

THE GRAND CHARITY

ESTABLISHED BY THE UNITED GRAND LODGE OF ENGLAND

Registered Charity No 281942

60 Great Queen Street London WC2B 5AZ

GRAND PRESIDENT

HRH THE DUKE OF KENT, *KG, GCMG, GCVO, ADC*

DEPUTY GRAND PRESIDENT

THE MOST HON THE MARQUESS OF NORTHAMPTON, *DL*

VICE GRAND PRESIDENT

THE RT HON LORD LANE OF HORSELL

14 August 2006

Dear Sir and Brother

NOTICE OF MEETING

A General Meeting of the Grand Charity will be held on **Saturday, 16 September 2006** at **HARROGATE INTERNATIONAL CENTRE, King's Road, Harrogate, North Yorkshire**. Members of the Grand Charity (i.e. Master Masons who are subscribing members of London and Provincial Lodges and all other Brethren eligible to attend Grand Lodge) and their partners or other guests, may attend. The meeting will start at 11.00 am but **everyone must be seated by 10.50 am**.

The Vice Grand President, the Rt Hon Lord Lane of Horsell, will chair the meeting. The agenda, report of the Council and minutes of the previous General Meeting, are contained in this booklet.

A buffet lunch will be provided after the meeting for those who have previously purchased lunch tickets (**see page 5 for further details**).

Yours faithfully and fraternally

RICHARD CAMM-JONES
Secretary of the Grand Charity

DRESS
Lounge suits – No regalia

GENERAL MEETING OF THE GRAND CHARITY

Saturday, 16 September 2006

AGENDA

1. Opening by the Vice Grand President of the Grand Charity, the Rt Hon Lord Lane of Horsell.
2. Minutes of the General Meeting held on Wednesday, 21 June 2006, at Freemasons' Hall, London, for confirmation (see page 13).
3. To receive the Report of the Council dated 19 July 2006. (The Council's Report, following its last meeting, is contained on pages 11 to 12. It includes details of recommendations for several non-Masonic charitable grants, which are set out on pages 7 to 10, paragraphs a. to q., which is an Appendix to the Council's Report. These require the approval, under item 4a. to 4q. below, of the members of the Grand Charity at this General Meeting before the money can be given).
4. To seek approval for the following grants (which are set out in more detail in the Appendix to the Report referred to above) to be made:

DISABILITY

- a. £112,000 to **CARE Fund** to provide equipment and training for people with learning disabilities at a new horticultural centre at Ponteland, Northumberland.
- b. £25,000 to **Whizz Kids** to provide funding for therapists to assess disabled children for specially designed mobility equipment including wheelchairs.
- c. £23,000 to the **Jubilee Sailing Trust** to fund the salary for a medical purser on a tall ship providing voyages for disabled and able-bodied people.
- d. £20,000 to **Canine Partners** to fund a programme for disadvantaged young people to participate in training dogs that will assist disabled people.

- e. £20,000 to the **Dystonia Society** payable in equal instalments over two years to fund the production of new information booklets.
- f. £14,000 to the **Multiple Sclerosis Society** for specialist beds and lifting equipment at a respite centre in York.
- g. £10,000 to **BREAK** for activity respite holidays for severely disabled children in Norfolk.

VULNERABLE PEOPLE

- h. £90,000 to **Rethink** payable in two instalments of £40,000 and £50,000 to fund a training programme for children on the link between cannabis use and mental illness.
- i. £42,000 to **St John Cymru** to fund the cost of a new emergency vehicle in Deeside and make a contribution towards the cost of a new vehicle in Holyhead.
- j. £40,000 to the **Prostate Research Campaign UK** payable in equal instalments over three years to fund the production of four information booklets.
- k. £26,000 to the **National Council for One Parent Families** to fund a specialist support service for lone parents who are caring for a disabled child.

YOUTH OPPORTUNITIES

- l. £50,000 to the **Brathay Hall Trust** payable in equal instalments over two years to provide bursaries for disadvantaged young people to attend courses at Brathay Hall.
- m. £50,000 to **Fairbridge Cymru** payable in equal instalments over two years to fund the salary of a development tutor for disaffected young people in Cardiff.

MEDICAL RESEARCH

- n. £100,000 to the **Arthritis Research Campaign** payable in equal instalments over two years to fund research into rheumatoid arthritis.

- o. £49,000 to **Deafness Research UK** to fund research into age-related hearing loss.
- p. £39,000 to **Diabetes UK** to fund research into genetic factors in the development of Type 2 diabetes.

RELIGIOUS BUILDINGS

- q. £5,000 to **Salisbury Cathedral**.
5. To report any Emergency Grants made since the last meeting.
 6. To receive an explanation of the work of the Masonic Relief Grants Committee.
 7. The Chief Executive, Laura Chapman, to talk about grants to non-Masonic organisations.
 8. To receive a presentation on the work of Emmaus UK by its Director, Tim Page.
 9. To receive a presentation on the work of the Alzheimer's Research Trust by its Chief Executive, Rebecca Wood.
 10. An address by RWBro John K. Clayton, Provincial Grand Master for Yorkshire, West Riding.
 11. To receive a presentation on the work of the Cavendish Centre, by the Director of its Board of Trustees, Professor Malcolm Reed.
 12. Closing address by the Vice Grand President of the Grand Charity, the Rt Hon Lord Lane of Horsell.

FOLLOWED BY LUNCH

A buffet lunch will be served after the meeting for ticket holders only.

The cost is £15.00 per head and application should be made to:

**Provincial Grand Secretary, Province of Yorkshire, West Riding
The Masonic Hall, Spring Bank Place, Bradford BD8 7BX
Tel: 01274 481 242 (Mon–Fri, 10.00–15.00 only)**

APPENDIX

to the

Report of the Council dated 19 July 2006,
which appears on pages 11 to 12

The Council proposes the following non-Masonic grants, which appear under item 4a. to 4q. of the Agenda for the General Meeting to be held on 16 September 2006 and which are referred to in paragraph 3. of the Council's Report dated 19 July 2006.

DISABILITY

a. CARE FUND The Council recommends a grant of £112,000 to the CARE Fund to pay for equipment and staff at a new horticultural training centre in Ponteland, Northumberland for people with learning difficulties. CARE is a national charity that provides a range of services for 550 people with learning disabilities, including purpose built communities and supported living, day care services and employment training. The aim of the project is to provide real employment opportunities and income for people with learning disabilities.

b. WHIZZ KIDS The Council recommends a grant of £25,000 to Whizz Kids to fund a network of qualified physiotherapists to assess the mobility needs of severely disabled children. The charity provides powered wheelchairs and tricycles at an average cost of £6,250 per child, together with equipment advice and wheelchair training. The ability to be independently mobile enables disabled children to participate in society more widely, lessening their reliance on carers and increasing their self-confidence.

c. JUBILEE SAILING TRUST The Council recommends a grant of £23,000 to the Jubilee Sailing Trust to fund the salary of a medical purser to look after the health and welfare of crew, particularly the 20 disabled crew, who will participate in a tall ship voyage. The Jubilee Sailing Trust provides adventure trips for disabled people through the experience of crewing a tall ship at sea with able bodied people.

d. CANINE PARTNERS The Council recommends a grant of £20,000 to Canine Partners to fund the cost of a new trainer who

will work with disadvantaged young people in the training of dogs for disabled people, specifically for a BBC programme. Canine Partners is a charity that trains dogs in specific tasks to assist disabled people in day-to-day living. The dogs enable disabled people to live more independently and to increase their working and social activities.

e. **DYSTONIA SOCIETY** The Council recommends a grant of £20,000 payable over two years in equal instalments to the Dystonia Society to fund a new range of information leaflets for people with dystonia and for health professionals. Dystonia is a neurological movement disorder characterised by involuntary and sustained extreme muscle spasms, often affecting the neck, eyes or speech. For nearly 50% of people it can take two years to obtain a correct diagnosis and there is a lack of understanding of the condition amongst some GPs and nurses.

f. **MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS SOCIETY** The Council recommends a grant of £14,000 to the Multiple Sclerosis Society to fund the cost of special beds and ceiling hoists at a respite care centre in York. An estimated 85,000 people have multiple sclerosis in the UK and the respite centre has provide 10,000 bed spaces for short term respite care over the past 15 years.

g. **BREAK** The Council recommends a grant of £10,000 to Break to fund themed holidays in Norfolk with tailored activities for severely disabled children. Break provides stimulating respite care holidays for people with learning or physical disabilities. Guests come without their parents or carers, giving the latter a complete break from their responsibilities.

VULNERABLE PEOPLE

h. **RETHINK** The Council recommends a grant of £90,000 payable over two years in instalments of £40,000 and £50,000 to fund a project to educate young children of the link between cannabis use and severe mental illness. Rethink will develop and implement a DVD training package. The aim is to prevent psychosis by communicating a clear message about one risk factor (cannabis), encourage those with mental health problems to speak publicly about their experience and to reduce the stigma surrounding mental illness

i. ST JOHN CYMRU The Council recommends a grant of £42,000 to St. John Cymru to fund a replacement emergency vehicle in Deeside, North Wales and to make a contribution towards a replacement vehicle in Holyhead. St John has a rolling programme of replacing its ambulances in Wales. Some of the cost is raised locally in each region and St. John seeks to raise the balance from charitable foundations.

j. PROSTATE RESEARCH CAMPAIGN UK The Council recommends a grant of £40,000 payable over three years in equal instalments to Prostate Research Campaign UK to fund four booklets on specific prostate diseases, including prostate cancer. The booklets are reprinted three times a year to allow for constant updating. The aim is that the booklets will contribute to a reduction in the number of men presenting late with prostate diseases as early intervention makes a significant difference to the treatment and cure of all prostate diseases.

k. NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR ONE PARENT FAMILIES The Council recommends a grant of £26,000 to the National Council for One Parent Families. There are 1.8 million one-parent families in the UK in which about 500,000 single parents have a disabled child. The charity provides a dedicated advice worker to provide a telephone call back service, an e-newsletter and an e-forum providing a peer support network for lone parents with disabled children. The disabilities are wide ranging, but the most frequently helped are those who have children with learning disabilities.

YOUTH OPPORTUNITIES

l. BRATHAY HALL TRUST The Council recommends a grant of £50,000 payable over two years in equal instalments to Brathay Hall Trust as a bursary fund for disadvantaged young people. Brathay Hall is an educational trust that helps young people to develop their potential through a mix of practical and creative activities on mainly residential training courses. In addition to those young people who join the residential courses, youth leaders are also trained at Brathay Hall and go on to deliver training locally.

m. FAIRBRIDGE CYMRU The Council recommends a grant of £50,000 payable over two years in equal instalments to Fairbridge Cymru to fund the salary of a development tutor.

Fairbridge provides support for some of the most socially excluded and disaffected young people in the country. The development tutor will design and deliver a range of projects and activities with the aim of retaining seventy per cent of young people on a long-term Fairbridge programme and will deliver further follow-on courses to develop specific skills.

MEDICAL RESEARCH

n. **ARTHRITIS RESEARCH CAMPAIGN** The Council recommends a grant of £100,000 payable over two years in equal instalments to the Arthritis Research Campaign to fund research into the fundamental initiation of the inflammatory destruction of cartilage by enzymes. The aim is to develop new drugs to act as road blocks to switch off enzyme production and prevent further joint destruction.

o. **DEAFNESS RESEARCH UK** The Council recommends a grant of £49,000 to Deafness Research UK to fund research into age-related hearing loss. A pilot project will investigate the degeneration of the lining cells in the ear to confirm the role of such cells in the maintenance of hair cells and the possibility of using stem cell technology to replace the lining cells.

p. **DIABETES UK** The Council recommends a grant of £39,000 to Diabetes UK to fund research to identify genes that are responsible for the inherited component of susceptibility to Type 2 diabetes. The risk of developing Type 2 diabetes arises from a combination of inherited genetic factors and environmental factors such as diet and exercise. The research will focus on investigating four genes that might affect the risk of an individual developing such diabetes.

RELIGIOUS BUILDINGS

q. **SALISBURY CATHEDRAL.** The Council recommends that £5,000 be given to Salisbury Cathedral via the Provincial Grand Lodge of Wiltshire towards maintenance and restoration.

END of APPENDIX to Council's Report dated 19 July 2006

REPORT OF THE COUNCIL OF THE GRAND CHARITY
dated 19 July 2006
FOR THE GENERAL MEETING
to be held on
Saturday, 16 September 2006

GENERAL

1. NEW MEMBER OF THE COUNCIL

The Grand President has appointed WBro Peter R. Griffiths, PJGD, to the Council.

MASONIC GRANTS

2. APPLICATIONS TO THE MASONIC RELIEF GRANTS COMMITTEE

Since the last report, the Council has ratified the following grants made by the Masonic Relief Grants Committee:

DATE	NO OF GRANTS AWARDED	TOTAL RELIEF
17 May 2006	108	£146,725
21 June 2006	156	£216,564
19 July 2006	140	£189,502

These figures include grants made under Rule 0311.

NON-MASONIC GRANTS

3. The Council proposes the non-Masonic grants set out in paragraphs a. to q. of an Appendix to this Report (pages 7 to 10) and which appear under items 4a. to 4q. of the Agenda for the General Meeting to be held on 16 September 2006.

GENERAL MATTERS

LEGACIES AND BEQUESTS

4. Since the last report the Grand Charity has received the following instalments from legacies of £1,000 or more:

Horace John Stokes	£161,423
Oscar Frederick Boehringer	£60,000
William Gustav Such	£50,000
Arthur Ernest Manley	£2,909

On behalf of the members of the Grand Charity, the Council expresses its grateful thanks to all those who consider the Grand Charity in their Will.

NORTH WALES FESTIVAL – 2006

5. The Festival held for the Grand Charity by the Provincial Grand Lodge of North Wales on Saturday, 10 June 2006 at the North Wales Conference Centre, Llandudno, raised £2,338,008.86. The Council is most grateful to RWBro Gareth Lloyd-Jones, Provincial Grand Master for North Wales, and the members of his Province for this magnificent achievement.

YORKSHIRE, WEST RIDING, FESTIVAL – 2007

6. The 22nd Annual Festival to be held on behalf of the Grand Charity will take place on Saturday, 28 April 2007, at the Royal Armouries, Leeds, under the Presidency of the Provincial Grand Master for Yorkshire, West Riding. Details of the arrangements may be obtained from the Provincial Grand Secretary:-

WBro John Rushworth, PAGDC
The Masonic Hall
Spring Bank Place
Bradford BD8 7BX
Tel: 01274 481242
Email: pgl@wrprovince.co.uk

(signed) GRAHAME N. ELLIOTT
President of the Grand Charity
19 July 2006

THE GRAND CHARITY

ESTABLISHED BY THE UNITED GRAND LODGE OF ENGLAND

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL MEETING

HELD ON
WEDNESDAY, 21 JUNE 2006

FREEMASONS' HALL
GREAT QUEEN STREET
LONDON WC2B 5AZ

UNDER THE CHAIRMANSHIP OF THE
DEPUTY GRAND PRESIDENT

As well as officers and members of the Grand Charity, the Mayor of Camden and many other invited guests were present.

The Deputy Grand President entered and opened the meeting at 6.00 pm by welcoming all those present. He then called on the President of the Grand Charity.

OPENING REMARKS

PRESIDENT OF THE GRAND CHARITY: Deputy Grand President, Madam Mayor, ladies, gentlemen and Members. On behalf of the Members of the Council of the Grand Charity, I welcome you to this General Meeting. I would also like to record how good it is to see our Vice Grand President, Lord Lane with us this evening.

The Grand Charity is the central Masonic Charity. It is a grant-making charity and is administered by a Council of 30 members – many of whom are seated here on the stage – together they broadly represent Freemasons in all areas of England and Wales.

The achievements of Grand Charity in its first twenty-five years are most ably set out in the leaflet, which has been placed on your chairs. This delightful leaflet celebrates our Silver Anniversary appropriately. Whilst I do not propose to repeat what is in that

leaflet, which we hope you will take away with you, it is important that we first highlight our principal activities.

On behalf of Freemasons, under the English Constitution these are:

1. to provide financial help to Masons or their dependants who are in financially distressed circumstances
2. to assist other Masonic charities in times of need
3. to provide the central channel for giving to non-Masonic causes
4. to provide relief, throughout the world to those affected by major disasters.

The Grand Charity is responsible to all Freemasons under the English Constitution of which all Master Masons are its members, the vast majority of whom live in England and Wales and, as such they can influence affairs by attending and voting at these General meetings.

Of course, none of the support we shall hear about today would be possible without the generosity of individual Freemasons and their families, for the work of the Grand Charity is funded entirely by contributions from them. Today will be an opportunity to acknowledge that support.

As we move to the formal business, set out in the yellow booklet, again on your chairs, I wish to thank the members of the Metropolitan Grand Lodge who have given support to this meeting. The Members of the Council and I are most grateful.

I do hope that you find the meeting interesting, informative and, as all things in Freemasonry should be – enjoyable.

CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

The minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on Wednesday, 8 March 2006 at Freemasons' Hall, London, were taken as read and confirmed.

REPORT OF THE COUNCIL OF THE GRAND CHARITY

The President (VWBro Grahame N. Elliott, *CBE*) proposed and the Deputy President (WBro Adrian R. Chalk, PDepGSwdB) seconded that the following report of the Council of the Grand Charity and

the Appendix to the report, be taken as read. The members agreed.

REPORT dated 19 APRIL 2006

GENERAL

1. **RETIREMENT OF PRESIDENT OF THE GRAND CHARITY** The Council wishes to record its thanks to RWBro Raymond J. Lye, PJGW, for the way in which he had conducted the affairs of the Grand Charity during the eleven years of his Presidency. Whilst his leadership will be greatly missed, as a Past President he remains a member of the Council, where his advice will be invaluable. The Deputy Grand President had announced at the Annual General Meeting in March 2006, that the Grand Master would be appointing WBro Grahame N. Elliott, *CBE*, *PSGD*, to be the new President.

MASONIC GRANTS

2. **APPLICATIONS TO THE MASONIC RELIEF GRANTS COMMITTEE** Since the last report, the Council has ratified the following grants made by the Masonic Relief Grants Committee:

DATE	NO OF GRANTS AWARDED	TOTAL RELIEF
15 February 2006	124	£170,352
15 March 2006	152	£237,233
19 April 2006	173	£239,064

These figures include grants made under Rule 0311.

NON-MASONIC GRANTS

3. The Council proposes the non-Masonic grants set out in paragraphs a. to o. of an Appendix to this Report (pages 6 to 9) [*in this document it appears on pages 17 to 20*] and which appear under items 4a. to 4o. of the Agenda for the General Meeting to be held on 21 June 2006.

4. **AIR AMBULANCE SERVICES** The Council recommends that £180,000 be placed at its disposal for grants of up to £10,000 for general purposes to each operational Air Ambulance Service in England and Wales. Further details of these grants will be reported at a later date.

5. **ASTHMA RESEARCH** The Council wishes to recognise the enormous contribution made to its work by RWBro Raymond J. Lye, PJGW, who retires as President of the Grand Charity, on 26 April 2006. It recommends that in recognition of Bro Lye's

achievements during his eleven years in office, £500,000 should be placed at the disposal of the Council for grants to charities working in the field of asthma research. Full details of the grants made will be reported at the earliest opportunity.

DISASTER RELIEF CHESTS

6. At the Annual General Meeting in March 2006, the Council was given authority to make grants at its discretion from the funds placed in any special Relief Chest set up to support the relief work of a particular disaster. Since then, the Council has made the following grants:

The Hurricane Katrina 2005 Disaster Fund – Relief Chest No E0098

The balance remaining of £6,507.44 to the Masonic Service Association of North America. The Chest has now been closed.

Asian Earthquake 2005 – Relief Chest No E0099

The balance remaining of £45,496.09 to the British Red Cross. The Chest has now been closed.

GENERAL MATTERS

LEGACIES AND BEQUESTS

7. Since the last report, the Grand Charity has received the following legacies of £1,000 or more:

Peter Allen	£26,597
A.E. Manley	£20,000
Mrs Jill A. Harrop	£10,817
Alan Fordham	£5,000
H.W. Guille	£1,000

On behalf of the Grand Charity, the Council expresses its grateful thanks to all those who provide legacies to the Grand Charity.

MASONIC CHARITIES RELOCATION PROJECT

8. The Council has resolved that, subject to certain conditions, relating to specific functions of current administration, the Grand Charity should relocate its office premises into the lower ground floor of Freemasons' Hall, as part of a general relocation of the four Masonic Charities.

GENERAL MEETING

9. The next General Meeting of the Grand Charity will be held at the Harrogate International Centre, Kings Road, Harrogate, North Yorkshire, on Saturday, 16 September 2006. The meeting is open to all Masons and non-Masons. Members are invited to bring wives and other guests. The Provincial Grand Lodges of

the surrounding areas will be sending details to their members over the next few months and the rest of the Craft will receive information nearer the date.

APPENDIX to Report dated 19 April 2006

The Council proposes the following non-Masonic grants, which appear under items 4a. to 4o. of the Agenda for the General Meeting to be held on 21 June 2006 and which are referred to in paragraph 3. of the Council's Report dated 19 April 2006.

DISABILITY

a. **NATIONAL AUTISTIC SOCIETY** The Council recommends a grant of £30,000 to the National Autistic Society to fund the Help! programme of workshops, which provides advice and support for parents whose children receive a late diagnosis of an autistic spectrum disorder. Each workshop covers identification of the spectrum of disorders, strategies for developing communication and social networks, educational issues, managing challenging behaviour and planning for the future.

b. **THE CALVERT TRUST** The Council recommends a grant of £25,000 to The Calvert Trust to fund bursaries to enable disadvantaged disabled people to attend centres run by The Calvert Trust in Keswick, Kielder and Exmoor. The centres provide outdoor activity centres for over 10,000 visitors from age 6 to 90 people with all kinds of disabilities, whether physical, learning or sensory. The visits enable disabled people to find out how much they can do, rather than what they cannot do.

c. **NATIONAL BLIND CHILDREN'S SOCIETY** The Council recommends a grant of £25,000 to the National Blind Children's Society to fund IT equipment for visually impaired children in low-income families. The charity provides fully qualified IT assessors to assess the child at home and at school to identify the right equipment. The equipment is used to enable the children to maintain progress at school.

d. **ROYAL SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF** The Council recommends a grant of £25,000 to the Royal School for the Deaf to fund the cost of equipping a vocational workshop for deaf young people with additional disabilities. The new workshop forms part of a complete modernisation programme at a specialist college for post-16 year olds. It is estimated that 250 young people will benefit each year from the workshop.

VULNERABLE PEOPLE

e. **SAMARITANS** The Council recommends a grant of £85,000 to the Samaritans payable in equal instalments over two years to fund training programmes for the volunteer directors and caller care deputies of local branches. Professional training is provided to all volunteers to enable them to deliver a high quality and consistent service. Every three years each branch appoints a new volunteer as a director. The course content includes governance, financial responsibilities, people management and motivation, and working with the police.

f. **CONTACT THE ELDERLY** The Council recommends a grant of £60,000 to Contact the Elderly payable in equal instalments over three years to fund a central administrator. The charity exists to relieve the acute loneliness of very elderly people who live alone with inadequate or limited social support from family, friends or statutory services. There are 272 social groups across the UK with 4,500 volunteers helping 2,271 elderly people. A new central administration officer will provide an efficient first point of contact for all enquiries and will support the regional development staff.

g. **WELLCHILD** The Council recommends a grant of £45,000 to WellChild to fund a WellChild nurse for home nursing for chronically sick children. NHS community nursing teams do not have sufficient funds to look after children who are living at home but who have chronic and sometimes severe complex illnesses. The new WellChild nurses will provide regular nursing and teach parents how to manage the caring role, including practical help with items such as ventilation or feeding. The work will prevent unnecessary admissions to hospital and help parents to become expert in their children's care.

h. **FOUNDATION FOR THE STUDY OF INFANT DEATHS** The Council recommends a grant of £30,000 to the Foundation for the Study of Infant Deaths payable in equal instalments over two years to support the salary of a helpline adviser. There are still more than 300 cot deaths each year in the UK and a further 200 babies die suddenly from accidents or infections. Some of the work of the helpline is in supporting bereaved parents and also taking calls from parents of new babies, often those who are single parents or who are isolated and have no local network of support. More than 4,000 people benefit from the service.

i. **MAGGIE'S CANCER CENTRES** The Council recommends a grant of £25,000 to Maggie's Cancer Centres to fund a cancer information specialist in Oxford. Maggie's provides practical and emotional support to anyone affected by any type of cancer in centres where people can meet, relax and obtain advice. The Oxford service is currently provided from temporary premises within the oncology outpatients department at the Churchill Hospital. The post is filled by an oncology professional.

j. **MDF BIPOLAR ORGANISATION** The Council recommends a grant of £20,000 to the MDF Bipolar Organisation payable in equal instalments over two years to fund a service to help people with bipolar disorder (manic depression) to find or retain employment. The purpose of the project is to help up to 50 people a month in all aspects of employment, whether helping someone to return to work, to retain employment or to change to new employment.

k. **ACTION ON ELDER ABUSE** The Council recommends a grant of £15,000 to Action on Elder Abuse to fund a training course to help care workers recognise and deal with the mistreatment of older people. The funding will be used to convert an existing training pack on elder abuse so that it can be delivered to care workers who assist older people at home. The training will identify indicators of mistreatment and explain how to deal with problems from and will form part of a course to enable basic grade workers to achieve a vocational qualification in care.

YOUTH OPPORTUNITIES

l. **SKILL FORCE** The Council recommends a grant of £150,000 to Skill Force payable in equal instalments over three years to fund the expansion of its services in the Manchester area. Skill Force uses the skills and experience of former Armed Forces personnel to follow a structured programme with young people aged between 14–16 years old who are struggling with education or at risk of exclusion. Currently 135 schools are implementing the programme and truancy has been reduced by up to 89%. The programme focuses on helping young people to achieve qualifications that employers will recognise.

m. **CLUBS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE** The Council recommends a grant of £50,000 to Clubs for Young People to fund the

development of a national sports programme. The charity helps young people to develop and achieve their potential through a national programme, including sporting, recreational, creative, residential and adventurous events and activities. A new national sports manager will develop targeted sports programmes for use by youth clubs around the country to improve the health and fitness of young people by increasing their level of activity.

MEDICAL RESEARCH

n. **BRAIN RESEARCH TRUST** The Council recommends a grant of £150,000 to the Brain Research Trust payable in equal instalments over three years to fund a research project which will study the diagnosis and treatment of brain tumours at the Institute of Neurology at Queen's Square, London. Each year 4,500 new cases of primary brain tumours are diagnosed in the UK yet little is known about how or why the cancer cells start to grow.

o. **BRITISH BRAIN AND SPINE FOUNDATION** The Council recommends a grant of £40,000 to the British Brain and Spine Foundation to develop a training resource to improve the early recognition and diagnosis of neurological conditions to enable patients to access appropriate treatment as early as possible. 10 million people in the UK are affected by neurological conditions but medical students receive limited training in neurology. The DVD is intended to reach 12,000 health professionals including medical students, nurses and GPs.

END OF REPORT

COMMENT ON THE REPORT

PRESIDENT OF THE GRAND CHARITY: Having taken this report as read, with the exception of paragraphs 3, 4, & 5 and the appendix, which are subject to separate items on the Agenda, I propose that it is adopted and entered in the minutes.

The motion was seconded by the Deputy President,
WBro Adrian R. Chalk, PDepGSwdB,
and was agreed by the members.

APPROVAL OF GRANTS

PRESIDENT OF THE GRAND CHARITY: Agenda item 4 a) to o) [detailed in the Appendix to the Report dated 19 April 2006] seeks the approval of this meeting for fifteen grants totalling £775,000, which are for a variety of causes to fund important work in their respective fields. In accordance with our regulations, I have to propose that initially, the approval of the fifteen grants be taken together, rather than individually.

The motion was seconded by the Deputy President,
WBro Adrian R. Chalk, PDepGSwdB,
and was agreed by the members.

PRESIDENT OF THE GRAND CHARITY: Deputy Grand President and Members – I now move that the fifteen grants set out under Agenda item 4 a) to o) and totalling £775,000, be approved.

The motion was seconded by the Deputy President,
WBro Adrian R. Chalk, PDepGSwdB,
and was agreed by the members.

PRESIDENT OF THE GRAND CHARITY: Few of us can be unaware of the enormous advantages that helicopters play in getting the injured the much needed urgent medical attention they require, when ordinary ambulances are simply not able to. The Air Ambulance services around the UK have become a vital addition to today's hectic lifestyle and the Council recommends that an amount of £180,000 be set aside to provide grants of up to £10,000 for each of the services in England and Wales. I propose that the resolution under Item 5 of the Agenda, be approved.

The motion was seconded by the Deputy President,
WBro Adrian R. Chalk, PDepGSwdB,
and was agreed by the members.

PRESIDENT OF THE GRAND CHARITY: It is an enormous pleasure for me, to propose the Council's recommendation that a grant should be made in recognition of the immediate past President's substantial contribution to the Grand Charity. Raymond Lye has served on the Council of the Grand Charity for all of its past 25 years, and for 11 years, from April 1995, as President. He was even a member, before that, of the Board of Benevolence, out of which the Grand Charity was formally established. The Council is

very happy to accept his suggestion that charities working in the field of asthma research should benefit from the honour we pay to him and accordingly, on behalf of the Council, I propose that the resolution under Item 6 of the Agenda, which is in effect for half a million pounds to be set aside for asthma research, be approved.

The motion was seconded by the Deputy President,
WBro Adrian R. Chalk, PDepGSwdB,
and was agreed by the members.

EMERGENCY GRANTS

PRESIDENT OF THE GRAND CHARITY: Under the Regulations of the Grand Charity, the President has authority to make Emergency Grants for either Masonic or non-Masonic charitable purposes of up to £100,000 each. I had hoped that I would not be called on to use such authority so early on in my tenure, but the tragic events in Java just over three weeks ago, could not be ignored. A grant of £25,000 has therefore been sent to the British Red Cross to aid their relief efforts following the 6.3 magnitude earthquake that struck the Indonesian island and shattered the lives of so many people.

As this is the end of the formal and less interesting part of our meeting, Members, may I thank you for the confidence you have placed in the members of our Council by approving their recommendations.

THE FIRST TWENTY-FIVE YEARS OF THE GRAND CHARITY

PRESIDENT OF THE GRAND CHARITY: When the Grand Charity started in 1981, it combined a long-standing tradition of support for Freemasons and their dependants and community-wide charitable activities, with an ability to be more outward looking. Every year the Grand Charity supports many individuals. In the 3 months to April, there were 449 grants made to Masons and their dependants totalling £646,000. The Grand Charity also supports many non-Masonic national charities, for which grants today have been approved totalling £775,000.

Since 1981, more than £72 million has been dedicated to supporting all of these causes and the Grand Charity has become one of the UK's leading grant making organisations. To explain more of the Grand Charity's history, it is now my pleasure to introduce:

- Andrew Stebbings, who is the President of the Royal Masonic Trust for Girls and Boys, and who we have invited here today to represent his late father, Sir John Stebbings, who was the first President of the Grand Charity;
- Sir John Welch, who was President of the Grand Charity from 1985 to 1995; and
- my immediate predecessor, Raymond Lye, who was President from 1995 until last April.

They will each reflect on the charitable activities of the Grand Charity and share just a few of the events that have taken place during the first 25 years of the Charity's operation.

ANDREW STEBBINGS: I am honoured to stand before you in the shoes of my late father, John Stebbings, the last President of the Board of Benevolence and the first President of the Grand Charity and sadly the only President who has not made it to today's celebration: he would have been 81. In his absence I shall draw on some of his words from an address that he made to the London Grand Rank Association in 1975 after the publication of the Bagnall Report on Masonic Charities.

"We need to pause in life to reflect upon that awful subject of deprivation. I do not only refer to material poverty, which is grim in itself, but also to that gaping abyss of loneliness which descends like a scotch mist over the hills to shroud the lives of so many of the disabled, the elderly and the bereaved".

Freemasonry is a fraternal organization that has both philosophical and social aspects. It is based on three principles—Brotherly love, relief and truth—they are inextricably interwoven and we interpret Brotherly Love and Relief as Charity. At all levels throughout Freemasonry, from the individual Lodge of which a man is a member, to the movement as a whole,

Masons express their commitment to charitable support, both for other Masons and for the wider community.

Charities have been established at the centre of Masonry over the years, each set up to address a specific area of need. First, in 1788, came the origins of today's Royal Masonic Trust for Girls and Boys, of which I am honoured to be the President, the charity that was set up as a school for orphaned girls followed a few years later by an institution for boys. Then in 1850, the Royal Masonic Benevolent Institution was established to offer residential care and advice for older Masons and their wives and in 1920 the Royal Masonic Hospital was founded to provide medical care. These three charities supported all members of the Craft and their dependants in need. To quote again from that address:

“While it was natural that the individual Charities, taking a natural pride in the individual work of their institutions, should defend their independence, a rigid loyalty to the Institutions themselves, without regard to the overall need for progressive thinking and more effective and efficient administration, will render a disservice to the cause of Masonic charity and the Craft. The Bagnall Report changed nothing – except our thinking!”

The Grand Charity was proposed as a central recipient body for Masonic Charity: its primary funding to be capitation fees derived from dues made to Grand Lodge on behalf of every subscribing member of the Craft: to assume the responsibility, then met by the Board of Benevolence of United Grand Lodge, to make financial grants to Masons and their dependants in need. My father's observation in 1975 was: “The evolution of this body will undoubtedly be interesting to observe – it has infinite possibilities, not least the prospect of serving as a central banking and investment charity for any Lodge which does not have its own charity.” We were beginning to open up and the Grand Charity offered the vehicle not only to provide additional support and funding for the existing charities but importantly to make meaningful donations on behalf of the entire Craft to non-Masonic charities, which would be of a scale and significance beyond the ability of individual Lodges. Thus the Grand Charity was conceived and first registered in 1981.

My father died in December 1988 at the age of 64, a victim of cancer, and the Grand Charity made a significant donation to an appeal in his memory for the benefit of the Royal Marsden, which raised a sum of nearly £300,000. By comparison, I stand in his shadow but I hope that working with my fellow Presidents and particularly Raymond Lye, we are on the threshold of delivering that vision from the 1970s for the more effective and efficient administration of the Charities, bringing the charities together in this building. We'll leave the progressive thinking to our successors!

SIR JOHN WELCH, Bt: It was in June 1985 when I first had the privilege of addressing a General Meeting of the Grand Charity and I took that opportunity to pay what was a fitting tribute to my predecessor as President; he was undoubtedly an outstanding President and it is a pleasure for me today to address this meeting after the remarks of Andrew Stebbings, who is himself following in the steps of his illustrious father by playing a leading role in the field of Masonic Charity.

The Grand Charity having been established, the policies were developed for various areas of giving, including the important areas of grants to Masons and their wives, widows and dependants who are in financial need.

As an indication of how this support has developed, in the first year Masonic Relief Grants totalled just over £285,000. By 1989, this total had risen, for the first time, to over £1 million and this figure was doubled to £2 million by 1997. In the most recent year, grants totalled in excess of £2.5 million.

The Grand Charity has now assumed responsibility for all cases of personal financial assistance on a national basis, relieving cases, which would formally have been considered by the Royal Masonic Benevolent Institution. This has enabled the RMBI to concentrate on its core activity of providing residential care to elderly masons and their wives or widows.

Grants to charities outside of Freemasonry have also increased over the years, with one particularly notable project in 1992 when the Grand Charity joined with the Masonic Trust for Girls and Boys to mark the 275th anniversary of the United Grand Lodge of England and the 25th anniversary of the installation of

HRH the Duke of Kent as Grand Master; both very significant milestones. The grants to Cottage and Rural Enterprises (CARE) from the Grand Charity (amounting to £1.25 million) and the RMTGB (£0.5 million) were used to fund the building, and equipping, of a village, or community, for people with learning difficulties at Rowde in Wiltshire. The Grand Master, as Grand President, visited the village in 1994 and unveiled the Foundation Stone, which he had dedicated at Earls Court in 1992.

The Grand Charity also responds to appeals from other Masonic charities and has over the years assisted and supported projects of both national and Provincial Masonic charities. But these applications are not always successful. One particularly troublesome case was an application from the Royal Masonic Hospital which in the early 1990s was experiencing financial difficulties. I was being pressed from various quarters to ensure that substantial grant would be made but, having heard a formal presentation from the Hospital in support of their case and having commissioned a formal Report into the finances of the hospital, the Council decided that the application could not succeed. The Council was, of course, acting as the charity trustees of an independent charity.

Grants had, however, been made to Hospital's Samaritan Fund and later the Grand Charity helped to finance the establishment of the New Masonic Samaritan Fund to provide medical care for Masons and their dependants.

But ladies and gentlemen even difficult cases like the Hospital can have their lighter moments. I remember being summoned to join the then Pro Grand Master, the then Assistant Grand Master and the then Grand Secretary to attend a meeting with the Grand Master at York House to discuss the implications of the Grand Charity's then imminent refusal of the Hospital's application. The Police Constable at the entrance to St James's Palace advanced to us from his sentry box and one of our number said to him: "Lord Cornwallis, Lord Farnham, Commander Higham and Sir John Welch to see HRH The Duke of Kent". The Constable, apparently unimpressed responded: "Wait here", leaving us in no doubt but that we were to do just that. He then trundled back to his sentry box, picked up his 'phone and said to the person at the other end of the line: "Four gents to see the Duke".

RAYMOND LYE: First, I wish to thank the members for their generous approval of the grant proposed under item 6 of the Agenda. A great deal of money is being applied to research of asthma, but I hope that we will find some aspect that will enable an advance to be made. I am particularly interested in the possibilities within gene and stem cell research. Thank you all.

It was indeed an honour for me to succeed Sir John in 1995 after his ten years at the helm and to take on the challenge of leading the Charity onwards from the firm base established by my two predecessors.

As I reflect on the contributions that have been made to the wellbeing of the Grand Charity during my term, I would single out three aspects:

- advances in technology have revolutionized communications, thereby enabling the Grand Charity to be more closely in touch with its members
- the broadening the membership – both of the Grand Charity and of its Council – has ensured that it reflects the priorities of Masons across England and Wales, and
- by the development of partnerships with leading national non-Masonic charities, that enable major projects to assist Masons and non-Masons alike.

Advances in information technology over the past ten years have given us the tools to communicate with the Craft more widely and effectively than ever before. Building on this capability, the Council decided that it was time for the mountain to go to Mohammed and General Meetings of the Grand Charity have been held from throughout the country where members have been encouraged to attend and bring their wives. Local dignitaries have also been invited and information about the Grand Charity's work has reached a wider audience than just the membership. Presentations, or as we named them, Road Shows, have also been held in most Provinces in England, Wales and the Channel Islands over the past three years.

Broadening the membership and enlarging the Council have been priorities during the past decade. The membership has been extended to all Master Masons, since they are all contributors to the Grand Charity. The Council now consists of 30 members, representing Masons across England and Wales – not forgetting the Isle of Man and the Channel Islands. Although this may appear unwieldy, it has the enormous advantage that it provides a continual barometer of the feelings of Masons across the country, whose representatives join together with a positive

“can do” approach. I count myself extremely fortunate to have been their Chairman over the last eleven years.

Against this background of support from the membership, non-Masonic grants have increased – especially for the millennium. Since the creation of the Grand Charity, over £30 million has been donated to charities of the wider community, including annual grants to hospice services – and emergency grants for disaster relief work worldwide.

Partnerships have been developed for longer-term projects with, for example, the Institute of Cancer Research and the Prince’s Trust. The projects supported through these partnerships frequently secure benefits and offer potential outcomes that would not be possible without the security of the long-term commitment that the Grand Charity is able to offer.

The Red Cross is another long-term partner with which the Grand Charity works to provide emergency grants in the wake of natural disasters worldwide. Since 1981, emergency grants have exceeded £1.5 million and the Grand Charity is frequently amongst the first to respond to the Red Cross appeals for support. By the unique authority for emergency grants, the President is able to provide immediate financial help at the time of the crisis. As an example, in the wake of the tsunami that devastated large parts of South Asia, I authorized an emergency grant to the Red Cross on Boxing Day, in the evening of the disaster, which was with the Red Cross on the following day. That evening, Laura Chapman suggested that a Relief Chest be opened, into which members of the Craft could channel their personal donations. Over the ensuing weeks, this fund exceeded £860,000, an amount that placed a major responsibility on the Council for its allocation.

It was decided to focus support on the victims of the tsunami who were orphans, other children and single parent families. After a careful review of the possible agencies, it was decided to work with Plan UK, to help fund their efforts in the area. The total of various funds provided by Masons for the relief of victims of the tsunami – and delivered through the Grand Charity – is almost £1 million.

Sad as that event was, the response by Freemasons and the application by the Charity to channel these funds into the relief effort, has been a considerable achievement, harnessing the charitable instincts of Freemasons. It is one of which the members of the Bagnall Committee, which recommended the formation of the Charity, and its first President, Andrew Stebbings' father, would have been justly proud.

GRAND CHARITY FESTIVALS

PRESIDENT OF THE GRAND CHARITY: We have just heard a few examples of how the support of the Grand Charity makes a difference to individual lives and the work of hundreds of different charities each and every year, at home and abroad. It should be remembered that none of this would be possible without the support of Freemasons and their families. Every penny used in our grant making activities comes from Freemasons, mainly through the annual contributions made by individual Masons through their Lodge Subscriptions and, more particularly, the major fundraising Festivals held each year in one of the 47 Provinces in England and Wales.

Since 1986, these Festivals have raised over £34 million to support the work of the Grand Charity and we are extremely grateful to all of the Provincial Grand Lodges that have hosted a Festival. Representatives of many of these Provinces have joined us today, including 11 Provincial Grand Masters and I ask you to join with me in showing your appreciation to them all for their hard work and support for the Grand Charity.

The Provincial Grand Lodge of Bristol held the first Grand Charity Festival in 1986. Since then they have been in:

- 1987 Northumberland
- 1988 Derbyshire
- 1989 Oxfordshire
- 1990 Staffordshire
- 1991 Monmouthshire
- 1992 Gloucestershire
- 1993 Wiltshire
- 1994 Devonshire
- 1995 Yorkshire, North & East Ridings
- 1996 Yorkshire, West Riding
- 1997 Cumberland & Westmorland
- 1998 Middlesex
- 1999 Buckinghamshire
- 2000 Worcestershire
- 2001 Leicestershire & Rutland
- 2002 Northamptonshire & Huntingdonshire
- 2003 Dorset
- 2004 East Lancashire

2005 Wiltshire

and 2006, North Wales, which a few days ago announced an outstanding Festival total of just over £2.3 million. I would like to take this opportunity, on behalf of the Grand Charity, to once again extend our gratitude. I am delighted that the Provincial Grand Master for North Wales, RWBro Gareth Lloyd-Jones, is with us today.

Before I move on, it would be remiss of me not to take this opportunity to also refer to the Provinces that will be supporting us over the forthcoming years as listed in the 25th anniversary leaflet. Thank you to them for the hard work they are currently undertaking.

THE FUTURE

PRESIDENT OF THE GRAND CHARITY: Looking to the future of the Grand Charity, the forthcoming year will see a continuation of the moves to strengthen co-operation between the four Central Masonic Charities, including the co-location into Freemasons' Hall. This will provide a greater use of some parts of this wonderful building, release properties that other Charities currently have and bring greater cohesion between the workings of the four central Charities. This is all for the benefit of the Craft and our beneficiaries, both Masonic and non-Masonic.

As President, I look forward to guiding the Grand Charity, with the assistance of your Council and our staff under the excellent leadership of Laura Chapman, the Chief Executive, and to continue this success during the forthcoming years.

With your permission Deputy Grand President, I would now like to ask Laura Chapman, the Chief Executive of the Grand Charity, if she would introduce our special guest speakers.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE (LAURA CHAPMAN): Deputy Grand President, Madam Mayor, ladies, gentlemen and members. I would like to add my personal welcome to all of you who have joined us this evening to celebrate 25 years of Grand Charity support. My own association with Freemasonry is very recent and I have been truly amazed to discover just how important the commitment to

charitable support is—both for other Masons who are in need and for charities serving the wider community.

I would like to speak for a few minutes about the latter—the Grand Charity's grants to non-Masonic charities. You have heard from the President and the past Presidents of the scale of the Grand Charity's support—some £30 million has been donated to non-Masonic charities over the past 25 years. The Grand Charity seeks to achieve four objectives:

- To make a significant difference to people who are in real need.
- To support issues that individual Freemasons and their families are concerned about and will be glad to be helping.
- To maximise the impact we achieve.
- And finally, to gain opportunities to raise public awareness about Freemasons' charitable support.

During the year to 30 November 2005, grants were made to 324 charities, totalling over £2.1 million. There are five areas that we support:

- Medical research
- Vulnerable people
- Youth opportunities
- Hospices
- Emergency relief work

Our speakers today represent two of these: hospice support and emergency relief work. These two areas are very popular with our members and often complement donations that individual Lodges make either to their local hospices or for relief efforts following a disaster. The programme of hospice support began in 1984 and, to date, the Grand Charity has given nearly £6 million to individual hospices to help fund their annual running costs.

The first major emergency grant of £25,000 was made in 1982 to the South Atlantic Fund, set up by the Ministry of Defence as a result of the Falklands War.

The first of our speakers this evening, Bruno Oudmayer, the Director of Plan International India, has led Plan's relief efforts for tsunami victims there. As Raymond Lye mentioned earlier this evening, following the disaster on Boxing Day 2004, the Grand Charity opened a Relief Chest to receive donations from members who wished their contributions for the relief work to be made through a central Masonic source. The generosity of Masons under the United Grand Lodge of England for this fund has been overwhelming and the Relief Chest has received more than £860,000. The Council of the Grand Charity recognised the significant responsibility that it carried to ensure that the Craft's donations were used to the best of purposes.

After interviewing a number of international charities in London and an on-site visit to India, the Council decided that Plan was the right partner for us. As I am sure Bruno will elaborate, Plan is an international development charity whose mission is to achieve lasting improvements in the quality of life of deprived children. Already working in India, Sri Lanka and Indonesia, Plan was well placed to provide immediate relief for the tsunami victims and to participate in the longer-term redevelopment work.

A year down the road, the Grand Charity knows that its trust has not been misplaced and Plan is delivering impressive results, whilst ensuring that safeguards are in place to prevent corruption and mismanagement at the local level. As I mentioned at the Grand Charity meeting in March soon after returning from a monitoring visit to India, any Programme Director who has decided that the fishing boats given to replace those destroyed by the tsunami should be owned by the women of the village must be a very wise man.

Bruno Oudmayer was born and educated in the Netherlands and, after an international career in technical and management positions with several multi-national companies, joined Plan as Country Director of Haiti in 2000. He became the Country Director of India in 2003. When I first met Bruno on our initial due-diligence visit, I was amazed by the depth of his knowledge of Indian social and economic life and his understanding of development issues. You can imagine my delight when he agreed to speak at our meeting tonight, because I know that you will have no better account of tsunami relief efforts. And, like

me, you will have no doubt that the Grand Charity's money is in very safe and competent hands. Ladies and gentlemen, Bruno Oudmayer.

BRUNO OUDMAYER: I am tremendously happy to have been given the opportunity to stand here to tell you a little bit about what we have done since the tsunami happened. Plan International works with children and for children. It has no religious or political ties and is only interested in making sure that children can fulfil their potential. We do lots of different things and after the tsunami we immediately sprang into action in Indonesia, Sri Lanka, Thailand and India. It will be too much for me to explain what Plan is doing in all these countries, so I will limit myself to India, which is where I am working at the moment. About ten days after the tsunami hit, I visited the area and the impression I had of the devastated area was incredible. It was a surreal experience. A war zone of devastation. Everything broken and not a single house standing. Large fishing boats that had been thrown two or three hundred metres inland.

Talking to people, they told me how three tremendous waves had hit the coast and how the third had hit those who had gone back to the beach to help those affected by the first two. In India itself, about 15,000 people lost their lives. In the villages where we work with the Grand Charity's support, there are about 12,000 affected. Many have lost loved-ones, their livelihood and many have lost all their possessions. So we have identified a period of three years over which we will rehabilitate the villages.

We focused first on the children and brought in milk, vitamins and biscuits. The next most important part is temporary shelters and getting people their livelihoods back, because that's the moment they can start looking after themselves again. Without that, they have nothing to fall back on. Livelihoods in a coastal zone obviously require fishing materials, boats, engines and nets, but one of the things we tried to do was bring a bit more equality to the lives of people in this part of India. Whereas in the past there would have been just the one owner of a boat, who would have three or four people working for him, we decided that, through the village committees that already existed, we would provide one boat with five co-owners. We also had to make sure that the boat was registered and insured. One of the biggest problems was identifying the beneficiaries of

this programme, because there were no records. It took us about four or five months to get that done and by the end of summer last year, people had boats again and started fishing again.

It was not only the fishermen who were affected, it was also the people in what we call the second-line villages, that are just behind and where there are the agricultural labourers. They don't have a lot and the salt water had inundated their lands, so we helped them clear up. It took about four or five months for them to grow their first crops again, but it will take them about two years before the crops are of a quality that will bring in the cash that it did before.

There are other ways that we can help the people as well. We can bring vocational training to the villages and we do that so that people don't have to go back to fishing if they don't want to. You can imagine lots of children who have seen this experience and who are traumatised by it and they have absolutely no intention to follow their fathers into fishing.

We bring in others ways to provide for the livelihood of people as well. The next phase is to help build houses, which takes a lot more time. We ask the women and children to tell us what they think is necessary in the layout of their villages, because many will have to be removed from where they were, close to the coast, to about 500 metres inland. It is a fantastic opportunity for the whole community to say what it should look like. One of the most important things in the communities will be the childcare centres. One of the first things we did when the tsunami hit was to make sure that parents had a place to bring their children. One of our biggest concerns was child protection, because after the tsunami there were children with no parents, with nowhere to go, who were traumatised and we had to make sure they had a place to go. Parents could leave their children there, knowing that they were safe and would be fed, so that they could go and help others by clearing rubbish and making sure that life continued. These child care centres have been continuing throughout and have taken on a role of not only child care but of tuition, because we have to make sure that children who have missed school classes for a couple of weeks, in some cases longer, don't fall behind. So in the evenings, the child care centres became tuition centres.

Plan International cannot stay there forever, so the biggest challenge is the last phase. Hopefully, by the end of June we will have finished the housing phase so we must then look at the consolidation phase. We have put in so much, by the time we have finished our job and rehabilitated the people and put them back on their boats, we have to make sure that what we have done will stay there. That's what we will be doing for the next year to year and a half and hopefully by the end of 2007, we will be looking at ten villages where life is actually better than it was before the tsunami. Children now have more opportunities to fulfil their potential, whether it is in fishing, if they want that, or whether it is in other things. Women have more livelihood opportunities and the best thing of all is that after we leave, those opportunities will remain there.

We are tremendously grateful to the Grand Charity for its support. We wouldn't be able to do what we are doing without donor organisations and charity organisations like yours and I am also tremendously thankful for having had the opportunity to talk to you and to explain at least a little bit of the sort of thing we are doing.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE: Our next speaker, Martyn Lewis, *CBE*, really doesn't need any introduction. I am sure that you all recognise him as the world famous news presenter and TV journalist. But few of you will probably realise the depth and scale of his commitment to community support. He is the Chairman and founder of YouthNet UK and Chairman of the Beacon Fellowship Trust. He has been very actively involved with the hospice movement for more than 20 years and is a Vice-President of the three major national hospice charities: Help the Hospices, Marie Curie Cancer Care and Macmillan Cancer Relief. He is also the author of *Tears and Smiles—The Hospice Handbook*. We are deeply honoured that he joins us this evening to talk about his experiences of the hospice movement. Ladies and gentlemen, please welcome Martyn Lewis.

MARTYN LEWIS: It is some years since I stood on this very spot to help with the launch of the RMTGB's magnificent *Lifelites* project, which provides vital IT equipment to Children's Hospices right across the country and which I was just told earlier has become a charity in its own right. At the time I recalled that the Grand

Charity gave its first grants to hospices in 1984, the year that saw the formation of Help the Hospices, a charity to act as a voice for the independent hospices and which has offered help of a kind, which is not always available through the other hospice charities. Having been involved with Help the Hospices right from the beginning, I am extremely proud to be representing them and the other hospice charities here tonight. Over the last quarter of a century you have found a magnificent £6 million for well over 250 hospice services right across our country with last year's donations alone topping half a million pounds with, I gather, another half a million pounds already on the way this year. That's really not surprising when you think Masonic support of Hospices dates back to 1894, when many Lodges donated money to support the new concept that was Trinity Hospice here in Clapham, London. So I know how vital a part the Masons have played in the development of the British Hospice movement. A movement that envelops patients and their families and friends in a five-star, Rolls Royce cocoon of care, which I have long believed to be among the very best which our country has to offer.

I was sharing a hospice platform the other day with the Bishop of Truro and he told a wonderful story about a friend of his who was a statistician who was asked to investigate what was the most dangerous moment of our lives. He did all his research, he looked at different forms of travel, he looked at different illnesses and he came up with the conclusion, which those doctors amongst you will know is absolutely 100% accurate, that the first two minutes of your life are the most dangerous – after that you are on a roll. He was asked to give a lecture about his conclusions and while he was racking his brains wondering what to call the lecture, a friend said: “Why don't you make the title, your conclusion”. So posters went up around the University where he studied, showing: *Lecture, Friday, 7.30pm. Subject: The first two minutes of your life are the most dangerous.*

One of the posters had only be up for about 15 minutes or so, before some wag had scribbled across the bottom – *Yes, and the last two are pretty hairy as well.*

Now the Bishop told that story to a hospice audience. There are some people who might think that you shouldn't tell that sort of story to a hospice audience, but it illustrates perfectly the fact

that the sound you hear most often in a hospice is laughter. We have moved light years away from the old concept of the hospice being the big building up on the hill, behind the trees, where people go to die and you walk past speaking in whispers and on tip-toe. Hospices are now the most incredible five-star luxury places that even have nice little touches like the drinks trolley that comes round at meal time, which makes people feel that they are at home and in a cocoon of care. They are places of love, of warmth, of friendship and of understanding possibly as great as any that the patients have ever known. Where care isn't just a job to the people who actually give it, but is almost a way of life.

One in every three of us will develop some form of cancer at some stage in our lives and one in every four of us will die of it. The cure rate is improving all the time – with a few of the 200 different types of cancer it can be as high as 98%. But despite the research, the advances and the breakthroughs, we are still left with cancer claiming the lives of 150,000 people a year in Britain alone – that is the equivalent of a heavily laden jumbo jet crashing every single day of the year.

But – and it is an absolutely vital ‘but’ – there are many people who live with cancer as well – or live with another kind of life-threatening illness. Britain's hospices – 190 of them, independent charities in their own right – are there to offer care when cure seems impossible. They use the very latest drugs and skills to banish your pain – to make sure that you have every opportunity to really live right up to the very moment that you die – proving that life is for living even when there seems all too little of it left. And they do it for you whatever your religion – or even if you have no religion at all. There isn't a single person who can guarantee that they won't walk into the doctor's surgery next week, or next month or next year, to be told they – or someone they love – has cancer or some other life-threatening illness. So helping to build up and maintain your local hospice services is, if you like, a form of insurance policy – to make sure that the right kind of care, and the right quality of care, is there for that totally unexpected moment when you need it most. We all owe that to ourselves and to our families and friends.

I have long believed that the decision to bring the gift of a hospice service to an area taps, from the very start, a spring – a fountain – of goodness that enriches that community in a way that spreads out far beyond the main purpose of caring for the patients themselves. It brings together men and women of goodwill in a way that is at the very heart of the best ideals of caring and commitment – of helping others. And you – through your Grand Charity, and through the additional support of many Provincial and individual Masonic Lodges – have more than played your part in building and maintaining this liferaft of hospice services.

Yes, there is some help from the government – at the moment averaging around 33% of funding needs. And it only in the last few weeks, some 30 years after the founding of the first Children’s Hospice in the world – Helen House in Oxford –the government has agreed to earmark a £28 million contribution towards their running costs. The rest comes from the community – it comes from people like you. You will be proud to tell your children that the hospice is there because you were there when you were needed most.

You help many causes – and that is only right. But for me, in my book – amongst all the charitable works carried out in this country today – amongst all the images from distant parts of the world that flood from the television to tug at our heart-strings, our consciences and our wallets – there is no cause finer than building up and running your own bank of hospice services – helping, week by week, people whose own personal difficulty or disaster doesn't command any dramatic headlines, whose plight doesn't have the attention-grabbing, towering, catalytic effect of a hurricane, a flood or a famine, because their experiences are individual ones – each very personal, very intimate and very different. And the quality of help that the hospice movement brings them is, as we know, on that same personal, intimate, different level. There is no shouting from a great height – that is not the hospice movement's way. Instead, you get this steady drip-feed of dedication – quiet and highly effective in a way that other areas of health care openly envy, and which many are seeking increasingly to copy.

Helping the hospice movement, as you do, is everyone's opportunity to remember those people whose last days were enriched immeasurably by being enveloped in the unique world

of caring that is the hospice way – and it is also an opportunity to help countless more families who do not yet even begin to suspect that one day they too will need to call on this very special hospice world.

On behalf of hospice patients, their families and friends – past, present and I know future – I congratulate you on the Grand Charity’s 25th anniversary and thank you from the bottom of my heart for all that you do for the hospice movement in so many different ways.

DEPUTY GRAND PRESIDENT: Members, on your behalf, I’d like to thank both our speakers for those fascinating insights into the wonderful work that their charities do. It’s always good for us, as members of the Grand Charity who give money freely, to know that our money is being well spent on people who really need it. Thank you both very much for coming.

CLOSING ADDRESS

DEPUTY GRAND PRESIDENT: Madam Mayor, ladies, gentlemen and Brethren. That concludes the formal part of our meeting and I hope you have enjoyed hearing about the work of the Grand Charity over the past twenty-five years. You have also heard a little about some of the other major Masonic charities that freemasons support in England and Wales. I should perhaps point out that Masons support many causes in their local communities, which we never get to hear about at the centre, and I am talking about many millions of pounds every year. I think by now you will have heard enough about charity so I will wind up this meeting by saying something about Freemasonry itself. So much rubbish is written in the press about the organisation and every story has an unpleasant twist - in fact several editors have told me, over lunch in this building, that an article about Masonry is not newsworthy unless it has a sting in the tail.

Be that as it may, Freemasonry today is very different to what it was even twenty-five years ago. We now practise a policy of openness about what we do and why we do it and a lot of effort goes into trying to get our members to talk about their Masonry with anyone who is genuinely interested. We are the oldest fraternity in existence having been formalised in 1717 when the first Grand Lodge in the world was created by four Lodges meeting at the Goose and Gridiron Public House at St Paul's Churchyard. Three of them still continue to meet regularly, although I am pleased to say, no longer in St Paul's Churchyard. If you ask a non-Mason what they know about Masonry they will probably mention the word charity and you have heard the reason for that today. What is less known about Freemasonry is its quality of tolerance. We accept all men regardless of their age, colour, status, nationality, or religious or political persuasion. In any one of our Lodges you will find men of many different faiths and with varied backgrounds and lifestyles. All we care about is that our members believe in God, want to better themselves and be of more service to their fellow beings. Harmony prevails in our Lodges probably helped by the fact that all discussions of a religious and political nature are banned. It is often said that Freemasonry breaks down the barriers, which keep men apart, and as someone who travels extensively visiting Brethren in Lodges all over the world I can certainly vouch for

that statement. Freemasonry has no dogma or doctrine and encourages its members to follow whatever religion they belong to. We hope that by helping the individual to become a better, wiser person, it will inevitably help society as a whole. Although we only allow men into our form of Masonry there are about 50,000 lady Masons in England and Wales in a parallel Order, who practise their Masonry in exactly the same way as we do.

There are only three ceremonies apart from the installation of a new Master each year. These are much the same wherever you find it in the world. The first deals with morality and the need to have good ethical standards of behaviour. It also emphasises the need to be in control of one's emotions. The second explains the importance of educating one's intellect so as to become a more useful member of society. The third deals with the importance of trust and integrity. As you have heard earlier the three main principles on which the Order was founded are Brotherly Love, Relief and Truth, which in layman's language could be described as deep abiding friendships, compassion and integrity. Freemasons throughout the ages have been persecuted and many have lost their lives because of their membership. The effect of Hitler's determination to exterminate Jews and Freemasons during the Second World War drove us underground and we became obsessively secret about ourselves. That has now changed and with our new ethos of openness we hope to be able to change any misguided perceptions, and show those who are not Masons the good things that Freemasonry stands for. I hope this brief explanation will help correct any misunderstandings you may have had and encourage some of you to want to know more about us and the work we do. There are many of us here who would be only too happy to help you.

Ladies, gentlemen and Brethren. I thank you all for attending today and there being no further business, I declare this meeting closed.

END

The Grand Charity General Meeting will be held at

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