

The Presbyterian Church Property Trustees



Church arson causes \$3.5m damage

If their church had caught fire a week earlier, Christchurch's St Paul's Trinity Pacific congregation would not have had enough insurance cover to restore the building.

Prior to the Presbyterian Church's 31 July end of insurance year, the parish had been persuaded to revalue its historic Cashel Street church, built in 1877. Accepting that the existing insurance cover was woefully inadequate, the parish remedied this for the new insurance year.

Five days later, a suspicious fire caused an estimated \$3.5 million damage to the church. Thanks to the just-in-time revaluation, the cost of repairing this church, including restoring the \$800,000 organ (which was not previously insured), will be fully met by the Church's insurers. The work may take two years.

The experience of this Christchurch parish should serve as a stark lesson to others that realistic insurance cover is vital.



Justifying property projects

Parishes who plan building projects, or who intend buying or selling property, must now provide much more detailed justification for their proposals, when applying to the Church Property Trustees for approval to proceed.

The 2008 Assembly adopted guidelines requiring all such proposals to be assessed within the context of regional strategic mission priorities. Applicant parishes are being asked to justify the level of expenditure in relation to worship growth, and to the ongoing viability of their congregation. Five year mission plans must also be provided. Presbyteries are to undertake a detailed appraisal of each application, based on the guidelines.

Parishes embarking on major alterations or extension projects may require extra insurance. They should contact the Assembly Office, or Aon, before their plans are finalised, to ensure adequate cover is in place.

Capital funds may now be used for growth projects, as well as for building-related work.

P.I.F. interest rates

The interest rate currently paid by the Presbyterian Investment Fund on parish deposits is **4.50%**.

The Trustees review this rate each month, and changes can be seen in the Church Property Trustees section of www.presbyterian.org.nz
Interest is credited to accounts quarterly.

Role of Church Property Trustees

The Trustees manage both the Beneficiary Fund (which involves investing the ministers' superannuation fund and administering the Trust Deed) and the Presbyterian Investment Fund (which holds parish property proceeds as well as general church funds.)

They approve property transactions and capital expenditure for all church properties north of the Waitaki River.

The Trustees also manage two farms (which can't be sold) and distribute bequests and other trust income.

New Trustees

The list of current trustees can be viewed on the Presbyterian website. They have been recently joined by Rev Chris Elliot (Christchurch), Paul Fenton (Wellington), Brian Milne (Otaki), and Paul Westbury (Wellington) as associates, until they are appointed by the next Assembly.

Contact people

Presbyterian Investment Fund, property matters and general Trustees enquiries: contact Heather McKenzie, on 04 381 8290 or email heather@presbyterian.org.nz.

Beneficiary Fund enquiries: contact Ashley Goss, at Aon Consulting. Ph 04 819 4052 or email ashley.goss@aon.co.nz.

Insurance enquiries: contact Russell Bell at Aon, 04 819 4004 or email russell.bell@aon.co.nz.