

April 2023

PROPERTY MATTERS

The Methodist Church 

Welcome to the April 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](#).

The Property Support team would like wish you a blessed Good Friday and a Happy Easter!

Action for Hope

[Action for Hope](#) is the Methodist Church's journey to hit its goal of net zero by 2030, to help us care for God's creation. Every month we're going to share with you some resources and opportunities to help you move towards net zero in your own context. If you have any questions about this, we'd be happy to hear from you and [click here to get in touch](#).



There are lots of resources available from the Methodist Church website on how to get your building down to net zero, including ways to assess your energy usage and the first steps you can take. Visit [Get Your Building Down to Net Zero Carbon](#) for ideas and guidance.

The Church of England has produced a series of webinars on net zero topics, from planning and measuring to solar panels and heating. Despite the denominational differences, there is some really helpful information available to help think through possible changes. You can sign up for an upcoming webinar (free of charge) or watch recordings of previous ones on YouTube. [Click here to view](#).

Methodist Insurance Updates

Fundraising Help in the Cost-of-Living Crisis

With inflation shocking the economy and putting pressure on our standard of living, church fundraising may feel more difficult than ever. Written in collaboration with Philanthropy Company, learn what your church can do to keep on fundraising in the current climate.

[Read top tips from the experts](#)



Food Safety at Church Events

If you're serving food at any of your upcoming events it's worth reviewing our food safety guidance, especially if you will be preparing food at the church.

Understand the legal requirements, hazards to avoid and precautions you can take. [Food safety guidance](#)



Managing Trees

Trees suffering from previous damage, disease or decay are more likely to fall because of weather conditions however, it is unusual for a healthy tree to fall due to storm conditions alone. A little maintenance can often help prevent injury or damage.

[Learn more about managing trees](#)



Building Works at your Church

Building works can present additional hazards to people using your church. There may also be insurance implications, so it's worth knowing when to contact us. Find out more about your responsibilities when planning work.

[Considerations for church building works](#)



Meet us at the Superintendents' Conference

from 17-19 May

The Superintendents' Conferences are annual events that offer information, worship and fellowship to those currently serving in the role of Superintendent Minister and to those taking on the role in September 2023. This year's conference is based on the theme 'In Ministry and Mission Together'.

[Learn more about the event](#)



Securing Funding for Church Projects

Benefact Trust's Methodist Grants Programme is always open for new grant applications and has recently expanded to include grants for church repair and maintenance projects that support mission and ministry. Learn more about the grants programme and see inspiration from successful applicants on our website.

[Methodist Grants Programme](#)



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HSE Update



First Aid at Work: The Basics

HSE's basic step-by-step guide on [first aid at work](#)

explains how you can have the right arrangements, including:

- a first aid kit
- training workers
- first aid for homeworkers
- appointing first aiders

Other 'basics for your business' topics include [reporting accidents and illness](#) and ensuring you have [the right workplace facilities](#).

Recording and Reporting Accidents and Near Misses

HSE's [Accident Book and Near-Miss Book](#) can be bought together as a pack.

Alternatively, they can be bought individually at the following links:

- [Accident book](#)
- [Near-miss book](#)

Building Improvement Grants

Benefact Trust's Building Improvement Grants programme provides essential support to protect and enhance churches and Christian charity buildings, ensuring their continued use, viability, and the safeguarding of their heritage.

[Click here to learn more.](#)



[Building Improvement Grants](#) are able to support direct capital costs relating to the following types of work:

- Essential, one-off repairs to ensure the viability of a building
- Minor works or equipment purchases to meet accessibility requirements
- Conservation or restoration of historic features

- Other aesthetic enhancements to improve indoor or outdoor spaces for users
- Energy efficiency/renewable energy measures which improve the sustainability of church buildings

No Mow May

[No Mow May](#) is an initiative from Plantlife to encourage those with gardens to refrain from mowing during the month of May in order to encourage biodiversity. This will increase vital food needed by pollinators like bees and butterflies. [Click here to learn more.](#)



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.](#)

The Great Big Green Week

10th - 18th June 2023

[The Great Big Green Week](#) is the UK's biggest annual call for action on climate change and nature, organised by the Climate Coalition. The week of action aims to show decision-makers that people from all walks of life are stepping up to take action - and that we need them to step up too. We'd love our supporters to take part and hold an event during Great Big Green Week. If you are interested in having an event, [click here for more resources](#) and do keep us in the loop about any plans you have.



Case Studies in Yorkshire North and East District

There are several stories of churches who are working on reducing their carbon footprint in the Yorkshire North and East District. There are five examples of churches who wish to lower their carbon footprint. [Click here to read more.](#)

As well, you can [click here](#) to read other examples and interviews about what other churches across the Connexion are doing to reduce carbon emissions.



Energy Bill Discount Scheme

The Government has put in place automatic energy bill relief for non-domestic customers until 31 March 2024, though the current level of support will be reduced after 31 March 2023, when the current Energy Bill Relief Scheme will be replaced by the [Energy Bill Discount Scheme](#). In brief:



- From **1 April 2023** to **31 March 2024**, all eligible non-domestic customers who have a contract with a licensed energy supplier will see a unit discount of up to £6.97/MWh automatically applied to their gas bill and a unit discount of up to £19.61/MWh applied to their electricity bill.
- The discount will be subject to a wholesale price threshold, set with reference to the support provided for domestic consumers, of £107/MWh for gas and £302/MWh for electricity. This means that businesses whose energy costs are below that level will not receive support.
- Customers do not need to apply for their discount. As with the scheme that it replaces, suppliers will automatically apply reductions to the bills of all eligible non-domestic customers.

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.

New Guidance for Churches Considering a Merger

Each small church has a gift to offer its community, a part to play in God's mission, and a share in God's hopeful future. Sometimes living into this hope will mean joining with another church to share resources. Sometimes it will mean letting go of a cherished building in order to worship in people's homes or in a community centre. Whatever the end result, each small church gets there by starting with its mission: its particular part of God's calling to share the love of Christ with the world. These new webpages offer guidance and resources for circuit mission planning, including different models of merger, and details of all the help that's available.

[Click here to read more.](#)

Additionally, the Legal & Constitutional Practice Team produced a new resource for Managing Trustees regarding schemes to amalgamate Local Churches into a multi-site Local Church under Standing orders 605A and 942.

[Click here for more information.](#)

There is also a webinar on Dual Transformation on **Wed, 19 April, 7-8:30pm** and it will look at 'new' and 'inherited' models of church can co-exist continues to evolve.

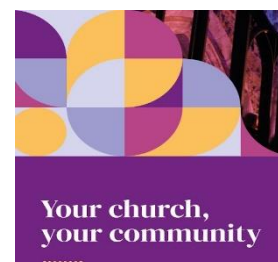
[Click here to register.](#)

Guidance on Community Use and Redundant Church Buildings

There is a new publication produced by Historic Churches Scotland to encourage community use of active and redundant church buildings. It has some useful information for helping churches explore future uses for church buildings.

[Click here to view.](#)

As well, a practical guide to the benefits and techniques for involving and consulting local communities has been produced by the Community Ownership



Support Service. It has useful guidance on how to involve communities and to reach out to them for consultation.

[Click here to read.](#)

Superintendents' Conference

Stephen Hetherington, Director of Property Support, will be running surgeries at the Superintendents' Conference both on 17-19 May and 5-7 June. He will be available to discuss options for Methodist buildings, maintenance and quinquennial inspections, net zero options and much more!

[Click here](#) to learn more about the event.

Five Golden Rules of being a Trustee

The Legal & Constitutional Practice Team produced a new resource for Managing Trustees called [The Five Golden Rules of being a Trustee](#). This new guidance will be essential reading for all members of Local Church Councils, Circuit Meetings, and any of the other Methodist bodies of Managing Trustees. It reminds us that if you are a member of any of these bodies then you are a charity trustee and are obliged to follow the duties placed on you under charity law. The guidance is a helpful reference tool summarising what it means to be a Methodist charity trustee and encapsulates the duties placed on you in five golden rules. The document also contains practical guidance on how to follow these rules in your day-to-day life as a Methodist charity trustee, gives information on trustee liability and provides links to further help and assistance from the Charity Commission. [Click here to read more.](#)



Charity Commission Trustee Guides

The Charity Commission has launched the next stage of its [campaign to raise awareness of core trustee duties](#) and available guidance. The core suite of 5-minute guides covers the following subject



CHARITY COMMISSION
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areas:

- [Delivering purpose](#) – advice on how to use your charity’s governing document, how to deliver on your charity’s purposes, and the law.
- [Managing finances](#) – advice on how to ensure that your charity’s money is safe, properly used and accounted for.
- [Conflicts of interest](#) – advice on how to identify and deal with conflicts of interest in your charity.
- [Making decisions](#) – advice on how to make valid trustee decisions that are in your charity’s best interests.
- [Reporting information](#) – advice on how and what you need to report to the Commission.
- [Safeguarding people](#) – advice on your responsibilities to keep everyone who comes into contact with your charity safe from harm.
- [Political activity & campaigning](#) – advice for charities that want to support, or oppose, a change in Government policy or the law

[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 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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