

September 2023

# PROPERTY MATTERS

The Methodist Church 

Welcome to the September edition of Property Matters with a focus on property-related updates and guidance.

For the latest property guidance, please refer to the [Property pages](#).  
[Meet the Property Support Team](#).

## Methodist Housing and Homelessness Gathering

We are pleased to announce that the next Methodist Homelessness and Housing Gathering will take place on **Thursday 5 October 2023** from 11.30 am - 1pm. Please [click here to register](#) to attend.



We will have updates on recent lobbying and on current developments in social housing and in homelessness outreach and prevention. We will be reporting on discussions regarding increasing The Methodist Church's involvement in affordable housing schemes and have presentations from Housing Justice and from Agile Homes. We will spend time sharing with each other as to how things are in our respective areas and pray together for our work on all these issues.

[Click here to register and for more information.](#)

# Annual Returns Update

We have made some significant changes to the Annual Returns update to help make it more efficient and relevant to the current needs of the wider Church. One of the most significant changes users will notice is the drastic reduction in the number of questions. The feedback from managing trustees over the years has been consistent: there were too many questions being asked on the portal. The questions now focus on Action for Hope and the mission of churches and circuits. These questions will be fed in to the work that the Connexional Team does and help assess the impact of these initiatives.



However, the questions that were previously on the return have not entirely gone away. They now form The [Managing Trustee Annual Returns Checklist \(Word\)](#) or [\(pdf version\)](#). This makes it easier for us to adapt the questions as the needs of the church change over time, but also make it easier for you to submit the information to your circuits and districts, but also store them for your own records.

The [Managing Trustee Annual Returns Checklist \(Word\)](#) or [\(pdf version\)](#) contains questions that used to appear within the annual returns checklist. However, although they have been removed, they may still assist you in fulfilling your obligations as a managing trustee. Please note that this is not a complete list, merely guidance to ensure that you keep in mind certain areas of responsibility on an annual basis. It is suggested that reference should be made to specific District or Circuit requirements.

These documents can be found on the website under 'Annual Returns' on [A-Z Property Guidance](#) and [Regular Inspections](#) as well as [Schedules and Forms](#) and [Managing Trustees](#).

## Action for Hope

Securing funding for energy efficiency and generation measures can be difficult, but the [Benefact Trust](#) are keen to receive applications from Methodist groups focussed on net zero and climate change. [Click here to view](#) their grants page.



There is a specific 'Methodist Grants' stream which is intended to fund missional projects, and this includes projects focussed on climate change. [Caring for God's Creation](#) and taking steps to address the injustices of the climate crisis are key missional priorities for the Methodist Church, so are absolutely included within this grant stream.

Before applying for a grant it is helpful to understand to assess your building and energy usage, and the Property Team have resources on the [Assess Your Building & Energy Usage](#) page to help you do this.

## National Churches Trust is increasing support for churches in the UK

NCT are excited to announce that, through [Cherish](#), they now have three dedicated support officers in post, based in Wales/Cymru, Scotland and North West England (Cumbria, Lancashire and Greater Manchester) who are able to provide on the ground support.



Thanks to funding from the National Lottery Heritage Fund, these officers will be able to provide a range of training, resources and mentoring to help you look after your place of worship.

In these places, it has been harder for historic churches to get the help they need to make urgent repairs to their buildings. Cherish has been set up to support at risk churches in these places, so that we do not lose this precious heritage.

- [Learn more about Gareth, the support officer in Wales/Cymru](#)
- [Learn more about Karen, the support officer in Scotland](#)
- [Learn more about Matthew, the support officer in Cumbria, Lancashire and Greater Manchester](#)

## Warm Welcome

Warm Welcome is not just for winter! Warm Welcome is continuing to support faith groups, community centres, libraries and other organisations who are seeking to reduce isolation in our neighbourhoods during the summer and autumn.



But winter is coming. Warm Welcome is going to be offering even more support, including advice on creating effective spaces, growing visibility, ensuring accessibility and inclusion and potential funding opportunities.

You're invited to the launch event online on **Wednesday, 4 October, 7.30-8.30pm** to find out about the latest developments and how they can help your church create a Warm Welcome space. There will be more details soon. In the meantime, please save the date. [Click here to visit the Warm Welcome website.](#)

## Methodist Insurance Updates

### Tackle risks that could cause slips and trips

Slips and trips are a common cause of accidents and the upcoming autumn weather can cause an additional risk as leaves fall onto pathways.

Manage the risks by reviewing slip and trip hazards both indoors and outside. You'll find tips on what to look for and suitable precautions to take in our guidance.

[Slip and trip guidance](#)



### **Use of digital technology**

Technology can help enhance your mission in a number of different ways. Whilst there are many obvious benefits of using digital technology, there are also risks which you should consider and mitigate. Learn more about the risks and your responsibilities.



[Digital technology made simple](#)

### **Has your church considered legacy giving?**

A legacy gift is a sum left in a person's will that reflects their personal priorities. It can be an expression of someone's faith; a sharing of their values; an act of love or a statement about how they want to be remembered.

To grow legacy giving at your church, read our guide on the church fundraising hub.



[Grow legacy giving](#)

### **Meet Mark**

We are proud of our reputation for customer care built on deep expertise, and we are always looking to drive it higher still. It's a great pleasure to introduce our new Head of Customer Operations – Mark Cowdell. He brings with him a detailed knowledge of the business and wide skillset built on a varied career.



“I am responsible for ensuring our customer experience continues to offer you expert knowledge and understanding to help you protect your church and its community, in what is an evolving picture, full of challenges and opportunities. I'm looking forward to getting to know you, our customers, to hear more about the work you are doing and how we can best support you.”

Whatever your Methodist insurance question, our team is here to help.

[Contact us](#)

### **Customer promise**

At Methodist Insurance, we operate for the wellbeing of the Methodist Church and related charitable causes, we are always prepared to go the extra mile to support our customers.

This desire comes to life in the form of our Customer Promise, which aims to demonstrate the standard that we set for ourselves in delivering good outcomes for the Methodist Church and charitable causes every day.

[Read our promise to you](#)



### **Protect your home in an emergency**

Methodist Insurance home insurance customers have access to home emergency cover.

Keep our helpline number handy and one of our rapid response team members will come to your assistance. By fixing the problem quickly, we hope to reduce the impact of the incident and the inconvenience for you.

[Learn more about home emergency cover](#)



### **Are you looking for funding towards your Methodist project?**

Benefact Trust's Methodist Grants Programme supports building development and maintenance projects, to enhance the mission and ministry of Methodist Churches across the UK and Ireland. The Trust will help to fund projects that focus on church growth, community engagement, and improved accessibility.

[Find out more](#)





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MORE THAN  
JUST COVER.**

**20%\***  
DONATED TO  
YOUR CHOSEN  
CHURCH OR  
CHARITY

\* Terms and conditions apply. Full details available on our website  
methodistinsurance.co.uk/charitydonation

## HSE Update

### Gas Safety Week 2023

Gas Safety Week is the annual campaign coordinated by Gas Safe Register that focuses on ensuring the general public know how to stay gas safe.

This year's Gas Safety Week runs from 11-15 September and focuses on diversity, recognising the essential role gas safe registered engineers play as trusted tradespeople in keeping householders safe.



You can pledge your support for Gas Safety Week, and get the resources you need to help your networks with an [online toolkit](#). This includes social media updates, images and animations, web banners, stock images and copy and much more.

- Find all these resources and more information on the [Gas Safety Week website](#)
- HSE's website has a wide range of [guidance and information about gas safety](#)

### Make sure you are working safely with DSE

All employers must protect workers from the health risks of working with display screen equipment (DSE).

Incorrect use of DSE or poorly designed workstations or work environments can lead to pain in necks, shoulders, backs, arms, wrists and hands, as well as fatigue and eye strain. [HSE's guidance](#) covers a range of topics including:

- workstations and assessments
- work routine and breaks
- eyesight testing

There are also accessible resources including a [DSE workstation checklist](#) and practical tips on [maintaining a good posture](#). In addition, HSE have guidance on what employers and workers need to know about [working with DSE from home](#). This includes a video with basic advice on how to maintain a good posture, both at home and in the office.

## Historic England's Everyday Heritage Grants: Celebrating Working Class Histories

Historic England have announced the second round of funding for [Everyday Heritage Grants: Celebrating Working Class Histories](#). These grants will fund community-led and people-focused projects to tell the stories of people and places missing from the records of history.



Historic England

Historic England is trying to reach community and heritage organisations, inviting them to apply for grants of up to £25,000. They are also interested in funding smaller grassroots projects starting at £1,000, in the hope of reaching people who haven't worked with Historic England before.

Each project should enable people to share untold stories about the places where they live, encouraging communities to examine and tell stories in their own way. The projects selected will contribute positively to participants' wellbeing and sense of pride in their place, as well as provide innovative volunteering opportunities.

Applications close on **7 November 2023**. [Click here to view information](#) on how to apply. This includes successful applications from the first round, FAQs and a video to help people who are not familiar with making grant applications.



## Support for Charities Helping Vulnerable People

Charities and community organisations working with vulnerable people in England and Wales are being invited by the Government to apply for a share of a Department of Culture, Media and Sport support package. The fund will support frontline charities and community organisations providing services such as the provision of food, emergency provisions, shelter, safe spaces, warmth and financial or housing advice. Organisations can apply for grants worth between £10,000 and £75,000 to cover project and core costs, including office rent, utilities, staff and volunteers, from now until the end of March.



**Applications will be accepted until 16 October 2023.** Further details on eligibility and the applications process can be found on [The National Lottery Community Fund website](#), in its role as the intermediary grant maker.

## Funding for staff salaries and ongoing costs

TCC can help with all aspects of funding church projects, from developing a suitable business plan, to advice on which funders to apply to, all the way through to drafting applications and monitoring project outcomes. Currently, their funding report features some excellent funds for those looking for to take on lay workers and paid staff. [Click here to learn more.](#)



### Listed Building Advisory Committee (LBAC) Meeting Dates:

- **10 October 2023** - Deadline for paper is 12 September 2023
- **23 January 2024** - Deadline for paper is 31 December 2023
- **23 April 2024** - Deadline for paper is 22 March 2024
- **16 July 2024** - Deadline for paper is 14 June 2024

## Supporting the Methodist Connexion

Methodist Insurance has been protecting the property of the Methodist Church since 1872. We are a Public Limited Company owned by shareholders and independent of the Methodist Church. The company operates like a mutual by returning most of our profits back to our community in the form of a significant financial contribution to the Methodist Connexion. [Find out more.](#)



**Property Matters is a monthly newsletter focused on giving updates on property related guidance and legalisation as well as providing information and links to related subjects. To view the most current content, please refer to the [Property pages](#) on the website. We cannot know about everything that's going on, so please do [email us](#) if you have any feedback or ideas for items to include.**

Methodist Church House, 25 Tavistock Place Road, London, WC1H 9SF 020 7486 5502  
[methodist.org.uk](http://methodist.org.uk)  
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