

**This Guidance is for those concerned with real property (buildings). Primarily written for Church property stewards, much of the information is relevant to Circuit and District officers.**

We are delighted to know that you have agreed to take responsibility for some, or all, of the property aspects of your local church or other property. As you can imagine District Property Secretaries and, the Connexional Team based in London and Manchester have numerous queries from those newly appointed to this task, and we therefore set out below some of the background information that we hope you will find helpful.

We have not reproduced here large portions of The Constitutional Practice and Discipline of the Methodist Church (CPD) and where a particular standing order is referenced you should refer to the latest addition of CPD.

### 1. Trustees' responsibilities

As a member of the Church Council, you are a Managing Trustee, and carry the same responsibilities as the trustee of any charity. In particular, you are personally responsible for your actions as a trustee, and you must ensure that you manage the trustees' affairs prudently, and take proper professional advice where you feel that you are not yourself competent.

For further information please see our web pages on Managing Trustees:

[www.methodist.org.uk/for-ministers-and-office-holders/office-holders/managing-trustees](http://www.methodist.org.uk/for-ministers-and-office-holders/office-holders/managing-trustees)

### 2. Contact us

If you have a simple query, please phone, but if your query is more complex, it is better to contact us in writing so that we have an opportunity to look into the file before responding.

#### Technical questions:

Your local District Property Secretary (contact details in your district directory) or [fpc@methodistchurch.org.uk](mailto:fpc@methodistchurch.org.uk) (based in London)

#### Listed buildings and conservation areas:

The Conservation Officer

Email: [conservation@methodistchurch.org.uk](mailto:conservation@methodistchurch.org.uk) (based in Manchester)

#### Legal questions:

Trustees for Methodist Church Purposes

Email: [legal@tmcp.org.uk](mailto:legal@tmcp.org.uk) (based in Manchester)

#### Funding and grants:

The Grants Team ([www.methodist.org.uk/our-work/our-work-in-britain/grants/apply-for-a-grant](http://www.methodist.org.uk/our-work/our-work-in-britain/grants/apply-for-a-grant))

Email: [grants@methodistchurch.org.uk](mailto:grants@methodistchurch.org.uk) (based in London)

#### Website:

A good deal of information is available on the Methodist website, including the *Property Matters* magazine and this Handbook, which provides guidance, information leaflets and examples of completed projects:

[www.methodist.org.uk](http://www.methodist.org.uk)

[www.methodist.org.uk/for-ministers-and-office-holders/property](http://www.methodist.org.uk/for-ministers-and-office-holders/property)

### 3. Duties of Property Stewards

The duties of property stewards are many and varied, and should be periodically confirmed at Church Council meetings. The specific term 'property steward' is not mentioned in Standing Orders, but SO 941 describes their general duties. There may also be a property committee, if the Church Council considers this necessary. Property stewards will then report to this committee.

The Supplement to the Annual Return (for the annual inspection of the property was Schedule A) should be downloaded in the Spring, to enable it to be completed in time for the Autumn meeting of the Church Council together with the online Annual Return. This information, together with a property report, is normally prepared by the Property Stewards.

A quinquennial report for all properties (unless excepted) must be produced every five years. Detailed information can be found in SO 952 and some other guidance can be found in the handbook pages under Technical Information ([www.methodist.org.uk/ministers-and-office-holders/property/handbook/technical-information](http://www.methodist.org.uk/ministers-and-office-holders/property/handbook/technical-information))

### 4. Property Matters

We have produced a considerable amount of background information to help you understand property matters more thoroughly. Our main communication with circuits and local churches is through *Property Matters*, published regularly and available online. Earlier copies should be kept in the logbook. *Property Points* (which preceded *Property Matters*) since 2002 are also available on request. *Property Points* contained information on a wide range of topics, including brief updates of new legislation. *Property Matters* continues in that manner, though with a much wider remit: [www.methodist.org.uk/for-ministers-and-office-holders/property/property-publications-and-events](http://www.methodist.org.uk/for-ministers-and-office-holders/property/property-publications-and-events)

### 5. The Property Handbook

We produce a number of information leaflets, all of which are available on our website under the heading 'Property Handbook'. This handbook is not available in hard copy as the regular updating of the pages would not be possible for a large group. *Property Matters* gives a list of those documents updated since the previous addition.

The handbook is split into different sections. Each section contains information that is relevant to the looking after of our buildings. There is an overview section, a general section on manses and church buildings, technical information, health and safety together with a specific section from Methodist Insurance and on conservation and these all contain many items that will help when dealing with our buildings. A direct link to the handbook can be found here: [www.methodist.org.uk/ministers-and-office-holders/property/handbook](http://www.methodist.org.uk/ministers-and-office-holders/property/handbook)

### 6. The Resourcing Mission Forum

Each year a 2-3-day Resourcing Mission Forum is held, usually in May, at a venue providing overnight accommodation. The cost for attending is not great, but is not centrally funded. Each year this event has speakers on a wide range of subjects and is attended by property officers and stewards as well as grants officers and others with an interest in property. Also present are representatives of the Connexional team, TMCP and others, such as Methodist Insurance.

Note: In 2019 there will be no RMF whilst its format and content are reviewed.

Check [www.methodist.org.uk/for-ministers-and-office-holders/property/property-publications-and-events/](http://www.methodist.org.uk/for-ministers-and-office-holders/property/property-publications-and-events/) for the latest property-related events.

## 7. Property projects

The information with regard to Consents Generally is set out in Standing Orders 930.

- **Listed Buildings and Buildings in Conservation areas:**  
The Conservation Officer should be contacted at the earliest opportunity when considering any work, maintenance, repairs or replacements in a listed building or one situated in a conservation area.
- **All other buildings:**  
If the work is fairly routine repair and maintenance, and is being paid for entirely from the local church's own bank account, no notification or consent, beyond that of the Church Council is normally required. You should refer again to section 93 of CPD to check whether, or not, consent is required.  
If, however, you are obtaining any grants (including from the Circuit Model Trust Fund - the old Circuit Advance Fund), or funds not already in your local church's own bank account) or if any legal issues are involved, or if there is to be any new building or structural work, then consent is required via an input of relevant details on the Property Consents website: <https://online.methodist.org.uk>.
- Only in exceptional circumstances (e.g. for emergency repair) is it possible for the District Officers to give consent after any work has started on site; Standing Orders make no provision for retrospective approval.

The above comments are only intended as a general introduction – if in any doubt, please contact your District Property Secretary (contact details in your District Directory)

## 8. Listed buildings and buildings in conservation areas

Please remember that if your building is listed or in a conservation area, then more stringent procedures apply. You should refer to Section 98 of CPD. Please note again that CPD has no provision for retrospective approval so early contact is absolutely essential to avoid undue delay. Due to updating of Listed Buildings by Historic England you can check to see if your property is listed by checking here: <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/>.

Local Authorities can also amend and change conservation areas. Unfortunately, there is no one national list of these Conservation Areas and a search should be made of the local authority website for the latest information. Please contact the Conservation Officer for further information: [conservation@methodistchurch.org.uk](mailto:conservation@methodistchurch.org.uk)