

Listed Buildings Advisory Committee

Contact Name and Details	The Revd Anthony J Parkinson, Chair of the Committee anthonyjparkinson@talktalk.net
Resolution	62/1. The Council receives the report.

1. The Listed Buildings Advisory Committee (LBAC) is the independent body set up as a statutory requirement of the Ecclesiastical Exemption (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Orders for England, Wales and Scotland. Membership includes experts in conservation, architecture, architectural history, archaeology and art, but it also includes two Chairs of District and a supernumerary minister who offer comment on the proposed mission of the local church. One of the Committee's main functions is to provide general advice to the Connexional Conservation Officer on policy matters regarding listed buildings and unlisted buildings in conservation areas.
2. The established procedure of the LBAC is that projects involving minor alterations of limited importance to the character of historic chapels do not need to be individually considered by the LBAC, providing they fall within policy guidelines specifically approved by the LBAC or established by previous LBAC decisions. Of the total projects requiring attention by the Connexional Conservation Officer (278) thirty-two were referred to the LBAC (this may have included individual projects presented on more than one occasion). Twenty-nine of the projects completing the Section 98 procedures during the year were considered by the LBAC (Section 98 comprises the Standing Orders relating to Listed Building Works). Some of those projects referred to the LBAC were informal, or concerned unapproved listed building works. None of the projects presented to the LBAC have resulted in a refusal. Nor has the Committee received any appeals against the decisions made.
3. The LBAC was notified, however, of all of the projects received and was free to request details of any of them. This occurred in several cases.
4. Members total thirteen. Revd Anthony Parkinson continues as Chair of the Committee and Dr Peter Forsaith as Deputy Chair. Ian Hume re-joined the Committee to provide specialist advice on structural engineering. Two further members have joined, the Revd Dr Adrian Burdon and the Revd David Crouchley, both having extensive experience in mission and the alteration of listed Methodist church buildings.
5. Terms of Reference and an updated Appeals Procedure were agreed by the Strategy and Resources Committee, on behalf of the Methodist Council, during 2017/2018. The former provides clear procedures and is intended to act as a policy document to sit behind SO 332 and Section 98. They set out the requirement for the LBAC to approve the Connexional Conservation Officer's Annual Report which is available online on the Conservation Section of the Methodist Church's website.
6. The Committee's performance is not evaluated in terms of the numbers of times that individual members attend meetings. Some will be present only when items requiring their specialist knowledge (eg stained glass, archaeology) are under discussion; unavoidably absent members will frequently submit comments in advance.
7. Members accompanied the Connexional Conservation Officer to Chew Stoke Methodist Church, Four Oaks Methodist Church and other major projects and have occasionally given guidance outside formal meetings on architectural, archaeological and structural engineering matters as well as guidance on the appropriateness of stained glass repairs.

8. The Committee has been trying to work with related Committees across the Connexion, including the Property Development Committee (PDC) and Heritage Committee, with a view to identifying areas of cross-over and making relevant input into their work areas. Indeed, there is a meeting of the three chairs held on a regular basis, with a short report presented to each meeting. It has also been agreed that one member of the LBAC will sit on the PDC and another on the Heritage Committee to provide a link between the three committees.
9. In an attempt to be more transparent the Committee began a series of open meetings, with one held in May 2016 in Northampton and another in Cornwall in April 2018. A further open meeting went ahead as planned for Hertfordshire in October 2019. The open meeting and subsequent site visits within the Cornwall District in 2018 were well received, with a number of observers attending.
10. The Committee is always looking at ways it can reduce its carbon footprint and has established a means of working that reduces the amount of papers required for each meeting. Only plans are printed and posted, making significant financial savings on postage. We have also been trialling the use of web based data sharing.
11. Members regularly visit churches and offer feedback on any completed schemes. Furthermore, the Chair has occasionally attended meetings, such as the Historic England Places of Worship Forum, as a representative of the Connexional Conservation Officer. The Committee regularly considers policy items such as pew removal, and replacement chairs, and the Chair continues with his research on the significance of remaining interiors to help with better and informed decision making. Members occasionally research architects to better understand the significance of our historic places of worship, such as Alan Brace, the designer of High Street Methodist Church, Harpenden.
12. The LBAC also note the quarterly list of historic chapels sold and have asked that we include a request for photographs of closing churches as standard, and that all war memorials for closed churches are recorded in the proper manner. In line with our Code of Practice, once a church is sold a letter is sent to the Local Planning Authority by the Conservation Officer informing them that the Ecclesiastical Exemption no longer applies.

*****RESOLUTION**

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