

February 2023

PROPERTY MATTERS

The Methodist Church 

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

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

If you have any feedback, please email the [Property Support Team](#).

Energy Basket Questionnaire

Last call to respond to the Energy Basket Questionnaire!

The questionnaire will close on 28 February 2023. If your church would like register interest or give feedback towards an energy basket scheme, [please click here](#).



The Connexional Property Team have opened this questionnaire as a response to receiving an increased number of enquiries from managing trustees concerned at the rising gas and electricity costs for their buildings, especially when contracts come to an end. Some churches have expressed an interest in joining a collective group called an energy basket, which may open up opportunities for more competitive gas and electricity rates due to buying in bulk. The Connexional Property Support team would like to support churches in facilitating an energy basket but we would need to know how many churches would be interested and at what timescales. Thus, this short survey has been developed so that we can ascertain the appetite for exploring this scheme further.

[Please click here to fill in the short survey.](#)

Update on the Energy Bills Discount Scheme

For most customers, a discount on the price per unit will be applied automatically via energy bills. Details of the discount can be [found here](#). Energy providers should provide confirmation to all customers before the end of March 2023. The government have produced a useful [Factsheet about the Energy Bills Discount Scheme](#). As well, Heritage Alliance have produced a useful summary - [click here to view](#).



Additionally, charities (including places of worship) can check whether they are currently paying the correct rate of VAT on the fuel that they purchase – see [VAT for charities: What qualifies for VAT relief](#). Contact your supplier if you believe that you may qualify for a refund.

A small number of places of worship may qualify for an additional reduction through the ETTI (Energy and Trade Intensive Industries) scheme. This will apply to 'places of worship which are a historic site or building or a tourist attraction; or which house a library, archive or museum'. They will need to apply for this additional support, however more information including the application process is not due until end of March 2023. [Click here to view more information](#).

[NCVO](#) (The National Council for Voluntary Organisations), NCVO are working hard to analyse what the new scheme means for the overall charitable sector as they are already concerned about the significant reduction in financial support via the reduced Energy Bill Relief Scheme and the impact it will have on already struggling organisations. They are offering support and resources for charities, including a template letter for writing to your MP. [Click here to learn more](#).

Methodist Insurance Updates

Does your church have a security plan?

It's good practice to regularly review security arrangements for your church and other buildings you are responsible for. We fully appreciate each location will have differing security challenges and assets are protected by bespoke solutions. You can read our church security article to get started.

[Church security guidance](#)



A broader scope for Methodist Grants

Recent changes to the Methodist Grants Programme mean funding is now available for repair and maintenance projects, as well as redevelopment projects, that are essential for the ongoing mission and ministry of a Methodist church.

[Do you have a project in mind?](#)



Applying for grants? Here are 5 top tips

Grant applications can be a great source of fundraising income for your church – and may be the largest donation towards your project.

Use our five top tips and application checklist to make sure yours is persuasive and shows the difference the money will make. [Top tips for grant applications](#)



Autumn/Winter Dialogue newsletter

The autumn/winter edition of our twice-yearly newsletter is available to read on our website.

You'll find a whole host of useful information from us, including introductions to some of the team here and inspiration from other churches working to provide their communities with a brighter future.

[Read Dialogue](#)



Home Emergency Cover

We include home emergency cover as standard on our home insurance policies, so if you have a burst pipe in the middle of the night, you have access to emergency help.

Keep our helpline number handy and one of our rapid response team 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 what's covered](#)



METHODIST INSURANCE

Protect your home and support your church or charity

*Terms and conditions apply.

20% donation*

The banner features the Methodist Insurance logo on the left, a photograph of a modern living room with a sofa and coffee table on the right, and a blue circular badge with the text '20% donation*' overlaid on the photo.

Net Zero in my Neighbourhood Workshops

Invite JPIT to run a workshop in your neighbourhood

JPIT are excited to be travelling the UK, online and in person, to share their Net-Zero in My Neighbourhood project with you! They've produced a one-hour workshop, which can be run in-person or online, introducing the project and starting to think about how it might work in your context.

It's perfect for an environmental group, small groups or to invite a whole congregation to get involved! Get in touch to invite JPIT to deliver the workshop in your church, or download the resources and use them yourself.

[Click here to learn more.](#)



HSE Update



Volunteering Guidance

The guidance explains how [health and safety law applies to volunteering](#). There is also information on:

- [when to report incidents involving volunteers](#)
- [including volunteers in your risk assessments](#)

The pages provide some specific advice for volunteers who manage non-domestic premises such as village and community halls, as well as guidance on charity retail and fundraising. For further information visit [HSE's Volunteering page](#).

Bust the myths on Portable Appliance Testing

Portable appliance testing (PAT) is the examination of electrical appliances and equipment to ensure they are safe to use. There are many common myths about PAT - visit the [Frequently Asked Questions page](#) to find the key facts about the inspection and testing of portable electrical equipment.

You can download the leaflet [Maintaining Portable Electric Equipment in Low-Risk Environments](#). It sets out simple and sensible precautions you should take to prevent danger from portable or movable electrical equipment. HSE's website also has [general advice on electrical safety at work](#).

Reporting accidents and illness at work

Make sure you submit a RIDDOR report for a workplace accident or illness where necessary. [RIDDOR](#) puts duties on employers, the self-employed and people in control of work premises to report certain serious workplace accidents, occupational diseases and specified dangerous occurrences. A publication on Reporting Accidents and Incidents can be [downloaded here](#). HSE also offer guidance on:

- [when you need to report an incident](#)
- [how to report an incident](#)
- [HSE's Accident Book template](#).

Here4Huntingdon

[Huntingdon Methodist Church](#) in

Cambridgeshire is situated on the High Street in Huntingdon. The church had a vision to create a caring and supportive environment for the whole community and the church recognised the fast growing and evolving challenges that were being experienced by their church and community. In order to fully appreciate these implications, they embarked on extensive research, investigation, consultation and planning before commencing with the Here4Huntingdon (H4H) scheme.

[Click here to read their story.](#)



Warm Spaces Updates

Methodist churches have responded to the cost-of-living crisis by opening their doors to ensure that communities are not left out in the cold. [Epsom Methodist Church](#) have been opening their building to the community each Wednesday throughout the winter, providing warmth, food and spaces for families to meet.



More than 450 Methodist churches have now registered on the Warm Welcome website as being willing to offer somewhere for people to find heat, comfort and companionship. This makes the Methodists second only to the Church of England in uptake of the scheme.

TMCP Updates

How to Ensure Managing Trustees Obtain the Best Deal

When Managing Trustees are considering disposing of property, it is vital to consider the structure of the sale and how the Charity can obtain the best possible deal. At TMCP, we frequently see transactions where the Managing Trustees' professional advisers are negotiating, and agreeing, to sales of property with overage provisions attached.



[Click here to read more.](#)

Dealing with Bequests and Trusts when closing the Local Church

It is always a sensitive and difficult decision for the Church Council, but if the time comes when it is decided that the Local Church is no longer viable then there are decisions that the Church Council must take in relation to any trusts or bequests they hold before they have their final Church Council meeting.

[Click here to read more.](#)

The 2023 Annual Data Protection Checklist

Thank you to all Managing Trustee bodies who completed the 2022 Annual Data Protection Checklist (Checklist). We recognize the hard work and commitment by those Managing Trustees and their District Data Champions. It is that time of year again when all Local Churches, Circuits and Districts need to complete the 2023 Checklist. [Click here to view.](#)

Watch out for Wayleaves

TMCP are receiving an increased number of requests from service providers that wish to install pipe, cable, or communication apparatus under, over or on the Church's land. Although this is often presented as a simple arrangement requiring a signature by the landowner, permission for such apparatus usually constitutes what is known as a "wayleave agreement".

[Click here to learn more.](#)

Levelling Up in Ashbourne

A £15 million levelling bid called Ashbourne Reborn was successful and includes the local Methodist Church as one of the partners.

[Click here to learn more.](#)

The Link Project at Ashbourne Methodist Church will be a community hub that offers a fresh, modern range of accommodation options for groups and families as well as an outdoor riverside garden event space. It will also link to a range of sustainable transport options to improve connectivity, including charging for e-bikes and scooters and connections to the Tissington Trail.

[Click here to read more.](#)



War Memorials Online

[War Memorials Online](#) aims to build a complete picture of the whereabouts, type and condition of all war memorials in the UK. Anyone and everyone can help protect war memorials for future generations. Register to contribute information or explore the site to find out more about war memorials.

[Click here to learn more.](#)



Please note the following 2 actions are required if a war memorial is part of a closed church building that is listed for sale.

1. A photographic record of the interior of closed church buildings should be taken before sale. A copy of the photographic record should be sent to the [Connexional Conservation Officer](#). [Click here to view guidance](#) on creating a record.
2. All war memorials should be recorded with the [War Memorials Online](#). If you need any assistance, please contact the [Connexional Conservation Officer](#).

Benefact Trust's Refreshed Approach to Funding

Benefact Trust are focusing on the social impact made by funding, guiding and celebrating the work of churches and Christian charities and help the most vulnerable in our communities and give them the opportunity to flourish.

It is now easier to understand what grants are available, and how to apply. The biggest change comes with the introduction of the [Community Impact Grants programme](#). Funding will be available under the following programmes:

1. [Community Impact Grants](#)
2. Building Improvement Grants (this programme will launch very soon)
3. [Heritage Skills for Christian Buildings Grants](#)
4. [Methodist Grants](#)
5. Crisis Response Grants

Love Your Burial Ground Week

[Love your Burial Ground Week](#) is a celebratory week which has been running for many years. Caring for God's Acre has been encouraging all who help to look after churchyards, chapel yards and cemeteries to celebrate these fantastic places in the lovely month of June – in any way you choose. This year, it will be held from **Saturday, 3 June - Sunday, 11 June 2023**.



Burial grounds can be ideal places for introducing people to wildlife and local heritage. Activities in previous years have included teddy bear picnics, family bug hunts, dawn chorus (followed by breakfast!), illustrated talks, wildflower identification, tree trails, leaf bingo, tower tours, family history, memorial recording, volunteer work party sessions and more!

[Churches Count on Nature 2023](#) is part of Love Your Burial Ground Week, focusing on the brilliant wildlife to be found in churchyards and chapel yards. It is a joint initiative promoted by Caring for God's Acre, the Church of England, the Church in Wales and A Rocha UK.

[Click here to register and download free resources.](#)

MHA Sunday

MHA Sunday is a chance to come together and celebrate Methodist Homes (MHA). It offers a time of reflection where we can pray for those in later life and those who support them as we raise awareness of the charity and everything it does. If you'd like to hold your own MHA Sunday, [click here find out more here.](#)



Listed Building Advisory Committee (LBAC) Meeting Dates:

- **18 April 2023** - Deadline for paper is 28 March 2023
- **18 July 2023** - Deadline for paper is 27 June 2023

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 legislation 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 Marylebone Road, London, NW1 5JR 020 7486 5502
methodist.org.uk
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