



The **Methodist** Church 

PROPERTY MATTERS

ISSUE 3 – JUNE 2013

This document is being sent to the following roles within the Connexion who are registered on the Connexional database: District chairs, Superintendent ministers, District property secretaries, Circuit property secretaries, Church property secretaries, District treasurers, Circuit treasurers, Church treasurers

INDEX

Introduction	2
Consents: Annual Property Returns	3
Consents: Quinquennial Inspections	4
Connexional Property Grants: the Connexional Grants Committee	4
Conservation: Listed Building Advisory Committee	5
Conservation: flow diagrams and information leaflets	6
Energy efficiency: <i>Hope in God's Future</i>	8
Energy efficiency: update on Total fuel boycott	9
Funding: Some practical tips on fundraising	9
Statistics for Mission: web map	10
News from the Connexion: 'All change' at Brunswick Methodist Church	14
Portsmouth Cathedral's business scheme to expand nationwide	15
English Heritage Quinquennial Inspection Review project: Final report and conclusions	19
Resources from the Arthur Rank Centre	20

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the June edition of *Property Matters*. This is later than planned as we are changing the publication dates to align with the calendar year. Future editions will be published in September and December, following on in March, June, September and December next year.

This edition includes an article about online annual returns. This has been demonstrated at the recent Resourcing Mission Forum and will go 'live' in July. We hope that in the future this will reduce the amount of repetition (and also storage) which was involved in completing paper format copies, at the same time as making the information more accessible to users.

We have also included an article of an initiative being introduced at Portsmouth Cathedral, which may be of interest to those who have churches that are either under-used or closed. An article about the new Statistics for Mission web map tool, which can be found on the Methodist Church Website, is included. We would also encourage you to look at the Arthur Rank Resources links which include examples of creative use of buildings to make them more sustainable within their communities. An example from the Brunswick Methodist Church in Newcastle tells the story of their development of a listed building and the different uses by the community, demonstrating that you can usefully adapt listed buildings to serve mission purposes, and the benefits of having an outward-looking focus which encourages people in.



Julie Robinson-Judd, connexional property coordinator

Telephone: 020 7467 3524 Email: robinson-juddj@methodistchurch.org.uk

FRONT COVER: Photograph of part of the chapel window at Methodist Church House, London

CONSENTS

Annual Property Returns

In the previous *Property Matters*, it was mentioned that we will be soon going over to an online form for the Annual Returns, or what was previously known as schedules A, C and D. This site will now be going live in early July and returns will have to be submitted through this site from now on. There will be a downloadable form available which can be completed by hand, however this will need to be copied and submitted using the Property Returns site.

As part of the Property Returns site, there will be a new login page: propertyconsent.methodist.org.uk/ (see below). This will mean that you will now have only one login for Property Consents, Statistics for Mission and Property Returns. After logging in, you will be taken to a landing page which will have links to these sites. There will also be some brief information about what's going on around the Connexion in regards to property.

None of your details will change, so your old username and password for the Property Consents and Statistics site will still work.

A further email will be sent around to the relevant people, notifying them when the site has gone live and how to access it.

The screenshot shows the landing page for the Methodist Church's Property Consents site. At the top, there is a red header with the Methodist Church logo and navigation links for 'mt1@lest.com', 'Logout', and 'Edit My Profile'. Below the header, there is a sidebar with four buttons: 'PROPERTY CONSENTS', 'STATISTICS FOR MISSION', 'PROPERTY RETURNS', and 'CONTACT US'. The main content area features a 'Welcome!' message, a 'Help and Guidance Links' section with links to 'Property Consents Management System', 'Statistics for Mission', and 'Annual Returns', and a 'Latest Methodist Property News' box containing updates on the Annual Returns site and a single log-in for Property Consents, Statistics for Mission, and Annual Returns.

Tom Lee, consents web officer

Telephone: 0207 467 5202

Email: leet@methodistchurch.org.uk

Quinquennial Inspections

On the property details page, there is a field for entering Quinquennial Inspections along with a summary of issues, which we will be discussing with the district representatives as to whether to make this a compulsory field or not. If this does become a compulsory field, a new outstanding issue will appear on a project if it is missing or out of date.

The next round of updates, which may include the above, will be done in June to coincide with the launch of the Annual Trustee Returns.

If you have any questions about either the Annual Trustee Returns or Quinquennial Inspections, please send an email to consents@methodistchurch.org.uk

CONNEXIONAL PROPERTY GRANTS

The Connexional Grants Committee is facing some tough choices as it seeks to resource mission through grants to building projects across the Connexion. The large number of applications from churches where the building project is likely to create or to enable tremendous mission opportunities is very exciting, but leaves the Committee in the difficult position of having to turn down some very strong applications simply because it is not able to fund them all.

The Committee introduced new criteria in the hope that it would be possible to target connexional property grants to those parts of the Connexion where the mission of the Church is being restricted because of the lack of suitable property, and where a church has a vision that a new building might be a launch pad to their mission. The response to this change has surpassed expectations, and it is apparent that the Methodist people are ambitious in their desire to renew their missional purpose. The applications tell a fascinating story of churches already engaged in mission, often among the most marginalised and vulnerable people in society. Some are churches whose buildings are used seven days a week, often full of people with little knowledge of Methodism, but who experience a Methodist welcome; others are churches in rural areas where the Methodist church is the only community space available, providing a lifeline to the isolated and lonely. Others are churches where the church has grown to such an extent that the building is simply not large enough, and a new building or imaginative extension is needed.

As the Connexional Grants Committee seeks to discern how it should respond to the applications it has received, the challenge it faces is that the funds available in the Fund for Property are insufficient in relation to the total value of the applications for funding that have been submitted. As a result there may be applications that are turned down that meet the criteria, and which are seeking to resource mission in a way that is locally intelligent and connexionally high impact. The Committee has to make some tough choices in order to discern which projects score most highly against the criteria, and which are likely to have the greatest impact.

Edmund Glynn, leader, Connexional Grants Team

Telephone: 020 7467 5178

Email: GlynnE@methodistchurch.org.uk

CONSERVATION

Listed Building Advisory Committee (LBAC): their role and dates for your diary

As a consequence of the Ecclesiastical Exemption for England and Wales and of the Standing Orders, all works of repair, alteration, extension and demolition to a listed ecclesiastical building require approval from the Methodist Church before development commences. As part of the internal system of control, the Methodist Council (Standing Order 332) appoints the Listed Buildings Advisory Committee (LBAC) to advise the conservation officer and provide expert knowledge of historic church buildings (Standing Order 982). The LBAC is also expected to provide general advice to the Methodist Connexional Team and its officers on policy matters regarding listed buildings and buildings in conservation areas.

Members of the LBAC have, between them, knowledge of the history, development and use of Methodist chapels. They also have knowledge of the history and development of Methodist liturgy and worship, architecture and the visual arts, and the experience of the care of historic buildings and their contents. Specialist advice is also provided by the LBAC on matters of archaeology and the conservation of stained glass.

The LBAC meets on a quarterly basis and those church members who are proposing works which require consultation with the LBAC are reminded of these dates for their diaries. Please also note that papers for consideration are circulated two weeks prior to the meeting date and papers which are not circulated by this time may not be accepted for deliberation. These deadlines are set out in the following table:

Deadline for circulation of papers	Meeting date
25 June 2013	9 July 2013
1 October 2013	15 October 2013
17 December 2013	14 January 2014

Forthcoming dates shall be included in future issues of *Property Matters*.

Flow diagrams

A quick reminder that flow diagrams are now available to download from the Conservation section of the Methodist Church's website, the purpose of which is to outline the process of consultation required to obtain listed building approval. You can download them from [here](#).

If you would like clarification on the form of consultation relevant to your project then please contact the conservation officer.

Conservation information leaflets

The following conservation information leaflets are available from the Conservation section of the Methodist Church's website:

- *Disability Access Provision in Historic Chapels*
- *Listed Buildings – Photographic Records and Archives*
- *Removal of Pews from Historic Chapels*
- *Replacement Windows in Historic Buildings*

There is also a suite of guidance notes on the submission of schemes for works to a listed building, which includes:

- *Submission of Schemes to Support Services in Manchester*
- *Statements of Significance and Need*
- *Statement of Significance – Example 1*
- *Statement of Significance – Example 2*
- *Statement of Need – Example 1*
- *Statement of Need – Example 2*

The Conservation Office intends to update these guidance notes and will begin by looking at the information leaflets on how to prepare a Statement of Significance and Statement of Need. We would welcome any comments on how to make these documents more user-friendly, and ask that you send these comments to us at conservation@methodistchurch.org.uk

Joanne Balmforth, conservation officer

Telephone: 0161 2356739

Email: balmforthj@methodistchurch.org.uk

English Heritage Quinquennial Inspection Review Project: Final report and conclusions

In May 2012, in order for it “to improve advocacy for historic chapels”, English Heritage (EH) contacted the Church requesting that we partner with them by providing information about:

- the physical condition of listed chapels, and
- the extent to which criminal damage, especially metal theft, is putting them at risk.

The project was for listed chapels in England. Wales, Scotland, the Channel Islands and the Isles of Scilly were not included. EH issued a schedule of listed Methodist properties; at the same time, the Methodist conservation team issued their schedule. The two schedules were compared and English Heritage agreed that the Methodist schedule should be used, but the EH spreadsheet should be used for the input of data. Further columns were added to the spreadsheet for the input of data of use to the Connexion – adequacy of the reports, whether photographs had been included, dates for future inspections, etc.

District chairs were initially informed of the EH project, followed by emails to district property secretaries to request copies of quinquennial inspection reports, either as hard copies or digitally. Some

DPSs responded within the first month of the request; others were slow to respond, with the final district responding in December 2012. Following consultation with English Heritage it was agreed that the project should be deemed complete at the end of January 2013; however, should further reports be received, they would be added to the spreadsheet.

The English Heritage list of Chapels (spreadsheet) issued for statistical reporting:	546 properties
Less: Chapels not identified from the Methodist list (also excluding manses and churches in Wales, Isles of Scilly and Scotland)	72
Less: Chapels closed, sold, leased or not in the jurisdiction of the Connexion	30
Less: Reports not received	113
Plus: Reports received for listed Methodist chapels not on EH list and added to the EH spreadsheet	44
Total Chapels included on the English Heritage spreadsheet:	375 properties

It is clear from examining these reports that, despite the Methodist Connexion issuing guidance to managing trustees to establish standards for reporting, the quality and usefulness of the reports varies considerably, from a two-page letter stating “as last report” to a comprehensive report clearly identifying the element of the building and including photographs, utilising the 'Churchcare' format of reporting recommended by the Church of England.

Of the reports received,

- 46% did not include any guidelines on costs;
- 58% did not use photographs to aid the understanding of the Church councils;
- 19% of the reports were considered poor and did little to assist churches, whereas 9% of those reports received were considered good – examples of reporting which were easily understood, had adequate technical content and gave clear guidelines for the maintenance and improvement of the buildings inspected.

It is the considered opinion that all Quinquennial Inspection reports should have a logical elemental structure and, particularly for buildings with Listed status, photographs should be the norm rather than the exception. Descriptions should be as detailed as possible (“as last report” is unacceptable). Some surveys, depending on the specialism of the surveyor, over-detail the services elements to the detriment of the structure descriptions. Following the examination of all the reports it is also the considered opinion that surveys for listed buildings should be undertaken by architects with a knowledge and/or accreditation in conservation and appropriate repairs (such as those approved by local Diocesan Advisory Committees) rather than valuation surveyors or engineers.

The information submitted indicates that, fortunately, few of our chapels suffer from persistent vandalism and the majority remain in reasonable condition. English Heritage indicated, at the start of the survey, that the information received would enable them better to understand the overall condition of the Listed stock with a view, perhaps of being able to provide support for repair work.

Ralph W Dransfield Dip Arch, RIBA, consultant for the EH QIR project
Email: Ralph@dransfield.freeserve.co.uk

ENERGY EFFICIENCY

Hope in God's Future

In 2011, *Hope in God's Future* was made a Statement of the Conference. It defines the teaching of the Methodist Church on the implications for discipleship when God's creation is under threat from the changing climate. *Hope in God's Future* describes a journey of transformation to which we are collectively called. There has been a growing awareness among us that the situation we face must prompt deep reflection on our lifestyles and our use of energy as a part of our Christian discipleship.

A recent manifestation of this interest can be seen in the number of churches that have invested in solar panels. The Feed-in Tariff (FIT) scheme was developed by the Department of Energy and Climate Change with the intention of releasing private capital to fund the capital costs of solar power and other renewables. Clearly grant funding on which projects previously relied was limited and incapable of funding the revolution in energy provision that our national climate change targets imply. The FIT scheme aims to make Photovoltaic solar panels an attractive investment prospect, particularly for those who are early adopters of the technology.

There are now over 65 Methodist churches in the UK that have installed solar panels. Our data reveals that most have invested local church funds and that at least one in four systems installed benefited from additional loans or donations contributed by church members. Most churches appear to see this investment as an extension of our mission to serve the wider community and as a means of communicating our concern to care for God's creation. Our experience across the Methodist Church suggests that the intention of the FIT scheme to act as a catalyst, enabling individuals and community groups to make a contribution to the transition to a low carbon economy, is paying off.

The initial implementation of the scheme was somewhat chaotic. The Methodist Church has contributed to two government consultations and the scheme is now improved in design though not perfect. Churches wishing to install solar power now have the additional hurdle of the requirement of an Energy Performance Certificate for their building. Tariff levels have decreased significantly in recognition of the dramatic fall in cost of PV systems over the past two years.

Solar panels are a visible and tangible means of reducing our carbon footprint and contributing to a transition to a sustainable future. Less visible but even more crucial are other measures for energy management and conservation that can be implemented at low cost. One way of making such efforts visible is to produce an annual report on energy consumption for the Church with the intention of seeing this figure decrease. This becomes easier as energy companies are increasingly obliged to support consumers in such monitoring. It may help us with the ongoing challenge to find ways to make the investment in the basic energy efficiency measures as tangible and engaging for our members as solar panels on roofs.



Steve Hucklesby, policy adviser, Joint Public Issues Team

Telephone: 020 7467 5245

Email: HucklesbyS@methodistchurch.org.uk

Total fuel boycott: an update

We are all pleased to see recent improvements in the situation in Burma. The human rights abuses there have been a concern of the Methodist people for some time, and some of us will remember the boycott of Total agreed by the Methodist Conference in 1998. That boycott still stands, and the JACEI report in this year's Conference agenda reminds us that although elections were held in 2012, the country is still far from free. JACEI is backing the Central Finance Board in continued avoidance of investment in Total, because of its actions in Burma.

The boycott is of all Total products, including heating oil as well as petrol and diesel. The Methodist Conference urged Methodist churches and members not to enter into contracts with Total, and that third parties acting on their behalf don't buy Total products without their knowledge. We ask you to pray for Burma and its people. We can give thanks for the recent improvements, but we still await the day when a boycott is no longer necessary.

2buy2 provide a wide range of energy buying services using various suppliers, including green energy, for Methodist churches. They also offer a national energy basket for which Total is currently the nominated supplier. We would encourage Methodist Churches to register with 2buy2 and use their services, but to opt out of being part of the energy basket. There are still significant advantages and opportunities to reduce your costs through 2buy2 and we would recommend that Methodist churches register with 2buy2 at www.2buy2.com or email enquiries@2buy2.com.



FUNDING

Tips for raising external funds

Sometimes it's easy to ask for help without highlighting in your fundraising application letters what your organisation is already doing to achieve its aims.

If you were asked to invest in a business, you would want to make sure your money is going to a business that will flourish. Trusts are similar. They may not want money back, but they do want their money to achieve certain goals – and so it's important for you to show them that your project has potential.

One way to do this is to highlight how your project is already achieving its aims on a smaller scale. Let's say, for example, that your project provides after-school tuition for children preparing for their GCSEs, and it needs funding towards creating hall space. It would be good to show that your project is already hosting lessons and that attendance has been good. Showing that there is a greater demand (perhaps via a waiting list) and providing projections showing greater attendance can really build confidence amongst potential funders. It can also help to have some quotes from young people, parents and teachers; comments that capture how much they value the project and the difference it's making in their lives.



IMPORTANT: Please keep in mind that all funders have different application criteria, and that this must be taken into consideration when drafting applications.

Mencey Morera, fundraising officer

Telephone: 0207 476 3532 Email: MoreraM@methodistchurch.org.uk

STATISTICS FOR MISSION

Web Map

Every October, the Conference asks every church in the country to fill out statistical returns indicating their size and some measures of their activities and impact on the local community. Statistics for Mission, as this process has become known, is the largest research exercise conducted within the Church.

Almost all the data we collect is available on the Statistics for Mission pages of the main Church website. This includes traditional summary charts of figures for churches, circuits and districts, some static maps demonstrating church data in a visual, geographical way, and also Excel spreadsheets, which can be downloaded and manipulated by any interested party. We have developed tools which allow users to decide for themselves what they want to see and, to an extent, how they want to see it.

Our relatively new reporting tool is very exciting and takes our data into the medium of interactive, dynamic online mapping. The map can be found on the Methodist website at methodist.org.uk/links/church-webmap-advanced-version. It does a range of things, but most importantly it allows any member of the Church to demonstrate, in one simple and easily understood map, complex data which otherwise would be inaccessible to most people.

The map user is presented with the screen (illustrated below) which has all the districts outlined on it. All the island districts are fully mapped, including Gibraltar and Malta.



Information on the map can be accessed either by making selections in the side bar or by clicking on the main map screen. The full number of ways this tool can be used in both of those actions is too large to give you a full picture in this article. Therefore we have outlined some of the key functions here.

The most basic function is the district/circuit finder. The user selects a district and is automatically taken to a view of the district, with its boundary highlighted. A list of the circuits in that district then appears. The user can select one or more of these, giving a quick overview of the location and sizes of each circuit. This is a very simple way of using the map to find a place.

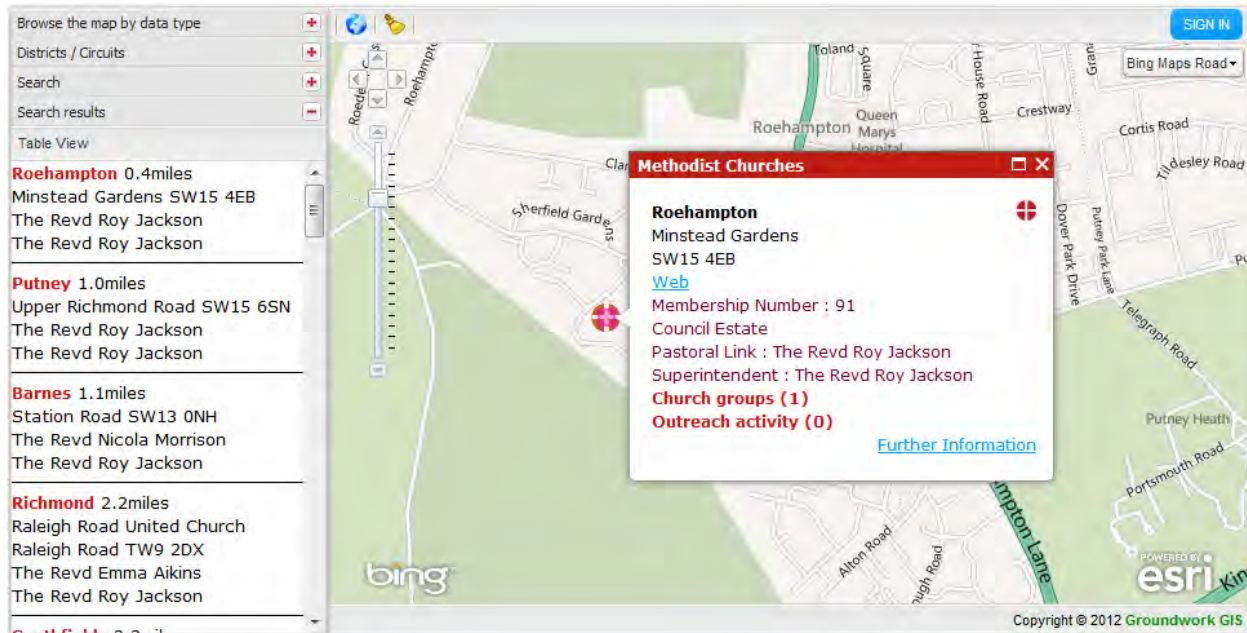
But there's a lot more it doesn't tell us.

Let's say we have heard all about the wonderful work of churches in a district and wanted to know more. First we select the district (we could also simply move the map and zoom in to the level we want in the same way we would use a regular online map like Google Maps). Then we use the map to see what's there. By using the browse function in the left hand column, we can switch on and off a range of options to display on the map the data about our churches.

We might begin by adding on the locations of churches. This shows us where they are, but gives no indication of what those churches are like. So we select another option to see a range of things:

- we could choose to colour the churches in a way that allows us to see the size and location of circuits
- we could choose to change the size of the church points to illustrate average attendance size (you may need to zoom in a little to see these)
- panning out or zooming in will allow the user to localise their view.

At this point you might want to know more about a specific church. By clicking on it in the map, a box appears, with some basic details about that church, including its size and the minister in pastoral charge.



- If you click on the 'more details' option, a range of our Statistics For Mission data is given at the bottom of the map. This includes the size and attendance figures, information about any groups that function, information about outreach projects the church has a hand in, and some other key data like languages of worship.
- If you hover over the icons under 'church groups' you can see the different category types for groups that the church has and clicking on one gives you additional information about that group such as attendance numbers and who it is aimed at. If there is more than one group within that category, then you can then click along the tabs to see the individual church details.
- If you click on 'past years', you can then look at church statistics going back as far as 2002 and past one-off questions such as 2011's carbon reduction measures information.

As a registered user, at this point you would also be able to upload comments or images relating to a church, to its groups or its outreach activities or to begin online discussions. This data is available for every church on the map.

There are a range of other layers of local information from government data sources we could add in, such as information on different faith groups, other measures of wealth, local ethnic demographics, land use and rural/urban categories for the locality. We could also add in a range of other administrative boundaries, such as wards and counties. All the data we present is the most recent available, and when the 2011 census data is published we will begin the process of adding in that new information.

As mentioned at the start, this tool has been developed to allow the user as much power as possible to explore the data they want to see. Although still in an early stage of development, the search tool on the webmap will make this much, much greater, and we can see the potential for this already.

How does this help mission? We believe it not only provides critical data for assessing need, viewing diversity, accessing target groups and pointing to potential areas for growth in mission, it also allows our Connexional Church to be more connected with itself and with the communities it serves.

There is also a mobile and tablet version as well. This is still under development and so is currently not quite as polished as the full web version. But it is still useful if you are out and about.

This tool has been developed by the research team with strong support from the Belonging Together Partnership. As such it has at its heart the desire to show the Church and its members who we are, where we are, what we do in those places, who we serve and who we could be serving. The map, at its most powerful, should allow us to be a more focused and more informed discipleship movement shaped for mission, building the Kingdom of God in the context of a diverse and changing world.

We'd like to encourage each of you to take a look and see if this helps you do what you need to do to be the church we need to be. The tool is in its early stages. We can develop it in any way we want to as a Church, and you can assist in shaping it by giving your feedback. There are bound to be a whole host of bugs and things we've overlooked, so we do welcome critical commentary to help us notice and to overcome those, recognising this is in no way a finished product.

As ever, you can contact the research team through the Helpdesk at Methodist Church House or on research@methodistchurch.org.uk or statisticsformission@methodistchurch.org.uk.

Thyra Hawkes, research officer - Statistics and Mapping
Telephone: 0207 467 3776 Email: HawkesT@methodistchurch.org.uk

NEWS FROM THE CONNEXION

Planning ahead

We all recognise (sometimes grudgingly!) the importance of compiling and submitting returns which record facts and figures at a certain point in time or over a certain period. But how much attention do we give to planning for the future? There always seem to be so many current issues that need addressing, that sometimes we neglect to think beyond the short term.



I believe that, as Managing Trustees, it is incumbent upon us to spend more time in looking at the future. Those of us who are motorists are aware that we need to check our mirrors regularly and to look from side to side, but our main focus has to be on the road ahead, fully aware of what lies in our path. There are signs that tell us of approaching junctions; of distances to certain places and of a whole range of potential challenges for the motorist. If we ignore them, we can lose our way or become involved in an accident.

At the Resourcing Mission Forum in May, district property secretaries discussed one of the important signs to which we need to pay close attention. As Managing Trustees, we have to comply with Standing Order 952 and ensure that Quinquennial Inspection Reports (QIRs) are commissioned from an appropriately professionally qualified person in respect of any property for which we are responsible. Similarly, we should have a Reserves Policy which is subject to regular review. The QIR will tell us how much money we are likely to need to spend over the medium term in repairing and maintaining our property; the Reserves Policy will indicate how much we hold in general, restricted and endowment funds to meet our future needs. These two documents provide us with a view into the future; snapshots of the road ahead.

How often do we tie these two items together? If the spending identified by the QIR is not covered by our existing and projected reserves, what are we going to do? Big decisions need to be taken! We cannot ignore the findings of the QIR, and therefore we have to work out how we are going to access the funds which are required to address those findings or – in a number of cases – we may have to recognise that the burdens of our property have placed too great a strain on our financial (and human) resources and those burdens have to be lessened or removed. We cannot do this by ignoring the findings of the QIR, and so a sale of the property may be necessary. Just as our motorist is guided by laws, best practice and experience, so must we be as Managing Trustees.

I would welcome the inclusion of the Reserves Policy as an integral part of the Standard Form of Accounts, and I would also welcome an obligation to include in the Reserves Policy specific reference to the financial implications of the most recent QIR. Unless (or, more optimistically, until) this occurs, may I commend to all Managing Trustees that the future is viewed with openness and honesty and that QIRs and Reserves Policies are clearly linked together. We must not divert our attention from the road ahead, or the signs which are there to guide us. If we do, then just like a motorist, we run the risks of getting lost or having a serious accident.

Andrew Slim, Manchester & Stockport District Consents Group

Telephone: 0161 434 4873

Email: circuit1901@unicombox.co.uk

All change at Brunswick Methodist Church, Newcastle-upon-Tyne



It is difficult, looking at the 1976 foyer photograph, to grasp how different the entrance to the church was between then and now. The functions were, and are, obviously very different; then it was simply an entrance to the church and the worship that took place there. Now it is still that – plus so many other functions!

Brunswick opened in March 1821, as the direct successor to the Orphan House in Northumberland Street – the first purpose-built Methodist church. And so – 270 years after John Wesley opened the Orphan House to be a place of preaching, teaching, accommodation and outreach – BMC continues Wesley's principles laid down in 1742!

The 1981 renovations to the church, which included flooring of the worship space and creating a church at first floor level, enlarged the foyer. The coffee shop opened and the church began to open seven days a week and now has the strapline “the Church at the heart of the city”. Over the years, the work of the church has grown both in the number of people who enter the building and in the range of work that is being done here. In the 32 years that have passed since the last major work, we have decorated the foyer several times. But last year, the opportunity to do major alterations came as we were left two bequests which primed the pump for funding the major renovation and re-ordering of the foyer. The foyer had gradually begun to be used for more functions than just the coffee shop, and we felt that we wanted to develop this work further. Architects were employed and designs produced. A lot of interesting discussions took place as we debated what we wanted to use the space for; we talked with the architects about how this could be achieved. We were encouraged to think big and have ‘blue sky’ thoughts by our ministers, the Revd Eden Fletcher and Deacon Eunice Attwood. What we wanted was a twenty first-century, multi-purpose space that would lend itself to new work in our mission to serve the city centre, while the existing work continues. The coffee shop will operate six days a week; a prayer room will be used for daily morning prayer and as an area for quiet personal reflection; the space will also be used for drop-ins (for example, the Brunswick Friendship Group for people on the margins of society or living on the streets, meets every Thursday evening). Social Services have sessions for disadvantaged young people and unemployed people. The Global Family (of students and young professionals from round the world) and our Chinese Church use the area for group sessions.

BMC is a listed building and throughout the whole process, we have been acutely aware of the



sensitivities of working to improve a building and remaining truthful to the original building. What we required was a contemporary look and feel which would not inhibit but enhance the Christian message and work in the twenty-first century. There needed to be a sensitive adaptation and with the help of the appointed architects we have been enabled to translate the vision into reality. The cost? A little short of £250,000 – most of which has been found from

within Brunswick. The reality? An entrance with a ‘wow’ factor and which enhances the Georgian features. The work? A space that is welcoming and open to all. As a gathered church in a city centre, BMC has survived by being flexible and adapting to the changing times. BMC is not just a preaching place, as it was prior to 1979; we are ideally situated at the heart of Newcastle and are able to be a home for over 60 disparate groups, many of which would find it difficult to meet elsewhere. These include: Alcoholics Anonymous, Gamblers Anonymous, the Methodist District International Students Centre (for fellowship and language classes), Girls Are proud (GAP) (a support group for sex workers) and SCARPA, the Children’s Society project with runaways and trafficked children.

The work is complete, bar a suitable Christian pictorial manifestation on the glass wall and some minor snagging items. And so on the Saturday of the church anniversary weekend (1-2 June), the Right Honourable the Revd Baroness Richardson of Calow OBE opened the foyer and coffee shop – in the presence of Deputy Lieutenant Major Eric Ingram MBE and Alice Ingram, Councillor Lord Shipley OBE and Lady Shipley, the Lord Mayor Councillor Margaret Wood and the Lady Mayoress; other councillors, Majors Antony and Fiona Mugford of the Newcastle City Temple of the Salvation Army,



representatives of Churches Together in Newcastle, church members and friends together with representatives of the architects and contractors. After Kathleen declared the foyer open, everyone was entertained in the foyer and hall with in-house catering by the executive chef of the Newcastle Marriott Hotel – who just happens to be on BMC’s community roll!

There were speeches from Kathleen Richardson, Eden Fletcher and Christine Beck (the senior church caretaker), who said that those coming into the foyer were saying “Wow!” It was Christine, in her pink hard hat, who ensured the premises were always ready for activities and worship throughout the twelve-week period that contractors were on site. Eden acknowledged the generosity of church members as well as the circuit, district and Connexion, who all provided grants to make the project possible. On the Sunday, Kathleen Richardson preached for Chapel Anniversary – 21 years after she became president and ordained presbyters in Brunswick.



And what have others noticed about the alteration? The Salvation Army Newcastle City Temple has been worshipping in our downstairs hall for over four years. Now there is daylight for the first time and this has opened up their worship space wonderfully. The Men’s Group meets weekly and the new sliding doors to the front of the building make access so much easier.

Christ calls us to be adventurous. He beckons us forward and we step into his presence in the sure knowledge that he challenges us to adapt to his changing world. BMC has moved forward in faith and we have pushed at what, sometimes, felt like a locked door – only to find we could push it open. Listed buildings are not properties that should be simply preserved but should be cared for and adapted in sympathetic ways so they serve the present age.

We believe that the architects and builders have been able to achieve this twenty first-century space for us and pay tribute to them for their hard work, the excellent standard they have produced and their willingness to be flexible and work alongside us. We would say it has (almost) been a pleasure to have them on the premises!

Soon there will be a specially commissioned piece of artwork on the glass ‘wall’ which is between the foyer and the hall and which we hope will reflect the Christian message of welcome, hospitality and the love of Christ, in the City Centre.

In so many ways BMC has come full circle to re-engage with Wesley’s original vision for his ‘Orphan House’: a place of welcome and hospitality, a place of encounter with the living God through preaching and service, a place of mission and transformation, a place where all, especially those on the margins of society, may find welcome.

David Stabler, district property secretary, Newcastle District

Telephone: 0191 2858006 Email: david.stabler007@btinternet.com

Some photographs courtesy of Peter Aughton@



Present presbyter the Revd Eden Fletcher at the opening with former ministers the Revd David Driver and the Revd Terry Hurst.

Portsmouth Cathedral's business scheme to expand nationwide

(This story by Susie Turner originally appeared on the *Christian Today* news website on 1 May 2013. It is reproduced here with their kind permission.)



An initiative set up by Portsmouth's Anglican cathedral to support entrepreneurs and business start-ups is going national. The Cathedral Innovation Centre (CIC) is providing entrepreneurs with office space, start-up loans and mentors.

The office space is owned by Portsmouth Cathedral and the CIC was launched as part of its response to the recession. The CIC will nurture business ideas and entrepreneurial talent as one way of addressing local social and economic needs. As well as driving innovation, it is hoped the scheme will create jobs and provide new purpose to under-used buildings. It is already preparing to roll the scheme out across the nation and is inviting members of the public to help finance the expansion.

The cathedral is looking for 2,000 people to become shareholders in the CIC by investing £75 or more to help the work grow. Monsignor Vincent Harvey, the parish priest for St Joseph's and St Edmund's RC Churches in Southampton, is working to open the next centre in church buildings in the city's Bugle Street. Discussions are also taking place for new centres in Derby, Cheshire, East Anglia, Bournemouth and the North East.

The CIC at Portsmouth Cathedral had its official launch on Wednesday by Baroness Berridge and government minister Mark Hoban.

Baroness Berridge said: "This isn't just one Cathedral Innovation Centre, but the start of a movement. It's about providing jobs, which is the best expression of hope, providing a real sense of self-worth. I'd like to pay tribute to the cathedral and the leaders of the Roman Catholic churches in Southampton for grasping the vision, and look forward to others joining the campaign."

There are already nine firms at the Portsmouth CIC, including a computer games firm, a catering company and a business that redevelops old land for wider civic use. Together they occupy 14 desks and in the coming days, they will each be recruiting three new apprentices thanks to the CIC's backing.

The CIC is a partnership between the cathedral, the Royal Society of Arts, the University of Portsmouth Business School, and the Roman Catholic diocese of Portsmouth.

Mr Hoban was among those to step forward and buy a share. He is encouraging others to do the same. "This is a fantastic project, and a way of getting people into work," he said. "Each of us putting forward £75 is a really powerful way of giving financial support to businesses."

"Often business people have really good ideas, but no capital to get the business going. It can also be very lonely running your own business, and you feel a lot of responsibility, so having people around you to give advice and guidance is also helpful.

"This is saying to the people who are looking for work that we aren't just talking about it, but we are doing it as well."

Francis Davis, chief executive of the Cathedral Innovation Centre, said it was more than just a property solution. "We are seeking to refresh the commitment to combining economic recovery with social and civic recovery too," he said. "Where will the next generation of great innovations such as the John Lewis Partnership and Traidcraft, Dyson and the Internet, come from if we do not recombine all our resources with a fresh energy?"

"With hardly any resources we have levered in-kind support of £500,000. So every pound invested in us really is a commitment to value for money and a social return on each penny."

The Arthur Rank Centre: Online resources for rural churches

For 40 years, the Arthur Rank Centre in Warwickshire has served both the spiritual and practical needs of the rural Christian community through a programme of community and social projects, resourcing and training. Amongst other things, the centre works with partners to provide churches with the tools and support they need to use their premises creatively.

Most of the centre's resources are delivered through its website, and are regularly updated. Virtually all are freely downloadable. The full list of resources (complete with links) is also updated regularly and can be downloaded from www.arthurrankcentre.org.uk/signposts/item/download/2480.

This document is being sent to the following roles within the Connexion who are registered on the connexional database:

- ✓ District chairs
- ✓ Superintendent ministers
- ✓ District property secretaries
- ✓ Circuit property secretaries
- ✓ Church property secretaries
- ✓ District treasurers
- ✓ Circuit treasurers
- ✓ Church treasurers

If you are aware of other people who may not have access to the internet, email or a computer could you please provide them with a copy of this document.

If you know of people who would like to subscribe to Property Matters email newsletter please forward this copy and ask them to visit www.methodist.org.uk/signup

The **Methodist** Church 

Methodist Church House
25 Marylebone Road
London NW1 5JR

020 7486 5502 [Helpdesk]
www.methodist.org.uk
Registered Charity no. 1132208