**Bedfordshire, Essex & Hertfordshire District**

**Property Guidance for Managing Trustees**

1. **For Churches – Church Councils should:**

* Obtain regular reports on the state of the property and undertake renovations and repairs as necessary [941 (i)]
* After each quinquennial inspection {of each property under its control} consider the findings and recommendations and take any actions required [941 (ii)]
* Prepare and consider the annual property schedule and take appropriate action [941 (iii)]
* Maintain a log book {for each property under its control} to include the annual schedule of property, latest quinquennial report and all other relevant material [941 (vi)]
* Periodically examine the log book and ensure that records are up to date [941 (vi)]
* Present an annual report on the local property to the Circuit Meeting [941 (vii)]
* After each quinquennial inspection present a report to the Circuit Meeting of all actions taken and to be taken to implement the recommendations of the inspectors [941 (vii)]
* Ensure that all residential property, not being used as a manse, is not being occupied without a binding written agreement, the wording of which needs to be agreed with TMCP legal. This includes occupancy by a caretaker / cleaner / youth worker or other lay worker [929 (5)]

1. **For Circuits – Circuit Meetings should:**
2. **In relation to Church managed properties:**

* Arrange for a quinquennial inspection to be undertaken on all properties held under the Model Trust every 5 years [952 (1)]

[Note : The Circuit Meeting should ensure that any further investigatory inspections shown to be necessary are carried out if the Church managing trustees have not acted]

* Arrange for the Church annual property schedules to be examined and obtain a report on the general condition of each property in the Circuit [953 (i)]
* Send copies of quinquennial reports and property schedules to the District Property Secretary as directed by the Connexional Team [953 (iii)]

[Note : There is currently no direction from the Connexional Team to send copies of Church quinquennial reports or property schedules to the District Property Secretary]

* Review all property projects proposed for Church properties and after due consideration give or withhold consent [951 (1)]

1. **In relation to Circuit managed properties**

* Arrange for a quinquennial inspection to be undertaken on all properties held under the Model Trust every 5 years [952 (2)]

[Note : The District Manses Committee should ensure that any further investigatory inspections shown to be necessary are carried out if the Circuit managing trustees have not acted]

* Appoint visitors to visit and inspect each manse every year and submit a report after each visit [954 (i)]
* After each quinquennial inspection {of each property under its control} consider the findings and recommendations and take any actions required [954 (ii)]
* Prepare and consider the Circuit annual property schedule and take appropriate action
* Maintain a log book {for each property under its control} to include the annual schedule of property, latest quinquennial report, manse visitation reports and all other relevant material [954 (ix)]
* Periodically examine the log book and ensure that records are up to date
* Receive the report of the District Manses Committee and report back what action the Circuit has taken [954 (iii)]
* Review at periods of no more than 4 years if manses are in the right place, economic to maintain or should be replaced [954 (vi)]
* Send to the District Property Secretary annually all new quinquennial reports received [954 (x)]
* Ensure that all residential property, not being used as a manse, is not being occupied without a binding written agreement, the wording of which needs to be agreed with TMCP legal. This includes occupancy by a caretaker / cleaner / youth worker or other lay worker [929 (5)]
* Review all property projects proposed for Circuit properties and after due consideration give or withhold support [951 (2)]

1. **Further notes on Manses**

* Circuits should seek to provide manses to meet a minimum of ‘c’ energy efficiency rating
* Circuits should endeavour to provide smart meter devices to enable ministers to control their energy use

1. **For Districts – District Trustees should:**

* Arrange for a quinquennial inspection to be undertaken on all properties held under the Model Trust every 5 years [966 (2)]

[Note : The District Policy Committee should ensure that any further investigatory inspections shown to be necessary are carried out]

* Maintain a log book {for each property under its control} to include the annual schedule of property, latest quinquennial report, manse visitation reports and all other relevant material [966 (2)]
* Appoint (via the District Manses Committee) a panel of visitors to visit each manse in the District every 5 years [965 (1)]
* Ensure (via the District Property Secretary) that all quinquennial inspections have been carried out [964 (1)]
* Ensure (via the District Property Secretary) that Circuit property schedules have been completed [964 (2)]
* Formulate (via the District Policy Committee) a development master-plan for church buildings and circuit staffing in the District [962]

Note : References in brackets refer to the appropriate paragraph from The Constitutional Practice and Discipline of the Methodist Church, volume 2 (CPD)

**Additional Guidance for Churches & Circuits**

**(More detailed guidance can be found on the Methodist Church website)**

**Annual Property Checklists** – Should be completed annually for every property under the control of Churches and Circuits and submitted to Church Council / Circuit Meeting for review

**Asbestos** – Every church building and other non-domestic premises should have an Asbestos Risk Assessment recorded in the log book. Managing Trustees must manage any risks highlighted with regular inspections at intervals of 6 months to 1 year

**Burial Grounds** – It is the Managing Trustees responsibility to maintain both ‘open’ and ‘closed’ burial grounds until disposed of

**Electrical Installations** – Should be independently tested at least once every 5 years (including manses)

**Empty Properties** – Should be inspected internally and externally weekly (including residential properties)

**Fire Extinguishers** – Should be serviced annually

**Fire Risk Assessments** – Should be in place for all premises and reviewed annually

**Food Safety & Kitchen Hygiene** – Apply to all churches : Check latest guidelines for details

**Gas Inspections** – Should be undertaken annually

**Health & Safety Risk Assessment** – Must be held for each building and reviewed annually

**PAT Testing** – Portable electrical appliances should be independently tested at periods between 6 months and 4 years, depending on the appliance

S M Watson

District Property Officer

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