



Property Matters

Please pass to your property representative

The Newsletter from Grants Loans and Property Committee
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Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme

The Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme has been operating for a number of years and in January 2011 the government announced some changes that may affect eligibility for claiming back the VAT for repair and maintenance projects.

Prior to the 4th January 2011 it was possible to claim back the VAT on professional fees, but this has now been removed, together with repairs to organs, pews, bells and clocks.

The full list of items that remain eligible is included on the LPW Scheme website. See details below.

For those works that remain eligible it is still possible to claim back the

full VAT paid but the amount available is limited to an annual fixed budget of £12 million. This could mean that some claims will not be paid in full, even if they are eligible and the budget will be proportioned accordingly.

It is worth noting that the budget for the last financial year was over subscribed by £10 million, and there is still a backlog of 2010/11 claims being processed together with any new 2011/12 claims.

Before submitting a claim it is recommended that you view the website for the Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme at:

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

The Equality Act 2010

The Equality Act brings together a number of pieces of legislation relating to discrimination in respect of age, race, sexuality, gender, disability, etc. In respect of disabled people the Act makes it unlawful to discriminate against disabled people in connection with employment, the provision of goods, facilities and services, or the management of premises.

Since the 1st October 2010 service providers have had to take steps to change their practice, particularly if that practice means that a disabled person is unable to make use of its services.

The primary purpose of the United Reformed Church is to provide a place of worship. In the eyes of the Act this is regarded as a service

which is open to all people. Many churches also provide other activities that fall within the requirements of the Act.

The whole emphasis of the Equality Act is to ensure that disabled people (and others) are treated with equality according to their needs.

Local trustees (elders) should make sure that your church complies with this piece of legislation.

For more information see the Grants Loans & Property Committee guidance note of The Equality Act 2010 which is available on the Synod Website or from David Skipp - contact details on page 2.

September 2011

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In the September 2010 Property Matters Newsletter we included an article about the need for churches to have leases in place for some of their building users.

Thames North Trust have done some further work on this and have produced a flow chart that is designed to help local trustees decide whether a business lease should be put in place.

They also have Generic Hiring Agreements and Standard Leases that will suit some situations.

For more information and guidance contact Fergus Urquhart at the Trust office - contact details on page 2



Are you part of a green community?

How much have you done to your church building to help conserve energy?

Some of our churches have gone as far as providing solar or photo-voltaic panels for hot water and heating, some even benefit from the current feed-in tariffs available.

This is one way to conserve energy, but there are many other ways.

Some years ago Property Matters Newsletter contained an article about Eco-Congregation. Some of the churches within our Synod signed up to this programme and have been given an independently assessed Eco-Congregation Award. The award is only given when members of churches can show what difference they have

made to their buildings (both at church and within their homes) that will help conserve energy and the earth's resources.

Eco-Congregation provides 13 modules, from theology to managing your carbon footprint, so there is something for all people within the church to get involved in.

If you would like to reduce your carbon footprint have a look at the Eco-Congregation website:

<http://ew.ecocongregation.org/>



Copyright Amendment

With effect from 1st January 2011 the Copyright Designs & Patent Act 1988 (CDPA) was amended. This amendment means that churches and other charities, including not-for-profit organisations are no longer exempt from requiring a licence from Phonographic Performance Ltd (PPL).

Even if you already hold a PRS licence you may also need to have a PPL Church Licence if sound recordings are played on your church premises or during church activities. For more information contact CCLI on 01323 436103.



There have been a number of rumours about changes to Radio Microphones. The changes will affect the regulated radio frequency 'channel 69' and as most churches use the deregulated 'channel 70' (863—865 Mhz) there is no need to do anything. If you are still unsure see: www.ofcom.org.uk

Fire Safety Reminder

Just a reminder that all church premises should now comply with the "Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005". You are also required to review your Fire Safety Plan on an annual basis.

Further details can be requested from David Skipp.



'Something about a bush on fire...'

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

Further Website's that may be of use are:

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

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