



Province of Yorkshire, West Riding

Provincial Charity Committee

Notes for Lodge Charity Stewards when delivering a Charity Address

Charity Stewards should consider different ways of addressing their lodge members when making their charity address. Traditionally the address has been made on Scroll Night but as the subject is so large, perhaps two or three addresses per year would be more appropriate.

An alternative to a formal lecture could be a Charities Quiz Night, or a Questions and Answers Evening (first preparing certain brethren with questions you would like to answer). Above all, addresses should be interesting and informative without too much emphasis on statistics and where possible introducing an element discussing beneficiaries who the brethren can relate to, without giving personal information away. Another idea is to invite a representative of any local charity you have assisted to explain at the Festive Board how the grant has been put to work.

It has been shown that holding a themed Festive Board, such as an Old England Night, following a Charities Address is a successful way of increasing attendance.

Charity Addresses are given in addition to the Charity Stewards monthly report, which deals with Charity News, often from either The Masonic Charitable Foundation (MCF) or the Provincial Grand Masters Fund (PGMF), relating to grants both home and abroad or updates when the Province is in Festival. The Provincial Charity Committee’s Newsletter is published approximately every other month, which also is a useful source of information. If there is no news, use the report to thank the brethren for their “continued support of Masonic Charities”.

As petitions for help to the MCF in particular involve the Lodge Almoner, it would be useful to involve him in your address as he may have personal experience, which will help with specific questions. At the end of these notes are some genuine situations, which illustrate examples of Almoner’s work.

These notes are a framework to allow you to pick, which aspects of Masonic Charities you wish to address. Do your research on line where you will also find up to date statistics and contact details.

The MCF is always happy to discuss any promotional material they have which will help with your address.

The Main Masonic Charities.

	West Riding Masonic Charities Ltd – WRMCL Including the PGM’s Fund, CHOICES and Teddies for Loving Care - TLC	WRMCL
	The Masonic Charitable Foundation - MCF incorporating the four previous central charities	MCF
	RMBI Care Homes Ltd - RMBI	RMBI Care Homes

West Riding Masonic Charities Ltd. Inc'. CHOICES, The PGMF and TLC

Up to date information is available from your Provincial Charity Assistant, WRMCL and the Provincial Web Site.

WRMCL is the designated charity of the Masonic Province of Yorkshire, West Riding. It is a charitable company limited by guarantee deriving all its funds from the voluntary contributions of Freemasons (and their families) within the Province of Yorkshire, West Riding.

The Charity:

- Makes emergency grants available to qualifying Freemasons and their dependants and also provides grants to beneficiaries who do not qualify for Central Masonic Charity support. Birthday and Christmas gifts are also provided.
- Works closely with the Provincial Grand Almoner to help identify those in need and how any assistance may best be given.
- Provides the services of a Welfare Visitor who maintains contact with all beneficiaries who are receiving masonic support and who are connected with the Province of Yorkshire, West Riding.
- Endeavours to develop schemes and services to support the frail and vulnerable within the Province.
- Responds rapidly to provide emergency assistance for local or national disasters.
- Is pleased to provide Match Funding when monies distributed by MCF to a National Charity are destined for local branches within the Province of Yorkshire, West Riding e.g. Yorkshire Air Ambulance.

It also provides grants for non-masonic communities within the Province of Yorkshire, West Riding through the Provincial Grand Master's Fund (PGMF) and 'the Teddies for Loving Care (TLC) Initiative.

WRMCL acts as a conduit to the National Charity (MCF) as well as helping needy brethren locally. Brethren must specify which charity their donations are to be sent to. The options are, WRMCL, the PGMF, TLC, the MCF or one of the four national charities within the MCF. If a brother has no preference he should be encouraged to donate to WRMCL, unless the Province is in Festival.

WRMCL will distribute to good causes within the Province either directly in the case of brethren in need or via CHOICES, or the PGMF. When the Province is in Festival, WRMCL continue to collect donations and send to the relevant Festival Charity.

CHOICES

In October 2015 WRMCL launched the CHOICES initiative – **Community Help Offering Independent Care and Effective Support** to replace, expand and enhance the emergency grant scheme that was in place.

Choices aims to assist those elderly, disabled, lonely or vulnerable West Riding Freemasons their families and other dependents to live independently in their own homes for as long as possible by providing:-

- Urgent minor repairs, small adaptations and general home maintenance through a handyman service
- Short term respite and convalescent care
- Short term help and support with health and social care needs i.e. transport costs to appointments, assistance with specialist equipment etc.
- Identification and alleviation of loneliness

The scheme should be accessed through your Lodge or Provincial Almoner who with assistance and advice from WRMCL Care and Support Officers will identify and suggest the most effective and appropriate assistance for each beneficiary. Your Lodge Almoner will be able to provide further assistance in preparing this part of your address.

Applications will be considered on their individual merits.

Provincial Grand Master's Fund

The PGMF was established in 1987 to enable Craft Lodges and Royal Arch Chapters to nominate Non-Masonic Organisations or Charities in the Province to receive grants for the benefit of the wider community.

Minor grants can be applied for throughout the year and are considered by the PGMF Committee at their meetings which are held quarterly. Minor grants are intended to be **relatively modest** in size and able to make a **significant difference** to the beneficiary. Minor grants may be awarded up to a maximum of £5000 in special circumstances with applications greater than £5000 usually being directed to the **Major Grants** scheme.

Major grants are considered once a year with the closing date for applications being 28th February. The total annual amount available for distribution for major grants is £100,000. All applications in excess of £5000 will be submitted as a major grant. These grants are intended to cover applications from particularly worthy causes who are in need of substantial financial assistance. The distribution of the £100,000 may be made up of a number of smaller grants or one large grant depending on the number and quality of applications received.

During the Tercentenary the total amount of grants available will be £300,000. Brethren wishing to propose a good cause for a grant should particularly consider applications where a relatively small amount will enable a project to be started and which will benefit the community at large. Each petition is assessed on its merits.

Further information on applications is provided in the PGMF Guidance Notes which can be found in the Charity Manual and on the Provincial website.

Teddies for Loving Care

The TLC fund supports the purchase and distribution of small teddy bears and is aimed at comforting distressed children attending the Accident and Emergency departments of Hospitals in the Province. These little bears, we hope, bring comfort and support to children in distress. We have received many heart-warming letters of thanks from appreciative parents and the scheme, which started in 2008, is supported and funded principally by WRMCL. In 2016 the 100,000th Teddy was distributed to children's Accident & Emergency Departments throughout our Province.

The Masonic Charitable Foundation

The MCF came into existence on 1st April 2016 and incorporates the work of the four previous central Masonic Charities, The Freemasons' Grand Charity, Royal Masonic Trust for Girls and Boys, Royal Masonic Benevolent Institution and Masonic Samaritan Fund. Since co-locating to Freemasons Hall in 2008, the central Masonic Charities have developed a strong track-record of working closely together.

Details of the MCF and the services it provides are detailed in the leaflets - MCF What We Do, Your New Masonic Charity Essential Guide, Support for Freemasons and their families, Community Support and Research, Advice, counselling and other support and Masonic Charitable Foundation – Information for Freemasons and their families booklet (the Yellow Book).

Every Freemason contributes to MCF via their Lodge subscriptions, currently £17.00 pa which is sent by the Lodge when Grand Lodge returns are due. The majority of the money raised for MCF is through Festivals. Funded entirely through the generous donations of the Masonic community, the MCF has an annual charitable expenditure which places it amongst the largest charities in the country.

At present should a Brother wish to make a donation to one of the previous four central charities he can do so and no procedural changes are necessary. However, if no preference is stated and a Brother wishes to support the Central Charity, **rather than** WRMCL or the PGMF, the donation should be made to the MCF who will in future fund the four previous central charities.

Support for Freemasons and their Families

The MCF aims to build better lives by enabling opportunity, advancing healthcare and education and promoting independence for Freemasons and their families.

A wide range of help and support is available for Freemasons, their wives, partners, widows, children and grandchildren. Most of the support provided takes the form of financial grants to assist with financial, health or family related needs.

Financial

- Daily living cost
- Grants following an accident, redundancy or personal crisis
- Funeral bills
- Minor home repairs

Health

- Medical treatment
- Dental treatment
- Mobility aids and essential home adaptations
- Respite care
- Counselling

Family – Children in full-time education

- Costs for education or training
- Scholarships, travel grants and student accommodation
- Supporting exceptional talent in sport, music or the performing arts

Family – Care

- Masonic Care Homes, including nursing, residential and dementia care (See 5.6)
- UK holidays

Practical Assistance - the Foundation's Advice and Support Team offer confidential, impartial and practical guidance about the help that can be provided. The team can also help with applications for state and local authority benefits and put Brethren in touch with other organisations who can give advice on care.

Applications for assistance can be made via the Lodge/Provincial Almoner or by direct contact with the MCF which can be made via Freephone 0800 035 60 90 or email help@mcf.org.uk.

Community Support and Research

The MCF's Community Support and Research programme looks beyond Freemasonry, making significant grants which help people to live happy, fulfilling lives and to participate actively in Society. To achieve this aim, grants are awarded to registered charities that provide support in the following areas:

- Financial hardship for those in poverty, debt or unemployment
- Health and disability for people experiencing chronic or life-limiting conditions and disabilities
- Education and employability for disadvantaged children and young people
- Social exclusion and disadvantage for those facing barriers to participating in society

The Foundation also provides funding each year to:

- Advance medical and social research
- Hospices throughout England and Wales
- Air ambulance and rescue services

Hospices receiving grants in the Province are:-

Barnsley Hospice
Bluebell Wood Children's Hospice, Doncaster
Kirkwood Hospice
Manorlands Sue Ryder Care, Oxenhope
Marie Curie Centre, Bradford
Martin House Children's Hospice
Overgate Hospice
Prince of Wales Hospice
Rotherham Hospice
St Gemma's Hospice
St Luke's Hospice
St Michael's Hospice
Wakefield Hospice
Wheatfields Hospice

Funding is also provided to support major natural disaster relief appeals at the discretion of the Foundation.

For more information on the Foundation's Community Support and Research grants and to find out how to apply please visit the MCF website.

RMBI Care Company - Masonic Care Homes

The RMBI Care Company was established following the creation of the Masonic Charitable Foundation to continue to deliver the support and services previously provided by the Royal Masonic Benevolent Institution. The Company is a major provider of high-quality care services for older Freemasons and their family members, as well as some other people in the community. All the 17 Homes can accommodate people with dementia following an assessment of their needs and where more specialist care is needed, a Dementia Support House has been created at several of the Homes.

A resident's care is initially paid out of their own assets, but when these fall to around £23,000 their local authority will make a contribution on a sliding scale, taking full responsibility when the resident's assets fall below £11,000. However, local authority rates are often less than those charged by the RMBI and residents would in normal circumstances be moved to a cheaper, often less satisfactory, home. In these circumstances, the charity takes on the proportion of costs, which the individual had been paying, enabling the resident to stay in the home, in most cases for the rest of their lives. This is at a time in the resident's life when they are old, frail and vulnerable. This can hasten their demise. Residents who chose an RMBI care home have the security of knowing that they have a home for life regardless of any changes to their financial circumstances, as long as the charity can meet their care needs.

The cost to the charity for bridging the difference between the total cost of care and what the state pays is approximately £6 million per year nationally, with approximately £600,000 pa required to cover the costs of residents from within our Province.

Respite care, is available in all RMBI Homes depending on the availability of beds, allowing carers the time to take a much needed break, or giving time for a person time to recover from a hospital stay. Your Lodge Almoner could be brought in to comment on these specific aspects).

In addition to the care homes the RMBI run a jointly funded venture with WRMCL called Harry Priestly House, based at Thorne near Doncaster, which helps young adults with learning disabilities.

Better Lives

Better Lives is the Newsletter of the MCF and is issued twice a year. It contains the latest news from the MCF and provides informative articles on the operations of the Charity. It is recommended that you sign up to receive the Newsletter and other information that is provided periodically by the MCF. This can be done on the MCF website

Anyone requiring assistance from WRMCL, CHOICES or the MCF should be referred to your Lodge Almoner or the Confidential Helpline on 0344 902 0220.

The Festival System

The Province is charged from time to time to raise funds for the MCF (previously for the four central charities) through a "Festival", a five to six-year fundraising campaign.

The Festival system is designed to spread the load of fund-raising evenly between the Provinces, thus ensuring a regular annual income for the MCF from which they will fund their activities. Every year throughout England and Wales, four Festivals are launched, one in each of four Provinces. Only 44 of the 47 Provinces under United Grand Lodge take part in the Festival system (The smaller Provinces of Jersey, Guernsey & Alderney and the Isle of Man are not included in the system, but may participate in periods of fundraising).

Until 2021, some Provincial Festival Appeals will continue to support the Foundations predecessor charities. These funds will be ring-fenced for use by the MCF in support of the objects of the predecessor charities.

When a Province is tasked by the Grand Master with raising funds for a Festival, the Provincial Grand Master assumes the position of Festival President for the duration of the Festival. The Provincial Grand Master will decide upon the structure of the Festival appeal committee.

Throughout the period of the Festival the Brethren within the Province will have been raising money and donating to the Festival for the designated charity. To celebrate the end of the Festival the Province may organise a Festival Banquet, which is attended by those Brethren who have qualified as Stewards during the Festival, together with their ladies.

A Provincial Festival Committee (appointed by the PGM) takes the lead role in organising and promoting Festivals allocated to the Province by Grand Lodge.

No change needs to be made to this Province's system of regular giving and further guidance is given at the start of each Festival.

General

Currently approximately 53% of the Brethren in the Province give regularly to Masonic Charities. Inform your brethren of this fact and also tell them what percentage of brethren give regularly in your lodge.

It is worth reminding brethren of the commitment they made in the North East part of the Lodge when they were initiated.

Explain the benefit of being able to recover Gift Aid and ensuring that every brother who can signs a Gift Aid Declaration Form.

Donating to charity by Monthly Standing Order makes giving easier for the brethren and saves the Charity Steward from chasing payments when they become due.

Encourage the brethren to ask questions. If you don't have the answer, say so and give it during your report at the next monthly meeting.

Ask the brethren what social events they would like the Lodge to hold, to raise funds on behalf of Masonic Charities, and then enquire if the Senior or Junior Warden would be prepared incorporate them into their year.

Don't assume that the brethren know everything there is to know about Masonic Charities. Unless someone is involved in Charities on a regular basis most will forget fairly quickly what has been previously addressed. New members will know virtually nothing at all.

Statistics on the whole have been deliberately left out of these notes; they are soon out of date and are readily available for you to research at the time of your address. Your brethren will soon forget statistics but the verbal picture you paint of the person or organisation which has benefited from a Masonic Grant will stay in their minds for a long time.

Genuine examples of Almoner's work

Example 1

This year we received a call on the help line from a Mason who resigned a few years ago after an operation which meant he was unable to walk. This made it difficult to attend meetings and had subsequently lost contact with the Lodge Almoner. He was struggling to meet his Daily Living Expenses. We were able to obtain a grant from MCF of over £3,000 for the year.

Example 2

Recently after the sudden death of a Mason our Care and Support Team were able to support his widow and very young children in the short term. We helped her to apply to the MCF for Grants for Daily Living Expenses and regular support for the children. During the time the applications were made my team were able to support the widow to deal with a complex situation, which arises after a sudden death.

Example 3

A beneficiary of the MCF developed a problem which reduced his sight and he needed a document reader to assist. When the suitable model was identified an application was made to the MCF who approved the purchase of the reader. The value of this was over £2,000

Example 4

A relatively new mason who was developing his career in a lower paid training job was managing his situation when his wife had a baby which had various medical problems. Visiting hospital and other costs meant that the family income was affected. After a request from the Lodge Almoner the Care and Support Team visited they identified the need and WRMCL CHOICES granted some short term support. An application was made to MCF who were able to make a grant of over £3,000 for Daily Living expenses

Example 5

In these days when mobility is becoming a problem for more Masons, Widows and Dependents we are making more applications to the MCF for Riser/Recline Chairs and Chair Lifts. CHOICES have helped a number of people with access problems by arranging for the Home Improvements Agency to provide wheelchair ramps, alter access steps and provide handrails for a number of West Riding beneficiaries.

My thanks to the Provincial Grand Almoner W. Bro Ron Crabtree for his assistance in updating these notes.