

Provincial Charity Stewards Report 2016/17

RW Provincial Grand Master and Brethren it gives me great pleasure to provide a report on charitable activities since last May.

After the Provincial Grand Lodge meeting in May 2016 over five hundred Brethren sat down to the festive board looking forward to receiving the result of the Norfolk 2016 Festival. The final amount raised was £2,051,686.44p. This amount was significantly higher than the "target" given to the Grand Charity in 2010. During the festival nearly five hundred "waymarks" were personally presented to the lodges. Lodges worked extremely hard to achieve this magnificent amount in only five years. My personal thanks go to the Seventy Six charity stewards for all their hard work.

Since the close of the 2016 festival, Lodges have worked extremely hard to continue their support for local good causes with some amazing donations. Helping others is one of the cornerstones of our Fraternity and we should all be proud of these achievements.

We then moved towards the 2016 Fun Day which was to support the East Anglian Children's Hospice Nook appeal. The event was a huge success with a record number of Lodges taking part, high level of footfall and record amounts raised. The success of the Fun Day contributed to over £20,000 being donated to the Nook Appeal and further monies have since been donated to the appeal which now exceeds £25,000

RW S.N. Allen PGM attended the Provincial "Presentation Events" arranged at Kings Lynn, Gt Yarmouth and Norwich. These have been very successful giving the charities receiving the donations an opportunity to not only say thank you but also informing those present of the work they do and how the donations made are helping the quality of the lives of those less fortunate in society. This format attracted improved media coverage.

Some Lodges have successfully held their own "presentation events" with a high level of success. The Province encourages such events and offers full support with personnel, marketing material and a contribution to the cost of guest refreshments if required. These events have been well supported and enjoyed by everyone taking part.

I along with, Mike Spalding, Mark Harrison and Paul Hooton, members of the NCF (le Strange) committee visited the Relief Chest Department in London for a thoroughly informative fact finding mission with a demonstration of how the Department operates. This gave us all a better understanding of the logistics and benefits of the Relief Chest Scheme. Since this visit more Lodges are looking to operate a relief chest and at least one has opened a new chest.

I attended the Wardens Seminar held at St Giles and gave a short presentation of the qualities to look for in a Lodge Charity Steward. Tercentenary activities were also covered.

I attended the MFC Festival Forum meeting in London in November.

As part of the "Provincial Induction Team" I attended both the Prospective and New Masons evenings to provide an overview of Fund Raising at local, Provincial and National Level and how that money is used to help those in difficulty and distress.

A Charity Stewards seminar was held at Watton Masonic centre in November and I was pleased to see the room full! The Lodge Charity Stewards were given a full debrief on the 2016 festival covering the benefit of Gift Aid and illustrations of the various income streams for the Festival; preparation for the next festival which will start in 2027; Ideas to move away from having raffles at every meeting and details on the intricacies of the 2017 Fun Day. This was then followed by a presentation by Suhail Alam, Relief Chest Director on the benefits of Lodges operating their own Relief Chests. RW S.N.Allen PGM gave a presentation on the forth coming Tercentenary events. Another seminar was requested by those present and I hope to arrange this for November 2017.

December saw the conclusion of the 2016 Christmas Draw. Funds raised of over £6000 will be used to support local charities in the Tercentenary Year. There will be another Christmas Raffle for 2017 with monies raised going to the Norfolk Freemasons Charitable Fund to relieve poverty and distress at a local level.

2017 started with a succession of Tercentenary meetings and a Tercentenary Seminar for the Lodge Tercentenary Champions.

The 2017 MCF Community Awards Scheme will provide funding from the Masonic Charity Foundation for each Province to celebrate the Tercentenary. Details have been discussed and acted on by the Executive together with the NFCF committee. Six local charities have been selected under the criteria issued by the MCF and these Charities will receive approximately £50,000 between them. The amount each charity receives will be voted for by Lodge members and the public using an online forum in the summer.

July 2nd is the date for the 2017 "Tercentenary Fun Day" and this will be again held again at Wymondham Rugby Club and will follow a similar format to previous years with one exception: - each lodge is asked to select a local charity to support on the day and the Norfolk Freemasons Charitable Fund will provide additional financial support towards each chosen charity. Every lodge has been issued details and tickets to sell.

I am very grateful for all the support I receive from the Lodges in the province which does make the whole "job/role" a very enjoyable experience.

W Bros Mike Spalding, Mark Harrison, Paul Hooton, Michael Muskett and the Prov Almoner Andrew Mason with Robin Shaw, who looks after the Respite Care, make up the Norfolk Masonic Charitable Fund committee and it is a pleasure to work with such a dedicated and diligent team and I thank them for the help and support they provide me.

My thanks must also go to W Bro Barry O'Leary who is always on hand in the Provincial Office to assist me in any way he can, often going beyond the call of duty to make sure everything is done, posted, delivered, filed, stacked and sorted.

I cannot close this report without thanking the Provincial Executive for the valued support and encouragement they provide.

W Bro Russell Carter

Prov Charity Steward.