

Summer 2026



## Ministries

*Contributed by the Ministries team at Baptist House ([ministries@baptist.org.uk](mailto:ministries@baptist.org.uk)). Members of the Ministries Team may be contacted through the Team's [contact page](#).*

We continue to strongly encourage ministers to ensure they are sustaining their capability and well-being by attending to their **Continuing Ministerial Development** (CMD – [www.baptist.org.uk/cmd](http://www.baptist.org.uk/cmd)). Equally, we strongly encourage churches to support their minister's CMD by making clear that they welcome the minister taking time to nurture the five CMD habits and by making at least £600 a year available for development activities. (Newly Accredited Ministers will already be practising the five CMD habits by engaging with their NAMs' programme.)

In particular, we encourage ministers to receive accompaniment from a person outside their setting, whether **pastoral supervision, spiritual direction, coaching or mentoring**. We have a list of those trained in the first three of these disciplines and who are offering to support Baptist ministers. More details may be found at [www.baptist.org.uk/Groups/418321/Accessing\\_pastoral\\_supervision.aspx](http://www.baptist.org.uk/Groups/418321/Accessing_pastoral_supervision.aspx). Mentors may be accessed through the regional associations – please speak to your regional minister.

We also have a **pastoral supervision taster day** those wishing to find out more about this form of accompaniment and see it in action. It is on Monday 23 March and is free and online. Details can be accessed off the link above.

Many churches support chaplaincy in their community. We are hosting another **online day for Baptist chaplains** on Monday 13 April. It is free and open to all Baptists involved or interested in chaplaincy of any type, whether paid or volunteer. Details can be accessed from [www.baptist.org.uk/chaplaincy](http://www.baptist.org.uk/chaplaincy)

All accredited and recognised ministers will shortly be asked to complete a video-based training module on pastoral boundaries. Though aimed at ministers, this may prove to be a very useful tool for whole pastoral care teams in churches and other ministry settings. More details will be emailed directly to ministers.



## Legal and Operations

*Contributed by the Legal and Ops Team ([Legal.Ops@baptist.org.uk](mailto:Legal.Ops@baptist.org.uk))*

### CIOs and Property Trusteeship

**Q: When a church becomes a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO), can it transfer property held in trust by a Baptist Trust Corporation into the CIO?**

**A:** Yes, the law allows a church to transfer property held on trust by a Baptist Trust Corporation into its new CIO. However, only a small number of churches have chosen to do this.

**Q: Why do most churches choose *not* to transfer their property?**

**A:** Because transferring property means losing access to the Baptist Trust Corporation's free legal, property, and trust expertise. After a transfer, the church must pay external solicitors for advice that the Baptist Trust Corporation staff would otherwise provide as part of BUGB membership. For most churches, this isn't a good use of charitable resources.

Belonging to our Baptists Together family means that Baptist churches relate to each other in a collaborative, covenantal spirit. Baptist Trust Corporations help us all to maintain the appropriate standards of transparency and accountability to one another and to statutory authorities as we seek to grow healthy churches in relationship for God's mission.

**Q: Will the church have more control over its buildings if it transfers the property to the CIO?**

**A:** Not really. When property is transferred, the *trusts* that apply to it transfer along with the property.

- The ultimate beneficiary (the organisation that receives the assets if the church closes) stays the same, by law.
- Ultimate beneficiaries often add a legal restriction on the title to protect their interest.
- The CIO becomes a trust corporation, and its trustees are then responsible for ensuring compliance with the trust terms—this can create a conflict of interest if the CIO trustees and property trustees are the same people.

**Q: Are property trusts complicated to manage?**

**A:** Usually, yes. They often include difficult issues like permanent endowment rules and restrictions on capital spending.

Even if a CIO currently has trustees who are confident with trust law, future generations of trustees may not—and the decision affects them too. If the church's membership declines or the church closes, CIO trustees must handle the entire closure process themselves, rather than the Baptist Trust Corporation managing it.

**Q: Why have Baptist Trust Corporations historically held church property?**

**A:** Baptist Trust Corporation trusteeship exists for good reasons, especially to protect assets for Baptist charitable purposes. Benefits include:

- **Covenantal safeguarding:** It reflects and protects the shared relationships within the Baptist family, as we seek to walk together and watch over one another as Baptists Together
- **Free specialist advice:** Churches get expert legal, property, and trust support from Baptist Trust Corporation staff.
- **Continuity of expertise:** Baptist Trust Corporation staff maintain long-term trust knowledge that individual churches may lose over time.
- **Support during closure:** If a church closes, the Baptist Trust Corporation handles the entire property reallocation process.
- **Protection from legal risk:** The Baptist Trust Corporation can recognise and prevent unlawful actions relating to property use.
- **Avoiding conflicts of interest:** The Baptist Trust Corporation acts solely in the interest of the property trusts, removing difficult dual-trustee conflicts.
- **Secure storage of deeds:** The Baptist Trust Corporation keeps trust deeds safe—CIOs must arrange their own storage.
- **Support for historic buildings:** Churches whose buildings are held in trusteeship with a Baptist Trust Corporation can get guidance on maintenance, alterations, repairs, grants, and more.
- **Listed building help:** For listed buildings, the BUGB's Listed Building Advisory Committee (LBAC) provides expert guidance and handles listed building consent.

**Q: Will the Baptist Trust Corporation continue supporting churches even if they don't transfer the property?**

**A:** Absolutely. Your Baptist Trust Corporation will act on any lawful request from the church and is always ready to help with legal, property, and trust matters. Their staff are there to support you—so please reach out whenever needed.

### **Charity Registration for excepted churches**

Baptist churches with an annual income under £100k are currently excepted from the need to register as a charity by law. The excepting regulations will end on March 31st 2031 and after that all charities with an income over £5k will have to be registered. The Charity Commission has now told us that they expect all currently excepted churches to be registered before the March 2031 deadline.

We are waiting to hear how the Commission intends to phase this registration process over the next few years but as a first step we encourage churches that have not yet adopted a BUGB Approved Governing Document as their constitution to do so. The Commission has said that churches that adopt an Approved Governing Document without making amendments will be able to benefit from a simplified and automated registration process.

Further information can be found in guideline leaflet [C06 Churches and Charity Registration](#) and [C03 Church Constitutions](#)



### **Finance Team**

*Contributed by the Finance Team ([Financeoffice@baptist.org.uk](mailto:Financeoffice@baptist.org.uk))*

### **CHARITY SORP REQUIREMENTS**

For churches with accounting periods that start on or after 1 January 2026, SORP requirements have changed and further details can be found [here](#).

The Baptist Union is looking to provide further guidance on this, however, as this is not yet available churches are reminded that they have automatic membership to the Association of Church Accountants & Treasurers (ACAT) who will be able to provide support. Should you need log in details please contact [Financeoffice@baptist.org.uk](mailto:Financeoffice@baptist.org.uk)



### **Environmental Issues**

*Contributed by Dave Gregory, Former President, Baptist Union 2018-19, Convenor of Baptist Union Environment Network (BUEN) and Director, John Ray Initiative – Connecting Environment, Science and Christianity*

Climate Change has once again been in the political spotlight. Powerful voices claim that it is a con. While most nations continue to strive towards agreement to limit the rise in temperature due to fossil fuel use. With good reason. While 2025 was not as warm globally as 2024, the last three years stand out as the warmest on record with an average temperature of 1.47 degrees Centigrade above the 1850-1900 average, close to crossing the 1.5 degrees Centigrade limit to contain the worst impacts of climate change upon people and nature.

In a contested arena, Christians need to stand aligned with God's mission to people and creation. A key encouragement of BUEN over the past five years has been to ask local churches to engage with A Rocha's Eco-Church programme. (<https://ecochurch.arocha.org.uk/>) At the end of each year, engagement across Baptists Together churches is reviewed to gain a measure of how well we are sharing in God's mission to creation.

So, a few headline figures. At the end of 2025

- 321 churches are now engaged in Eco-Church, around 20% of Baptist Together churches, and a doubling since BUEN's launch five years ago.
- Just over half of these have achieved an award, a three-fold increase over the past five year.

Signs of momentum slowly building of the inclusion of care for creation within our heart to share God's good news with people and all creation.

At this time of year, with the colder weather, churches minds may be focused upon the cost of keeping their buildings warm. The buildings part of the Eco-Church survey and website

(<https://ecochurch.arocha.org.uk/resources/buildings/>) contains ideas both small and large to help you begin your environmental mission journey. They may help you reduce the costs of heating your building while also reducing the environmental impact of your church life and mission. So, at the start of a New Year, why not join this growing momentum within Baptists Together and check out how Eco-Church can enhance your churches engagement with mission.



### Support for Listed Buildings

*Contributed by our Church Historic Buildings Support Team  
([listedbuildings@baptist.org.uk](mailto:listedbuildings@baptist.org.uk)) Please email us if you would like to be added to the listed buildings mailing list.*

### Great Expectations – Churches: See them. Save them. Support them.

In October, our Commercial Manager and Church Historic Buildings Support Offer attended *Great Expectations – Churches: See them. Save them. Support them.* The conference was hosted by the National Churches Trust in partnership with the Victoria and Albert Museum, The King's Foundation and the Churches Conservation Trust, and sponsored by Ecclesiastical Insurance (part of Benefact Group). Historic churches, chapels and meeting houses are among Britain's most treasured built heritage, but they are facing many challenges. The event brought together community voices, faith leaders, heritage experts, policymakers, and volunteers to explore how these remarkable buildings can continue to serve their communities, inspire new generations, and remain part of our shared cultural fabric. The full recording, including all speakers and panels, is now available at [nationalchurchestrust.org/GreatExpectations](http://nationalchurchestrust.org/GreatExpectations).

The conference was also attended by Historic England, who discussed their research into public support for preserving historic churches. The evidence shows that even those who do not regularly attend services or identify as religious are willing to pay to protect these buildings. This can help churches to strengthen funding applications. If you would like help to tell your church's story and connect with the wider local community, then please contact our Church Historic Buildings Support Officer at [listedbuildings@baptist.org.uk](mailto:listedbuildings@baptist.org.uk).

### Places of Worship Renewal Fund

In recognition of the important role religious heritage buildings play in the UK's national story, the government has announced a new £92 million fund called the Places of Worship Renewal Fund. They say this will *"replace the £23 million Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme and bring these important buildings into line with other heritage assets."* This is part of a £1.5 billion scheme to fix urgent capital need and open up access to culture for everyone, everywhere. It also includes £75 million for at risk heritage, and £46 million to help communities look after local heritage and bring buildings back into public use. While we remain concerned by the loss of the Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme, we welcome this announcement and look forward to more detail about what this will mean in practice for those Baptist churches looking after listed buildings. The government's press release can be read here: [www.gov.uk/government/news/government-announces-bumper-15-billion-package-to-restore-national-pride](http://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-announces-bumper-15-billion-package-to-restore-national-pride).



## Pensions

*Contributed by the Baptist Pension Team. Routine queries should be directed to [baptistpensions@broadstone.co.uk](mailto:baptistpensions@broadstone.co.uk) and non-routine matters directed to [pensionshared@baptist.org.uk](mailto:pensionshared@baptist.org.uk)*

### Auto-enrolment and workplace pensions

All employers in the UK, including churches, have a **legal duty** to help employees save for retirement. As an employer, you must:

- **Automatically enrol** eligible staff into a qualifying workplace pension scheme
- **Pay pension contributions** for those employees

These duties are ongoing and form part of good care and stewardship for the people you employ. As an employer you must keep appropriate records, provide required information to staff, and re-enrol eligible employees every three years. Please note auto-enrolment is viewed as an **HR responsibility**, rather than a pensions department task.

### **Why compliance is important**

If auto-enrolment duties are not met, **The Pensions Regulator** can take action and issue **financial penalties**. Employers should review their pension arrangements regularly to make sure they remain compliant.

A step-by-step guide to auto-enrolment for employers is available from The Pensions Regulator:

### **Choosing a pension scheme**

The pension scheme you use must meet **legal minimum standards**.

- The **Baptist Pension Scheme (BPS)** has three sections (Ministers, Staff and Basic) all of which meet the requirements for auto-enrolment. Information about each section is available at: [Employers - Baptist Pensions](#)
- Other schemes, such as **NEST** or **The People's Pension**, may also be suitable for some employees

Applications to the BPS for new members under auto-enrolment should be made using the form on the **Broadstone Engage Members portal** ([Welcome to Broadstone Engage, your pension portal, powered by Broadstone](#)). If you require any assistance with this, please contact the administration team at Broadstone: [baptistpensions@broadstone.co.uk](mailto:baptistpensions@broadstone.co.uk).

### **Ministers and auto-enrolment**

Most ministers already have pension provision in a Qualifying Scheme through their church. Where this is not the case, the church must consider whether auto-enrolment applies.

BUGB has been advised that ministers are usually **office-holders**, rather than employees in the conventional sense. Since each church has its own individual relationship with its minister, the applicability of the auto-enrolment regulations must be considered on a **case-by-case** basis. Specialist advice may be needed if a church wishes to establish that auto enrolment does not apply to their minister.

**Please note:** Even if auto-enrolment does not apply to a minister, it **still applies to church employees**.

### **For further help:**

- **Routine queries:** [baptistpensions@broadstone.co.uk](mailto:baptistpensions@broadstone.co.uk)
- **Non-routine queries:** [pensionshared@baptist.org.uk](mailto:pensionshared@baptist.org.uk)



At Utility Aid, we stand with the causes that matter most, protecting our heritage and supporting places of worship. Behind every energy bill is a church, chapel, cathedral, or historic site working tirelessly to serve congregations, preserve history, and strengthen communities.

With almost 30 years of experience, we don't just provide services—we earn trust by delivering results.

Utility Aid exists to help charities and not-for-profit organisations source energy. We use our knowledge and experience. We anticipate and solve problems. Above all, everyone at Utility Aid is united by their desire to do more good for our stakeholders and that sets us apart in terms of how we are as a business.

#### **How can we help you?**

- [Energy switching](#)
- [Online switching \(for single meter sites\)](#)
- [Collective Purchasing](#)
- [Account management](#)
- [Bill checking](#)
- [Net zero and carbon reporting](#)

As a member of BUBG you can benefit from a free consultancy session with Utility Aid, whether you need support with understanding your bills, checking whether you are paying the correct VAT or if you need advice on starting your journey to Net Zero.

[Contact a member of the Utility Aid today!](#)



#### **Practical steps to start 2026 from Baptist Insurance.**

As we journey together through the early part of the year, now is a great time to take a few simple steps to care for our church grounds and buildings, helping keep everyone as safe as possible.

The Baptist Insurance risk calendar highlights two key areas that are especially helpful for churches in the coming months, which you can find here - [baptist-insurance/risk-calendar](#)

#### **Tree maintenance**

Trees are a blessing to our grounds, but ageing limbs, hidden decay, or storm damage can create hazards. Plan an annual visual check, and others after high winds. Note any deadwood or overhanging branches near paths, roofs, and power lines, and use competent contractors for any work at height. Good tree care reduces the risk of injury and protects property.

More in-depth information is available at: [baptist-insurance.co.uk/trees](#)

#### **Reducing flood damage**

While no church can be completely flood-proof, taking simple steps now can greatly reduce the impact of heavy rain. Keep gutters and downpipes clear and drains free from leaves and debris – including crisp packets! If your church is in a higher flood-risk area, consider basic resilience measures such as moving critical equipment above likely water levels, and review your access routes so there is at least one safe way in and out if the worst happens.

More information is available at: [baptist-insurance.co.uk/flooding](#)

Alongside these seasonal priorities, here are some simple year-round safety checks to keep in mind.

### **Slips and trips**

The most common cause of church injuries - regularly check floors, thresholds, external paths and lighting, and act quickly on any hazards.

### **Events**

As Lent and Easter activities grow, scale your risk management accordingly. Complete proportionate risk assessments, brief volunteers, and check whether any licences are needed.

### **Cold weather legacy**

Late cold snaps can still burst pipes. Ensure heating systems are serviced, know where your stopcock is, and avoid open flames when thawing.

Finally, remember that risk assessment is about sensible precautions, not paperwork for its own sake. Use Baptist Insurance's practical templates and guidance to focus on what matters most, people's safety and your mission.

These can all be found at: [baptist-insurance/risk-management](https://baptist-insurance/risk-management)

By acting now, trees in February, floods in March, plus everyday basics, we honour our duty of care, protect our congregations, and keep our churches open and welcoming through the season.