

The principal purpose of the URCMG Organ Advisory Service is to be the initial source of advice to Churches on their organs. A secondary purpose is to ensure that pipe organs in current URCs are accorded appropriate stewardship for their relevance to worship. If your Church requires help with organ matters then, in the first instance, please contact the Organ Advisory Service's Co-ordinator: **Mr John Corrie**
155 Garden Wood Road, East Grinstead RH19 1SU

Are you aware that:

- Some organ tuners no longer consider that blower maintenance is within their work. Even though your pipe organ is tuned, be sure that the blower is also being lubricated and maintained. The maintenance required depends on the type and age of the blower. Neglect of simple attention can lead to larger bills.
- Insurance companies put a high value on a pipe organ even if it is currently in unplayable condition. Any incident on the premises may not get full insurance payment if the insurers feel that the whole premises, including the organ, are undervalued;
- Much work done on a fixed pipe organ in a listed building is exempt from VAT; Eligibility for grants towards work on an organ often depends on the initial production of a report by an organ advisor prior to any work being authorised.

These are just a few examples of things that can sometimes be overlooked by Churches. The Organ Advisory Service exists to help United Reformed Churches with these and similar stewardship matters.

Additionally, the United Reformed Church may be required by planning controls to implement measures to conserve pipe organs in its premises. Any work involving the appearance or location of the organ may require Planning consent or, in the case of a listed building, consent either from the local Planning Authority or the Listed Buildings Committee of the Synod acting under the Ecclesiastical Exemption arrangement.

Organs are made by those with craft skills, who need to consider an instrument's musical and liturgical duties as well as the engineering matters that affect its reliability. Selecting an organ builder with appropriate skills requires consideration of matters of worship preference as well as of engineering if long-term performance is to be satisfactory. The particular needs of a Church and its musicians needs to be identified and explained to organ builders. The United Reformed Church's Organ Advisors can suggest from whom tenders should be requested and also on how to evaluate the tenders received.

Can we help you or YOUR Church?

We have advised on:

- Condition reports;
 - Comparison between costs of pipe and electronic instruments;
 - Budgeting for organ maintenance;
 - How to find suitable tuners, maintainers and organ builders to undertake work, and how to specify work to be undertaken;
 - Procurement of new or second-hand organs;
 - Possibilities for obtaining financial grants for restoration work;
 - The effects of Church heating systems;
 - How to obtain guidance on any asbestos, for example in blower cabinets;
 - Church acoustics;
 - Suitability of an organ for relocation within a Church building;
 - The practical effect of reordering a Sanctuary on console siting, tonal projection from pipes/speakers, the effect of heating systems and sunlight on the proposed location of organ parts;
 - Restoration of historic instruments;
- Suitability of an organ for practice by pupils working for organ examinations.

The United Reformed Church Musicians' Guild

Our activities include:

- Responding to requests from Churches for advice;
- Maintaining a register of URC pipe organs;
- Maintaining a register of redundant organs suitable for relocation and publicising their availability;
- Liaison with the Institute of British Organ Building (IBO) regarding matters relating to organ stewardship;
- Attending the Organ Advisors' Conferences of the Church of England and Methodist Churches to share good current practice.

What would contacting us cost?

The URC Organ Advisors do not charge a fee, but Churches using our services are expected to meet their reasonable expenses. Naturally, if the Church wishes, a donation to the Guild's Organ Advisory Service Fund is always welcome!

What if a Church does not understand all this?

Just call John Corrie and say "Help"! The URCMG Organ Advisory Service exists to support our Churches in the stewardship of organs or in finding suitable instruments to support worship. John can respond to a simple request for "help" or find an advisor with experience in a specific technical matter if required.

So, can the Guild's Organ Advisory Service help **YOUR** Church?



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Organ Advisory Service

