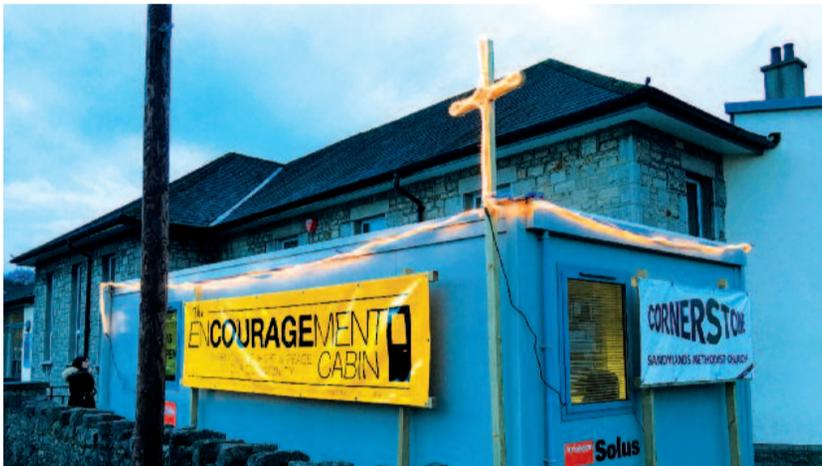


# The flood won't dampen Sandylands' spirit

Storm Desmond brought unprecedented flooding to the Sandgate area of Kendal, and the waters engulfed Sandylands Methodist Church. Thanks to Methodist Insurance's expertise and support, they ensured the church was able to continue to play a vital role in the heart of the community.



## A vital part of the local community

While we were on the scene at Sandylands we quickly established their number one priority was their community work. Sandylands has employed a Community Officer for the last ten years, and reaches out to support people who need a helping hand. It was obvious that this had to continue, flood or no flood. Building on our experience we authorised temporary accommodation that would allow the church to carry on its excellent work.

"They saw the need and were very quick to approve a portacabin," explains Bill. "We call it our Encouragement Cabin." Open every day from 9am to 5pm and manned by volunteers, the cabin is a place of refuge for people affected by the floods, offering support and advice. The cabin also gives out food and hot drinks, and literally hundreds of people have visited since it opened.

"The spirit in the church has been amazing," says Bill. Thanks to the quick reactions of Methodist Insurance, and our support of Sandylands' mission work, the church is able to continue thriving and working at the heart of its community. The building should be repaired and back to normal within six months, and Methodist Insurance is also advising the church on how to introduce flood proofing to stay safe in future. "I have to say they performed superbly," says Bill.

Sandylands recently featured in an edition of Songs of Praise that focused on acts of kindness in Cumbria in the aftermath of the flooding. "In some ways the congregation sees the flooding as a blessing," says Bill, "It's broken down any barriers that exist between the church and the community, and brought the churches together as well." Churches like Sandylands are vital to their local community. That's why you can count on us to respond whenever disaster strikes, with specialist advice and support to get churches back on their feet as quickly as possible.

In the floods of December 2015, Sandylands Methodist Church had been designated as a refuge for people affected by the floodwaters. But on the night of the 6th December 2015 it soon became apparent that Sandylands itself was in trouble. Nearby becks and culverts had burst their banks and over one metre of water was flowing down the high street. The church had to be evacuated, and fast.

The following morning members of the congregation gathered to assess the damage. The building had been flooded up to a depth of 40cm, and a tidal mark was left around the walls. All the electric equipment including the PA system and the organ were ruined.



within hours, despite many impassable roads and damaged bridges.

"It would have been impossible for them to respond any sooner," says Bill Broekhuizen Coillach, Treasurer of Sandylands. Once on site, Methodist Insurance carried out an assessment of the damage and authorised repair work to begin immediately. As we knew local restoration companies would all be busy, we arranged for a specialist from Truro, Cornwall, to move a team to Cumbria to help our customers. This forward thinking enabled us to be ahead of the game. Drying commenced extremely quickly with 12 dehumidifiers and 10 air dryers put into the building to make it dry enough for the cleaning and restoration to begin.



Here at Methodist Insurance we know that in the aftermath of a disaster like the one that hit Sandylands, an immediate response is vital. Supporting the wider community is the priority, and we needed to get the church up and running again as quickly as possible. That's why we made sure we were on the scene at Sandylands

## For churches everywhere

When the River Eden flooded Sands Methodist Church in Appleby, we attended immediately to get the church up and running again.

"The initial response was excellent... they raised things we hadn't even thought of. Methodist Insurance set things in motion with the drying out and getting the local tradesmen involved – we couldn't have asked for anything better."

John Hall, Sands Methodist Church

## A personal message from David Walton, Chair of Methodist Insurance PLC to our customers



The board of the Methodist Insurance Company is committed to supporting the Methodist Church in Britain and Ireland and its wider community. We are very aware of the recent storms and floods and the devastation that they have caused to some of the churches we insure and we sympathise with all those who have been affected.

What we can promise is that we will pull out all of the stops to ensure that Methodist Churches can continue to hold services and perform their vital community roles. Disasters, whatever the cause, do happen from time to time, we believe that thanks to our expertise and understanding of the Methodist Church we know exactly what is needed to help you get up and running again in the shortest possible time, even if your church building is out of action while repairs take place.

The story of Sandylands shows how we have made sure that this active, vibrant church can continue in its mission to support the local community despite the devastation caused by an unexpected flood.

To all churches that have suffered in the bad weather, I want to let you know that you are in our thoughts and prayers.

Please be assured that we will do everything we can to help you.

**David Walton**  
Chairman, Methodist Insurance PLC

For more information visit  
[www.methodistinsurance.co.uk](http://www.methodistinsurance.co.uk)  
or call **0345 606 1331**