

# BUC GUIDELINES

## BUC1 Introducing The Baptist Union Corporation Ltd (10/2008)

### HISTORY

The Baptist Union Corporation Limited was formed by the Baptist Union of Great Britain (and Ireland in those days) in 1891. This was in response to the problems churches were experiencing difficulty in finding suitable trustees for their premises. As a Trust Corporation the Baptist Union Corporation could become the property trustee and overcome the problem.

Later several of the Baptist Associations launched their own Trust Corporations. There is now a high degree of co-operation between all the Baptist Trust Corporations. The trust officers hold an annual twenty-four hour consultation to discuss matters of mutual interest.

Since the 1950s the Baptist Union Corporation has also dealt with the trust work of the East Midland Baptist Trust Company Ltd on an agency basis and more recently has agreed to assist the North Western Baptist Association and the Yorkshire Baptist Association.

### PURPOSE

Over time the initial role expanded so that now all the Trust Corporations see their purpose as serving our Baptist churches and to facilitate them in their mission. We aim to make available first class professional advice and assistance to all Baptist churches – and particularly ministers and other Charity Trustees (often called deacons) – in connection with legal, property, trust, charity and other practical matters. We help churches in developing their work and mission, particularly when this involves complex property transactions or redevelopments.

### OUR WORK AND ACTIVITIES

The Baptist Union Corporation offers guidance and assistance in the following areas:

- **Property Matters** – Buying, selling and letting of church premises and manses. We consider proposals from churches to redevelop or to make alterations to properties.
- **Legal Issues** – Advice is available on a wide range of legal issues – from pre-schools to burial grounds and from health and safety to boundary disputes and from employment to disability discrimination.
- **Charity Law** – Churches are charities so they need to comply with various legal and accounting requirements. Information is available about the role of Charity Trustees and their legal responsibilities.
- **Trust Provisions** – Many churches will have little or no knowledge of the content of their trust deeds. Yet they often contain important doctrinal or procedural provisions which can determine how church life is organised.

- **Title Deeds** – We have the custody of some 2,000 packets of title deeds for the churches in trust with us. We also look after the deeds of properties owned by the East Midland Trust Company Limited and the Retired Baptist Ministers' Housing Society.
- **Listed Buildings** – Churches whose premises are listed as being of historic interest or architectural merit must apply to the Listed Buildings Advisory Committee, which is administered from the Baptist Union Corporation office, if they want to make alterations affecting the fabric and character of their building.
- **Funding** – We operate the Baptist Union Loan Fund and we are consulted by churches looking for loans for the redevelopment of their premises and we welcome deposits from churches.

All this keeps us very busy indeed. In doing the work we respond to churches through:

- **Correspondence** – Every day we receive, and send, a very high volume of letters, faxes and E-mails. If you have a question, a letter, fax or e-mail explaining exactly what you need is helpful. We try to respond in five working days, but if we are very busy or involved in events outside the office there may be a delay.
- **Telephone** – Our phone lines are often busy, but leave a message and we will phone back.
- **Visits** – Although visits to churches place a heavy strain on our limited resources there are times when a visit is the best way of dealing with a situation. In appropriate cases the Manager, Deputy Manager or the Loan Fund Officer, will visit – often with the Area Director.
- **Meetings** – A significant amount of our time is spent in preparing creatively for meetings – and attending them!
- **Seminars** – We conduct seminars and other training events, usually for Associations or groups of churches, on topics relating to our work.
- **Guidelines** – Producing – and updating – the *Guidelines* series of leaflets is a particularly effective way of making advice available to churches. These are available from the Corporation office or on our website [www.baptist.org.uk](http://www.baptist.org.uk). Click on Resources, then Admin//Finance//Leadership, then BUC Guidelines.

## OUR STRUCTURE

The Baptist Union Corporation is a company, limited by guarantee rather than by shares. The usual features of a limited company are therefore part of its structure. There is a Board of Directors and an Annual General Meeting is held. Like any other limited company it operates in accordance with a Memorandum and Articles of Association and has a Common Seal for the purpose of authenticating property deeds and other official documents. The Baptist Union Corporation is registered with Companies House and also with the Charity Commission as it is a registered charity. It has its own staff and retains Professional Advisers.

## THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

There are three categories of Directors – Appointed, Ex Officio and Co-opted.

Thirteen **Appointed Directors** represent the thirteen regional Associations. Although they share in all the work of the Baptist Union Corporation they have a particular responsibility for their own Association. They will often have local knowledge of matters being discussed which can be helpful in coming to a right decision.

There are three **Ex-Officio Directors** – the Treasurer of the Union and two other staff nominated by the Baptist Union. Their presence at meetings of the Directors ensures that proper attention is given to wider issues affecting the overall work of the Union.

The Directors have power to appoint up to five **Co-opted Directors**. These will often be people with particular expertise, usually in legal, financial or property matters.

Quarterly **Board Meetings** of the Directors are held at Baptist House and are chaired by the **Moderator** who is appointed by the Baptist Union Council.

## THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

A Company limited by guarantee is accountable to its members rather than to shareholders. The members of the Baptist Union Council constitute the members of the Baptist Union Corporation. The AGM of the Baptist Union Corporation is therefore held as part of the Baptist Union Council Meeting, usually in March every year.

The accounts for the previous year are presented and the Company Moderator will report on the activities of the Baptist Union Corporation.

The Annual General Meeting provides opportunity for members to review the past year and to ask questions about the work of the Baptist Union Corporation.

## WHO'S WHO AT THE BAPTIST UNION CORPORATION OFFICE

The hub of our activity is the Baptist Union Corporation office at Baptist House.

Please contact us with your questions. We may not be able to give instant answers but will all do our best to help. It may help for you to know something about the team.

**Manager – Linda Holder BA (Hons) (Mrs)** - She is responsible for holding everything together and making sure that the Baptist Union Corporation runs as efficiently as possible!! Linda comes from a background in the legal profession but has also gained a degree in theology. Before being appointed as the Manager she was the Deputy Manager. As well as being Manager of the Corporation Linda is also Secretary to both the Listed Buildings Advisory Committee and the Legal Committee of the Baptist Union of Great Britain.

Tel No: 01235 517751

E-Mail: [lholder@baptist.org.uk](mailto:lholder@baptist.org.uk)

**Deputy Manager – Steve Wing** - Steve joined the Corporation from a banking background but also has experience of dealing with property transactions and title documents. Steve has particular responsibility for dealing with manse transactions and the work of the Listed Building Advisory Committee - as well as answering general questions.

Tel No: 01235 517754

E-Mail: [swing@baptist.org.uk](mailto:swing@baptist.org.uk)

**Corporation Administrator – Justine Higgin (Mrs)** – Justine has a legal background and can often help with questions particularly when they relate to general legal matters, employment, health and safety and charity law. Once again we cannot promise to know the answer but will try to find the information you need.

Tel No: 01235 517744

E-Mail: [jhiggin@baptist.org.uk](mailto:jhiggin@baptist.org.uk)

Justine is part time during term time only.

**Property Officer – Louise Ferguson (Miss)** – Louise has a law degree and experience of working in a solicitors' office. She joined the team in August 2008 and will be dealing with a range of work with particular responsibility for redundant burial grounds, closed churches and major redevelopment projects.

Tel No: 01235 517743

E-Mail: [lferguson@baptist.org.uk](mailto:lferguson@baptist.org.uk)

**Manager's Secretary – Sally Spicer (Mrs)** - Sally is an experienced legal secretary with experience in family, probate and trust law. She has worked in the Baptist Union Corporation office for several years and has gained experience and expertise in our work. She has specific responsibility for dealing with the approval of plans for building alterations – as well as general enquiries.

Tel No: 01235 517747

E-Mail: [sspicer@baptist.org.uk](mailto:sspicer@baptist.org.uk)

**Secretary - Jenny Evans (Mrs)** - Jenny is an experienced legal secretary. She has responsibility for the preparation, printing and distribution of our Guidelines Leaflets by post. Jenny has been involved in a process of voluntary land registration of Baptist properties with the Land Registry. She may be able to answer your questions or she will try to find someone who can help!!

Tel No: 01235 517745

E-Mail: [jevans@baptist.org.uk](mailto:jevans@baptist.org.uk)

**Loan Fund Officer – Rob Bruce.** The Baptist Union Loan Fund is administered by the Baptist Union Corporation. Enquiries about a loan should be made to Rob, our Loan Fund Officer. He is able to advise churches planning to borrow money to assist with building or similar projects. He is usually at Baptist House on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday each week .

Tel No: 01235 517746

E-Mail: [rbruce@baptist.org.uk](mailto:rbruce@baptist.org.uk)

#### **WHO'S WHO AT THE FINANCE OFFICE**

**Head of Department - Philip Putman MA FCA** is the Head of Finance and Administration for the Baptist Union, and Company Secretary for the Baptist Union Corporation. He has overall responsibility for all the financial aspects of the Baptist Union Corporation. He is the point of contact for questions about income tax, VAT and charity accounting.

Tel: 01235 517735

E-Mail: [pputman@baptist.org.uk](mailto:pputman@baptist.org.uk)

The Finance Office of the Union also supports the Baptist Union Corporation dealing with the Baptist Union Corporation accounts including deposits from churches and obtains advice for churches on investments and similar matters. **Robin Phillips** and **Mrs Jayne Lonsdale** assist with the Baptist Union Corporation work.

**Finance Administrator – Robin Phillips** is responsible for the financial side of the Baptist Union Loan Fund including the operation of the church deposit accounts which form the funds from which loans are made. He is the point of contact for churches wishing to open a deposit account.

Tel: 01235 517725

E-Mail: [rphillips@baptist.org.uk](mailto:rphillips@baptist.org.uk)

**Finance Clerk - Jayne Lonsdale (Mrs)** is responsible for the Baptist Union Gift Aid Scheme which is administered by the Baptist Union Corporation. This reclaims Gift Aid on behalf of churches which choose to use the service rather than make their own claims direct. There is a charge for this service.

Tel: 01235 517724

E-mail: [jlonsdale@baptist.org.uk](mailto:jlonsdale@baptist.org.uk)

#### **THE LEGAL COMMITTEE**

The Legal Committee of the Baptist Union deals with a wide range of legal and church matters. Many of the issues they consider are closely related to the concerns of the Baptist Union Corporation. It is

therefore convenient that the Directors of the Baptist Union Corporation are also the members of the Legal Committee. The Legal Committee reports to the Baptist Union Council through the report of the Baptist Union's Trustees. The Legal Committee meets on the same day as the Baptist Union Corporation Directors.

The Legal Committee receives reports from the Churches Main Committee, which is the ecumenical body through whom the Government relates to the churches.

The Baptist Union Corporation Manager services the work of the Legal Committee.

### **THE LISTED BUILDINGS ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

In 1994 the Government agreed to delegate to six of the mainline Christian denominations, including Baptists, the power to determine applications for changes to listed chapels and places of worship. This is obviously an exceedingly specialised area of work and the Legal Committee has established the Listed Buildings Advisory Committee.

The Baptist Union Corporation office deals with applications to the Listed Buildings Advisory Committee and the Baptist Union Corporation Manager services the Committee.

### **PROFESSIONAL ADVISERS**

The Baptist Union Corporation retains the services of Solicitors and Surveyors who are consulted on a regular basis. They have built up considerable expertise in their own fields and are a valuable resource to the Baptist Union Corporation and the churches we seek to serve.

The Baptist Union also have an Honorary Tax Adviser who, together with the staff of the Finance Office are able to assist churches with the complications of Income Tax and other related subjects.

### **GUIDELINES LEAFLETS**

Our usual way of passing on information about legal, property and other practical issues is through Guidelines leaflets, prepared for our Baptist churches.

Many churches have expressed considerable appreciation of the series of Guidelines leaflets we publish. They are regularly updated and new titles are being added.

The leaflets are available for downloading on the Baptist Union website – [www.baptist.org.uk](http://www.baptist.org.uk) Click on Resources, then Admin//Finance//Leadership, then BUC Guidelines.

### **CONCLUSION**

At a first glance the work of the Baptist Union Corporation may seem to be far removed from the mission of the church. Yet there are at least two reasons – probably more – why we ask for your prayerful support and your encouragement in our work.

- In the first place we see ourselves as providing advice and assistance to busy ministers and church officers in matters with which they may not be familiar and which, without help, could so easily distract them from the more obvious mission activities of the church.
- Secondly do remember that we are in constant touch with Government departments, local authorities and financial institutions as well as individual professionals such as solicitors, surveyors, architects and accountants. They will judge the claims of the Gospel by the way in which we relate to them. We are obviously committed to Kingdom values of integrity, courtesy and justice and are very conscious that when we sometimes get things wrong the witness of all God's people will suffer.

This is one of a series of *Guidelines* which are offered by the Baptist Union Corporation as a resource for Baptist churches.

<b>Association Trust Company</b>	<b>Contact</b>
<b>Baptist Union Corporation Ltd</b>	Baptist Union Corporation Ltd Baptist House PO Box 44 129 Broadway Didcot Oxfordshire OX11 8RT Telephone: 01235 517700
<b>East Midlands Baptist Trust Company Ltd</b>	The Baptist Union Corporation Ltd Baptist House PO Box 44 129 Broadway Didcot Oxfordshire OX11 8RT Telephone: 01235 517700
<b>Heart of England Baptist Association</b>	Heart of England Baptist Association BMS International Mission Centre 24 Weoley Park Road Selly Oak Birmingham B29 6QX Telephone: 0121 472 4986
<b>London Baptist Property Board</b>	London Baptist Association 235 Shaftesbury Avenue London WC2H 8EP Telephone: 020 7692 5592
<b>North West Baptist Association</b>	Baptist Union Corporation Ltd Baptist House PO Box 44 129 Broadway Didcot Oxfordshire OX11 8RT Telephone: 01235 517700
<b>South West Baptist Trust Corporation</b>	South West Baptist Trust Corporation Wonford Baptist Chapel 36-38 Wonford Street Exeter Devon EX2 5DL Telephone: 01392 433533
<b>Yorkshire Baptist Association</b>	Baptist Union Corporation Ltd Baptist House PO Box 44 129 Broadway Didcot Oxfordshire OX11 8RT Telephone: 01235 517700
<b>West of England Baptist Association</b>	West of England Baptist Association The Old Forge Broom Hill Stapleton Bristol BS16 1DN Telephone: 0117 965 8828

As at Jan 2010

This is one of a series of *Guidelines* that are offered as a resource for Baptist ministers and churches. They have been prepared by the Baptist Union Corporation Limited and are, of necessity, intended only to give very general advice in relation to the topics covered. These guidelines should not be relied upon as a substitute for obtaining specific and more detailed advice in relation to a particular matter.

The staff at the Baptist Union Corporation, at Baptist House (or your regional Trust Company) will be very pleased to answer your queries and help in any way possible. It helps us to respond as efficiently as possible to the many churches in trust with us if you write to us and set out your enquiry as simply as possible.

The Baptist Union Corporation staff also deal with churches that are in trust with the East Midland Baptist Trust Company Limited, the North Western Baptist Association (Incorporated), and Yorkshire Baptist Association.

**If your holding trustees are one of the other Baptist Trust Corporations you must contact your own Trust Corporation for further advice. A list of contact details has been included.**

**If you have private trustees they too should be consulted as appropriate.**

**Contact Address and Registered Office:**

The Baptist Union Corporation Ltd, Baptist House, PO Box 44, 129 Broadway, Didcot, Oxfordshire OX11 8RT England

Telephone **01235 517700** facsimile **01235 517715** e-mail **buc.corp@baptist.org.uk** **DX 40852 Didcot**

A Company Limited by Guarantee. Registered in England No 32734. Registered Charity No 249635