

North Kent Methodist Circuit

The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)

In May 2018, new legal requirements come into effect in the UK concerning Data Protection. These are update legislation from the Data Protection Act 1998 which has become somewhat obsolete in the face of increased use of the internet. The Methodist Church has issued advice for churches which can be found at: <http://tmcp.org.uk/about/data-protection/resources/guidenotes/gdpr>.

Several challenges to this legislation are expected, but for now, churches in our circuit are advised to consider the following:

Churches can certainly continue to maintain lists of their members, adherents, and 'community roll', and to include contact details for the same where these are appropriate. Such lists – and details – should be kept securely on a need-to-know basis (ie, the Minister, Church officers, Pastoral visitors, etc) but should not be available to the general public. Directories of church members – with their contact details – can be produced with the permission of those whose names and details are included, but such directories should only be circulated to those *who have signed an agreement* indicating they understand their responsibility to keep such information confidential.

Church directories and other printed or written materials which include contact details of persons should *not* be left lying around in churches or church community centres where they can be picked up by the general public.

Permission is being sought from all those whose names/contact details are included in the Circuit Directory.

The Circuit maintains a list of contact details in the Chrestos system for members and adherents across the circuit. Chrestos is a closed and secure system which can only be accessed by those to whom permission is given by the circuit officers. Chrestos is also updated at regular intervals so that obsolete details are not retained.

Churches which keep separate online/cloud-based directories and/or use cloud-based systems for information sharing should be aware that, from May 2018, only such systems which are registered in Europe will be legal. Some systems such as Dropbox are registered partly in Europe and partly in North America, so care should be taken to establish where the Dropbox the church is using is registered.