

THE LINCOLNSHIRE MASONIC CHARITY ASSOCIATION

MEETING THURSDAY 12TH SEPTEMBER 2019

PROVINCIAL GRAND CHARITY STEWARD'S REPORT

Charity Stewards

As well as my other duties, I continue to provide support to the Lodge Charity Stewards and have assisted where they have had problems. They are kept up to date with Newsletters and, prior to Installation meetings, each receives a breakdown of what has happened in the Province so that they can use the information in their toast to Masonic Charities or pass the information on to brethren in their reports. I pay tribute to them for their hard work and dedication.

LMCA

We continue to have good support from Lodges and brethren. However, when we did the last analysis, over each of the last four years, of between 12 and 18 Lodges, there is no record of the Lodge having held a collection for LMCA. In 25 Lodges, LMCA collections are held at less than 15% of the meetings. I find this disappointing as every Lodge in the Province can apply for yearly grants and it would be nice to think that every Lodge was fully supporting the LMCA. I thank the brethren in those Lodges who individually contribute directly to LMCA via standing order. On the positive side, almost 55% of Lodges have collections for LMCA at half or more of their meetings.

We were able to support the recent flooding disaster in Wainfleet. Three grants of £25,000 each, were made from the Province of Lincolnshire, the Mark Benevolent Fund, and the Masonic Charitable Foundation. This has been further supported by Somerset and Essex and also Lodges within this Province.

I thought it might be of interest for you to see the top ten beneficiaries from the annual NPBF grants which have been funded by LMCA since 2005 up to and including 2018

Charity	Total funding
LIVES	£12,900
When You Wish Upon A Star	£12,435
Lincs & Notts Air Ambulance Charitable Trust	£9,650
Lincolnshire & Nottinghamshire Air Ambulance	£8,500
South Lincolnshire Blind Society	£8,150
St. Barnabas Hospice Trust	£6,400
Marie Curie Cancer Care	£6,350
St. Andrew's Childrens Hospice	£5,985
Butterfly Hospice Trust	£5,750
Holbeach & E. Elloe Hospital Trust	£5,750

The Trustees recently met to decide this year's grants. I understand details of those grants will be available at this meeting. As one of those Trustees it was pleasing to see the thought and care that had gone into Lodge nominations. Virtually all were able to show a benefit to the community or disadvantaged groups.

Once again my thanks to Lorraine Miller and W Bro Paul Ellis for all their help and support with the administration of LMCA.

Masonic Charitable Foundation

The Masonic Charitable Foundation has continued to provide support to the Province and as I have reported in the past, grants totalling £12,805 were awarded - £3,805 to five hospices, £5,000 to a centre for rough sleepers and homeless persons in NE Lincolnshire and £4,000 to Lincolnshire & Nottinghamshire Air Ambulance Charitable Trust. MCF has made an award of £5,000 per year for three years for 'Friendship at Home' a charity in N E Lincolnshire for isolated people over 60 years. In addition Age UK Lindsey has been selected as one of the Age UK local partners and will be supported with a grant of £63,000. The grant will fund Age UK over the next three years, to help 750 elderly people improve their wellbeing and increase their independence. MCF made a grant of £19,240 to St Barnabas Hospice Lincolnshire for a project 'Coping with bereavement in Lincoln's Homeless Community'. The PGM recently visited the YMCA centre in Lincoln to mark that grant and was told this is the first type of bereavement support of this kind in the Country.

2025 Festival

It is now six months since I presented my first report to this meeting and at that meeting the PGM confirmed the date of the 2025 Festival. As you are aware, W Bro Jez Hyland has been chairing meetings of the Festival Committee and whilst it is not my role nor right to report in detail what the decisions of that Committee are, nevertheless I feel you need to be aware of the general direction preparations for the Festival launch in January next year are progressing.

In his recent letter to all Lodge Secretaries, the PGM invited Lodges to consider the best approach for them. He said:

'.....our fund-raising aspirations will require sustained effort by our Lodge Charity Stewards. I would therefore suggest that your Lodge committee works out the best approach for your Lodge. It may be that the present Charity Steward relishes the task, and is looking forward to it; he may want to step down and let someone else take over; you may want to appoint a deputy or a team to work with him; or you may want to appoint a dedicated Festival Charity Steward'

I fully support what he said and would further add that many of our Lodge Charity Stewards have a wealth of experience and knowledge and are more than capable of rising to the task but it is their decision and a decision I hope the Lodges will support in the best interest of the Charity Steward and the Festival.

The tone of this Festival will be one of enjoying and benefitting from the experience. There will be neither targets nor league tables. You will be given an idea of what contribution your Lodge may wish to make to help meet the overall £2.25 million but there will be no unfair pressure on you. The aim is that the next five years will be fun.

For my part I have drawn up and arranged three training sessions to specifically give Charity and Festival Stewards the knowledge and skills to play their part. Those sessions will have a number of speakers, including MCF representatives, and the speakers will give Charity Stewards the knowledge and detail they need. The means by which brethren can donate and how those donations will be dealt with has been given considerable thought and we have designed it to be as simple and straight forward as possible. It is important though that the Charity Steward or the Festival Steward, or indeed both, attend one of those sessions.

I am specifically responsible on the Festival Committee for looking after the interests of Charity Stewards and that will continue during the course of the Festival as will my support for each and everyone one of the Charity Stewards on a day to day basis. I am very much aware that Charity Stewards have duties in addition to those involving the Festival. We are doing all we can to ensure their role is as easy and smooth as we can make it. To that end, Lodge Charity/Festival Stewards will have Area Co-ordinators, experienced and senior Freemasons who are there to support and guide on a local basis.

I recently had the pleasure of addressing a meeting of Grand Officers and Officers of Supreme Grand Chapter and in that address I urged them all to give meaningful support to Lodge Charity Stewards and to encourage the brethren to support them and acknowledge the difficult and important job they do in Lodges. I ended by saying

'In five years' time I am confident we will be congratulating a brilliant and effective team of Charity and Festival Stewards who, through hard work and dedication, have guided this Province to raise well in excess of £2.25 million.'

Brethren, I truly believe that. During the last eleven months in this role I have come to realise that the majority of Charity Stewards do a brilliant job, they are committed to their role, they give a great deal of their time and they do it willingly and without looking for accolades. I take this opportunity to thank them all.

W Bro Peter Tong PProvSGW

Provincial Grand Charity Steward