

# PROPERTY POINTS

2008 Part 1

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This Spring edition of *Property Points* introduces a change in publishing Annual Schedules and provides further information about New Ways of Working from 1 September 2008.

We announced our intention in 2007 to move towards electronic Schedules and this is now our policy. We believe it makes sense environmentally and for reasons of cost and efficiency.

At our Resourcing Mission Forum from 21– 23 April 2008 district representatives will be exchanging views with connexional staff around the significant changes for dealing with property projects.

There is information about this and details of the charity reforms for England and Wales.

We hope this *Property Points* provides all relevant current information and look forward to sharing more both at the Forum and the Charity Roadshows.

Alan Pimlott  
Connexional Property Secretary

The **Methodist Church** 

## THE CHARITIES ACT 2006 REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS

Local churches, circuits & districts whose annual income for year ended **31 August 2007** exceeded **£100,000** are required to register with the Charity Commission from 1 October 2008

A series of Roadshow events will be held in **June 2008** to provide assistance in applying for registration

### PLEASE BOOK NOW

Contact Chris Day or Jean Haynes at The Resourcing Mission Office, Central Buildings, Oldham Street, Manchester M1 1JQ  
Tel 0161 236 5194 or Email [roadshows@property.methodist.org.uk](mailto:roadshows@property.methodist.org.uk) giving details of your church and circuit with choice of venue

### JUNE 2008

4 Wednesday **West Wakefield**

10 Tuesday **Trinity Newport South Wales**

14 Saturday **Coventry Central Hall**

17 Tuesday **Wonford, Exeter**

18 Wednesday **Methodist Church House London**

25 Wednesday **Central Hall Manchester**

ONLY APPLY IF THE CHURCH'S/CIRCUIT'S/DISTRICT'S INCOME EXCEEDED £100,000 IN THE YEAR ENDING 31 AUGUST 2007 OR THE TRUSTEES ARE CONFIDENT THAT INCOME WILL EXCEED £100,000 IN THE CURRENT YEAR.

# CHARITY REFORM

Here is a summary of recent charity reforms affecting Methodist Charities

## **The Isle Of Man District, The Channel Islands District and Circuits Located Outside the British Isles i.e. Gibraltar And Malta**

The reforms do not affect these parts of the Connexion.

## **The Scotland District/The Shetland District**

These two districts were affected by the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005. Under that Act all Methodist trust bodies were required to register with OSCR (The Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator) in order to maintain charitable status. All charities were registered before the deadline set in 2006.

Annual Returns will be required and in due course there will be a Rolling Review of charities.

## **All Methodist Trustee Bodies in England And Wales**

The Charities Act 2006 affects all districts in England and Wales. Under this legislation there are two means by which charitable status may be demonstrated:-

- (1) If annual income for the year ended 31 August 2007 exceeded £100,000 the charity must register with the Charity Commission from 1 October 2008. (See below for registration arrangements).
- (2) If income in the year ended 31 August 2007 was below £100,000 registration is not required (nor available) and the charity will continue to be an Excepted Charity.

[A new Statutory Instrument No.2655 of 2007 extended the Excepting Regulations to 2012]

## **Roadshows**

A series of Roadshow events will be held in June 2008 to help trustees with the registration process.

We have sent invitations to all trust bodies currently preparing Accruals Accounts as they will be required to register. We have also sent this

information to all superintendents and district chairs.

At the Roadshows we will give precise guidance in answering the standard questions following our consultations with the Charity Commission. Trustees will then receive general guidance about how to complete the remaining parts of the form to do with the aims and objectives, and activities of the trustees.

We will also hope to provide information about how to demonstrate that your charity benefits the public and talk about the requirement for Trustee Declarations.

## **Connexional Clearing House for enquiries**

The Resourcing Mission Office will provide a clearing house for ALL registration application enquiries following an agreement made with the Charity Commission.

We are currently planning a timetable for registrations with the Charity Commission and details will be made known at the Roadshows.

It is possible that a phased programme will be arranged, perhaps extending over several months.

## **LEPS**

Special arrangements are being made for Category 1 LEPs (Single Congregations) that will be required to register if annual income exceeds £100,000. It seems likely that most Category 2 LEPs (Covenanted Partnerships) will also be required to register.

LEPs in Categories 3-6 (3 Shared Building Partnerships, 4 Chaplaincy Partnerships, 5 Mission Partnerships, 6 Education Partnerships) will not be required to register as it is deemed they are not separate entities.

The exception to the above is Sharing Agreements (Category 3) where they are also Single Congregations (Category 1) and in which case will be required to register.

# PROPERTY CONSENTS

## (A New Regulatory System for Dealing with Property Projects)

The Connexional Year beginning September 2008 sees the introduction of a new process for dealing with Property Projects. The present Approvals system will be phased out gradually, district by district. It may take a year or more before all districts are on board with the new system.

### The Present Approvals System

At present our Standing Orders require 'the approval of the appropriate bodies' for any scheme. For a local church scheme those bodies are the circuit, the district and the Connexion (The Methodist Property Office).

This system has served us well for many years but it is somewhat bureaucratic and this was one reason why the scheme for dealing with minor works was introduced in 2004.

In the recent strategic review circuits told us they valued the expertise and guidance provided by 'Manchester' but would welcome a less bureaucratic regulatory system which would reduce the burden on trustees seeking to develop their buildings for mission.

### The New Consents Process

Under the new system there will be just one body required to give consent to any project – the district.

The present paper Schedules will be replaced by a web based Consents process. Managing trustees will register their project and circuit, district and Connexion will be able to respond when necessary. It will be an intuitive process which directs trustees to the next step in the process.

Specific guidance for LEPs is being arranged in conjunction with our ecumenical partners and further discussions are taking place with the Charity Commission and the Office of the Third Sector.

Further guidance will follow as soon as it is available.

### Other Entities (Trustee Bodies Other Than Local Church/Circuit/District)

The Connexional Liaison Group responsible for ensuring Methodist charities comply with the Act will write to other trustee bodies whose income exceeds £100,000 and make arrangements for them to register.

If you are a trustee of one of these entities required to register, please let the Resourcing Mission Office know if you have not heard from us by the end of May.

### General Enquiries

You need take no action for the present. We will endeavour to answer all relevant questions at the Roadshows.

Please do NOT contact The Charity Commission direct as we are working with them to produce guidance and information for all trustees throughout the Connexion.

There will be some matters that must be referred to the Connexion, such as work to listed buildings in order to obtain Listed Building Consent before the district is able to give its consent to the overall project. Similarly, all sales and purchases of property will have to be referred to TMCP (the Trustees for Methodist Church Purposes) to ensure the legal and charity law obligations of the trustees have been fulfilled.

## Timetable

The first district pilot is due to begin in April 2008 and a second pilot is being planned for July. We plan to share the early experience of the first pilot at the Resourcing Mission Forum at Swanwick from 21-23 April 2008 though they will still be at a very early stage.

## Transitional Arrangements

The new arrangements for Property Consents will be rolled out to the districts on a gradual phased basis with perhaps one new district being introduced to the new system each month. It may be possible to increase the speed of the roll out as we learn from experience.

## Training

Plans are currently being developed but one option may be to arrange a regional seminar for four or five districts in a given geographical area to be followed perhaps by a local visit to each district in turn, prior to implementation.

Those districts attending the Forum will be asked to contribute to the planning arrangements.

## The Role of the District as Consent-Giving Body

This will be a key focus for discussion at the Forum and at the Superintendent's Course in July. We hope to provide more detailed information and guidance to the districts about their new responsibilities together with reassurance that there will be ongoing connexional support and guidance throughout.

# Treasurers Tips

Local churches, circuits, districts and all other Methodist bodies are required to complete their Annual Accounts using the Standard Forms.

As indicated elsewhere in *Property Points* all of the Annual Schedules are now available on the Methodist website

Link to Annual Schedules

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

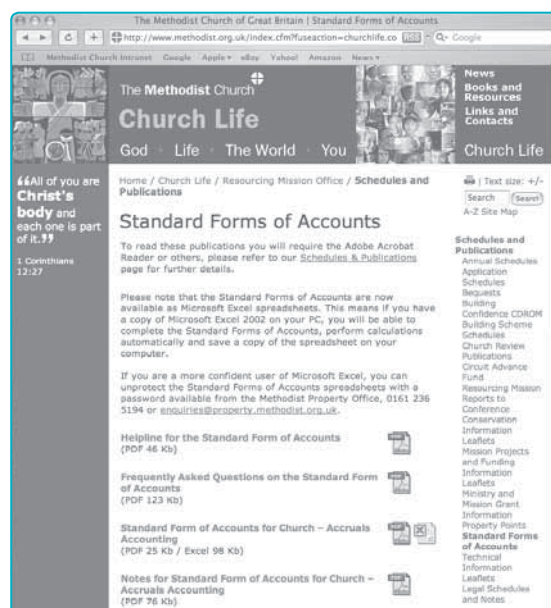
Standard Form of Accounts see page 5.

The Standard Forms on the website at the time of writing are for 2006-2007.

The Forms are currently being revised for 2007 – 2008 to take account of the Charities Act 2006 and any other relevant issues.

Fundamentally, we are aiming to leave the Forms unchanged wherever possible and any changes this year are likely to be mainly around thresholds as affected by the Act.

We hope to publish the revised Forms during April or May and are looking to a latest target date of 31 May.



# Connexional Schedules for Property and Funds

In the edition of *Property Points* last Spring we gave an update on the Annual Property Schedules including the introduction of the Standard Form of Accounts (which replaced Schedule B) and the proposal to move towards electronic distribution generally.

This year therefore the Annual Schedules have been updated/amended where appropriate and are available on the website to be downloaded locally for your use as and when required. They have of course been available on line for some time and we know, from feedback received, that treasurers and property stewards have found this useful.

Overall we are sure that this action will not only reduce costs and be more efficient but will also bring environmental benefits.

Superintendents will, as promised, be sent a reminder to ensure that the most convenient arrangements can be made locally for these to be made available to the relevant officers.

In exceptional circumstances we will endeavour to provide a limited number of paper copies if there are particular problems within circuits regarding the availability of computers and access to the Internet.

If circuits have an insurmountable problem it will be necessary for superintendent ministers to contact us in writing setting out the exceptional circumstances.

Link to Annual Accounts  
[www.methodist.org.uk/accounts](http://www.methodist.org.uk/accounts)

Link to Annual Schedules  
[www.methodist.org.uk/annualschedules](http://www.methodist.org.uk/annualschedules)

Below is a list of the Schedules and available formats for your assistance:-

	PDF format	Word	Excel Spreadsheet
Schedule A	•	•	
Schedule A Supplement	•	•	
Schedule C	•	•	
Schedule C Supplement	•	•	
Schedule D	•	•	
Schedule E	•	•	
Schedule G	•	•	

## Standard Form of Accounts Receipts & Payments

Short Form	•		•
Short form Notes	•		
Church	•		•
Church Notes	•		
Circuit	•		•
Circuit Notes	•		
District	•		•
District Notes	•		

## Accruals

Church	•		•
Church Notes	•		
Circuit	•		•
Circuit Notes	•		
District	•		•
District Notes	•		

For those of you who download the forms and save on your computer in the Word or Excel format it will be essential that they are updated because of any changes in legislation. We will note the changes in future copies of *Property Points*.

Thank you for your continued co-operation and all that you do in ensuring the responsible stewardship of Methodist property.





## Theft of Metal

The wave of theft of metals which has affected churches alongside other buildings such as schools, heritage buildings, commercial buildings and private houses, has had a devastating effect on those affected.

Driven by demand in China, the international price of copper and lead has broken all records over recent months and looks likely to continue.

This has led to an increase in theft of metals in all areas of the country. Ecclesiastical Insurance supported by English Heritage, Council for the Care of Churches and SPAB have now produced a guidance leaflet which can be accessed by going to the following link. [www.ecclesiastical.com/theftofmetal](http://www.ecclesiastical.com/theftofmetal)

This guidance was mailed to all churches insured with Ecclesiastical Insurance in November 2007 but this note is a reminder for all trustees.

## Surface Water Drainage

Several churches have been shocked to receive a bill for the drainage of water from the church site which includes all areas that are non permeable.

The matter has been taken up ecumenically since all churches are affected (although those in the North West of England seem to be suffering most). When the office has any further news on the situation there will be information posted on the Methodist Church website.

## Trustees for Methodist Church Purposes (TMCP) Statements

Following the successful e-mailing of year end statements in 2007 TMCP will send all statements by e-mail this coming September. We will liaise with the relevant contacts to explain this in detail over the forthcoming weeks. The whole system of access to statements, as well as the format and style, is the focus of a current review being undertaken by Anne Hughes-Holmes, TMCP's General Manager.

'This is seen as one further step to achieving our long term goal of remote and instant access to investment information.'

## Legal Section

With the onset of the Consents Process TMCP, who are based in Manchester, are experiencing some major changes as they work in partnership with the Connexion.

March saw the arrival of Joanne Broadbridge as a new legal officer. Working as part of the TMCP legal team Joanne will divide her time between connexional and TMCP legal duties.

Joanne brings with her a wealth of experience and is very much looking forward to working alongside Neville Johnson and the rest of the team.

## Land Registration

TMCP have paid a fee so all unregistered Methodist Model Trust properties in England and Wales can become registered. This will be done on a district by district basis, although churches and circuits needing to register out of sequence can do so. Any enquiries should be directed to the Legal Section of TMCP at Central Buildings, Oldham Street, Manchester, M1 1JQ

### This document is aimed at

- Local Property Officers
- Church Treasurers
- Superintendents
- Ministers
- Circuit Stewards
- Circuit Property Officers
- Circuit Treasurers
- District Property Secretaries
- District Treasurers
- District Chairs

### Further information

Please contact The Methodist Property Office – Resourcing Mission, Central Buildings, Oldham Street, Manchester M1 1JQ  
Tel 0161 236 5194

This newsletter is available on the Methodist website. [www.methodist.org.uk/propertypoints](http://www.methodist.org.uk/propertypoints)