

Annual General Meeting – 14 March 2007

SCRIPT **[TO BE CHECKED AGAINST DELIVERY]**

DEPUTY GRAND PRESIDENT:

Brethren, we will now attend to the business of The Grand Charity.

Item 1

MINUTES

DEPUTY GRAND PRESIDENT:

Members of The Grand Charity, the minutes of the last meeting, which was held in Harrogate on 16 September 2006, have been circulated.

May I take them as read and confirmed?

Those minutes are approved.

Item 2

THE REPORT OF THE COUNCIL OF THE GRAND CHARITY

DEPUTY GRAND PRESIDENT:

Members, I call on the President of The Grand Charity.

PRESIDENT (Grahame Elliott):

Deputy Grand President and Members, welcome to the twenty-seventh Annual General Meeting of The Grand Charity, which, as you will see from the business paper (*holds up yellow booklet*), we now refer to as The Freemasons' Grand Charity.

This must be one of the largest public gatherings of any charity in the world, let alone the UK and we are privileged to be able to hold our Annual General Meeting through the good offices of the United Grand Lodge of England at this Quarterly Meeting, thus enabling some 1,700 members to attend.

Under our regulations, we must present at all General Meetings a report of the Council's activities and decisions made since the last such occasion. The report following Council meetings held on 18 October 2006 and 31 January 2007, is set out on pages 10 to 13 of the yellow booklet (*holds it up*). I hope you all have this with you.

If I may I would like to draw to your attention to the proposal during the year to use the Charity's working name of The Freemasons' Grand Charity. This is to obtain greater understanding and recognition from both within and outside the Craft of what we are about – particularly with regard to the non-Masonic giving made possible by Masons' generosity through this Charity.

Much of the work of the Charity over its first 25 years is recorded in the silver leaflet that was produced for the General Meeting held in London last June, when we celebrated our Anniversary. Subsequent activities are shown in the minutes for the General Meeting held in Harrogate, which have been circulated with today's Paper of Business.

The non-Masonic grants, as detailed in the Schedule of Non-Masonic Grants on pages 6 to 9, form part of the report for today's meeting. These will be specifically explained later on by our Chief Executive, Laura Chapman, but in the meantime, I propose that the whole of the report be taken as read, and with the exception of paragraph 10 and

the Schedule of Non-Masonic Grants, which are the subject of Agenda Items 3 to 8, be adopted and entered in the minutes.

VICE-PRESIDENT (David Morrow): [STANDS]
Deputy Grand President and Members – I second.
[SITS]

DEPUTY GRAND PRESIDENT:
Members, those in favour?

To the contrary?

That is approved

Item 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, & 8.

NON-MASONIC GRANTS

PRESIDENT (Grahame Elliott):
Items 3. to 8. relate to the non-Masonic grants listed on pages 6 to 9. This being the most interesting part of the meeting, I will, with your permission Deputy Grand President, ask Laura Chapman, the Chief Executive, to say a few words about this aspect of our Charity's work.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE (Laura Chapman):
Lord Northampton, Gentlemen

At the General Meetings of the Grand Charity, I regularly speak about our support for non-Masonic charities, so I apologise to those of you who have heard some of my comments before. But it is a very important responsibility and we have been doing a number of things over the past few years to increase the impact and effectiveness of our giving and to make it more relevant to members at the local level.

Providing a central point for giving to non-Masonic charities on behalf of the whole Craft was one of the primary reasons that the Grand Charity was established in 1980. Although local and Provincial Lodges donate money to literally thousands of charities, these donations tend to be quite small and focussed on the local community. It was envisioned that the Grand Charity would make grants that would complement this local giving by being of a scale financially and geographically beyond the reach of individual or even Provincial Lodges.

The Council is very aware of its responsibility to you, the Craft, when it decides which projects and which charities to recommend for support. The Council recognises that non-Masonic grants should:

- Support causes that you, the Craft, are concerned about and that you would want to be funded
- 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 achieving maximum impact, and
- Raise public awareness about Freemasons' charitable support through the publicity received from national charities.

With the fantastic support that the Craft gives to the Grand Charity, we are able to make a very significant contribution to many charities of the wider community. As you will have seen from the Annual Report and Accounts to the year ended 30 November 2006, we made non-Masonic grants totalling just over £2.2m during the year. Since it

was established, grants of more than £35m have been made to non-Masonic charities and this figure does not include the grants that are made from Relief Chests.

Funding is given to charities under five main headings:

- Medical research;
- Vulnerable people;
- Youth opportunities;
- Hospices; and
- Emergency grants for disaster relief, both at home and abroad.

Within each of these groups we try to identify specific causes that will be popular with Brethren. In fact, Brethren have the ultimate responsibility for approving all non-Masonic grants which is why under items 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7 of today's Agenda you are asked to approve a number of resolutions.

Item 3 of the agenda identifies grants to fund specific projects for 13 charities. These are projects for which the sponsoring charity has submitted an application. Initially, all applications are reviewed by our non-Masonic grants officer, who typically visits the charity at work as part of our due diligence. The applications are then reviewed by a Committee of the Council against agreed guidelines. Finally, those grants that the Council recommends come to you, the members of the Charity, for final approval.

Items 4 and 5 of the agenda seek your approval for the Grand Charity to make grants to adult and children's hospices for their annual running costs during 2007. The Hospice Grants Scheme is one of our longest running and most popular initiatives with the Craft. As a result, we are introducing this year an additional and separate allocation of £100,000 solely for children's hospices. We will continue to liaise with Provinces about the distribution of hospice grants so that local cheque presentations can be made and an opportunity is created for the Province to build a better relationship with its local hospice services.

Under item 6 of the agenda you are asked to approve an allocation of £100,000 for the Council to use to make small grants not exceeding £5,000. Although I have emphasised that most of the Grand Charity's grants are large, we do receive applications from many smaller charities, often in the very first stages of development, to which a relatively small grant will make a significant difference and often this support is critical in helping it to get started.

Item 7 of the agenda requests your approval of £10,000 for grants to Air Ambulance Services. You may recall that at the June 2006 General Meeting you approved £180,000 for grants for air ambulance services. As I am sure you know, there is very widespread support in the Craft for the fantastic life-saving services of air ambulances and we wished to help Provinces support this cause. We have requested an additional £10,000 tranche because we have learned that several of the services operate more than one helicopter ambulance and we feel it to be equitable to make a small additional donation where this is the case.

Finally, under item 8 you are asked to approve £50,000 for our matched funding programme for Provinces. Two years ago we introduced a pilot scheme under which the Grand Charity matches Provincial grants to charities meeting the Grand Charity's guidelines up to a maximum of £5,000 per Province. Each year a different group of Provinces is invited to participate on a rotational basis. This scheme has been very popular and we have decided to expand it this year to include 10 Provinces. Through this initiative we are again seeking to help Provinces achieve greater impact and greater awareness of the support that Freemasonry gives to the wider community.

So with that introduction, I would like to turn back to the President who will move for these grants to be approved.

PRESIDENT (Grahame Elliott):

Deputy Grand President and Members – unless anyone has any objections, I shall propose as one resolution, the recommendations just outlined by Laura.

[pause a look around]

I, therefore, in that case, move that Agenda Items 3. to 8. be approved, totalling £1.3 million.

VICE-PRESIDENT (David Morrow): [STANDS]

Deputy Grand President and Members – I second.

[SITS]

DEPUTY GRAND PRESIDENT:

Members, those in favour?

To the contrary?

They are approved.

Item 9

ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS

PRESIDENT (Grahame Elliott):

Deputy Grand President and Members, Item 9.

In presenting the Annual Report I would like to reiterate the help that I have received from my predecessor Presidents and particularly Raymond Lye who was responsible for setting in motion most of the activities, which have been the main thrust of the current year's work. Some of these I would like to refer to after the accounts have been approved, but in the meantime I would like to place on record our thanks to the Provincial Grand Lodge of North Wales for the benefit we received from the Festival it held during the year on our behalf, congratulate those responsible in the Executive for the work in bringing forward the Asian Tsunami projects with Plan International and I feel that the work of the Relief Chest Scheme activity must be highlighted. We now have 44% of Lodges and 11% of Chapters using the Scheme. The level of activity is shown in the Report on page 10, accounting for over 30,000 transactions per month and the total fund now stands at over £30 million.

I hope that the accounts in their new form properly summarise the work of the Charity and are both useful and interesting to the reader.

I will, of course, respond to any particular points that members may wish to raise and I am sure if I cannot answer them that the Treasurer, Rod Mitchell, will be pleased to assist me.

DEPUTY GRAND PRESIDENT:

Does anyone wish to raise any matter?

PRESIDENT (Grahame Elliott):

I now propose that the Annual Report and Accounts for the year ended 30 November 2006 – be taken as read, received and adopted.

VICE-PRESIDENT (David Morrow): [STANDS]

Deputy Grand President and Members – I second.

[SITS]

DEPUTY GRAND PRESIDENT:

Members, those in favour?

To the contrary?

The Annual Report and Accounts are approved.

PRESIDENT (Grahame Elliott):

Thank you for the confidence you have expressed in the Council by approving the Annual Report and Accounts.

I now wish to draw your attention to certain other aspects of the Charity's work.

With regard to the well-publicised move of the main Masonic charities into this building, I am please to announce that the contract with the builder has now been signed, together with the agreement to lease, as mentioned on page 11 of the Annual Report. The overall objective of this move is to create greater efficiency and cost-effectiveness of the operations of the four charities by greater co-ordination and co-operation in the delivery of services. The move will allow the other charities to reduce significantly their accommodation costs and to make more efficient use of their assets in the longer term. Although this Charity will not reduce its own costs as a consequence of the move, the Craft as a whole will benefit from improved charitable services at a lower cost overall.

Your Charity, with the other three central Charities, has discussed the increasing complexity of the regulation affecting charities. As a result, during the coming year it has been agreed that we will be working with the United Grand Lodge of England to approve arrangements to support the Craft generally in this respect.

The third point I would like to raise is the Annual Contribution recommended for next year. During the last twelve months the number of Relief Grants awarded has reduced slightly. There is no doubt that this is because at the present time there is considerable extra support in the level of State Benefits that petitioners are encouraged to claim before being eligible for a grant. The Council is concerned that this could change as the age profile of our nation increases and residential care costs rise dramatically. We must prepare for the likely increase in requests for the support of Masons and their dependents. For this reason we feel it prudent to follow the policy recommended by Sir John Welch, when he was President in 1987, that the Annual Contributions should be reviewed for small, regular increases. Under these circumstances we are proposing a £1.50 increase in the Annual Contribution to £13.00 for 2008. That means that on average during these last 20 years the increase in the contribution has been at the rate of 55p a year. I hope I am right in saying Brethren, that nobody will object to this and, therefore, it is in order for it to be placed on the Agenda for the June Quarterly Communication to be formally approved. Thank you Brethren.

Item 10

EMERGENCY GRANTS

PRESIDENT (Grahame Elliott):

Deputy Grand President and Members - Item 10

Under the powers given to the President, I authorised a grant last December, of £10,000 to the British Red Cross in response to an appeal following flooding in Kenya. The money from will help provide food, blankets, water purification tablets, medical supplies and seeds.

Item 11

APPOINTMENTS AND ELECTIONS

DEPUTY GRAND PRESIDENT:

Members we now come to item 11 and I call on the Secretary.

SECRETARY:

Deputy Grand President and members.

The Grand President has made the following appointments for the ensuing year: -

- a. as Deputy President, Bro Brian Kelly
and as Treasurer, Bro Roderic Mitchell.
- b. The Grand President has also appointed: -

Bros Charles Akle
Paul Richards
and Michael Turnbull

to serve for the period 2007 to 2010,
and to fill a Casual Vacancy that has occurred for the two-year period
until 2009, Bro Kenneth Rondel.
- d. The members elected to represent Provincial Lodges for the period 2007 to
2010, are:-

Bros David McCormick
Dr Kenneth Harvey
and Dr Vivian Thomas.
- e. The Provincial Grand Master for Herefordshire has appointed:

Bro John Butler
for a three-year period in connection with the 2008 Festival.
- f. The member elected to represent London Lodges for the period 2007 to 2010,
is:-

Bro Ian Johnson.

Item 12

ELECTION OF AUDITORS

DEPUTY GRAND PRESIDENT:

Members, the next item is the election of the auditors of The Grand Charity and I
call on RWBro Colin Wright, Provincial Grand Master for West Lancashire.

PGM West Lancashire (at microphone):

Deputy Grand President and members. I propose that the firm of Horwath Clark
Whitehill LLP be re-elected auditors of The Grand Charity for the ensuing year.

DEPUTY GRAND PRESIDENT:

I now call on RWBro Eric Stuart-Bamford, Provincial Grand Master for Surrey.

PGM Surrey (from his seat – or microphone, if he cannot be seen/heard by the Chairman):

Deputy Grand President and members, I second.

DEPUTY GRAND PRESIDENT:

Members, you have all heard the proposition, those in favour?

To the contrary?

The proposition is carried.

DEPUTY GRAND PRESIDENT:

Does anyone have any further business?

PRESIDENT (Grahame Elliott):

May I, prior to your closing this meeting Deputy Grand President, extend our thanks to a number of Brethren, in particular Ian Chalk who retires from the Council after 10 years, the last 3 of which he has been an excellent Deputy President, and also to those noted in the Report, who retire this year. Our thanks particularly to the staff, led so capably by Laura Chapman, for all the work they do for us throughout the year and finally to you, Deputy Grand President, the Grand President and our Vice Grand President, Lord Lane of Horsell (who I am delighted to report, has recently been re-appointed) for your unstinting support and trust in us, as we work to represent our members and provide the service to our beneficiaries.

Deputy Grand President, may I invite you to instruct the members of the Council present, to stand so that they may be identified?

DEPUTY GRAND PRESIDENT:

[Instructs members of the Council to stand]

[Any other closing words]

That concludes the business of The Grand Charity.

CALL ON GRAND LODGE