



# CONFERENCE 2025

## Welcome to the Joint Charity Stewards & Almoners Conference

### “Back to Basics – Caring for the Family”

Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> October 2025, Ashlar House, BSE

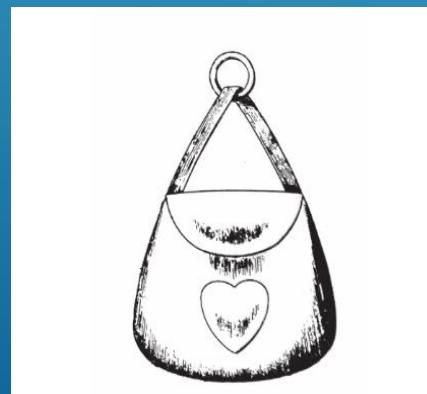


# A BIG WELCOME TO YOU ALL

**W. Bro Jon Neill – Provincial Grand Charity Steward**



**W. Bro Douglas Paine – Provincial Grand Almoner**



- ▶ Welcome to all our guests –
- ▶ Bumblebees – Julie Goodridge
- ▶ Janet Humphrey B.E.M and Bridget McIntyre M.B.E
- ▶ Caroline Wales - MCF
- ▶ Ladies from Lowestoft Ladies Fellowship –Elisa Allen and Gill Seymour
- ▶ Wives and Partners
- ▶ Members from other orders
- ▶ Provincial Grand Almoner Mark Masons Roger Florey
- ▶ Assistant Provincial Almoner Hertfordshire Anthony Cook
- ▶ Assistant Provincial Grand Master Suffolk Province Paul Rackham
- ▶ to you Brethren all

# HOUSEKEEPING

- ▶ In event of emergency - Fire
- ▶ No Fire alarms expected!
- ▶ In event of alarm W. Bro Jamie Fire officer

## Toilets

We will be having a natural break halfway through !  
But if you need to go, please do get up and leave.

## Mobile phones

Please do turn off or to silent.

If you need to take or make a call, please do leave the room.

# Contents

- Part 1 – Charity Stewards Presentations
- Part 2 – Almoners Presentations





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# Festival 2029 Update

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**Suffolk Provincial Charity Steward  
Festival Chairman  
W. Bro Jon Neill  
October 2025**



## Welcome to the Festival 2029/Charity update.

- Festival.
- New grants.
- Benefits of electronic giving and gift aid.
- Hear from two of our Charities that we have supported and would like to continue to support



- ▶ Did you read the news last week in The Spectator and on BBC? According to the news ...
- ▶ •Catholics and other religions are not allowed to join Freemasons?
- ▶ *This is, of course, a complete falsehood. We are proud to be an organisation with people from all faiths, including Catholics. In fact, Freemasonry remains one of the very few institutions that celebrates this diversity so fervently, as a cornerstone of who we are. It is common to find Christians, Muslims, Jews, Hindus, Sikhs, and all faiths, sat together in a Freemasons' Lodge – enjoying each other's company.*
- ▶ •Our Freemasons hall is dull and like a 1930 Odeon?
- ▶ *It was built as a war memorial built in 1933 to remember the thousands of Freemasons that so valiantly made the Ultimate Sacrifice for this country in the First World War. This memorial, funded by Freemasons themselves, stands as a reminder of those brave men – with the Art Deco splendour a fitting tribute to their memory.*
- ▶ •We are a secret organisation?
- ▶ *Our members are actively encouraged to talk openly about their membership of Freemasonry and to talk with pride about it, whilst raising awareness of what we do. We are happy to open our lodges to view.*
- ▶ •There is something vulgar about Freemasons?
- ▶ *We gave away 23.8 million pounds to charity in 23/24 and with 18 million hours of volunteering. We support masons, non-mason, families, children and people of all faiths. We pledge allegiance to King and country and to abide by the rules of honesty, integrity, friendship and service.*
- ▶ •What is there not to like about Freemasonry?
- ▶ *Lets hear a little of the difference that our Festival is making in Suffolk.....*

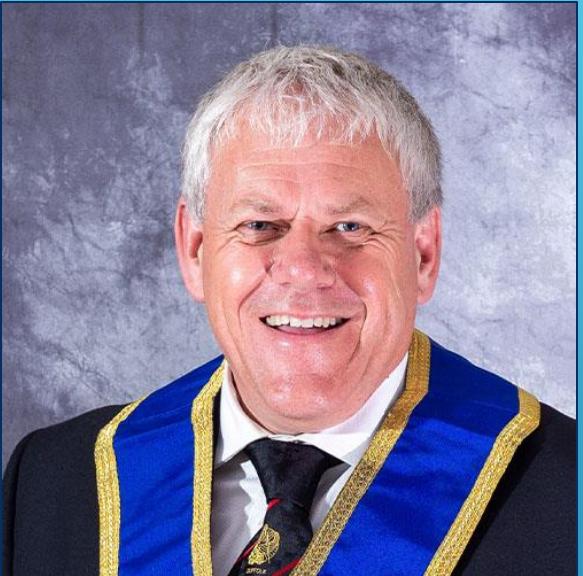
# Festival 2029 Team



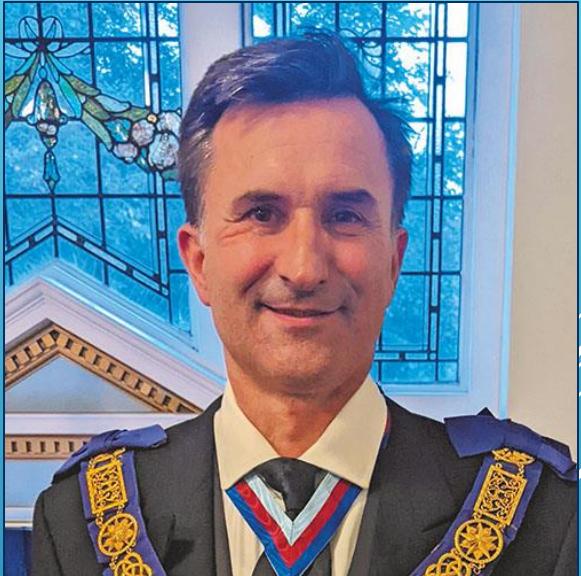
Andy (Deputy Chairman)



Nick



Chairman



President



Chris



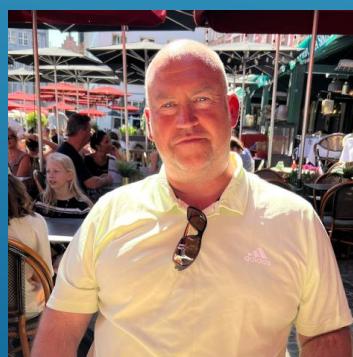
Roger



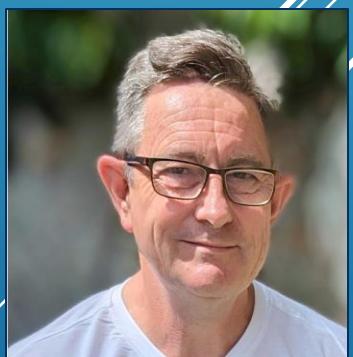
Kelvin



Bill



Neil



Mark



Rob



Paul

## Charity Team



Charity Steward



Roger Howlett Grants



Deputy Charity  
Steward



Steve Holman Accounts

# What is a Masonic festival?

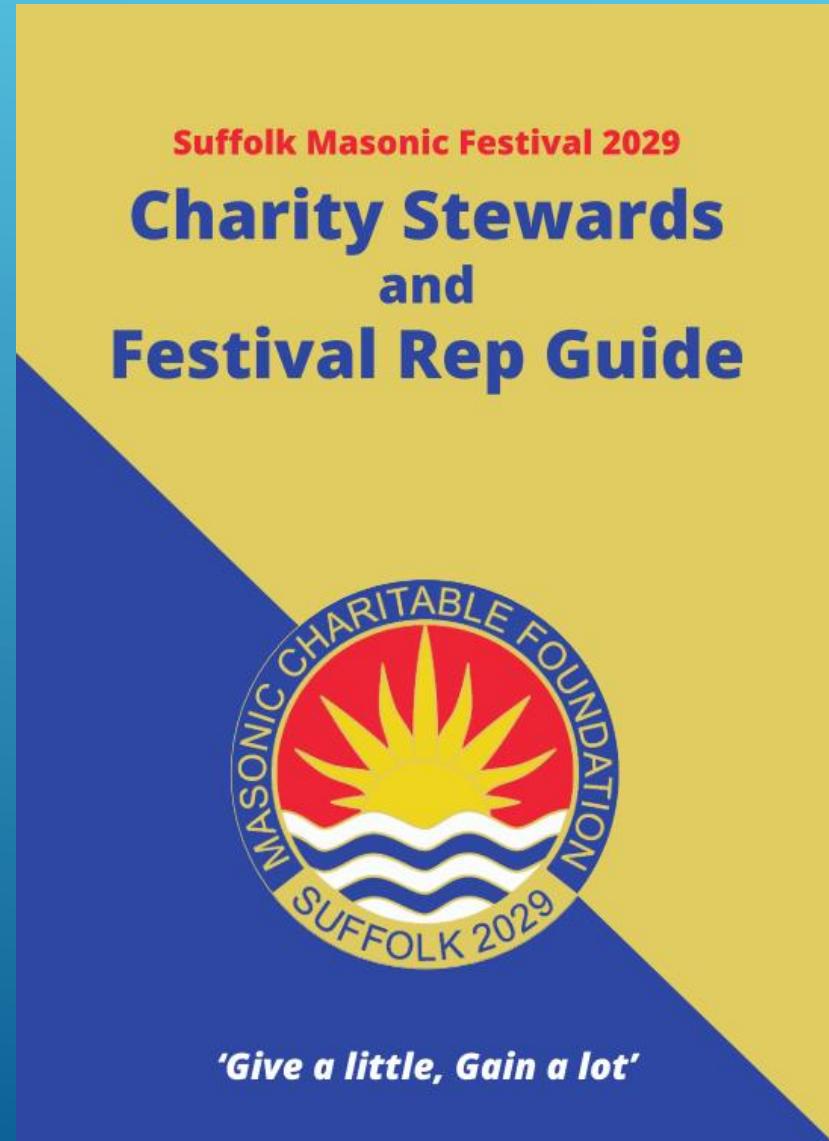


A masonic festival is a fundraising appeal, in our case it will last for 5 years, during that time we raise money for our own masonic charity the MCF, 47 provinces take part in the Festival scheme.

Don't assume your new members or even some existing members will know about the MCF and Festivals.



Why is the Suffolk Festival slogan....“Give a little, Gain a lot”



- Funding since 2019
- Return on investment
- Changes to the system, grant updates
- Last year Suffolk Freemasons gave away £250,000 direct from our lodges this is not the MCF.



- As well as the MCF grants this is just some of the charities that our lodges have donated to over the last few years.



- Lowestoft & District Deaf Society
- SERV SC (Service by Emergency Response Volunteers Suffolk and Cambridgeshire)
- Ipswich Community Playbus
- Chaps – Mens Health Charity
- Eye Opportunity Group
- MACS
- Brave Futures
- Halesworth Volunteer Centre
- The Tom Bowdidge Youth Cancer Foundation
- Ipswich Opportunity Group
- Suffolk Mind (Multiple Awards)
- Shelley Centre for Therapeutic Riding
- The Bumblebee Children's Charity
- Gatehouse Charity
- Ipswich 17 Good Neighbour Scheme
- Stowmarket Foodbank (New Life Church Suffolk)
- The Basic Life Charity
- FIND Families In Need
- Waveney Foodbank East Anglia's Children's Hospices – The Nook Hospice
- East Anglia's Children's Hospices – Ipswich Hospice (Multiple Awards)
- St Elizabeth Hospice Hospice (Multiple Awards)

- St Nicholas Hospice Care Hospice
- K1 Britannia Foundation Trust
- Medical Detection Dogs
- Emmaus Suffolk (Multiple Awards)
- Freemasons COVID-19 Community Fund
- St Nicholas Hospice Care Hospice
- Aspect Living Foundation
- University of East Anglia Suffolk
- Provincial Grand Charity
- RCG COVID-19 National Initiative
- University of East Anglia
- MCF Covid-19 Fund
- East of England Ambulance Service NHS Charitable Funds
- Lord Kitchener's Memorial Holiday Centre
- The Porch Project
- St Nicholas Hospice Care Hospice (Multiple Awards)
- Hospice Colchester and Ipswich Hospitals Charity
- ActivLives
- Our Special Friends (OSF)
- Hospice UK Partnership
- East Anglian Air Ambulance
- Medical Detection Dogs
- Emmaus Suffolk (Multiple Awards)
- Freemasons COVID-19 Community Fund



- It's not just about the money we also help in the community, fishing days for children in 2025.



- Bows and Arrows garden project, Ipswich 2025



- Our Provincial Grandmaster in his spare time, doing his bit in the community. You will see a lot more of this in the years to come.



# Our Strategy for Suffolk Festival 29.



- Fun and membership.
- No lodge targets.
- No league or performance tables.
- Give early to the Festival chest.
- One province, one goal to beat £1.6M
- Give back to our members.
- Support Suffolk.





# SUFFOLK FESTIVAL 2029

## SEVEN STEPS

'Give a little, Gain a lot'

Please pick Three, Five or all Seven Steps to help support the Festival.

For more information speak to your lodge Charity Steward or visit our Festival website [www.suffolkfestival.org.uk](http://www.suffolkfestival.org.uk)



**1**

### COMMIT TO QUALIFYING FOR A FESTIVAL STEWARD'S JEWEL

Just £5 per month over the Festival period to qualify - the jewel itself is free.

**2**

### OR GAIN A PATRONAGE JEWEL

For just £10 a month for Vice Patron, £15 Patron or £20 for Grand Patronage. Select the Patronage option of your choice and RECEIVE a free jewel, festival gloves, socks and hankerchief. Your contributions are assigned to you and your lodge.

**3**

### FESTIVAL 500 CLUB

Not only a way to support the Festival Appeal but also a fun way to engage your friends and families, with the chance of winning a prize!

**4**

### BRANDED MERCHANDISE

Promote your support of the Festival by wearing a Festival29 Tie and using other high quality items produced specifically for our Festival29 Appeal.

**5**

### ENCOURAGE LODGE TO USE DIGITAL DONATIONS/GIFT AID ENVELOPES

This ensures your donations are assigned to you and to your lodge.

**6**

### SUPPORT PROVINCIAL EVENTS

Your Festival Team are going to be arranging a host of events and activities that will not only raise funds for the appeal, but also provide you and members of your lodge with a fun experience that will allow you to include family and friends and may offer opportunities to attract new members.

**7**

### ORGANISE A LODGE EVENT

Don't be afraid to organise your own event.

Join forces with other Lodges or associated Chapters and encourage your members to take part, have fun and raise funds.

To make a donation, scan barcode or visit <https://gtap.uk/suffolkcg>

SCAN TO MAKE A DONATION



And more...!

Perhaps you could take on a sponsorship challenge - Do you want to firewalk, run a half marathon, or challenge yourself to lose weight. There are endless ways to challenge yourself and gain sponsorship, plus the MCF can help you through our fundraising platform, Freemasonry Gives.

What else can you do? Why not think of other ways that you can support the appeal.

# HOW WILL WE DO IT?

- Follow the seven steps guide.
- Give early to the appeal.
- Check out our website.
- Sign up to the RPP

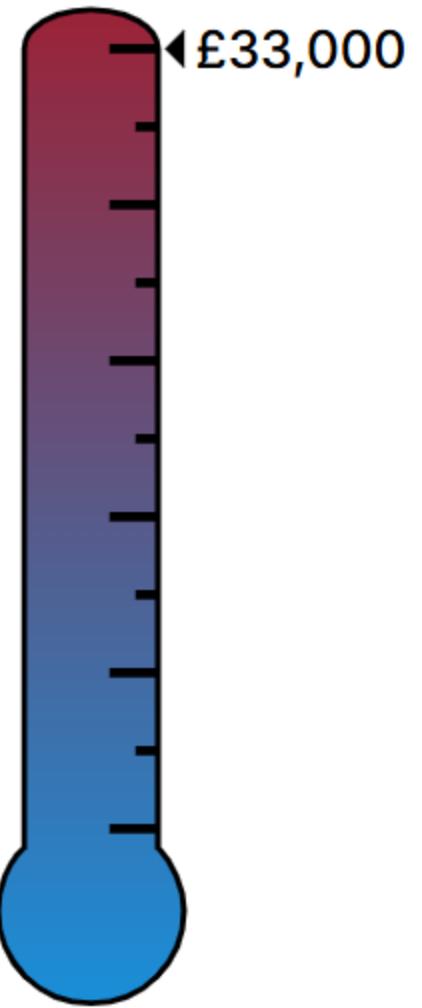


**Support the Festival29 and keep Roger busy by signing up to a jewel today on [www.suffolkfestival.org.uk](http://www.suffolkfestival.org.uk)**

# THE FESTIVAL TORCH AFFECTIONALLY KNOWN AS “TORCHY”



- What is the torch?
- How will it raise money?
- How do we know where it's going next?



## 2025 Lodge Visit Plan

*Rotary* (Framlingham) – 9306 – Tuesday 13/5/25

*Copperfield* (Gorleston) – 9581 – Monday 19/5/25

*Magi* (Lowestoft) – 9747 – Tuesday 10/6/25

*Christchurch* (Ipswich) – 6829 – Friday 12/9/25

*Fidelity* (Framlingham) – 555 – Wednesday 1/10/25

*Felix United Services* (Felixstowe) – 3833 – Wednesday 22/10/25

*Laconic* (Ipswich) – 9771 – Friday 21/11/25

*Stour Valley* (Sudbury) – 1224 – Friday 19/12/25

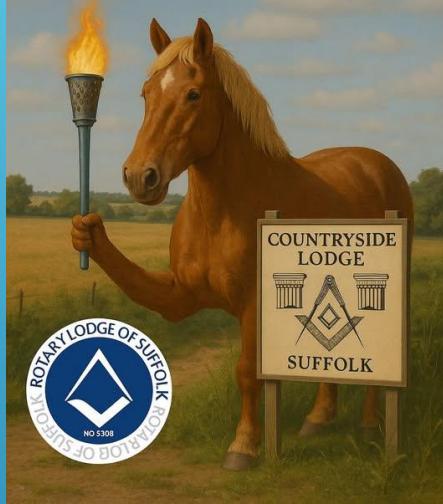
## 2026 Lodge Visit Plan

*Ionic* (Ipswich) – 5922 – Tuesday 13/1/26

*Orient* (Lowestoft) – 4085 – Wednesday 4/2/26



This Tuesday 13th May,  
something special is  
happening at the  
Suffolk Punch Trust.



Y" ON ITS JOURNEY.



# WHAT ELSE WILL BE HAPPENING?

The Festival 29 team present...

## SUFFOLK'S GOT TALENT!

Calling all talented performers and shining stars! The stage is set, and the spotlight will be waiting for you at our highly anticipated Talent Show!

Contact Jon Neill on [chstwd@suffolkfreemason.org.uk](mailto:chstwd@suffolkfreemason.org.uk) for more info or to register an interest.

[www.suffolkfestival.org.uk](http://www.suffolkfestival.org.uk)



- Suffolks Got Talent
- Golf days 2026
- Fun days
- Firewalking
- Classical music event
- Midway Dinner/Dance
- Large community project
- Festival to end the Festival
- See Masons in action/Give tap
- Lodge events



## HOW ARE WE DOING ?



- It's not a race, almost 2 years in.
- Just under halfway pledged to our 1.6M
- Actual cash in bank £550,000
- Regular payment plan, target is to beat 1000 signed up by DD, just £5 a month.
- Do one thing today to help, We need 200 more using RPP that's just 3 members from each lodge. And we will be close to our pledged amount



**Where can you get information on the Festival?** The Festival website on <https://suffolkfestival.org.uk/>  
Our facebook page on <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1158249228483605/>  
Our Instagram page on **suffolkfestival2029**



- New grants rules



- MCF Grants

So, we have a change in direction from the MCF and some new grants and changes to the grant system.

- It is positive for Suffolk.
- The changes mean we can spend the charity money where we need it.





# Masonic Grants

## and what the changes mean to us in Suffolk

### Matched funding and the changes



We previously received £10,000 per year from the MCF to match fund a maximum of 6 applications.

This scheme has been cancelled by the MCF and a community fund scheme put in its place. No MCF matched funding scheme now exists.



### New Community fund to replace matched funding

Each Province will be able to **submit one application** for a grant of between £10,000 and £50,000 towards a charity project which meets the Community Fund criteria. **Grants up to £100,000 will be considered in exceptional circumstances.**

Decision-making panel made up of **representatives from MCF and UGLE** will meet in February 2026 to award grants. If you have a worthy cause, please discuss in the first instance to the Suffolk Provincial grant team on [charitygrants@suffolkfreemason.org.uk](mailto:charitygrants@suffolkfreemason.org.uk).

No application is guaranteed.

## MCF Grants



Large and small grants via the MCF remain the same and please direct people to check eligibility through the MCF website and to progress any application directly with the MCF, it would be advisable to advise the Provincial team of any applications to enable them to assist. Please visit [www.mcf.org.uk/get-support/grants-to-charities/](http://www.mcf.org.uk/get-support/grants-to-charities/)

## Suffolk Proposals



To create our own Suffolk Provincial match funding scheme of £10,000 per annum to be agreed and renewed on a yearly basis by the Provincial charity team. Lodges can apply for a grant between £500 and £1000, only one application per lodge per year. Apply direct to the Provincial charity team on [charitygrants@suffolkfreemason.org.uk](mailto:charitygrants@suffolkfreemason.org.uk). This is to commence at our conference 2025 and will close on the 31st May 2026.

## Festival Donations



The Festival scheme remains mainly unchanged in terms of how we give to the MCF and our strategy. However commencing in April 2026 the province will receive a proportion of all our Festival giving back in the form of a percentage, this will be paid into a relief chest for us to use as a fund to manage charity, community and almoner giving and support.. This gives us greater control of how we spend our money and where we spend our money. This money can only be given to charities via our relief chest.

It is important that we continue with the regular DD and encourage new members to sign up to our Festival and wear a jewel for Festival29.

**Suffolk Provincial Grand Charity bank account**  
Sort Code 20-44-51, Account 70868221, Ref Lodge name and Festival29

These changes are positive to our charity aims and enable us to control the giving of monies and to whom we donate and support, due diligence will need to still be undertaken and we have our own charity process for undertaking this. However, we can still use the MCF if required to undertake due diligence.

**Any questions please contact Jon Neill our Provincial Charity Steward**  
**on [ChStwd@suffolkfreemason.org.uk](mailto:ChStwd@suffolkfreemason.org.uk)**



- Benefits of electronic giving and gift aid.





Relief chest envelopes and your lodge charity steward. He....

1. Hands out envelopes.
2. Collects envelopes.
3. Counted by two people.
4. Cash is then paid into a bank
5. Slips sent via post to MCF for gift aid, forms to fill in.
6. The MCF have to manually process them, it takes weeks.
7. Its costs £3.39 to process 25 envelopes, QR or electronic payments costs nothing.
8. How many envelopes fail ? 6%





## Why is our membership slow to change?

1. People like the envelopes, we can claim gift aid easily.
2. Part of the ceremony.
3. People don't understand QR codes or payment links.
4. Its easy with cash.
5. Don't like change.





## Reasons to try it

1. Saves you Charity Steward a huge amount of paperwork.
2. Security, no cash, no visit to the bank.
3. Proven people give more = £8.25 V £13.62.
4. Its easy once you know how.
5. Saves 6% of failed envelopes.
6. Saves admin costs of processing them.





We are undertaking a trial at Court Knoll

1. Give out envelope type slip and collect as a normal alms collection, with members filling it in, but no cash is given.
2. It means the Secretary can add up the donations for the minutes from the pledged amount on the slips.
3. At the festive board or even the day after the member makes the donation by QR or bank link straight into relief chest.
4. All the Charity Steward has to do is check they made the payment in the relief chest, cutting his work down.
5. Finally, if you have a member that really insists on cash then he can fill in the form, give the cash to a brother and he can do it for him via electronic giving with a few clicks in that brothers name.



## The benefits

1. No cost to process envelopes.
2. No trip to bank or paperwork for charity Steward.
3. No handling or counting cash.
4. Maybe higher donation, its been proven.
5. No 6% of failed envelopes.
  
6. Surely its worth a try?

If you need help get in touch , happy to come along and give some support.

20:47 8/11/2023

Make a donation to MCF2029 - Suffolk MCF 2029 Festival

**Donation Amount**

£ 10   £ 25   £ 50   £ 100   Other

£ 25 GBP

First name\*   Last name\*

First name   Last name

First line of your home address\*

First line of address

Postcode\*

Postcode

Are you a Freemason?

[Read our privacy policy here](#)



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Thank you from me and the Festival Team for all your support,  
thank you for listening.

We could not achieve this without our Charity Stewards in the  
lodges or the amazing support of our members,

Enjoy the Festival, create some fun in your lodges and when it  
ends, we will all celebrate together.





# THE BUMBLEBEE CHILDREN'S CHARITY

*miracles in movement*



# THE BUMBLEBEE CHILDREN'S CHARITY

- ▶ The Bumblebee Children's Charity is a specialist centre working together with families to support babies and young children with physical difficulties taking part in a fun filled sensory programme.
- ▶ The parent/carer and child learn skills together enabling them to achieve the child's full potential notwithstanding their disability.





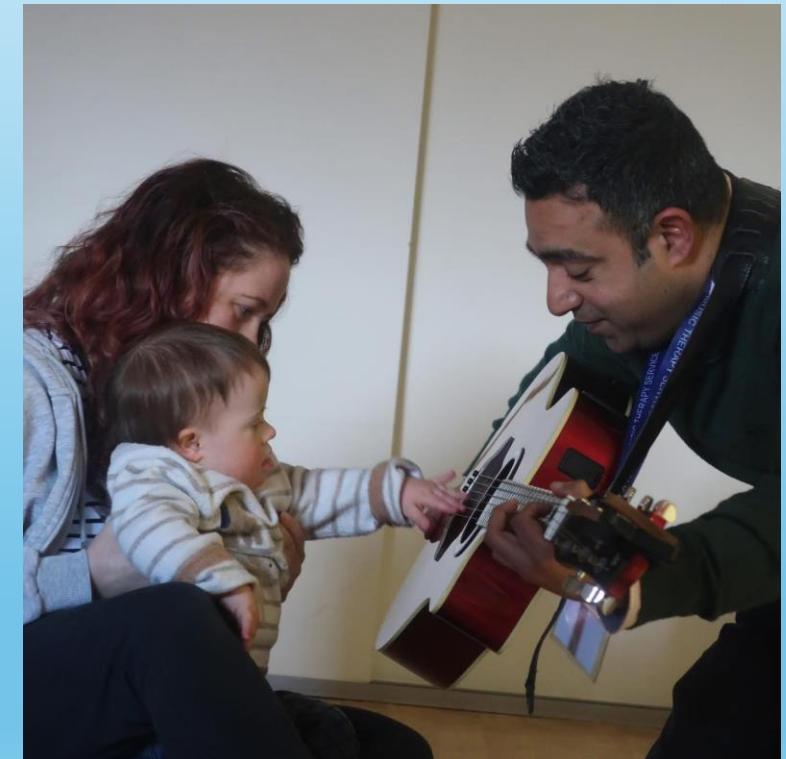
**optimism, resilience, and persistence**

# The sessions

- The charity runs from a purpose-built barn in Sproughton near Ipswich.
- Currently there are 6 sessions offered over 3 days.
- 6 families attend each session.
- Families can self-refer into the charity and are invited to attend a session once a week.
- Two or three members of staff support the children and families at each session.
- All sessions are provided for free.



# Music Therapy



# What children say....



# What's in a name?

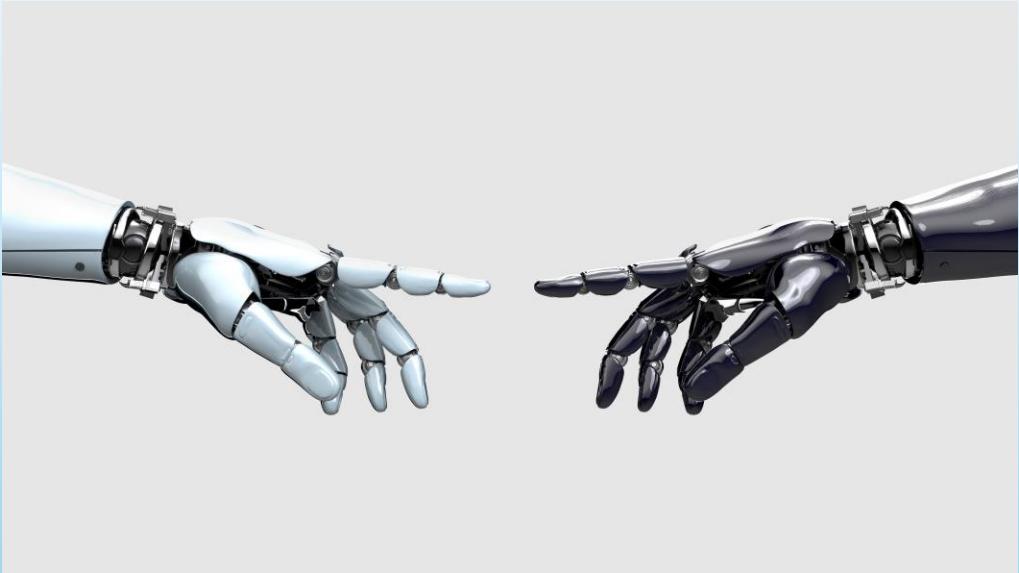
During its history the charity has evolved and when there was an opportunity to rename the charity the parents were determined it should have Bumblebee in its title because....

**By the laws of aerodynamics bumblebees shouldn't be able to fly – but nobody told them that - so they fly anyway!**

That's how our charity works with the children – we focus on what they can do now and what they could do in the future.



# How you can help





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## THE BLOSSOM CHARITY

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**Bridget McIntyre M.B.E  
Janet Humphrey B.E.M**

October 2025



# Suffolk PGL Charity Stewards and Almoners Conference 2025

## Janet Humphrey Survivor Story



BREAK

PLEASE RETURN TO YOUR SEATS ASAP



## Almoner Service Update

Suffolk Provincial Grand Almoner  
W. Bro Douglas Paine  
October 2025



RMBI

# Royal Masonic Benevolent Institute

Cornwallis Court set in Bury St Edmunds



16 M investment programme

Stage 1 to be complete in July 2026

Stage 2 handover 2027

Current occupancy is 40 residents

22 residential residents

11 nursing

7 Dementia residents

Due to the move into the first phase, next year will only be able to accommodate 32 residents they will not be admitting anymore residential residents, only end of life/nursing residents.



RMBI

## Royal Masonic Benevolent Institute



Benefits of choosing RMBI once financial reserve reached can stay funded by MCF currently 41% Masonic residents and 44% are Masonic supported residents.

How can you help

Visit

Coffee mornings held on First Saturday every month 10.30 onwards

Encourage Lodge visits

Support with donations via Friends of Cornwallis court

Donate Raffle prizes .



# Provincial Group Almoner Team



Deputy PGA- (Craft ) Jamie GWATKIN

Deputy PGA – (Royal Arch) Will AUSTIN

Group 1 – Andy HUNT

Group 2 – Paul DURRANT

Group 3 – Steve WILLIAMS

Group 4 – Will AUSTIN

Group 5 – Bill DOTESIO-EYERS

Group 6 – Trevor CLARK

Group 7 – Roger CAWSTON

Group 8 – Matt HIRST

Group 9 – Melvyn EKE



## Suffolk Provincial Benevolent Fund

The SPBF is a registered charity.



The Trust aims to provide **relief and assistance** through emergency financial support to:

- Suffolk Freemasons
- Spouses/partners, and dependents

**when outside MCF policy or timescale**



## Suffolk Provincial Benevolent Fund

Emergency Fund where urgent and immediate support needed- Similar rules to MCF application  
Suffolk | Freemason and dependants



Grants, not loans (in most cases). Max £1,000

The process - Lodge Almoner > Group Almoner > PGA

Application made and sent to PGM

If successful - monies by BACS

All is confidential and usually completed within 7 days



## Very Good Friend



With thanks to W. Bro Bill Dotesio-Eyers

### Purpose

To support those suffering medical condition and preventing fear of the unknown by introducing them to someone who has suffered /undergone similar condition.



# Suffolk PGL Charity Stewards & Almoners Conference 2025

“I feel like I’m the only one going through this”

“Nobody understands what it’s like”



One call to your Almoner and quickly and quietly you will be put in touch with a “Very Good Friend”

You are not alone, in Suffolk Freemasonry.  
There will Always be someone who's been there.



## Buy the Almoner a drink!

**Objective:** Replace the almoner's box in a digital age

Created to assist Almoners by providing an income source within the lodge to assist with their day to day almoner costs.

How it works .

- Introduce the idea in the almoner report
- Clipboard at bar – members when buying drinks can buy a drink to the almoners tab
- Almoners fund given payment by the bar steward /manager for outstanding drinks .
- Collect the money at the end of the evening from bar till
- Pay into the Almoner's fund

**Drinks paid for are NOT for consumption by the almoner!**



## Suffolk Provincial Mobility Equipment scheme

Set up by myself in 2024

### AIM

To provide mobility equipment short to mid term for loan interim measure between NHS or MCF funding( NO COST)

To Suffolk Freemasons and dependants

Equipment held at 3 bases.

Bury / Lowestoft / Felixstowe

There is a loan agreement form and a refundable deposit is requested to ensure we get it back !

We have no electrical or battery operated equipment .

Still could do with wheelchairs in particular large wheel rear small front

**But please nothing that is marked or belongs to the NHS or mediquip!**



# Suffolk PGL Charity Stewards & Almoners Conference 2025



# LODGE ALMONER BUDDY INITIATIVE

- WITHIN EVERY LODGE THERE IS HELP
- HOW DOES IT WORK ?
- VOLUNTEERS BECOME A BUDDY
- NO VOLUNTEER WILL BE ASKED TWICE DURING YEAR
- ALMONER IDENTIFIES THE BROTHER IN NEED
- BUDDY PROVIDES HELP NECESSARY TO ASSIST VISIT



# COMMENDATION OF CARING AWARD

Awarded to Lodge Almoners and Lodges who are recommended by the Group Almoner to the PGA



Commendation of Caring Certificate

Presented in Lodge by the PGA in recognition of

their specific or overall effort(s)

BUT if you know an Almoner who has gone above and beyond please let me or your Almoner Group Rep know!





# Provincial Grand Lodge of Suffolk

## ALMONER INDUCTION TRAINING

Suffolk Provincial Almoner Service



## Training

Almoner role has become more complex and some areas subject to legislation i.e. DP Act.



It is vital that we help you to perform that role to the best of your ability and within the constraints of Legislation with a good knowledge and understanding on where and how you can support and signpost members to the help they need saving you also time worry and concern.

I really do advocate that all almoners and deputies have a Saturday morning sitting at home in the armchair with a cup of tea at hand.





- **Next training session is on Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> November**
- ▶ **at 10am until 12.30pm**
- Training run by Andy Hunt ,Jamie Gwatkin and myself.
- Held over Zoom for ease and avoiding travelling
- Invitations will be sent out to register with Andy via Group reps
- Please register with Andy Hunt at [almoner1631@gmail.com](mailto:almoner1631@gmail.com)



**Training** – Congratulations to the below



Alan Greenwood - St Andrew's Lodge 1631  
Robert Smith - Felix 2371  
Paul Taylor - Adair 936  
Anthony Evans - Landguard 9346



Ladies Groups  
Lowestoft Ladies Fellowship



Elisa Allen and Gill Seymour





## PGA – requests

## Communication -E- mail addresses-

Please create / adopt a generic e mail address for yourself as Lodge almoner.  
I.e. [Colneisalmoner@gmail.com](mailto:Colneisalmoner@gmail.com) or [almoner1631@gmail.com](mailto:almoner1631@gmail.com)

### Benefits.

1. DP Act – keeps Lodge material separate and confidential helps reduce access , provides security and prevents accidental deletion or unsolicited sending and therefore breaches of DP Act.
2. Protects your own private e mail , no conflict with private and lodge material.
3. Can be accessed / monitored and shared with Deputy almoner
4. Protects your own private e mail from circulation / intrusion as can use generic on summons and other lodge circulation.
5. When hand over new almoner that information not lost, avoiding confusion and aids maintain communication by PGA and group reps

### PGA – requests



Bereavement – Please can you let PGA (me) know of bereavement as I do write cards and personal letter on behalf of Province to all deceased families but only get membership no and name from UGLE therefore it will really help me personalise by knowing N.O.K details and address.

Change of Almoner. Please let me know.

New Initiatives! – We have not got the monopoly on good ideas you are out there doing the job therefore your input is valuable and needed – please speak up or contact me – I can always listen and learn.



**MCF**

**1<sup>st</sup> January 2025 till 6<sup>th</sup> October 2025**



**41 Grants – totalling £119,021.50**

13 Health Grants - £55,627.40

10 Daily Living Cost Grants - £38,027.50

18 youth Grants - £25,366.60

This does not include support to residents of the RMBI Care facilities



# How



# Suffolk Freemasons

# Helped Me

Powerful Story

**Suffolk**  
FREE MASONS



## Visiting Volunteers

Take all the historic paperwork and  
hassle from the almoner.

Trained by the MCF visit applicants on  
behalf of the MCF completing the  
application forms.





# Provincial Grand Lodge of Suffolk

## MASONIC CHARITABLE FOUNDATION

### Suffolk Provincial Almoner Service





# BUILDING BETTER LIVES

Suffolk's Joint Almoner and Charity  
Stewards Conference 2025

Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> October



# Caroline Wales – MCF Advisor

Covering Suffolk, Essex, Norfolk  
& Cambridgeshire

T: 07802 797 239

E: [cwales@mcf.org.uk](mailto:cwales@mcf.org.uk)

# MCF, THE FREEMASONS' CHARITY

Funded entirely by Freemasons,  
we build better lives by  
encouraging opportunity,  
promoting independence and  
improving wellbeing.

# Support for Freemasons and families

We are here to support Freemasons and their families when life takes an unexpected turn for the worse.

We offer a wide range of support for financial, health, family and care-related needs.

# The Advice and Support Team (AST) is a trusted, knowledgeable resource for a wide range of issues and can help with ....

- ▶ Talking about financial difficulties
- ▶ Assisting with applications for MCF support
- ▶ Discussing the best approach to meet care needs
- ▶ Exploring how home adaptations and mobility aids can help people maintain independence
- ▶ Offering practical advice on education and wellbeing of children

# Our Present Focus ...

## Maximising income

The Advice and Support Team (AST) have great knowledge and experience regarding accessing benefits, grants, and other financial assistance.

They can signpost to state and local authority services and help you access benefits you may be entitled to but are not currently claiming.

# Our Present Focus ...

## Maximising income

In 8 months, AST has helped to identify a total of **£1,485,355.37** in financial gains to Freemason's and their families

# Maximising your income

Around eight million people in the UK are missing out on unclaimed state support each year, totalling...



## More support is available than you think

When Ray's wife of over 50 years died last year, his life changed overnight, and his income halved.

One day, Ray found an MCF leaflet in his pocket with our enquiry line number. After speaking to Ray, we were able to talk about his difficulties and assist with an application for support.

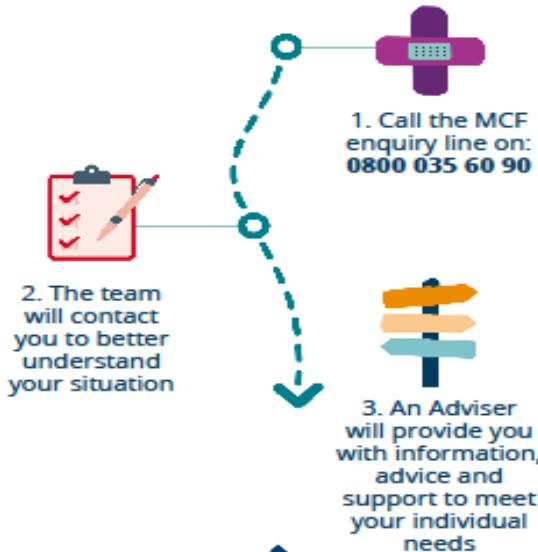
Ray had long-term health difficulties. AST identified he was not receiving a disability benefit and helped him to apply.



*"For 15 years I realised that I didn't have to miss out for so long, I could've been receiving these state benefits for years. The help I got from the MCF made life so much more bearable."*  
– Ray



## How we can help



**In six months, the AST helped to identify a total of £1,184,703.37 in financial gains**

## Meet the AST

Our Advice and Support Team (AST) offers a free and confidential service for Freemasons and families. The team works regionally across England and Wales offering face-to-face or telephone advice on a wide range of issues.

The AST can help by:

- Talking about financial difficulties
- Assisting with and completing benefit applications
- Signposting to state and local authority benefits and services available from other charitable organisations
- Assisting with applications for MCF support

Those seeking Advice & Support Team support should contact our enquiries team for a referral.



**Masonic**  
Charitable Foundation

The DWP states there is £1.5 billion in benefits going unclaimed by pensioners

Approx 761,000 households in the UK, are missing out on vital Pension Credit support

Even a small award of Pension Credit can provide access to a wide range of other benefits – such as help with housing costs, health costs, council tax or heating bills.

For those over 75, this includes continued entitlement to a free TV licence.

Even getting online can be cheaper for those who receive Pension Credit.

# Check on Masonic Widows

They may be eligible for this extra financial support, which could make a huge difference to people's everyday lives, especially following a bereavement



# Access support

Contact our Enquiries Team to discuss further:



0800 035 6090



help@mcf.org.uk

# Mental Health Support

Members of the AST are not trained counsellors, but we do offer a separate service.

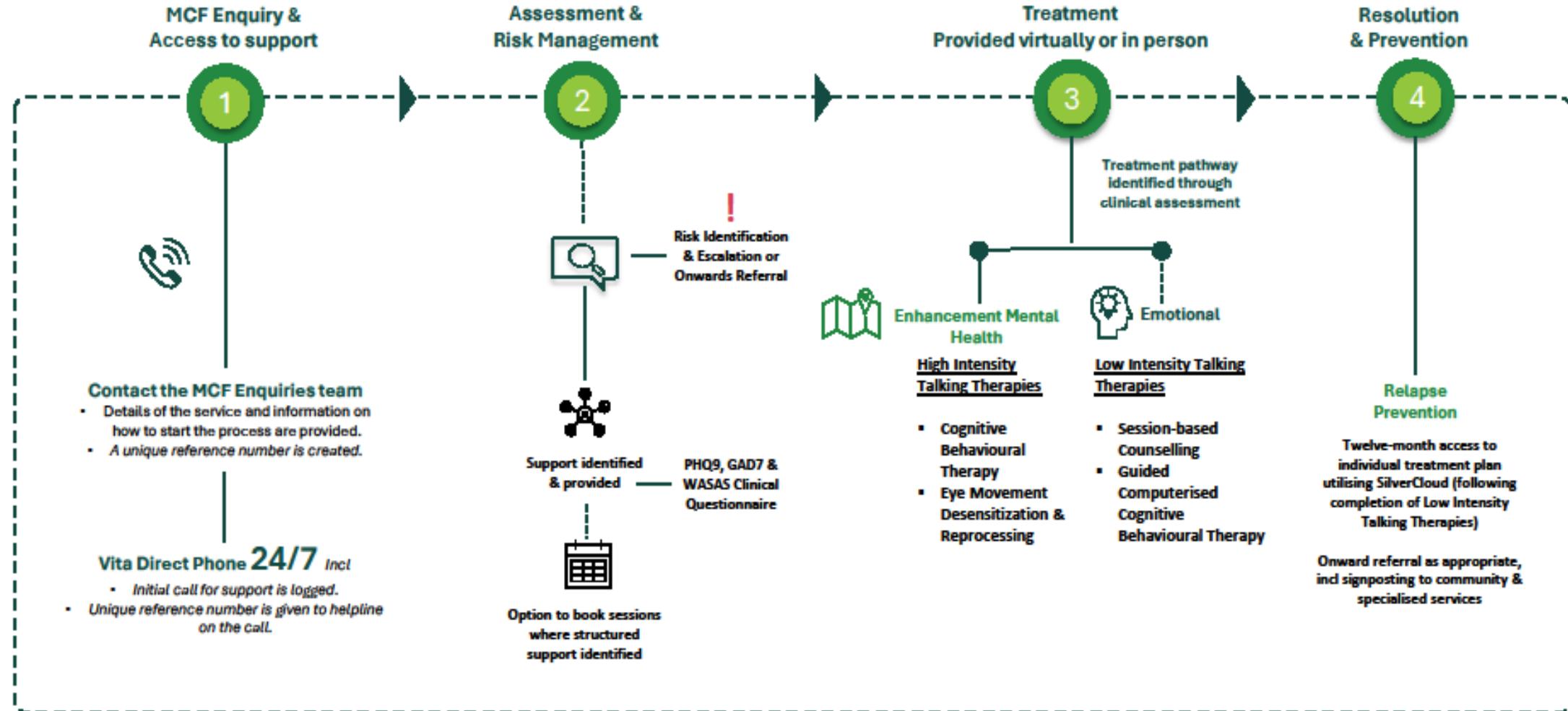
Access to mental health support is available for Freemasons and their eligible family members, including children who are over five years old.



Masonic  
Charitable Foundation

# Mental health support

*for you and your family*



# Access support

Those seeking mental health support should contact our enquiries team who will provide the details required to access the service.



0800 035 6090



help@mcf.org.uk

# WILL MAKING & POWER OF ATTORNEY

Write or update your Will for free

The MCF has teamed up with The Goodwill Partnership to assist you write or update a simple Will for free.

# Will Making

Call or use the online link on the MCF website



**01492 510340**

Please use the discount referral code **MCF001** to claim your FREE Will

# Lasting Power of Attorney

LPA is vital for future planning, ensuring that your wishes are respected and that your loved ones can manage your affairs without delay or stress if you become unable to make decisions for yourself.

The AST team can offer advice and support when considering an LPA

# Lasting Power of Attorney

Let me tell you about Jim ...





Office of the  
Public Guardian

Lasting power of attorney (LPA)

**Where to start**

# MCF FACTSHEETS

THESE RESOURCES BRING TOGETHER GUIDANCE FOR LODGE ALMONERS, AND USEFUL INFORMATION ON KEY SKILLS AND RELEVANT TOPICS.

AVAILABLE TO DOWNLOAD ON THE MCF WEBSITE

**ADDICTION**

**BEREAVEMENT**

**CONVALESCENT CARE**

**DATA PROTECTION**

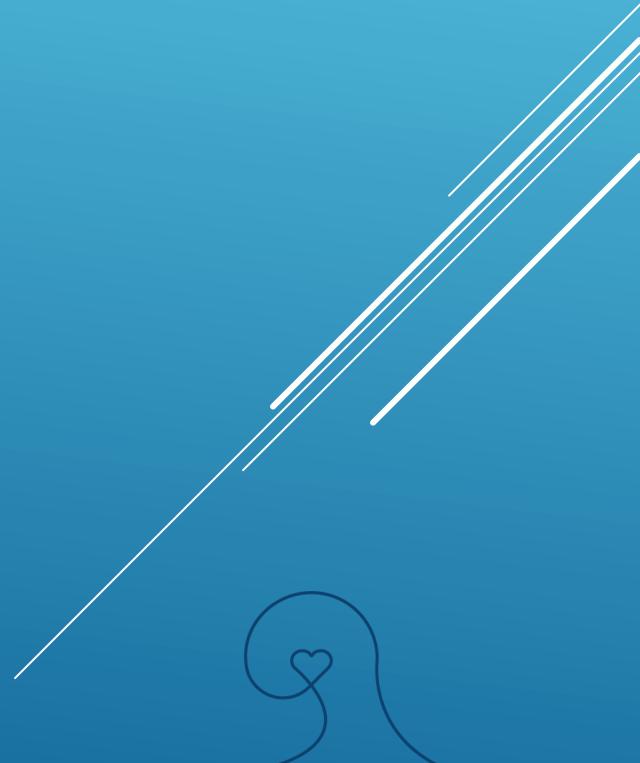
**DEBT**

**DEMENIA**

**LONELINESS**



**Mental Health**  
**Power of Attorney**  
**Prostate Cancer**  
**Redundancy**  
**Respite Care**  
**Trauma and PTSD**



# APPLICATION IS EASY

## PICK UP THE PHONE



# Contact our Enquiries Team directly

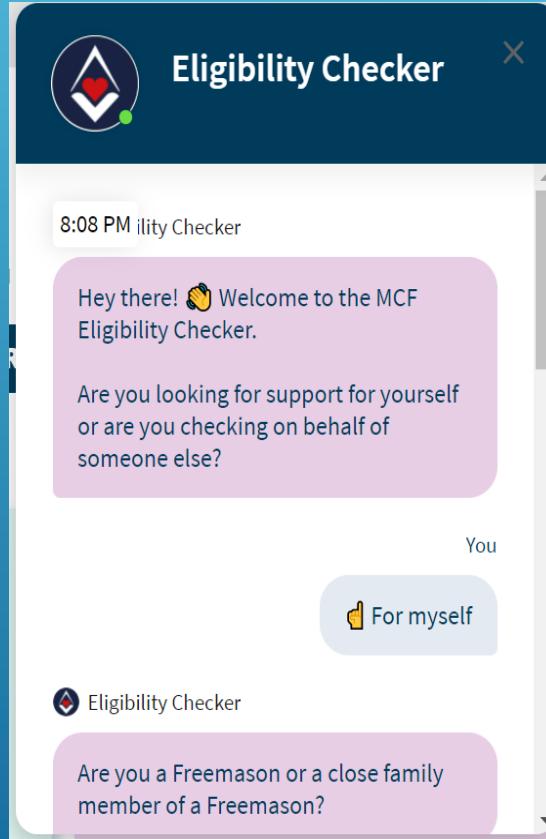


0800 035 6090



help@mcf.org.uk

# YOUR ROLE AS AN ALMONER ... HOW YOU CAN HELP?

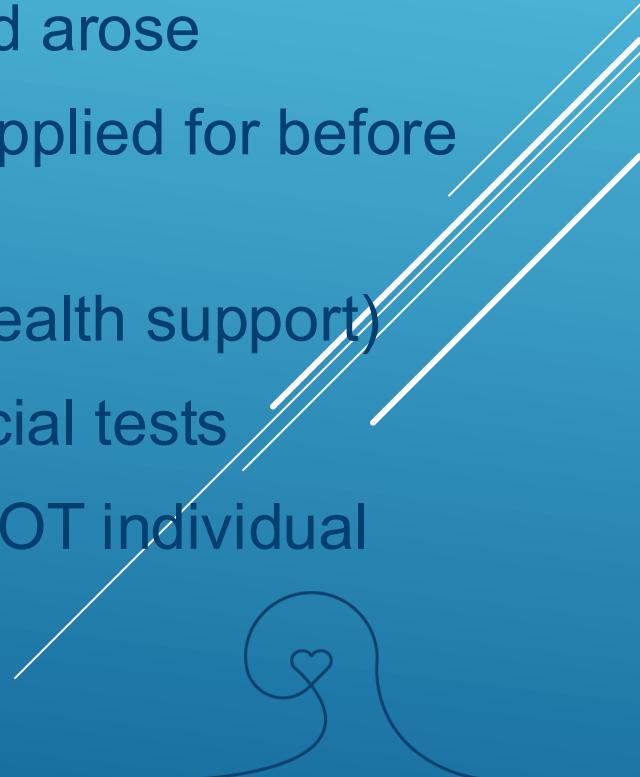


- ▶ Inform Freemasons and their families of the MCF and share how we might help
- ▶ Listen to their situation carefully, don't over promise
- ▶ Encourage them to PICK UP THE PHONE and call or email so that we can listen to their needs and assess eligibility
- ▶ Encourage them to visit the MCF website, support them to complete the eligibility checker so that they know if they are eligible for support without the need to speak to us

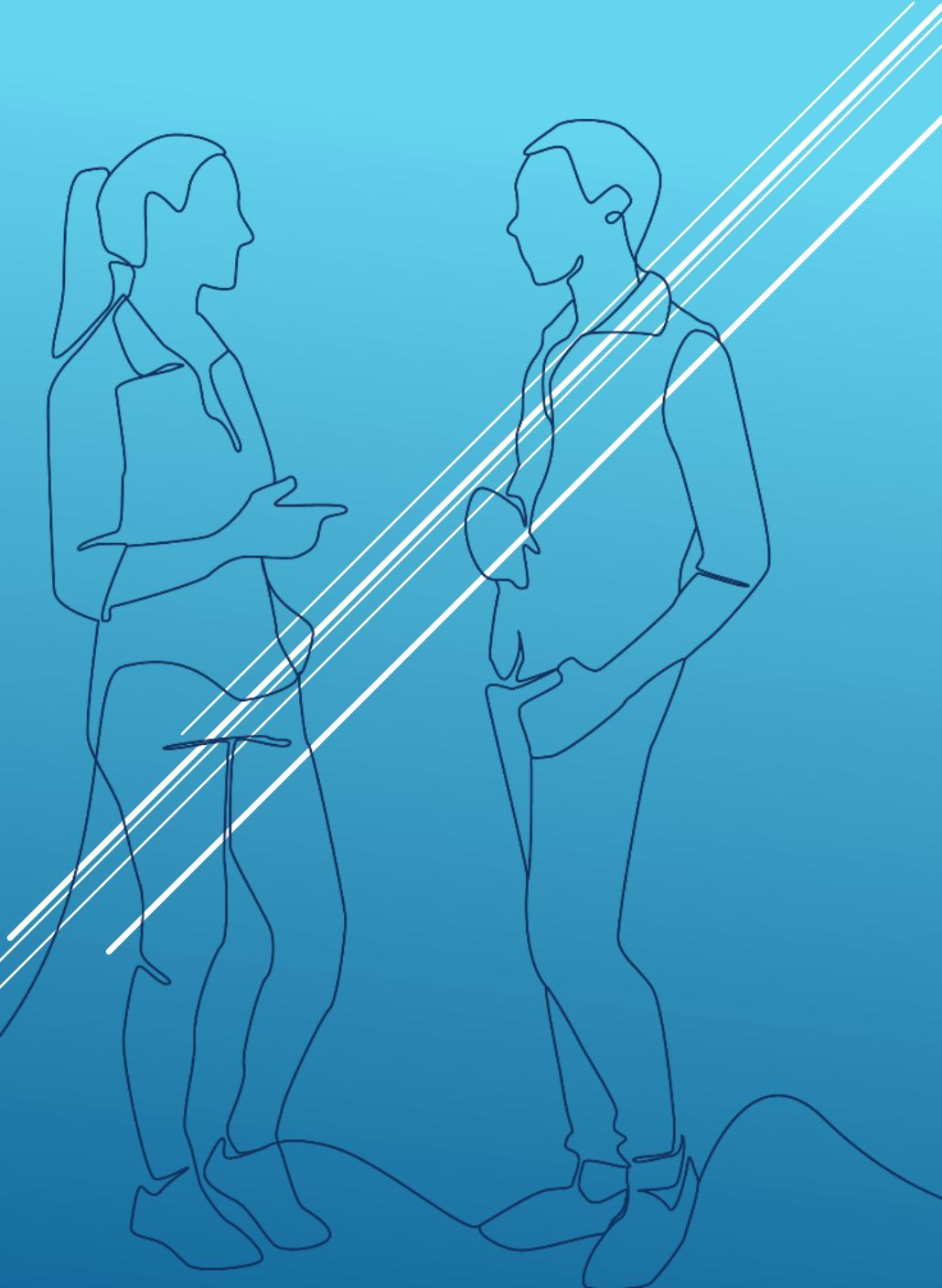
# MANAGING EXPECTATIONS:

**It is essential that expectations are managed - requests may not always result in a grant being awarded.**

- There must be a financial crisis or distress
- Must have been initiated/joined before the need arose
- Expectation that all available state benefits have been applied for before charitable funding is sought
- Support is subject to a financial test (unless mental health support)
  - Different types of support require different financial tests
  - Dependant on HOUSEHOLD income and savings, NOT individual



# CASE STUDY



# Contact our Enquiries Team directly



0800 035 6090



help@mcf.org.uk



**Masonic**  
Charitable Foundation



[mcf.org.uk](http://mcf.org.uk)  
0800 035 60 90

And finally, Lodge Almoners are essential to our success, you are all at the forefront of delivering care and support to lodge members and their families.

Thank you all for your continued support.



# Final Questions

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**Suffolk Provincial Grand Almoner**

**W. Bro Douglas Paine**

**Suffolk Provincial Charity Steward**

**W. Bro Jon Neill**

**October 2025**

## FEEDBACK FORMS



Please complete the feedback forms

Be honest!

To make future events valuable your input is needed





# CONFERENCE 2025

Thank you for coming

**W. Bro Douglas Paine (PGA)**  
**07947 355893**

**almoner@suffolkfreemason.org.uk**

**W. Bro Jon Neil (PCS)**  
**ChStwd@suffolkfreemason.org.uk**



# Suffolk Almoner Lunch 2025

## Table 1

W. Bro Dougie Paine Prov GA [ A-E-J ]  
Mrs Caroline Paine [ C-E-G ] ! Allergy - Pesto, Sesame & Parmesan  
Mrs Elisa Allen [ A-E-G ]  
Mrs Gill Seymour [ A-D-G ]  
Mrs Caroline Wales [ A-E-H ]  
Mrs Janet Humphrey [ C-D-G ]  
W. Bro Roger Florey [ B-E-J ]  
W. Bro Malcolm Clements [ B-E-G ]

## Table 3

W. Bro Chris Drakes [ A-E-G ] ! Gluten Free & Lactose Free  
Bro John Tricker [ C-D-G ]  
W. Bro Julian Brightwell [ A-E-G ]  
W. Bro John Ramsey [ C-E-G ]  
W. Bro Jamie Gwatkin [ A-E-I ]  
Mrs Jane Gwatkin [ B-E-H ]  
W. Bro Steve Holman [ A-E-J ]  
W. Bro Martyn Sutton [ B-E-H ]

## Table 5

W. Bro Rob Bamberger [ C-D-G ]  
W. Bro Allen Chilver [ A-E-J ]  
Mrs Elizabeth Chilver [ A-D-H ] ! Garlic Allergy  
W. Bro Bill Dotesio-Eyers [ B-E-G ]  
W. Bro Anthony Lyster [ C-E-J ]  
W. Bro Brian Dundon [ C-D-H ]  
W. Bro Jonathan Crabtree [ C-E-G ]  
Bro Ken Howard [ A-E-G ]

## Table 2

W. Bro Jon Neill [ C-E-J ]  
Ms Judy Dow [ A-D-J ] ! Gluten Free  
Ms Jonannah Metcalf [ A-E-G ]  
W. Bro Roger Cawston [ B-E-J ]  
W. Bro Karl Smith [ A-E-H ]  
W. Bro Richard Bowdidge [ C-D-J ]  
W. Bro Michael Ashford [ B-E-H ]

## Table 4

Bro Andy Hunt [ C-E-J ]  
W. Bro Pete Atkins [ A-E-J ]  
Bro Alan Greenwood [ C-E-J ]  
W. Bro Dorian Eady [ A-D-J ]  
W. Bro James Gray [ A-D-I ]  
W. Bro Chris Warnes [ C-E-I ]  
W. Bro Karl Hodgins [ C-E-J ]  
Mrs Sheryl Hodgins [ B-E-I ]

## Table 6

W. Bro Trevor Clark [ A-E-J ]  
Mrs Avril Clark [ A-E-I ]  
Bro Andy Oxborrow [ A-E-G ]  
W. Bro Andy Peachey [ A-D-J ]  
Mrs Daphne Peachey [ C-E-G ]  
W. Bro Edward McEwan [ A-E-H ]  
W. Bro Scott Jenkins [ A-E-H ]  
W. Bro John Howes [ B-E-J ]