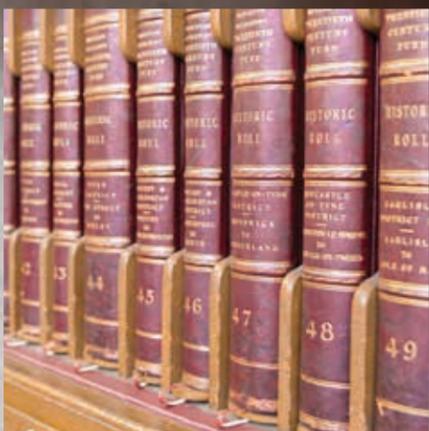


PROPERTY MATTERS

ISSUE 8 – September 2014



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PROPERTY MATTERS

Issue 8 – September 2014

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INTRODUCTION

Dear readers,

Welcome to the September edition of *Property Matters*. This edition includes a case study on VAT which has been kindly prepared by Mark Peters, a VAT consultant. If, like me, you sometimes find computers a mystery, the article by Russell Baker may provide help and re-assurance. We also welcome a contribution from the Heritage team.

Many thanks to all of our subscribers for their continued support, which is greatly appreciated. Please send us articles you think may be of interest to the Connexion, for inclusion in future editions.

All good wishes for the new Connexional year,



[Julie Robinson-Judd](#), Mission Resources Manager, 0207 467 3524

Front page photographs: Methodist Heritage

CONNEXIONAL TEAM UPDATE

Statistics for mission – the other side of the coin

Online annual property returns are accessed through the same [web portal](#) as churches' annual statistics returns: click the purple box for property returns, the blue box for property consents and the red box for Statistics for Mission. The annual returns rounds for property and statistics opened on 1 September. Often the same people are involved in accessing (and in some circuits, data-entering) the different sites – even if, at official level, property and consents go through District Property Secretaries and statistics go through District Membership Secretaries. In all cases, district chairs have oversight of the returns process – which makes sense because each type of information serves as a resource for the District Policy Committee. Increasingly, there is an understanding that property and statistics are two sides of the same coin. They both support the Church's wider mission and ministry rather than just being separate routines.

The Statistics for Mission site deals mainly with membership and community roll numbers, attendance figures at church services, numbers of occasional offices and groups and outreach activities. There are particularly rich data holdings relating to which groups meet where, how often, and with how many attending. All this information is potentially useful in considering how church buildings are used, or could potentially be used. Headline numbers and geographic information are plotted on the [Methodist webmap](#), which shows where churches are and plots district and circuit boundaries, as well as allowing demographic information (deprivation; age profiles etc) to be viewed.

The Statistics for Mission site has been running for 11 years, so is an 'elder child' compared with its sophisticated little siblings, Consents and Returns. Nevertheless, all three sites are subject to an annual upgrade and review process. The 2014 enhancements and updates we've introduced on the Stats sides will obviously be of interest to number-crunchers, but we report them here in the spirit of co-operative working, and to suggest how all these things link together to build up a 360° picture of mission and ministry at church, circuit, district and connexional levels.

So then, for Stats and Mapping, following on from the 2013/2014 review, here's what we've done to help you.

1. We've introduced a facility for you to report when a church has ceased to meet, either in the course of the past year or further back in the past.
2. We've stopped you having to report other denominations' membership numbers if you are a Local Ecumenical Partnership.
3. We've let you see all the membership and attendance numbers you've reported since 2002, via spreadsheets you can access on the Methodist website.
4. We've begun to clean up this data (acknowledging that it might have been us who dirtied it), and have shown you how far we've got with this.
5. We've updated the webmap so that it shows you church sites, not just a single address for each church...
6.and we've refreshed the census information and circuit boundaries on the webmap.

And here's how we'd like you to help us.

1. Get your numbers in by 30 November 2014, when the year-end figures are still fresh to hand and the Statistics Team is geared up to offer you any help you may need.

2. Tell us when any churches closed in your circuit, and what happened to their members, so that we don't keep asking you about them.
3. If you are a Single Congregation LEP, decide which members you are going to report as 'Methodist' – and stick with that decision.
4. Make sure all your groups and outreach activities are individually reported and up to date (once entered, they can be automatically reviewed from one year to the next).
5. Look at the prior year spreadsheets for individual churches and circuits and let us know if the figures are wrong.
6. Feedback to us, good or bad, and tell us of any use that you've made of the numbers, or of any local research projects they may have fed into.

Experience shows that year by year, the process becomes less painful (the Stats site reached a 99% return rate in 2013), and that the amount of accessible, useful information you get back from the process grows.

For further information contact Alan Piggot, Research Officer (Statistics and Mapping);
Tel: 020 7467 3776. Email: statisticsformission@methodistchurch.org.uk.

Annual returns

The annual returns site is now live. Following last year's feedback, we have made some improvements to the site to make it easier for people to use. We appreciate the comments we have received and look forward to keeping this dialogue going.

Some of the changes we have made are:

- **A separate sign-off tab**, making it clearer at what point the return should be signed off.
- **Conditional questions** - It will now be easier to work out which questions need to be completed based on your property type, such as burial ground or LEP.
- **Downloadable forms** - Property details and carbon footprint are now included on to the downloadable form.
- **Carbon footprint** - It is now possible to enter consumption figures in kilowatt hours for gas meters. The tab is now also optional.
- **Help and guidance** - a help and guidance document is now available for the Annual Returns site, which can be found on the [Methodist Church website](#).

Property consents

In recent years, many churches have taken on new activities. Some are in need of structural repairs; others consider refurbishment essential in order to reach out to their communities. All these demands have financial implications.

We have updated the fundraising content on the Property Consents website to make it more accessible for local churches. Please see [How to Fund Your Project](#) for more information if you are:

- reviewing whether an idea is good enough for a project
- looking for funding from Methodist Church sources
- considering applying for external (non Methodist) funding
- needing assistance filling out a funding application form
- in need of new fundraising ideas
- experienced in fundraising but are looking for specific advice.

We have included basic information, ranging from how to run successful local fundraising activities to the best way to fill in the application forms required by large donors. The updated site provides simple steps to online fundraising, budgeting and event planning. It covers local, government and trust fundraising. When using the site you can go directly to the chapter you are interested in. The site also includes downloadable templates such as for basic budgets. A downloadable table of donors allows you to search for donors according to specific types of work – youth work, for example.

The Fundraising Officer (Connexional Team) provides fundraising advice and guidance through various options available to churches. You can still contact our fundraising team when you have completed your project proposal at fundraising@methodistchurch.org.uk for their advice and assistance. However, we strongly encourage you to visit our [consents website](#) before you do so as you may find many answers to your questions there.

The Property Handbook

The Property Handbook is currently in production and will be available during October 2014. Hard copies will be sent to each of the District and Circuit Property officers. It is intended that the Handbook will be used as a reference document to assist with day to day operational matters in relation to Model Trust property. It will replace the online technical and information sheets currently available on the Methodist Church website and will include new guidance and information, making it an essential resource for trustees and church officers with responsibilities for the care and maintenance of church properties.

An electronic version will also be available to download on the Methodist website for all property officers (district, circuit and local church property stewards). Future updates will be date referenced and posted online, enabling out of date information to be easily replaced. We anticipate notifying updates via *Property Matters*.

We hope that you will find this resource helpful. If you notice any inaccuracies, or something which requires updating, please do let us know. We would appreciate your help in this. An email will be sent to all property secretaries when the resource is available online.

For further information contact Kim Medford-Vassell, Executive Support Officer (Property), at medford-vassellk@methodistchurch.org.uk.

Connexional property grants - towards a paperless application process

We are currently working on bringing together the Consents website and application form for connexional funding. This will mean the information supplied on the Consents site will be converted and inserted into the application form, with the intention to make the process less repetitive and ensure applications are uniform when presented to the Connexional Grants Committee (CGC) for consideration.

To enable this to happen we will be updating the guidance notes on the consents website to ensure that all the information the CGC needs is included when you first submit a project. We will also be working towards specific word counts for each section.

It is important that when applying for connexional funding that the both the criteria and advice notes are read together, especially in relation to Section A3 (the Church's mission and vision) and Section C (reasons for undertaking the project and the potential impact).

Updates will be sent as the work progresses, but applications for the current year continue on the existing paper forms.

The closing date for the next round of applications is 12 noon on Wednesday 1 October 2014.

All applications and associated papers need to be sent to grants@methodistchurch.org.uk.

LANDFILL TRUST GRANTS

Landfill Grants Officer

The Landfill Grants Officer Colette Dean has now left the Connexional Team to work on a project with Beanstalk and Save the Children, coordinating volunteers who help disadvantaged youngsters with reading difficulties. We wish Colette every success for the future.

In the meantime, until a new officer is appointed, applications are still being dealt with by Support Services in Manchester. We ask for your patience as Jean Haynes (the administrator) is doing this alongside her usual work. The contact details remain the same as before.

CONSERVATION & HERITAGE



Joanne Balmforth (Connexional Conservation Officer) and Jo Hibbard (Methodist Heritage Officer) regularly receive enquiries that should have been sent to the other – two Joannes dealing with the Church's historic assets understandably gets confusing. To help, Jo Hibbard, together with Chair of the Heritage Committee Sarah Friswell and some members of the wider Methodist Heritage network are going to be contributing regularly to *Property Matters* from now on to give you a feel for their focus, and the help and resources the Heritage team offers.

Do get in touch via Jo about anything covered in these articles. Call 020 7467 5257 or email hibbardj@methodistchurch.org.uk.

Heritage for mission

In 2008, the Conference received a report called *Methodist Heritage and Contemporary Mission*. The Conference approved the setting up of a Heritage Committee and the creation of the Methodist Heritage Officer's role within the Connexional Team, within what is now called the Mission & Advocacy Cluster. The Heritage Committee has a dual remit: overseeing the preservation of the Methodist Church's historic assets, and ensuring the use of Methodism's heritage in God's mission today.

In its first five years, the committee's work has focused on improving the financial sustainability and supporting the development of the visitor offer at the four 'accredited' Methodist museums¹

¹ Our four key heritage sites are: Epworth Old Rectory; The New Room / John Wesley's Chapel, Bristol; John Wesley's House & Museum at Wesley's Chapel, City Road, London; Englesea Brook Chapel & Museum of Primitive Methodism, near Crewe.

and agreeing clearer service level agreements for the Connexional archives². In April 2014 the Methodist Council approved the committee's proposals for a Methodist Church policy on the management of historic objects, to mirror that already in place for archiving. The Heritage Committee has also improved communication, engagement and collaboration with new websites including www.methodistheritage.org.uk and www.mymethodisthistory.org.uk; through a bi-annual newsletter and by convening annual events for local archivists and anyone involved in caring for Methodist heritage sites and historic chapels.

The Conference is not interested in the Connexion keeping old stuff for the sake of it. And so the Heritage Committee seeks to encourage good practice in interpretation as well as conservation, with innovative and intentional ways to make Methodist heritage accessible and relevant. How can our heritage be a mission tool? Let me suggest three ways, and what they might look like in practice:

1. As a way into exploring what it means to identify yourself as a Christian in the Methodist tradition. This might mean visiting a church where there are past associations (I have often heard visitors open a conversation with "I haven't been in here for 30 years..."). For our young people, it could be with a heritage site visit or by looking at memorabilia and considering the origins of our practices, such as membership tickets. Increasingly, encounters happen through family history research. It can be quite a 'revelation' for someone without faith today to find from the archives that they come from a line of preachers for whom faith was as natural as breathing.
2. As a tool for mission planning, where understanding your history (the themes, not necessarily every date) can be instructive in helping make decisions about the direction of mission today. What has worked in the past? What didn't and why not? And what has changed – or not? Read your church's minute books from 100 years ago and see if you spot the crises developing before the hand that is recording the decisions as they happen. Or find out how your forebears managed to fundraise to build the new school room. What might you have done differently? What can you learn for today?
3. Outreach to your community is probably the most obvious mission opportunity that heritage provides. In Methodism we believe all are welcomed by God. So open your doors and invite your community in. History and heritage are very popular at the moment and a great vehicle for engaging with those outside the Church. The Heritage Committee's next five-year strategy hopes to support churches, in collaboration with the Connexional Property team, to open more often for visitors and help them to use their physical assets and history to introduce the love of Christ. Old churches have a ready-made story; new churches are writing theirs and becoming Methodism's legacy day by day. Heritage does not necessarily mean 250 years old! This is Methodist Heritage for *contemporary* mission.

In our next article we will introduce you to Sarah and the members of the Heritage Committee, and then to the managers and development projects transforming the key heritage sites.

² The Conference archives are housed at the University of Manchester's John Ryland's Library as the 'Methodist Archives & Research Centre'. The Methodist Missionary Society Archives are deposited in the Special Collections of the University of London's SOAS Library.

Historic Religious Buildings Alliance

The HRBA publishes a monthly newsletter. Anyone can sign up to receive their own copy – free – at the HRBA website www.hrballiance.org.uk.

We would like to draw your attention to the following items of the September edition:

- **English Heritage's new Strategy for Working with Places of Worship published**
The new five-year strategy has been developed to promote the value of places of worship as part of England's heritage, to support the communities that look after them, and support creative and viable ways of using places of worship to improve sustainability. For a free copy of the strategy, phone 0870 333 1181 or click [here](#).
- **Two more rounds of grants announced for war memorials in England**
Two more opportunities are available for organisations to apply for funding to repair or restore a war memorial in England. The funding is intended for freestanding war memorials with no other function other than as a war memorial. The deadlines for 2014 are 30 September and 31 December. For full details of how to apply, phone 0300 123 0764 or click [here](#).
- **Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme**
DCMS and HMRC have clarified that in most cases the installation of solar panels will be judged as an alteration and so will come within scope of the LPWG scheme. Until 1 August 2013, they were eligible for the 5% rate, and if a project commenced prior to that date then this reduced rate would apply for the life of the project even if some of the work was carried out at after 1 August 13. The Scheme will only refund VAT at the rate actually paid.
- **Landfill Communities Fund**
Under the Landfill Communities Fund (also known as the Landfill Tax Credit Scheme) landfill operators can currently redirect up to 6.2% of their tax liability in any year as part of a voluntary donation, which they can then reclaim tax credits on. This can be used to fund projects undertaken by Approved Bodies including the repair, maintenance or restoration of a place of worship or a place of architectural importance. For full details of the scheme and its terms, phone 01926 488 300 or click [here](#).

METHODIST INSURANCE

Unoccupied buildings - protecting your empty churches

It can be difficult to see a church that was once at the heart of its community close its doors. However, it's even more upsetting to see that church fall into disrepair, prey to vandals – or worse, suffer an arson attack. Once a church building is empty, there is a risk of squatters taking up residence and routine maintenance is often overlooked which can result in blocked gutters, slipped roof slates and tiles, which can then lead to water damage.

As the owners of the church, you need to take into account any risks to the public, including trespassers. The Occupiers' Liability Act 1957 and 1984 imposes a duty of care to both lawful visitors to, and trespassers on, the property.



There are wide insurance implications relating to vacant churches. If your church is insured by Methodist Insurance, it is a policy requirement that you inform the company about any such properties.

According to the conditions of Methodist Insurance policies, churches must notify the company within **30 days** of a church becoming unoccupied.

This is because unoccupied buildings are at much greater risk of damage than occupied ones.

Kevin Thomas, Risk Control Technical Faith Manager at Methodist Insurance said, “We know from bitter experience that once a church, hall or manse is unoccupied, it can very quickly become a target for vandals. It’s important to understand that if a building is empty and we’ve not been notified, the building is not technically insured, which is a situation nobody wants.” In order to maintain and protect the property and your legal responsibility as its owner, you need to carefully manage the risks an unoccupied building presents.

Methodist Insurance have developed a short, downloadable unoccupied buildings guide, to help you protect any empty churches you are responsible for and to help you manage the risks that empty church buildings present. The guide includes a log sheet for you to record the inspection visits at your church. Download your copy [here](#).

Safe use of ladders and stepladders – working at height

Working at height remains one of the biggest causes of fatalities and major injuries according to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE). 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. Before undertaking the task ask yourselves, “Is this something we have the equipment and capabilities to do ourselves, or should we seek outside help?”

Conducting repairs or maintenance high up inside a church poses a challenge and risk at the best of times. But doing it alone, without someone to steady a ladder or ensure scaffolding is secure, is an even greater risk as some churches have recently found to their misfortune.

Methodist Insurance’s Technical Survey Manager Kevin Thomas said: “There are specific statutory health and safety regulations applying to working at height. It is extremely important that church trustees make sure that when work is carried out at height by staff or volunteers they take suitable and sufficient measures to prevent, so far as reasonably practicable, any person falling a distance liable

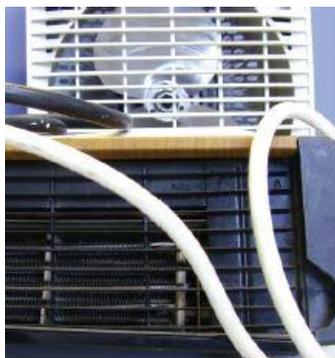


to cause personal injury. Using a stepladder to change a light bulb could result in a serious fall and people should never do jobs like this when unaccompanied. It is vitally important written risk assessments are undertaken, actioned and recorded in writing.”

Quite apart from the risk of injury, this type of accident can expose the church to be investigated by the HSE. Methodist Insurance knows of a recent successful prosecution brought against churches by enforcing authorities for breaches of health and safety regulations. Kevin added: “An accident caused by a breach in health and safety regulations can have enormous implications. Apart from personal injury, there are indirect costs that insurance does not protect against such as the time taken up by legal action and the reputational damage done to the church involved. It is important we make sure our churches are safe places.”

Information and guidance on working at heights, as well as a working at heights checklist, are available on the Methodist Insurance website in the [church guidance section](#).

Keeping your church cosy this winter



A church’s heating system affects its fabric, its contents, its congregation and its mission. Should you find yourself in a situation where your main church heating system fails during the winter months – especially in the run-up to Christmas – it can mean having to getting a temporary situation in place quickly.

There is a variety of different heaters available. Our recommendation is that you use electric convector or fan-assisted heaters (with thermostatic cut-outs which operate in the event of over-heating) as a temporary measure.

We don’t recommend the use of liquid petroleum gas (LPG) heaters because they give off lots of water vapour which can have an effect on the building, and can lead to the onset of rot in woodwork. If they are used, cylinders should be kept to a minimum and preferably changed in the open air in a well-ventilated area away from any source of ignition.

Portable heaters should be sited well clear of woodwork or other combustible materials. Where possible, they should have guards fitted to protect against the possibility of their being accidentally knocked over or moved.

Never use electric radiant heaters and paraffin or oil fired heaters, even as a temporary measure. Do not leave temporary heaters unattended for long periods or use them when the building is unoccupied. These heaters should never be moved once they have been switched on.

For more information about heating in churches, please visit www.methodistinsurance.co.uk/guidance and download the fire guidance notes.

CASE STUDY

New build, extension or annexe? A VAT case study

Some years ago, a church identified that its existing building was no longer suitable for the range of activities it wanted to undertake. In particular, rising attendances meant that space was at a premium, and so a much larger building was needed.

After considering a range of options, it was decided that a new church building would be constructed alongside the existing one. The new building would be five times larger, and adjoin the existing building at first floor level. VAT was prudently identified as a potential issue and clarification was duly sought from HMRC, who advised that the works might qualify for VAT relief, as new build, subject to certain conditions being met.

The church reviewed these conditions and decided that they were indeed met. The construction works were therefore treated as zero-rated, and invoices for separate supplies of materials (the church congregation wanted to undertake as much of the work itself as possible) retained with a view to the subsequent submission of a DIY Refund Claim. Unfortunately this claim was then rejected by HMRC, on the basis that they now saw the project as a standard-rated extension. Helpfully, a significant amount of time had passed since the main construction works were supplied – meaning that HMRC were ‘out of time’ to challenge VAT zero-rating.

The problem had manifested itself in the use of the word ‘extension’ in the consent obtained from the planning authority, which HMRC insisted was determinative. The church considered the project an extension of its life and work, and had used such terminology when applying for planning permission. Unfortunately, the VAT implications of using such language in a physical ‘bricks and mortar’ sense were not recognised – which was all rather unfortunate, given that the local authority itself had raised objections to the building being described as an extension, but decided to grant permission anyway, as there appeared to be few obvious planning implications. The church therefore found itself in dispute with HMRC. If the project were capable of being treated as either a new build or as an annexe, then relief would apply and the DIY refund claim would be met. However, if the new building were an extension (as HMRC contended), relief would be refused.

The presence of internal access ways appeared to undermine the ‘new build’ argument, and so the church concentrated on the annexe line of argument. Key factors that were highlighted included functionality (one was used for worship, the other by a different group for youth and Sunday School activities), facilities (each had its own kitchen, toilets, and heating, water and security systems) and access. Critically, the buildings had their own entrances, whilst internal access was largely emergency one-way.

With considerable effort, including an appeal to the VAT Tribunal, HMRC were eventually persuaded that the weight of all these factors relating to the operation of the building overrode the wording adopted in the planning consent. The building was there accepted as an annexe rather than an extension, and relief was allowed.

The matter highlights a number of interesting points.

- Firstly, taking care with the wording used in the planning process can prevent some issues ever arising.

- Secondly, the wording of any planning consent is not necessarily determinative, although HMRC often consider that it is.
- Thirdly, as a general rule of thumb, the DIY Refund Claims unit are more likely to apply a stringent application of the VAT rules than perhaps Parliament intended – it being their job to reject as many claims as possible.
- Fourthly the borderline between extension, annexe and new build is difficult to determine; indeed the terms annexe and extension may not necessarily be mutually exclusive and it seems quite possible for a development to be both.
- Lastly, and perhaps most importantly, some considerable attention to detail is often required if HMRC are to be won over. That and a fair amount of stamina.

About the author

Mark Peters is an independent VAT consultant based in the West of England, who specialises in land and property matters. If you are considering a similar project, and would like to understand the associated VAT implications, please feel free to email him at mark@markpetersvat.co.uk.

New VAT guide

Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC) have issued a new guide on VAT for Charities which can be accessed at www.gov.uk/government/publications/vat-notice-7011-charities/vat-notice-7011-charities.

GOOD NEWS FROM AROUND THE CONNEXION

Zion Bristol – a community art space

The last service at the Zion Methodist Church was held in August 2008. Once a focus for the local community of Bedminster Down, the beautiful chapel was left derelict after the dwindling congregation could no longer sustain its use.

In 2010, local designer and events organiser Jess Wright came across the building for sale whilst hunting for a unique property that could house the various community projects that she had worked on over the years. Once Jess had been inside the decision was made and the long drawn out battle for planning and funding began! Completion of the building was finalised in April 2011 and work began to restore the building as a centre for this community once again and provide Bedminster Down with a creative space for all to use.

Zion is a not-for-profit social enterprise. All income is used to create a sustainable future for the community art space. They do not receive funding and rely on their events and activities to keep the space going.



Zion aspires to be a meeting place for the local residents and for visitors across Bedminster Down. Tea, coffee and lunches are available, and the 'Deli on the Down' serves special treats. Zion also provides facilities for families alongside regular activities for kids.

The space itself is an inspiring venue that is available to rent for meetings, parties, workshops and many other uses. For further information, visit zionbristol.co.uk.

Comfortable with computers

Fairfield Methodist Church has about 20 members with an average age of over 75. Like other churches they struggle with financial issues, and as one of three Methodist Churches in a small town, they feel under the threat of closure. However, they are an active church within the limits of age, health and talents and endeavour to be disciples of God's love for all.

In October 2013, the Church Council looked at how to continue and improve their Christian mission in the circuit of eight churches soon to have only one minister. Fairfield decided to take on a challenging, innovative and exciting project now known as *Comfortable With Computers*.

The project is aimed at helping older people to try out and use computers in a safe environment under the guidance of church member Russell Baker, who has an interest in technology inspired by his 93-year-old father-in-law Roy. Russell has many years of experience in helping older people with computers as a volunteer with two national charities and has seen the benefits technology can bring to improve their quality of life.

Having decided to start the project, the church trustees offered to host it free of charge over what was agreed would be a two-year commitment. Russell was able, with Roy's help, to offer some equipment as well as the two-year time commitment needed.

The next important step was to seek funding for a broadband connection to the church as well as other essential project expenses. An enthusiastic local councillor, who saw the project as an innovative way of helping older people, persuaded two of her colleagues to offer financial support through the Councillors Community Initiative Fund. Further financial support was received from two local charities. Local businesses, the district and Derby University were also approached and a lot of goodwill was created, as well as some money promised.

The plan came together, although not without difficulties. At the end of February this year, the first weekly morning clinic opened. Russell admits he was nervous about how the project would be received. But pleasingly (and with little advertising), several interested people turned up.

Was Fairfield ready for them? Yes and no. They had a reasonable numbers of 'normal' computers for the newbies, but not enough tablet-type computers, which have turned out to be what was wanted. On the first day, one person came with a top-of-the-range iPad she had little idea of how to use.

Over the months, the problems brought have all been dealt with. The clinic now lasts four hours, not the two originally envisaged, and more essential and relevant equipment has been purchased. So besides helping callers to decide if computers in their various forms are for them or not, what has been achieved?

The many positives include seeing older people gain confidence in using a computer as a communications device for emailing or Skyping relatives and friends, thereby pushing loneliness behind them. Friendships have been made; people are using their newfound skills to mentor their friends. But most importantly, Russell says, they have seen older people become empowered and able to use technology to get listened to and to achieve a sense of fulfilment by acquiring a new skill.

No one new has yet come to Sunday worship as a result of the project. But through Comfortable With Computers, the church provides an essential free service for the community within a Christian environment. Fairfield is no longer seen by the community as a place just for funerals.

Russell Baker is happy to share in more detail the lessons he learnt from setting up and running this project. Contact him via email at russellbaker77@gmail.com.



DATES FOR THE DIARY

- 1 Sept **Returns and Statistics websites go live**
- 13 & 18 Sept ***The Beautiful Burial Ground: Simple ways to create a haven for wildlife, for heritage, for people, Durweston, Dorset & The Park, Exeter***
Organised by Caring for God's Acre, this event will provide training and specialist advice on how to transform burial grounds into havens. The fee is £15 including lunch and refreshments.
Booking information: 01588 673041 or click on this [link](#).
- 23 Sept ***Getting the best out of your building, St Albans, Herts***
A participative seminar organised by the CoE Cathedral and Church Buildings Division designed to help clergy care for and develop their church buildings. Speakers will introduce ways that our churches and churchyards can be used for both the mission of the Church and as places of culture and heritage.
Booking information: Laura Hart on lhart@stalbans.anglican.org or click on this [link](#).
- 1 Oct **Closing date for the next round of grant applications**
- 2 Oct ***Building Performance – caring for church buildings and collections, London***
Building performance assessments support the successful management of historic buildings, taking information about the fabric, microclimate, services (e.g. heating), and current and future uses to help plan for sustainable care and conservation. This practical conference will look at the conservation challenges and technical demands that arise with the multiple uses including worship, community support, and the display of museum-quality collections.
Booking information: 020 7898 1889 or click on this [link](#).

- 3 Oct **Free seminar on HLF funding, St Andrew's Church, Epworth, North Lincolnshire**
The HLF is running a free training seminar for places of worship in Lincolnshire and Doncaster, focussing on available funding in the Grants for Places of Worship scheme and how to apply. The event will also include lunch and the opportunity to learn about the restoration of St Andrews.
Booking information: y&hdevelopment@hlf.org.uk
- 8-9 Oct **CRE North**
A team of staff from Methodist Insurance will be at the Christian Resources Exhibition in Manchester in October. The team will be available on the Methodist Insurance stand to answer questions about church, home, charity or community group insurance. You will be able to pick up a copy of the latest issue of *Dialogue*, Methodist Insurance's newsletter, with information about running night shelters on church property, advice for getting your home winter ready and protecting empty churches.
The event takes place at Event City in Manchester, from Wednesday 8 to Thursday 9 October. It is one of the biggest events of its kind in the UK and gives churches the opportunity to purchase equipment and resources.
If you would like a complimentary ticket to attend, as Methodist Insurance's guest, please email: annika.howard@micmail.com no later than Tuesday 30 September 2014.

Subscribing to future editions of *Property Matters*

Anyone is welcome to receive a copy of *Property Matters*. You can subscribe by clicking on this [link](#). It is free to download and available in both a colour version to read online and as a printable black and white version. Previous editions can be accessed [here](#).
Please encourage the wider circulation and ensure that new church officers are made aware of it.

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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