

Past issues are available at www.baptist.org.uk/transform

Coronavirus

Resources for churches

We continue to support churches by maintaining a dedicated section of our website, www.baptist.org.uk/corona which has all of our resources relating to Coronavirus.

Please do check the website regularly to ensure that you are using the most recent version of any guidance documents. Where appropriate we have included a change log in the documents so that you can see what amendments have been made. Please contact us at supportservices@baptist.org.uk if you have any queries not covered in the guidance or feedback on the content.

Ministry Matters

Contributed by the Ministries Team at Baptist House
(ministries@baptist.org.uk)

Supporting Continuing Ministerial Development (CMD)

40% of our accredited ministers have now enrolled for our Continuing Ministerial Development framework and many have carried out a 'CMD audit' with a fellow minister to help them review and plan their development. We continue to encourage churches to have a supportive conversation with their minister about the time and finance that the church can offer

to facilitate their ongoing learning, accountability and connection with others. For more detail of the Baptists Together CMD framework, please see www.baptist.org.uk/cmd

HR and Safeguarding Matters

Contributed by the HR and Safeguarding Team at Baptist House
(safeguarding@baptist.org.uk)

National Living Wage

The National Living Wage (NLW) rate increases for 2022 have just been announced. The main NLW rate for those aged 23 and over rises from £8.91 to £9.50 an hour, an increase of 59p an hour.

For churches who have voluntarily signed up to the Real Living Wage, a quick reminder that the rate has just risen by 40p to £9.90 an hour from 15 November 2021 (Real Living Wage employers in London will pay £11.05 an hour, a 20p rise).

Age band	Rate from April 2022	Current rate	% Increase
23 and over	£9.50	£8.91	6.6%
21-22 years old	£9.18	£8.36	9.8%
18-20 years old	£6.83	£6.56	4.1%
16-17 years old	£4.81	£4.62	4.1%
Apprentice rate	£4.81	£4.30	11.9%

Excellence in Safeguarding Training

Association teams are gearing up to offer face-to-face Level 2 and Level 3 Excellence in Safeguarding training – most associations will re-start face-to-face events between October 2021 and the end of March 2022. In the meantime, our Safeguarding Update film for churches, with accompanying online Question and Answer session, will continue to be available over the winter and early spring. For information on training roll-out in your association area, please see your association's website and newsletters.

DBS checking service

A quick reminder that our DBS checking service is available to all Baptists Together member churches. If your DBS verifier has changed recently, or if you want to add an additional verifier for your church, please complete and return the verifier changes form (available from www.baptist.org.uk/dbsverifier) so that we can make arrangements for your verifiers to receive access instructions and training.

Go all-electric, with Newgate

Electric vehicles – or EVs – are good for the planet, drive well, and they look great too. Let Newgate help you make the switch.

Through Project EVe we're working closely with Clergy across the country to share our expertise and help you go green. We can answer all your questions – from how to charge your car, to how far you can travel on one charge, and which EVs offer the best value.

To find out more, call us on **08000 324 900**.
Or, for our latest electric, hybrid and petrol offers, visit newgatefinance.com/baptists

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Legal and Operations News

Contributed by the Legal and Operations team at Baptist House (legal.ops@baptist.org.uk)

Considering Church Closure

We are aware that as a result of the pandemic and other pressures some churches are considering their future viability and therefore the possibility of closure or other changes such as a merger with another Baptist congregation. It is essential in these circumstances that churches engage as early as possible with their local Baptist association via their regional minister for advice and support. Where there is property involved such as a church building or manse, churches should also engage with their Property Trustee to understand the options available. For more on church closure, please refer to our Guideline Leaflet L07: Church Closure (www.baptist.org.uk/resources/L07).

Annual Returns

The Annual Return process for 2021 was launched in late November 2021. Through this process we ask churches to check and update the data that we hold about them and provide statistics for the year. This ensures that any communications are being sent to the right contacts and that subscriptions are calculated on accurate membership numbers. The Annual Return is submitted via our Church Update portal (www.baptist.org.uk/churchupdate). Please contact churchupdate@baptist.org.uk if you need help gaining access. To reduce the environmental impact, we prefer email communication so please do check we have the most appropriate email addresses for your church.

The Annual Return process will close on 31 January 2022, so we ask every church secretary to ensure that they complete the process prior to that date.

The Church Update portal will continue to be available throughout the year if you have changes in your church contacts.

Coming Soon: Church Healthcheck

We often get asked by churches whether there is a way they can check they are doing everything they need to. With this in mind we have been developing a new web-based self-assessment tool for Baptist churches to help you review your practices around governance, finance, property, health and safety, etc. We expect to launch the tool early in 2022 so please look out for further updates.

Support for Listed Buildings

Contributed by our Church Historic Buildings Support Team (listedbuildings@baptist.org.uk) funded through a partnership with Historic England. Please email us if you would like to be added to the listed buildings mailing list.



Heritage Property Initiative

We are delighted to share that Historic England have extended their funding for the Heritage Property Initiative to the end of March 2022. The funding has already made a huge difference to the support we've been able to offer churches with historic buildings, including the Quinquennial Inspection Grant Scheme which concluded at the end of 2021.

Grants available for maintenance

Building on the success of the Quinquennial Inspection Grant Scheme we are now excited to be piloting small grants, co-funded by Historic England, towards maintenance and minor repairs identified in either a maintenance checklist or a Quinquennial Inspection carried out in the last five years. Routine care, especially of roofs and rainwater goods, prevents small issues escalating into bigger problems requiring much more expensive and challenging repairs, so we are delighted to be able to offer this type of support to our churches with listed buildings.

All grants must be claimed by the end of March 2022. For further information please visit www.baptist.org.uk/heritagepropertyinitiative or email listedbuildings@baptist.org.uk.

Finance Matters

Contributed by the Finance Team at Baptist House (financeoffice@baptist.org.uk)

Stipend and Manse Value

The 2022 Standard Stipend has been set by the Baptist Union Trustees at £24,750 and the Manse Value at £6,480. Full details can be found at www.baptist.org.uk/financialguidance

Subscriptions

The 2022 subscription rate for churches has been set at £4.90 per member which is an increase of 3.1% based on September CPI (rounded to the nearest five pence).

We ask wherever possible that you pay by Direct Debit as this reduces our administration costs, especially as we are being charged 40 pence for every cheque that is deposited.

To set up a Direct Debit mandate please go to our website www.baptist.org.uk/directdebit. The signed Direct Debit form can either be put in the post to us or scanned and sent to subscriptions@baptist.org.uk.

When returning your form, please let us know whether you would like the payment to be taken annually or quarterly.

Church Energy Bills

Baptists Together are working in partnership with Utility Aid, a specialist energy broker focussed on the charity sector. Utility Aid are offering a free energy bill audit to our member churches. If you sign up, Utility Aid will check your bills for any overcharging and work with you to claim any refunds due. This service is entirely free and you will receive 100% of any refund due. Also, if your utility provider has gone out of business Utility Aid can offer advice on what to do.

Visit www.baptist.org.uk/utilityaid for more details.



Taxation Topics

Contributed by Philip Cooke FCA - our Honorary Taxation Adviser.

Philip stepped down at the end of 2021 after 37 years faithfully serving the Baptist family as Honorary Taxation Adviser. From January 2022, please send any tax related queries to (financeoffice@baptist.org.uk)

We are delighted that Malcolm Gunn (treasurer at Godstone Baptist Church) has agreed to take on the work of maintaining our tax guidance leaflets and writing updates for *Transform*.

Philip writes: 'It has been a great privilege to have had fellowship in this way with so many churches and ministers over the years and I'm certain that it has also contributed to my continuing sanity! With my sincere thanks and every blessing to all ministers and treasurers in their respective ministries.'

Ministers' tax returns

HMRC has announced that the plan to 'make tax digital' as far as self-assessment tax returns are concerned has been 'pushed back' until April 2024, and many taxpayers (and not just ministers!) will be relieved to hear this. So, for a while longer tax returns can continue to be submitted in paper or online format in the usual manner, and free from the so-called 'digitalisation' which, when introduced, will undoubtedly involve a demanding learning curve.

Unfortunately, because the 'minister of religion pages' still do not form part of HMRC's free online filing service, ministers either have to file a paper return or use commercial software. Many ministers use the service provided (at a discounted fee) by GoSimpleTax - see guidance leaflet X01 - www.baptist.org.uk/resources/X01 for further information.

Ministers' fees and expenses

Ministers are reminded that fees received from preaching/speaking/literary sources (whether in the UK or overseas) - or for officiating at weddings or funerals - are taxable and have to be included in the tax return. Guidance leaflet X02: *Self Assessment and the Minister* (www.baptist.org.uk/resources/X02) contains information regarding tax deductible expenses but there are two items which are

worth particular mention. If mileage allowance in respect of 'church-business' journeys is paid at less than the 'official' rate (45p per mile up to 10,000 miles pa) then a minister is entitled to claim the difference as a tax-deductible expense. Similarly, if a church is unable fully to reimburse the ascertained church-business proportion of manse lighting and heating costs, a minister is able to claim the difference as a tax-deductible expense up to a limit of 25% of the total manse lighting and heating costs.

Ministers serving in a non-stipendiary capacity

Where a church provides a non-stipendiary minister with manse accommodation this does not give rise to a taxable benefit - neither will the payment by the church of the associated council tax and water charges.

Pending increase in National Insurance contributions

It will be well known that the rates of both employee and employer NICs are to be increased by 1.25 percentage points as from 1 April 2022 as part of measures planned to fund health and social care. The increase for employees applies to those earning above the class 1 primary threshold (currently £9,568 pa in 2021/22). For employers the increase applies to employees earning above the class 1 secondary threshold (currently £8,840 pa in 2021/22) - but the existing £4,000 employment allowance should shield some churches from this increase.

From April 2023 these increases will be collected separately as a health and social care levy and NIC rates will return to 2021/22 levels. However, the employment allowance will (within the £4,000 limit) continue to be available to cover the employer levy. Also (from April 2023) the levy is to be extended to individuals over pension age in employment.

Church letting income

Income (eg, rent, fees or donations) received from the letting of church

premises does not, by itself, give rise to any tax liability. However, if a letting is accompanied by the provision (by the church) of services, the church might possibly be deemed to be trading, and thus become chargeable to corporation tax on any profit arising. This kind of situation is likely to occur only if such activities are ongoing and long term and involve employment (by the church) of staff to perform services for those using the premises. [See also *Transform 057* for details of the exemption for small trading activities - www.baptist.org.uk/transform57]

Gift Aid Small Donations Scheme

The opportunity has been taken to update the guidance leaflet G01 relating to claims for relief in respect of small cash donations not exceeding £30 each. There has been no fundamental change to the provisions, but the updated notes can be accessed at www.baptist.org.uk/resources/G01. Relief continues to be limited to donations not exceeding £30 made in cash or by way of a contactless terminal - though relief can be claimed for accumulated 'catch-up' donations (made in cash) which were postponed by lockdown. One would like to think that the long-standing £8,000 annual limit on the amount of donations qualifying for relief might be revisited some time - but probably not any time soon!

Manse ingoing internal repairs and redecoration

If a church bears the expense of internal repairs and redecoration of a manse this will normally give rise to a taxable benefit (reportable on form P11D) unless they relate to what are known as landlord's fittings, or the expense is incurred prior to the settlement of a new minister.

In some situations, it may not be possible for intended repairs or redecoration to be carried out before a new minister moves into the property - but provided there is agreement between church and minister that the particular work will be undertaken as soon as is practicable there ought not to be any taxation consequences.

These notes are offered to provide general information for Baptist churches. We hope they will be helpful in highlighting new guidance and providing reminders about other important matters relating to the life of a local Baptist church. Although every effort is made to ensure that the information is correct at the time of publication, we make no representations, warranties or guarantees (whether express or implied) that the information is accurate, complete or up-to-date. Further, these summary notes are not intended to amount to advice on which you should rely and cannot be a substitute for formal professional or specialist advice. We do not assume and will not be liable to any party (who has either taken or refrained from taking action in reliance on these notes) for any loss or damage caused by errors or omissions, whether resulting from negligence or any other cause. If you want to ask detailed follow-up questions, please contact us through the Baptist Union website.



Baptists Together Deposit Accounts

Baptist member churches with savings and reserves are encouraged to lodge these in a Baptists Together Deposit account.

These accounts, provided by the Baptist Union Corporation Limited, offer a competitive rate of interest to depositors. They also provide funds which are used to make loans to finance the purchase of new church sites and manses and fund the construction of new churches, as well as redevelopment and improvement projects. Such projects help churches to develop their mission in their community and it is a fantastic way for churches with surplus funds to support mission across the Baptist family.

For more information visit

www.baptist.org.uk/depositaccounts

CURRENT RATES:

0.60% interest
on 1 year fixed rate deposit

0.45% interest
on 3 month notice account

0.20% interest
on 7 day notice account

(all rates subject to regular review)

**Minimum deposit £1,000
for all accounts**

