**URC Thames North Trust**

**THE FOLLOWING DOCUMENTS ARE ENCLOSED**

1. **Guidance document**

This booklet has been prepared on behalf of the URC’s national Mission Council by the Law and Polity Advisory Group. The first part of this booklet repeats guidance already available throughout the national church and website about the responsibilities of Elders as charity trustees of the funds and day by day life of the local church. The second part relates to the question of local church property which is held in trust by the trust company and it is this that is the change from previous advice and to which this correspondence relates. This is available on the national website at [http://urc.org.uk/images/Elders\_2014/EldersAsCharityTrustees-ChurchLand Bdgs.pdf](http://urc.org.uk/images/Elders_2014/EldersAsCharityTrustees-ChurchLand%20Bdgs.pdf)

1. **Proposed resolution by URC Thames North Trust, incorporating the conditions of delegation.**

The conditions set out some of the details as to how this will need to work. Please read this carefully By and large it is formalising what churches already do but does include some additional requirements, in particular:

* The use of agreements with hirers using the form provided by URC Thames North Trust (see 4);
* Providing the URC Thames North Trust with an annual confirmation that all the hiring of premises were correctly documented (see 5)
1. **Suggested Church Meeting Resolutions and Summary of Process**
2. **Sample Hiring Agreements and Usage Guidelines**

The Decision Chart is offered as a guide to help you decide when the use of these sample agreements is appropriate and when a different agreement is required which will involve the input of the trustees.

We have a simple standard form of lease which should be used when the locally-administered hiring agreement is not appropriate but a full bespoke lease is not necessarily required. The aim is to try to keep costs reasonable in those many situations when churches lease relatively modest accommodation to a user, often also charitable, for a relatively low annual rent. However, all such agreements must be handled by URC Thames North Trust.

The standard Hiring Agreement is a suitable document for casual hirings and situations where a lease is not required and a copy is enclosed. It is recognised that churches have, and are using, their own form of hiring agreement so TNT would ask that you start using the new form as soon as possible for new bookings and at the next “refresh” date for regular users. It is not intended that the new delegated authority would operate retrospectively, so nothing is asked of churches with respect to previous hiring periods.

Please note that church-sponsored Scouting and Guiding Groups along with Boys or Girls Brigade can be considered to be the church’s own use of the premises and therefore the delegation need not apply to them. Church-run lunch clubs or other activities, ecumenical groups and Synod events would be in a similar position.

1. **Form confirming Resolutions passed**

Please complete this form and if possible return to us by 28 February 2018 to confirm the resolutions for the delegation to enable the church to hire their premises for casual lettings.

1. **Annual Return**

We have endeavoured to keep the amount of information to a minimum and a sample of the Annual Return to be sent to the Trust in January each year is enclosed.