



Mark

Benevolent

Fund

**Annual
Review
2022**



A Message from the President of the MBF

May I welcome you all to our 2022 MBF Annual Review I hope you all find it of interest. Activity has been brisk, even in the first few weeks of 2023 showing signs of another busy year.

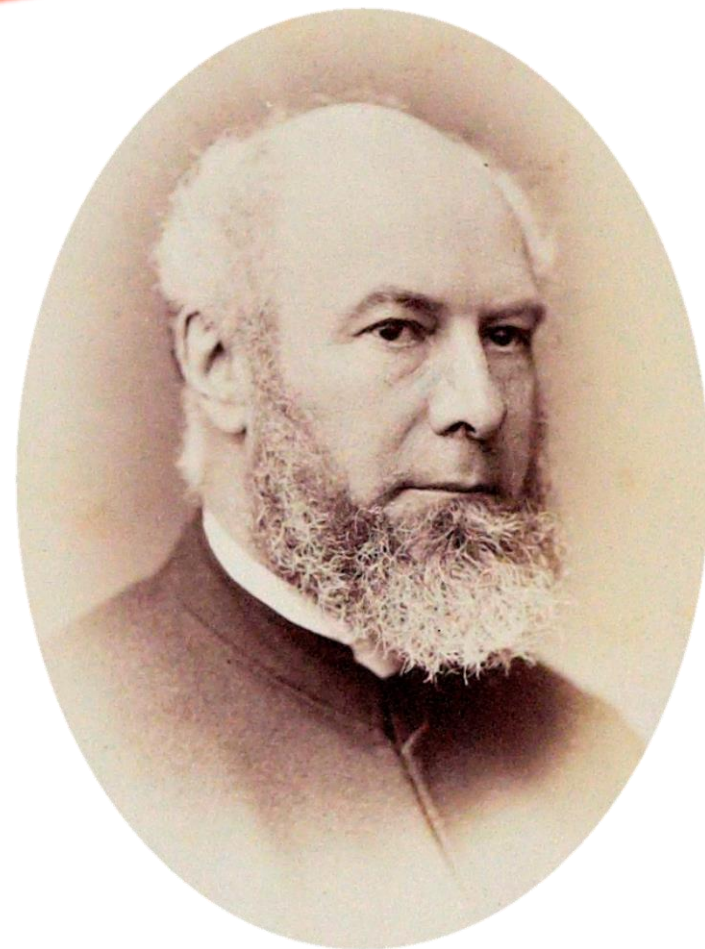
There is of course one major problem we are facing at the moment which is the ongoing war in Ukraine. In March of 2022 the MBF joined forces with our Brethren in the District of Romania and immediately gave assistance in the form monetary aid to assist refugees fleeing across its borders seeking safety. We were also delighted to see so many of you wishing to help, in particular our Brethren in the Province of Cheshire. Our aid to them is continuing but is constantly reviewed by the Board of Trustees. We will, of course, keep a watchful eye on events connected with Ukraine and keep you updated in the weekly newsletter from Mark Masons' Hall.

As always we are facing constant challenges to our way of life. The cost of living problems are but one. Please seek the help of your Lodge Almoner if you are in any difficulty. Whether it is financial or you just need some advice and a chat, he will always be there for you.

Sincerely and fraternally,

R.W.Bro. John Bell, P.G.J.W.

President of the Mark Benevolent Fund



The Mark Benevolent Fund was founded in 1868 by the Reverend George Raymond Portal, *MA* Grand Master 1869-1873, (in 1881 Canon Portal). It is the official charity of the Grand Lodge of Mark Master Masons, the third largest branch of Freemasonry.

The disbursement of grants is overseen by its Board comprising of twelve Brethren who in turn form the two committees who review applications:

- The Petitions Committee assess applications from individual Mark Master Masons or their dependants who may be in distress.
- The Worthy Causes Committee looks at applications from registered charities and other worthwhile organisations.



Fund Activity Summary 2022

- £25,000 - Cancer Care
- £139,800 - Healthcare
- £160,780 - Disability Support Services
- £51,257 - Hospice Movement
- £148,186 - Secondary Emergency Services
- £190,451 - Local Community Focus
- £102,438 - Youth Sector
- £255,000 - Humanitarian Aid
- £35,388 - Our own members and their families

70%

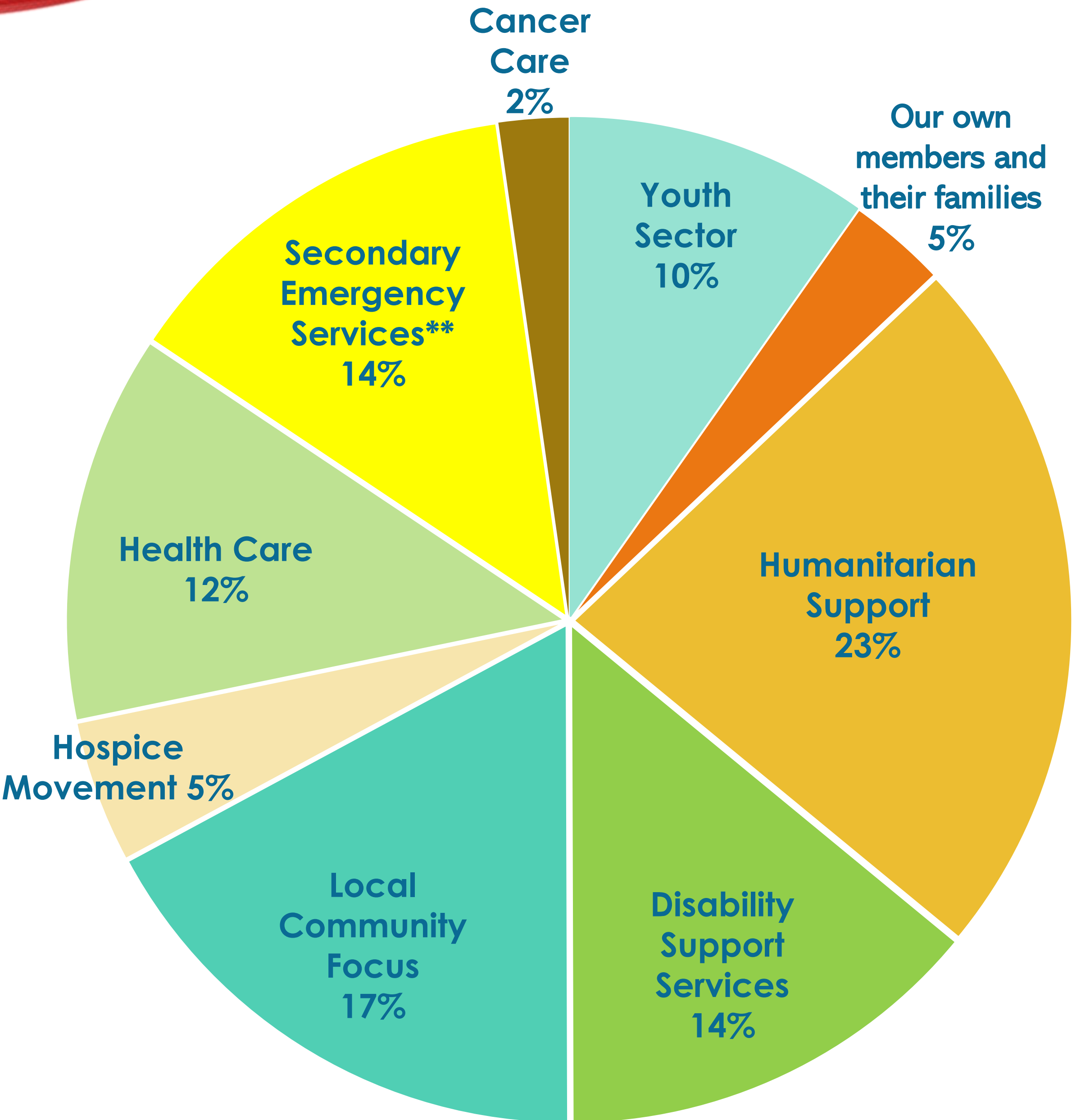
went to applications initiated by our Provinces

30%

went to charities making direct applications



At a Glance...



**Covering Blood Bikes, RNLI, mountain rescue Independent lifeboats and mobile doctors



Worthy Causes

The Chairman of the MBF Worthy Causes Committee writes:

'This has been another busy year for the Committee with 60 cases covering a Nationwide spread of applications. After lengthy deliberation on all of those cases the Committee agreed to support around 50% of the applications.

The Committee really do put a lot of time into each case, looking into Charity Accounts and what the grant will be used for, we cannot of course grant every petition as we would soon run out of money but with due diligence applied on every case, I am confident that we make the right decisions.

I must thank the Committee, R.W.Bro's Alex McLaren, Kevin Hicks, Richard Olliver, and Roger Richardson, also W.Bro. Dr. Tapeshe Pakrashi who gives us such valuable advice on applications that have a medical background. Their dedication to their roles and response times are really without equal, for example following the recent tragic events in Jersey, the loss of a fishing boat with the crew and the explosion that sadly cost many lives, we had a request from the Province of the Channel Islands for support for their appeal to help to relieve those in distress, as the Craft had offered £10,000 we decided it would be appropriate if the MBF matched that sum. Within a few hours of sending out the details, all of the Committee replied in favour.

Please remember Brethren that it is your money that we are approving for Worthy Causes so if you know of a Worthy Cause that is desperate for help please talk to your Provincial Almoner with a view to putting forward an application in conjunction with the Charity. I am confident that our hard working Charities Manager Darren Coleman-Heald would be delighted to assist and guide you through the necessary paperwork.

I look forward to meeting up with as many of you as possible as I travel the Country trying to tempt you to buy one of the current Stewards Jewels and hopefully at the same time raising the profile of our wonderful Mark Benevolent Fund.'

Sincerely and fraternally,

R.W.Bro. David Ashbolt, P.Prov.G.M. (London)
Deputy President of the Mark Benevolent Fund



£1,108,300

In 2022 the Mark Benevolent Fund made 30 Grants to local charities, Provinces, Districts and other worthy organisations and 20 grants to our own members and their families covering England and Wales



Province of the Channel Islands (Jersey)

Indicates location of a Worthy Causes Grant



District of Romania



£160,780

**to support
those with
Disabilities**



£26,669

A vehicle was required to transport staff, volunteers, family, carers and all associated equipment to all areas of the Province to relieve the needs of those diagnosed with autism and those who are currently engaged in the medical diagnosis of autism. The purpose of the charity is to create safe sensory learning and stimulation through the organising of events, trips and social gatherings and provision of support and recreational activities.





STRONGBONES

CHILDREN'S CHARITABLE TRUST

£5,750

This national charity helps families and disabled young people under the age of 21 who have complex needs including scoliosis, spina bifida, brittle bone disease or any other bone condition. This grant is funding a sensory equipment project which is different every year. They supply hundreds of sensory educational packs with different themes such as the 'Solar System' and 'Under the Sea'. The theme of this year's pack is 'Musical Instruments from Around the World'. 50 sensory packs have been provided by your donations.



Meet Myles, looking as 'Pleased as Punch' with his new musical pack





£33,400

Ospreys Wheelchair Rugby Club, based in south Wales, was set up in 1989 by Keith Jones and Paul Jenkins. It was established by people who loved the game and wanted to create meaningful sporting and rehabilitation opportunities for people with a disability. The club is run by volunteers, parents and ex-players.

Ospreys needed four new wheelchairs, replacement wheels and new inert tubes for another 11 players. The wheels needed to be replaced due to the constant contact battering they have received on the pitch.



£40,167

Disability Challengers provides play & leisure opportunities for disabled children and young people between the ages of 2 & 25. At the centre, based in Stoke Park in Guildford, their schemes give visitors a space of their own to have fun, meet friends and challenge their impairments through play. The MBF funded the car track for their new project.





£30,000

This charity is renovating a group of houses which will provide supported living for up to 21 autistic young adults in Bedfordshire. They have reached the fit-out stage and the for the kitchens and bathrooms of the first three properties which has been funded by the MBF.

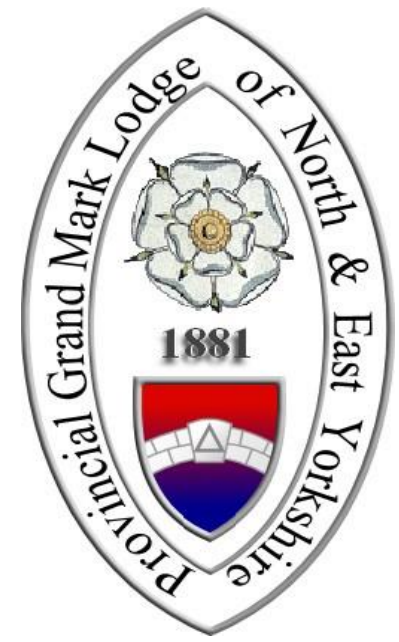


£24,794

The Bike Experience is promoting the physical, mental health and wellbeing of disabled people who would otherwise be excluded by enabling them to enjoy the pleasures and benefits of riding a motorcycle by the provision of adapted and modified bikes. The MBF has funded a vehicle to enable them to transport the trailer carrying the specially adapted bikes to venues across the UK.



**to support our
Secondary
Emergency Services**



£24,561

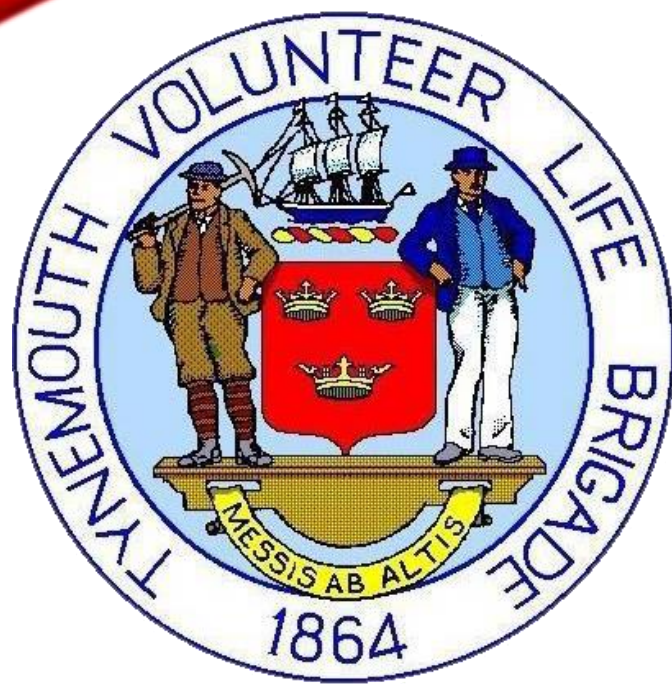
The team needed help with replacing worn and outdated communications equipment, some of it being over 20 years old. There has been a growing failure rate and with most of the radios being analogue sets they are no longer compatible with modern digital systems.

The MBF grant has allowed them to upgrade their essential equipment and provide a more reliable service.



£11,573

The Haverigg Inshore Rescue Team are independent of the RNLI and rely on public charitable support. The MBF has funded a new shallow water rescue vehicle in the form of a quad bike; that is because at the low water mark, the tide recedes several miles and the water is extremely shallow.



£55,751

The Tynemouth Volunteer Life Brigade provides a 24-hour, 365-day, multi-disciplinary, shore-based coastal rescue service. The rescue team is a declared facility to HM Coastguard and represents the Coastguard Rescue Service in the North Tyneside and Newcastle area. The brigade currently has twenty-three members and responds to an average of 120 callouts per year. The purchase of a second rescue vehicle and radio equipment has enabled them to operate more effectively.



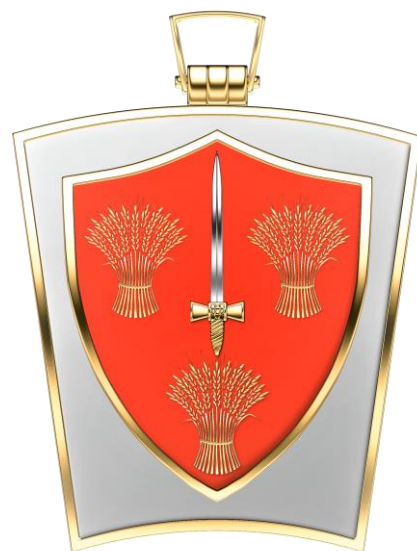
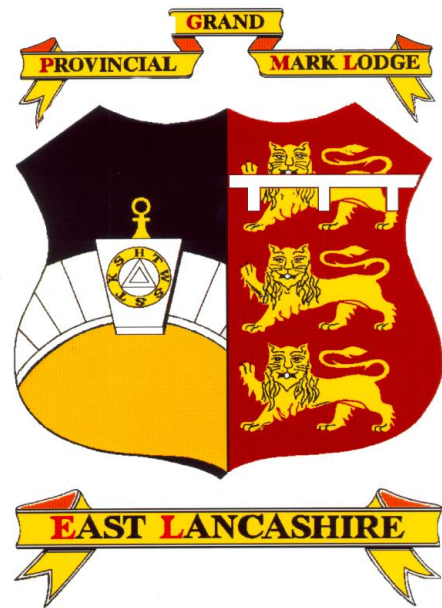
£11,005

The MBF purchased a specialist defibrillator and associated accessories for Dr Leon Roberts who has been a doctor with the East Midlands Immediate Care Scheme for many years. Dr Roberts lives close to the Rutland and Leicestershire borders and in his role as a responder for EMICS covers a rural population of around one million.



£37,500

This charity's current Landrover is the real workhorse of the Team, acting as a blue light emergency response vehicle to transport first aid, communications and rescue equipment to an incident. It has superb off road and adverse weather capabilities and is highly useful in getting heavy equipment closer to the scene of an incident as well as being able to transport team members to the start of various missing person search sectors. The Landrover, now 15 years old, has 60,000 hard miles on the clock, and wear and tear is really starting to show. Repairs are becoming more frequent, and the time off the road is becoming an issue for our responsiveness. The MBF has made the replacement of the vehicle a reality.



£18,801

In August 2022 the Greater Manchester Blood Bikes charity had one of its bikes stolen while working in the region. It was later found badly damaged, leaving Greater Manchester Blood Bikes with only three bikes to cover over 500 square miles.

The bike was able to be repaired but had over 85,000 miles on the clock. It was already nearing the end of its working life and given its condition it was likely that the bike would be retired sooner than expected. The MBF stepped up to replace the bike and provide the volunteers with a more reliable and economical bike.



£102,438

**to support
the Youth
Sector**



Scouts

Cornwall



£9,460

The Cornwall County Scout Council needed support for the purchase of vital safety and security equipment. Every four years they hold the 'Kernow Jamboree', a week-long activity camp, which attracts over 1,000 young people and over 500 volunteer leaders and support teams.





£5,450

On a rainy day in summer (probably the only one!) representatives of the MBF and the Provinces of South Wales, Dyfed and Wiltshire met at the Beacon Beacons in Wales to present a cheque to the Youth Adventure Trust to purchase new tents and other camping equipment.

The Wiltshire based charity works with disadvantaged young people aged between 11 and 16 living in areas of social and economic deprivation in Swindon and the surrounding areas in Wiltshire. Each year they help up to 360 young people build resilience, develop confidence and learn skills that will last a lifetime. These funds paid for 15 new tents for the volunteers, staff and children to use at the camps that take place every summer.





£87,528

This award was made to The Rock Youth Project, Currock and Upperby in Carlisle, to rebuild their Club House. They were in desperate need of financial support so they could replace the dilapidated, vermin infested wooden huts that they operated from. The Rock Youth Project is a safe fun space in the community welcoming over 50 vulnerable young people five nights a week keeping them off the streets and out of trouble.



£51,257

**to support
the Hospice
Sector**



£28,075

A new Children's Therapy Pod will provide a discrete and age-appropriate counselling and well-being space for children. The hospice will be able to deliver a range of therapeutic activities, increasing the mental health, psychological and emotional well-being of the children and their siblings. Situated in the Hospice grounds the building will be private and able to accommodate and be accessible for wheelchairs.



**Merlin
MS Centre**



£7,080

The Merlin MS Centre is upgrading their older, larger minibus for something more economical and practical. The rising cost of fuel and a reduction in volunteers who are able to obtain a specific license for the larger vehicle have been a major factor in taking this decision. The changing dynamic of travel in the county also continues to change the way in which they run the service. Thankfully they will receive a significant trade-in discount on the purchase of the new vehicle.



St Peter & St James Hospice
Hospice care in the heart of Sussex

£16,102

The hospice needs to move the existing In-Patient Unit Nurse Station, which is out of sight of many of the bedrooms. It will create a new integrated unit closer to the main hub of all the bedrooms and nursing activity.



**Supporting
Health Care
Projects**



Woodland
House



Birmingham
Women's Hospital
Charity

£100,000

In 2020 the MBF pledged funding to the Birmingham Women's and Children's Hospital charity to go towards the fitting out of counselling rooms in a new £1.5m neo natal bereavement centre called Woodland House.

The charity reached its fundraising goal early in 2022 and representatives of the MBF along with the Provincial Grand Master for Warwickshire, R.W.Bro. Philip Wills and W.Bro. Nigel Clemson, Assistant Provincial Grand Master, joined the team in the ground-breaking ceremony.

The centre will open in the autumn of 2023. The MBF's pledge was made very early in the fundraising process and inspired other organisations to make their donations.





£28,795



This request was to help set up a new project at The Christie Hospital in Manchester called 'Blood Tests Closer to Home'. Patients at The Christie require a routine blood test before having Systemic Anti-Cancer Therapies (SACT) on consecutive days, meaning they have to visit The Christie twice during the week of treatment.

Over the past two years, The Christie has been testing the potential for the development of a local blood testing service to enable our patients to have routine blood tests closer to where they live.

act

**Addenbrooke's
Charitable Trust**

£100,000

The Trust is purchasing a new surgical robot, costing £1.5 million, to transform complex surgeries and enable patients to recover from surgery within weeks. This new machine offers robotic surgery to six new areas of the hospital benefitting over 1,500 patients per year.



**to support
cancer care**

£25,000



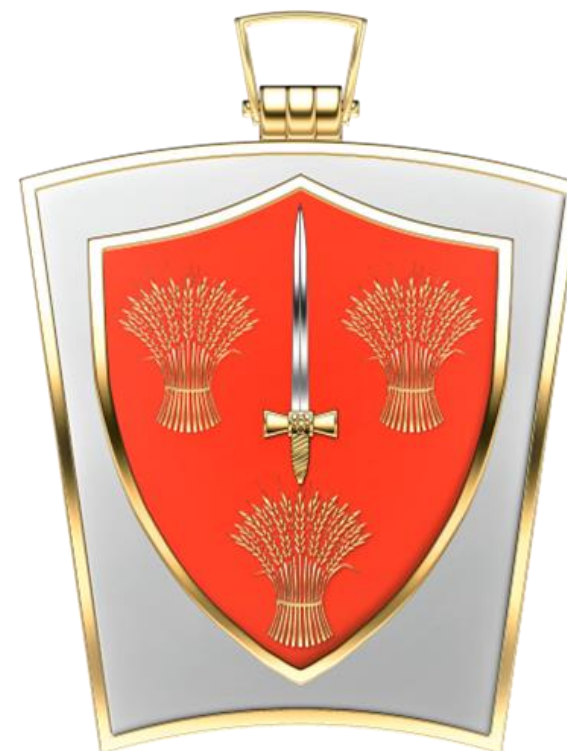
**Lennox
Children's
Cancer Fund**

£25,000

The Lennox Children's Cancer Fund provides practical and financial support for children and their families experiencing the trauma and heartache of a childhood cancer diagnosis. These funds will strengthen their emotional support service by providing therapy 'Treasure Boxes' alongside professional counselling to a child with cancer and their family.



**supporting
Humanitarian
Projects**



City of Goodness Orphanage



£10,000

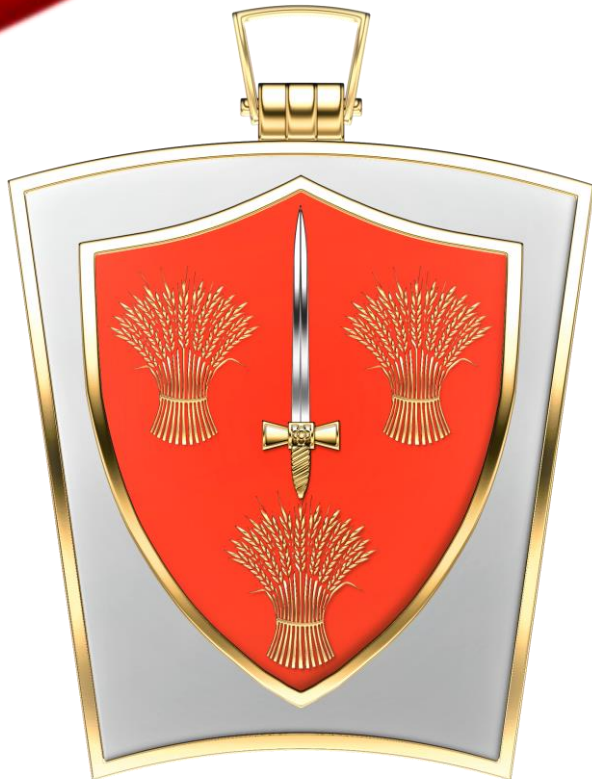
Following a recent successful trip to the Ukraine, Paul Stevenson and Michael Ross, local Cheshire Freemasons, delivered an ambulance full of medical and humanitarian aid to an orphanage in the City of Goodness, Chernivtsi. The orphanage survives on donations only and receives no state aid. It was in desperate need of a mini bus to transport the children to hospital appointments and if the time arrives to transport the children and parents to the border to safety.



£10,000

The MBF swiftly donated funds to the Jersey Bailiffs Appeal following two tragic events just before Christmas in 2022. On Thursday, 8 December 2022 a ferry collided with an 18 metre (59ft) fishing trawler off the north west coast of Jersey sadly all three crew of the fishing boat were lost.

Saturday, 10 December 2022 saw the explosion of a small block of flats in St Helier with the loss of ten lives. Residents were mostly of an upper age group. Those living in the immediate vicinity were displaced from their homes due to damage to their dwellings by the blast. The Bailiff of the Island, Sir Tim Le Cocq, set in motion an appeal to provide support for those affected by the two tragedies. The money received, which will be overseen by the Bailiff, will be used entirely to help those affected by both events.



£10,000

AMBULANCEAID.CO.UK is a non-profit making group of volunteers delivering ambulances and medical aid to the Ukraine. The funds bought a fully equipped ambulance to be driven initially to Poland and then on to the Ukraine. The volunteers filled the ambulance with medical supplies and other urgently needed equipment.





£235,000

At the meeting of Mark Grand Lodge in March 2022, the Pro Grand Master announced that the Mark Benevolent Fund would be making an initial donation of £25,000 to the District of Romania who have been working proactively in many ways to provide support and relief to their neighbours in Ukraine. The District continues to work closely with the government to provide, amongst other things:

- special tents for more than 20 people
- electrical heating devices
- beds and blankets
- personal hygiene products
- emergency medical and small surgery kits
- antibiotics and other different medicines
- personal protective equipment
- food and water

This tremendous endeavour has touched Freemasons across the Constitution and many of our Brethren have been keen to add their own support by making a donation.



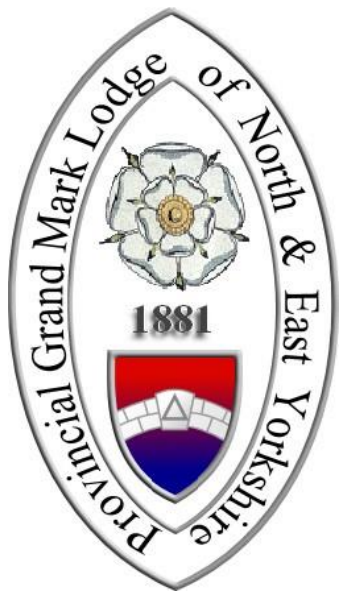
£108,188

**to support
projects in your
Local Community**



£4,327

The centre works with women who live or work in the London Borough of Sutton and focus on working with those who have experienced domestic or sexual violence. The programs that they provide help to support and empower women leading to increased confidence and self-esteem. It gives women the opportunity to make positive life decisions for themselves and their children. The MBF has helped the centre update their ageing white goods and replace a fence in their children's play area.



£38,118

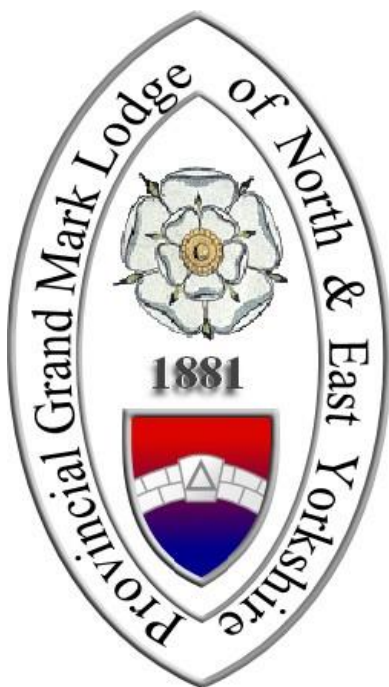
This grant was for the purchase of an electric van. One of their vans is reaching the end of its useful life and they are looking for funding to replace it.

In line with the move to provide more eco-friendly means of transport the funding for an electric van will allow them to deliver to clients around the whole of Yorkshire.



£46,090

The Millom Network Centre in South Cumbria and acts as a supplier of furniture and household goods to those in need who don't have the funds to purchase them. It also acts as a foodbank and food distribution centre. Following a break-in at their premises their van was stolen and vandalised. The MBF was delighted to fund a replacement to enable them to continue their essential work.



£1,916

Stape Silver Band is a community brass band based in Pickering, North Yorkshire. Throughout the year we perform at a variety of venues in and around the local area. The band, formed in 1884, seek to cover the cost of updating the electrical installation in their practice rooms to comply with the standards required by their insurers.



20

**Grants to our own
members and
their families**

‘During 2022 the Petitions Committee has dealt with 21 applications and have dispensed a total of £35,388 in relief.

From the very nature of these Petitions the precise information must be kept confidential however I can report that assistance has varied from helping with daily living allowance to the purchase of new kitchen items, carpets, special chairs, redecorations, and essential car repairs amongst other things.

The Committee of six Trustees receive all applications via email and send their views to me as Chairman, I then collate those views and then send a decision to Darren, the Charities Manager who facilitates the payments.

In most cases the response time is very speedy which is in line with Canon Portals motto; “Bis dat qui cito dat” – “He gives twice who gives promptly”, This is why it is essential that the application forms are completed correctly and contain all the information that the committee requires, so time is not wasted in asking for additional facts. I would also remind you that you should also initiate an application to the MBF at the same time as making an application to the MCF. Always seek out your Lodge Almoner for any help or advice you may need.’

Sincerely and fraternally,

R.W.Bro. Mike Whelan, Provincial Grand Master for Dorset
MBF Trustee and Chairman of the Petitions Committee



Who did we help?

- A grant was made to the widow of a Brother who now resides in a care home. She was in need of some funds to help with the necessities such as hair dressing, newspapers, new clothes, chiropody and manicures. All of these things are not generally paid for by care homes.
- The pandemic has caused severe hardship to one brother who ended up losing his job. A diagnosis of severe illness followed which stopped him from moving on with his life when restrictions were relaxed. His benefits did not cover his outgoings and the MBF stepped in with an emergency grant to give him some much needed peace of mind while he recovers.
- Another Brother and his family were suffering due to the sudden increase in the cost of living. Rent increases, benefit reductions and illness had all taken its toll leaving them struggling to find non-existent funds to cover the shortfall.
- W.Bro. K needed help. The rising cost of living and illnesses suffered by members of his immediate family had prevented him from returning to work having a knock-effect on finances. The MBF assisted with a grant that took the pressure off the family and helped them get back on their feet.
- Mrs M had been managing with a fridge-freezer that was well past its sell-by date and definitely not keeping food as cold as it should be. During a visit by our Visiting Brother, he also noticed that she struggled to get in and out of her armchair. He decided to ask the Petitions Committee if the MBF could help. As well as a daily living allowance the MBF replaced Mrs M's fridge-freezer and arranged for her to have a new recliner chair to make her life just that little bit more comfortable.
- V.W.Bro. P, having received help from the MBF on a previous occasion, asked his Provincial Grand Almoner for some assistance to replace a carpet that was becoming threadbare and dangerous. During his visit, the Provincial Grand Almoner found that the state of the flat was in a much worse state than V.W.Bro. P. had led him to believe. He applied immediately to the Petitions Committee for a capital grant to help with repairs and redecoration. Saving money where they could, Brethren from his Lodge also helped complete the work leaving him in a much more pleasant and relaxing environment.
- Four of our Masonic Widows received grants to help with the rigours of daily living. As the cost of living crisis continues to bite, every penny now makes a difference. Are you struggling to make ends meet? Speak to your Lodge Almoner for more details.
- W.Bro. M received an emergency grant to help with immediate family costs. This Brother had sadly lost his wife leaving him with young children to care for as well as holding down a full-time job. Members of the Province also rallied round to helping ease his burden. As this is an emergency grant the MBF Petitions Committee will review his case once the result of his MCF application is known to assess if further help can be offered.

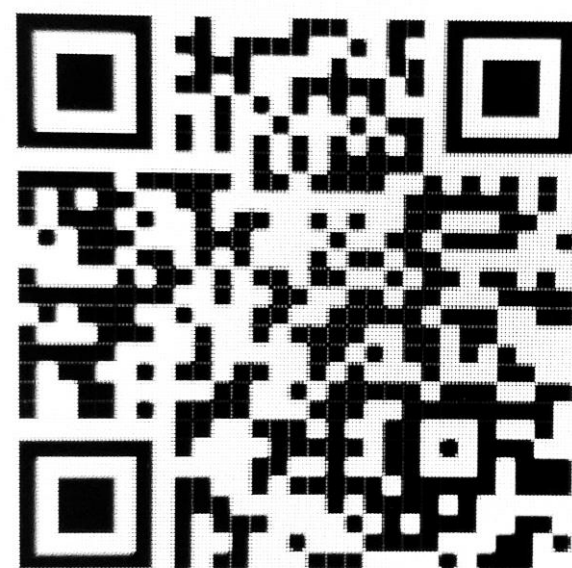


155th MBF Festival Banquet
will be held at the
Harrogate Conference Centre

Kings Rd
Harrogate
HG1 5LA

Saturday, 1 July 2023

BOOK HERE





2022 Annual Review

Issued by
Mark Benevolent Fund
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30 January 2023