



Property Matters

Please pass to your property representative

**A Property Newsletter from
Thames North Synod of the United Reformed Church
St Paul's URC, Newton Road, London, W2 5LS**

Resources Committee Buildings Update

New Application Form

A new application form for application of grants and loans was approved at the Resources Committee which was held on 1st March 2016. This application form follows the format that was previously used by the Grants Loans and Property Committee, but it should be noted that the new form should now be used for all funding applications, draw-down of funds requests and for larger work which requires Synod approval. Further details and notes for use of this form can be found on the Synod website. See contact details on page 2.

Gutter Maintenance

Resources Committee launched a gutter maintenance programme at the Synod meeting on 12th March 2016. Contractors, Hall & Randall, based in Borehamwood will provide this service on churches within Thames North Synod. The programme will include a one off access survey being completed by the contractor at a cost of £124.50 including VAT which will be paid by Thames North Synod. The Synod will also offer an annual grant of £250 towards the cost of the gutter cleaning for the church

building only. The total cost of the gutter cleaning for the church building is £492.48 including VAT. It is also possible for local churches to use the same contractor to carry out cleaning of halls, and manses at their own cost. See full details of the programme in the Resources section of the Synod Website, or Contact David Skipp for more details.

Synod Surveyors

Rapleys LLP have been formally appointed Synod Surveyors in succession to Biscoe Craig Hall. Our contacts at Rapleys are: Adam Harvey and Graham Smith. They will deal with Charity Act reports, valuations and often be appointed to work with churches on larger projects, advising the Synod appointed Development Group. Before appointment, fee proposals must be approved by local church and Synod and the cost of fees covered by the local church or by Synod approved grant or loan funding. Contact can be made via the Trust or David Skipp.



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Health & Safety Poster

Somewhere in your premises, you might come across an ancient out of date H&S poster, which no one ever reads.

You may be aware that the law has changed and it is no longer a legal requirement that this poster is displayed. However, if you don't display the H&S poster you will need to provide all your workers with a leaflet which gives equivalent information. We suggest you update the poster. To ensure all are able to see it.

URC Buildings Forum

Following on from the URC and Methodist Joint Property Strategy Group roadshows last year it has been agreed by Mission Council that a nationwide Buildings Forum should be established.

The first meeting took place at our Synod Offices on 9th February 2016 and was attended by representatives of most of the URC Synods.

This Forum is designed to consider how we can help one another overcome many of the difficulties associated with buildings which very often are of such an age and size that they use significant resources, both people and money, to keep them fit for purpose.

The steering group for the Buildings Forum consists of David Tatum, Clifford Patten, David Skipp and Frances Brienen, who together are seeking a way of sharing information between churches.

This is likely to be an interactive web page that is to be included on the URC website and will include 5 main headings:

1. Our Church Building Inheritance
2. Mission & Buildings

Building Health Check

There is an excellent online resource at: <http://www.churchbuildingprojects.co.uk/how-to/>

This provides various free downloads once you have registered with them, which is also free of charge. These include:

- A map of the likely milestones in any building project
- Church Buildings Audit
- Buildings Health Check

The resources can be used by small groups and may be a good way for your church members to start looking at the potential your buildings can provide both for income and how to use your buildings for mission.

You should note that the website has been designed jointly by an architect and project manager, and whilst you may consider them as your professional advisers in any future project, the first step for larger projects is always to seek the appointment of the Synod Property Development Group before spending funds on professional fees.

3. Stewardship
4. Buildings & Finance
5. What happens when a church membership closes

The hope is that the website will provide useful information from various development projects around the country but will also give information about the cost of the total URC building maintenance problem to managing buildings and resources to how many buildings can we afford!

The Forum will link with PLATO (Property Legal and Trust Officers) and LBAG (Listed Buildings Advisory Group)

It is hoped that the web pages will go live this summer, and further information will be provided later in the year.

'If you are going to build a church you are going to create a thing which speaks. It will speak of meanings, and of values, and it will go on speaking.

And if it speaks of the wrong values it will go on destroying.'

(Robert Maguire, 'Meaning and Understanding', Towards a Church Architecture.)

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Large print copies of this newsletter are available from Synod Office.

Useful websites:

<http://www.urc.org.uk>

<http://www.churchcare.co.uk>