

WEST LANCASHIRE MARK CHARITIES CHAIRMANS ANNUAL REPORT

Brethren

This year for the first time my annual report as Chairman of the West Lancashire Mark Charities is being published on our Provincial web site prior to Provincial Grand Lodge being held on 4TH May 2016.

It is always a privilege to report on what has been yet another very successful and rewarding year. The total donations received in the last financial year amounted to £34000.00, a remarkable sum given the present economic climate and outlook.

As has previously been stated it is the intention of the trustees to ensure that at least seventy five percent of the sum received is granted as donations to worthy organisations and causes throughout our great province. This year has been no exception with donations/grants amounting to £29000.00 (85%) of all monies received.

Details of the income and expenditure account are attached to this report for your perusal together with a full listing of all of the grants made.

Looking at the listing I would wish to highlight one particular grant which personally gave me the greatest satisfaction, namely that to Highfurlong School (Special needs) in Blackpool in the sum of £7503.00. This was for the provision of a purpose built eight speed wheelchair transport bicycle. As the details imply it has enabled the wheelchair bound pupils to participate in "bike " rides in the parks and promenades around the area making them feel part of the class and able to enjoy the fresh air, sights and sounds other pupils take for granted.

It is only on these occasions that one can fully appreciate the value of your donations on the charity plate and as has been said on numerous times when a cheque has been presented at an Installation "it will be faithfully applied and thankfully received by the recipients"

On the subject of giving may I please ask for your support in considering "GIFT AID" for your donations. Year on year we are reclaiming circa £2500.00 totally free from HMRC however when taken in the context of £0.25P in every £1.00 donated it is not such a large sum. Donations such as last year's £34000.00 could equate to a claim of £8500.00 if all donations were gift aided. Just consider what the Charities could do with an extra £5000/£6000 each and every year. Administration of the scheme for the Lodge charity stewards is not onerous with assistance available from the Province if required. Forms are on the web site to be downloaded and gift aid envelopes are available from the Provincial Grand Charity steward.

If you are attending the banquet after Provincial Grand lodge you may well see a very happy brother after it is announced that he has won the first prize in the 21st Century draw of £750.00 or indeed one of the eleven other prizes ranging from £350.00 to £50.00. As is always stated you must be "in it to win it" if therefore you are not a member and wish to join speak to W.Bro Peter Hegarty or W.Bro John Sarti both of whom will be on duty at Provincial Grand Lodge before the commencement to take on new members.

As well as the prizes distributed approximately £2000.00 is also given to the Mark Charities which since the 2000 Festival amounts to over £30000.00. This is a magnificent amount and is a testimony to the efforts of W.Bro. Frank Thomas ("Frank the Bank") who will be retiring at Provincial Grand Lodge with the grateful thanks of all of the Executive members he has worked with during the past nineteen years.

Finally I wish to thank the leaders & deputy leaders of our five Charity groups, the Provincial Grand Almoner, the Provincial Grand Charity steward, the Honorary secretary and treasurer of the Charities and each and every one of the Lodge Charity stewards for all of the hard work they put in behind the scenes in ensuring that the Mark Charities continue to go from strength to strength whilst being ever mindful of the need of others.

Above all I thank you brethren for your support of the Charities which continues year on year unabated. The Mark Charity is your Charity, please continue to use it as well as supporting it ultimately it is the various recipients who will thank you in the long term.

Please continue to enjoy your Mark Masonry

V.W.Bro. Michael J Clarke P.G.J.O. Asst P.G.M.
Chairman West Lancashire Mark Charities

May 2016