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September 2025

PROPERTY MATTERS

The Methodist Church

New Connexional Year Welcome Note

We welcome all our readers of Property Matters to the new Connexional year publication for September.

Property Matters is an important means of communication for us in the Property Support Team and we hope that you enjoy the articles and information which is shared by ourselves, partners, colleagues and others. We are always looking for new ideas and themes for each month, so if there are stories you would like us to publicise, particularly if it is a successful building project or missional project using your building, we would love to hear from you. You can contact us by clicking here

We also thought you might be interested to hear that you are one of over 4,000 individuals and churches who subscribe to Property Matters. Over this year it would be great if we could expand upon this number, so that the information we share can be shared as widely as possible. Do feel free to forward on the newsletter to others in your circles who might benefit from it, or encourage them to sign up themselves by visiting the Methodist Church website newsletter sign-up page

We value your continuing readership, and if you have any property queries or projects which you would like our support with, please contact the team and of course don't forget to click here to look at our Property Pages in the Methodist Church website, which are full of information to help you develop and manage your properties.

Yours,
Stephen Hetherington & the Connexional Property Support Team

Important Reminder

Deadline for LBAC Submissions - 23 September 2025

Meet the Team Profile Series

Meet the **Director of Property Support** - **Stephen Hetherington**

1. Can you share a bit about your background?

I am an architect by profession spending 25 years of my professional life in private practice in London and the North of England working on everything from hospitals to housing, offices to churches. However what linked them all was an enjoyment of working with people to create places which make a difference in their lives.

This led to a career change of sorts in 2012 when I joined a homelessness charity to establish and run an empty buildings renovation programme, eventually creating over 120 affordable homes for people in housing need. It is through that involvement with the church and its role in social justice which led me to the role I am in now.

2. When did you join the team? What is your role within the Connexional Team and what are you most excited about in your role?

I joined the Team in late 2019 as Director of Property Support, with just four of us in the Property Support team. Much of my time was spent working with churches, as they looked at new missional opportunities for their buildings. Over the last 6 years, the team has grown to meet the demand for our support, and my role has changed too. Alongside supporting the team, in the last year two years I have been supporting colleagues manage and develop our Connexional properties, such as the new Methodist Church House. The joy of a growing team is an expansion of knowledge and experience, and I am looking forward to how we can collectively make an impact for the church and make the best use of its property assets for mission.

3. What's the most unusual job/most interesting project you've ever worked on?

In 2011, I was honoured to be part of something which I hope made a difference to people's lives, as the designer and project manager of a new adolescent wing for a children's hospice in NW England. To work alongside the dedicated client team of clinicians, carers and fundraisers in a place filled with so much joy amongst the sadness was a humbling experience and I was very proud of what we achieved together, creating a modern building which met all the healthcare requirements, but also still felt like a home from home.

4. If you could have any superpower what would it be and why?

I will cheat here and say greater faith, and being able to fully live out Jesus' words in Matthew 6 v25 – 34.

5. What's your most favourite way to unwind after a busy day at work?

Despite spending my working life dealing with property, I do like to be outdoors and where I live in NW England we have lots of countryside and opportunities for walking, including Pendle Hill on our doorstep. I also play the piano and love reading – so that does help me in my down-time.

If you would like to have a conversation with Stephen about your church project needs, please click here

Action For Hope Corner

This section of Property Matters is where we share news, resources and events linked to Action for Hope and our commitment to care for creation.

Replacement Projects Criteria

On 1 September, the new criteria for Replacement Projects came into effect. These criteria now include net zero projects as missional work. You can read the new criteria here, and more information on the process to request a project be deemed as a replacement one can be found in the A-Z Property Guidance.

Case Studies

We're sorry that the links to Summerbridge and Lancaster's solar PV case studies were broken in the last edition of Property Matters. Hopefully you all got the Newsflash with the working links but if not, you can read about Summerbridge here and Lancaster here.

A case study about infrared heating at Radyr Methodist Church has recently gone live and there will be more case studies coming soon, including one on retrofitting manses.

If you've got a story to share, please get in touch with Anna. It doesn't have to be as big as solar panels- if you've switched to LED's or installed insulation and it's made a difference to your church or manse, we want to hear about it.

Events

The Climate Coalition's Lobby Week runs from **13-20 September**. JPIT are encouraging churches and church members to meet with your local MP for a conversation about tackling the climate and nature crisis. There are tips on writing to and meeting with your MP from JPIT, and more information is available here.

Blackburn Cathedral is hosting a **Creation Care Conference on 31 October and 1 November,** exploring how faith communities can respond to the environmental crisis. You can find out more here, including the link to book tickets.

Also on **31 October,** is **Caring for God's Acre's Conference** on the importance of burial grounds for nature. You can find more details, including the programme and details on how to book your place, here.

As always, a reminder you can find more about Action for Hope here, guidance on getting your building down to net zero here, and you can contact Anna here for net zero support and guidance.

Events

Heritage Open Days 2025

Visit churches with open days throughout September - many heritage sites, including churches, will be opening their doors to welcome visitors as part of national festivals across the UK.

It's an annual opportunity to celebrate and explore fascinating heritage. Thousands of places of worship will be open to welcome you, so you can discover something new. Open days are arranged differently in each nation, so click the link below to find out about open days where you live.

Heritage Open Days in England (12 – 21 September)
Open Doors in Wales (7 – 30 September)
Doors Open Days in Scotland (6 – 28 September)

Useful Information, Reminders & Resources

Contactless and Online Donations

As all those responsible for church property will say, finding the money to maintain a building is a never-ending task. It is therefore helpful in these days of contactless payments and online banking that new ways of fundraising or receiving donations from those visiting our buildings are emerging.

Our colleagues in the Connexional Finance team have produced some very helpful information and guidance about this - Contactless and Online Donations - The Methodist Church.

Please note that this service is provided by Dona - all enquires about this service should me made directly to Dona by clicking here

Reminder: Living Alongside Bats in Churches Grant

The Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) has developed an online tracker for the Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme.

This is a small grant aimed at supporting places of worship who need help with their roost if, for example, the roost is causing an increased cleaning burden.

Places of worship can apply for up to £1000. The next round opened on **18th August 2025 and will close at 9am on 27th October 2025**.

For more information and to apply, click here

Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme: New Budget Tracker

The Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) has developed an online tracker for the Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme.

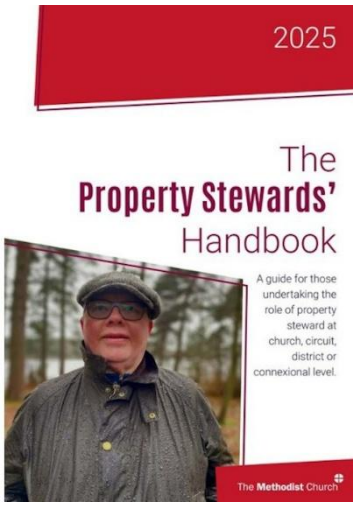
This tracker monitors the Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme's total funding available until 31 March 2026, and the amount already allocated.

For information and to access the Tacker, click here

Property Steward's Handbook - Updated

Don't forget - the Property Steward's Handbook has been updated and a 2025 edition is now available to download on the Methodist Church Website.

Click here to access and download the PDF version of the handbook



Methodist Insurance September E-News
(Sponsored Content)

This month, our sponsors at Methodist Insurance share practical guidance to help you care for your church and community.

From maintaining churchyard trees to preparing successful grant applications, understanding home insurance accidental damage cover and celebrating record-breaking Methodist grant giving, there's information here to support your mission and help safeguard your church spaces.

Click here to access the e-news content

Interesting Reads

Safeguarding Wales's Nonconformist Chapels

The Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales has gained support from The National Lottery Heritage Fund to develop a major new project ***Capeli***

Cymru: Preserving the Nonconformist Heritage of Wales.

Click here to read the entire article.

At Risk War Memorials Project

This interesting project, based in Leicester, aims to rescue war memorials at risk of loss or damage from closed or deserted buildings, including schools, factories, churches and chapels. This NHLF funded project not only rescues memorials but relocates them to a suitable location in the original community and/or moves them to a safe site for the purpose of repair, conservation and display.

They also work with individuals, schools and community groups to research, record and learn about their history. This includes examples of our own war memorials, such as the one at the former Claremont Street Methodist Church.

To see more visit this link: About us - At Risk War Memorials Project

Listed Building Advisory Committee (LBAC)

Meeting Dates:

- **14 October 2025 -** Deadline for submissions is 23rd September 2025
- **20 January 2026 -** Deadline for submissions is 20th January 2026
- **21 April 2026** - Deadline for submissions is 31st March 2026
- **14 July 2026** - Deadline for submissions is 23rd June 2026

Property Matters is a monthly newsletter focused on giving updates on property related guidance and legal updates as well as providing information and links to related subjects. To view the most current content, please refer to the Property pages on the Methodist Church website. We cannot know

about everything that's going on, so please do email us if you have any feedback or ideas for items to include.

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