

Province Of South Wales

Report of the Provincial Grand Almoner ending 31st March 2020

Introduction

This is my second report as Provincial Grand Almoner of the Craft and Royal Arch for the Province of South Wales and it has been a most interesting, encouraging and rewarding year since my last report.

During the past twelve months, apart from having the considerable responsibility of doing my best to help those Brethren, Companions and dependants who are in need, I have seen a groundswell of better understanding and knowledge on the part of our Lodge and Chapter Almoners. I have experienced a significant increase in direct enquiries for advice and guidance which I consider is a result of growing trust, confidence and effort of so many involved in helping others.

In addition, our Petitions Applications Officers are directly and locally supporting our Lodges and Chapters whenever they are needed. There is a tangible sense of growing co-operation and the PAO's are often referred to as 'your regional Almoners' which is shining testimony to their work, their commitment to the cause and the personal qualities of those who carry out that role.

Greater numbers of Brethren and Companions are now more aware and have a better understanding of financial support particularly that available from the Masonic Charitable Foundation (MCF). Later in this report, I set out how the disbursement of Funds has been realised. I trust you will see how much we benefit as a Province and most importantly how vital your ongoing and personal contributions to Charity are to help those who are in difficulty.

There are other sources of charitable funding available in addition to the MCF and I would also like to pay tribute and extend my gratitude to the Chair, Trustees and Committee Members of our Provincial Masonic Benevolent Fund (MBF) for their unstinting and generous support to the Brethren, Companions and their very close dependants when urgent financial assistance is required.

The MBF response is impressive in its swiftness, willingness to help and the fact we have access to such a facility is envied by other Provinces.

Disbursement of Charitable Funds

Drawn from the Quarterly statistics reports compiled by the MCF, the below categories are shown as an annual comparison to indicate the differing level of support received in this Province up to year ending March 2020.

Finance

Ending 31/3/19	Beneficiaries 72	Disbursement £219,681
Ending 31/3/20	Beneficiaries 72	Disbursement £230,217
Increase of £10,536 (+4.8%)		

Family - Education

Ending 31/3/19 Beneficiaries 61 Disbursement £67,995

Ending 31/3/20 Beneficiaries 72 Disbursement £91,814

Increase of £23,819 (+35%)

Health

Ending 31/3/19 Beneficiaries 133 Disbursement £277,775

Ending 31/3/20 Beneficiaries 155 Disbursement £462,857

Increase of £185,082 (+66.6%)

(Long waiting lists for NHS treatment in Wales continue to increase demand).

Residential Care

Ending 31/3/19 Disbursement £201,613

Ending 31/3/20 Disbursement £428,400

Increase of £226,787 (+112.5%)

Currently there are 46 residents in RMBI homes from the Province of South Wales. 25 of those individuals are privately funded while 21 are supported by the RMBI.

The figure of £428,400 reflects an additional contribution from the MCF to the RMBI and is described as an average charitable spend which suggests it will not be repeated on an annual basis

Difference in Total Disbursement

Ending 31/3/19 Disbursements £767,064

Ending 31/3/20 Disbursements **£1,213,288**

Increase of £446,224 (58.2%)

Conclusion

The stories behind the figures are truly moving and more fully set the context of what we are achieving:-

'A Brother who had used all his private assets to pay for cancer treatment while working abroad where free medical care was not available was supported to continue his course of life saving therapy'

'Following the death of his wife after a painful, protracted illness, a Brother did not have the sufficient means to pay for her funeral which left him devastated. He was humbled by the support he received'

'A grandchild with heart breaking disabilities was assisted with the purchase of a specialist all terrain buggy to enable him to venture outside in an unrestricted manner. Life changing for the child'

It is so incredibly rewarding to experience at first hand the amazing impact your Charitable donations make and you can all have the assured satisfaction of knowing you have helped to change peoples' lives for the better.

The unprecedented and hugely significant increase in Charitable funds from the Masonic Charitable Foundation to South Wales also reflects the skill and growing expertise of all practitioners to satisfy the stringent criteria set by the Charities to access support.

The awareness, knowledge and actions of our Almoners and their relationship with the PAO's and Provincial Grand Almoner clearly augurs well for the future and our collective capability to help those that need support.

Philip Bevan

Provincial Grand Almoner

June 2020