

**Minutes of the Lodge Charity Stewards and Almoners meeting held on
Tuesday, 20th October 2009 at Burnham on Sea Masonic Hall.**

Attendees. Province Ray Guthrie – Chairman, Eric Kellett – Provincial Charity Steward, Ian Cox – Provincial Almoner, Terry Haggett – Provincial Charity Rep South. Apologies John Nicholson - Provincial Charity Rep North.

Lodge Charity Stewards. Keith Fisher 191, Pete Claperton 348, Ian Strickland 730, Jan Nichols 781, Tony Atherton 967, Ron Troup 1295, John Lawes 1608, Terry Haggett 1656. (8 attending) Apologies Peter Atkins 697, Dave Smith 749, Mike Waterman 128, Cliff Hannabuss 1548.

Lodge Almoners, Chris Beckett (rep) 191, David Veale 697, Geoff Seaman 730, Chris Dyer 749, John Smith (rep) 781, A Wilkins 967, Tony Drew 1615, John Morgan (rep) 155RAM. (8 attending). Apologies. Gordon Poulson TI, Mike Skyrme 102, J Warnes 162, Ken Wheadon 571, Philip Coles 1295,

The Deputy Provincial Grand Master, Ray Guthrie, Chaired the meeting. He opened the proceedings at 7.05pm and welcomed charity stewards and almoners to the meeting, he went on to introduce Mrs Marilyn Sydenham representing Hearing Dogs for the Deaf and Mr Gerry Webb representing St John Ambulance. Mrs Sydenham then gave an interesting presentation on her work with hearing dogs for the deaf and on the scope of the charity. Mrs Sydenham also handed out literature about the charity and then answered questions.

Mr Gerry Webb of the St John ambulance then gave a presentation on that charity, including an historical perspective and the work of the charity today in Somerset. He covered more especially the upgrading of the crusader ambulance previously supplied by the Mark Master Masons. The £10,000, which we hope to raise for this charity would be used to convert the vehicle based in Wells into a full cardiac response unit. Following this presentation he also answered questions.

The deputy PGM then announce a break for refreshments during which Charity Stewards and Almoners could speak with the representatives from the two charities. He also thanked Mrs Sydenham and Mr Webb for taking the time and trouble to come to talk us.

Following refreshments both Mr Webb and Mrs Sydenham took their leave and the chairman resumed the meeting and gave a report from worshipful Brother John Nicholson regarding the 600 club. John had given his apologies for his absence this evening but was pleased to confirm that with the help of every Lodge Charity Steward we now had 614 shares in this year's 600 club slightly up on last year. There are still in 9 draws left with the next one taking place at Portal Mark Lodge on October 29. Would Charity Stewards please note that an application form for entry into the draw is available for downloading on the website at www.somersetmarkmason.co.uk. John was pleased to announce that in addition to the 10 draws, one each month until June next year, each with three prizes of £150 £60 and £40, there would be extra prizes drawn at Christmas. This would happen at the meeting of Cerdic Mark Lodge on Wednesday, 9 December when an extra three £100 prizes would be drawn. He would again like to thank all charity stewards for their hard work in making this year's

600 club such a success.

In his absence the Deputy Provincial Grand Master thanked John for all his hard work together with those others who had helped namely the Provincial Grand Charity Steward Eric Kellett and charity representative Terry Haggett together with all the Lodge Charity Stewards.

The deputy PGM gave a brief report on this year's Mark golf day and stated that next year the competition will be held at Taunton and Pickeridge golf club on Monday, 12 July 2010. Although the object of the golf day was not specifically charity he would appreciate Charity Stewards informing their members about this day.

The Provincial Grand Almoner Worshipful Brother Ian Cox addressed the brethren with regard to the help available from the Mark Benevolent Fund and from our own JJ Webber fund and Provincial Mark Benevolent Fund. He also stressed that he worked very closely with Worshipful Brother John Winston the Craft Provincial Almoner. Normally the craft should be the first point of call to relieve a brother's distress. He issued new forms together with instructions for completing the same from the Mark Benevolent Fund, and stressed how important it was that these forms should be filled in accurately and correctly.

The Deputy Provincial Grand Master moved on to talk about the website and in particular the relevance of the Almoner's blog. This had been started particularly to keep brethren up-to-date not just with other brethren throughout the province who are ill or suffering in anyway but also to report success and happy events. He hoped that Almoners would consider using the blog and would very much appreciate their feedback on it. He will also be appreciate feedback in general about the website and more specifically were Almoner's and Charity Stewards prepared to have their e-mail address published on their own Lodge Web page.

The resources section of the site contained forms for Almoner's, Charity Stewards, Secretaries and brethren. Such as forms for 600 club, the annual ball next March, the dining form for the provincial meeting on 1st May 2010, the Royal Ark Mariner assembly at Nailsea on January 30 next year together with up-to-date toast lists and secretarial return forms.

I a final point about the web site he would like to have a section for the PGMs appeal, there was already a photo of John Lendon's talking dog and the running total of the amount donated so far on the news page. He asked that when any Lodge makes a donation or holds an event to raise money for the appeal please let him have a photo and brief details for this special section on the web site.

He then went on to say how disappointed he was at the very low turnout this evening, only half of the lodges in the province were represented and only 16 people had signed in. He then asked as a general question whether this low turnout was due to the meeting being held to regularly and suggested that it should be held every other year rather than annually has at the moment he canvassed opinion and the only response came from Brother Chris Dyer who felt quite strongly that an annual meeting was necessary, in view of that the DPGM said he would canvass opinion from those who had not been present.

There being no other points raised by any of the Brethren present, the Deputy PGM announced that he would close the meeting having thanked worshipful Brother Bob Shaw and his assistant, for the bar and buffet. He forgot to thank W.Bro Eric Kellett for organising the evening and now apologises profusely for not doing so. He then went on to say how pleasant it was to see W.Bro Keith Fisher restored to full health and returned to us and that he was very pleased to announce that the Grand Master had been pleased to appoint Keith to Royal Ark Mariner Grand Rank, this he would receive on December 8th in London.

The meeting was closed with acclamation for Keith at 9:10pm