

WEST LANCASHIRE FREEMASONS' CHARITY (WLFC)



THANK YOU

This leaflet describes WLFC's activities and what we have been able to achieve during challenging times. All this has been possible because of your generosity. The charitable collections in Lodges and Chapters, and other fund raising are all generous individually but when combined you have enabled WLFC to make a difference to the lives of Masons, their loved ones and to communities. Thank you for your ceaseless support on behalf of those we have been able to help because of your donations

WHO ARE WE?

WLFC exists for one main reason – to provide financial assistance to Freemasons of West Lancashire and/or their dependents in time of need.

It also makes grants to promote young persons' education and to suitable community projects.

The Charity is manned by some twenty dedicated West Lancashire Freemasons from all parts of the province who give their time freely and voluntarily.

WHAT DO WE DO?

We receive applications into the offices at Huyton, assess them according to our guidelines and criteria. If an application qualifies, we calculate the appropriate award and pay it directly to the applicant. Of course, because of the nature of our work and the vital need for privacy of applicants, confidentiality must be and is strictly observed at all times.

We work closely with the Provincial Grand Almoner and the Provincial Grand Charity Steward together with their teams throughout the length and breadth of the Province and, of course, for the majority of applications, we rely on them to identify those in financial need and to help in the application process. However, we are always pleased to receive applications direct from brethren.

The WLFC also has a programme for non-Masonic giving. Each year the Directors select 3 or 4 suitable Charities for major donations in excess of £25,000 where our help can make a significant difference to the communities in West Lancashire. We are also able to make grants to promote young persons' education.

YOUR CHARITY IS HERE TO HELP YOU

WLFC now provides financial assistance to hundreds of Freemasons and their dependents throughout the Province of West Lancashire as well as supporting projects in the community at large and personal development of certain educational needs.

This publication describes areas where assistance is available and how to access that help. We realize that many people find it embarrassing to ask for help, but all applications are dealt with in the strictest confidence.

We believe that there are many Freemasons and/or their dependents who are facing financial hardship and would benefit from an application to WLFC but are completely unaware that help is available to them.

All applications for assistance are assessed to ensure that they meet our basic criteria and that the individual's income and resources are insufficient to meet their needs. Applicants who have savings can receive assistance provided that their savings are within certain limits.

WLFC can also help with financial emergencies very quickly, often within a matter of 2-3 hours.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE TO CLAIM

Any Mason in a state of financial hardship who has been a subscribing member of a Craft Lodge or Royal Arch Chapter in the Province of West Lancashire for at least three years. (In certain cases WLFC may, at its discretion, waive this requirement). It is NOT necessary to belong to a Lodge or Chapter at the time of application nor, indeed, to be resident in the Province.

Applications can also be made by widows and immediate financial dependents of masons.

HOW TO APPLY

First, contact your Almoner or if you would prefer, the Local Group Care Officer, or indeed the Provincial Grand Almoner. All of these Brethren will be able to offer you comprehensive and confidential advice. In addition a confidential helpline email is cam@westlancscharity.org.uk.

Your details will then be put in the hands of a Care Officer who will arrange to visit you at home in order to help complete the necessary paperwork and obtain from you all necessary 'back up' information.

The Visiting Volunteer will forward the completed forms and supporting information to the Applications Department at our office at Huyton for assessment and processing. Copies of the forms are sent to our friends at the Masonic Charitable Foundation (MCF) to check whether the applicant also qualifies for their help.

YOUNG PERSONS' EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE

Support for the children and grandchildren of West Lancashire Freemasons, may be provided by the MCF where there is evidence of hardship within the family, irrespective of where they reside.

If young people are involved when an adult application is received, we will, as a matter of course, check whether the MCF can give additional help.

With regard to other young people, if they are aged under 25 and resident in our Province, even if there is no connection with Freemasonry, assistance may be available if there is evidence of hardship preventing an important feature of their education.

Our assistance does not cover services normally provided by the state but may for a related activity.

HOW HAVE WE COPEDED WITH THE 2021 FESTIVAL AND THE PANDEMIC

WLFC work closely with the MCF so were delighted to support the 2021 Festival. Periodic festivals are a fact of life and so provision had been made to continue WLFC's core activities using investments and reserves. WLFC were further assisted by the generosity of Brethren leaving legacies.

Not surprisingly, the Pandemic and lockdowns provided many problems. Whilst the Huyton office had to be closed, the dedicated team of volunteers worked from home and continued to deliver WLFC's important activities. Indeed during the full period of the lockdowns we made awards to Freemasons and their connections at levels similar to that before Covid-19 arrived on the scene. During this trying period we were also able to make substantial awards to non-Masonic charities and organisations supporting 'Covid' initiatives throughout the Province including:

Provision of equipment to 13 hospices and PPE to hospitals and care homes; assistance for young carers and the homeless as well as laptops for students; funding for meals on wheels; food bank support and seed funding for the Provincial Food Bank Scheme

During the period of lockdown WLFC provided funding to Masonic and non – Masonic beneficiaries in excess of £453,000.

As we return to a more normal way of life WLFC will continue and, when possible, extend support to Masons, their dependents and non-masonic causes.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Once again, many thanks for your continued support and if you wish to find out any more about the charity and its work our website is www.westlancsfreemasons.org.uk/wlfc-home.

The WLFC office number is 0151 482 4750, and letters to WLFC can be sent "FREEPOST WLFC".