

SUFFOLK FREEMASONS

Festival29 News

ISSUE TWO | JANUARY 2026

Messages

from the PGM and Festival Chairman

Who's who?

Your Festival Team

Grab a Jewel

Festival29 needs 4 more

Masons in Action

Rob and Colin, an update

Breaking News

Successful trial of cashless Alms

Festival Torch

Update and future journey

MCF & Charity Giving

Nick Moulton gives an update

Festival Mini Conferences

Free beer included!

And much more!



For everything Festival visit our website: www.suffolkfestival.org.uk



Messages from the PGM and Festival Chairman >



I know a chap who runs 'ultra marathons'. He once asked me about my experiences in the army and how soldiers just keep going when they have to.

His story was incredible; he ran a half-marathon which he enjoyed very much but felt he needed something a bit more challenging. So he signed-up for the 'Ultra-Trail du Mont-Blanc'; a gruelling 106 mile race around Europe's tallest mountain in which runners ascend and

descend about 33,000 feet. What could I tell this chap about endurance? The 'UTMB' must be completed within 46 hours. My friend was the last person to finish within the time allowed (apparently, the last one across the line gets a bigger cheer than the person who 'wins' the race) and although he was hospitalised by the blisters he acquired during the encounter, he kept signing up for more. He ran from Lands End to John O'Groats in 2016 (getting a blister in Bristol) but needed more than one attempt to complete the 145mile Grand Union Canal Race.

I shared a pretty lame experience. Being on exercise with the Royal Tank Regiment in the 1990's on the cold northern plains of Germany, we were regularly sleep-deprived and freezing cold. Long nights were the hardest but there were two things which would always help. Eating was first. When one is cold to the core and it does not matter how many layers you wear, eating anything will help; it's the metabolic equivalent of throwing a log on the fire. The next thing is washing -but in particular cleaning one's teeth! On exercise we usually looked like Victorian chimney sweeps, black from head to toe with oil, grime and mud. Days seem to be 26 hours long and there was no routine; no breakfast time, no rest breaks just relentless movement, maintenance, fighting and problem solving. To stop, eat and wash was to become human for a moment. Even if the surrounding environment had not changed- it was still cold, we were still tired and I was probably still lost- these small acts made a huge difference.

The marathon cliché when talking about fundraising for a festival is trite, but also well used; we are about 70 miles into our ultra marathon, over half way but with the hardest part to complete. Of course we're feeling the odd blister and in need of a rest, but we need to keep going.

On my friend's second attempt to complete the Grand Union Canal Race, he attributed a small advantage to a mental trick he used on himself after our chat. At a point in the race when he was feeling particularly drained and unsure if he could carry on, he promised himself that in 5 miles he would brush his teeth! He spent 5 miles looking forward to this simple chore, as those miles fell away, he duly brushed his teeth as he ran. He spent the next 5 miles enjoying the experience of a fresh mouth and with 10 more miles more behind him he found a renewed sense purpose and was that bit closer to his goal, which of course he achieved.

So, brethren, with regard to our own marathon Festival29, consider what might be your equivalent of an oily 'egg banjo' sandwich (a tank crewman's favourite), a shave or a teeth-clean. Pick a small target, hit it and enjoy the feeling knowing you're closer to the finish line.

Jolyon Berry Provincial Grand Master

As we reach the two-year mark of our five-year Festival journey, it's a moment to pause, reflect, and feel proud of what we have achieved together. Thanks to your incredible generosity, commitment, and belief in Festival29, we are in a strong position and exactly where we need to be financially at this stage. That is no small achievement, it is the direct result of a community coming together with purpose and heart.

That said, we are very much in the middle of the journey, and this is the point where focus matters most. Momentum is everything during this spell, and with your continued support, we can keep moving forward with the same energy and determination that has brought us this far.

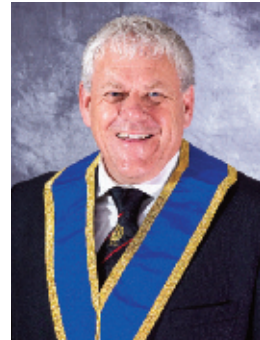
Looking ahead, there is so much to be excited about. Plans are already underway for a fantastic lineup of events in 2026, including wine tasting evenings, a parachute jump, a golf day, and more, all designed to bring people together while raising vital funds for our Festival.

If you have a personal goal in mind, whether it's a walk, a run, or even a long-held life ambition, we would love for you to consider turning it into a fundraiser for Festival29. Every individual effort, no matter the size, helps move us closer to our shared goal.

We also ask you to continue spreading the word. Encouraging new members to join, and those not yet signed up to consider a regular Direct Debit, makes a real difference. Regular giving is one of the most powerful and sustainable ways to raise funds, and as a thank-you, members receive a Festival jewel, a small symbol of a big commitment.

Above all else, thank you. Thank you for your kindness, your generosity, and your belief in what we are building together. Festival29 exists because of you, and we are truly grateful for every step you take alongside us on this journey.

Jon Neill Provincial Charity Steward





Who's who in the Festival Team >



Jolyon Berry
Provincial Grand Master
secretary@suffolkfreemason.org.uk



Jon Neill
Festival Chairman
chstdw@suffolkfreemason.org.uk



Andy Gentle
Deputy Festival chairman
festival2029@suffolkfreemason.org.uk



Robert Bamberger
Asst to Festival Chairman
mrrbamberger@gmail.com



Nick Moulton
Asst to Festival Chairman
nick@moultons.co.uk



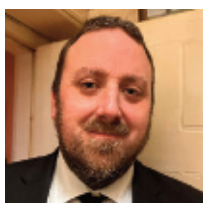
Bill Dotesio-Eyers
Asst to Festival Chairman
bill@dotesio-eyers.co.uk.com



Chris Drinkald
500 Club Lead
chris.drinkald@icloud.com



Roger Cawston
Festival Jewels Lead
roger.cawston@talk21.com



Phil Debenham
Light Blues Liaison
slbchairman@suffolkfreemason.org.uk



Mark Campbell
Merchandise Lead
mark.campbell60@sky.com



Paul Raynor
Festival Treasurer
treasurer@suffolkfreemason.org.uk



Kelvin Avis
Communications
kelvinavis@me.com

Your Lodge and Chapter donations continue > Thank you to everyone!





Grab a Jewel, Join the Fun...Festival29 needs Four More

Festival 29 Jewels – Four More Can Keep Us on Target

As we approach the midway point of Festival 29, now is the moment to refocus our efforts and maintain the strong momentum already achieved. Regular giving remains the most effective and sustainable way to support the Festival. By committing to a small monthly donation, members not only contribute steadily to the appeal but also receive a Festival Jewel a visible symbol of commitment, pride, and shared purpose.

Four more members per lodge. A simple target

We are asking every Lodge to aim for just four additional members to sign up to regular giving and receive a Festival Jewel. This modest target, when achieved across the Province, will be enough to keep Festival 29 on course and strengthen our collective contribution to the appeal.

The focus should be on:

- New members, who can begin regular giving from as little as £5 per month and still receive a Jewel.
- Members who intend to sign up but simply haven't yet got round to it.
- Small monthly contributions, multiplied across the Province, make a significant and lasting difference.

Wearing Our Support with Pride

The Provincial Grand Master has asked that, where possible, all those attending Provincial Grand Lodge in 2026 at Holbrook do so wearing their Festival Jewel with pride. A strong visual show of support will send a powerful message about our shared commitment to Festival 29 and the charitable work it enables.

How to Sign Up

Signing up is quick and straightforward. Members can set up their regular giving and receive their Festival Jewel by visiting the link below:

<https://donate.mcf.org.uk/festival-or-appeal/?festivalId=19490>

Regular donations are collected by direct debit, making it easy to support the Festival in a manageable and consistent way.

Need More Information?

If lodges require an updated list of members already signed up, or need support identifying potential new supporters, please contact the Provincial Grand Charity Steward, Jon, at:

chstwd@suffolkfreemason.org.uk

We do listen... >

Following the Charity and Almoner Conference in 2025, we carefully reviewed the comments, suggestions, and feedback shared by members across the Province. A consistent message came through: you want clearer, simpler information and more opportunities to ask questions and stay informed. We listened and we've acted.

Clearer Festival Information for All Lodges

In response to your feedback, the Masonic Charitable Foundation (MCF) has been asked to produce a simple, easy-to-read report for all Lodges, outlining Festival progress and current totals.

These reports will be distributed early in 2026, ensuring that every Lodge has a clear picture of how Festival 29 is progressing and how collective efforts are contributing to the overall appeal.

Grab a Jewel, Join the Fun... Festival29 needs Four More!

Our aim...
We are appealing to all lodges to ask 4 more of their members to sign up for jewels by Direct Debit or regular giving. If we are successful with this it means we will be on track to reach the goal the Province has set itself for Festival29.

Who does this target...
It is aimed at those not yet signed up yet to a regular payment. New members, it is not too late to pay monthly by Direct Debit from only £5 a month, which is less than a beer.

The Benefits...
Gift Aid is claimed automatically increasing donations by 25%. Amount is accredited to you and your lodge.
It is easy to support Festival 29 by Direct Debit, just log on, sign up to pledge a small monthly amount and forget it.
Receive and wear your Festival Jewel knowing you and your lodge are supporting Festival29.





Sign up here:
www.suffolkfestival.org.uk/donate/
or use the QR code.

Plus! Receive free Festival Gloves with each sign up made between 1/12/25 to 1/4/26.

Note If you have signed up but not yet received your jewel simply contact Roger on roger.cawston@talk21.com
Speak to your Charity Steward or Provincial Grand Charity Steward if you need help.

www.suffolkfestival.org.uk



Save the Date! - Our 2026 Charity & Almoner Conference is planned for 1st November

For everything Festival visit our website: www.suffolkfestival.org.uk



Rob's Fundraising Journey >

A Few Words on the Road I've Been Travelling

Some of you will know that, as part of supporting the Masonic Charitable Foundation through the Suffolk Masonic Festival 29, I set myself a bit of a challenge: to visit one lodge in every province under the United Grand Lodge of England. I'm pleased to say I've now attended lodges in 21 of the 47 provinces, and it's been an amazing experience.

Everywhere I've gone, the history and tradition of the Craft really stands out. You walk into a lodge you've never visited before, yet it instantly feels familiar. Different buildings, different customs perhaps and sometimes, a different ritual... (you should visit Bristol sometime), but you will find the same values, and the same spirit.

One of the best parts has been meeting new friends. I've been made welcome in every province without exception. A handshake at the door, a chat over the festive board, and before you know it, you feel among friends. It reminds you just how strong our brotherhood really is.

It does all take a fair bit of time and planning—choosing lodges, organising travel, and fitting it around everyday life—but it's more than worth it. Those journeys also give plenty of time for a bit of contemplation, especially about why we support our charities and the real difference that support makes.

If I've learned anything from this journey, it's given me a greater understanding of the Craft. Seeing Freemasonry at work across the country reinforces that what we do really matters—not just to us, but to the people and communities the MCF helps every day.

I have also learned a great deal about making videos. You can get a glimpse of my travels on my YouTube Channel.

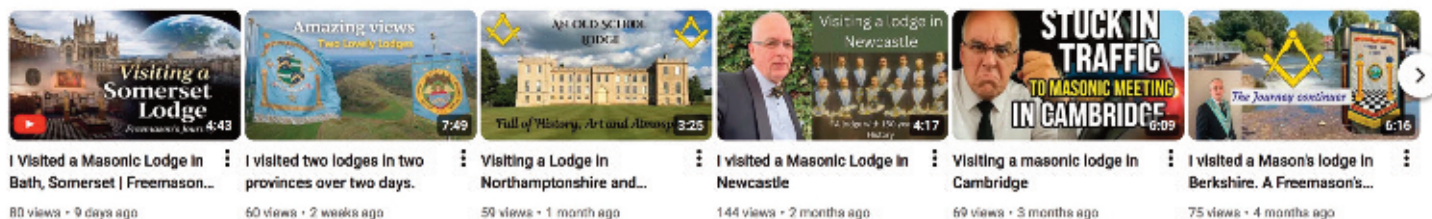
<https://www.youtube.com/@ATravellingMasonsFestival-nk7br>

I would welcome your support there as well.

If this little adventure encourages a bit of extra sponsorship for the Suffolk Masonic Festival 29, then it's doing exactly what it's meant to do. You can sponsor my effort by donating to my official GiveTap page. Every contribution helps.

<https://donate.givetap.co.uk/f/masonic-charitable-foundation/mcf2029-suffolk-mcf-2029-festival/a-travelling-masons-festival-fundraising-journey>

Rob Bamberger



Masons in action > Colin Jackson, The Travelling Organist

“Get music in your meeting if you don’t usually have it, or give your regular Organist a night off!”

Colin Jackson has set himself a challenge to visit every Masonic Centre in the Province and every Lodge and Chapter over the course of the Festival, in order to play the music for the Ceremony. He could also combine this with one of his Masonic Lectures if you wish. Minimum Donation will be £50 (plus travel expenses if outside his local area) all towards the Festival.

“I want to support the Suffolk Festival and encourage music to be played in our lodges, the sound of the organ enhances all lodge meetings. I am happy to travel the province so please give generously and if you donate using a members name we even receive Gift Aid”.

Contact Colin on 07971 918178 email: boe@live.co.uk





Masons in action > The Suffolk Masonic Performing Troupe

Journey Through Ancient Mysteries: From Darkness to Light

Step into a world where ancient mysteries come to life! The Suffolk Masonic Performing Troupe presents a captivating series of educational plays covering all three degrees, culminating in the Holy Royal Arch. You'll journey deep into Masonic traditions, each performance revealing another layer of age-old wisdom. This isn't just theatre—it's a transformative educational Journey from darkness to Light.

1. The Entered Apprentice

'The Crossing Over: A Mason's First Light'

Begin your journey where every Master once stood - at the threshold of ancient Masonic knowledge.

2. The Fellow Craft

'Pathways to Higher Understanding'

Ascend through sacred geometry and hidden wisdom as you climb the winding stairs of enlightenment.

3. The Master Mason

'From Shadow to Resurrection'

Experience the legendary tale of Hiram Abiff's death as a consequence of crime; the genuine secrets of a Master Mason were irretrievably lost. However, there is more to this story than you might realise.

Finally - The Supreme Degree

'Mysteries Unveiled: The Seeker's Ultimate Truth'

Discovery awaits those ready to pierce the veil of deeper understanding. It is an experience that builds to an unforgettable revelation, where the ancient puzzle finally falls into place, enabling you to uncover what was lost and perhaps is now found.

Why not host one of these engaging performances? Invite brethren from neighbouring lodges or LOI to join in the celebrations and strengthen the bonds within your Masonic community.

Reviews on The Crossing Over: A Master's First Light.

"Absolutely brilliant." "I have been a Mason for 53 years, and this evening, I learned something I never knew." "I wish I had seen this play 30 years ago when I first joined." "Can't wait to see the Fellowcraft play"

Contact: Larry Bensusan, Provincial Learning & Development Officer

LDO@suffolkfreemason.org.uk. 07973 525475.



Wine Taking Events 2026!

We are pleased to say that Green Punch, in conjunction with Festival29, will be organising these two Wine Taking events scheduled to take place at Soane Street, Ipswich on Saturday 18th April and Ashlar House, Bury St Edmunds on Saturday 24th October 2026.

All we ask is you invite six people, one of which must be a member of your Lodge or Chapter, to purchase a table at one or both of these events. These events are open to all.

A table of six will cost £150 of which 25% will be donated to Festival29 in your Lodge or Chapters name.

This is a wonderful opportunity to socialise and enjoy a welcome drink, taste 7 x Wines from around the World, specially selected by our host Bob Stopp. There is a platter of nibbles for each table, entertainment from The Wesley Ukulele Band and all this for £25 per person.

To book your Lodge or Chapter table, just go to www.suffolkfestival.org.uk



FESTIVAL29 WINE TASTING EVENT

ORGANISED FOR YOU BY GREEN PUNCH

“Wines from around the World”

Saturday 18th April 2026

Welcome drink at 7:00pm

Freemasons' Hall, Soane Street, Ipswich IP4 2BG
Entertainment with Wesley Ukulele Band

Saturday 24th October 2026

Welcome drink at 7:00pm

St Edmunds Masonic Centre, Ashlar House, Eastern Way,
Bury St Edmunds IP32 7AB
Entertainment with Wesley Ukulele Band

Experience a selection of seven wines from around the world inc. Canopes

HOSTED BY MR BOB STOPP

Please book your Lodge/Chapter table, minimum six people,
with your Charity Steward

Tickets £25 each

A donation from your table will go towards the "Festival29" in your
Lodge/Chapter Name

PLEASE SEE OUR LEAFLET
FOR BOOKING DETAILS AND FURTHER INFORMATION

Raising funds for Festival29 in conjunction with Green Punch



SUFFOLK PUNCH TRUST - GREEN PUNCH

SAVE OUR SUFFOLKS






CHARITY & FESTIVAL UPDATES

Ipswich
Soane Street
2nd March

Lowestoft
Lowestoft Masonic Centre
3rd March

Bury St Edmunds
Ashlar House
5th March

TIME: 6:45PM (ALL EVENTS)

WHO SHOULD ATTEND:

- Charity Stewards
- WMs, Secretaries
- VOs
- Anyone with an interest in the Charity & Festival

WHAT WILL BE COVERED:

- Festival updates & key topics
- New grant updates and how to apply
- Changes to MCF rules
- Open discussion on other charity matters

TO ATTEND YOU MUST BOOK IN

A FREE BEER/DRINK & CRISPS FOR ALL THOSE ATTENDING

PLEASE BOOK IN TODAY

CONTACT NICK
deputycharitysteward@suffolkfreemason.org.uk

TO ATTEND YOU MUST BOOK IN

Festival Charity Mini Conferences (Free beer) >

To further improve communication and accessibility, we have arranged a series of Festival Charity Mini Conferences covering the North, East, and West of the Province.

Soane Street, Ipswich 2nd March 2026 6.30pm
The Avenue, Lowestoft 3rd March 2026 6.30pm
Ashlar House, Bury St Edmunds 5th March 2026 6.30pm
Please book direct with Nick Moulton on
deputycharitysteward@suffolkfreemason.org.uk

No food provided but all those that attend will receive a free beer/drink and crisps!

These informal sessions are designed to:

- Share up-to-date information on Festival 29 and wider charity matters
- Provide an opportunity to ask questions directly
- Encourage open discussion and shared understanding
- Support Lodges and members in their charitable roles
- Learn how to move to Cashless Alms Collections

Importantly, members may attend any of the events, regardless of location, making it easier for everyone

Skydive 2 >Beccles Airfield, 8th June 2026

Festival Parachute Skydive 2026 takes flight in Beccles

Following the outstanding success of last year's event, the Festival Parachute Skydive 2026 is set to return to Beccles, promising another unforgettable day of adrenaline, teamwork, and charitable impact.

In 2024, more than 20 brave participants took to the skies, collectively raising in excess of £20,000 for our charitable causes. Their courage, commitment, and generosity made the event a resounding success and demonstrated just how powerful our Festival community can be when we come together for a shared purpose.

Building on that momentum, Skydive 26 will once again support Festival 29, with all proceeds going directly to the Festival appeal. Every pound raised will be paid straight into the Festival Relief Chest, ensuring that funds are used efficiently and transparently to make a real difference. Where applicable, donations may also be eligible for Gift Aid, helping to maximise the value of every contribution.

Whether you are a seasoned skydiver or taking the leap for the very first time, Skydive 26 offers a unique opportunity to challenge yourself while contributing to a truly worthwhile cause.

How to Take Part

Getting involved is simple:

1. Register your interest by contacting Phill, who will guide you through the next steps.
2. Create a GiveTap fundraising page via the MCF Festival webpage. Join the Skydive 2026 group, ensuring that all funds raised are correctly allocated.
3. Share your page with friends, family, and colleagues to build support for your jump.

To create your GiveTap page for Skydive 26, please use the following link:

<https://donate.givetap.co.uk/f/masonic-charitable-foundation/mcf2029-suffolk-mcf-2029-festival>

Once set up, all funds raised will be automatically collected and transferred directly into the Festival Relief Chest—simple, secure, and effective.



**FESTIVAL29
SKYDIVE 2!**

**BECCLES AIRFIELD
MONDAY 8TH JUNE 2026**

WWW.SUFFOLKFESTIVAL.ORG.UK/MASONIC-SKYDIVE/

For further information email:
phill.speechley@btinternet.com



Breaking News! >



Court Knoll Lodge's Cashless Alms Trial Delivers 25% Donation Boost

Court Knoll Lodge has successfully completed a trial of a cashless alms collection system, reporting overwhelmingly positive results and a notable 25% increase in donations compared with a traditional cash collection.

The initiative designed to modernise charitable giving within the lodge replaced physical cash with pledged donations. Members made their pledges on slips during the normal alms collection, but instead of placing cash into the bag, they later completed their donation through a web link or QR code that transferred funds directly into the lodge's Relief Chest.

Objections were overcome with simple solutions.

Early concerns centred around two main issues:

1. Whether older or less tech-confident members could participate, and
2. Whether the traditional feeling of an alms collection would be lost.

According to lodge officers, both concerns were quickly resolved. The physical alms collection was retained exactly as normal, preserving tradition, while members without electronic giving capability were simply assisted—handing cash to another brother who completed the digital donation on their behalf, ensuring the gift was still recorded under their own name.

Significant administrative and financial benefits

The trial highlighted several advantages for both the lodge and the Masonic Charitable Foundation (MCF):

- Zero administrative cost for the MCF, thanks to funds entering the Relief Chest system automatically.
- Elimination of failed Gift Aid envelopes - around 6% of paper envelopes normally fail, resulting in lost tax benefit.
- Substantial reduction in workload for the Charity Steward, who no longer needs to count cash, complete forms, or pay in donations.
- Greater transparency, as pledges recorded during the meeting allow the Secretary to know immediately how much has been raised, while the Charity Steward simply verifies the funds as they arrive in the Relief Chest.

A strong case for lodges considering the switch

Perhaps the most compelling result was the 25% increase in total giving, achieved with a similar attendance to a typical meeting an early indication that cashless pledging may encourage greater generosity.

Lodges across Suffolk considering a move to cashless collections are encouraged to seek guidance from Provincial Charity Steward Jon Neill, who is available to support any transitions and answer practical questions.

With smoother administration, reduced costs, and a measurable boost in charitable income, Court Knoll Lodge's experience suggests that going cashless offers clear and immediate benefits to the Craft.

FREEMASONS
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
PROJECT

**HELP US AT
ELM TREE SCHOOL**

Lowestoft, NR33 9HN
SATURDAY 28TH FEBRUARY 2026
10AM - 4PM

**Calling all Suffolk Freemasons
with gardening & labour skills!**
Partner's welcome too!

- ✓ Help create vegetable gardens, planting, ponds, woodwork tasks & more!
- ✓ Bring minor hand tools, gloves & packed lunch
- ✓ Remember to bring a smile - photos will be taken!

Please book in to attend!
ChStwd@suffolkfreemason.org.uk

Let us know you're coming to make this a community success!
Feel free to ask any questions. Thanks for your support!



MCF and Charitable Giving > An update from Nick Moulton

MCF and Charitable Giving:

There are significant changes in hand as to how money passes from the Brethren to those that require our assistance.

Festivals will continue and MCF will remain the initial recipient of the money raised.

Direct Grants

MCF will continue to provide funds for making direct grants and this process remains unchanged.

Anyone can make a direct application to the MCF for a grant, this includes individual Masons, Lodges, non-masonic charities.

These applications are referred back to the Province for comment, so it is best to liaise with us as a first step.

All of these grants comes from MCF funds and is not connected with the funds sent to the province.

It will remain as an key source for obtaining financial assistance.

New Community Fund

This is a new MCF scheme to enable provinces to seek and obtain larger amounts of money for registered charities operating within our provincial borders.

The idea is that larger donations will have a greater benefit for the recipients and draw more attention to charitable giving by Freemasons.

In 2026-27 the fund will be £2m per year. One application can be made per province per year with a limit of £50,000.

There are 47 provinces participating in the scheme so the chances of a successful application will be good.

Suffolk Provincial Charitable Giving:

Provincial Match Funding

The changes set out above have brought the MCF match funding scheme to an end. This will be continued at province level which has enable the development of a more flexible approach, meaning that smaller grants can be given and can provide support for 'good causes' as well as registered charities. The 2025-26 funding is £10,000, which is nearly exhausted but will be refreshed shortly.

Festival Funded Provincial Grants

With effect from April 2026 25% of all monies raised from Festival giving will be automatically credited to the Provincial Relief Chest for distribution locally. This will be managed by the Provincial Charity team.

Applications are to be made to the Provincial Charity Steward. Further detail on the application process will be explained during the face to face local meeting that have been arranged for early March 2026, when Jon Neill & Nick Moulton will be available to explain how the applications process works in practice.

Summary

The above initiatives are intended to empower local Masons to help locally. The MCF is too remote to know which cause deserves help, so funds are being made available to provinces to respond more quickly and guide MCF where larger sums are required or more targeted giving is needed.

This returns some of the power of giving to the grass roots, we hope that the wider membership will recognise the significance of these changes and respond by identifying good causes that deserve our help, particularly those which have the added aspect community engagement, where it is not only money that is needed.

Nick Moulton

Deputy Provincial Grand Charity Steward

St. Lukes Lodge No. 225

GOLF DAY

Supporting Festival 2029

FIRST PRIZE £500

plus other valuable prizes!

TEAMS OF 4

OPEN TO ALL

MONDAY 13TH JULY

at STOKE BY NAYLAND GOLF CLUB

£70 Per Person or £280 per Team of Four
includes Full English Breakfast and 2 Course Carvery Lunch
Tea and Coffee

Various Sponsorship Opportunities available

Look out for further details - coming soon!

For further information contact Trevor Tinley:
trevor.tinley1@btinternet.com



The Suffolk Masonic Fishing Charity > That's it Folks, for 2025!

The Suffolk Masonic Charity, which has been operating for ten years across the province, held its final event for 2025 at Hintlesham Lakes. Eighteen young men from Langham Oaks School attended the countryside and fishing experience day, each receiving one-to-one tuition.

The day started early at 7 a.m. with our Provincial Charity Steward's alarm sounding - meaning only one thing... off to the lakes! As always, I found myself wondering, *why do I do this?*

The team began assembling, setting up gazebos and cookers ready to fire up. With food supplied and cooked by Alan Leeder Butchers, everyone - helpers and casters alike - started the day with a well-earned bacon roll.



By 9:30, the school arrived in cars and a minibus, with teachers and even the headmaster joining us for the day. More children than ever before wanted to take part this time. Some of the boys, remembering their casters from previous events, asked eagerly, "Can I fish with the same man again?"

The day unfolded as these events always do - with camaraderie, laughter, good-natured teasing, and mutual respect between the boys and the casters. Many of these children find it difficult to engage with strangers or new situations, yet they feel completely at ease with us - and we absolutely love having them join in.

Fish were few and far between, but most of the boys managed to catch something. Once again, the day was a great success, building bonds and friendships between Masonic and non-Masonic fishermen alike, and strengthening our ties with the local community.

By 1 p.m., it was time for lunch - once again cooked by our own chef, Alan - and thoroughly enjoyed by everyone. Soon after came the awards ceremony, attended by Graham Saward, Master of SIM, who kindly sponsored the event with a £500 donation. Graham thanked

everyone and presented certificates and medals to all participants, including Bob, who won the prize for the biggest fish. The day ended with a few kind words from the school, lots of happy children, and cheerful waves goodbye - until next time.

On the way home, we received a message from one of the teachers. It read:

"Hello Jon, what a wonderful day! The lads didn't stop talking about it all the way home. When we arrived back at school, they proudly showed their certificates to staff and fellow pupils. A huge thank you to you and your team - you all treated the boys with absolute respect, something these brilliant lads don't often experience. Thank you again."

And that, I think, answers the question of *why we do this* - to give something back to those less fortunate, to those who struggle and as a simple act of kindness.

These are young lads just starting out in life. Maybe one day they'll look at Freemasonry a little differently - and who knows, perhaps even become the next members of our lodges.



Festival Merchandise >

Festival merchandise is available from your lodge Charity Steward or simply contact Mark Campbell - mark.campbell60@sky.com for further information or to restock.





How to sign up for a Jewel >

The main charge in the arms of our jewel is the sun rising over the sea. Suffolk is the most easterly County in England and thus the first to see the sun rise. The sun also refers to a poem by Michael Drayton, written in 1627, and was also used as the badge of Suffolk at the battle of Agincourt.

Entitlement to wear the jewel depends on the level of donation pledged:

Steward

£300 donation over the period of the festival (£5 per month).

Vice Patron

£600 donation over the period of the festival (£10 per month).

Patron

£900 donation over the period of the festival (£15 per month).

Grand Patron

£1200 donation over the period of the festival (£20 per month).

If you choose a level but exceed it you will get an upgrade and a free new bar. If you do not want to be seen to give more, you don't have to wear your upgrade bar, meaning we could all wear the same Jewel.

The payment can be made in one lump sum, or by setting up a direct debit for the appropriate sum, or by pledging to make the appropriate payment by other regular means.

You can make a regular monthly donation over the period of the festival; a single donation to cover the cost of your preferred jewel; or download a form to do either of these options if you prefer - simply by clicking here:

<https://suffolkfestival.org.uk/donate/>

Or by using the QR code below, or speak to your Lodge Charity Steward who will be able to assist.



Once the appropriate sum is pledged, the jewel will be dispatched - please speak to your Charity Steward or direct to Roger Cawston on roger.cawston@talk21.com, who will arrange delivery of jewel for you.

Lodge Grand Patronage >

For lodges that match or exceed the amount raised at the last festival, Lodge Grand Patronage for the lodge is achieved, a gift and presentation will be made and Grand Patronage recognition from the PGM at the Provincial Grand Lodge Meeting. It is hoped that all Jewels are given out in lodge by the Charity Steward or the WM to add some weight to the fact these are an honorific and worn with pride at supporting our Festival. It will also highlight the Jewel to others and may promote participation.

Please also ensure all new members are informed and given the chance to set up the direct debit to obtain a Jewel, the time for payment can be extended beyond the Festival if needed. Jewels should only be worn when attending Meetings of Craft Lodges and RA Chapters within our own Province, and not when attending meetings of Grand Lodge or Lodges and Chapters in other Provinces.

We have not set expected upper or lower targets for lodges; it is entirely up to individual Lodges and Chapters as to how much they raise, but please start early to maximise the effect of the very good interest rate of the relief chest.

We will be issuing quarterly statistics showing how each Lodge and Chapter is doing on a per-capita basis.





Festival Torch Update > £55,000 raised so far!

We truly thank you all for your continued support and we look forward to hearing and seeing Torch on his travels around the Province.

To date, early December 2025, £55,000 has been given by you all towards our Festival 2029 appeal.

Torchy Visit Diary 2026

Ionic (Ipswich) - 5922 - Tuesday 13/01/26
 Orient (Lowestoft) - 4085 - Wednesday 04/02/26
 Abiff (Saxmundham) - 2810 - Monday 09/03/26
 Corinthian (Ipswich) - 3093 - Monday 23/03/26
 Suffolk 250 (Bury St Edmunds) 10014 - Tuesday 31/03/26
 Court Knoll (Boxford) - 9194 - Tuesday 21/04/26
 St Margaret's (Lowestoft) 1452 - Monday 11/05/26
 Perfect Amity (Ipswich) - 6347 - Friday 05/06/26
 Selig (Lowestoft) - 9459 - Saturday 20/06/26
 Composite (Ipswich) - 9480 - Saturday 03/10/26
 Ala (Stowmarket) - 5043 - Friday 16/10/26
 Wisdom (Ipswich) - 9333 - Tuesday 10/11/26
 Culford (Bury St Edmunds) - 8482 - Saturday 12/12/26

2027

Apollo (Beccles) - 0305 - Thursday 07/01/27



Relief Chests >

If anyone needs help with relief chests or advice please get in touch and we can help. If your lodge does not have a relief chest and would like one we can ask the MCF to give you all the help and support you need, it really can make your charity stewards job a lot easier.

Finally if you have funds in your relief chest that you may be thinking of donating to the Festival then the sooner the money comes in the Festival fund the better as we receive approx 10% interest which is effectively free money and on £1.5 Million that is a huge sum of free money.

500 Club >



The lottery or 500 club has been moved to an online platform for ease of operation. It is an important part of our fundraising.

This is our website for the lottery

<https://draw.ourclublotto.co.uk/suffolk500club/>

or use the QR Code to take you straight to sign up!

It is very easy to sign up and buy your tickets, you choose the length of time, it can be monthly or yearly, payments of tickets are made automatically.

50% of all money raised goes to the winners, so the more that play the higher the prize. If you need assistance please contact Chris Drinkald - chris.drinkald@icloud.com.