

October 2023

PROPERTY MATTERS

The Methodist Church 

Welcome to the October 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](#)

Grants for Building Energy Audits (England)

Why get an energy audit for your church building?

Energy audits are a useful tool for learning how best to make to church buildings more sustainable, both in terms of energy efficiency and in terms of reducing energy costs. More

grant providers, such as [the Benefact Trust](#) and [National Churches Trust](#), are offering grants that support energy efficiency adaptations. An energy audit is a useful tool for giving evidence to support grant applications.



The new £10million [Community Energy Fund \(CEF\)](#) will initially be based upon the same criteria as the previous Rural Community Energy Fund, although will be opened up to applicants from urban areas. The aim of the fund is to help kick start projects including small-scale wind farms and rooftop solar partnerships, as well as battery storage, rural heat networks, electric vehicle charging points, and fuel poverty alleviation schemes - all proposed, designed and owned by local people.

[Click here to learn more.](#)

In addition, a webinar is scheduled for **Tuesday, 31 October 2023** in collaboration with Net Zero Hubs and is open to community energy organisations and other communities interested in exploring energy projects. The webinar aims to demystify the application process for the new Community Energy Fund.

[Click here to learn more.](#)

Lastly, for churches in Greater London, there is a fund for Eco-Audits, which set out ways organisations can be more sustainable and reduce their carbon footprint.

They are free and available to all eligible organisations.

[Click here to find out more.](#)

Transforming Light

If you are wondering if it's worth the effort involved to add energy efficiency adaptations to your church building, you can read how the solar panels on Baildon Methodist Church are helping to reduce its carbon footprint as well as offer significant financial savings.



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

Action for Hope - Meet Tim O'Brien

Tim O'Brien is the net zero officer of the [Yorkshire North & East District](#). The district is committed to climate justice and they're doing this through the [Tea & PV project](#), where they are intending to install photovoltaic panels whenever possible.

[Discover more about Tim's job role](#) and how he is helping the district find the best pathway possible in becoming net zero.

Winter's coming - Get your roofs and gutters checked and cleared

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Need help finding a contractor?

- [Maintenance Booker](#) offers a range of contractors
- You could ask other churches in your local area or circuit for recommendations
- Contact your District Property Secretary (or equivalent for recommendations)



Leaking gutters or drainpipes are often the cause of damp walls. © Historic England Archive. DP169342

Guidance on Annual Property Inspections can be [found here](#). As well, Churches for Cumbria Trust has created a useful [Maintenance Checklist](#) to assist those looking after church buildings.

Maintenance Motivation

Look to Mt Zion Church in Halifax, Yorkshire as an inspiring example for engaging friends of the church as well as looking after building.

[Click here to watch a video](#) about their Volunteer Day.



As well, you can read about how 4 headstones were reset for public safety and to help maintain their heritage.

[Click here to learn more.](#)

Update from TMCP

New Matter Management System

Over the last few years TMCP, together with external consultants, has been developing a new Matter Management System (MMS). As a result of the time and resources that have been invested, the project is now nearing its conclusion and the core functionality of the MMS was implemented at the end of September 2023 with training take place for the whole TMCP Team over 2nd and 3rd October 2023. [Click here to read more.](#)



In addition to the MMS, we will be implementing streamlining for purchases and leases in a similar way to the system that was introduced a few years ago for sales. [Click here to read more.](#)

Regeneration in Malton



Methodism is a part of Malton's history; it has been central to the political and social evolution of the town since the mid-18th century. The first Methodist Church was established in Old Maltongate, and Methodism's founder John Wesley, preached there during the 1770's; having outgrown the first Church, a deal was struck with the 4th Earl Fitzwilliam, bartering this for a new larger site, and the Saville Street Church opened in 1811. Almost a perfect cube in form, the 'new' 700

seater Church, was designed as an auditory 'preaching house' by William Jenkins, and was built by public subscription.

However, given the costs associated with its duty of care to maintain the listed building, the Church Council commenced discussions in the summer of 2015 to reconsider the future for its building; this included a sale attempt (for the third time in its 208-year history), a partial re-purposing, or permanent closure/ mothballing. Serious structural issues within the roof space were first identified in a quinquennial inspection during September 2015 – and this challenge focused minds. After reviewing five different options during late 2015, including sale or permanent closure, the Church Council unanimously decided to explore the most ambitious plan: to use its historic building as a much needed community resource in the heart of Malton. [Click here to read the rest of the story.](#)

Methodist Insurance Updates

Outputs, outcomes and measuring your fundraising impact

These terms help funders understand what kind of activity or work your church wants to do, the impacts and benefits it will bring or changes it will make to your local community. Having knowledge about outputs and outcomes will also help you clearly identify and plan your project activity.

[Lean more about defining your impact](#)



Does anyone at your church work alone?

Working alone can present additional hazards; for example, using a ladder or lifting a heavy object could be too much for one person. You should assess whether tasks can be carried out safely to avoid accidents or injury.

[Protecting people who work alone](#)



Electric bikes

As e-bikes continue to rise in popularity, there has been a significant increase in fires linked to battery charging. Reduce the likelihood of an incident by talking a few simple steps. Learn more about reducing the risks and ensuring your electric bike is covered by home insurance.



[E-bike safety](#)

Is your bicycle covered by your home insurance?

Methodist Insurance is seeking new non-executive directors to join the Board and succeed long term serving ministers stepping down in 2024. We're looking for someone who is actively engaged with the priorities of the Methodist Church, including at local, Circuit and District level, and the wider Connexion. Candidates will also ideally have experience in insurance, financial or audit services or otherwise have worked in a regulated environment.



[Learn more about the role](#)

How to Successfully Apply to Grant Funders - Benefact Trust's new podcast

Benefact Trust has just launched its Beyond Funding podcast with the first episode sharing top tips on how to successfully apply to grant funders with Senior Grants Officer, Paul Playford. This is the start of the Trust's new podcast series discussing all things funding and opening-up conversations about social issues with expert guests.

[Watch](#) on YouTube

[Listen](#) on Spotify

BEYOND FUNDING

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MORE THAN
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methodistinsurance.co.uk/charitydonation

HSE Update

PAT Testing- Busting the myths

Portable appliance testing (PAT) is the examination of electrical appliances and equipment to ensure they are safe to use.

There are many myths about PAT but you can use [HSE's frequently asked questions](#) to find the key facts about the inspection and testing of portable electrical equipment.



You can download the HSE leaflet on [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.

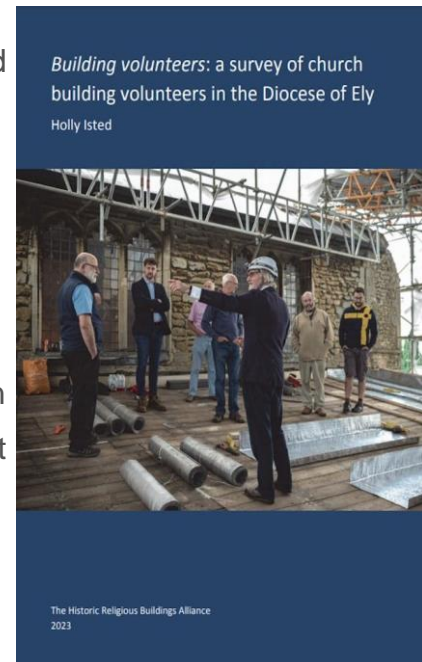
HSE's website also has general advice on [electrical safety at work](#).

Building volunteers: a survey of volunteers in the Diocese of Ely

This is an important piece of research recently carried out by the Historic Religious Buildings Alliance (2023). It talks of the need to recognise the contribution made by our church volunteers and to provide them with the necessary support and training needed to carry out their roles. Whilst the survey is of volunteers in Anglican buildings there is much we can learn relating to our own experiences in the Methodist Church. This includes the need for concise information to avoid overwhelming people as well as the need to review the key leadership roles and their relevance to modern attitudes to volunteering.

- Do we consider that our volunteers' responsibilities, duties and expectations are appropriate, realistic or indeed fair?
- Is there sufficient financial and practical support to ensure those who volunteer in areas like property and routine maintenance feel they can carry out this role to the standards expected of them?
- Is it a crisis of numbers but also a lack of a positive volunteering experience for people?
- Is the lack of volunteers a greater threat to historic church buildings than a lack of funding?

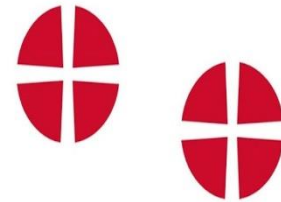
There is much to learn from the research. It is important to recognise that some of our churches are looking at creative and innovative ways of providing positive volunteering experiences such as working with Friends' Groups, and encouraging those who, whilst not wishing to attend worship, care about and want to help us look after our buildings. The Property Support Team welcome these initiatives and we hope you find the research of interest. [Click here to read the research](#)



In addition, there are [resources available on engaging volunteers](#) from the NCVO (National Council for Voluntary Organisations).

A new way to support churches: The Bridge Circuit

[The Yorkshire North & East District](#) has launched a new circuit which aims to free up ministers by employing someone to take care of the governance. Bridge Circuit was set up so churches scattered around the area could keep their identities while a new operations manager takes the lead on finances and property leaving time and freedom for ministers to focus on their mission.



Green Church Awards

The Church Times has launched the 2024 Green Church Awards in recognition of the urgent environmental crisis and the efforts being made by Christian organisations and communities, churches and church schools, of all denominations, to care for creation.

[Click here to learn more.](#)



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 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](#).

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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