



Help and Advice

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

Bulletin 69: 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.

Invasive Plants

The Environment Agency has produced guidance on how to identify Japanese knotweed and prevent it from spreading. This can be a serious problem, and it is an offence to allow it to spread onto neighbouring land.

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/prevent-japanese-knotweed-from-spreading>

Village Halls Fund

Action with Communities in Rural England can give Government grants of £10,000-£75,000 for 20% of the costs of improving village halls. In rural communities where there is no village hall, a church hall may qualify if it is used as a community facility and not just for church purposes.

<http://acre.org.uk/our-work/village-hall-improvement-grant%20fund>

Tenant Fees Act 2019

Churches that let manses and other residential properties after 1 June 2019 are limited in the fees that they can charge to tenants. In practice, the new law is aimed at unscrupulous landlords charging excessive fees for viewings, setting up, checking out, and additional services. Churches will probably not be affected, and should in any case be advised by a reputable local estate agent.

Detailed guidance is available from the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government.

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/819634/TFA Landlord and Agent Guidance 190722.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/819634/TFA_Landlord_and_Agent_Guidance_190722.pdf)

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