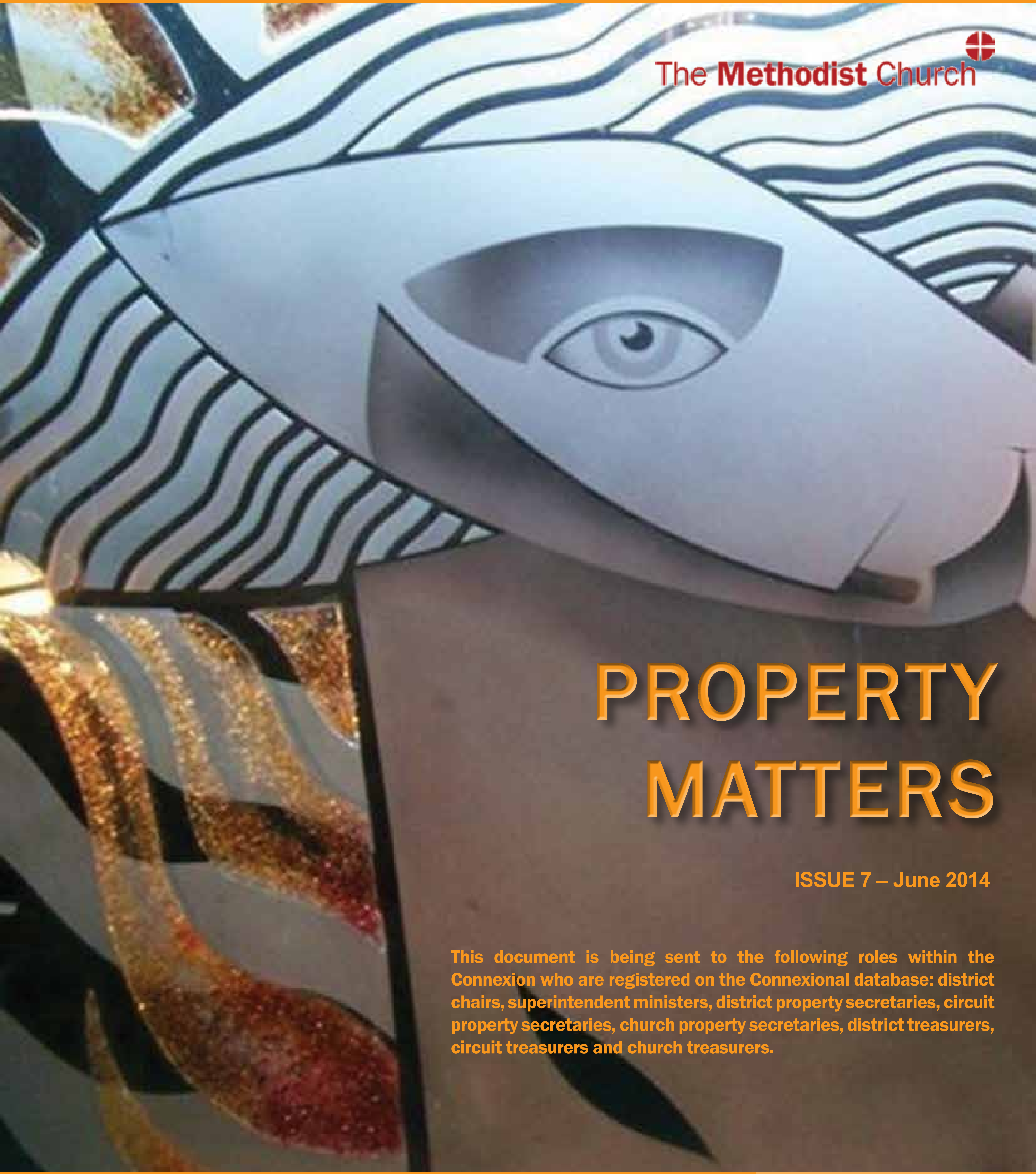
The Methodist Church



PROPERTY MATTERS

ISSUE 7 – June 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.

PROPERTY MATTERS

Issue 7 – June 2014

***Property Matters*, Issue 7 (June 2014)**

INDEX

INTRODUCTION

Dear readers,

Welcome to the latest edition of *Property Matters*. The long-awaited energy purchasing scheme is now moving forward with 2Buy2 and details are included in this edition. Green energy is one option being offered and if you are considering the effect of your activities and how you might reduce the impact on the environment, this might be the one for you.

This year, the Research Team has prepared and submitted a triennial report to the Conference on statistics for mission. The *Methodist Recorder* has also included a couple of articles aligned to this. If you want to know information about your church, the statistical information you submitted last autumn is now available to view through the web map facility explained in this edition.

Volunteers are greatly appreciated for their time, commitment and care they give to the roles they undertake. As Connexional Team officers, we are grateful to the unstinting work you do in many aspects of church life. Methodist Insurance has prepared an article specifically on volunteers.

There are updates from Methodist Insurance, Property Consents, Landfill Community Grants and Conservation. In addition, we have received queries in respect of church duties in respect of Legionellosis and food hygiene. This edition includes two articles which may assist you.

We are looking for stories from where you are. They can be about a project that has gone really well and is delivering the outcomes expected, one in which you have overcome obstacles to progress, or one which went badly and would provide learning for other churches.

All good wishes for the holiday season (and hopefully some sunshine).

Julie Robinson-Judd, Mission Resources Manager
Tel: 020 7467 3524

ENERGY

2buy2 energy scheme

We have some important news about the energy buying scheme with 2buy2!

Already, several hundred Methodist sites have used 2buy2 to reduce their energy costs. Following work done by the Methodist Connexional Team and 2buy2, the national buying group for churches that we have previously promoted, we are delighted to announce a national energy group deal available to Methodist churches, through 2buy2. The new agreement will allow Methodist churches to purchase energy individually as you currently do but you will benefit from lower costs from the energy supplier which 2buy2 have negotiated for the wider group. Now is the right time to launch a group deal as gas is currently close to its lowest point in the last four years.

It had been hoped that the group deal, or 'basket', would have been operational from autumn 2013, but unforeseen factors prevented this from happening. Total Gas & Power won the tender to supply the electricity and gas for the proposed basket, which included churches from several denominations, and the Methodist boycott of Total products prevented active participation.

The Connexional Team has worked with 2buy2 since that point to arrive at a solution and we think that it is now in place. A lot has been learned in the meantime about the correct type of contract for the typical usage patterns of churches of various sizes and how to give the best customer service.

The benefits of the scheme are

- reduced cost to your energy
- energy managed by an organisation that truly understands the issues churches and their volunteers face
- one point of contact for customer service issues with 2buy2
- an opportunity to simplify your contracts by bringing them all to one end date
- reduced administration means reduced volunteer time.

The details

The first group deal, or 'basket', will run from 1 June 2014 through to 30 March 2016. Anyone with electricity or gas contracts that are due for renewal between these two dates will be able to join.

The basket will be provided by a ‘Big 6’ supplier and you will benefit from dedicated account management at 2buy2 to support you joining the group deal and to answer any ongoing questions you may have.

If you have already logged all your meter details with 2buy2, or are already registered and part of the scheme, then they will be in contact with you shortly to discuss how you can benefit from this national group deal for Methodist churches.

If you have not yet logged all your meter details or they have changed since you last dealt with 2buy2 then please complete the attached data collection form for your meters and send it through to energy@2buy2.com.

Green energy

2buy2 have also created a ‘green energy’ basket in collaboration with Good Energy. The Renewable Energy Buying Group Initiative (REGBI) enables churches to access reduced rates on 100% renewable electricity, with a gas option also available, through one of the leading renewable energy suppliers in the UK. For more information visit www.2buy2.com/regbi

If you would like to get in touch with the 2buy2 team to discuss your energy options, you can do so by emailing energy@2buy2.com or calling them on 03333 201 015.

2buy2 have a range of national contracts available to support churches in the stewardship of their resources. For more information or to be kept up to date with the latest news about 2buy2 visit the website (www.2buy2.com) and register, or find us on Facebook, Twitter or LinkedIn.

METHODIST INSURANCE

Harnessing the power of volunteers

“Volunteers are unpaid – not because they’re worthless, but because they’re priceless.”

This is how one well-known saying extols the virtues of volunteers and the vital contribution they make – a contribution that Britain saw first-hand and up close in 2012, as thousands of people stepped up to become unpaid volunteers at the Olympic and Paralympic Games.

Volunteers working at grass roots level are the lifeblood of the nation’s Methodist churches. Without people willing to commit their time and energy to maintain church buildings, attend meetings and raise funds, churches simply could not function in the way they do today.

Volunteering in decline

But volunteers are in short supply in all walks of life. A study by the Department for Communities and Local Government in 2010 recorded a decline in volunteering over the previous five years. Robert Putnam, in his seminal 2000 book *Bowling Alone*, argued that over the last 50 years, changes in the demands of people's working lives, the rise of a more home-centric social culture, the impact of television and the movement of women from the home to the workplace, have all served to make society less willing to give up its collective time. The book's core message is that we may be more willing to write a cheque for a good cause, but we are less likely to knock on doors for it or attend meetings on its behalf. The sad truth is that volunteering has been in steady decline since the 1950s.

Turning the tide

So what can churches do to encourage individuals and families in their local communities to organise a prize draw or have a charity bake-off? There's a lot of advice and suggestions available from many sources. But when it comes down to it, a small group of very sensible ideas rise head and shoulders above the rest.

Be very clear with people what you're trying to achieve and what the benefits will be. Asking people to turn up year after year to run the lucky dip at the church fête may suffer from the law of diminishing returns. Put the event into context; explain the state of the church's funds, how much you're hoping to raise and what the money will be spent on. An event to raise £1,000 to repair a much-loved and used church hall will probably get more support than the annual autumn fair.

Make sure your volunteers feel appreciated. If Mrs Braithwaite volunteers every year to arrange flowers in the church, it can be all too easy to take her contribution for granted. Ensure that she's thanked and her work is recognised, perhaps with a mention in the circuit newsletter.

Try not to link volunteering to set times. Flexibility is often the key for would-be volunteers, particular those in employment or with families to look after; many people struggle to attend at a specific time each week. If a task can be carried out at any time during the week, let the volunteer choose when to do it.

Be clear with volunteers up front what level of commitment you're asking for. People who volunteer for one hour a week and find they're actually giving five are unlikely to be happy with the situation. They're also more likely to withdraw their support.

Make the most of social media. Online communication channels such as Facebook, Twitter, blogs and the church's own website can be great places to ask for help and to strike up engagement with the local community. Of course, don't forget more traditional forms of communication such as newsletters, posters and even the local paper.

Consider approaching local businesses. While most people know that firms will often donate money, many are now encouraging their staff to volunteer. If you have a specific project for which you're seeking help, a business could well assist.

Protecting your volunteers

Once you've found your volunteers, insuring them is one thing you don't have to worry about. Methodist Insurance's Church Shield policy treats authorised volunteers in the same manner as employees, offering protection against injury and what is known as third-party liability – damage or harm the volunteer might cause during their work for the church. Kevin Thomas of Methodist Insurance makes the point very succinctly: "Don't let risk stand in the way of recruiting new volunteers. They're the lifeblood of the Church and Methodist Insurance gives you the cover to protect both them and your church."

Dialogue


METHODIST INSURANCE

dialogue

The twice-yearly newsletter from the Methodist Insurance Company

Cutting down on claims

Dialogue takes a look at the five most common causes of insurance claims and offers some advice on how to avoid them.

1 Storm damage

2 Accidental damage

3 Malicious damage

4 Burglary with forced entry

5 Metal theft

The five most common types of loss

22% STORM

15% Accidental Damage

Malicious damage 14%

Theft 12%

6% Metal Theft

Methodist Insurance's newsletter, *Dialogue* (published later this month and available to download from the website), has a host of health and safety information to help keep churches running safely and smoothly.

There's also news about Methodist Insurance's recent relocation from Brazennose Street to newly refurbished offices in St Ann's Place. The company, which has strong ties to Manchester, has always had a Manchester base and remains resolutely in the heart of the city. As a result of the move Methodist Insurance is now sharing offices with its operational partner and reinsurer Ecclesiastical Insurance. Sharing the office space means that in the future both insurers will be able to benefit from access to wider specialist knowledge and shared expertise.

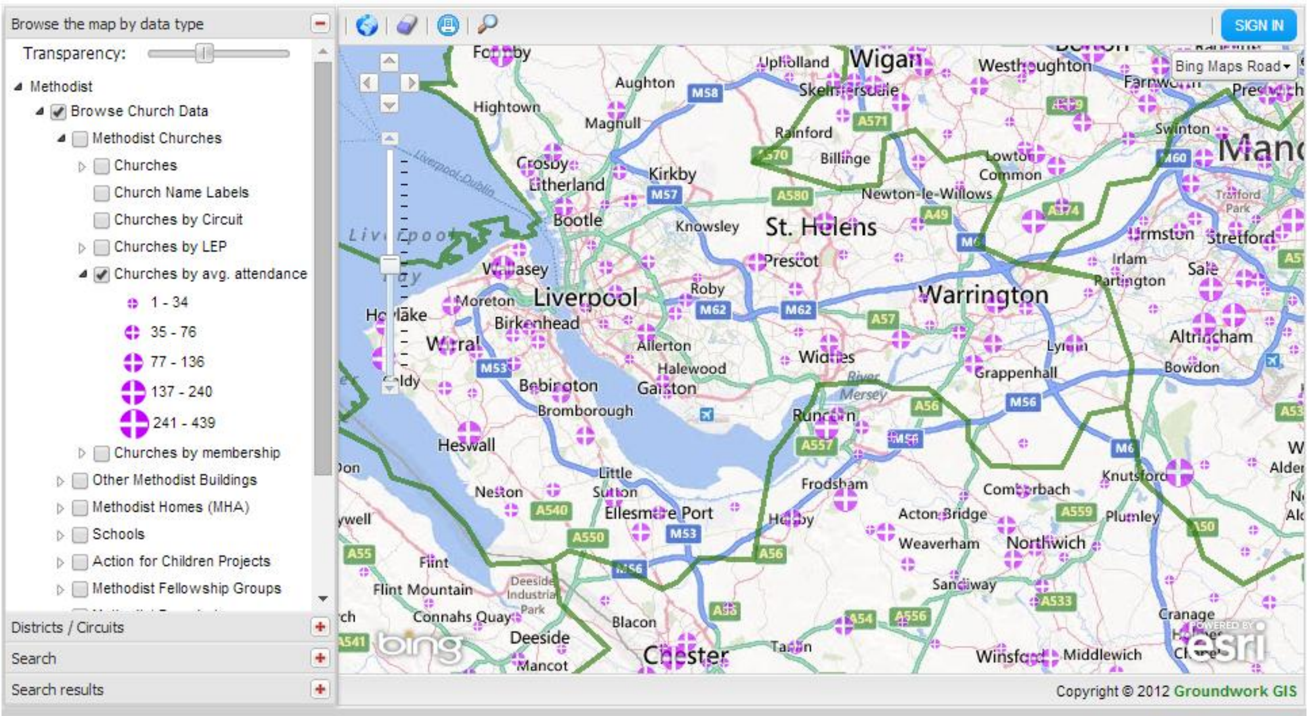
John Coates, director at Methodist Insurance, said the move will benefit both staff and customers. "St Ann's House is in an ideal location in the city centre and only walking distance from our previous office, so there will be minimum disruption from the move to our staff and customers," he said.

"I'm also pleased that we will be sharing offices with the underwriting, claims and customer services teams of Ecclesiastical as, although our teams remain separate, we will be able to share expertise from our respective businesses and past experiences to benefit our customers. We will look forward to welcoming our business partners and friends for an opening reception in the near future when the teams have settled in."

STATISTICS FOR MISSION

Church Web Map

The Church Web Map is an interactive map which can be accessed via the Methodist website (www.methodist.org.uk/links/church-webmap-advanced-version). It is populated by the annual statistics submitted by local churches, circuits and districts, enabling users to search for buildings, projects and fellowships by location, membership number, average attendance and a variety of other criteria. The map has now been updated with data from the 2011 census to provide a more accurate context and help identify opportunities for mission.

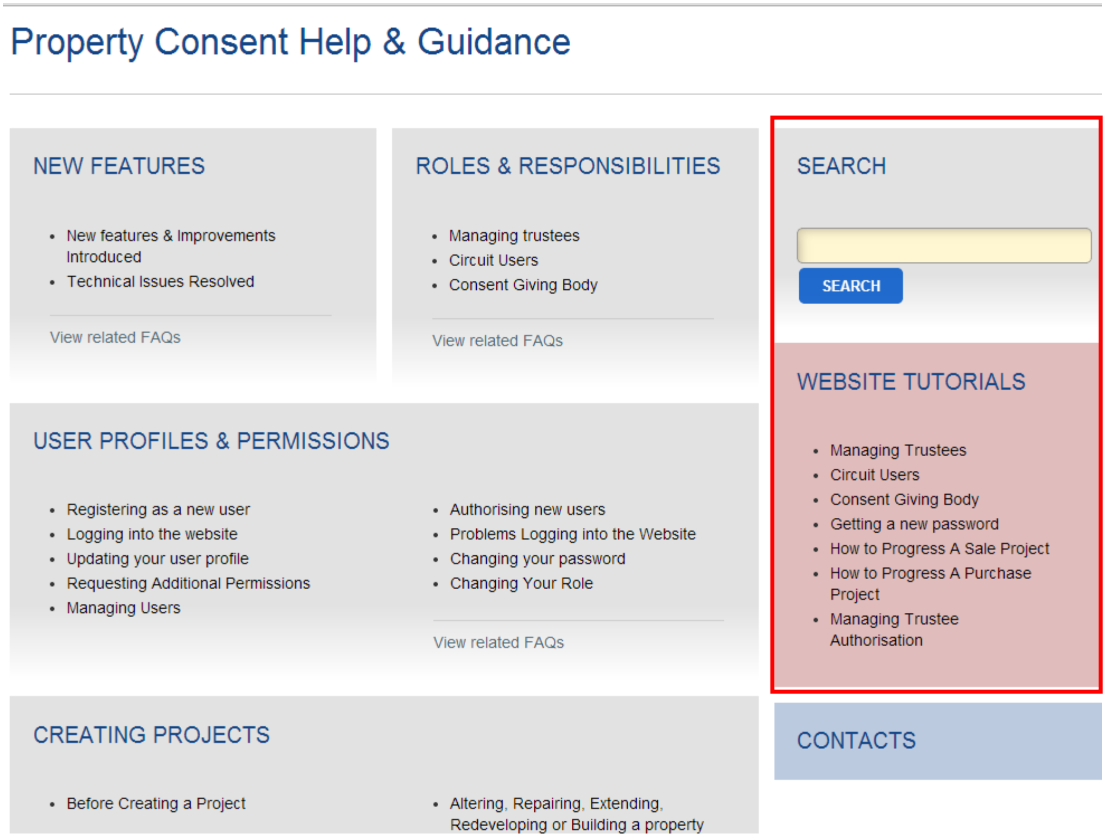


Contact the Research Team on statisticsformission@methodistchurch.org.uk if you have any questions or wish to find out more.

PROPERTY CONSENTS

Help and guidance

We have recently updated the *Help and Guidance* section of the Property Consents site to make it easier to search for particular bits of information. Each of the eight sections has a clear overview of what you can find in it and also includes frequently asked questions.



There are a number of website tutorials available which provide step-by-step guides to getting a new password, how to progress a sale/purchase project, managing trustee authorisation and other subjects.

The full information can be found here: propertyconsent.methodist.org.uk/guide

The Consents Web Officer can be contacted on consents@methodistchurch.org.uk .

ANNUAL RETURNS

A district perspective

There are many reasons why we should complete our annual returns, even though many may consider them an unnecessary bureaucracy. I will not list the legislative reasons but rather just say they are a way of us recording our good stewardship of our inherited resources.

Bearing this in mind, when we learnt of the proposal to computerise these records, we knew that in Cumbria we would face perhaps more challenges than our colleagues in other more digitised parts of the country. My colleague Martyn Evans undertook a survey of all our churches and found that only 58% had access to the Internet, compared to the UK average of 83%. The reasons for this low percentage could be:

- the age profile of Cumbrian Methodism (ie a high proportion of church members characterised by a disinclination to change, a lack of computer skills and knowledge about the advantages of web access)
- the lack of good, fast connections to the Internet across Cumbria as a whole, or
- the cost of access.

We therefore embarked on our endeavours to make the transition from a long standing paper based system (understood, if not loved, by all) as easy as possible by circulating information to churches and circuits about the change in July 2013. In early September 2013 we made available paper copies of the report for completion by those who either did not have access to a computer, were not sufficiently confident to use the online system, or found that the line speed in their locality made the task impossible to do in a reasonable time.

I have no accurate record of how many chose the paper option for subsequent input to the system but I do know that our largest rural circuit (with 21 properties to deal with) used their ever-willing administrator to do the input. I had all sorts of queries during the data entry phase and became a constant correspondent or conversationalist with the longsuffering but ever-helpful Tom Lee as we ironed out problems real and perceived. One circuit completed its entries without having to raise a query, but it has none of the complications local ecumenical partnerships etc can generate.

As Synod approached in May, I was still encouraging some to complete their returns. But I was eventually able to report that over 90% had been completed. Of the remainder, some only lacked completion in one or two boxes, and five had no entries at all. Steps are being taken to rectify this situation. Hopefully all the work undertaken this year will make the task easier for the 2013/2014 connexional year, but with the teething troubles experienced this year having been corrected, there may still be some questions to answer. In an endeavour to alleviate this, I trust those responsible will circulate details of the changes together with appropriate help and guidance as we have to remember it is volunteers who are doing the bulk of the work.

As the District Property Secretary, I am very grateful for the co-operation of my colleagues in the district. In expressing my thanks at Synod, I left them with the thought that a 100% completion rate is not impossible.

Finally we now have access to all those reports to enable us to formulate the District Plan as required by Standing Order 962 which is a significant improvement on the amount information which the former Schedule D provided. We will also benefit from the results of this year's hard work as next year will mainly be an updating exercise.

Jim Irving, District Property Secretary, Cumbria District
Email: jamesmirving@tiscali.co.uk

LANDFILL COMMUNITIES FUNDING

If you have a refurbishment or building project at your church and are looking for grant funding, one possibility is the Landfill Communities Fund. This is a tax credit scheme that enables operators of landfill sites to award funds to projects that benefit communities and the environment.

Methodist churches can secure funds from this scheme under the 'Improvement of a public amenity or community building' category. Individual landfill companies operate their own funding programmes with different funding criteria but in general all projects need to be

- located within the vicinity (usually within 10 miles) of an active licensed landfill site owned by a participating landfill company
- open and well used by the wider community (for at least 104 days per year or equivalent).

Further information on the scheme can be found at www.entrust.org.uk/landfill-community-fund. Alternately, contact Colette Dean (the Connexional Team's landfill grants officer) and she can advise on whether your project is suitable to apply to this funding stream. Her telephone number is (0161) 235 6734 and her email address is landfill@methodistchurch.org.uk.

Landfill Communities Fund closes in Scotland

The current landfill tax will no longer be charged on waste going to Scottish landfill sites after 31 March 2015. This means that the Landfill Communities Fund will no longer operate in Scotland after 31 March 2015. Methodist churches in Scotland will not be eligible to apply for this funding opportunity after this date.

The period from 1 April 2015 to 31 March 2017 will be a transitional period to enable completion of any approved projects in Scotland. All Landfill Communities funded projects in Scotland must be completed by 31 March 2017. Projects that have secured funding before 31 March 2015 can still be registered with ENTRUST between April 2015 and March 2017, but the projects must have a completion date no later than 31 March 2017.

After 31 March 2015, the current landfill tax will continue to be liable on disposals to landfill sites in England, Wales and Northern Ireland and the Landfill Communities Fund will continue to operate as normal in these areas.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Legionnaire's Disease

Legionellosis is the collective name given to the pneumonia-like illness caused by legionella bacteria. This includes the most serious Legionnaires' Disease, as well as the similar but less serious conditions of Pontiac fever and Lochgoilhead fever. Legionnaires' Disease is a potentially fatal form of pneumonia and everyone is susceptible to infection.

Legionella bacteria are widespread in natural water systems (eg rivers and ponds). However, the conditions are rarely right for people to catch the disease from these sources. Outbreaks of the illness occur from exposure to legionella growing in purpose-built systems where water is maintained at a temperature high enough to encourage growth, eg cooling towers, evaporative condensers, spa pools, and hot water systems used in all sorts of premises (work and domestic).

Infection is caused by inhaling small droplets of water, suspended in the air, containing the bacteria. Certain conditions increase the risk from legionella, including:

- water temperature between 20–45 °C, which is suitable for growth
- creating and spreading breathable droplets of water, eg aerosol created by water outlets such as shower heads
- stored and/or re-circulated water
- a source of nutrients for the organism eg presence of sludge, scale or fouling.

While most cases of Legionnaire’s Disease are the result of infections caught in the UK, a number of cases occur abroad.

The symptoms are similar to those of flu, ie high temperature, fever and chills, cough, muscle pains and headache. In a severe case, there may also be pneumonia, and occasionally diarrhoea, as well as signs of mental confusion. Legionnaires’ disease is not known to spread from person to person.

All employers, or someone in control of premises (Managing Trustees), including landlords (in the case of Manses), must understand the health risks associated with legionella and have a duty of care. Duties under the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 (HSWA) extend to risks from legionella bacteria, which may arise from work activities. The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations (MHSWR) provide a broad framework for controlling health and safety at work and more specifically the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002 (COSHH) provide a framework of duties designed to assess, prevent or control the risk from bacteria like Legionella and take suitable precautions. **You** are responsible for health and safety and need to take the right precautions to reduce the risks of exposure to legionella.

Identify and assess sources of risk

It is the responsibility of employers to carry out a risk assessment. They may be competent to carry out the assessment themselves but, if not, they should call on help and advice from either within their own organisation or from outside sources, eg consultancies.

They or the person responsible for managing risks, need to understand their water systems, the equipment associated with the system such as pumps, heat exchangers, showers etc, and the constituent parts, to identify whether they are likely to create a risk from exposure to legionella, and whether:

- water is stored or re-circulated as part of your system
- the water temperature in all or some parts of the system is between 20–45 °C
- there are sources of nutrients such as rust, sludge, scale and organic matters
- the conditions are likely to encourage bacteria to multiply
- it is possible for water droplets to be produced and, if so, whether they can be dispersed over a wide area, eg showers and aerosols
- it is likely that any of your employees, residents, visitors etc are more susceptible to infection due to age, illness, a weakened immune system etc and whether they could be exposed to any contaminated water droplets.

The risk assessment should include:

- management responsibilities, including the name of the competent person and a description of your system
- any potential risk sources
- any controls currently in place to control risks
- monitoring, inspection and maintenance procedures
- records of the monitoring results and inspection and checks carried out
- a review date.

If it is decided that the risks are insignificant and are being properly managed to comply with the law, the assessment is complete. No further action need be taken, but it is important that the assessment is reviewed periodically in case of changes to the system.

All employers, or persons in control of premises, must appoint someone competent to assist with compliance with health and safety duties, ie take responsibility for managing the scheme. A competent person is someone with the necessary skills, knowledge and experience to manage and control the scheme effectively. If it is decided to employ contractors to carry out water treatment or other work, it is still the responsibility of the competent person to ensure that the treatment is carried out to the required standards.

A full risk assessment should be carried out at least every two years or when the system has been changed (eg a new sink fitted).

Consideration should be given whether the risk of legionella can be prevented in the first place by consideration of the type of water system required. The key point is to design, maintain and operate water services under conditions that prevent or adequately control the growth and multiplication of legionella.

Keeping records

If the organisation has five or more employees any significant findings have to be recorded, including any groups of employees identified by it as being particularly at risk and the steps taken to prevent or control risks.

If there are less than five employees, it is still useful to keep a written record of action taken.

Records should include details of

1. the person or persons responsible for conducting the risk assessment, managing, and implementing the written scheme
2. significant findings of the risk assessment
3. written control scheme and details of its implementation
4. results of any inspection, test or check carried out, and the dates
5. the state of operation of the system (ie in use or not in use).

These records should be retained throughout the period for which they remain current and for at least two years after that period.

Further information and guidance can be obtained from the HSE website with their frequently asked questions (www.hse.gov.uk/Legionnaires/faqs.htm. HSE's *Brief Guide for Dutyholders* is available as a free download from www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg458.pdf.

Food hygiene: advice from the FSA

(This article was written by Frank Cranmer, Secretary of the Churches' Legislation Advisory Service (CLAS). It first appeared in the CLAS newsletter and is reproduced with their kind permission.)

At the request of one of the members of CLAS we wrote to the FSA with some specific questions on food handling in relation to church events such as after-service coffee and 'bring and share' lunches.

In its reply, the FSA draws attention to its guidance on how the law applies to charity and community food provision (see www.food.gov.uk/enforcement/enforcework/food-law/#.UyrYuPl_uSo). It should be noted that the guidance applies *in England*.

The FSA confirms that it is *not* mandatory for charity and community volunteers handling food to have attended a formal course or gained a qualification in food hygiene: "The key thing is that food handlers have the necessary knowledge to handle food safely; this is the case too with food handlers in food businesses."

As to the more general issues, Mr Okoruwa replies on behalf of the FSA as follows:

> In response to your questions about the circumstances in which food is served (eg at bring-and-share lunches or cold buffet breakfasts) and whether food can be prepared in domestic circumstances and later brought to the church: this depends on the circumstances in each case.
>
> The questions to consider are whether the supply is a regular and organised – the advice document gives advice on this – because if it is, then the supply should be registered with the local authority and the rules of Regulation (EC) 852/2004 complied with.
>
> If the supply is not regular and organised – and the advice looks at this pragmatically to ensure charity and community food handlers are not unduly burdened, there is still a requirement for food to be safe for consumers. Again I would advise church volunteers to look at the hygiene advice Q&A and other related sources of advice the FSA provides – these are detailed in the advice.
>
> Of course the option is always open to local volunteers who still have concerns about how the law applies to food supply activities, or would like more information on to handle food safely, to contact local authority environmental health officers; advice is free of charge.

The answers to the specific questions were as follows. I should draw your particular attention to the answer to Question 4, which I think has been answered on the assumption that the meal is being provided by commercial caterers rather than members of the congregation. If the latter, I assume that the answer relating to 'bring and share' would apply.

Q1. When coffee/tea/squash and biscuits are being served at the end of a service is there any requirement for those serving to have a basic food hygiene certificate? Is it OK to serve cakes which members of the congregation have made themselves and brought to church?

It is not mandatory for charity and community volunteers handling food to have attended a formal course or gained a qualification in food hygiene. It is possible to demonstrate the knowledge in other ways, such as prior knowledge or on-the-job training.

It is OK to serve cakes which members of the congregation have made themselves and brought to church; but there is still an overriding requirement (Regulation (EC) 178/2002, Article 14) for all supply of food going beyond purely 'private domestic use' (effectively close family) to be safe to eat. This would cover for example an annual church fete and other 'occasional' food activities.

Q2. What are the requirements for a 'bring and share' lunch? Does it affect things if any of the food is hot (and/or reheated)?

The requirements for bring and share lunches are the same for all supply of food going beyond purely 'private domestic use' as detailed above.

Cooked or cold foods (ready to eat) that are left outside of refrigeration temperature should be fine for up to four hours. Food kept out for a longer period of time could allow any bacteria present to grow to high levels. Bacteria that causes food poisoning will grow at temperatures above (8˚C and below 63˚C) so it is important to ensure the product stays out of this 'danger zone' by either chilling or cooking.

Foods that will not be consumed within the above timeframe should either be cooled down as quickly as possible and then refrigerated or frozen, or put under hot holding conditions at a temperature of 63˚C or above. When food is reheated it should be reheated thoroughly; reaching a core temperature of 70˚C for 2 minutes (or equivalent) so that it is steaming hot throughout, food should not be reheated more than once they should be discarded immediately after the tolerance period.

Q3. Is it correct that when food is being prepared cooked and served for Messy Church that it should only be done by those with basic food hygiene certificate? Or is it OK if at least one person supervising has a certificate? Again, does it affect things if any of the food is hot (and/or reheated)?

As explained above it is not a requirement in the food hygiene regulations for charity and community volunteers handling food to formerly hold a food hygiene certificate. The second part of this question has been addressed at Question 2 above.

Q4. Similarly, what are the requirements when a cold buffet breakfast (includes meats and cheese) is being provided (not 'bring and share') for those attending church services?

Regular activities that do not constitute 'occasional' food activities would be regarded as a food business operation and would require registration as a food business. The suppliers I presumed will already be registered as a food business and would need to comply with the requirements of EU Regulation (EC) 852/2004 which requires food business operators to put in place, implement and maintain a permanent procedure, or procedures, based on HACCP principles. This means that they should have in place suitable food safety procedures, or might need to adjust their usual procedures, if they are handling or distributing foods at the church.

They will also need to comply with Article 14 of Regulation (EC) 178/2002, which lay down that food shall not be supplied to consumers if it is "unsafe" and that food shall be deemed to be "unsafe" if it is:

(a) "injurious to health"

(b) "unfit for human consumption".

[Source: FSA March 2014]

Chubb fire extinguisher contract update

The Fire Extinguisher Service contract for churches operated by Chubb Fire National Accounts has been extended for another year to 31 March 2016.

The basic unit price remains £6.25, with a one-off charge of £1.50 per service visit. 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.

Further information and advice can be obtained from our fire precaution adviser:

Colin Domville MIFire E

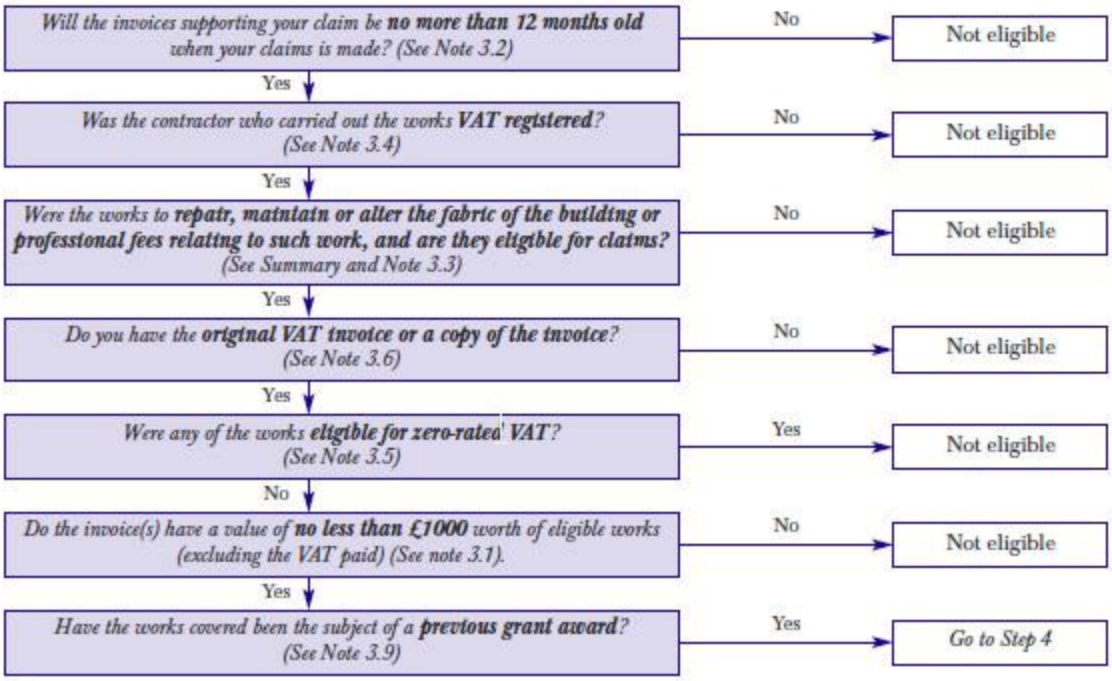
Tel: 01704 875 597

Email: cbdomville@blueyonder.co.uk

CONSERVATION

The Listed Places of Worship Grants Scheme (valid until March 2016) acts as a reimbursement scheme for church expenses spent on alteration, repair and maintenance provided the place or worship is a listed building. This particular reimbursement scheme covers expenses such as toilet and kitchen installations, heating installations, pipe organs, bells and ropes and many others. Individual expenses over £1,000 (excluding the VAT paid) can be claimed within 12 months. For the latest reimbursement criteria please see the full eligibility checklist

www.lpwscheme.org.uk/step3_eligible_expenditure.htm .



Further requirements: To claim under the scheme, eligible works must be carried out by a VAT registered contractor. You can easily verify VAT registration of your contractor by asking for his/her VAT registration number, which must also be shown on the invoice.

Application form: www.lpwscheme.org.uk/lpw_application_form.pdf

WHAT'S NEW? From 1 October 2013, each listed place of worship will also be allowed to submit one claim in respect of works with a value of less than £1,000 but more than £500 (excluding the VAT paid) in any 12-month period. This change has been introduced to enable places of worship undertaking smaller works to claim under the scheme.

Booking now open for *Managing Major Buildings Projects in Places of Worship*, 24 June 2014

Following previous very successful training days, the Historic Religious Building Alliance's third training day is on 24 June. It will be held at All Saints Church in Oakham in the Diocese of Peterborough (oakham.oakhamteam.org.uk/), in partnership with the architects Purcell UK.

This is an important opportunity to hear experts speaking on how to manage major projects in places of worship, and to meet others who are carrying out such work.

The purpose of the day is to help with the management of all stages of a building project in a place of worship. It is aimed at people who are concerned with places of worship, regardless of size, type or location. It will be relevant to new builds as well as to older properties that need alterations or repairs. Although focusing on projects of a significant size, many of the principles apply in simplified form to smaller projects, and the day should be useful whatever the size of project being considered. It will be useful both to those who are directly responsible for a single project in a single building, and those who have an oversight role for a number of religious buildings.

The day is open to anyone. All documents and the booking form can be downloaded from www.purcelluk.com/news-events/news#/news/june-seminar-in-managing-major-building-projects-in-places-of-worship.

NEWS FROM THE CONNEXION

Resourcing Mission Forum 20-22 May 2014

What is the Resourcing Mission Forum?

This year the Resourcing Mission Forum (RMF) took place at High Leigh Conference Centre in Hoddesdon, Hertfordshire. The two night event has been held annually for a number of years, the main focus of the event is to envision and equip those working at circuit and district level responsible for helping the Church to make best use of its resources in furthering mission and developing discipleship. We hope it will inspire and enthuse District Chairs, District and Circuit Property and Grants Officers and Treasurers in their roles and in their churches and communities. It also provides opportunities for networking across the connexion and sharing ideas for furthering mission. The event is organised by the Mission Resources team within the Connexional Team, with valuable input from Trustees for Methodist Church Purposes (TMCP) staff.

What took place this year?

The programme this year provided delegates with a number of exciting sessions delivered by speakers on the following subjects: managing change, accessible environments, information on *Larger Than Circuit*, the Langley House Trust, using church property for affordable housing, the work of the ecumenical partnership in Cumbria, and a specialist property developing group who work ecumenically to provide premises for community use (specifically primary health, spiritual and social care). There were also sessions on the property projects at Harwood Church in the Bolton & Rochdale Circuit and Trinity Church in Ellesmere Port. The project leaders involved in each project gave fascinating presentations highlighting the churches experiences in managing a large building project, their journey from concept to completion and the highs and lows throughout, all of which provided a unique insight into all that can be achieved A 'surgery' session was also provided designed to give delegates the opportunity to ask questions of three panels of legal, property and finance officers.

The feedback received was very encouraging and included comments such as:

- "Invaluable to enable me to fulfil my role effectively and help me to work with others in a similar role."
- "Two days is good so we can build contacts. Networking is important with delegates as well as with head office staff from MCH or TMCP."
- "I considered the Forum to be an investment of my time. Very worthwhile; a really valuable event."
- "Appreciation to all for a good programme with much to consider and use."

The district property secretaries also meet annually at the RMF during which the new *Methodist Church Property Handbook*, the benefits of this new resource and its launch were discussed; the Handbook will be available to download from the Methodist Church website in the near future. We were also very pleased to welcome the Revd Dr Martyn Atkins, General Secretary of the Methodist Church, who presided over the Communion service on the final day. We also welcomed Doug Swanney, the Connexional Secretary, and Nick Moore (Head of Support Services), both of whom facilitated at the event.

Where is the RMF taking place next year?

Next year's event will be held at Kings Park Conference Centre in Northampton from Tuesday 14 – Thursday 16 April. Information on the programme will be sent to District Chairs, property secretaries, grants officers and treasurers as soon as it is available.

How do I find out more?

If you are interested in receiving the presentations given by this year's speakers (see above), or any additional information on the RMF contact Verena Thim on thimv@methodistchurch.org.uk .

Our Buildings Speak of Us…

A one-day conference in Sheffield on Saturday 21 June, exploring how church buildings can meet the needs of mission and outreach in the twenty-first century.

Organised by the Diocese of Sheffield and taking place in Sheffield Cathedral.

Key speakers will help you consider what God is calling you to do in your church; re-shaping liturgical space to meet your style of worship and opening your church for community use.

To find out more and download the booking form, go to www.sheffield.anglican.org/attachments/1564_Our%20Buildings%20Speak%20of%20Us%20Booking%20Form.pdf

The Conservation, Repair and Management of War Memorials

For churches currently involved in (or considering getting involved in) works to war memorials, here is a link to this useful publication recently published by English Heritage and the War Memorials Trust. It aims to provide guidance and best practice advice on the understanding, assessment, planning and implementation of conservation work. Guidance is also provided on their ongoing maintenance and protection.

www.english-heritage.org.uk/publications/conservation-repair-management-war-memorials/conservation-repair-and-management-war-memorials.pdf

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Listed Places of Worship grant scheme – Department for Culture Media & Sport

This is a quick reminder about the existence of the Listed Places of Worship grant scheme which is administered by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport for churches in England and Wales. The scheme makes grants towards the VAT incurred in making repairs and carrying out alterations to listed buildings mainly used for public worship. Details can be found on their website by following this link: www.lpwscheme.org.uk/index.htm

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Crossing the Threshold toolkit

The *Crossing the Threshold* conference (held in Hereford in 2009) aimed at helping Anglican churches get the best from their buildings for wider community use. The day was dedicated to sharing best practice in the use of church buildings, and looked at examples of how successful projects are working in and for their communities already. At that event, a toolkit was produced in partnership with the Herefordshire Council and Shropshire RCC, and as a response to demand from Anglican churches at the start of their journey down the road towards returning their buildings to their communities. This has now been updated.

The toolkit is an easy-to-follow step by step resource containing exactly the sort of information any church will need to know and can be applied to Methodist churches. It aims to offer practical guidance to make it possible for more churches to remain open as places of worship but also as places where the wider community can enjoy a range of activities and support that will help improve the quality of their lives.

A link to the toolkit can be found at

www.hereford.anglican.org/Content/Crossing%20the%20Threshold%202013.pdf

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Listed Building Advisory Committee meeting dates and dates for receipt of papers

The meeting dates and the dates for receipt of papers for the forthcoming Listed Buildings Advisory Committee are as follows:

Date of meeting	Date for receipt of papers
8 July 2014	17 June 2014
14 October 2014	23 September 2014
13 January 2015	16 December 2014
21 April 2015	31 March 2015
7 July 2015	23 June 2015

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

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