



The
United
Reformed
Church

Help and Advice

Northern Synod Office, 4 College Lane, Newcastle upon Tyne NE1 8JJ (0191-232 1168)

Bulletin 61: PROPERTY UPDATE

The Help & Advice Group was set up by Synod in 2009, to support local churches in being informed and effective in their life and mission. The group was disbanded in 2014, as part of a simplification of Synod committees, and its work continues through the Trust Officer, under the oversight of the Trust's Property Subgroup. We are willing to try to provide specific advice on particular topics. Please get in touch if you have questions or suggestions.

This article is part of a series giving an overview of particular subjects of interest for local churches. We also circulate general updates from time to time. Bulletins will also be posted on the website <http://urc-northernsynod.org/help-advice-bulletins>, with direct links to other websites.

Where readers are directed to web-based resources, the Synod Office is willing to respond to reasonable requests for printed out information for readers without web access, although they may find it more satisfactory to follow up their interest through their local library's web access.

Metal Theft

Historic England has published new guidance on theft of metal from historic buildings:

<https://content.historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/metal-theft-from-historic-buildings/heaq128-metal-theft-historic-buildings.pdf>

This includes advice on replacing lead on roofs after theft, and suggestions on how to prevent theft in the first place, together with checklists on assessing risks, considering alarms, and what do if metal is stolen:

In the case of churches that are listed buildings or are in conservation areas, you should consult the Synod's Listed Buildings Advisory Committee before carrying out significant works. They can advice on how best to proceed and whether consent will be required.

Church Heating

Choosing a new heating system is probably one of the largest decisions many churches will make (at least, from a finance and property aspect). The Church of England has published helpful guidance on choosing the right system:

[www.churchcare.co.uk/images/Guide to choosing the right heating system.pdf](http://www.churchcare.co.uk/images/Guide%20to%20choosing%20the%20right%20heating%20system.pdf)

Although references to Anglican governance structures such as parish church councils and diocesan advisory committees need to be translated into a URC context, the general approach on what to consider and what questions to ask is useful.

Property Maintenance

The National Churches Trust has produced general advice on knowing your church building, caring for it, and making the most of it, as well as embarking on building projects:

www.nationalchurchestrust.org/building-advice/managing-your-building

The Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings has produced general resources drawn from its faith in maintenance project:

www.spab.org.uk/campaigning/maintenance-co-operatives-project/mcp-fim-resources

Telecommunications Equipment

Historic England has published a brief note outlining the issues to be considered before installing telephone masts or radio transmitters in listed places of worship:

<https://content.historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/installation-telecomms-equip-in-places-of-worship/installation-of-telecommunications-equip-pow-20170811.pdf/>

Some of these issues may also be relevant for churches that are not listed buildings. Usually, equipment is installed under a lease to a telecommunications company, and care should be taken to ensure that the church's interests are protected. In any case, Church Meeting and Synod approval would be needed, and possibly also listed building consent and planning permission. Please contact the Trust Officer at Synod Office for advice if you are considering this.

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