

# Provincial Grand Lodge of Leicestershire and Rutland

## CHARITY - A GUIDE FOR LODGE CHARITY STEWARDS

### Introduction.

This short guide aims to help Charity Stewards carry out the responsibilities of their Office, and to help them provide details for all their Brethren. It covers the difference between **Lodge** charity, the **Local** Leicestershire and Rutland Freemasons Charity (LRFC) and the **National** Masonic Charitable Foundation. (MCF) It explains how a Lodge Relief Scheme works, and the giving via the Continuous Giving Scheme to the MCF.

### Lodges and Charity

Lodges have a very long and well-established history of giving to Charity. Often the WM might select a charity that he is particularly wishing to highlight during his year in office. Over the years, this has amounted to a very great impact in the local community.

### The Leicestershire and Rutland Freemasons Charity

The basic details of the LRFC

- The first KEY POINT - The Leicestershire and Rutland Freemasons' Charity (LRFC) is the Charity belonging to ALL the members of the Province.
- The LRFC is the public facing name of what used to be called the LRMCA. (masonic charity association)
- The Charity is administered by the Charity Office in FMH, London Rd Leicester on behalf of the members of the Province
- It is a Registered Charity with the Charity Commission. (ref 234054)
- It dates back to October 1962 and its Rules and Policies are reviewed annually at the AGM - the last major change took place in 2023.
- It is a membership charity, and membership is by subscription.
- It has been an established expectation for decades dating back to 1962 that EVERY member of the Province is expected to be a subscribing member.
- Members are expected to subscribe only once - members in multiple lodges can subscribe via their mother Lodge and this is recorded so multiple subscriptions are not required.

- The subscription rate is set at the Annual General Meeting of the Charity.
- The subscription is paid by individuals via **Standing Order** (not Direct Debit - not cash.)
- The current subscription rate (September 2024) was approved by LRFC members at their AGM in November 2023.
- It is a minimum of £36 / year (or £3 / month) or more. While any members of the Province can subscribe at a higher rate - the minimum subscription is £36/yr
- The subscription Year starts on 1<sup>st</sup> June and finishes on 31<sup>st</sup> May.
- The PGM expects to see the following (updated) statement on the summons of every Lodge :
- *“It is a continuing duty that every Brother should subscribe to the Leicestershire and Rutland Freemasons’ Charity (LRFC) which provides emergency grants to Brethren and supports local non-masonic charities. This fact should be strongly impressed on all candidates and joining members by their sponsors.”*
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- As a Grant Making organisation, the LRFC meets its objectives by using the subscription funds, along with any legacies, for grants to support Freemasons and their dependents through masonic support grants, and grants to masonic and non-masonic charities, and match funding donations made to Charities by Lodges.
- Any donation made by Brethren to the MCF is over and above their CORE expectation of subscribing to their own charity - the LRFC

### **The nitty gritty details of the LRFC subscriptions**

- The LRFC accounting year runs from 1<sup>st</sup> June to 31<sup>st</sup> May.
- The subscription sum **cannot** be added to the Lodge Subscriptions (The Rules of UGLE do not allow this to happen)
- The Lodge Charity Steward supports the members of the Lodge to ensure that every member is subscribing the minimum amount of £36 / year by Standing Order.
- The subscription attracts Gift Aid for those eligible.
- The Charity Steward keeps confidential records of all members, and their subscription status, and Gift Aid declaration status.
- The LRFC records are published by the Charity Office three times a year but the Lodge Charity Steward can ask for updates whenever they feel an update would be helpful.

## Match Funding process

- If a Lodge has raised a **minimum sum of £250** or more for a particular charity, then they can apply to their charity, the LRFC, for Match Funding.
- Applications are made via the Provincial Website on a google form:
- Details to include are the sum to be matched, the name of the Charity, the Charity Commission registration number if applicable, and any further details about the impact any donation will make.
- This is the mechanism for getting the application onto the Grants Meeting agenda.
- These are now held every month in order to speed up the process and achieve more impact for your Lodge donation.
- Important to note : For reasons of confidentiality, any Masonic grant application for a Brother or family in need, should be sent direct to the Provincial Grand Almoner and not via the charity .
- While an individual Lodge can choose to support a National Charity, or an International Charity, the LRFC can only support charities who operate within the Province.
- While most applications for grants relate to registered charities, the LRFC rules now allow for other worthy causes to be considered.
- If there are sufficient funds available and the match funding application is approved then the next step is for the Lodge to deposit their sum from their Lodge charity account into the LRFC current account (or if it is coming from a Lodge Relief Chest, it can be transferred to the E2047 LRFC Relief Chest.)
- Important - Please advise the Charity office that the transfer has been made.
- The Charity Office then makes the necessary payment to the Lodge chosen charity.
- The Lodge arranges a visit to the Charity if they so wish.
- The Charity Office can supply Presentation Certificates..
- The VERY best publicity is informal photos of activity rather than “grip and grin” photos with big presentation cheques!
- NB - the old style “Cheque Presentation Mornings” in London Road no longer exist and Lodges are encouraged to develop a relationship with their chosen charity.

## **Lodge Relief Chests**

A Relief Chest is like a bank deposit account where a lodge can place money raised for charity and it is administered by the Relief Chest Scheme at the Masonic Charitable Foundation at Freemasons' Hall in London.

Why is having a Lodge Relief Chest useful? The Relief Chest Scheme claims the Gift Aid for you on your individual donations and thus effectively increases the impact of your Lodge giving. NB - you can only use funds in a Relief Chest for Charitable purposes. (see MCF website for full details)

Those Lodges that have had a Relief Chest for several years found it invaluable for raising funds for their Charities. With a Relief Chest comes all the easy methods of payment, QR codes, digital giving and so much more.

Having a Lodge Relief Chest also enables fundraising events to use the new Freemasonry Gives platform (like Justgiving) and the results are very impressive. Your own Lodge charity impact is much greater as a result.

It is very easy to open a Relief Chest - follow this link here or use the attachment

<https://mcf.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Application-Form-MAR23.pdf>

If you need any advice please do ask us in the Charity Office.

## **THE MCF - Masonic Charitable Foundation**

### **What is the Masonic Charitable Foundation?**

In 2016, the amalgamation took place of the 4 large Masonic institutions – namely The Freemason's Grand Charity, the Royal Masonic Trust for Girls and Boys, the Masonic Samaritan Fund and the Royal Masonic Benevolent Institution – They all came under one umbrella called the MCF (The Masonic Charitable Foundation). This is based at Freemasons' Hall, Great Queen's Street, London – the Headquarters of the United Grand Lodge of England. The money raised across ALL the Provinces runs into millions. It is the major Freemasons Charity that supports Freemasons and their dependents in times of need and distress medical research, charitable organizations and disaster relief to name but a few.

## **What does the MCF actually do?**

The money it receives through your contributions goes towards the Festival system for Provinces in England and Wales.

Full details of the work of the Masonic Charitable Foundation can be found on their website ([www.mcf.org.uk](http://www.mcf.org.uk))

The types of support it can offer include :

- Financial Health Family Care
- In terms of financial support, funeral costs, help through a personal financial crisis, emergency home repairs and essential daily living costs are all considered.
- In terms of physical and mental health, mobility aids and essential home adaptations, medical treatment and counselling qualify.
- Support for family could include educational expenses for children, University Scholarships and support for exceptional talent in sport or performing arts.
- Care would include the support of the RMBI Masonic Care homes, residential and dementia care, guidance from professional benefit and care advisors, and respite care.

The MCF is one of the largest grant making charities in the UK and in addition to all the aforementioned, its support for social and medical research, hospices, and rescue services also stand out.

## **What is a Festival?**

Festivals are very big MCF fund-raising campaigns and come around every 10 years or so. At any one time there are five festivals running across the 48 Provinces. The Leicestershire and Rutland 2022 Festival started in late 2016 and concluded in June 2022.

## **How can we all support the next Festival?**

The Leicestershire and Rutland 2033. **(UPDATE COMING IN DECEMBER 2024)**

To smooth out the demands on individual Brethren in terms of giving to Festivals, *the strategy for Festival giving has changed following the last Festival.* In line with other Provinces, members of the Province are encouraged

to sign up to the new Leicestershire and Rutland Continuous Giving Scheme to make things as easy as possible.

Just £1 a week makes a massive difference and with Gift Aid build a significant pot ahead of the 2033 Festival. (for the minority of lodges who already have Relief Chests with members donating into those individually and regularly, then there is no need to change.)

For the vast majority of Lodges and members - you should be warmly encouraged to set up a regular payment via the L&RSG relief chest - Leicestershire & Rutland Smooth Giving.

### **Making the use of Gift Aid**

It is beneficial for all members of the Lodge eligible for Gift Aid on their charitable donations to have in place a valid Gift Aid Declaration. Do please ask the Charity Office if you have any questions about Gift Aid.

### **Communications with the Charity Office -**

80 London Road, Leicester, LE2 0RA.

Most questions are responded to via email or phone. 0116 254 5325 (option 6 followed by option 1) [lrnca@pglleics.co.uk](mailto:lrnca@pglleics.co.uk)

Alternatively, [nicmerrett@pglleics.co.uk](mailto:nicmerrett@pglleics.co.uk) (07801 983530)

Nic Merrett - Chairman of the LRFC and ProvGdChStwd

The costs of running the LRFC are very small. Apart from paying for 16 hours/week to support the Finance and Administration, all others working for the Charity are unpaid volunteers.

### **Final Summary**

The following are the calls on the Charity of individual Brethren as members of the Province..

- A subscription to the LRFC set at £36 per yr or £3 month (priority ONE)
- A regular Payment Promise towards the next Festival (2033) via Leicestershire and Rutland Smooth Giving Relief Chest if possible..

Additional calls made on Brethren as members of Lodges at their meetings and these might include collections in favour of the Lodge Charity or the Almoner.

## Reference Links

The link below is a really helpful resource for all things to do with charity and fundraising. The more you delve into this resource the more you will find it useful in answering all those questions you might have - a wealth of information.

<https://mcf.paagetiger.com/fundraising>

and this is a great window on how “festival” donations can make such a wonderful impact.

<https://mcf.org.uk/impact/>

and this part of the MCF website aimed at Charity Stewards is worth saving too:

<https://mcf.org.uk/resources/charity-steward-resources/>

Nic Merrett ProvGdChStwd

Autumn 2024