commissioner.

#### **The Methodist Church in Great Britain**

Whilst it is recognised that the Connexion is comprised of over 6000 separate charities and is not a single entity, a separate registration was completed in the name of the Methodist Church in Great Britain with the Conference as the trustee body.

The registration number for the Methodist Church in Great Britain **applies only** to the **connexional charity** and the connexionally-held funds for which the Methodist Council are the managing trustees - local churches, circuits and districts **must not** use this number.

If your local Church or Circuit continues to be excepted from registration and are asked for a charity number, you will need to explain that you are excepted from charity registration under the above Statutory Instrument. Providing your HMRC number is often sufficient evidence of charitable status.

Please note that all Methodist churches, circuits and districts are charities whether

or not you are registered with the Charity Commission.

A review of the excepted status was due to be undertaken in 2012. However it is now envisaged that such a review will not be undertaken and the exception status of all Methodist bodies in England and Wales with an income under £100,000 will continue for the immediate future.

Any Methodist church or circuit who reaches the threshold of £100,000 per annum must register with the Charity Commission. A booklet which takes you step by step through registration online is available at:

<http://www.methodist.org.uk/media/609133/s-charity-registration-booklet-0812.pdf>.

#### Further Info

Further information and advice can be obtained from our Officer for Legal and Constitutional Practice:

Louise Wilkins

Tel 020 7467 5278

Email [wilkinsl@methodistchurch.org.uk](mailto:wilkinsl@methodistchurch.org.uk)

### 3.2. BURIAL GROUND GUIDANCE NOTE

#### Introduction

Burial grounds can cause a great amount of anxiety for a local Church, Circuit and those living in the local area to the burial ground. For information on maintaining burial grounds and health and safety questions please refer to the Ministry of Justice website. This information can be found at <http://www.justice.gov.uk/coroners-burial-cremation/burials> .



This guidance note has been produced to highlight the options that are available if a burial ground has been closed and is disused. The key time that this guidance is likely to be considered is when there is no longer space for further burials or if the local Church has ceased worship. It might be that the local Church want to make more use of the burial ground for outside space or the Circuit are looking to sell the a redundant Chapel and therefore turning the burial ground into amenity land might help a sale.

It should firstly be appreciated that any changes in a burial ground can be contentious and can cause distress to those who have relatives buried in the grounds or to those who just live locally. Any proposed changes to the use and landscape of the burial ground will therefore need to be dealt with sensitivity.

If a burial ground has closed and/or the local Church has ceased worship, the local Church or Circuit remains responsible for the upkeep and maintenance of the burial ground until it is sold. The Local Authority can be approached about taking on the maintenance under the Open Spaces Act 1906 but local authorities are often unwilling to take on responsibility for the upkeep of the burial ground given the cost implications.

It is possible to sell a burial ground with the Chapel where it is being sold or it can be

sold separately. If the Chapel and burial ground are being sold together and the Managing Trustees are not retaining any land then the normal course is that a burial ground will only be disposed of by way of a long term Lease to the purchaser. This helps to ensure that the Trustees for Methodist Church Purposes can enforce the covenants placed on the land and that the history of the land as a burial ground continues to be recognised as well as ensuring that a purchaser indemnifies the Church against any future activities it undertakes.

Methodist burial grounds are not consecrated and therefore the legislation and rules that apply to Anglican cemeteries do not apply to Methodist burial grounds. The relevant legislation when a burial ground has closed and is no longer used is the Disused Burial Ground (Amendment) Act 1981.

### Closing a Burial Ground

Methodist burial grounds fall into the category of 'Private' under the Burial Ground Acts and therefore can be closed by a resolution passed locally. A local Church needs to consider whether to close all the burial ground or leave parts open where plots have already been purchased for future burials.

If the local church wishes to close all or part of the burial ground then they should pass a formal resolution authorising the action and then publish the fact in the local press and

on the church door or at the entrance to the burial ground. The notice should also set out the local Church's proposals for the burial ground, such as moving headstones, which is covered in more detail below.

### Moving Headstones

If a local Church or Circuit want to consider landscaping a burial ground in order to utilise the space for amenity land, the process set out in the Schedule to the Disused Burial Ground (Amendment) Act 1981 must be followed.

A copy of the Act can be found at <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1981/18>.

Before making any changes to the burial ground a plan should be prepared, noting the place of all graves, inscriptions on each headstone and ideally photographs taken of the same. This plan and records should be stored safely in the local Church or Circuit safe if the Chapel is being sold.

Before moving headstones, memorial or tombstone a notice must be served in the local newspaper for at least two successive weeks and a copy of the notice placed in a prominent place by the burial ground. It is important to remember that monuments and tombstones belong to the family of the deceased and not the Church and they must be given the chance to object.

A notice must also be served on the Commonwealth War Graves Commission. The notice must be served on any personal representatives or relatives of those interred with the last 25 years who can be

contacted through reasonable enquiries. A period of at least 6 weeks should be provided for objections and representations to be received but good practice would dictate that only two months after the notices were given.

The Schedule to the Act sets out at paragraph 2 the details that must be specified in the notice.

Once notice has been provided and any objections have been withdrawn or dealt with, the headstones or memorials can be moved. Memorials, headstones and tombstones should ideally only be moved to the side of a burial ground.

If it is necessary to remove the headstones or memorials completely and no objections have been received, then the memorial or headstone should be completely broken up before being disposed of and any relatives should be informed of this intention before doing so. Any disposals should be dealt with sensitively. If memorials are removed from the burial ground a record of the date and manner of the removal as well as details of the memorial must be sent to the Local Authority and Registrar General.

Old burial registers should also be preserved and they can be lodged in the public archives if necessary.

### **Building on a Burial Ground or Rendering a Grave Inaccessible**

It is illegal to build on a burial ground unless notice has been served on all the personal representatives or relatives of those buried within the last 50 years, no objections have been received and all the human remains have been removed and reinterred or cremated. This applies whenever a Church propose building on a burial ground or undertaking action that will render a grave inaccessible e.g. hard surfacing to create a car park or a play area.

The process set out in the Schedule of the Act should be followed. In this instance notice will be served on those relatives and personal representatives buried with the last 50 years.

Before any human remains are removed a licence from the Secretary of State must be obtained. The relatives or the Commonwealth War Graves Commission can organise for the remains to be removed and reinterred or cremated but the local Church will need to cover their reasonable costs.

Before building on the burial ground or doing anything that would potentially disturb the human remains or render the grave inaccessible, all human remains must first be removed and reinterred or cremated. If removal and re-interment is not undertaken by the relatives then the local Church will need to organise this in

accordance with the Act and any directions in the licence from the Secretary of State. Further guidance on exhuming human remains can be found on the Ministry of Justice website

<http://www.justice.gov.uk/coroners-burial-cremation/burials>.

Within 2 months of the removal, re-interment or cremation a certificate should be sent to the Registrar General and the General Register Office with details of the removal and re-interment. The exact details to be provided can be found in paragraph 8 of the Schedule to the Act.

### **Listed Buildings**

Where a Church is a Listed Building it is possible that the memorials and headstones in an adjoining burial ground also fall within the listing. You should therefore speak with the Conservation Officer based at Support Services in Manchester before making any proposals for the burial ground.

### **For further information please call:**

*Officer for Legal and Constitutional Practice  
Louise Wilkins*

*Tel 020 7467 5278*

*Email [wilkinsl@methodistchurch.org.uk](mailto:wilkinsl@methodistchurch.org.uk)*

*The Trustees for Methodist Church Purposes*

*Tel 0161 235 6770*

*Conservation Officer*

*Tel 0161 235 6739*

#### 4. CONNEXIONAL PROPERTY GRANTS

Connexional property grants are available from the Fund for Property to resource the mission of the church. In order to ensure that the best possible use is made of these limited funds, the Connexional Grants Committee have introduced a new set of criteria designed to target the resource to those parts of the Connexion where it is most needed – where it will most effectively enable the church’s mission. It has made this change in recognition that church buildings are worth investing in to the extent that they resource mission and are not an end in themselves.

The new criteria, which are available on the website, are designed to ensure that connexional property grants resource contemporary mission with the property it needs, instead of funding repairs to buildings that are in the wrong location, or are no longer fit for purpose. The introduction of the new criteria and system aims to ensure that the resource will go to those places where what is hampering the Church’s mission is the lack of suitable property.

To this end, the maximum grant that can be awarded has been increased to £200,000, so that where the missional need is for a new build project, the Fund for Property is able to make a significant contribution to the overall project cost.

Projects do not have to be very expensive to qualify for a grant however, and the Committee recognizes that revamping a rural chapel, for example, making it an attractive, flexible, accessible and multi-use space, and turning it into a buzzing focal point for community engagement and outreach, can have a huge missional impact, and might be achievable on a much smaller budget. What is critical is the enabling impact of the project on the church’s mission, and the use of the Fund for Property to equip the Church with buildings that are fit for mission in the twenty-first century.

In order to facilitate applications against the new criteria, a new application form has been introduced, which can be downloaded from the website

[www.methodist.org.uk/ministers-and-office-holders/connexional-grants/what-do-we-fund/connexional-property-grants](http://www.methodist.org.uk/ministers-and-office-holders/connexional-grants/what-do-we-fund/connexional-property-grants).

Applications need to be submitted on this form in addition to Consent being applied for in the normal way.

If you are not sure whether your project meets the criteria, ask your District Grants Officer or Property Secretary, or contact the Connexional Grants Team at Methodist Church House:

*Tel* 020 7467 5178

*Email* [grants@methodistchurch.org.uk](mailto:grants@methodistchurch.org.uk)

## 5. FUNDING

The new Connexional fundraising team is here to support local church's work and assist them in the process of securing external funding. The new fundraising team consists of two members:

- Victoria Ireland, the Fundraising Manager, will be heading all the major fundraising campaigns which include Mission in Britain, the World Mission Fund, the Advent Appeal and many others.
- Mencey Morera, the Fundraising Officer, will be assisting churches with their external fundraising for a range of mission activities, from community to building projects.

There will be a range of support the Connexional Fundraising team will be able to provide you with, namely:

- We offer advice on grant applications; we will review your current applications or help you with the writing of your applications.
- We also have access to GRANTfinder ([www.grantfinder.co.uk](http://www.grantfinder.co.uk)) which we can facilitate and source external grants that are appropriate to support your project.
- We could also help explore how you can set up your own fundraising events and provide material that may be useful for your event.

For further information contact the team:

Email [fundraising@methodistchurch.org.uk](mailto:fundraising@methodistchurch.org.uk)

## 6. LANDFILL GRANTS

### 6.1. LANDFILL COMMUNITIES FUND

If you are looking for grant funding for your property project one option might be the Landfill Communities Fund.

The government allows some of the landfill tax it levies on landfill companies to be used as grants to benefit communities and the environment. The scheme has a number of categories that can be funded and two of these are relevant to churches looking for grant funding. These are the 'Improvement of a public amenity of community building' and 'The repair, maintenance or restoration of a place of worship'.

There are both nationwide landfill operators (such as Biffa, Veolia, Wren, Viridor, Sita) and regionally based operators and local authorities who participate in the scheme. They all tend to have different eligibility criteria but in general projects need to be located within the vicinity (usually within 10 miles) of a landfill site owned by a participating landfill company, the building must be open to the general public, not operated with a view to profit and the scheme will not fund any retrospective work.

Methodist Churches have previously been extremely successful in securing funding

from the Landfill Communities Fund and since 1997 have secured over £10 million towards different property projects. Recent successful applications include Grangewood Methodist Church who received a grant towards internal restructuring of the building and new toilets; Burnham on Sea Methodist Church who received two landfill grants towards a new heating system and Wesley Methodist Church, Cardiff who received a grant for the renewal of the church hall roof.

eligibility criteria, undertake searches for the most appropriate landfill operator to apply to, provide overall scheme advice and support your application through the submission and implementation phases.

If you would like to discuss whether your project is suitable to apply for Landfill Communities Funding please contact:

*Colette Dean*

*Tel 0161 235 6734*

*Email [landfill@methodistchurch.org.uk](mailto:landfill@methodistchurch.org.uk)*

Colette Dean, Landfill Grants Officer based in Manchester can offer initial guidance on

## 7. PROPERTY CONSENTS WEBSITE

[www.propertyconsent.methodist.org.uk](http://www.propertyconsent.methodist.org.uk)

After many months of planning, in July this year we updated the Property Consents website. This update fixed many of the issues and flaws with the previous system. Included in this update were a major revamp of the appearance of the site, making it easier to navigate and feel less cluttered.

A new feature you may find useful is the [contacts page](#). This page contains a list of the main people in the Connexional Team and TMCP that you may need to contact regarding the Property Consents process. It also includes what each person does so you know who to contact regarding a particular query you may have.

In making the site more user-friendly, we have included numerous accessibility functions, such as: status keys, which identify when information needs to be entered and by whom; hover over helps, which give on the go help for specific items and a revamped [Help & Guidance](#). We have also included video tutorials for [managing trustees](#), [Superintendents](#) and members of the [consent giving body](#).

The system now offers 'steps', which can be found at the top of each page within a project. These indicate how your project is progressing. Hovering over the active step (this is the pale orange tab), will tell you what outstanding issues are remaining and therefore preventing you from signing off a project.

Another new feature that is important to take note of is the second authoriser for payment requests. When a managing

trustee requests a payment now, it must be authorised by someone at the level where the funds are coming from, for example, if a managing trustee is requesting a payment from Circuit funds, then the authoriser must be someone at the circuit.

Standing Orders now require that electronic payments from all Methodist bank accounts have dual signatories, so we are pleased that the website now complies, making the consents process more secure.

We hope you find the new site an improvement on the old.

For further information contact the Consents Web Officer:

*Tom Lee*

*Tel 020 7467 5202*

*Email [consents@methodistchurch.org.uk](mailto:consents@methodistchurch.org.uk)*

## 8. CONSERVATION

### 8.1. Finding Out More About The Condition Of Listed Methodist Chapels And Extent Of Criminal Attack

In order to improve advocacy for historic chapels English Heritage has commissioned the Connexional Team to provide robust information to them about:

- the physical condition of listed Methodist chapels
- the extent to which criminal damage, especially metal theft, is putting them at risk

As part of its Heritage at Risk programme, which includes Places of Worship, English Heritage wants to work with the Methodist Church to use a combination of Quinquennial Inspection Reports and local knowledge to create an up to date database of the physical condition and extent of criminal damage of all listed Methodist chapels in England.

Most people who are not worshippers do not realise that the responsibility for the

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upkeep of chapels falls upon the congregations, since they assume that the buildings are managed and maintained by “the church” – meaning some large central

organisation – or “the state”. Neither, of course is true. It is hard to communicate the enormous commitment that congregations bear without having accurate data to demonstrate the physical condition of historic chapels, illustrating both what is achieved and where support might be needed.

To-date we have received copies of approximately 58% of the Quinquennial Inspection reports needed to complete this exercise. We are grateful to those who have submitted returns. If you have yet to submit your reports, please could you do this as soon as possible, or let us know if for any reason you are unable to do this.

#### Listed Buildings Advisory Committee

Please note the future meeting dates:

Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> January 2013

Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2013

Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> July 2013

Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> October 2013

Please note that you should not undertake any work to a listed building or a building in a conservation area without the written consent of the Connexional Team Conservation Officer.

In addition, demolition of buildings in a conservation area requires Local Authority approval.

English Heritage has produced guidance called: “New work in historic places of worship 2012” which is available from them

*Tel* 0870 333 1181

*Email* [customers@english-heritage.org.uk](mailto:customers@english-heritage.org.uk)

For further information contact:

*Jean Haynes*

*Tel* 0161 235 6722

*Email* [tech-cons@methodistchurch.org.uk](mailto:tech-cons@methodistchurch.org.uk)

## 9. CARBON REDUCTION

### 9.1. A Great Opportunity to Save on Your Energy Bills

Saving just 10% could free up huge sums of money for mission and also significantly reduce our carbon footprint. The Methodist Church in conjunction with 2buy2 is now offering central purchasing for Methodist properties. 2buy2 have negotiated national contracts for electricity, gas and oil securing very competitive pricing for Methodist properties. Millions is spent on energy every year; by taking advantage of the economies of scale that clearly exist with connexional properties buying together significant savings are possible.

2buy2 is a Christian buying group that negotiates energy tariffs on behalf of churches and charities. Suppliers are continually monitored to ensure you get the best service at the lowest cost, enabling you to buy with confidence and focus your resources on your mission and ministry.



2buy2 currently manage three main suppliers on behalf of the Methodist Church, these are Solis Consulting (energy broker), Good Energy (renewable energy) and GB Oils (oil). To take advantage of any of these deals please register for free at [www.2buy2.com](http://www.2buy2.com) . After your registration has been approved you will be contacted by the relevant approved supplier to discuss your energy equipments.

## 10. NEWS FROM THE CONNEXION

### 10.1. NON DOMESTIC RATING OF CHURCH PREMISES

Local authorities in England and Wales, under Government pressure not to increase domestic rates, are looking increasingly to the non-domestic sector to raise additional revenue to provide local services.

In my town, following the formation of an LEP, we were left with a 'spare' building at the same time that a pre-school nursery was looking for premises, and the church has licensed these premises to them for a number of years.

We have had a visit from The Valuation Office. Although the license states quite clearly that the church is able to use the premises whenever they wish, the valuation officer has deemed the primary use of the building to be a nursery school rather than a church hall. Therefore, non-domestic rates are payable.

This seems to be at variance with the provisions of The Local Government Act of 1988 exempting "Churches, chapels, and other places of religious worship, church halls, chapel halls, and similar buildings, and ancillary administrative buildings" from non domestic rates. However, it is in line with The Valuation Office Rating Manual, Section 8 Part B "Churches".

The addition burden of rates falls on the license holder (or lease holder as The

Valuation Office determines there is no difference) rather than the church and it is they who receive all correspondence from The Valuation Office. In our situation, the license fees payable are a significant part of our income and we as a church are working with the license holder to mitigate the quantum of rates payable in order that their business remains viable.

An appeal has been lodged against the Rateable Value figure given that the premises are occupied in term-time only – 42 weeks instead of 52, and for educational rather than business use. Our local authority allows a 100% rebate on rates payable if the Rateable Value is less than £6,000 and the building is the sole place of trading. Between £6,000 and £12,000 there is a sliding scale in place. Other local authorities may use different figures, and the percentile figure for rates payable will differ.

I have been invited to submit this report, given that Local Managing Trustees (rather than TMCP) are responsible for dealing with the matter. For further discussion please contact

*Peter Bigg*

Email [peter.bigg1@btinternet.com](mailto:peter.bigg1@btinternet.com)

This document is being sent to the following roles within the Connexion who are registered on the Connexional database:

- ✓ 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.

