

Masonic Benevolent Institutions

MASONIC GIRLS BENEFIT FUND – MASONIC BOYS BENEFIT FUND – VICTORIA JUBILEE MASONIC BENEVOLENT FUNDS – MASONIC WELFARE FUND

NEWSLETTER

FOR PATRONS OF THE MASONIC WELFARE FUND

CHAIRMAN – M.W. THE GRAND MASTER

The Masonic Welfare Fund came into being to support those in need that the other Masonic Charities cannot assist. Having been set up in the 18th and 19th Centuries our M.B.I. Charities are constrained by the social conventions and legal requirements of those times. Our Fund is designed to meet the needs brought about by the complex changes in the social and cultural life of the present and indeed to anticipate further changes. This is all clearly shown in the very flexible and widely written primary objective of the Fund as follows:

- To relieve cases of poverty, hardship, sickness and distress amongst members of the Fraternity of Freemasons whether situate in Ireland or overseas and the wives, widows, children and other more remote issue and dependants of such members and other necessitous persons.**

The work of the Fund began from a standing start for not only did it need funds in order to begin work it also needed publicity.

By becoming a Patron of the Fund you clearly demonstrated your compassion and concern for those in need of help, care and assistance.

Slowly the Fund built up, applications began to arrive and revealed that those dedicated Brethren who bought the Fund into existence had indeed been visionaries.

The Management Board is drawn from all over Ireland and is made up of Brethren with wide experience of Masonic Charities, they are

Grand Master's Representative	S.P. Weafer
Antrim	D.A. Atkinson
	D.R. Millen
	A.R.G.R. Patterson
Armagh	E. MacKarel
North Connaught	J. Strong
South Connaught	Wm. Shortland
Down	J.I.A. Davison
	B. Eve
	C.E. Ruttle
Londonderry & Donegal	W.J. Johnston
Meath	J.F. Wood
Midland Counties	R. Gyles
Munster	J. Crowley
North Munster	D.C. Webster
South Eastern	T.C.B. McBain
Tyrone & Fermanagh	J.R. Hadden
Wicklow & Wexford	M.D.E. Benson
Metropolitan Area	B. O'Byrne

The work of the Fund is diverse as each case is unique and requires individual attention. Your Management Board has developed skills, which enable quick and flexible response to applications, that are frequently of an urgent and compelling nature. Furthermore in the majority of cases Social Services have been unable to provide any assistance or support.

Here are some examples that show a few of the cases dealt with, to preserve confidentiality the beneficiaries are not named.

- A Brother was involved in a fall, which resulted in him being paralysed from the waist down. A farmer married with a young family he was unable to attend to his business. The Fund gave him a grant, which enabled him to adapt a power hoist to his tractor. With the aid of the hoist he is now able to move about his farm and attend to such matters as providing fodder for his cattle.**
- A young girl whose unmarried mother died tragically was living with her grandparents. Tragedy struck for the second time in her young life when her grandfather who was a Mason died. She continued to live with her grandmother, financial circumstances were not good but as she was not the**

daughter of a Mason the Girls' Fund could not provide assistance. Our Fund has provided an Annual Education Grant thus giving security and relief to both the girl and her grandmother.

- An elderly Mason with a terminally ill wife given only a few weeks to live appealed for financial help so that he could provide some extra nursing care. Your Board gave an emergency grant to meet that appeal and to give support in a most distressing situation.

- A young mother, the daughter of a Mason, was involved in a serious road traffic accident which left her virtually paralysed from the neck down. While she may or may not eventually get an insurance settlement your Board took the view that decisive action was needed immediately and made a grant towards the purchase of a specially adapted People Carrier.

- A young Mason received 50% burns when the motor bike he was working on went on fire, fell over and trapped him. He had a wife and young family to support, due to the severity of his injuries he was unable to work for some considerable time. Standard Social Welfare benefits of course helped but he was rapidly losing the unequal battle of trying to support his family. A grant was made which helped that young Mason back on his feet.

- A young lady, who had had her first kidney transplant in 1986 and a further one in 1999, had been selected to compete for the United Kingdom in the World Transplant Games in France. She was competing in a 20km cycle race and a 5km-time trial. Your Board decided that such courage and fortitude coupled with determination to succeed merited consideration. It was decided to give a grant towards her travel expenses to supplement the already generous support given to her by the sponsoring Lodge.

- The house of an elderly widow of a Mason was damaged by fire. Like many persons on low income she had no insurance and no financial means to pay for the necessary repairs. Working in conjunction with the sponsoring Lodge the Board made available emergency funding towards the renovation work and so enabled the widow to return to the comfort and security of her own house.

- An elderly widow of a Mason had first one leg amputated and then the other. Despite this she remained a very positive person. To enable her to be mobile in her wheelchair and continue to live independently considerable adaptations were needed to her home. The Board provided a grant towards the cost. The lady is also an Annuitant on the Victoria Jubilee Masonic

Benevolent Fund. This case is an example of the two Funds working closely together and such co-operation is expected to increase.

You played an important part in bringing assistance to the cases mentioned. You did so by being a Patron of the Fund, by wearing your Jewel and so giving publicity.

You can give further valuable help by promoting the Fund within your Lodge. At your next Stated Communication why not try to get a least one other Brother to become a Patron. Even better get two or three. Perhaps you could photocopy this newsletter and give copies to your friends both inside and outside Freemasonry.

Our Deputy Chairman, R.W. Brother Dennis Millen, has plans to widen the scope of the Fund and as a Patron you can play a vital role in the future of the Fund. One potential area is that of Respite Care. Do you know of an incapacitated Mason or wife or widow of a Mason or other dependant in need of constant care? All too often the Carer attending to that person gets no help from Social Services. The Welfare Fund maybe able to help and provide some relief to what may be a 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days per year commitment. Often Carers are very private people who do not attract attention. You may well know at least one. Look around, check, play an active role in your Fund, show you care, discuss the situation with your Lodge Almoner or for guidance call –

**Janice Griffin on 01 – 679 6799
on
01 – 679 6799
at
17 Molesworth Street,
Dublin, 2.**

or

**Rosemary Black on 028-90-451 020
on
028 – 90 – 451 020
at
115 The Mount,
Belfast,
BT4 5ND**

Thank you for being a Patron.