

PROPERTY POINTS

2008 Part 2

INDEX

Annual Property and Financial Schedules **p3**, Charity Reforms Latest Information **p1-3**, Charity Roadshows **p3**, Charitable Status **p4**, Consents Process **p6**, Consents Process – Listed Buildings and Buildings in a Conservation Area **p5**, Electronic Signatures **p4**, Electronic Property Points **p4**, Faith in Maintenance **p6**, Google 'Methodist Schedules' **p4**, Grants **p5**, Land Registration **p5**, Manses **p6**, Methodist Heritage Sites **p5**, Theft of Lead and Other Metals **p4**, Trustees for Methodist Church Purposes - Annual Statements **p5**, Water Charges **p4**

Greetings from the Resourcing Mission Office to all colleagues involved in property and mission related matters.

A number of significant changes relate to Property Consents: where districts begin to take on a new role, new processes for dealing with connexional grants and changes under the new Charities Act.

Throughout all of this change the Resourcing Mission Office staff will be here to offer guidance and support.

Please contact us if you need help or information.

We are grateful for all that you do and wish you a good new year in 2008/2009.

Alan Pimlott
Connexional Property Secretary

The **Methodist Church**



CHARITY REFORMS

LATEST INFORMATION

The Charities Act 2006, which affects England and Wales only, is now reaching the implementation stage in the registration process.

Over a period of seven months from 1 October 2008 all Methodist trust bodies whose annual income exceeds £100,000 are required to register with the Charity Commission.

Roadshows

During June 2008 a series of seven Roadshows were arranged and some 560 people attended. Guidance was given to assist in completing the electronic application for registration (OLAR – On Line Application for Registration).

Gross Income

If your gross income for the year ended 31 August 2007 was over £100,000 or is expected to exceed that figure in the year ended 31 August 2008 then registration is required.

CHARITY REFORMS

LATEST INFORMATION

...continued

Registration

We estimate that up to 500 local churches, circuits and districts will be obliged to register. If your church or circuit etc was not represented at one of the Roadshow events but its income exceeds £100,000 please contact Jean Haynes at the Resourcing Mission Office at haynesj@property.methodist.org.uk and provide details of your organisation. We will send you information about the registration process.

Dispensation

Some dispensations will be allowed by the Charity Commission if your income is normally well below £100,000 but in the year in question has exceeded this threshold because you have been involved in a building scheme or have received a large bequest.

While you cannot take dispensation for granted we will apply for a dispensation on your behalf if you send us the details.

Circuit Amalgamations

If your circuit plans to amalgamate with another circuit from 1 September 2009 the Charity Commission will allow you to delay registration until after the merger has taken place. In this case registration may be applied for following the first full year of the amalgamated circuit.

Registration Timetable

Those who attended the Roadshows will know that electronic registration must be completed in a particular month between October 2008 and April 2009 determined by stationing regions.

Please note that you can submit your application at any time during your designated month.

LEPs

Around 40 – 50 Local Ecumenical Partnerships (LEPs) will be required to register as separate charities, though each denomination involved will continue to be accountable to their denominational governing body – in the case of the Methodist Church, this is the Conference.

A special seminar is to be arranged sometime during the connexional year 2008/2009. However, negotiations are to take place with the Charity Commission and ecumenical partners about LEP constitutions and other legal and technical matters. This may mean that the seminar will not take place before spring 2009. In any event the Commission have already agreed to such a delay on the basis that the whole process should prove to be more straightforward once such issues have been clarified.

Other Methodist Trust Bodies

There are a number of other Methodist bodies not on the church/circuit/district models. We will be writing to these trustee bodies in the autumn. Again, guidance will be provided to assist with the registration process.

Special Projects

Where a church, circuit or district runs a separate project please send details to Jean Haynes at the Resourcing Mission Office to enable a decision to be made about whether the project should register separately or as part of the managing trustees' registration application.

OLAR (On Line Application for Registration)

The electronic application process is mandatory for all churches, circuits and districts and for any other trustee body which has approved governing documents.

The approved governing documents for churches, circuits and districts are the *Deed of Union* and the *Model Trusts* enshrined in *The Methodist Church Act 1976*.

Each separate entity or project will need to look at its own trusts and, in discussion with the Charity Commission and the Resourcing Mission Office, then decide whether their trust has approved governing documents.

If not, OLAR cannot be used and the application for registration will need to be submitted in paper form.

Pilot Exercise

Discussions are underway with the Charity Commission and those trustee bodies being invited to take part in the pilot will be contacted as soon as possible. We asked for volunteers at the Roadshows and a total of 21 were received. It is presently intended that all those bodies which volunteered will be invited to be involved.

Website www.methodistchurch.org.uk

Information will be published on the Methodist website on a continual basis over the coming months in order to:

- 1 Share further details on matters yet to be resolved.
- 2 Remind trustee bodies when to register.
- 3 Offer guidance on completing Annual Returns.

Annual Returns

Once the registrations are underway further information will be made available about completing the Annual Return and other trustee responsibilities.

Email Contact

We will send these updates direct to those who provided their email address.

Annual Property and Financial Schedules

Regular readers will have noted in the last three editions of *Property Points* our plans to move to electronic distribution of schedules. In particular, the last spring edition (2008 Part 1) included a comprehensive list of the Annual Property Schedules and Standard Form of Accounts (both Receipts and Payments and Accruals versions) together with the formats in which they are available.

Most of the Schedules have been available on the web since the spring.

Our policy is not to issue paper copies though we have received some enquiries to do so.

However, if there are really exceptional circumstances we will consider supplying hard copies if the superintendent minister requests them, in writing, setting out the particular circumstances.

Please refer to the last edition for further details and thank you again for your co-operation and to all those at the local level for all that you do in your stewardship and mission of the Church.

Charity Roadshows

Our thanks to the Roadshow hosts.

We are most grateful to our hosts at

- West Wakefield
- Coventry Central Hall
- Trinity, Newport
- Wonford, Exeter
- Methodist Church House
- Manchester Central Hall

for willingly providing facilities and the locations for the Roadshows.

We have received very positive feedback from these events, including from the Charity Commission, and we very much appreciate the time and effort everyone put in to make them a success.

Charitable Status

We have been advised by the Charity Commission that Churches that are not registered charities should quote their HMRC number, which is used for Gift Aid purposes, when they are asked to provide evidence of their charitable status.

Water Charges

The last edition of *Property Points* included a very brief article on this subject which we are aware has already affected a number of churches in certain water company areas.

As we said at that time, the matter is being taken up ecumenically through the Churches' Legislation Advisory Service (CLAS) – the name of the new body which has replaced the Churches Main Committee.

There is an information leaflet on our website www.methodistchurch.org.uk which includes some guidance for managing trustees affected and which will be updated with any further developments. Further information is also available on the OFWAT website: www.ofwat.gov.uk.

Electronic Signatures

We have had many enquiries asking whether it would be possible to use electronic signatures as the Annual Property Schedules are available to be downloaded. The answer is YES.

John Sargent, Circuit Property Secretary from the Watford Circuit suggests this way forward

"...hard copy is signed at the Church Council Meeting and this is retained in the church's records, and the electronic version is sent to circuit with the date and printed name of the signatory. Similarly for circuits forwarding Schedules to districts".

Of course this will only be available where the recipient has an email account.

Electronic Property Points

Sometimes an item is so topical it really should not wait for the next edition of *Property Points*. We therefore intend to start a rolling edition of *Property Points* on the Methodist website. We will include these items in the next paper edition.

For 2008/2009 *Property Points* will be published in paper versions. However we will begin gradually to develop the electronic edition alongside.

Google "Methodist Schedules"

The easiest way to find the Annual Schedules A – G and the Standard Forms of Accounts on the website is by typing "Methodist Schedules" in your search engine. The list that appears will include "The Methodist Church in Great Britain Schedules and Publications". Click on this and it will take you to the Resourcing Mission publications page.

Theft of Lead and Other Metals

We hope you will have read the brief item which appeared in the last edition of *Property Points* and many of you will have also seen the Methodist Insurance leaflet on this subject.

For those churches who are insured with Methodist Insurance you should have received from the company, earlier this year, a complimentary pack of 'Smartwater', though feedback suggests that only a small proportion of churches have so far used the material and registered its application with 'Smartwater'.

Methodist Insurance have stressed the importance of trustees doing all they can as claims are currently occurring at the rate of one per day. This is costing the insurance company and congregations around the country significant sums as well as the inconvenience caused by such events. We commend the advice Methodist Insurance have offered to managing trustees.

Further information is available from Methodist Insurance www.methodistinsurance.co.uk, (telephone 0845 769 7531) and www.smartwater.com.

Land Registration

The Land Registry advise that registering land with them will help trustees manage and protect one of their most valuable assets. Their target is to register all land in England and Wales by 2010.

The scheme where all Methodist Model Trust properties will be registered free of charge (the fee having been paid by Trustees for Methodist Church Purposes) is gathering pace. The Land Registry has indicated that they now have the capacity to take all districts at one time.

Will districts who wish to have their properties registered earlier rather than later (other than those already contacted) please send an email to legal@tmcp.methodist.org.uk or write to The Chief Legal Officer, Trustees for Methodist Church Purposes, Central Buildings, Oldham Street, Manchester M1 1JQ so that the necessary arrangements can be made. TMCP is mindful of other pressures such as charity registration and we will work with the districts to ensure the process puts as little stress on trustees as possible.

Methodist Heritage Sites

Conference this year approved the creation of a Methodist Heritage Committee which will meet twice a year.

Its purpose will be to develop and keep under permanent review a policy for Heritage and Mission. It will also introduce processes to determine which sites are of connexional significance and for the disbursement of any funds provided by the Methodist Church for this work.

Transitional arrangements will be put in place pending the implementation of the proposals by the Methodist Council and a budget allocation has been agreed for this purpose.

If anyone wishes to know more please see the Conference Agenda on www.methodistconference.org.uk under Methodist Heritage and Contemporary Mission.

Consents Process – Listed Buildings and Buildings in a Conservation Area

Please note that the new consents process that is being introduced throughout the Connexion still requires that the Property Office is notified of all proposals affecting the exterior of buildings in conservation areas and all proposals affecting listed buildings. It is advisable to contact the Conservation Officer Ian Serjeant at the Resourcing Mission Office to discuss what is intended before a formal submission is made.

Trustees for Methodist Church Purposes - Annual Statements

Following last year's successful rollout, it is our aim to send all statements via email in September 2008. As usual we shall send the statements to your superintendents. We shall ensure, as much as we are able, that all email addresses are correct and we will have been in touch with superintendents about this matter. However, the onus is on the individual superintendent to keep Methodist Church House up to date with any changes in personal details.

Each year we are inundated with queries from treasurers who need to know when they will receive their statements. In order that they may perform their duties, we would ask that the statements are passed on to them as soon as possible.

It is our aim, in due course, to provide remote computer access to statements and this is something we are working on with the target to deliver either in 2009 or 2010.

Grant Applications 2008-2009

Please note that arrangements for connexional ministry grant applications remain substantially unchanged for one more year. The changes that have taken place primarily relate to the way in which grant applications are assessed. Please contact your district grants officers in the first instance if an application to the Connexion is planned.

Manse

The present state of the property market has resulted in property taking longer to buy and also a greater incidence of conveyancing chains breaking down. Managing trustees considering buying or selling a manse will need to bear this in mind when preparing a possible time frame for the sale or purchase.

Faith in Maintenance

Previous editions of *Property Points* have given information on this excellent free training available to property stewards. If you have the responsibility of looking after a historic building, whether listed or not, this is highly recommended. Courses are being arranged throughout England and Wales during 2009. You can either join an existing one or try and get one arranged in your area. Further details are available on the following website: www.spabfim.org.uk. If you attend you will receive a pack including a useful maintenance calendar, maintenance handbook and access to a helpline and website.

Consents Process

As was announced in the last edition of *Property Points*, the first pilot exercise of the web-based Property Consents process was launched in Nottingham and Derby District in April. The exercise went well and we are grateful to everyone in that district for their involvement, particularly for the helpful suggestions for improvements.

As a result of these suggestions, version two of the website was developed and is now being thoroughly tested. Once we are satisfied that it works well and consistently, Nottingham and Derby District will switch to the new improved version.

Meanwhile we are working hard to produce the Help and Guidance website to back up the Consents process. This is a huge task involving checking, updating and in many cases

rewriting the information currently available in paper form which has accumulated over many years.

It was always our intention to have this available before starting the second pilot exercise and as it is likely to take longer to complete than originally thought, there will be a delay before the second district 'goes live' on the system. However, provided everything works well, the roll out to all other districts could then be delivered on a shorter timetable overall. It is therefore our plan to move ahead and roll out all districts in the Connexion according to a timetable that is as efficient as possible once the second pilot has been completed and we are satisfied that we have a robust system in place.

Conference 2008 agreed that as each district switches to the new

process they will be absolved from appropriate Standing Orders within Part 9 of CPD. Conference 2009 will be asked to adopt new Standing Orders underpinning the Property Consents process.

Throughout this transitional period, colleagues in the Resourcing Mission Office together with staff from TMCP will be working with both the Approvals and Consents processes in their daily work as well as helping develop and test the new systems. We ask you therefore to be understanding of this in your dealings with them.

Consents Project Management Group

Anne Hughes-Holmes **TMCP**

Robin Garrido **Resourcing Mission Office**

John Nelson **Connexional Team**

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.methodistchurch.org.uk/propertypoints