

PROPERTY MATTERS

ISSUE 13 – December 2015



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This document is being sent to the following roles within the Connexion who are registered on the Connexional database: district chairs, superintendent ministers, district property secretaries, circuit property secretaries, church property secretaries, district treasurers, circuit treasurers and church treasurers.

PROPERTY MATTERS

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INDEX

Introduction	Page 2
Connexional Team update	
Online portal: Consents, Returns and Statistics	Page 3
Connexional property grants	Page 4
Resourcing Mission Forum 2016	Page 5
Volunteer position: Membership of MCH Management Committee	Page 5
Legal matters: Gift Aid envelopes	Page 6
Autumn statement 2015: update	Page 6
Property and planning	
Community Infrastructure Levy: DCLG review	Page 7
Planning reform proposals and change of use	Page 8
Conservation & Heritage	
Asbury 200th Anniversary Connexional Launch Event	Page 9
Conservation conference	Page 11
“Embracing All” at Welshpool Methodist Church	Page 12
Methodist Insurance	
Church property appeals grants	Page 14
Advice for protecting your church in cold weather	Page 14
Read the latest edition of <i>Dialogue</i>	Page 14
Legislation outside England	Page 15
Dates for the Diary	Page 16

INTRODUCTION

Dear readers,

Greetings! We have reached the end of the year and I am writing to you having entered the most expectant part of our year: Advent, leading to Christmas. May I take this opportunity to wish everyone who is reading this a very happy and peaceful Christmas.

The current circulation of *Property Matters* is 6,847 and as the newsletter is distributed further, I have hopes for a larger readership. However, we remain keen that everyone who wants a copy gets one. You can do this by signing up here: www.methodist.org.uk/news-and-events/sign-up-for-e-newsletters.

I am actually writing this on St Andrew's Day. Saint Andrew was the possibly first person to engage with social media, because when he was a fisherman he brought the first 'foreigners' to meet Jesus as his 'fisher of men'. He encouraged people to share their food with others near them. At this troubled time following the atrocities in places such as Paris, China, Libya, Algeria and Kenya, we should perhaps pursue his example – and, following our President's lead, try to lead people to Christ.

In this issue there are many fascinating articles – some on property and planning, on Gift Aid, an update following the Chancellor's autumn statement, and a reminder of pages for churches outside England. I hope you find them both interesting and informative.

I trust you will find this useful and I look forward to meeting more of you in the coming months. If you are planning a meeting on property, please feel free to send me an invite.

Richard Farmery, Facilities and Property Coordinator
0207 467 5190 or fpc@methodistchurch.org.uk

Front page photographs: © Methodist Heritage

CONNEXIONAL TEAM UPDATE

ONLINE PORTAL: Consents, Returns and Statistics

> PROPERTY CONSENTS

Passwords

We have received a number of calls recently relating to password resets. In case people aren't sure of the process, it is outlined below:

1. Click on "Forgotten your password?"
2. Enter the email address you use to log in to the online suite and click "Proceed".
3. An email will then be sent to you called "The Methodist Church Online System: Forgotten Password".
4. Click **ONCE** on the link that says "Reset password".
5. A second email will then be sent to you with your new password.

Document file size

The file size limit for the document management system is current set to 5MB. We are aware that quinquennial inspections and some plans can be larger than this. However, often documents are uncompressed and can have overly large images attached. Therefore, it is recommended that any file is compressed before uploading, particular PDFs.

To compress a PDF, please go to pdfcompressor.com/.

To use the site, simply click on "Upload files" and select the PDF you wish to compress.

Contact: consents@methodistchurch.org.uk

> STATISTICS FOR MISSION

This annual statistics returns round is now underway. The changes that have been introduced since last year are designed to do two things:

- To give a clearer overall picture of what the Methodist Church actually looks like, rather than concentrating just on the number of members. We want to find out more about what else goes on in Methodist churches, and how it contributes to mission and ministry. Also about projects and fresh expressions that have a circuit-wide, district-wide or connexional appeal;
- To help churches, circuits and districts plan for mission and ministry, by giving them details about their sites and activities, and how their numbers have moved in recent years. These can be linked up to publicly available information on their local area, for instance through the ONS Neighbourhood Statistics website. The advanced version of the Methodist webmap is another tool that can help in this way.

Increasingly, applying for grants, revising the circuit plan, reporting to synod and generally planning for the future will depend on taking a good hard look across a range of factors: membership; activities; property; ministers and finance. The planned introduction of computerised reporting of churches' standard forms of accounts should help link up financial with non-financial information.

Contact: statisticsformission@methodistchurch.org.uk

CONNEXIONAL PROPERTY GRANTS

Consents system

Online Property grant applications on the Consents system are now fully functional. We received 36 applications in October which will have been assessed by Streams and Grant Committees by the time you read this. During November, the Connexional Grants Committee awarded 12 property grants with a total value of £1,126,000.00. One new development with this new system is that we now have a property dashboard. This helps us keep track of all applications, from when the Connexional Grant funding request is ticked to when an application is either approved or rejected.

We are continuing to refine the questions asked on the application form and how we process applications. In the meantime, some common issues that affect applications are:

- circuit and district comments not posted
- start/finish dates not updated when timetable changes
- no district support on Grants tab
- required documents not uploaded
- authorisations missing, or
- final consent given before application complete.

We encourage all applicants to look at these carefully.

The next deadline for grant applications over £30,000 is 2 March 2016.

Grants Team on the road

We were pleased to attend the District Property Secretary's gathering at Four Oaks near Birmingham recently, and it was very helpful to meet everyone and put faces to names. We were able to talk through:

- how the Grants Team can support people making applications
- the role of the District Property Secretary as a link between applicants and the Grants Team
- how to apply for a grant
- questions relating to the Consents system.

All communication should be sent to grants@methodistchurch.org.uk.

Resourcing Mission Forum 2016

The theme of next year's forum is **RESOURCING MISSION TOGETHER**.

The main focus of this annual event is to envision and equip those responsible for helping the Church to make best use of its resources in furthering mission and developing discipleship, with the aim to inspire and enthuse district chairs, district and circuit property secretaries, grants officers and treasurers in their roles and in their churches and communities. The event also provides opportunities for networking across the Connexion and sharing ideas for furthering mission. The RMF is organised by the Mission Resources Team within the Connexional Team, supported by the Trustees for Methodist Church Purposes (TMCP) and sponsored by the Methodist Insurance.

Date: Tuesday 10 May (5pm) to Thursday 12 May 2016 (lunchtime)

Venue: Kings Park Conference Centre, Northampton NN3 6LL

Registration is now open. A draft programme will be published in due course.

Go to www.methodist.org.uk/ministers-and-office-holders/property/events to download a registration form, or contact Kim Medford-Vassell (medford-vassellk@methodistchurch.org.uk) for online registration details via Eventbrite: www.RMF2016.eventbrite.co.uk



Volunteer position

Membership of Methodist Church House Management Committee

We are seeking volunteers who are building services engineers to contribute to the Methodist Church House Management Committee for a period of three years.

The main purpose of the role is to be part of a team to provide advice and direction to ensure that Methodist Church House in central London is in good condition and is suitable and sufficient for its intended purpose.

The Management Committee meets four times a year for about two hours and has oversight of:

- use of premises - ensuring the property is used for Methodist Church purposes and is compliant with relevant legislation
- letting arrangements
- repair and maintenance (including rates, insurance etc.)
- preparing annual reports to the Methodist Council
- budgetary expenditure (Long Term Renewals Fund).

Travel expenses will be paid.

For more information please contact Brian Pugh at pughb@methodistchurch.org.uk

LEGAL MATTERS: Gift Aid envelopes

Churches and charities have been given exemption on use of old Gift Aid envelopes.

Recently HMRC had announced details of new wording for the model Gift Aid declaration (www.gov.uk/guidance/gift-aid-declarations-claiming-tax-back-on-donations#information), which is due to be in force from 6 April 2016. "I am a UK taxpayer and understand that if I pay less Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax than the amount of Gift Aid claimed on all my donations in that tax year it is my responsibility to pay any difference".

In this new declaration, HMRC wants to remind donors that they have to inform their charities if their tax circumstances change so that the charities can adjust the gift claim they submit to HMRC. In order to ensure that both the donors and churches do not have to make any refund due to over claim, it will be useful to remind your donors to update you if they believe that the PAYE or Capital Gains Tax they have paid is less than 25% of the total donations they made to their charities.

A number of churches have thousands more Gift Aid envelopes in stock than could be used before the deadline and raised concerns about the associated waste and additional costs that would be incurred. These concerns were shared with HMRC. In response, HMRC has agreed that churches can use up their current stock (ordered up to 21 October) of pre-printed Gift Aid collection envelopes beyond 6 April 2016.

Only church Gift Aid envelopes are covered by this concession. Other declarations will need to be updated.

This is a very welcome and sensible step. HMRC's guidance will continue to recommend that all charities introduce the new wording by 6 April 2016, but will allow the current stocks of envelopes to be used up effectively.

If you have any question, please go to the HMRC link above for further explanation, email giftaid@methodistchurch.org.uk or write to Finance at Methodist Church House by post if you do not have internet access. Alternatively, you can get in touch with your church Gift Aid secretary, who will be able to help you.

AUTUMN STATEMENT 2015: UPDATE

On 25 November the Chancellor delivered his *Autumn Statement* referring to some of the headline policies set out in more detail in the *Spending Review and Autumn Statement 2015* (links to the full documents at the end of this article).

Some of the points of particular interest to us include:

Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme

The Chancellor announced a pot of £42 million for the Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme. This scheme covers VAT and enables listed places of worship to reclaim any VAT paid on invoices totalling over £1,000. The annual fund has now been secured for the lifetime of this Parliament.

Listed Places of Worship Roof Repair Fund

The government has reaffirmed its commitment to a second round of the Listed Places of Worship Roof Repair Fund for churches requiring roof repairs to ensure that their buildings are watertight to prevent further deterioration in their condition. Details of the launch of this second tranche will be available soon.

Stamp Duty Land Tax on second homes

The Chancellor announced a three percentage point surcharge on rates of Stamp Duty Land Tax on purchases of additional properties for buy-to-let and second homes.

We assume that the term 'second homes' refers to holiday homes and that, for this purpose, a house bought by a minister as a retirement property is not a 'second home' given that they do not own their manse; however, this will be raised with HM Treasury.

We await further detail about 'buy-to-let' homes as stamp duty is not usually paid by charities so this should not apply to purchases of residential property as an investment. It would certainly not apply to the purchase of a manse intended for a presbyter which is later let because of a vacancy. However, investment properties are covered by the exemption only if the profits go towards the aims of the charity, and the stamp duty would be payable if a property is purchased with the specific intent to later re-sale or if the purchasing body later relinquishes or loses charitable status.

Autumn statement: www.gov.uk/government/speeches/chancellor-george-osbornes-spending-review-and-autumn-statement-2015-speech

Spending review:

www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/479749/52229_Blue_Book_PU1865_Web_Accessible.pdf

PROPERTY & PLANNING

Community Infrastructure Levy: DCLG review

The Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) opened a consultation on 19 November 2015 as part of the review of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). The Department wants to hear from a wide range of people and sectors affected by CIL on its effectiveness, together with any suggestions for changes that might improve its operation.

www.gov.uk/government/consultations/community-infrastructure-levy-review-questionnaire

Given that there is an important charity exemption in place – one that the Churches Legislative Advisory Service (CLAS) and the Charity Property Association worked extremely hard to secure – the question of particular interest is likely to be question six, on the impact that exemptions and reliefs have on delivering infrastructure. The terms of reference provide additional detail on this point.

www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/476681/151027_CIL_TOR_FINAL.pdf

There also appears to be a focus on reviewing the relationship between CIL and planning obligations under section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended (commonly known as 's106 agreements' and for which there is no charity exemption. Extending or at least retaining the current exemption would be favourable or at least neutral; but any merger between CIL and s106 agreements could be problematic if charities were not provided with at least the same level of protection from s106 as they have now.

Submissions can be made via an online form (www.surveymonkey.com/r/9356DYV). While DCLG will accept submissions until **15 January 2016**, they would prefer responses by **24 December 2015**. As usual, it would be helpful if any member making a submission could copy us in.

[Source: DCLG, 19 November]

Planning reform proposals and change of use

Of less immediate concern, but possibly of interest, the government's 2015 Productivity Plan set out reforms aimed at making the planning system quicker and simpler to use. The House of Commons Library has recently produced two useful publications on planning issues.

- A briefing paper setting out the Government's key planning reform proposals and those changes in the process of being made. Most of the proposed changes would apply to England only.
researchbriefings.parliament.uk/ResearchBriefing/Summary/SN06418
- A helpful note on the issues surrounding the vexed question of possible reforms to the planning use class system which, along with permitted development rights, allows change of use without the need for planning permission. Pressure for reform has been sparked off by concerns about proliferation of charity shops and hot food takeaways, coupled with the loss of local amenities such as pubs and village shops. Though not, perhaps, of direct concern to most members in managing their own property portfolios, the current system can sometimes have quite serious pastoral implications.
researchbriefings.parliament.uk/ResearchBriefing/Summary/SN01301#fullreport

[Source: House of Commons Library, 16 & 18 November]



**Methodist
Heritage**

CONSERVATION & HERITAGE

Sanya Strachan, Project Coordinator for the Asbury commemorations, tells us all about a connexional event inspired by our Heritage.

Asbury 200th Anniversary Connexional Launch Event

9 April 2016, Black Country Living Museum, Tipton Road, Dudley DY1 4SQ

Asbury Cottage

Bishop Francis Asbury was born, brought up and apprenticed to a metal worker in England's 'Black Country': the Midlands region around Birmingham (so called because of the blackening of the buildings by industrial smoke in the nineteenth century).

This small eighteenth-century cottage was the childhood home of Bishop Francis Asbury.

Asbury founded Methodism in America and became the first Methodist Bishop in America and joint superintendent with Thomas Coke. The cottage contains information regarding the rise of Methodism in the Black Country with links to John Wesley's visits to the local area.

Although the Methodist Church does not own this property, we support Sandwell Museums and their work at this site as a way of building a better relationship with visitors to the Black Country.



Asbury's Cottage

Work and Chapel: Black Country Methodism



To commemorate the bicentenary of the death of Francis Asbury, the Methodist Church are currently developing plans for a family celebration launch day on Saturday 9 April 2016, before a six-month programme of local commemorations in the Bristol, Birmingham, Southampton, Wolverhampton and Shrewsbury districts, which we will cross-promote.

We are delighted to announce that we will be working with the Black Country Living Museum to stage our launch day.

Black Country Living Museum

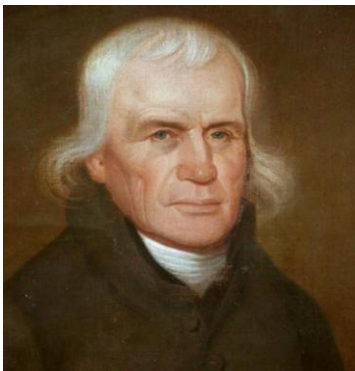
Activities taking place will include:

- a commemoration service in the former New Connexion Providence Chapel
- a Victorian Sunday school experience (be on your best behaviour!)
- vintage bus trips to visit Francis Asbury's childhood cottage
- nail-making and chain-making in the forge (see the sparks fly!)
- an exhibition
- talks
- a 'flash mob' costumed choir, street entertainment and refreshments.



Mission

Francis Asbury responded to a call and sowed seeds that bore wonderful fruit. Asbury was the first Joint Superintendent Methodist minister in America. He took a step of faith by going to America, and this led to Wesleyan theology being spread worldwide – which is possibly more important today than in the eighteenth century. By learning about Francis Asbury and his ministry we are reminded that “it’s not all about the Wesleys”. We’re reminded of the impact of Methodism on the industrialised Midlands of the nineteenth century. American Methodism became a global Methodism, and that was due to Asbury.



Bishop Francis Asbury

A discipleship response could be: What am I being called to do having learnt about Asbury’s life and ministry?

For more information, updates on plans for 9 April 2016 and how you can get involved, visit the **Methodist Heritage website:**
www.methodistheritage.org.uk.

To continue commemorations for the life and work of Francis Asbury, the Birmingham, Bristol, Southampton and Wolverhampton & Shrewsbury Districts are all planning a variety of events.

For more information regarding these district events please go to the relevant website:

Birmingham	www.birminghammethodist.org.uk
Bristol	www.bristolmethodist.org.uk
Southampton	www.southamptonmethodistdistrict.org.uk
Wolverhampton & Shrewsbury	www.wsmethodist.org.uk

Other helpful websites and contact information:

Methodist Heritage website: www.methodistheritage.org.uk

Black Country Living Museum website: www.bclm.co.uk

Sanya Strachan | email: strachans@methodistchurch.org.uk | tel: 020 7467 3770

Twitter hashtag: [#asbury200](https://twitter.com/asbury200)



CONSERVATION conference

Registration for the conference *Parish Church Interiors in Changing Times* is now open.

This 24 hour event will take place in Leicester **14-15 December 2015** and will explore the significance of nineteenth and twentieth century parish church interiors through presentations and group discussions, covering the interiors of churches constructed during this period, as well as internal changes made during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries to earlier buildings.

Details of the conference programme are at www.le.ac.uk/church-interiors-conference and registration at shop.le.ac.uk/browse/product.asp?compid=1&modid=1&catid=711.

Speakers include the Right Reverend Dr John Inge, the Church of England's lead Bishop on cathedrals and church buildings and the Right Worshipful Charles George, Dean of the Court of Arches, plus papers on nationally known and locally significant architects, Victorian and twentieth-century approaches to church design, revitalising historic heating systems, responding to the challenge of major fires, and the experience of change to meet community needs. There will also be presentations on listing and statements of significance. The conference will offer DAC members and Secretaries, Chancellors, Amenity Societies, Conservation Officers, clergy, academics, architects and heritage professionals the opportunity to explore the issues raised by maintaining, using and sustaining churches with nineteenth- and twentieth-century interiors. Dr Loyd Grossman, Chairman of the Churches Conservation Trust, has very kindly agreed to be the speaker during the conference dinner.

While this particular conference focuses on the Church of England, it is hoped that there will be an opportunity to explore a knowledge-sharing event for other denominations and faith groups in due course.

“EMBRACING ALL” at Welshpool Methodist Church

High Street Methodist Church, situated in a conservation area in the small market town of Welshpool in mid-Wales, has, throughout its 150-year history, had a reputation for welcoming both friends and strangers over its threshold.



Welshpool Methodist Church

The premises have become an integral part of community life in the town. Every day, both church groups and local organisations use them for a variety of activities – everything from line dancing to classical music concerts; Welsh and art classes to Alpha Courses; the WI to the wildlife group, the Choral Society to the church’s own Jubilate Singers.

In recent years, usage has grown to such an extent that some groups were being turned away because of lack of space and facilities. The church agreed that if it was to continue to fulfil its mission to “celebrate and share God’s love”, the building had to be developed and updated. And so in 2012, the church embarked on a £200,000 'Embracing All' project, the first two phases of which were completed in time for the church’s 150th anniversary celebrations last December.

A new meeting room, the Gallery, has been created in a little-used first floor space. It can accommodate up to 40 people, and has lift access for people with mobility problems.



Lift to provide access for all



Following the completion of the Gallery, work started to provide better means of access into the premises for those with disabilities.

A dedicated parking bay is now situated next to a new ramped entrance, which is well used and much appreciated by wheelchair users.

Providing access for all: Disabled parking bay

One of the most successful means of the church's outreach into the community is through its catering activities, run by a group of dedicated volunteers, who have acquired a reputation for the quality of their home-cooked food.



The Monday coffee mornings, Thursday Open Church and Heritage days, Friday seniors' afternoon tea groups, Saturday friendship lunches and monthly Sunday 'bring and share' lunches attract local non-churchgoers over the threshold, many of whom are elderly, lonely, or the more vulnerable residents of our town, who know they can find a friendly face and a listening ear (as well as good food) in a safe, non-threatening environment.

Monday Coffee Morning

In the final phase of the project (and thanks, in part, to a £30,000 grant from the Connexional Fund for Property), the church's catering facilities are to be expanded and updated with an extended kitchen and new units and equipment – including a much needed dishwasher.

Also included in this final phase are the upgrading of the toilets, and the reconfiguring and refurbishing of the worship area to make the space multi-functional. Plans to replace the solid wood front doors with glazed units to make the church more open and welcoming have yet to be given planning approval by the necessary bodies, but a positive outcome is hoped for.

Further plans for mission and outreach next year include extending the cafe's opening, introducing a weekly lunchtime drop-in session, with a 'thought for the week' slot, and building on the Open Church and Heritage days. Our church is definitely "not just for Sundays"! As the largest and most active of all the congregations in this rural circuit (and also of the churches in the town), we are trying to safeguard this witness for future generations.

All photos © Gordon Rhodes

METHODIST INSURANCE: Church property appeals grants

Methodist Insurance has a grants fund which responds to appeals for financial assistance from churches in the Methodist community for small projects where mission, outreach and the community would benefit. Grants are made out of the Company's annual profits.

Plymouth Central Methodist Hall applied for, and was awarded, a grant towards the cost of building toilets for their youth facility. The project was initiated after working with a group of young people who started attending the church's youth group in 2009. To access the toilets meant going up a flight of stairs, along a corridor and down another flight of stairs. This meant that the whole church had to be opened up, which made youth events harder to supervise, and caused problems of access for disabled people and those with mobility issues.

Examples of successful applications include funds for updating or improving kitchens, toilets, or entrances for specific use for community groups. Applications cannot be supported from individuals (unless it is on behalf of a church), or for general running costs such as maintenance and salaries, or where more than one application from the same applicant has been successful within a 24 month period.

Find out more and how to apply on the Methodist Insurance website:

www.methodistinsurance.co.uk/contact-us/church-property-appeals-grants

Advice for protecting your church in cold weather

Winter is on its way and the onset of cold weather will bring the usual related problems for churches and associated properties. Make sure your church is prepared for cold weather and freezing conditions with our hints and tips.

Visit the Methodist Insurance website for practical advice to tackle some of the most common issues, such as:

- essential building maintenance
- burst pipes
- keeping pathways clear.

www.methodistinsurance.co.uk/risk-management

Read the latest edition of *Dialogue*

Methodist Insurance has just published its newsletter, *Dialogue*.

This issue includes:

- a question and answer section on church building works
- the insurance implications of opening up churches to the local community
- advice about getting your home ready for winter.



Read the latest copy on the website: www.methodistinsurance.co.uk/news.

LEGISLATION OUTSIDE ENGLAND

We are all aware that there are differences in legislation and its resulting impact in different jurisdictions within the British Church. Hopefully the information on the pages listed below will be of assistance to you.

Methodist Church in Scotland

The Scotland District of the Methodist Church in Britain has its own webpages. These are full of useful information, including a link to the Scottish Churches parliamentary office updates: methodistchurchinscotland.net/.

Church Buildings Renewal Trust

The Church Buildings Renewal Trust is a Scottish charity concerned with maintaining church buildings in active use once regular worship has ceased. The Trust has adapted the Arthur Rank Centre's web guidance (with permission) on rural places of worship to reflect the different circumstances in Scotland and has provided links to advice on sustainable maintenance and use, and how it applies in particular to Scotland. www.cbrt.org.uk



Iona Abbey
© Church Buildings Renewal Trust

The Methodist Church in Wales

In Wales, there is a specific website for the Methodist Church in Wales/Yr Eglwys Fethodistaidd yng Nghrymu, with pertinent advice and news for the Wales Synod. www.methodistwales.org.uk



Asian Christian Fellowship, Swansea
© 2015 Lisa Medina

Channel Islands



The Methodist Church in the Channel Islands has also produced its own website, with individual pages for its two circuits.

www.ci-methodist.org.uk

Sunrise in Guernsey

© 2008 The Bailiwick of Guernsey Custodian Trustees

In addition to those above, the websites of the following may also be of interest:

- **Isle of Man:** www.isle-of-man.com/manxnotebook/methodism
- **Malta:** www.saintandrewsmalta.com
- **Gibraltar:** www.methodist.org.gi/history.htm



DATES FOR THE DIARY

14-15 December 2015: *Parish Church Interiors in Changing Times* conference
(details on page 8)

9 April 2016: **Asbury 200th Anniversary Connexional Launch Event**
(details on pages 9-11)

10-12 May 2016: **Resourcing Mission Forum 2016**
(details on page 4)

This document is being sent to the following roles within the Connexion who are registered on the connexional database:

- ✓ District chairs
- ✓ Superintendent ministers
- ✓ District property secretaries
- ✓ Circuit property secretaries
- ✓ Church property secretaries
- ✓ District treasurers
- ✓ Circuit treasurers
- ✓ Church treasurers

If you are aware of other people who may not have access to the Internet, email or a computer, could you please provide them with a copy of this document.

If you know of people who would like to subscribe to the *Property Matters* email newsletter, please forward this copy and ask them to visit www.methodist.org.uk/signup



The Methodist Church

**Methodist Church House
25 Marylebone Road
London NW1 5JR**

**020 7486 5502 [Helpdesk]
www.methodist.org.uk
Registered Charity no 1132208**

Contact us

For further information contact your local Insurance Consultant and Surveyor or call us on

0345 606 1331

Monday to Friday 8am to 6pm (excluding Bank Holidays). We may monitor or record calls to improve our service.

You can email us at

enquiries@micmail.com

Or visit

www.methodistinsurance.co.uk

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. www.methodistinsurance.co.uk/about-us

- Church, Circuit and District insurance
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- Home insurance
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Methodist Insurance PLC, St Ann's House, St Ann's Place, Manchester M2 7LP
enquiries@micmail.com 0345 606 1331 www.methodistinsurance.co.uk

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