



M.B.F. Newsletter Special Edition



# Vanuatu Cyclone

# £25,000 DONATED

# TO RELIEF EFFORTS

*Funds Directed Straight to the Devastated Areas*



Between Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> and Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> March 2015, the normally peaceful and serene tropical nation of Vanuatu, in the South Pacific, was devastated by the immense cyclone designated as Pam.

Pam tore through the islands with overwhelming speed and intensity leaving 16 dead and over 166,000 people affected, many of whom were made homeless.

Over the weekend the Trustees of The Mark Benevolent Fund exchanged emails and telephone calls to decide how they could help and by the morning of Monday 16<sup>th</sup> March the Trustees had pledged £25,000 to go towards the relief efforts.

The M.B.F., known for its speed of delivering assistance where it is needed, decided that the funds should be sent directly to the islands where it could be disbursed more readily to those in immediate need. As Mark Masonry does not have a presence in Vanuatu, the funds will be strictly controlled by the Brethren of the Craft Lodge in the area namely, The Lodge of Discovery No. 8727 and overseen by the Grand Inspector of the South West Pacific Inspectorate. It has been guaranteed that funds will only be going to specific and identified recipients, bypassing involvement from governments or aid agencies, which may delay help.



Bro. Alan W. Churchill, Secretary of the Lodge of Discovery, tells us, 'Long-term, the Lodge of Discovery will be engaging in an essential community infrastructure project once the needs are assessed. This will enable the Lodge of Discovery to identify with a local community and provide excellent publicity for Freemasonry in general. We are also thankful to the Grand Charity having made a donation of £20,000 via the Red Cross. I assure you that any donations will be thankfully received and faithfully applied.'

You may wonder as to the delay in communicating our pledge to you – well, the Trustees wanted to be sure that the infrastructure was sufficient and that the funds could be transferred directly to the Lodge. Once everyone was happy that the funds could be transferred with ease, it was apparent that the time was right to apprise you all.

We will keep you up to date with how things are progressing so please keep in touch with our Facebook and Twitter pages for details.