



PROVINCE OF YORKSHIRE, WEST RIDING

Provincial Grand Charity Steward W Bro. John B Birkenshaw

17th December 2022

Dear Brother Charity Stewards,

This is my final Newsletter of 2022 and may I wish you and your families a very Merry Christmas and a prosperous New Year.

2023 will bring about fresh challenges for all of us, as we begin a new year. We need to be in good shape to meet these new challenges. For those that do not feel up to speed and are having difficulties, please don't be afraid to ask for help, as we have a strong network of support within Team Charity. Your first point of call is your Provincial Charity Assistant, secondly, your area Provincial Charity Committee Chairs and thirdly, me. I am always available to lend a hand, roll my sleeves up and provide help and support. So as you can see, we are willing, ready and able to support you.

Masonic Charitable Foundation (MCF) – ‘The Freemasons Charity’ - I would ask all Charity Stewards to ***help improve knowledge and understanding of our National Charity***, as I am concerned that some brethren across the Province have a lack of understanding of MCF. Indeed, I became aware of instances, where brethren do not know of its existence!

Our PGM will be mentioning the launch of the ‘2023 Festival’ at the annual meeting of Provincial Grand Lodge in May 2023. It is extremely important that brethren know how important the festival system is, in providing financial support to our National Charity, which in turn provides support back to members in ours and every other Province. More information will be forthcoming about the Festival, before the launch.

I would ask every Charity Steward to please make a special presentation in their Lodge in the New Year about the MCF (and also send copies of it to brethren along with the lodge minutes). It is important also that you signpost members to the MCF website which contains a great deal of information about the charity, especially the latest Impact Reports; including interesting facts and figures. Indeed, I would remind all Charity Stewards to please sign themselves up to receive the MCF regular newsletter. This will help keep brethren apprised of events and facts and figures etc. The MCF website can be found at: <https://mcf.org.uk>.

Annual Stats Form – These Forms are extremely important and I am aware that you have all received them; however not all of you have completed them, and I urge you to please do so immediately. They are very simple to complete, so ***‘Don't Delay, Complete Them Today’***. If you are having difficulties, we will help you. The **Deadline was 14th December 2022.**

Online Banking - A gentle reminder that you should now be in the process of moving to online banking as the deadline remains 1st January 2023. Please make progress towards this date. Lloyds Bank, Coop Bank and Metro Bank are offering free banking and we have appointed Area Banking Ambassadors to assist those who are struggling; so please ask your PCA or Area Chair if you need assistance. This change in working practice is proving to be very challenging; however, many of you have already made the transition.

Raffles at Festive Boards - I would like to remind brethren that it is essential when holding a raffle at a Festive Board that the **name of the recipient Charity or Good Cause is announced before any tickets are sold.** It is not permissible to just say, ‘Charity’, or ‘Masonic Charities’.

West Riding Masonic Charities Ltd - Currently the charity is undergoing a transition in their administration processes and have employed their own administrator. Previously this role was carried out by our Provincial Grand Lodge administration team. A full briefing will be provided early in the new year about the new structure and how it will operate. I know that some Charity Stewards have had some issues; however, please bear with us until the new system is up and running smoothly.

Lodge Charity Bank Accounts - **MUST BE SEPARATE** from the main lodge account and used only for Charity monies. Monies held in your account should be sent without delay to the intended recipients and payments to WRMCLtd., should be paid quarterly.

PGMs Fund - There are many worthy causes out there who could benefit greatly from a grant from the PGM's Fund, so ask your brethren to nominate a worthwhile organisation. Our Provincial Grand Master is very keen that we identify these causes and offer our assistance. So why not 'Apply & Try'!

Information to Support Charity Stewards in their Role – There is a lot of information now available on the members website charity page: <https://www.westridingfreemasons.info>

Communication

- a) **Communication** - All Charity Stewards now receive direct communication from me, which has improved communication greatly. However, it is vital that my messages are passed on to your brethren promptly.
- b) **Summons Agenda** – Please ensure you have an agenda item for the Lodge Charity Steward on your Lodge Summons. This will enable you to educate your brethren on the wider aspects of charity, e.g. WRMCLtd (CHOICES, TLC & PGM's Fund), MCF, Festival System, Lodge & Provincial Achievements etc. A Charity Stewards reports should be made in 'person', to ensure direct communication with members who may wish to ask questions.
- c) **Charity Stewards Briefings** – There will be a new round of briefings both before and after the PGL meeting in May 2023 in readiness for the launch of the 2023 Festival. The Autumn 2022 round of briefing sessions proved to be very successful and were well attended. They provided a great deal of best practice and hints & tips to help charity stewards in their roles.
- d) **Methods of Communication:**
 - **Provincial Facebook Page:**
<https://www.facebook.com/YorkshireWestRidingFreemasons/>
 - **Twitter:** <https://twitter.com/WYFreemasons>.
 - **Instagram:** <https://www.instagram.com/wyfreemasons/>
 - **External website:** www.yorkshirewestridingfreemasons.org.uk.
 - **Provincial Internal Website** <https://www.westridingfreemasons.info>
 - **Publicity** – Please strive to achieve maximum publicity for all the good Charity work you undertake; especially PGM Fund Grants and other Charitable Presentations. Details of your Area Communications Officer can be found on the above members website, who can advise and assist you. Don't forget!, **'Success Breeds Success'**.

Kindest fraternal regards



John Birkenshaw
Provincial Grand Charity Steward