

# PROPERTY MATTERS

ISSUE 5 – January 2014

This document is being sent to the following roles 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.

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# PROPERTY MATTERS

*Issue 5 – January 2014*

## INDEX

Introduction.....  
Consents .....  
Property Returns .....  
Statistics for Mission .....  
News from the Connexion .....  
Connexional Property Grants: .....  
Conservation: .....  
Historic religious buildings alliance .....  
Health & Safety.....  
Health & Safety.....  
Health & Safety.....

## INTRODUCTION

Dear readers,

Welcome to the winter edition of 'Property Matters'. We are grateful to Methodist Insurance who are contributing to the cost of electronic transmission and also for the articles they have provided on Health & Safety updates.

This edition includes two articles from the Connexion, namely Hinde Street, London and their work with the homeless, and a 'Winterwonderland' at Culswick Church, Shetland Isles. Both articles illustrate different ways in which we can use our church buildings to further mission.

We would like to wish all of our readers a Happy New Year.

All good wishes



Julie Robinson-Judd  
Connexional Property Coordinator



## 1. PROPERTY CONSENTS

> PROPERTY  
CONSENTS

### 1.1. Funding types

When putting funding on to your project, please could you make sure that you enter the correct funding type. If your money is being held by TMCP, then you will need to make sure you select the funds with “(TMCP)” in the name.

If you are unsure, please talk to your treasurer first. The general rule is that if you have been given a trust number, then the money is held with TMCP.

The section in Help and Guidance called [Choosing the Correct Fund Type](#) will give you a guide on what to choose.

For Property Consents queries, email [consents@methodistchurch.org.uk](mailto:consents@methodistchurch.org.uk) and a new email address has been created for all queries regarding the Returns site and that is [returns@methodistchurch.org.uk](mailto:returns@methodistchurch.org.uk).

## 2. PROPERTY RETURNS

> PROPERTY  
RETURNS

### 2.2 Carbon footprint

The Carbon Footprint tab has now been revamped to accept both meter readings and consumption figures.

Please note, if you have more than one meter, you will need to enter the consumption figure.

For Property Returns queries, email: [returns@methodistchurch.org.uk](mailto:returns@methodistchurch.org.uk).

## 3. STATISTICS FOR MISSION

> STATISTICS FOR  
MISSION

### 3.1 Website closing date

The website closes on **31 January 2014**, please remember to enter all the data for your church by this date. If you have any queries please contact Kim Medford-Vassell on 020 7467 5197 or via the Statistics for Mission inbox – [statistics@methodistchurch.org.uk](mailto:statistics@methodistchurch.org.uk)

Statistics for Mission website: <https://online.methodist.org.uk/>

### 3. NEWS FROM THE CONNEXION

#### 3.1 Hinde Street – home for the homeless?



Hinde Street is not your average Methodist chapel. If you walk up the steps, under the imposing portico and through the large wooden front doors, you'll find a beautiful Victorian church. It has white Corinthian pillars, a splendid organ and a balcony that seats over 200 people. When it was first built in the 1880s it used to be standing room only for services, and there were often queues down the street. Although the church was packed for this summer's ordination service, our Sunday congregations are now much

smaller.

But in another way the church is still packed. This is not a museum; it is a lively and well-used community resource. The sanctuary area is regularly used by orchestras and choirs from the Royal College of Music for rehearsals. Our resident pianist, Grace Yeo, who performs around the world from the Wigmore Hall to Korea, practises on our lovely Steinway piano. We host the Hugh Price Hughes lectures here every year ([www.hindestreet.org.uk/hph](http://www.hindestreet.org.uk/hph)). Once a month, we put on a free music recital after our morning service ([www.hindestreet.org.uk/music](http://www.hindestreet.org.uk/music)).

Every Wednesday we open the doors of our church hall to people who are homeless (or who feel homeless) in the lonely city of London. We make soup and sandwiches, and sell them for 10p a time. We often have 40 or 50 people each week; people who want a safe, warm place to spend a few hours, who want to meet friends and chat, who want to read the paper, play scrabble or simply have a snooze. Towards the end of the evening local cafés let us have their unsold sandwiches, salads and cakes, and we share these out. They are always extremely popular! We're currently planning our annual Christmas party. Wednesday Club started at Kingsway Hall before moving to Hinde Street, and has been running for over 50 years.

Every Monday over the four coldest months of the year, we open our premises to provide a hot meal and a bed for the night for 15 homeless people. The West London Day Centre, which is part of the West London Mission, co-ordinates the referrals. People come to us on Mondays, to St James Piccadilly on Tuesdays, to Notre Dame de France in Leicester Square on Wednesday, and to other Westminster churches on other days. This year the team has been joined by the West London Synagogue, and it is a delight to work alongside friends of other churches and other faiths in this project. Each Monday a team of volunteers from Hinde Street cooks a meal – lamb stew is always a popular menu choice – and guests and volunteers sit down together to share food and conversation. After a day on the streets people are tired, and by 10 o'clock the camp beds are put up, the sleeping bags shared out and guests and volunteers are snoring together.

As well as these two initiatives run by church volunteers, our premises offer hospitality to a wide range of 12-step groups in the heart of the West End. Alcoholics Anonymous, Gamblers Anonymous, Overeaters Anonymous... wherever people struggle with addictions, there are support groups to help them face, name and overcome their problems. Methodist churches are, of course, alcohol-free, so they provide a safe space for people who struggle with drink. From early morning to 9pm every evening, there is rarely a room that is not being used by one of these groups, and Hinde Street is well known in the anonymous community across the world.

It's a challenge finding the money and the human resources to maintain this lovely building, but we think it's worth it.

Contact: Val Reid, acting superintendent, the West London Mission - Email: [val.read@wlm.org.uk](mailto:val.read@wlm.org.uk)

### 3.2 Going Green Project Emmanuel Church Bungay

Thanks to the generous support of our members and friends at Emmanuel Church Bungay and five fantastic grant offers from EDF Energy, the Suffolk Greenest County Fund, the United Reformed and Methodist Churches and the Alfred Williams Charitable Trust, we have nearly completed the second phase of our Going Green Project.

The Church Community Halls were cleared on 18 February and a lot has happened in nine weeks. The wooden floors were taken up and replaced with a level insulated concrete floor incorporating under-floor heating. Radiators have been fitted to the far end of the building which had existing solid floors. The outside walls have been insulated along with all the ceilings and a new hot water system has been installed. The heating is being powered by a large ground source heat pump which collects heat from the ground via seven boreholes under the car park. Six of the boreholes are 75m (246ft) deep. The hot water is from a combination of the heat pump, two solar thermal panels on the roof and an immersion heater.

Some of the flooring is made from recycled car tyres, we have changed the spot lights in the cloakrooms for LED lighting and water limiters have been fitted to the taps in the toilets to conserve water. Our aim is to have examples of as many different environmentally friendly technologies as possible to show and encourage others to follow our example. Suffolk has the aim of becoming the greenest county – will we be the greenest town?

The Town Mayor and Town Reeve will be attending our opening ceremony on Wednesday 15 May at 11am when we will declare the greenest building in Bungay open for business. We have also invited the firms involved; the people who have given us grants, representatives from the local schools and members of Sustainable Bungay. Please come along and see what we have achieved.

This exciting project couldn't have happened without the support and forward thinking of the members and friends of Emmanuel Church and everyone who has supported the many fundraising events over the last two years. Although we are committing ourselves to paying back £50,000 over 10 years, this project still wouldn't have gone ahead without the grants that we have received. EDF Energy are giving us £25,000, Suffolk Greenest County Fund - £22,500, The United Reformed Church - £6,500, The Hunter Rowe Trust administered by the Methodist Church - £5,000 and The Alfred Williams Charitable Trust - £1,000. Church Members and friends have also donated gifts of over £13,000 over and above the fundraising. Graham Gibbs, the Project Manager, said, "That totals £73,000 – absolutely fantastic!"

We hope that other people will be able to experience what we are doing and be enthused to do something themselves to reduce their carbon footprint. We know that everybody can't afford it all, but if we can encourage little steps by showing as many different ideas as possible, then we are moving in the right direction.

"From a little acorn, a mighty oak will grow. If everyone does something, climate change will slow."

(This was a little verse the church put on fridge magnets for its Environmental Information Day).

Contact: Mr Graham Gibbs, Project Manager and member of Emmanuel Church E-mail: [grahamofthepaddocks@talktalk.net](mailto:grahamofthepaddocks@talktalk.net)



### 3.3 CULSWICK METHODIST CHAPEL

One of Shetland's (and by default the UK's) smallest and most rural chapels has revitalised itself by turning its physical attributes into something of a 'special novelty'. As with many other rural chapels across the country, it is a challenge to maintain regular worship and provide enough income to supply the basics needed to maintain the building. Shetland has a population of about 22,000 people spread over a large area (the 100 islands are roughly 100 miles long by 30 miles wide).



This in itself provides its own challenges in regard to mission and worship.

The Culswick chapel in Shetland sits on a hill in the middle of a field with nothing more than a basic gravel track providing vehicular access (for those brave enough to risk their car's suspension).

It is believed that the chapel was built to be an interdenominational meeting place, as all the local people contributed to the fundraising. When it was finished and ready to open in 1893, the landlady had a plaque made and placed above the door, naming it a 'Wesleyan Methodist Chapel'.

From the late 1940s until the early 1970s, Methodist and Church of Scotland ministers preached there on alternate fortnights; during the 1950s, the Congregational minister from Reawick came once each month. That meant the chapel was used three Sundays out of every four, all year round.

By the end of 1946, the population of Culswick was only 25 people. Although the number of residents has since dropped, I believe as a small community in Shetland it must be almost unique, as all the houses that were occupied 50 years ago are still so today.

In recent years the chapel only holds services monthly during the summer period and at festival times (Easter, Harvest & Christmas).

In 2006, Culswick Chapel became host to what has now become a regular pilgrimage for many on the Shetland Islands during the Christmas period. The Culswick Christmas Carol Service, for those attending, has become one of the highlights of their Christmas season. The little chapel is always filled to bursting with people. The small chapel provides an intimate setting for a devotional and meaningful Christmas experience, with singing from the congregation that is quite literally superb.

People make their way in the winter darkness across the uneven field. The way is illuminated only by the candles flickering in the tiny windows of the chapel, enticing the pilgrim to enter inside. When they open the door it has often been described as "entering the land of Narnia". The warmth of welcome is in total contrast to the cold and dark of the outside. The decoration (expertly created by Mary Fraser, a local artist and church steward) catches the breath of those that enter.

The service itself hits the right note for those that attend and through word of mouth the people keep coming back year after year.

The carol service attracts up to 100 people crushed into tiny wooden pews, and some even standing outside in the dark. People come from all over the Shetland Islands to attend this unique event, and the income from the offerings taken enable the chapel to continue as a place of worship for yet another year.

Contact: Chris Jackson, Property Secretary Email - [chris.jackson7@gmail.com](mailto:chris.jackson7@gmail.com)

### **3. 4 District Property Secretary Meeting Four Oaks, Birmingham:**

Each year the Revd. David Westhead organises two meetings for all District Property Secretary's. The event covers a range of topics in relation to property, legal and financial matters and provides an opportunity for sharing best practice and stories of missional projects. We receive a number of enquiries about liability for business rates on church premises that are hired out. A speaker was invited from Birmingham City Council to explain the rating system and in particular discretionary rates relief. Our notes are included below:

- Places used exclusively for public religious worship will get 100% rate relief.
  
- If the building is used both by the church and for other purposes, it should be noted that the building has to be used for Charitable purposes i.e. by registered charities to obtain up to 80% mandatory rate relief (this applies where the uses do not meet the criteria of 'worship' fully). There is up to a further 20% discretionary rate relief if the use is to the benefit of the community. This is at the discretion of the local authority and is influenced by financial and political priorities.
  
- Should be able to apply for mandatory relief if the Charity (the rate payer) is still in occupation and is trying to raise money by letting clubs use it. The question is 'who is the principal occupier?'
  
- One question concerned a church property which was let to Cardiff City Council. The tenant left and the church not only lost the rental income, but were liable for business rates. HMRC said that since the property had not been used for church purposes and could still be let out, it was not exempt from business rates.
  
- Groups such as Weight watchers and other casual users that are not charities do not qualify for rate relief. The crucial test is use by the charity (the church) or another charity.
  
- A further question asked who notifies the rating department if a property is leased out? Both parties should notify the Local Authority.
  
- Where a cafe has been incorporated into a church property, for rating purposes it would have to be proved that it was for the benefit of the charity (i.e. the church).
  
- It is important that any changes of use, new buildings etc are notified to the Local Authority.
  
- TMCP noted that their Standard Leases include a clause requiring tenants to pay business rates and to indemnify the owner against liability for rates.
  
- Can appeal against The Valuation Office decision.

Contact: Julie Robinson-Judd, Connexional Property Coordinator,  
E-mail [Robinson-juddj@methodistchurch.org.uk](mailto:Robinson-juddj@methodistchurch.org.uk)

## 4. CONNEXIONAL PROPERTY GRANTS

### 4.1 The Fund for Property – resourcing local mission through property grants

The Connexional Grants Committee awards grants from the Fund for Property to resource mission in Britain. In order to be awarded a grant, projects need to be new builds or major refurbishments; to create fully accessible, energy efficient, multi-use, flexible spaces (ie buildings which allow people to use sanctuary space throughout the week for a range of activities in addition to fulfilling the requirements as a place for worship), and will obtain the necessary energy performance certificates so that they can be let out or used in this way. Projects also needed to provide space for either a congregation which is growing or for several congregations (or fellowships) to share. This change was referred to by the General Secretary in his [annual report to the Conference](#) where he described the introduction of these criteria as transforming the use of the Fund for Property so that it gives greater effect to the vision of the Church as a discipleship movement shaped for mission. He stated that grants have been directed to where their missional impact is the greatest, and gave the example of Wreyfield Drive Methodist Church in Sheffield. In truth, any of the 25 projects that received property grants over the year could have been used to demonstrate this. Each of them will enable the Methodist Church locally to be mission-focused, engaging the local community, entering into partnerships with local groups and supporting local people.

Table 1 below illustrates the proportion of grants that were awarded to new-build projects, and the proportion that were awarded to undertake major refurbishments, extensions etc.

	Grants made	% of budget allocated
Grants to erect new church buildings	£1,001,000	80%
Grants to undertake major refurbishments, extensions etc.	£249,000	20%
<b>Total</b>	<b>£1,250,000</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 2 below illustrates the proportion of grants that were awarded from the Fund for Property, by district.

Grant Awarded	District	Percentage of budget	Number of applications awarded	Number of applications submitted
Nil	Birmingham	0	0	1
£28,000	Bristol	2%	2	3
£380,000	Bolton & Rochdale	30%	3	3
Nil	Channel Islands	0	0	0
£12,500	Chester & Stoke on Trent	1%	1	2

Nil	Cumbria	0	0	0
£120,000	East Anglia	10%	1	1
£50,000	Lancashire	4%	1	1
Nil	Lincoln	0	0	2
£25,000	Liverpool	2%	1	1
£35,000	London	3%	1	1
£7,500	Manchester & Stockport	1%	1	2
£56,000	Newcastle-upon- Tyne	4%	4	5
£30,000	Northampton	2%	1	1
£200,000	Nottingham & Derby	16%	1	1
£80,000	Southampton	6.4%	1	2
Nil	The Synod Cymru	0	0	0
£21,000	South East	2%	1	1
£180,000	West Yorkshire	14%	3	3
£25,000	York & Hull	2%	1	1
Nil	The Wales Synod	0	0	1
<b>£1,250,000</b>				

Table 3 below illustrates the grants of more than £100,000 that were awarded from the Fund for Property.

Type	Amount	Location	Purpose
New build Property Scheme	£100, 000	Greetland and Lindwell Methodist Church, West Yorkshire District	To build a new church in Greetland
New build Property Scheme	£150, 000	North Bolton Mission, Bolton District	To build a new church in North Bolton
New build Property Scheme	£200, 000	Bingham Methodist Church, Notts and Derby District	To build a new church in Bingham
New build Property Scheme	£120, 000	Huntingdon Methodist Church, East Anglia District	To build a new church in Huntingdon
New build Property Scheme	£200, 000	Harwood Methodist Church, Bolton District	To build a new church in Harwood

Contact: Edmund Glynn, Connexional Grants Team Leader, email: [glynne@methodistchurch.org.uk](mailto:glynne@methodistchurch.org.uk)

## 5. CONSERVATION

### 5.1 Amendment to Listed Building Advisory Committee Meeting date

We would like to amend one of the dates previously supplied for the circulation of papers to the LBAC in January 2014. The date for circulation should read 17 December and not 24 December, which fails to account for the Christmas period.

We apologise for any inconvenience this may cause and we ask that any church submitting a project for consideration who was working to this date should contact us to discuss how this impacts on their timetable.

The forthcoming dates for the Listed Building Advisory Committee are as follows:

<b>Date of submission of papers</b>	<b>LBAC meeting date</b>
17 December 2013	14 January 2014
11 March 2014	1 April 2014
17 June 2014	8 July 2014
23 September 2014	14 October 2014

### **Maintenance of Historic Properties**

For practical and straightforward advice on maintenance and repairs, irrespective of your knowledge and experience, visit the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB) at [www.maintainyourbuilding.org.uk/main/](http://www.maintainyourbuilding.org.uk/main/).

### **The Enterprise and Regulatory Reform Act 2013 – Impact on listed and unlisted Buildings**

The next issue of Property Matters will include details about the recently introduced Enterprise and Regulatory Reform Act 2013 and how this may impact on listed and unlisted buildings. For those of you who want information before the next issue please contact the Conservation Officer.

Contact: Joanne Balmforth, Conservation Officer: Email: [conservation@methodistchurch.org.uk](mailto:conservation@methodistchurch.org.uk)

## **6. HISTORIC BUILDINGS ALLIANCE**

### **6.1 Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme – welcome changes to scope and operation**

**Historic Religious Buildings Alliance**  
*a group within the Heritage Alliance*

The Government has announced changes to the scope and operation of the Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme. This is the scheme which allows listed places of worship to reclaim VAT (with certain restrictions) paid for alterations and repairs.

From 1 October 2013, works to pipe organs, turret clocks, bells and bell ropes will be eligible for claims under the scheme. Professional services directly related to eligible building work such as architect fees will also become eligible. These changes apply to works supplied from 1 October 2013.

From this date, applications to make use of the scheme will be accepted from religious and charitable groups whose main purpose is to conserve, repair and maintain redundant listed places of worship which are not in private ownership.

These changes will be accompanied by administrative changes to simplify claiming through the scheme including:

- a new provision that in any 12 month period each place of worship may submit one claim using eligible invoices with a value between £500 and £1,000 (excluding the VAT paid). This is in addition to an unlimited number of claims where the value of eligible work carried out (excluding VAT) is £1,000 or greater
- scanned and photocopied invoices will now be accepted to support claims
- the scheme will process payment runs each week to deliver a smoother flow of payments to applicants helping applicants receive their grants more quickly.

Full details of the changes and new application forms will be available on the Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme website ([www.lpwscheme.org.uk](http://www.lpwscheme.org.uk)) from 1 October.

### **Comic Relief re-launches UK grants programme**

There are grants available for projects in England, Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland, the Channel Islands or the Isle of Man that are aimed at supporting vulnerable young people aged 11 to 24, those experiencing severe financial hardship, those who face violence, abuse and exploitation especially those who are 11 years old or older. There are also grants for those working to develop stronger communities and a fairer society by empowering and giving voice to marginalised groups of people.

To find out more, visit [2013.comicrelief.com/apply-for-a-grant/uk](http://2013.comicrelief.com/apply-for-a-grant/uk)

### **Funding art in churches**

Grants are available for new works of art in medieval churches from the Cottam Will Trust. Details here: [www.friendsoffriendlesschurches.org.uk/CMSMS/index.php?page=Church-Art](http://www.friendsoffriendlesschurches.org.uk/CMSMS/index.php?page=Church-Art)

## **7. HEALTH AND SAFETY**

### **7.1 Working at height and the safe use of ladders**



Working at height is one of the most dangerous things you can do. That is why it is taken so seriously by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE). Most serious accidents and fatalities at work result from falling from a height.

In many ways church buildings are more hazardous than most workplaces such as offices and factories. Compared to these, churches are often very lofty, have difficult access and the majority were built at a time when health and safety

was not a consideration. Unlike other activities that carry a risk of injury, a fall from a height is more likely to result in serious injuries and can be fatal. A single moment of carelessness or absentmindedness could result in a lifetime of disability.

#### **Elimination of risk**

The best control measure of all is to eliminate the risk entirely. Before undertaking the task ask yourselves, “Is this something we have the equipment and capabilities to do ourselves or should we seek outside help?”, “Is there another way of achieving what we want?” For example, could a mechanism be installed to lower light fittings to ground level to change bulbs or could longer life bulbs be used?

## Risk assessment

If you are thinking you can undertake the task yourself make sure you refer to the Methodist Insurance guidance to assess just how hazardous the risk is by looking at the likelihood of an accident happening and if it does, just how serious the consequences could be if something goes wrong. The Methodist Insurance web site includes a handy risk assessment guide to help you.

## Health and safety law and the duty of care

A church owes a duty of care to all volunteers and can be prosecuted under The Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974. Remember - before using a ladder or entering a disused balcony, ask yourself “Am I really sure this is safe?”

## Further guidance

Methodist Insurance’s Church Health and Safety Guidance Notes contain detailed advice on working at height and the safe use of ladders – go to [www.methodistinsurance.co.uk/resources/church-guidance/health-and-safety-advice](http://www.methodistinsurance.co.uk/resources/church-guidance/health-and-safety-advice) for more information and to download a risk assessment form.

Contact: Mike Hayward, Methodist Insurance E-mail: [mike.hayward@ecclesiastical.com](mailto:mike.hayward@ecclesiastical.com)

## 7.2 HSE makes minor changes to regulations on reporting workplace accidents

All employers, including churches, have a duty to report accidents in the workplace and occupational diseases to HM Government’s Health and Safety Executive (HSE). The purpose of this is to provide accurate information which is used to assess the safety of the nation’s workplaces. Now the rules governing what should and should not be reported have been amended with the aim of simplifying the system, following a review conducted in 2011.



The most significant change to RIDDOR – or to give it its full name, Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995 – is, as far as churches are concerned, the 11 *major injuries* sustained by employees or volunteers that the HSE said were previously reportable have been replaced with a shorter list of eight so-called *specified injuries*. These include bone fractures, burns and loss of sight.

47 types of industrial disease which were also previously reportable have been replaced with eight new categories of work-related illness. These cover conditions such as occupational dermatitis, asthma and cancer.

In April last year, the amount of time an employee is off work with a work-related injury or illness before the employer must file a report was raised from three days to seven. There are, however, no significant changes to the manner in which a fatal accident is reported, or accidents to members of the public.

Kevin Thomas, Methodist Insurance's survey manager said: "These changes should not have any significant effect on churches but it is important to be aware of the legislation and your reporting requirements."

Details of the RIDDOR reporting requirements can be found on [www.hse.gov.uk/riddor/](http://www.hse.gov.uk/riddor/). For more information you can also contact Methodist Insurance on 0161 833 9696, email [enquiries@micmail.com](mailto:enquiries@micmail.com) or contact your local insurance consultant and surveyor. The web site [www.methodistinsurance.co.uk](http://www.methodistinsurance.co.uk) also contains much useful guidance and advice on looking after your church and its users.

In addition to the death of an employee or volunteer, the eight serious workplace injuries that a church must report to the HSE are:

- unconsciousness caused by head injury or asphyxia
- bone fractures, but not including fingers, thumbs and toes
- amputation of an arm, hand, finger, thumb, leg, foot or toe
- crush injuries causing damage to internal organs
- serious burns (covering more than 10% of the body, or damaging the eyes, respiratory system or other vital organs)
- permanent loss of sight or reduction of sight
- scalpings which require hospital treatment
- any other injury arising from working in an enclosed space, which leads to hypothermia, heat-induced illness or requires resuscitation or hospital admittance for over 24 hours.

### **7.3 New first aid regulations give churches greater choice in training providers**

According to the St John's Ambulance Brigade, first aid can make the difference between life and death in a serious accident. It is one of those skills that the public is regularly encouraged to acquire – and with good reason. Think of the recent television advertisement encouraging people to administer CPR to the tempo of the Bee Gees' hit *Stayin' Alive* as an example.

Churches have always had to keep an eye on first aid regulations as, in common with all employers, they are governed by health and safety legislation – in particular, the Health and Safety (First Aid) Regulations 1981. As of September this year, this act was amended in respect of what it says about first aid training. Previously, the manner in which a church provided first aid training to its staff or volunteers had to be approved by the government's Health and Safety Executive (HSE). Now, this approval is no longer required, meaning that churches have greater flexibility in their provision of first aid. The move follows a review of the way in which the first aid training system operated in England, Scotland and Wales. Northern Ireland has its own legislation.

In effect, the new legislation means that training firms which were previously certified as approved by the HSE are no longer accredited in this way – although this change is not a reflection in the quality of training they provide.

According to Methodist Insurance client survey manager Kevin Thomas, this is not a major change for churches but could offer a little more scope in terms of providing first aid care. He said: "These changes by the HSE are designed to give employers such as churches greater choice of first aid training providers and more scope to buy training that fits what they believe are their needs.

"Every employer, including a church, still has to make an assessment of the first aid needs of their establishment. That need is going to be dependent on the number of employees, volunteers, and

visitors, the size of the church and the type of activities taking place there. However, for the majority of churches, the minimum first aid provision is going to be two things: a suitably stocked first aid box and a person who's been appointed to take charge of first aid.

“If the church is required to provide first aid treatment, records of this should be kept including details of the patient, the time and date, the nature of the incident, the treatment given and by whom, and details of any witnesses. This type of information is vital should a claim of some kind be made in relation to the injury. If there's a nothing in writing, then that makes a claim much harder to defend if it goes to court.”

All staff and volunteers should be aware of the arrangements for administering first aid and the location of any first aid kits and room. This is particularly important if any activities carried out in church are potentially hazardous.

Any church looking for first aid training for its employees or volunteers can find information on how to select a training provider on the HSE's website at [www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/geis3.htm](http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/geis3.htm). The HSE's Health and Safety (First Aid) Regulations 1981 are also available on the website.

For more information you can also contact Methodist Insurance on 0161 833 9696, email [enquiries@micmail.com](mailto:enquiries@micmail.com) or contact your local insurance consultant and surveyor. The website [www.methodistinsurance.co.uk](http://www.methodistinsurance.co.uk) also contains much useful guidance and advice on looking after your church and its users.

This document is being sent to the following roles 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 Property Matters email newsletter, please forward this copy and ask them to visit [www.methodist.org.uk/signup](http://www.methodist.org.uk/signup)

The **Methodist Church** 

**Methodist Church House**  
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**London NW1 5JR**

**020 7486 5502 [Helpdesk]**

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

**Registered Charity no 1132208**

## Contact us

For further information contact your local Insurance Consultant and Surveyor or call us on

**0845 606 1331**

Monday to Friday 8am to 6pm (excluding Bank Holidays). We may monitor or record calls to improve our service.

You can email us at

**[enquiries@micmail.com](mailto:enquiries@micmail.com)**

Or visit

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