

August 2026

PROPERTY MATTERS

The **Methodist** Church 

Welcome to this month's edition of Property Matters
For the latest property guidance, please refer to the [Property pages](#).
[Meet the Property Support Team](#)

**Deadline for LBAC applications is 29 September
2026 for 20 October 2026 meeting**

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.

Resources

If you're thinking about net zero for your church, but want to know how technologies work in a church setting, this is a reminder there are case studies available on the [Getting Your Building Down to Net Zero](#) webpage.



Recent case studies include [Silsden Methodist Church](#), who have solar PV and air source heat pumps, and [Wetherby](#) and [Sewerby](#) Methodist Churches, where d3associates have shared their learning from both projects. d3associates will be sharing more of their learning to help tackle the common net zero myths and misconceptions in the coming months, so keep an eye out for that!

For those considering PV projects, a reminder that [Methodist Insurance](#) have guidance on both panels and batteries available. They also have a [questionnaire for churches](#) to complete- the advice is to complete this early on in the project and start the conversation with Methodist Insurance, so any requirements can be discussed.

Eco Church Awards and Anniversary

A huge congratulation to all Methodist Churches who have achieved an Eco Church award. Since the last update, there are now 1,329 Methodist churches registered; 526 of these have Bronze awards, 192 Silver and 18 Gold.

2026 marks the 10th anniversary of Eco Church! A Rocha UK are holding a series of events to celebrate, bringing churches together to give thanks, celebrate all that's been achieved and look ahead with hope. You're welcome whether your church is already part of Eco Church or if you're interested in finding out more. You can book your place and find out more at the following links;

- [Chelmsford Cathedral](#), 30 September, 5.15pm
- [Christ Church Toxteth Park](#), 3 October, 1pm
- [The Mint Methodist Church](#), 17 October, 2pm

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.

Inspiration from East Yorkshire

St John's Burlington Church, Bridlington Celebrates Completion of Organ Restoration

St John's Burlington Church, Bridlington, is celebrating the successful completion of a major restoration project to its historic pipe organ. The work has been undertaken by Aistrup & Hind Ltd of Lincoln and has restored the instrument in accordance with the agreed specification, ensuring its long term future and significantly enhancing its performance.



The project included extensive cleaning, repairs to worn mechanical components, re-leathering of action parts, replacement of damaged keyboard ivories, refurbishment of the console, and cleaning and reinstatement of the pipework. Photographs taken during the works reveal both the scale of the intervention and the craftsmanship involved in returning the organ to full working order.

Church members report that the instrument is now “sounding brilliant”, with the restoration bringing renewed richness and reliability to worship and music making at St John’s. A service of rededication is planned for August, marking an important milestone in the life of the congregation and the preservation of this significant musical asset.

The celebrations will feature an opening recital by Robert Poyser of Beverley Minster on Saturday 24 October at 2.00pm, providing an opportunity for the wider community to hear the restored instrument at its best.

This project is an excellent example of how careful stewardship and investment in historic church organs can safeguard an important part of our Methodist heritage while enriching worship, mission, and community engagement for future generations.

[Click here](#) to view pictures of the organ restoration process.

We would love to share your Story?

Do you have an Inspirational Story to share, please get in touch – no project is too big or small. Sharing your project experience will help encourage other churches who are thinking of embarking on a similar journey.

Please click [here](#) to access the questionnaire that will help you write your story.

Important Updates, Reminders & Useful Resources

Annual Returns 2026/27: Upcoming Changes

Following the significant reduction in questions introduced in 2023/24, feedback has shown that although churches welcomed a simpler process, many districts felt important compliance information was no longer being captured. Thus, we have reviewed the Annual Returns process to make it easier to complete while ensuring Churches, Circuits and Districts can meet their responsibilities as managing trustees.



The proposed changes to next year's [Annual Returns](#) seek to strike a better balance between reducing administrative burden and providing the information needed to support good governance.

Some key changes include:

- A stronger focus on trustee responsibilities and compliance through streamlined questions covering accounts, data protection, insurance, property inspections and key legal obligations for managing trustees.
- A redesigned property section, with clearer reporting on quinquennial inspections, asbestos management, fire risk assessments and conservation matters.
- Updated Action for Hope questions for each property that will help to gather more practical information about net zero planning, renewable electricity tariffs, heating systems and onsite energy generation, while removing some less useful energy-cost questions.
- Removing the Mission and Ministry section as the data can be extracted elsewhere

In addition, the current Word/pdf version of the [Managing Trustee Annual Checklist](#) has been transferred to an online form that can be sent directly to your District. The Word and pdf version will still be available but it is hoped that the online form will help to simplify this process.

The new format will be available from 1 September 2026. If you have any questions or concerns about the Annual Returns questions, please [email](#) the team.

A Fresh New Look for the Online Suite

We're pleased to share that the Methodist Online Suite has got a refresh and update.

What's changed?

- A refreshed look — the same tools you use today, but cleaner, clearer and easier to navigate.
- Improvements behind the scenes to make the system faster, more secure and more reliable.
- A new way of working: we'll now be delivering improvements in 3-month blocks, based on what you tell us matters most.



Keeping you in the loop

We'll publish a list of what people have asked for and confirm what we're working on in each 3-month block, so you can always see what's coming next.

Tell us what you think

If something isn't working, or you'd like to suggest an improvement, [please use our short feedback form](#). Every suggestion is reviewed and considered for an upcoming block of work.

Need help?

The Online Suite team is [here](#).

Thank you for your patience and support - we hope you'll enjoy the refreshed site.

Time To Start Asking Questions

Decision-making is an important and significant part of being a charity trustee within your Local Church, Circuit or District. What you may not know however, is that the Charity Commission sees asking questions as a fundamental aspect of the decision-making process.



[Click here](#) to read the full article and to access useful guidance notes on decision making.

Methodist Insurance August E-News



In this month's edition of Property Matters, Methodist Insurance shares practical fundraising and security advice for churches, alongside news of record-breaking grant funding helping Methodist churches strengthen their mission and community impact.

[Click here](#) to access the e-news content

Grants & Funding

Places of Worship Funding Index

A resource to support places of worship in England to identify potential funders



for building-focused projects.

[Click here](#) to access the complete index.

Giving Silent Organs a Second Chance

Across the Methodist Church, many treasured pipe organs sit silent, often assumed to be beyond economical repair. Yet a new initiative from the charity Pipe Up for Pipe Organs is demonstrating that appearances can be deceiving.

According to the charity, an accumulation of relatively minor faults can sometimes lead to an organ being written off after receiving a costly “death estimate”, when in reality it may be possible to return it to a playable condition for a fraction of the expected cost.



To help address this, Pipe Up has launched its [“Sleeping Beauty” grant scheme](#), which funds 100% of the cost of a two-day visit by a local organ builder to assess and carry out practical repairs to silent or unreliable organs, particularly instruments dating from before 1915. The aim is not a full restoration, but to make organs playable once again where this can be achieved at modest cost.

One Methodist beneficiary is Mount Zion Methodist Church, Ogden, near Halifax, where work is being funded through the scheme. Pipe Up hopes to bring 26 silent organs back into use during 2026 and is keen to receive applications from Methodist churches across the UK.

The charity is also developing a national list of churches that welcome visiting organists. Churches with playable instruments that would be happy to host visiting musicians may wish to express their interest in joining this future network.

If your church has a silent pipe organ, or one that is increasingly unreliable, it may be worth exploring whether the “Sleeping Beauty” scheme could help breathe new life into an important part of your worship and heritage.

Listed Buildings Section

[Listed Building Advisory Committee \(LBAC\)](#)

Meeting Dates:

- **20 October 2026** - Deadline for paper is 29th September 2026
- **26 January 2027** - Deadline for paper is 5th January 2027
- **27 April 2027** - Deadline for paper is 6th April 2027
- **20 July 2027** - Deadline for paper is 29th June 2027

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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