



Berkshire & Hampshire Borders Methodist Circuit

Manses Policy

Upkeep of Manses

The Connexional website provides a set of [guidelines for manses](#).

Maintenance of the manses is managed by the Resources Coordinator and authorised by the Circuit Stewards. This delegation of authority will be agreed annually at the September Circuit Meeting in line with the agreed budget.

The Circuit provides manses for ministers in accordance with the requirements laid out in CPD Book VII, Part 2 (Guidelines on Provision of Adequate Accommodation for Manses) – see Appendix 1. The Circuit aims to maintain manses in a good condition in line with these guidelines, both for the benefit of the occupants and to safeguard the asset value for the Church. To this end, repairs, maintenance and modifications are made as and when necessary. A property should be ready to market.

Kitchens and bathrooms need to be upgraded when required. The timing of these items tends to depend on several factors. The standard of the upgrade needs to reflect the overall value of the property.

Regular maintenance of the garden is the responsibility of the occupants, but Circuit funds can be provided to carry out specific improvements to make maintenance easier. Maintenance of trees is a Circuit expense.

The Circuit will pay the cost of an end of occupancy cleaner for all manses.

Inspections:

The schedule for manse inspections is as follows:

- An annual inspection of each manse will be carried out at the end of the Summer. From this visit a list is prepared of all the jobs that need doing for inclusion in the budget.
- Every five years a quinquennial inspection will be conducted by a suitably qualified professional.

Testing and Servicing:

The schedule for testing and servicing of manses is as follows:

- Annually
 - Carbon monoxide alarms
 - Gas system (where present)
 - Heating system
 - Security system
 - Smoke alarms

- Every 5 years
 - Electrical wiring

- Every 10 years
 - Roofing, including a detailed check on all the roof components (usually as part of the quinquennial inspection)

Staff-occupied manses

Staff are expected to, and will be encouraged to, report all defects and issues when they occur to the Resources Coordinator who will arrange and manage contractors as necessary.

If staff wish to repair, improve or alter the fabric of the property in any way themselves, this can usually be agreed but they must first obtain the approval of the Circuit Stewards through the Resources Coordinator.

All properties shall be visited after the first three months of a new occupation, and annually thereafter. If there is any cause for concern, frequency of visits shall be increased.

Internal decoration needs to be maintained to a reasonable standard, although this is generally preferred to be done at minister change time. Curtains and lampshades are provided by the circuit, and these should be regularly monitored.

The Circuit shall, having regard for energy efficiency, also provide all carpets, curtains and other floor covering, lamp shades and light fittings, fixed fires (where fitted), study furniture, cooker and kitchen cupboards.

Tenanted Properties

Manses not required for Circuit staff for a period expected to be more than 6 months should be let out to tenants.

Estate agents should be used for tenant find, right to rent checks, references and a check-in inventory. The estate agent's advice as to the level of rent will be followed. Where a range is provided, the bottom end of the range will be accepted, subject always to the agent being able to complete the required written confirmation that Charities Act requirements for property transactions are being met, i.e. confirmation of market rent and best terms.

To support tenants and encourage good care of properties, rents shall not be increased annually as a matter of course. There may be occasions where annual increases are necessary, such as where the value of the rent has fallen significantly below market levels, or where tenants are not treating the property well.

Rent reviews will be carried out every three years to verify the level of rent being charged.

The Circuit will, wherever possible, manage the tenancy and arrange all maintenance. This will primarily be the role of the Resources Coordinator but for some properties local assistance from Circuit staff members, manse stewards or Circuit stewards may be required. Where it is not considered possible to manage the tenancy a suitable local estate agent will be commissioned.

All properties shall be visited after the first three months of a tenancy, and annually thereafter. If there is any cause for concern, frequency of visits shall be increased.

When a tenanted property may be required for a member of Circuit staff, the Church's requirement to house Circuit staff shall prevail over any wish to retain a property for investment purposes, or any wish to continue to house a tenant because asking them to move on is problematic. The tenants shall be informed of the possibility of the Church requiring the property at the earliest possible time, and kept informed of the situation, giving them the best possible opportunity to find alternative accommodation. Notwithstanding this principle, no tenant shall be forced to leave a property if so doing would make them homeless or cause them a similar level of distress or trauma, provided that they have taken all reasonable steps to find alternative accommodation.

Unbudgeted major works

Any unbudgeted major works will require Circuit Meeting approval and CMTF funding.

If a property would be uninhabitable, the Circuit Leadership Team has designated authority to approve immediate expenditure.

Appendix 1 - CPD Guidelines on Provision of Adequate Accommodation for Manses

In 2009 the Conference adopted S.O. 803(1)(b), which requires that accommodation to be provided as a manse for a presbyter or deacon in the active work or probationer appointed to a station within the control of the Church shall satisfy such guidelines as the Conference approves for the purpose, unless permission to depart from them has been granted under S.O. 803(1)(c). The 2009 Conference then approved these guidelines (derived in part from the previous S.O. 803(3)) and directed that they be printed in this volume.

Paragraph 3 was amended in 2010 (and see also the note to S.O. 803(4) on that specific matter) and in 2012 the guidelines were re-phrased to reflect the changed usage as to 'presbyter' and 'minister'.

1. Whilst it is impossible to prescribe exactly the number and use of rooms in a manse because of the wide variation in the internal arrangements of houses, a manse must provide adequate accommodation for a mixed family and visitors. This should include:
 - enough bedrooms (normally four)
 - at least two separate living rooms and a kitchen
 - a separate study (one of the bedrooms may be used for this purpose provided that all other requirements of these guidelines are met).
2. Adequate garage or other parking facilities should be provided.
3. Using Energy Performance Certificates and advice, Circuits should undertake measures to meet the potential energy efficiency ratings of their manses. Circuits should seek to provide manses to meet a minimum of a 'C' energy efficiency rating.
4. Arrangements for the use of a manse for the work of ministry must be such as to protect the confidentiality of all parties.
5. If possible, the study should be downstairs. There should be no necessity for anyone visiting the manse on church business to go upstairs.
6. If there is no study downstairs and a bedroom is used as a study, it must be possible for pastoral interviews or church business to be conducted in one of the downstairs rooms without disturbing the privacy of other family members or compromising the minister's own privacy. These arrangements must be thoroughly explored with the prospective minister before a match is concluded in the case of a circuit manse. Circuits, Districts or other bodies providing manses should note that this requirement may cause difficulties in a house with fewer than four bedrooms.
7. If the arrangement of the rooms downstairs in the manse makes the above impossible, or in any case if there is no downstairs cloakroom, proper provision must be made elsewhere (e.g. a properly appointed study at a church).
8. Since the manse is to be used as a home as well as a base for the work of ministry, proper arrangements must be made for protecting the privacy of ministers and their families. Such arrangements must include:
 - maintaining their safety
 - allowing them to carry out the activities of daily life without undue restriction
 - protecting them from intrusion and embarrassment.

9. Circuits must be aware that providing a small manse may lead to the need to change it with a change of minister.

Appendix 2 – Energy Efficiency

The Methodist Church has set an aspirational target of becoming a net zero carbon emissions church by 2030. Many districts, circuits and churches have already begun to work towards net zero goals, an Eco District award, or other aims in caring for creation.

Areas of focus

The Methodist Church has decided to initially focus on three key areas:

Assets

We have committed that by 2030 all travel, electricity and gas directly funded by the Church will have net zero emissions. More detail around these aims, along with guidance and resources to support work, will be produced, in collaboration with districts and circuits.

Wisdom

The main resource available is [Hope in God's Future](#). The report offers not just a statement on our approach to climate change but resources including for small group reflection and whole-church conversation.

The resource highlights the goodness and interconnectedness of all God has made and this together with the theology and practice of good stewardship informs much of the work of the Connexion from Oversight and Trusteeship to the emphasis of the JDS strategy on the need for a fairer approach to Christian life together.

Lifestyles

The Methodist Council has proposed the aim of encouraging Methodist members and adherents to reduce their carbon footprints, particularly via the three key areas of energy, travel and diet (the biggest contributors to individual emissions).

Getting your Building down to Net Zero

In response to the climate change emergency, a set of practical steps and recommendations have been created with the aim of helping churches reduce their energy use and associated carbon emissions.

It is suggested that the first step is to review the carbon emissions of buildings using the [Net Carbon Zero Checklist](#).

Appendix 3 - Job Definition for A Local Manse Steward (where appointed)

The role of the Local Manse Steward (LMS) is to look after a single manse, and to plan with contractors to carry out various works that are required.

The Circuit Manse Steward will carry out an annual visit, usually in August or at the latest September. From this visit a schedule of the work to be carried out during the year will be prepared.

The LMS would then progress these works with the aim of completing them during the Connexional year.

It would be helpful if LMS could make periodic visits to the manse. These visits would enable checks to be made on work carried out and would also enable any other problems to be identified.

In the event of any extra repair items being identified the LMS has authority to arrange for the work to be carried out, notifying the Circuit Manse Steward at the same time. If the job needed is large (more than £400), the agreement of the Circuit Manse Steward needs to be obtained

All the contractors used are familiar with manse work, and a list of these firms will be provided.

There is a standard proforma for seeking quotations and placing firm orders.

Although it would obviously be beneficial, there is no specific need for the steward to be a “buildings” person.

All necessary assistance will be given with preparing schedules of work and contacting contractors.

Appendix 4 – Maintenance Schedule

As defined in Section 14 (Repairs, Maintenance and Improvements) of the [guidelines for manses](#), to ensure that a manse meets the standards recommended in Standing Order 803 and remains reasonably modern in design and construction, it is recommended that the following schedule of maintenance be followed.

Item	Replacement Frequency (years)
Sundry General Repairs	1
Decorations (external)	5
Decorations (internal)	5
Curtains	8
Floor coverings	8
Lawnmower	10
Study furniture	10
Cooker	12
Central heating boiler	15
Kitchen fittings	15
Shed (installed)	15
Utility fittings	15
Central heating installation	25
Rewiring	30
Roof covering (inc. scaffolding)	60