

THE FREEMASONS' GRAND CHARITY

60 Great Queen Street London WC2B 5AZ
Registered Charity No 281942

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

8 September 2008

Dear Sir and Brother

NOTICE OF MEETING

A General Meeting of The Freemasons' Grand Charity will be held on **Saturday, 27 September 2008, at 11.00 am** at the **Bournemouth International Centre (BIC)**. Members of the Charity (i.e. Master Masons who are subscribing members of London and Provincial Lodges, plus all other Brethren eligible to attend Grand Lodge) and their partners or other non-Masonic guests are welcome to attend. Everyone must be seated by 10.50 am.

The Vice Grand President, the Rt Hon Lord Lane of Horsell, will chair the meeting, which has been organised with the support of the Provincial Grand Lodge of Hampshire and Isle of Wight. A buffet lunch will be served afterwards to those who have previously purchased tickets via the Province's website: www.hants-iow-mason.org

The agenda, report of the Council and minutes of the last General Meeting, are contained in this booklet.

Yours faithfully and fraternally

RICHARD CAMM-JONES
Secretary of the Grand Charity

DRESS
Lounge suits - No regalia

GENERAL MEETING THE FREEMASONS' GRAND CHARITY

Saturday, 27 September 2008

AGENDA

1. Welcome by the Vice Grand President of The Grand Charity, the Rt Hon Lord Lane of Horsell.
2. Minutes of the General Meeting held on 5 June 2008 at Freemasons' Hall, London, for confirmation (see page 13).
3. Presentation of cheque to the **Royal National Lifeboat Institution**.
A grant of £72,000, payable over three years, to the **Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI)** to fund an introductory D Class Crew Training Course, was approved at the last General Meeting. A presentation on behalf of The Freemasons' Grand Charity will be made to the RNLI (which will be represented by David Brann, the Fundraising and Communications Director) jointly by RWBro Brian C. Bellinger, Provincial Grand Master for Hampshire and Isle of Wight, and by WBro Richard Merritt, PGSwdB, Deputy Provincial Grand Master in charge of Dorset.
4. To receive the Report of the Council dated 16 July 2008. The Report is contained on pages 11 and 12. It includes recommendations for several non-Masonic charitable grants, which are set out in detail in the Schedule of Non-Masonic Grants on pages 7 to 10, and which should be considered as part of the Report. These recommendations require the approval, under item 6. below, of the Members of The Freemasons' Grand Charity at this General Meeting, before the money can be given.
5. The Chief Executive, Laura Chapman, to explain the Charity's grant-giving activities and policies.

6. To seek approval for the following grants (which are set out in more detail in the Schedule of Non-Masonic Grants referred to above) to be made:

MEDICAL RESEARCH

- a. £1,000,000 to **Ovarian Cancer Action** in five equal annual instalments to fund research relating to the treatment of ovarian cancer and a programme to raise awareness of the illness amongst women.
- b. £82,700 to **Deafness Research UK** in two equal annual instalments for research into growing fibrocyte cells to replace defective cells in age-related hearing loss.

YOUTH OPPORTUNITIES

- c. £500,000 to the **Scout Association** in five equal annual instalments towards its KidsOutdoors Campaign.
- d. £25,000 to **The Who Cares? Trust** to fund the *Choice Matters* interactive CD project for foster carers and residential care staff.
- e. £15,600 to **Raleigh International** to fund Youth Agency Partnerships to work with charities.
- f. £15,000 to **Reach Volunteering** to fund support for organisations working with young people.

VULNERABLE PEOPLE

- g. £50,000 to the **National Autistic Society** to fund advocacy for Education service.
- h. £40,000 to **Whizz-Kidz** to fund a Head Therapist.
- i. £30,000 to **The Elizabeth Foundation** to fund the building of a Home Learning and Support Suite to support and train deaf babies and pre-school children.
- j. £26,700 to **Children: Our Ultimate Investment (UK)** to fund the Teens and Toddlers programme, which addresses teenage pregnancy.

- k. £25,000 to the **Treloar Trust** to fund a visual impairment adviser for children with severe and multiple physical disabilities.
 - l. £15,000 to **Elizabeth Fitzroy Support** to fund salary of a coordinator for supported volunteering in the community.
 - m. £15,000 to **Counsel & Care** towards the cost of an advice worker.
 - n. £10,000 to **The Bruce Trust** Provides canal boat holidays for disabled people. Grant towards the cost of a new boat.
 - o. £10,000 to the **Cued Speech Association UK** towards the cost of spreading information on improved communication through the Information Plus Project.
 - p. £8,000 to the **Royal Blind Society** to fund holidays for 80 blind and physically disabled children.
 - q. £5,000 to the **St John Ambulance and Rescue Service** in Guernsey.
- 7. To consider a resolution that a total of £400,000 be placed at the disposal of the Council for grants to appropriate charities that are associated with MWBro HRH The Duke of Kent, KG, in commemoration of his 40 years as Grand Master of the United Grand Lodge of England.
 - 8. To report **Emergency Grants** made since the last meeting.
 - 9. To receive a report on the work of the Masonic Relief Grants Committee from its Chairman, WBro Dr Kenneth C. Harvey, PAGDC.
 - 10. Guest speakers:-
 - a. Paul Arengo-Jones, CVO
Chief Executive of the Breast Cancer Haven
 - b. Shirley Metherell
Chief Executive of the Elizabeth Foundation

11. An address by RWBro Brian C. Bellinger, Provincial Grand Master for Hampshire and Isle of Wight.
12. Talk by Bryn Parry, Chief Executive of Help for Heroes.
13. Closing address by the Vice Grand President of The Grand Charity, RWBro the Rt Hon Lord Lane of Horsell, PSGW.

END OF MEETING

LUNCH for ticket holders only

Following the meeting, a buffet lunch will be served to those who have previously purchased tickets via the website of the Provincial Grand Lodge of Hampshire and Isle of Wight

www.hants-iow-mason.org

RNLI TRAINING EXERCISE A search and rescue demonstration

At 1.30 pm, there will be a rare opportunity to see the Royal National Lifeboat Institution's lifesaving crew in action with a Coastguard helicopter (subject to operational requirements).

This will last for about half an hour and will take place off Bournemouth Pier, which opposite the Bournemouth International Centre (BIC).

SCHEDULE OF NON-MASONIC GRANTS

The Council proposes the following non-Masonic grants, which appear under items 6a. to 6q. of the Agenda for the General Meeting to be held on Saturday, 27 September 2008, and which are referred to in paragraph 3. of the Council's Report dated 16 July 2008.

The paragraphs are numbered to match those shown in the Agenda.

MEDICAL RESEARCH

6a. **OVARIAN CANCER ACTION** The Council recommends a grant of £1,000,000 payable in equal instalments over five years to Ovarian Cancer Action to fund research relating to the treatment of ovarian cancer and a programme to raise awareness of the illness amongst women. Ovarian cancer is the fourth most common cancer in women and each year some 7,000 women are diagnosed with the disease.

6b. **DEAFNESS RESEARCH UK** The Council recommends a grant of £82,700 to Deafness Research UK payable in equal instalments over two years to fund research into the transplantation of fibrocyte cells to combat age-related hearing loss. The research is a continuation of a successful pilot project funded by The Freemasons' Grand Charity in September 2006.

YOUTH OPPORTUNITIES

6c. **THE SCOUT ASSOCIATION** The Council recommends a grant of £500,000 payable in equal instalments over five years to The Scout Association as a contribution towards its KidsOutdoors Campaign. The grant will help improve opportunities for young people from all backgrounds to access the physical, social and emotional benefits of outdoors activities and help to develop scouting across the country.

6d. **THE WHO CARES? TRUST** The Council recommends a grant of £25,000 to The Who Cares? Trust to fund the *Choice Matters* interactive CD project. The Choice Matters project aims to facilitate foster carers and residential care staff to enable children and young people to develop decision making skills, in order that they can make informed choices.

6e. **RALEIGH INTERNATIONAL** The Council recommends a grant of £15,600 to Raleigh International to support the youth agency partnerships programme working with other youth opportunities charities to enable disadvantaged young people to take up volunteering opportunities and achieve personal and life skills development.

6f. REACH VOLUNTEERING The Council recommends a grant of £15,000 to Reach Volunteering to fund support for organisations working with young people. The Youth Programme will promote and provide tailored support to help improve operational effectiveness, strengthen governance and achieve greater sustainability, creating greater benefit to the young people and the communities with which they work.

VULNERABLE PEOPLE

6g. NATIONAL AUTISTIC SOCIETY The Council recommends a grant of £50,000 to the National Autistic Society to support the Advocacy for Education service. The service enables parents to understand both their own and their children's rights and obtain the most appropriate educational provision for their children. An estimated 520,000 people in England and Wales, 130,000 of whom are aged between 0-19, have an autism spectrum disorder.

6h. WHIZZ-KIDZ The Council recommends a grant of £40,000 to Whizz-Kidz to cover the salary of a Head Therapist. Whizz-Kidz's mobility therapists work with disabled children and young people to enable them to get the most out of their mobility equipment and help them to take part in activities to which they would not otherwise have access.

6i. THE ELIZABETH FOUNDATION The Council recommends a grant of £30,000 to the Elizabeth Foundation as a contribution towards the building and development of a National Home Learning Programme and Demonstration Home for parents with newly diagnosed deaf babies and pre-school children. The Elizabeth Foundation supports infants and pre-school aged children with hearing loss and their families, by providing help, support and encouragement.

6j. CHILDREN: OUR ULTIMATE INVESTMENT (UK) The Council recommends a grant of £26,700 to Children: Our Ultimate Investment (UK) to fund the Teens and Toddlers programme. The innovative programme significantly reduces the occurrence of pregnancies amongst participating teenagers and is founded on creating an environment where at risk teenagers, both male and female, can experience first hand the demands of parent – child relationships and understand the implications for their future life of becoming a parent.

6k. TRELOAR TRUST The Council recommends a grant of £25,000 to the Treloar Trust to cover the salary of a visual impairment adviser. Treloar Trust provides education, care, therapy, medical support and independence training to young people with physical disabilities. The visual impairment adviser works as part of a multi-disciplinary team to ensure that all aspects of a student's learning and care are addressed, increasing independence, confidence and academic success.

6l. ELIZABETH FITZROY SUPPORT The Council recommends a grant of £15,000 to Elizabeth FitzRoy Support towards the salary of a coordinator for supported volunteering in the community. Elizabeth FitzRoy Support provides practical support for adults with learning disabilities. The supported volunteering initiative enables service users to become volunteers, fostering integration into local communities and helping people to be more independent, confident and to learn new skills.

6m. COUNSEL & CARE The Council recommends a grant of £15,000 to Counsel & Care to cover the cost of an advice worker to provide information, advice and emotional support to vulnerable older people and their carers in the UK. The advice team deals with more than 2,500 enquiries every year answering many complex queries on community care issues faced by many older people and their carers.

6n. THE BRUCE TRUST The Council recommends a grant of £10 000 to the Bruce Trust towards the costs of a new canal boat. The Bruce Trust provides purpose-built, wide-beam canal boats for disabled, disadvantaged or elderly people and their carers, enabling them to enjoy a holiday.

6o. CUED SPEECH ASSOCIATION UK The Council recommends a grant of £10,000 to the Cued Speech Association UK to fund the Information Plus Project. Cued Speech is a simple system of manual cues, which clarify lip reading. The Information Plus Project will disseminate information about cued speech and how it can be used, helping about 1,000 deaf children and 30 deaf adults to improve their literacy and communication skills.

6p. ROYAL BLIND SOCIETY The Council recommends a grant of £8,000 to the Royal Blind Society towards the cost of holidays at specially adapted hotels for blind and physically disabled children. The holidays provide a rare opportunity to be in an environment away from home, alongside other young people; this can help to give greater independence, encourage self-esteem and confidence and assist social and communication skills.

6q. ST JOHN AMBULANCE AND RESCUE SERVICE The Council recommends a grant of £5,000 to the St John Ambulance and Rescue Service in Guernsey.

END OF SCHEDULE OF NON-MASONIC GRANTS

REPORT OF THE COUNCIL

following its meeting held on 16 July 2008

FOR THE GENERAL MEETING

to be held on

Saturday, 27 September 2008

GENERAL

1. NEW MEMBER OF THE COUNCIL

The Grand President has appointed WBro Dr Kevin R. Williams, PAGPurs, 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
22 May 2008	98	£178,005
18 June 2008	135	£253,982
16 July 2008	133	£236,355

NON-MASONIC GRANTS

3. The Council proposes the non-Masonic grants set out in the Schedule of Non-Masonic Grants [on pages 7 to 10] and which appear under items 6a. to 6q. of the Agenda for the General Meeting to be held on Saturday, 27 September 2008.

4. The Council proposes that a total of £400,000 should be made available for grants to organisations to be chosen by the Grand President, MWBro HRH The Duke of Kent, KG, to commemorate his 40th anniversary as Grand Master. These would be charities with which the Grand President is associated and that meet the guideline policy requirements of the Council of the Grand Charity. Item 7 of the Agenda for the General Meeting to be held on Saturday, 27 September 2008 is a resolution to put this into effect.

GENERAL MATTERS

LEGACIES AND BEQUESTS

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

Douglas Gill Simpson	£6,107.88
Mrs Mary Payne	£3,234.42

The Council has also been notified of a substantial legacy from the estate of the late Bro Robert Millman. Further details would be available at a later date. On behalf of the members of The Freemasons' Grand Charity, the Council expresses its grateful thanks to all those who consider the Charity in their Will.

HEREFORDSHIRE, FESTIVAL - 2008

6. The Festival held for The Grand Charity by the Provincial Grand Lodge of Herefordshire on Monday, 23 June 2008 at the Three Counties Hotel, Hereford, raised £583,679.74. Of this total, over £322,000 came from the 14 Lodges within the Province. The Council is most grateful to RWBro Rodney C. Smallwood, Provincial Grand Master for Herefordshire, and the members of his Province for this magnificent achievement.

HERTFORDSHIRE, FESTIVAL - 2009

7. The 24th Annual Festival to be held on behalf of The Grand Charity will take place on Saturday, 13 June 2009, at the New Connaught Rooms, London, under the Presidency of the Provincial Grand Master for Hertfordshire. Details of the arrangements may be obtained from the Provincial Grand Secretary.

GRAHAME N. ELLIOTT
President
16 July 2008

THE FREEMASONS' GRAND CHARITY

60 Great Queen Street London WC2B 5AZ
Registered Charity No 281942

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL MEETING

HELD AT FREEMASONS' HALL, GREAT QUEEN STREET, LONDON, WC2B 5AZ
ON THURSDAY, 5 JUNE 2008 UNDER THE
CHAIRMANSHIP OF THE DEPUTY GRAND PRESIDENT

As well as officers and members of The Grand Charity, 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, ladies, gentlemen and Members. On behalf of the members of the Council of the Grand Charity, I welcome you to this General Meeting, particularly those of you for whom this is your first visit to Great Queen Street and this wonderful building, or if it is your first attendance at one of our General Meetings. We are especially pleased to have so many representatives here from other charities that we have supported over the past few years. We hope they will use this opportunity to speak to the Masons present about their work and how our grants have assisted their endeavours. Welcome also to Nigel Brown, the Grand Secretary, who is an enormous help to all four of the central Masonic Charities.

This is not a fund-raising event – there will be no money-box rattling. It is essentially a formal business meeting to report to the Members of the Charity and to seek their approval for grants that the Council has recommended for several non-Masonic charities. But we take this opportunity to make it an awareness event, both for Freemasons and the general public and I hope that everyone will leave here tonight knowing just a little bit more about Freemasonry's charitable activities, and maybe even Freemasonry itself.

The Freemasons' Grand Charity is one of the four central grant-giving Masonic Charities. The others are: -

The Royal Masonic Trust for Girls and Boys - which works to alleviate poverty and advance education, mainly for the children of Masonic families in need. Last year it spent over £7.5 million helping beneficiaries to overcome the effects of poverty and distress in their lives and to give them the opportunity to achieve their potential.

The Royal Masonic Benevolent Institution - which provides care and support to Freemasons and their dependents, mostly through their 17 residential homes where last year they provided charitable support of £3.1 million to some 500 of the occupants. We welcome Willie Shackell, the President of the Institution, who is here tonight.

The Masonic Samaritan Fund - which principally assists with the cost of private medical treatment. In its last financial year, £3.7 million was allocated in support of 626 applicants. We welcome Hugh Stubbs, the President of the fund, who is also here tonight.

As mentioned at the Annual General Meeting in March, all the charities are now comfortably re-housed in our new accommodation. There are minor snagging points, but the good news is that we are all working tremendously well together on a number of joint initiatives.

Charity itself has been a major part of organised Freemasonry since its beginnings nearly 300 years ago.

The Freemasons' Grand Charity covers the more general charitable needs. It is administered by a Council of 29 members - many of whom are seated here on the stage - together we broadly represent Freemasons in all areas of England, Wales and the Channel Islands.

You should all have been given a copy of our current Annual Review this evening, for you to take away, although my fellow Masons will have already received a copy with Freemasonry Today.

If I may, I would like to draw your attention to page 2, which refers to our main objects:

- to help Masons and their dependants – in total this amounted to £3.66 million last year
- to assist other Masonic charities in times of need
- to provide the central channel for giving to non-Masonic causes - £2.77 million last year
- and to provide relief throughout the world to those affected by major disasters – in the last 12 months this has amounted to £236,500, which includes a donation of £5,000 to the Warwickshire Firefighters Families Fund, following the tragedy suffered by Warwickshire Fire Service last November. The grant was part of a total of £47,000 collected by Freemasons, of which Warwickshire Freemasons themselves contributed £37,000.

The Freemasons' Grand Charity is responsible to all Freemasons under the English Constitution of whom all Master Masons are currently the Charity's members, unless, for personal reasons, they are amongst the few who have so far chosen to opt-out of membership. There is no membership fee, but nearly all Lodges pay Annual Contributions in respect of each of their members at the rate of £13 per head, whether or not they remain Members of The Grand Charity. Last year the income from this source amounted to approximately £3 million.

The vast majority of the Members of The Grand Charity live in England and Wales and, as such they can influence affairs by attending and voting at these General meetings as many of you are able to this evening.

Other than the Annual Contributions I have just mentioned, the work of The Freemasons' Grand Charity is mostly funded from Festivals, which are organised fund-raising events, lasting several years and culminating in a suitable event to announce the final total. This year, on 23 June, the Provincial Grand Lodge of Herefordshire is holding a Festival for us. I know that they have worked extremely hard on our behalf. The average Festival total for the Grand Charity over the past ten years has been a figure of some £2.6 million per annum. I hope you will appreciate from this that the Grand Charity's income is derived solely from Freemasons, by way of the Annual Contributions and through the Festival system, without either of which our grants to Masonic and non-Masonic projects would simply not be possible.

We are also looking forward to next year's Festival, which many of you, who are from the Province of Hertfordshire, have been working towards for a number of years.

Just over 20 years ago, The Grand Charity developed what is known as the Relief Chest Scheme. This is a free service created specifically to help Masonic organisations efficiently manage the money they collect to donate to charity.

Today, there are nearly 4,000 Relief Chests and just under £30 million is held in the Scheme on their behalf. Every penny remains under the control of the Lodges or other Masonic bodies in whose name the Chests are opened. Hertfordshire has 158 Lodges, 9 Chapters and other organisations that have opened Chests.

Before we move to the formal business of this meeting, which is set out in the yellow booklet you have been given, I wish to thank the members of the Provincial Grand Lodge of Hertfordshire who have given their support to this evening's event and particularly welcome their Provincial Grand Master, Colin Harris, who will later tell us something about the current charitable activities for The Grand Charity in his Province. The members of the Council and I are most grateful to them for their support this evening.

I do hope that you will find this 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, 12 March 2008 at Freemasons' Hall, London, were taken as read and confirmed.

ADOPTION OF REPORT

PRESIDENT OF THE GRAND CHARITY: Under our regulations, we must present at all General Meetings a report of the Council's activities and decisions made since the previous General Meeting, which in this case is the AGM that was held last March – the minutes of which are included in the yellow booklet [the Paper of Business]. The report of our Council's meeting held on 16 April 2008 is set out on pages 9 and 10 of the booklet.

Under Item 3, I now propose that the whole of the Report be taken as read and, with the exception of paragraph 6 and the Schedule of Non-Masonic Grants, which are the subject of Agenda Items 4a. to 4j. and will be dealt with later, be taken as read, received and adopted.

The motion was seconded by the
Vice-President (WBro Dr Vivian Thomas, PJGD)
and agreed by the members.

APPROVAL OF GRANTS

PRESIDENT OF THE GRAND CHARITY: Deputy Grand President and Members, we will now deal with the ten non-Masonic grants recommended under Agenda Item 4. To give us some further insight, I will, with your permission Deputy Grand President, call on our Chief Executive, Laura Chapman, to tell us something about the process undertaken by the Council, before the recommendations are made. Ladies and gentlemen, Laura Chapman.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OF THE GRAND CHARITY: Deputy Grand President, ladies, gentlemen and Members. I am very pleased to add my welcome to all of you who are joining us tonight for our General Meeting. I would like to speak very briefly about the Charity's non-Masonic donations, to give you some additional background about this aspect of our work, before the members are asked to approve the Council's recommendation for the grants listed under item 4 of the Agenda.

Providing a central point for giving to non-Masonic charities on behalf of the entire Craft was one of the primary reasons that The Grand Charity was established in 1980.

The Council, when deciding which charities to support, is very aware of its responsibility to those of you who are Freemasons and who provide all the funding for these grants. With non-Masonic grants, The Freemasons' Grand Charity seeks to:

- Support causes that you, the Craft, are concerned about and that you would choose to fund yourselves
- Support charities that are well-managed, need funding and offer services that are relevant
- Achieve identifiable and measurable results—helping people in real need, and

- Raise public awareness about Freemasons' charitable support through the publicity received from national charities.

Before a grant is put to a general meeting for approval, it is carefully vetted by staff as part of our due diligence. For all larger grants, we will visit the charity at work. The accounts of the charity will be scrutinised and the management team assessed to ensure that it can deliver the project for which it is seeking funding. After a grant is made, we ask for follow-up reports as part of our monitoring and evaluation to find out what the grant has achieved.

We have also introduced a number of initiatives to work more closely with Provincial Masons to provide support for causes that are particularly important to them. Three years ago we introduced a scheme of matching Provincial grants, to a maximum of £5,000 per Province to charities that meet our guidelines. Two of the other projects that we have supported in conjunction with Provincial Grand Lodges are for Air Ambulances and Hospices, which we know are particularly popular with Masons.

Turning to the yellow Paper of Business, you will see that under item 4, the ten recommended grants are grouped under the main categories of support of the Freemasons' Grand Charity: medical research, youth opportunities and vulnerable people.

The President will now seek approval from the membership, for these grants.

MEDICAL RESEARCH

a. **AUTISM SPEAKS** The Council recommends a grant of £40,000 payable in equal instalments over two years to Autism Speaks to fund research into autism. Autism affects 500,000 people in the UK, but there is very little medical research into the causes. Autism Speaks aims to attract young scientists to the field and is establishing a number of new, mentored, autism research fellowships.

b. **EPILEPSY RESEARCH UK** The Council recommends a grant of £25,000 to Epilepsy Research UK to fund research at St George's, Tooting, into a type of severe infant epilepsy. The research project will analyse whether abnormal molecules called gangliosides are present in the 6,000 children who develop epilepsy at an early age. 45,000 people in the UK have epilepsy and in 60% of cases the cause is unknown.

YOUTH OPPORTUNITIES

c. ROYAL NATIONAL LIFEBOAT INSTITUTION (RNLI) The Council recommends a grant of £72,000 payable in equal instalments over three years to RNLI to fund a weeklong residential Introductory Crew Training Course in Poole for young people. Last year about 40% of recruits were aged 25 or under and 90% of the RNLI's 4,500 volunteer crew come from non-maritime backgrounds.

d. RAINER The Council recommends a grant of £25,000 to Rainer to fund a part-time tutor at a vocational skills centre in Kent. Rainer supports 18,000 disadvantaged young people every year and the centre in Kent is set up as a fully equipped garage to provide training in motor mechanics.

VULNERABLE PEOPLE

e. HOME FARM TRUST The Council recommends a grant of £60,000 payable in equal instalments over two years to Home Farm Trust to fund the Family Carers' Support Service (FCSS). FCSS provides advice and information to family carers who have relatives with learning disabilities. About 4,000 family carers benefit each year from contact with the service, which is wholly funded by charitable donations.

f. BRITISH RED CROSS The Council recommends a grant of £50,000 to the British Red Cross (BRC) to fund a new Responder emergency response vehicle for use in the UK after events such as floods, fires, major traffic incidents or terrorist attacks. The BRC provides crisis response to support the UK emergency services and vehicles are also used in community services to provide first aid cover.

g. HUNTINGTON'S DISEASE ASSOCIATION The Council recommends a grant of £45,000 payable in equal instalments over three years to the Huntington's Disease Association (HDA) to fund the regional care advisory service in the north west of England. HDA is an organisation run by people affected by Huntington's Disease. This North West Advisory Service is part of a countrywide network of advisers and provides support to over 500 adults and children with Huntington's, high numbers at risk of the disease and 600 health professionals.

h. RIDING FOR THE DISABLED ASSOCIATION The Council recommends a grant of £25,000 to the Riding for the Disabled Association to fund a volunteer development manager to help attract, train and support more volunteers. Riding for the Disabled has 416 member groups in England and Wales serving 19,000 people with the help of 12,000 volunteers. The new role follows a successful pilot project, which increased volunteering by an average of 10% in participating groups.

i. CHANGING FACES The Council recommends a grant of £20,000 to Changing Faces to fund the salary of an adult specialist adviser, providing workshops and one-to-one counselling for individuals. Advisers are trained counsellors or psychologists and about 350 new people contact the service each year.

j. ROYAL NATIONAL LIFEBOAT INSTITUTION (RNLI) The Council recommends a grant of £6,000 to the RNLI as a further contribution towards a new lifeboat in Jersey. A grant of £4,000 was approved in March 2008, and so this brings the total contribution to £10,000.

PRESIDENT OF THE GRAND CHARITY: Deputy Grand President and Members, unless anyone has any objection, I shall propose these recommendations in one resolution. In that case, I now move that Agenda Items 4a. to 4j., totalling £368,000, be approved.

The motion was seconded by the Vice-President
and agreed by the members.

EMERGENCY GRANTS

PRESIDENT OF THE GRAND CHARITY: Deputy Grand President and Members. At a time when we thought we had had our fill of world emergencies, as is well-known, there have been two catastrophic climatic disasters, one in Burma (now called Myanmar) and the other in China. After very careful research, £20,000 has been awarded to both locations – Burma through the Save the Children and China through the Red Cross. Both these organisations were found to have aid-workers on site and therefore the funds are reaching those actually suffering and not being diverted on the way. I hope that awarding these emergency grants meets with your approval.

SPEAKERS

Dr Kenneth Harvey, Chairman of the Masonic Relief Grants Committee of the Council of the Grand Charity, spoke on the work of the Committee.

Nicola Russell, Director of Services for the Multiple Sclerosis Trust, explained how the grant of £60,000, approved in March 2007, was helping their efforts.

Major General Andrew Cumming, *CBE*, Chief Executive of the Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Families Association (SSFA), spoke about the work undertaken by the Association. The Freemasons' Grand Charity approved a grant of £100,000 to SSAFA Forces Help in March 2008.

RWBro Colin Harris, Provincial Grand Master for Hertfordshire, spoke about the fund-raising activities for the Festival, which his Province would be holding on behalf of the Freemasons' Grand Charity in June 2009.

PRESIDENT OF THE GRAND CHARITY: Deputy Grand President, ladies, gentlemen and Members.

My thanks to Colin Harris and to all the speakers we have heard from this evening. The Province of Hertfordshire has been most accommodating in helping us to organise this meeting and special thanks should go to the Provincial Grand Secretary, Keith Gilbert, and the Provincial Director of Ceremonies, David Ferris. Even their Provincial Grand Organist, Don Ballard, has been able to make a most useful contribution to the meeting and we thank him.

Thank you also to everyone who has come along to listen to us. I hope that when you are outside in a few moments, you will take the time over a glass of wine or whatever to stop and look at the charity display stands (details are in the envelopes), and to chat to the various representatives who have given their time freely to be with us this evening.

Finally and most especially, Deputy Grand President, I would like to thank you on behalf of us all for once again agreeing to Chair this General Meeting and for your continued support for us throughout the year.

CLOSING ADDRESS

DEPUTY GRAND PRESIDENT: Ladies, gentlemen and Brethren. That concludes the formal part of our meeting and I hope you've enjoyed hearing about the work of The Grand Charity. I would like to thank the President, Grahame Elliott, for all the efforts he makes on behalf of the Charity. It is an honorary position, which takes an enormous amount of time and effort and I know how hard he has had to work recently with the four Charities moving into this building.

Apart from The Grand Charity, you've also heard a little about some of the other major Masonic Charities, that our members and their families support. As well as these, local Lodges help many causes in their local communities, which we never get to hear about at the centre, and Provinces also have benevolent funds, which give away large sums of money each year.

Freemasonry these days is very different to what it was even 25 years ago. We now practise a policy of openness about what we do and why we do it, and encourage our members to explain their Masonry to anyone who is interested.

This Grand Lodge was formed in 1717 by four Lodges meeting in a public house in St Paul's churchyard. Three of them still continue to meet regularly to this day. If you ask a non-Masonic what they think about Masonry, they will probably mention the word "charity" and you've 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 many of our Lodges you will find men of many different faiths and with different backgrounds and life-styles. All we care about is that our members believe in God, want to better themselves and be of more service to their fellow beings. It is often said that Freemasonry breaks down the barriers which keep men apart and there are many examples of this around the world today. Freemasonry is a system of morality in which every object has a deeper, symbolic meaning. It 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 person, it will inevitably help society as a whole.

There are only three ceremonies, apart from the installation of a new Master each year. These are much the same wherever you find Freemasonry around 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 education so as to become a more useful member of society. The third deals with trust and integrity. It goes on to explain that to worry about one's own death, limits the potential for living life to the full. The three main principals on which the order is founded are brotherly love, relief and truth, which in layman's language could be described as long-lasting friendships, compassion and integrity.

Hitler's determination to exterminate Jews and Freemasons during the Second World War drove the Order underground and we became obsessively secretive about ourselves. This 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.

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

END

RNLI TRAINING EXERCISE

**A special search and rescue demonstration
presented for those attending
The Grand Charity General Meeting**

See how an RNLI Lifeboat and a search and rescue
helicopter work together to save lives at sea.

Saturday, 27 September 2008

1.30 pm

**off Bournemouth Pier
(viewable from the rear of the BIC)**

*The participation of the helicopter is subject to
operational requirements of the Coastguard.*

The Freemasons' Grand Charity, 60 Great Queen Street, London WC2B 5AZ

Registered Charity No 281942

Tel: 020 7395 9261 - Email: info@the-grand-charity.org