

December 2023

PROPERTY MATTERS

The **Methodist** Church 

Welcome to the December 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](#)



This year's Christmas Campaign is Out of Ordinary and did you know the church featured in the video is the Chapel Field Methodist Church in Norwich? It's great to see one of our historic buildings being used in this way.

[Click here to view the video.](#)

[Click here](#) to learn more about the Chapel Field Methodist Church, which has an interesting history section and the church is usually open during Heritage Open Days (September of each year).

The Property Support team would like to wish you a very blessed and restful Christmas!

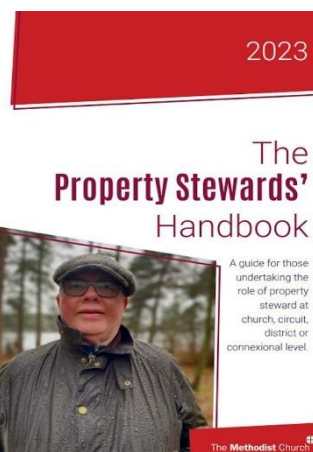
Property Stewards' Handbook

We are pleased to announce the launch of the Property Stewards' Handbook!

This handbook is design to be an across-the-board information resource for property stewards at a church, circuit and district level.

It includes the Top 10 Essentials of being a property steward as well as other useful information and links.

[Click here to download a copy.](#)



Energy Buying Update

Business Solutions Made Simple!

Proud Partners of the Methodist Church



As Christians we are called to care for God's creation and to work for justice in the world. We are currently living in a climate emergency which threatens much of the life on earth and disproportionately affects those people who did least to cause it.

The Methodist Church in Britain has set a target of net zero by 2030. This will require action in a number of different areas and contexts, but crucial to achieving this aim will be ensuring that the energy we use is green, renewable energy. Moving to using green electricity not only ensures that the energy we use does as little as possible to contribute to the climate emergency but also allows us to

demonstrate collectively that we, as a Church, want to see the building of greater capacity for renewable energy.

As well, we are aware of the concern that churches have regarding rising energy costs. One possible option for managing trustees to consider would be to get in touch with an energy broker who may be able to fix your rates for a period of time. Although it is not always guaranteed that the rate is cheaper, there is a level of security of having a fixed rate. Managing Trustees could also contact other churches in their circuit and/or district to see if they might be interested, as sometimes brokers can offer deals for a cluster of churches. Here is a message from [Switch365](#), the new energy partner for The Methodist Church:

Our goal is to streamline the energy renewal process for all Methodist Churches. Whether your current contract nears expiration or extends into the future, we invite you to reach out.

Our account managers can explore tailored plans designed to meet your specific needs and to introduce sustainable energy practices for your church. Together, we can embark on a journey towards a greener and more cost-effective energy future. [Click here to fill in an online enquiry form.](#)

TMCP Updates

Template DAR and Instruction Letter Available

Following the reforms to the Charities Act 2011 (brought in by the Charities Act 2022) which came into force on the 14th June 2023, TMCP has been updating our guidance to Managing Trustees. Rather than having a QSR, the DAR (Designated Adviser's Report) is now required. [Click here to learn more.](#)



The Welcome Centre in Easington

Easington is a large, imposing red brick building sitting on the main road that runs through the colliery down the hill towards the sea in the Darlington District. Easington itself is an area of high deprivation, hit hard by the closure of the local pit in the early 1990s.



Despite being used for worship every other week by a small but loyal congregation, who had been visiting the chapel for most of their lives, the building was declared at risk in 2022 and it seemed likely that it would follow the path of the Catholic church and the Salvation Army church, both of which are permanently closed.

The church were keen to keep the chapel open for worship for the local congregation and use the space inside and outside the building for activities that will benefit the wider community and thus, a joint venture with funding from [The Benefact Trust](#), support from [The Plunkett Foundation](#) and a charitable community benefit society called 'Focus Easington' have begun the early stages to transform the building to 'The Welcome Centre.'

Plans for the Welcome Centre see the chapel being sympathetically modernised to become an accessible, multifunctional community space offering regular worship plus youth provision, a lunch club, employability sessions, health and well-being sessions and a community owned laundrette. A community larder which could include cooking lessons as well as packages of healthy ingredients that can be made into family meals is being considered, as are rooms that can be rented as meeting spaces for community groups or local businesses whilst generating income to ensure the Centre remains sustainable. [Click here to read more.](#)

What do you need to know about Martyn's Law?

Following the announcement of Martyn's Law in the King's Speech (also known as the Terrorism Bill), the Home Office have produced the [Martyn's Law Factsheet](#). There is also a new dedicated page about [Martyn's Law on ProtectUK](#) which includes information on good security practices.



The property support team are currently reviewing the draft bill and will be working towards producing guidance next year. At the moment, churches are not required by law to act on this.

However, for places of worship and Christmas events, there is some advice about the Counter Terrorism winter campaign 2023/24. [The Winter Vigilance Toolkit 2023/24](#) is focused on keeping the public safe at big events, looking out for each other and being confident to report anything that looks suspicious.

COP 28

COP 28 (The 28th Conference of the Parties), part of the United Nations response to Climate Change) has recently finished in Dubai, and it brought together leaders from all over the world to talk about global responses to the climate emergency.



Throughout the COP process JPIT have been producing resources to help us to engage with the issues raised and challenges faced. You can find prayers, blogs and other material at www.jpit.uk/cop28.

If you have been inspired, angered or energised by the process in Dubai you can find out more information about ways we can address the causes of climate change at [Get Your Building Down to Net Zero](#).

West Midlands Virtual Forest

If you live within the West Midlands Combined Authority, you can request free trees to either plant on church land or to give away at an event. It's a great way to start conversations about the climate and start the process of creating a biodiversity and human interest hotspot in church grounds. For more information head to [Virtual Forest](#), and you can request trees at [Request trees for your community group](#).



Top tip: Remember to make a plan for watering the tree as planting a tree is the easy part but growing a tree requires a bit more care.

Historic England Consultation: Climate Change and Historic Building Adaptation Advice Note

Historic England has opened a [consultation](#) on its new [Advice Note on Climate Change and Historic Building Adaptation](#). It aims to provide advice to local planning authorities



Historic England

and others

involved in the planning process on:

- The need for planning permissions and/or other consents for some of the common changes required to decarbonise and improve the energy efficiency of historic buildings.
- Determining proposals to decarbonise and improve the energy efficiency of historic buildings to enable positive climate action.
- How local plans and other planning mechanisms can deliver a positive strategy for historic buildings that proactively supports climate action.

The [consultation](#) will close at 12 midnight on Sunday 24 December.

The Heritage at Risk Register celebrates 25 years



The Heritage at Risk Register 2023 was published on Thursday 9 November and Historic England would like to take this moment to thank you for everything you do to help save and care for England's most cherished heritage sites.

Since 1998, around 6,800 entries have been removed from the Heritage at Risk Register which is around three-quarters of the entries on the original Register. It has been truly inspirational to see volunteers, community groups, charities, owners, councils and public bodies coming together to help save historic buildings and places and find new uses for them. Just this year, 203 sites were saved in England, and we are grateful for your help in this achievement. [You can find our press release online here.](#)

Methodist Insurance Updates

Wishing you peace and blessing over the festive season.

Grant making trends to watch

Sometimes faith charities face challenges in securing grants, partly due to concerns about promoting religion. However, there are lots of funders out there who will support churches or religion. We've put together some free tools to help you in your search [Search for grants](#)



Christmas risks and how to manage them

Christmas is a wonderful time of year with special events and services bringing extra visitors to your church. A little extra planning can help keep everyone safe, from managing slips and trips to using ladders safely while hanging decorations.

[Christmas risks](#)



Unoccupied churches - guide to insurance

The protection of unoccupied buildings can be a challenge for churches. They are susceptible to various forms of damage, especially arson.

Our new Made Simple Guide helps you understand your responsibilities and how to reduce risks.

[Managing unoccupied church buildings](#)



Risk Reminders

Don't forget, our risk management team is here to support you with any questions. Methodist Insurance customers can call the risk advice line on **0345 600 7531** or [email us](#).

And for monthly reminders on common risks churches face, [download our risk calendar](#).



Festive boost for home insurance

If you have Methodist home insurance, you'll be pleased to know you get a Christmas boost on contents in your home to cover those additional gifts.

We automatically increase your contents sum insured by 20% for 30 days before and 30 days after.

[Learn more about home insurance](#)



Creating a Methodist hub in a rural location

£100,000 funding from Benefact Trust's [Methodist Grants Programme](#) is helping Stones Methodist Church to create a more flexible and usable space in the church building. The church plays an active role in its rural, often isolated community and will be able to do even more with the new space. [Find out more](#)



Merry Christmas and a happy New Year from all of us here at Methodist Insurance.



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HSE Update

Keep safe at work as the winter months begins

Wintry weather is arriving, which means slips and trips accidents are likely to become more frequent. At this time of year surfaces can be perilous – there are plenty of [seasonal factors to consider](#) when avoiding these sorts of accidents.

- Poor lighting, excess water from rain and even wet and decaying leaves can all cause slip and trip accidents to increase significantly.



- Slips and trips cause over a third of all major injuries and can also lead to other types of accidents, such as falls from height.

HSE's website has [guidance on slips and trips](#) provides plenty of information and resources on how to avoid these accidents in and around the workplace.

Working Minds Campaign launches free online learning for employers

To help employers prevent stress and support good mental health, a free interactive tool has been developed that brings HSE's Working Minds campaign principles to life.

[The Working Minds campaign](#) promotes the principles of risk assessment, with a focus on 5 steps: reach out, recognise, respond, reflect, make it routine.

The new bitesize online learning is made up of 6 short modules that guide you step by step, with helpful tools and practical resources. You'll come away with an understanding of what the law requires of employers and what you need to do to be compliant. [Register and get started today](#)

The Fundraising Regulator's Annual Safer Giving Campaign

The Fundraising Regulator, the Charity Commission for England and Wales and Action Fraud have launched their [annual safer giving campaign](#) to remind people



**CHARITY COMMISSION
FOR ENGLAND AND WALES**

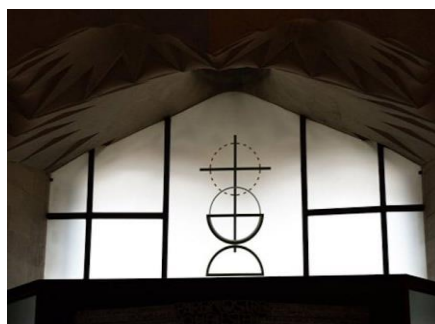
how to give safely to charities. The campaign launch comes as new data from Action Fraud reveals fraudsters diverted more than £2.7m from charities in the last year. The data also revealed there were 501 charity fraud crime reports between 1 November 2022 and 31 October 2023. The Charity Commission has given the following advice for people wishing to donate to charities with confidence:

- Check the charity's name and registration number on the Charity Register at www.gov.uk/checkcharity – most charities with an annual income of £5,000 or more must be registered.
- Make sure the charity is genuine before giving any financial information.
- Be careful when responding to emails or clicking on links within them.

- Contact or find out more online about the charity that you're seeking to donate to or work with to understand how they are spending their funds
- Look out for [the Fundraising Badge](#) – the logo that says 'registered with Fundraising Regulator' – and check the Fundraising Regulator's Directory of organisations which have committed to fundraise in line with the Code of Fundraising Practice.
- A face-to-face fundraiser should have a licence from the relevant Local Authority Licensing team or the Metropolitan Police (in Greater London). Never feel under pressure into donating immediately. Ask the collector for more information and if in doubt, wait and make a donation directly at a time that suits you.

Updated Guidance on Closed Church Buildings

When a church ceases to meet, there are various steps that need to be taken as part of the closure process. [The Guidance on Closed Church Buildings](#) was created collaboratively by the Conference Officer for Legal, Constitutional Practice, the Law and Polity Committee, TMCP, the Property Development Committee, the Heritage Committee and the Property Support team. The aim of the guidance is to provide useful information, including a checklist and templates, to assist with this process.



[Click here to view a pdf version of checklist](#) or [click here for a Word version](#).

Additionally, [click here for further pastoral support on Endings](#).

Does your church have a landline?

Landlines in the UK are going digital. As part of an industry wide switch, by December 2025, old analogue landlines will be replaced with a digital home phone service. No one will be left disconnected; there will be a solution for everyone that still depends on their landline.



[Click here to watch a video from BT.](#)

BT will be contacting their customers about the switch to their digital home phone service, Digital Voice, regionally. The rollout started in summer 2023 and people in the East Midlands, Yorkshire & Humber and Northern Ireland have already been contacted, with the rest of the UK to follow on a month-by-month basis. [Click here to see a list of regional events.](#)

[Further information can be found here.](#)

Listed Building Advisory Committee (LBAC) Meeting Dates:

- **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.

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