

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

20 September 2007

Dear Sir and Brother

NOTICE OF MEETING

A General Meeting of The Freemasons' Grand Charity will be held on **Wednesday, 3 October 2007**, at **6.15 pm** at **Cardiff City Hall**, Cathays Park, Cardiff CF10 3ND. 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, may attend. Everyone must be seated by 6.00 pm. A buffet will be served after the meeting for those who have previously purchased tickets.

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 South Wales, Eastern Division. 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

Wednesday, 3 October 2007

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 28 June 2007 at Freemasons' Hall, London, for confirmation (see page 11).
3. To receive the Report of the Council dated 18 July 2007. The Report is contained on pages 9 and 10. It includes recommendations for several non-Masonic charitable grants, which are set out in detail in the Schedule of Non- Masonic Grants on pages 6 to 8, and which should be considered as part of the Report. These require the approval, under item 5a. to 5o. below, of the Members of The Freemasons' Grand Charity at this General Meeting, before the money can be given.
4. The Chief Executive, Laura Chapman, to explain the Charity's grant-giving activities and policies.
5. 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. £56,500 to **Leukaemia Research** for research into acute myeloid leukaemia.

b. £30,200 to **The Healing Foundation** for research into Dupuytren's Disease.

VULNERABLE PEOPLE

c. £75,000 over 3 years to **The Place2Be** for a new Hub for six schools in Burnley and an information leaflet.

d. £30,000 to **BIBIC** for new IT equipment (conditional upon appointment of an IT manager).

- e. £30,000 over 2 years to **Listening Books** for a project to upgrade to Digital Books.
- f. £20,000 over 2 years to the **Aidis Trust** for ICT training to staff in local disability organisations.
- g. £15,000 to **SeeAbility** for physiotherapist assistant salaries.
- h. £12,000 to **The Challenging Behaviour Foundation** for a family information service.

YOUTH OPPORTUNITIES

- i. £47,000 to the **Marine Society and Sea Cadets** towards a new power training ship.
- j. £40,000 to **Voice for the Child in Care** for a pilot project to improve access to advocacy services for children in care.
- k. £30,000 to **Phoenix Futures** for a skills and employability programme following drug rehabilitation.
- l. £25,000 to **Childhood First** for a leaving care support package.
- m. £24,500 to the **Happy Days Children's Charity** for day trips for disadvantaged children with special needs.

RELIGIOUS BUILDINGS

- n. £5,000 to **Guildford Cathedral's** West Window Appeal.
 - o. £5,000 to **St Woolos Cathedral's** Rescue Appeal.
6. To report **Emergency Grants** made since the last meeting.
 7. To receive a report on the work of the Masonic Relief Grants Committee from its Chairman, WBro Dr Kenneth C. Harvey, PAGDC.
 8. Guest speakers:
 - a. David Biggart, *OBE*, Interim Operations Director, Skill Force.
 - b. Shan Nicholas, Chief Executive of The Princess Royal Trust for Carers.

9. An address by RWBro Hywel Davies, Provincial Grand Master for South Wales, Eastern Division.
10. Talk by Professor Malcolm Mason, *MD, FRCP, FRCR*, Cancer Research Wales Professor of Clinical Oncology at Cardiff University.
11. Closing address by the Vice Grand President of The Grand Charity, RWBro the Rt Hon Lord Lane of Horsell, PSGW.

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

SCHEDULE OF NON-MASONIC GRANTS

The Council proposes the following non-Masonic grants, which appear under items 5a. to 5o. of the Agenda for the General Meeting to be held on Wednesday, 3 October 2007, and which are referred to in paragraph 2. of the Council's Report dated 18 July 2007.

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

MEDICAL RESEARCH

5a. LEUKAEMIA RESEARCH FUND The Council recommends a grant of £56,500 to the Leukaemia Research to fund research at the University of Kent into acute myeloid leukaemia (AML) to develop a new technique of radioimmunotherapy for treating patients. AML is an aggressive cancer affecting nearly 2,000 people in the UK each year. The project will prepare for a clinical trial enabling cancer cells to be targeted more effectively.

5b. THE HEALING FOUNDATION The Council recommends a grant of £30,200 to The Healing Foundation to fund research into Dupuytren's Disease at Imperial College, London. Dupuytren's disease is a condition affecting older people whereby the fingers curl up to the palm, causing loss of function.

VULNERABLE PEOPLE

5c. THE PLACE2BE The Council recommends a grant of £75,000 payable in equal instalments over three years to The Place2Be to fund a new service at six primary schools in Burnley and the publication of an information leaflet. The Place2Be helps disadvantaged young children to cope with the problems caused by abuse, parental drug and alcohol problems, domestic violence and bullying by providing a therapist and counselling service within primary schools in deprived areas.

5d. BIBIC The Council recommends a grant of £30,000 to BIBIC to fund an upgrade of the IT equipment for staff. BIBIC treats children with neurological disorders at special clinics providing a multi-disciplinary team of therapists and medical staff to assess and design therapeutic treatment programmes for parents to deliver at home to help improve the quality of life for disabled children and their families.

5e. LISTENING BOOKS The Council recommends a grant of £30,000 payable in equal instalments over two years to Listening Books to fund the *Digital Book* project converting the cassette audiobook library for disabled people into digital format for use on mp3, CD players and via internet streaming. Listening Books provides over 2,000 titles free of charge to more than 4,000 disabled children and adults.

5f. **AIDIS TRUST** The Council recommends a grant of £20,000 payable in equal instalments over two years to the Aidis Trust to fund specialist disability-related information and communication technology training for staff and volunteers in local grass-roots disability organisations and hospices. The project will improve the use of computer and technology equipment by and for disabled people by providing advice and support on special adaptations.

5g. **SEEABILITY** The Council recommends a grant of £15,000 to SeeAbility to fund two part-time physiotherapist assistants at a specialist home in Hampshire providing 24 hour nursing care to young people with juvenile Batten's disease and profound multiple disabilities. SeeAbility provides accommodation and supported living services for visually impaired people who also have other severe disabilities.

5h. **THE CHALLENGING BEHAVIOUR FOUNDATION** The Council recommends a grant of £12,000 to The Challenging Behaviour Foundation to part-fund a family information service. The Foundation provides evidence of how best to manage the challenging and sometimes violent or destructive behaviour of people with severe learning disabilities and supports families who are dealing with children or young people who exhibit such disruptive behaviour.

YOUTH OPPORTUNITIES

5i. **THE MARINE SOCIETY AND SEA CADETS** The Council recommends a grant of £47,000 to The Marine Society and Sea Cadets as a contribution towards a new training ship to be berthed in London. Each year 640 young people, many of them from deprived areas, will benefit from a six-day training voyage as sea cadets on the new vessel.

5j. **VOICE FOR THE CHILD IN CARE** The Council recommends a grant of £40,000 to Voice for the Child in Care to fund a pilot project aimed at improving access to the independent advocacy services provided by Voice for children in foster care and privately run children's homes. Many of the 60,000 children in care are currently hard to reach and are not aware of, or are unable to access, the independent services that are available to support them.

5k. PHOENIX FUTURES The Council recommends a grant of £30,000 to Phoenix Futures to part-fund a skills and employability programme for young people in residential drug and alcohol rehabilitation centres. The charity helps about 13,000 people each year and runs six adult residential services for over 700 people providing a therapeutic community recovery programme and support in moving into education, training or employment.

5l. CHILDHOOD FIRST The Council recommends a grant of £25,000 to Childhood First to fund a support package for young people leaving a Childhood First residential care home, providing training for independent living and ongoing support for 12 months after the young people leave. The charity runs five residential facilities for children who cannot be placed through the normal care system due to severe emotional or behavioural disturbance.

5m. HAPPY DAYS CHILDREN'S CHARITY The Council recommends a grant of £24,500 to Happy Days Children's Charity to fund day trips for children with special needs from disadvantaged backgrounds. The charity provides holidays or outings for over 12,000 children with special needs each year.

RELIGIOUS BUILDINGS

5n. GUILDFORD CATHEDRAL The Council recommends a grant of £5,000 to Guildford Cathedral for the West Window Appeal.

5o. ST. WOOLOS CATHEDRAL The Council recommends a grant of £5,000 to St. Woolos Cathedral, Newport for the Rescue Appeal.

END OF SCHEDULE OF NON-MASONIC GRANTS

REPORT OF THE COUNCIL

following its meeting held on 18 July 2007

FOR THE GENERAL MEETING

to be held on

Wednesday, 3 October 2007

MASONIC GRANTS

1. 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
16 May 2007	98	£178,005
20 June 2007	135	£253,982
18 July 2007	133	£236,355

These figures include grants made under Rule 0311.

NON-MASONIC GRANTS

2. The Council proposes the non-Masonic grants set out in the Schedule of Non-Masonic Grants [on pages 6 to 8] and which appear under items 5a. to 5o. of the Agenda for the General Meeting to be held on Wednesday, 3 October 2007.

3. Tsunami Project

One of the five projects that had been identified to receive funds from the Asian Tsunami 2004 Floods Relief Chest had been in two phases, the second of which could not now go ahead. It had been intended that a final balance in the Chest of just over £100,000 would be given to this second phase, but in view of the inability to proceed, due to certain donors failing to complete their promises, and the fact that the first phase had over-run, it had been decided that the money should now be allocated towards the first phase, which is the building of a new school in Hambantota, Sri Lanka.

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:

John Martin	£20,000
Hayden Parry Edwards	£2,722

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.

YORKSHIRE, WEST RIDING, FESTIVAL - 2007

5. The Festival held for The Grand Charity by the Provincial Grand Lodge of Yorkshire, West Riding on Saturday, 28 April 2007 at the Royal Armouries, Leeds, raised £5,022,849. The Council is most grateful to RWBro John K. Clayton, Provincial Grand Master for Yorkshire, West Riding, and the members of his Province for this magnificent achievement.

HEREFORDSHIRE, FESTIVAL - 2008

6. The 23rd Annual Festival to be held on behalf of The Grand Charity will take place on Thursday, 26 June 2008, at the Three Counties Showground, Malvern, under the Presidency of the Provincial Grand Master for Herefordshire. Details of the arrangements may be obtained from the Provincial Grand Secretary.

GRAHAME N. ELLIOTT
President
18 July 2007

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, 28 JUNE 2007 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, particularly those of you for whom it is your first visit to Great Queen Street and this amazing building, or if this is your first attendance at a Grand Charity meeting.

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 assists mainly in educational needs of children of Masonic families with grants last year of over £7 million.

The Royal Masonic Benevolent Institution - which cares and supports Freemasons and their dependents, mostly through their 17 residential homes with a turnover of over £30 million. Tonight we particularly welcome my colleague as a President, Willie Shackell, who has just been appointed as their President.

The Masonic Samaritan Fund - which principally looks after the costs of private medical treatment for those who are on long waiting lists for the National Health, and they now, ladies and gentlemen, have reserves of £30 million through the giving of Masons to that Charity. Our congratulations go to Hugh Stubbs, their new President, a former Trustee of The Freemasons' Grand Charity.

As mentioned at the Annual General Meeting, these three Charities are moving from across the road to join The Freemasons' Grand Charity (which is already in this building) in our joint move to the lower ground floor. This project is progressing well after the usual building start up problems. All the Charities in that floor will be equal and are already beginning to work very well together in our mutual best interests as well as for the Craft in general.

In that respect, I think I would like to pay tribute to two members of the Craft who are helping with the project enormously. One is a member of our own Council, Paul Richards, and the other is Gary Horstman, a Cheshire Mason, who is here tonight, for their unstinting time and expertise they have brought to the project on behalf of all the four Charities.

The Freemasons' Grand Charity covers the more general charitable needs of not only Masons but also non-Masonic Charities. It is administered by a Council of 30 members, all but four of whom are here tonight. All of them take an active part in one of the four sub-Committees. We represent Masons from all areas of England, Wales and the Channel Islands.

I am also delighted that my predecessor is here tonight. Raymond Lye was very much responsible for actually making the project I have just mentioned come about. It is lovely to see him and his wife, Sheila, here and we thank you for all that you did when you were President.

The Charity itself is a major part of organized Freemasonry. Since the very beginnings, through the Board of Benevolence, nearly 300 years ago; from which 26 years ago, The Freemasons' Grand Charity was constructed, taking over the former Board's funds and activities. The achievements of the Charity in its first 25 years were the subject of the General Meeting here last year. I hope that you will all have in your pack this year's Annual Review. All Masons will have received a copy with their MQ magazine, but we hope that our visitors will also take home copy and show it to anybody, Masonic or non-Masonic, who you believe will be interested. We really do want to let people know what The Grand Charity and Freemasons, through the Charity, do for non-Masonic activities.

If I may, I would like to draw your attention to page 2 in the booklet, which refers to the main objects of The Freemasons' Grand Charity. They are

- to help Masons and their dependants – and last year, The Grand Charity provided £2.4 million in that connection
- to assist other Masonic charities in times of need and this year we are facilitating the other Charities moving into this building. We are already in here and the other Charities have taken the initiative of moving from their premises on the other side of the road and moving in with us
- to provide the central channel for giving to non-Masonic causes – and last year, we gave £2.2 million on behalf of Masons to non-Masonic causes and that is described in that Annual Review
- and to provide relief throughout the world to those affected by major disasters – in the last 12 months we have given £100,000 in that connection.

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 29 Masons who have to date chosen to opt-out of membership. There is no membership fee, but near all Lodges pay an Annual Contribution to the Charity, which last year amounted to approximately £2.5 million, in respect of each member of the Lodge, whether or not he has chosen to opt-out of membership.

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

Of course, none of the grants that we shall hear about today would be possible without the generosity of individual Freemasons and their families. Other than the Annual Contribution, which I have just mentioned, the work of The Freemasons' Grand Charity is mostly funded through Festivals. These are fund-raising activities in different Provinces throughout the country. This year the Province of Yorkshire, West Riding, achieved the highest Festival total that The Freemasons' Grand Charity has ever received. It was £5,022,000, which was raised within the Province within their Festival, which was approximately six years. This magnificent achievement is so supportive to our Charity. The Council and I are extremely grateful for this generosity and I am very glad to have the opportunity tonight to thank the Provincial Grand Master, John Clayton, and his Brethren for that achievement.

Just over 20 years ago, The Grand Charity developed what is known as the Relief Chest Scheme. This is now a major service to the Craft, increasing in importance to the extent that over 35,000 transactions, including Gift Aid claims, are now handled each month by the Charity, by way of receipts (totalling over £527,000 each month) and on average 250 donations are paid out on behalf of the Relief Chest holders, on their instructions, amounting to £200,000 a month. There are now 3,800 Relief Chests in operation. Our thanks go to the Finance Manager, Suhail Alam, and his team. It has been a tremendous achievement and was planned years before I was even in the Craft. It has taken a long time to come to fruition and it is developing well. Over £30 million is held in the Scheme and every penny remains under the control of the Lodges or other bodies in whose name the Chests are opened. An updated and very readable new version of the Scheme's Operating Manual has just been published and will be sent to all Lodges over the coming months.

Before we move to the formal part of the meeting, which is set out in the yellow booklet, and which I hope you all have in you pack, I wish to thank the members of the Metropolitan Grand Lodge who have given their support for this evening's event and particularly welcome the Deputy Metropolitan Grand Master, our friend Russell Race, who will use this opportunity to explain to us London's charitable activities, through their own Charitable Trust, and also tell us about London's special appeal for the Royal Masonic Benevolent Institution (RMBI). The members of the Council and I are most grateful to them for their support.

I do hope that you will find this meeting interesting, informative and above all, which must be in Freemasonry - enjoyable. Thank you for coming.

CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

The minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on Wednesday, 14 March 2007 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 here last March – the minutes are included in the yellow booklet, which you all have. The report of our Council meeting held on 18 April 2007 is set out on pages 9 and 10 of the booklet.

The Charity now uses its working name of "The Freemasons' Grand Charity". This is to obtain greater awareness and recognition, both in the Craft and from people outside, of what we are about – particularly with regard to the non-Masonic giving made possible by Masons' generosity. We hope that by using this name we will achieve greater understanding of Masons interest in charity, not only for our own needs but also for those of the outside world. Thus stimulating greater interest in Freemasonry, particularly amongst the younger generation.

Under Item 3 of the Agenda, I now propose that the whole of the Report is taken as read and, with the exception of paragraph 6 and the Schedule of Non-Masonic Grants, which will be dealt with later, propose that they are adopted and entered in the minutes.

The motion was seconded by the
Deputy President (WBro Brian D. Kelly, PJGD)
and agreed by the members.

APPROVAL OF GRANTS

PRESIDENT OF THE GRAND CHARITY: Item 4 on your Agenda is non-Masonic grants. Deputy Grand President and Members, we will now deal with the 14 non-Masonic Grants recommended under Agenda Item 4. To give us some further insight, I will, with your permission, Deputy Grand President, call upon our wonderful Chief Executive, Laura Chapman, to tell us something about the process undertaken by the Council, before recommendations are voted upon. Ladies and Gentlemen, Laura Chapman.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OF THE GRAND CHARITY: Deputy Grand President, Madam Mayor, ladies and gentlemen.

I am very pleased to add my welcome to all of you who are joining us here this evening 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 members are asked to approve the Council's recommendation for the 14 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. Although local and Provincial Lodges donate money to literally thousands of charities, these donations tend to be quite small and limited geographically. It was envisioned that The Freemasons' Grand Charity would make grants that would complement this local giving by being of a scale both financially and geographically beyond the scope of local or even Provincial Lodges.

In its first 25 years, the Charity has made grants totalling more than £35 million to a wide range of social welfare and medical research charities. The Council, when deciding which charities to support, is very aware of its responsibility to you, the Craft, who provide the funding for these grants - grants that in 2006 totalled more than £2.2m. 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 the national charities.

Before a grant is put to a general meeting, as it is here today, for approval, it is very 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 results, which the project is destined to do. 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 introduced a number of initiatives over the last several years to work more closely with Provinces - to provide support for causes that are particularly important to them. Two years ago we introduced a scheme of matching Provincial grants, to a maximum of £5,000 per Province to charities that meet our guidelines.

Last year we earmarked £180,000 for support for all Air Ambulance services across the country and this spring PGMs have been presenting cheques, often augmented by their Provincial fund-raising for these local service.

Masonic support for air ambulance services is probably surpassed only by its support for hospices. Since 1984 The Freemasons' Grand Charity has given nearly £6.5 million for the operating costs of adult and children's hospice services throughout England and Wales. All of these grants are made via the Provincial office.

Now, turning to the yellow Paper of Business, you will see that under item 4, the 14 recommended grants are grouped under the main categories of support of the Freemasons' Grand Charity: disability, vulnerable people, youth opportunities and medical research. You also will be informed of one Emergency Grant; the President of The Grand Charity is authorised to make these grants between general meetings, to that we can contribute immediately to the relief efforts, immediately after a disaster.

The President will now seek your approval for these 14 grants.

DISABILITY

I CAN The Council recommends a grant of £50,000 to I CAN as a contribution towards the costs of a new independent assessment centre in Nottingham for children with severe communication disabilities. Early assessment and targeted support can help children to overcome early language difficulties or receive appropriate support for their needs. The Centre will provide multi-disciplinary assessment by special educational needs teachers, speech and language therapists and educational psychologists.

MACULAR DISEASE SOCIETY The Council recommends a grant of £50,000 payable in equal instalments over two years to The Macular Disease Society to fund training in eccentric viewing techniques for older people with failing eyesight. Eccentric viewing and steady eye strategies maximise the use of peripheral vision and the training will teach individuals who suffer from macular disease to identify the exact location of their vision loss and to utilise the area of the retina that provides the clearest image.

SENSE The Council recommends a grant of £30,000 to SENSE to fund the salary of a coordinator in the eastern region for older people with acquired deafblindness. SENSE provides specialist services enabling deafblind people to live as independently as possible. The role of coordinator is part of a three-year campaign to raise awareness, especially amongst service providers and professionals, of the needs of older people with sight and hearing difficulties.

BAG BOOKS The Council recommends a grant of £24,800 payable over three years to Bag Books to fund the *Story-Go-Round* project providing storytelling packs for use in local libraries. The charity develops and produces multi-sensory packs, with sounds and smells and textures, for children with the most profound and complex disabilities. The project will provide 100 free multi-sensory packs to community libraries and teach library staff how to use them with severely disabled children.

WHEELPOWER - BRITISH WHEELCHAIR SPORT The Council recommends a grant of £15,000 to WheelPower – British Wheelchair Sport to support the *SportStart* programme for recently paralysed individuals. WheelPower encourages the use of sport to aid rehabilitation and as a means of preventative healthcare leading to greater independence. About 1,200 people become paralysed due to an accident or illness each year and the programme aims to benefit 800 people by introducing them to the most suitable wheelchair sports.

VULNERABLE PEOPLE

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.

EXTRACARE CHARITABLE TRUST The Council recommends a grant of £15,000 to ExtraCare Charitable Trust to support a research project into a model of care for older people with dementia in sheltered housing. The charity provides sheltered accommodation and nursing care for older people with a range of 'ExtraCare' activities. The research project will employ specialist staff in ten sheltered housing schemes as a pilot to develop and evaluate a model of care for older people with dementia.

COUNSEL AND CARE The Council recommends a grant of £15,000 to Counsel and Care to contribute to an advice service and fact sheets produced to support older people. Counsel and Care is a relatively small charity providing detailed information and advice for older people on housing, welfare, care and benefits together with a personal advocacy service.

RE-SOLV The Council recommends a grant of £10,000 to Re-Solv to produce educational packs on the dangers of substance abuse for primary schools. Research shows that younger children are experimenting with solvent abuse and that those who use volatile substances when they are young are more susceptible to drug abuse in later life. The grant would pay for sample packs to be distributed free to 30,000 children.

NEW PHILANTHROPY CAPITAL The Council recommends a grant of £10,000 to New Philanthropy Capital (NPC) to part-fund a research project to identify drug, alcohol and other substance abuse programmes that are effective and deserving of charitable support. NPC is a charity that carries out independent research in the charitable sector in order to advise donors as to where funds can be most effectively targeted.

YOUTH OPPORTUNITIES

CENTREPOINT The Council recommends a grant of £70,000 payable in equal instalments over two years to Centrepoint to fund the rollout of a partnering project for the *Centrepoint Model* with four local youth homelessness charities. The Freemasons' Grand Charity previously part-funded the initial pilot project in the northeast. The charity works with young homeless people providing support, training and advice as well as accommodation.

MEDICAL RESEARCH

PARKINSON'S DISEASE SOCIETY The Council recommends a grant of £170,000 payable over three years towards a medical research project by Professor Wood at the Institute of Neurology, London to study the PINK1 gene which, when mutated, causes Parkinson's disease. About 120,000 people in the UK suffer from Parkinson's Disease.

FIGHT FOR SIGHT The Council recommends a grant of £40,000 payable in equal instalments over two years to Fight for Sight to fund a medical research project at the Institute of Ophthalmology. The charity is dedicated to research into blindness and treatment of eye disease and the grant would pay for research into abnormal blood vessel growth investigating the factors that control macrophages in the retina. The research will be relevant for age-related macular disease and diabetic retinopathy.

INTERNATIONAL SPINAL RESEARCH TRUST The Council recommends a grant of £20,000 to the International Spinal Research Trust to support a medical research project at Cambridge into the use of chondroitinase enzyme in the removal of scar tissue, which stop nerves from regrowing and reconnecting. The charity carries out research into treatments that will restore movement and sensation after paralysis caused by a broken neck or back as a result of traffic or sporting accidents or violent attacks.

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, as there doesn't seem to be any dissention about it, I shall move forward and move that Agenda Items 4a. to 4n., totalling, Brethren, £569,800, be approved.

The motion was seconded by the Deputy President
and agreed by the members.

EMERGENCY GRANTS

PRESIDENT OF THE GRAND CHARITY: Deputy Grand President and Members. As shown on the Agenda at Item 5, I have to report that under the powers given to the President, a grant of £50,000 to the British Red Cross has recently been authorised in response to their appeal to support relief work in Darfur. This donation was the first to be received by the Red Cross to be spent directly by them through their aid workers in Dafur to assist in that area of total deprivation, which, I believe, is a clear example of cruelty to innocent people on a world scale. The Red Cross were looking for £2 million and so far I am sorry to tell you that the support is lamentable. Anyway, at least, ladies and gentlemen, I hope the Brethren will feel that the first to respond to this launch was something Masons can feel justifiably proud about.

I might add, under consideration at the moment, is a more local disaster, in that if it turns out to justify a flood disaster appeal, it might be that people in Yorkshire who are suffering greatly, might benefit, and I am sure you would all approve of that after their generosity to us.

SPEAKERS

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

DR KENNETH HARVEY: No one can predict personal calamity, poverty, disaster, sickness and bad luck, but it could affect anyone of us without warning. If disaster strikes The Grand Charity's Masonic Relief Grants Committee is there to assist distressed Brethren and their dependants.

In 2006, 1,775 Masons and their families successfully sought help from The Grand Charity, which assisted them with grants of between £300 and £4,000. The average grant was £1,491, at a total cost to The Grand Charity of nearly £2.5 million.

The Masonic Relief Grants Committee meets every month and considers an average of 186 applications per meeting. 2,522 applications were considered last year.

All masons in financial distress are eligible to apply, plus their wives, widows, partners and dependents, even if the Mason had resigned or has been excluded for non-payment of subscriptions. Recently The Grand Charity assisted a widow whose husband had died one month after his initiation, leaving her with three children and a huge financial problem. The only exception is those expelled by Grand Lodge. Even then, their dependants may be assisted if they are distressed. Two such families were assisted last year.

Grants are awarded to Masons and their dependents to assist with essential daily living expenses; disability equipment such as wheelchairs, stair-lifts, showers, all of which are maintained and fully insured. Emergencies can be relieved within 24 hours with a telephone call to The Grand Charity office. If applicants have minimal savings, grants can be given for minor repairs and basic household furniture and equipment. Also, funeral costs. Simple things such as a cooker or new carpet make a huge difference to an applicant's quality of life. Recently a Mason was discharged from hospital after three months to discover that his wife had left, removed all the furniture and sold the house. He was given a grant to furnish his new flat.

We are fortunate to have on our Committee a member who is an expert State Benefits. Thus, as well as grants, the Committee may suggest that some applicants may wish to test their entitlement to additional State Benefits. As an example:- a Lodge Almoner took two years of patiently visiting a proud and private widow to discover that she was only claiming a basic pension, without additional benefits, and paying £10 per month for her late husband's funeral. The Grand Charity made a grant, covered the funeral costs, and the Almoner helped her claim additional State Benefits.

Grants are annually renewable and there is no limit to the number of grants an individual may receive over a lifetime. Assistance will continue until distress is resolved. Last year we supported a Masonic widow, whose husband had died 60 years ago.

3% of our applications come from abroad from Lodges affiliated to Grand Lodge – half from Indian subcontinent. We even had our first application from Fiji this year.

In April 2007, new guidelines for Masonic Relief Grants were approved. The Grand Charity considered that costs, especially food, heating and clothing for poor applicants, had increased over the last few years, affecting the poorer members of society more significantly, and this was reflected in an above inflation increase.

The single person's guideline was increased by 10.2% to £7,800 and the couple's guideline was increased by 4.4% to £10,972. The savings levels remain at £10,000 (single person) & £15,000 (couple). The level of grants has also been raised. The minimum grant is now £350 and the maximum grant is now £4,500; whilst the exceptional or super-maximum rises to £6,000.

Our guidelines are not rigid rules, but lines of compassion. Grants are well spread over the UK. London, with 1559 Lodges, received 148 grants, of which 33 were new applications. Thus there was one grant for every 11 Lodges, at a total cost of approximately £275,000. This is just below the average rate of one grant per seven Lodges, but in view of the large number of Lodges and the geographic spread of London Brethren, it is a highly commendable result.

82% of all grants are for those aged 60 or older. 18% of all grants, are given to families of working age, often where the breadwinner is killed or seriously injured, or suddenly disabled by illness. These grants can go on for many, many years.

We are still giving grants to less than half of one percent of all Masons and their dependants. We believe that there are many more who need help, so that is why we all must become unofficial Deputy Almoners for our Lodges. If you are concerned about a Mason or his dependants, a very simple way to calculate eligibility for a Masonic Relief Grant is that anyone who receives additional help with State Benefits is likely to be eligible for assistance, provided that the savings limits are not exceeded.

The Committee is grateful to the extremely hard work performed by our dedicated and knowledgeable staff. Credit must also be given to Lodge and Provincial Grand Almoners and to the Visiting Brethren who are all volunteers, often without specialised knowledge of the State systems.

Remember, if we miss even one poor and distressed Brother, or his dependants, we are failing in our duty. The Grand Charity, your Charity, is there to assist our distressed Brethren and their families, and we thank you for your support.

GUEST SPEAKERS

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OF THE GRAND CHARITY: Professor Colin Cooper holds “The Grand Charity of Freemasons Chair of Molecular Biology” at the Institute of Cancer Research. This was established by a grant of £1 million from The Grand Charity for research into testicular and prostate cancers. Professor Cooper is Chairman of the section of molecular carcinogenesis at the Institute of Cancer Research and he has a special interest in molecular genetics. As a result of his department’s work, the Institute of Cancer Research is responsible for the discovery of more cancer related genes than any other organisation in the world. Professor Cooper is a male cancer specialist and is Chairman of the National Cancer Research Institute’s South of England Prostate Cancer Research Collaborative Centre. Given this most impressive list of credentials, you might expect a very dry and academic lecture from him, but those of us who have had the privilege of listening to Professor Cooper previously know that he has the rarest of abilities in a scientist – to make the most complex and sophisticated research understandable to us mere mortals.

Professor Colin Cooper outlined the programme laid down and the progress that had been made to date.

PRESIDENT OF THE GRAND CHARITY: We now welcome the Deputy Metropolitan Grand Master, Russell Race – a very good friend to this Charity. He is also a member of the Council of the Royal Masonic Benevolent Institution. The members of The Grand Charity’s Council and I are most grateful for the support London has given us this evening and it gives me great pleasure to introduce Russell Race, who will tell us about the current and future plans for London’s own charitable giving.

DEPUTY METROPOLITAN GRAND MASTER: Deputy Grand President, Madam Mayor, ladies and gentlemen, Members of The Grand Charity.

Can I thank you, Brother President, for this opportunity of giving an outline of the progress of charitable giving by London Masons since Metropolitan Grand Lodge was inaugurated in October 2003.

Charity, of course, takes many forms. As I travelled on the tube this morning, I was somewhat surprised to be offered a seat by a young man. Still pondering whether my appearance and general decrepitude justified such a kindly gesture, I was confronted on the Strand by a collector for Help the Aged. As I began to get the message, I put a coin in the box and passed swiftly on my way to the office! The simple message from my experience is that Charity encompasses not only monetary giving, but also what has been called a "good deed in a naughty world". We should never lose sight of the need to give of ourselves, as well as our money, to worthy causes.

Nonetheless monetary contributions are vital to the wellbeing of all good causes. Within London over the last four years, we have made strides to redress the balance between Masonic and non-Masonic donations – as well seeking to increase the total amount given each year by our Brethren individually, and by their Lodges.

Building London as an autonomous Masonic body, after over 250 years of being run directly by Grand Lodge, is not a short-term task, but one of the best ways in which we can foster a strong family feeling among the London Masonic community, is by uniting in support of a worthwhile charitable aim. As London Masons will be aware, we have been doing just that in the last couple of years, by giving focused support – with the agreement of all the Charity Presidents - to the Royal Masonic Benevolent Institution. This charity provides residential and nursing accommodation to some 1,100 elderly masons and their dependents in 17 homes around the country – and it provides an unparalleled level of care and security to all its residents.

Our Appeal for the RMBI, which will run until early 2009, is gaining momentum. As of today our total stands at over £2.1 million. However, given our London membership of 45,000, the half term report on the Appeal would probably read "could do a little better" - but I have no doubt the level of donations will accelerate as we enter the final phase, and I must congratulate all London Masons who have given generously to the appeal thus far.

After this Appeal is concluded in 2009, there will be a pause for breath, before London again lends support for a defined period to whichever of the Masonic Charities is then most in need. I do not anticipate London entering into the Provincial Festival matrix for the four Charities, but rather acting as a potent resource to fill in funding gaps thrown up by the Festival system.

As regards non-Masonic giving in London, many London Lodges have given, and continue to give, generously to local charities with which their members have a particular link. Richard House Children's Hospice, which has a stand here today, has received consistent and large-scale support in recent years and is a good example of one such charity.

We are now channelling most of our donations to community good causes in London through our own London Masonic Charitable Trust. This enables us to give worthwhile sums to the nominated major projects within the Metropolis, whilst individual Lodges can still support smaller, local charities. In the year just finishing, the LMCT has given some £40,000 to seven nominated charities and I anticipate that this figure will grow steadily in the years ahead.

Recipients of donations certainly appreciate regular giving, as well as one-off gifts, as this enables them to plan ahead more easily. We have with us this evening, representatives of two organisations that we have been able to support in this way over a number of years.

First, St Paul's Cathedral. Many of you will be aware of the major restoration work, which has been undertaken in recent times to the exterior of this iconic building. The ongoing nature of that work, as well as day-to-day refurbishment, means that the Cathedral has its own masons' yard, and we have been delighted to support them by paying the salary of an apprentice stonemason, Michael Crocker, for the last three years. Canon Edmund Newell will tell you something of the Cathedral's work in this area.

Secondly, Moorfields Eye Hospital. The hospital is an international centre of excellence in its field and constantly strives to improve the level of service it offers to the many thousands of patients who attend there every year. The provision of a new wing for children's care has been a major recent initiative at Moorfields and substantial donations from London Masons have helped to pay for some of the very specialised – and very expensive – new equipment in that wing. Professor Khaw, a Consultant Ophthalmologist, will give you an insight into the work of the hospital for its younger patients.

Both St Paul's and Moorfields have display stands in the vestibule where you will see more of their activities and have an opportunity to talk to this

evening's speakers and, in the case of St Paul's, to the Clerk of Works, Martin Fletcher, and to the apprentice stonemason, Michael Crocker.

Dr Edmund Newell, Canon Chancellor of St Paul's Cathedral and Director
of St Paul's Institute

and

Professor Peng Tee Khaw, Consultant Ophthalmologist and Professor of
Glaucoma and Ocular Healing at Moorfields Eye Hospital

elaborated on the work of their respective projects, which the attendees
received and showed appreciation for in the usual way.

PRESIDENT OF THE GRAND CHARITY: Deputy Grand President, Madam Mayor, ladies, gentlemen and Members. My thanks to Russell Race and to all the speakers from whom we have heard this evening and the support we have received from London in organising this meeting. My thanks on behalf of all Masons, to the members of the Council of the Grand Charity, all of whom take an active part on one or more of our hard working sub-Committees. Thank you also to you Madam Mayor and everyone who has come this evening to support us. I hope that when you are outside in a few moments you will take time to stop and look at the Charity display stands and to chat to the various representatives who have given up their time so freely to be with us this evening.

Finally, and most especially, Deputy Grand President, I would like to thank you once again for agreeing to Chair this General Meeting, and for your continued support throughout the year. Also, thank you to Lady Northampton, for gracing us with your attendance this evening.

CLOSING ADDRESS

DEPUTY GRAND PRESIDENT: Madam Mayor, distinguished guests, ladies, gentlemen and Brethren.

We have heard about the work of The Grand Charity this afternoon, both from those who administer the Charity on behalf of all Masons in England and Wales, and from some of the beneficiaries who have made use of our money. We have also heard about the charitable activities of London Masons. What you have not heard, is anything about Freemasonry itself and I would like to end by saying something about this quite remarkable Order.

It is a very different Freemasonry today to what it was 25 years ago. In those days Masons would never discuss what they did, even with their families, and Grand Lodge answered enquiries, however, genuine, with the words "no comment". An air of secrecy surrounded the Craft, which provided fertile ground for myths and half-truths. One of the criticisms levelled against us was that we only helped our own. There would be nothing wrong with that if it were true, but as you have heard today, it is another of those myths that we need to dispel.

In the late 1980s it was recognised that that culture of silence did not serve us well and great efforts were made to change the public's perception of us as an organisation. It was not an easy task as old habits die hard, but it is happening and after 20 years we are at last getting our message across and are more than happy to tell anyone about the Freemasonry that we all enjoy.

We have only three ceremonies. The first is based on morality and the importance of an ethical code of behaviour as the foundation for a worthy life. With over 320,000 members worldwide it is not surprising that there are some who fail to live up to our high standards. Thankfully they are very few and they get expelled. The second ceremony deals with the importance of education and training the intellect as a means of living a more fulfilling life. One of our other Charities helps over 3,000 children in full or part-time education. The third ceremony deals with the importance of trust and integrity and furthermore explains that to fear death limits the potential for living life to the full. All three ceremonies are full of symbolic teachings and there is hardly a single thing in Freemasonry that does not have a deeper meaning. Heart and light both play an important part in our teaching.

We are a very tolerant organisation, accepting all men of good faith, whatever their status, colour, nationality, religion or political persuasion. We forbid any discussion of a religious or political nature in our Lodges to preserve harmony amongst our members. Our three principals on which the order is founded are brotherly love, charity and integrity and a good Mason should demonstrate all of those qualities in his everyday life.

With such good credentials you may wonder why Masons used to be so secret about themselves. The answer is that many of them during many different wars have been hunted down and killed just for being Masons and this was brought home to me very vividly when I visited the Grand Lodge of Spain earlier this year. Be that as it may, you will now see Masons with their own stands at county shows all around the country. We hold regular open days at our centres and we enjoy telling people what we do. Much of it, as you have heard today, is concerned with charity and helping those less fortunate than ourselves. We raise the majority of our charitable money from holding Festivals in our Provinces, which equate to our counties and this year alone, Masons in four of them have raised nearly £15 million for worthy causes. The Masons in Nottinghamshire alone raised more than £1,000 from every member in that Province.

I hope that you have enjoyed the meeting this afternoon and I would like thank all those who have taken part and enlightened us on the work that they do. Madam Mayor, ladies, gentlemen and Brethren, I thank you for attending today, I hope you will go way with a better understanding of what Freemasonry is about and there being no further business, I declare the meeting closed.

END

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