

HEREFORDSHIRE PGL

RW Festival President, what a splendid start to the Festival a cheque for £45,000 and it is a great pleasure to be with you to launch the 2020 Festival for the MSF although it appears that the ship has already left the dock and its steaming ahead - one only has to look around and see the large number of Festival Jewels already in existence to realise that your ambitious target of £300K is well within your grasp.

May I first however, on behalf of the MSF congratulate all those Promoted and Appointed today because this is clearly in anticipation of a leading role for you in promoting the Festival. When you do so could I ask you to remember the 3 aims of the Festival

- To raise money to allow us to do our work
- To promote the work we do so that no one misses out
- To have fun doing it

Clearly the money side is what people tend to focus on as it can be measured and you have set a very ambitious target. Its importance is that it allows us to continue to help those of our beneficiaries who in many cases wait in vain and often in pain for a medical or dental procedure, it allows us to care for the carer by providing that often needed respite care, to assist families with mobility aids and home adaptations which hard pressed Local Authorities find difficult to provide and to ease the burden of those finding coping with daily life more difficult with some well-timed counselling. All this costs us some £5m annually and that is what your support will achieve. Now many of you will know that by this time next year we shall be under the umbrella of a single overarching Masonic Charity – do not worry – the money you raise goes into the MSF pot, a Restricted Fund which can only be used for the purposes for which it was raised – it is safe. We also use money raised to fund relevant Masonic Research Project often in conjunction with the FGC and this year we have had 2 notable successes:

- Blood test Alzheimers UK for early detection
- Papworth Hospital – non beating heart transplant

Both funded by the MSF. We currently allocate up to £0.5 million a year but this year, our Silver Jubilee year we have set aside £1m and are aiming to give 10 grants of £100K for Research at large hospitals around the Country. We have short listed some 30 projects and will be asking PGM's to let us know which Project you wish us to support. We shall then ask PGM's to present the cheque, thus promoting both MSF and Freemasonry in the Community.

So that is where your money goes, now to promoting our work within your Province. We have already started by giving a presentation at the excellent Provincial Widows Lunch in March, great fun and I hope useful to those who attended.

I said that this was our Silver Jubilee year in that time we have helped some 52 Masons and their dependants in the Province. Not a large number but then you are not a large Province and living in such a beautiful County you are clearly a very healthy bunch. All I can ask please don't let people suffer in silence, make them

aware that we are there for them. You do not need to be on bread line to get help from the MSF. We look at whether we feel you can afford to pay or not.

We have an Eligibility Calculator on our website but if you are unsure please, please ring and ask we have some very helpful staff.

I closed a very successful West Kent Festival a couple of weeks ago, financially very successful but just as pleasing was to record that after 25 years we had helped over 550, of that number over 200 had been helped during the last 5 years of the Festival. Brethren please spread the message that we are there to help and if you need us to come down here to help you to promote the MSF please ask us.

Finally Brethren these Festivals need to be fun. We have had all sorts of events – golf days, family fun days, race days and so on and when I mentioned in March that at PGM had done a sponsored parachute jump I did not think, Festival President that you would take it up – I wish you well!!

Brethren whatever to do to promote the Festival, make it fun and thank you David for agreeing to run this Festival for the MSF.