

# **THE GRAND CHARITY**

## **SHORT PRESENTATION**

**\*\* SLIDE 1: Introducing The Freemasons' Grand Charity**

**This is a short presentation about the work of The Freemasons' Grand Charity.**



**\*\* SLIDE 2: The Masonic Charities**

The Freemasons' Grand Charity is one of the four central Masonic charities, incorporating:

- The Freemasons' Grand Charity
- the Masonic Samaritan Fund.
- the Royal Masonic Benevolent Institution; and
- the Royal Masonic Trust for Girls and Boys;



And together these charities provide, respectively, support for Masons and their dependants in the form of:

- financial help
- medical, dental and respite care
- care and housing for the elderly, and
- education.

**\*\* SLIDE 3: About The Freemasons' Grand Charity**

Our focus today is on The Freemasons' Grand Charity which is the central Charity, but remains independent of Grand Lodge. The Charity was established in 1981 and took over the activities of the Board of Benevolence. Since then, it has supported more than 30,000 Freemasons and their dependants and hundreds of non-Masonic charities with grants totalling over £80 million. Before telling you about its activities, I want to emphasise some of the ways in which it is *unique*, and which underline how it is 'your' Charity.



It is unique in that:

- It is *accountable* to the Craft, particularly through the *Council* – the majority of whose 30 members come from Provinces across the Country.
- It receives a substantial part of its *income* - on average more than 50% - from the annual contribution of £14 per member, paid by Lodges.
- And its *membership* is open to all Master Masons, who therefore have a role to play in helping to determine its policies and priorities. For example, members are encouraged to attend the regular General Meetings of the Charity where grants to Masons and their dependants are reported and grants to non-Masonic charities are put forward for approval.
- Finally, it alone, of the main charities, provides support for the others when needed. This extends to support for major initiatives when the need arises. For example, the project to co-locate the charities within Freemasons' Hall.

**\*\* SLIDE 4: Activities of The Freemasons' Grand Charity**

The first and foremost role is to give *grants*, in three areas:

- To individual Masons, or their dependants, who are in need - these are the **Masonic Relief Grants**;
- To non-Masonic national charities serving England and Wales and for emergency relief work worldwide; and
- Other Masonic Charities.



**\*\* SLIDE 5: Help provided to the Masonic Community**

Masonic Relief Grants provide assistance for Freemasons and their dependants in financial need and range from around £500 to £7,000 in any one year – more in exceptional circumstances. The grants can be renewed annually, and there is no limit to the number of grants an individual may receive, one each year, over their lifetime.



Grants are awarded for:

- Essential daily living expenses (e.g. the costs of food, clothing, heating, lighting and home repairs after taking income and some state benefits into account)
- Unexpected needs (outstanding funeral bills, replacing a broken boiler)

In addition to its grant-giving, The Freemasons' Grand Charity also manages the Relief Chest Scheme on behalf of Masonic organisations. The Relief Chest service was specifically created to help Lodges, Chapters and other Masonic organisations to efficiently manage the funds they collect to donate to charity. The centrally administered service works on behalf of Chest Holders to reclaim tax relief under Gift Aid and invests funds at a favourable rate of interest.

Over four years more than £2 million has been added to over 4,000 relief chests as a result of Gift Aid and last year over £5 million was donated to people in need via the Scheme.

**\*\* SLIDE 6: Support for Freemasons in 2009**

**In 2009, 1,933 Freemasons and their dependants were assisted at a total cost of around £3.5 million.**



**\*\* SLIDE 7: Some people we have helped...**

To help paint a better picture of what this means, here are a few examples of recent cases:

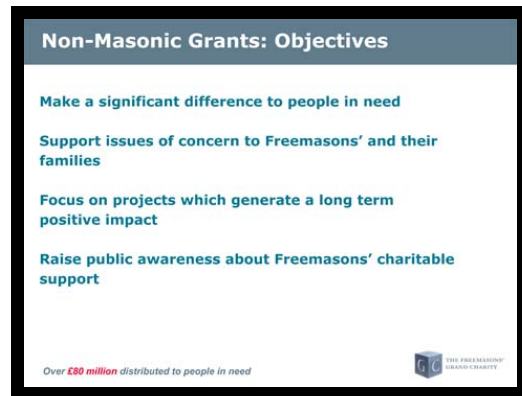
- A Mason, whose only source of income was state benefits, found it difficult to meet all of his essential living expenses. A grant was made to help him cover his everyday living costs such as heating and maintaining his home.
- The widow of a Mason had only modest savings and a year after the death of her husband was still repaying funeral costs. A grant was given to assist with the outstanding expenses.



These are just three examples, but please remember that The Freemasons' Grand Charity encourages applications in any case of genuine need and all of us have a responsibility to seek out those Brethren and their dependants who need help and to ensure they receive it. We encourage applications wherever there is a genuine need and every single case is assessed on its merits.

**\*\* SLIDE 8: Non-Masonic Grants: Objectives**

One of the reasons that The Freemasons' Grand Charity was established was to enable the Craft, as a whole, to make donations to non-Masonic charities. With non-Masonic grants, The Freemasons' Grand Charity seeks to achieve four objectives:



- To make a significant difference to people 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 it achieves (that means focusing on projects with the potential to generate a long-term “multiplier” effect, where the benefits are many times greater than the initial input).
- And finally, to gain opportunities to raise public awareness about Freemasons' charitable support for the wider community.

**\*\* SLIDE 9: Support for the wider community**

In the year to end November 2009, over £2.9 million was donated to approximately 385 operating charities in England and Wales.

The non-Masonic grants made by the Charity range from a few hundred pounds for smaller and newly established charities to as much as £1 million for occasional, special grants like the Charity's long-term support for research into male cancers.

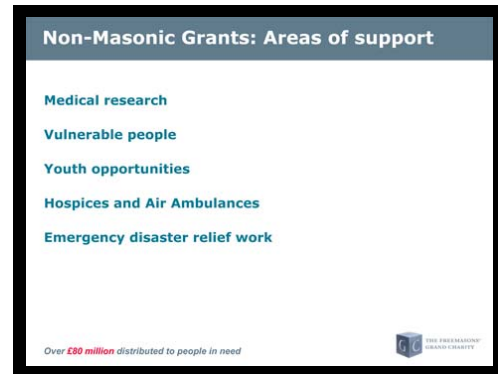


All applications received by the office are reviewed against guidelines agreed by the Council. One of these specifies that the charity must be *national*: charities that serve only a local area are not eligible for support from The Freemasons' Grand Charity and are advised to seek funding from local or Provincial Lodges.

**\*\* SLIDE 10: Non-Masonic Grants: Areas of support**

**The Freemasons' Grand Charity supports charities working in five main areas:**

- **Research into the cause and treatment of illness and disease;**
- **Care for vulnerable people of all ages, including people with disabilities and other healthcare needs;**
- **Opportunities for young people;**
- **Hospices; and**
- **Emergency grants for disaster relief.**



**To illustrate these areas I will now give some examples of grants made by the Charity under each of these headings.**

**\*\* SLIDE 11: Medical Research - Institute of Cancer Research**

Under the category of medical research, we have given the Institute of Cancer Research a £1 million grant for research into testicular and prostate cancers, to be paid in ten annual instalments of £100,000. This is funding a Chair named “The Grand Charity of Freemasons’ Chair of Molecular Biology”, held by Professor Colin Cooper – shown to the left of this slide.



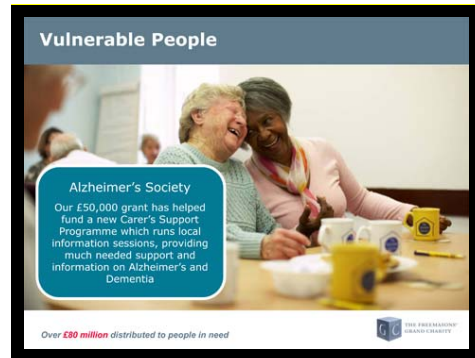
Prostate cancer is now the most common cancer affecting men in the UK. Each year 27,000 cases are diagnosed and 10,000 men die of the disease. In June 2004 scientists at ICR announced a major advance in understanding the genetic basis of prostate cancer. The ground-breaking discovery of the over-active E2F3 gene in prostate cancer tumours will allow doctors for the first time to predict how aggressive the cancer will be.

Professor Cooper is working on translating this discovery into a ‘tiger-pussycat’ test so that thousands of patients can be spared unnecessary treatment, whilst those with an aggressive cancer can be given the life-saving treatment they require to fight the disease.

In 2008 it was decided that a substantial grant should also be made for research into a women’s health issue. Following consultation with the wives of Masons, a grant of £1 million was recommended for payment to Ovarian Cancer Action. The grant will fund research into ovarian cancer and support activities to ensure greater awareness of the symptoms, enabling women to seek treatment at an earlier stage of the disease.

**\*\* SLIDE 12: Vulnerable people - Alzheimer's Society**

In the UK 700,000 people are currently living with dementia. The majority of these people are looked after at home by an estimated 600,000 carers. Our grant has helped fund a new Carer's Support Programme which runs local information sessions, providing much needed support and information on Alzheimer's and Dementia.



**\*\* SLIDE 13: Youth Opportunities - The Scout Association**

Under the youth opportunities banner a grant of £500,000 to the Scout Association was announced in 2008, to be spread over five years.

This money is intended to fund a number of activities including:



- Funding 1500 new Scouting groups through 'start-up' grants, to encourage growth at a local level
- To provide new programme resources for over 340,000 young people, including games books and similar activity resources
- To fund new equipment at activity centres across England and Wales

and

- To subsidise 2,500 young people who cannot afford uniforms etc, or to attend Scouting activities

**\*\* SLIDE 14: Hospices 1984-2008**

Since 1984 The Freemasons' Grand Charity has donated over £8 million to hospices throughout England and Wales to assist with their annual running costs.

Not only is support for the movement one of the Charity's most popular initiatives but the programme also offers excellent opportunities for local publicity. All of the cheques are sent to the relevant Provincial office to present to the individual hospices, and these donations are often of interest to the local press.



**\*\* SLIDE 15: Air Ambulances**

Mirroring the popularity of the Hospice grants, donations are also made to the emergency air ambulance charities that operate across England and Wales. Over £500,000 has been given in total since the project's inception. In 2009, £192,000 was given to these lifesaving operations, which rely almost entirely on donations from the public to remain airborne.



Each Provincial Grand Lodge was allocated £4,000 to present to the air ambulance service of its choosing. The cheques were then sent to the Provincial Grand Lodge for presentation.

**\*\* SLIDE 16: Emergency Grants for Disaster Relief**

The President of the Grand Charity is empowered to make emergency grants for relief work following disasters, both at home and abroad. Where practicable support is given to the relief efforts of the appropriate Provincial or District Grand Lodge.

As this is not always possible, grants for international disaster relief are frequently made via agencies like the British Red Cross, which recognises The Freemasons' Grand Charity as one of its staunchest supporters.

Most recently grants have been made to assist relief efforts following disasters in Chile, Haiti, Asia Pacific, India, Australia, Namibia, and the UK.



**\*\* SLIDE 17: Final slide - Contact Us**

**That concludes the overview of The Freemasons' Grand Charity and its activities.**

**Further information on the topics covered today is available from The Freemasons' Grand Charity. It**

**publishes a number of leaflets and its website is also regularly updated with details of its most recent activities.**

**Now I would be very happy to answer any questions you might have.**

***END***

***[Updated June 2010]***

