



THE REPORT OF THE PROVINCIAL GRAND CHARITY STEWARD FOR THE YEAR ENDING 14 JULY 2020

Masonry as we all know has had to change dramatically because of the Corona Virus Pandemic. We have not been able to hold our regular Meetings since March 2020 and the charitable giving side of our organization has consequently suffered with us not having normal collections by raffles, gift aid envelopes and other fund-raising events. Despite these recent setbacks during the period 1 January 2019 and 31 December 2019 Hertfordshire Mark and Royal Ark Mariner Lodges made 38 donations to local charities totaling £9,466.00. This is a great achievement and I would like to thank everyone for their generosity and especially Lodge Charity Stewards, for their support in promoting these charities.

On this point I would like to emphasize that Relief Chests are a marvelous way for Lodges to save money to then distribute for charitable purposes especially with the incentive of the government adding 25p for every £1 deposited (providing the member is a tax-payer) I would commend all Charity Stewards to consider opening a Relief Chest if they have not done so already. It is very easy to set up and please contact me if you need any help or guidance.

The Provincial Grand Master recently announced the launch of the Mark Province of Hertfordshire Blood Bike appeal which will run from July 2020 until July 2021. The aim of the appeal is to try and raise £15,000 to purchase a new specialized and liveried motorcycle for the use of SERV Herts & Beds Blood Bikes. This organization is run entirely by volunteers who give their time for free. They receive no government help and therefore rely entirely on charitable donations. They provide 24-hour cover throughout the year and much of their costs are borne by the individuals who volunteer to do the work. We all appreciate the work carried out by the NHS during the current Covid 19 crisis and have supported them. The Blood Bikes Team do equally important work. In addition to delivering blood they also deliver breast milk, Coronavirus samples for the NHS and Anti-body tests from Portland Down to London. Last year they dealt with 7,000 calls for assistance and they normally deal with 5 – 7 calls each evening.

Members who would like to make a donation to this Appeal can do so very easily by completing a form and making a payment by Direct Debit to the Provincial Grand Mark Lodge of Herts Benevolent Fund or simply submitting a donation by personal cheque directly to the Provincial Grand Treasurer whose address is on the form. The form can be downloaded from the Herts Mark website – www.hertsmark.org or from any Charity Steward. It would be a terrific gesture if all Mark Masons in the Province were to spread the word about this initiative and support the Appeal – if they have not already done so with whatever donation they can afford.

The Mark 200 Club currently has over 100 entries for the monthly draw and the latest one on 23 July 2020 showed the sum of £250 will be donated to the Herts Mark Benevolent Fund and an equal amount was paid out in prize money. The total amount attributed to the Benevolent Fund up to the year ended 31 March 2020 was £2,852.50 to which must be added a further £140 from brethren who did not wish to take their prize money. This is a fantastic total and all members should be encouraged to join this Club as this is a marvelous way of raising funds for our charitable giving. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank W Bro Dennis Brown, the Assistant Grand Charity Steward, for his hard work in overseeing the running of this Club.

Charity plays a major part in Masonry and it never ceases to amaze me on the generosity of our members, particularly in the Mark degree. I thank everyone for their generosity and long may it continue.

W Bro David Horne
Provincial Grand Charity Steward