

Mark Benevolent Fund



MBF Festival Financial Procedures

Introduction

Each year a Province will take its turn to host a Festival celebrating the end of many years of fundraising from within that Province for the Mark Benevolent Fund (MBF) culminating in a Festival Weekend/Dinner. During the Festival Dinner a booklet is distributed which details the money received over the preceding years towards that particular Festival.

The Province decides how much they hope to raise, some will set and publish a target, others just have an idea of what they hope to achieve and will strive towards that balance, **the MBF do not** set targets for the Province.

There are different ways the Province can account for the funds raised, they can bank the money themselves either through their own Benevolent Fund or a separate bank account, open a Relief Chest account at UGLE or send the money direct to the MBF at Mark Masons' Hall (MMH). Ideally the money would go direct to the MBF as ultimately this is what the fundraising is all about. In all cases a record is kept of all the donations received both for the member's records, which in turn can lead to various patronage honorific's and for the publication of the Festival booklet.

For the records to be updated and maintained the MBF rely on the Festival Province to send details of the source of their fundraising, whether they are donations from individual members, Lodges or various ad hoc activities. This booklet briefly outlines the MBF procedures and the details required to account for the money received.

However, if there are any queries, please do not hesitate to contact those involved in the Charity's administration, details as follows:

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Donations

Donations can be paid by cash, cheques, credit card, direct payments into the bank or regular commitments paid by standing order. Cheques should be made payable to The Mark Benevolent Fund or MBF. Donations can come direct to the MBF at MMH or can be paid through a Lodge, Province or the UGLE Relief Chest. In all cases when the funds are transferred to the MBF a summary should be included to detail, in particular, which festival year the money is to be assigned to. If no year is stated we will try to discover what is wanted, failing that the money will be assigned to the current year's festival. Also needed are the details of where the money is to be attributed to – an individual Brother, Lodge, Province or any other fundraising activity. If the funds are to be allocated against an individual's name, we will need his MMH membership number and his lodge details, if the membership number is not known this can be obtained from MMH, we will also supply a list of all the Province members and their MMH numbers on request. If the donation is from a Lodge the Lodge name, number and Masonic Order should all be included; there are similar Lodge names in more than one Masonic Order. A simple spread sheet giving these details is essential, please see the example at the end of this booklet, this can be sent electronically on request. Any non-Masonic donors will be given their own unique number which can be used for any further donations. One-off donations of less than £10 per member are not normally processed individually, for example if a Lodge has a collection made up of several donations from its members and these are all under £10 the total amount will be attributed to the Lodge. However if a member sets up a regular giving standing order this will be processed as an individual donation regardless of the amount.

To claim gift aid on a single or multiple donations a form must be completed and sent to us, this will enable gift aid to be claimed on one or all donations. This is for donations paid through MMH, if paying through a Province they may have their own system. Any gift aid claimed will be credited to the member and will count towards patronage. We also have the forms for Regular Giving, one to provide the MBF the donation details plus a standing order mandate for the individual donor's bank.

If the festival committee decides to use the UGLE relief chest for their funds please be aware it can take at least one month and occasionally up to three months from the initial request to transfer funds for the payment to reach the MBF. It is important when giving instruction to the Relief Chest to transfer funds, details of the donation are also sent to the MBF and receipt of this transfer can then be checked. It is also important to note that until the funds are paid into the MBF through MMH it will not appear on the Brothers' account or count towards any honorifics. Members who pay regularly into their Province often question why they do not qualify for their expected patronage, this is usually because the funds are still held by the Province and have not been transferred to the MBF. Alternatively, when the funds are sent from the Province the details of the source of the donation may not be recorded and the donation would then be attributed to the Province.

We have a dedicated team consisting of Linda and Millie who deals with all donations received. If there are any queries regarding donations, they should be directed in the first instance to Linda. Linda and Millie also deal with the Patronage Collarettes and Jewels. If Linda is not available please contact Millie Pilson. Please bear in mind that we cannot give information about a member's donations to a third party without prior authorisation, although we work on the principle that the Lodge or Province's Charity Steward have this authorisation.

Festival Booklet

The cut off date for donations to appear in the Festival Booklet is the end of May for a July Festival, this will leave us with 6 weeks for the preparation and printing of the booklet. Any donations received after this date will still be attributed to the festival but will not necessarily appear in the booklet although, if requested, a summary may be printed giving details of additional donations received. The final total will be announced at the Festival dinner which will include any money received after the publication cut-off date. This total is always kept confidential, however we will check with the Provincial Grand Master or the Festival organiser prior to the Festival weekend whether he thinks the total we have is what he is expecting. Any donations received after the 1st Sunday in July will automatically default to the following year's festival unless specified otherwise.

All donations received are recorded on our database and from this we download the information in a way that can be formatted ready for publication. This is reported in three sections:

- 1 **Festival Province** – listing the totals raised by Mark and RAM Lodges, other Masonic Orders and any fund raising events within the Province
- 2 **Mark Masons' Hall** – all donations received from outside the Festival Province listed by Province, Inspectorates, Overseas Lodges, Unattached Lodges, other Masonic Orders and any other sundry donations.
- 3 **Stewards** – listed as number of Stewards by Province, the money received for a Stewardship will be included in the reported Province totals.

The Steward's fee is currently £100.00 and will count towards a Patronage qualification, which can be gift aided if applicable. A Festival Stewards Pack contains a Stewards Breast Jewel, a Breast Pocket Sleeve and a Year Bar. If it is your first donation you will also receive a Life Governor breast jewel. The Festival Provincial Lapel Badge, which will only be sold whilst the hosting Province is in it's final year of festival, can also be purchased from MMH or a Provincial representative for £10.00.

Please note that the Steward's fee is £100.00 plus gift aid and cannot be taken from Regular Giving donations. It is a stand alone payment. Your Province would be happy to take payment in instalments from brethren if you are unable to pay the amount in full. When you have reached the £100.00 the Province will send us payment for the Jewel.

The Festival Province will be credited with an amount of interest on donations received by the MBF, currently we allow 2%. This is simple interest calculated on the number of months the money is held by the MBF, it will not be credited to individual accounts. The current interest rate applies to all donations whenever received. Please note these rates will be subject to the Bank of England base rate and UGLE.

Gift aid will be claimed each year in April and added to member records, this also counts towards a member's MBF patronage. The Gift Aid is attributed to the same Festival year that the original donation was made to. This is currently 25%, future budgets will be checked to see if this will continue in its current form.

Finally – and most importantly, also recorded in the booklet is a list of the Charitable Donations awarded through the Worthy Causes Committee together with the total of Petitioner Grants paid and the running totals of all grants made through the MBF.

UGLE Relief Chest & Interest

Many Lodges / Provinces use the Relief Chest for their festival donations, it is very useful for them to operate a relief chest to distribute their charitable funds but funds specifically for the MBF would ideally come direct to the MBF. We credit any gift aid to the individual, which counts towards their honorific, and will credit interest to the festival total, currently 1.6%, as simple interest calculated monthly at the end of the festival period. If and when the interest rates start changing, we will review this contribution, but still anticipate maintaining 1.5% rate above base rate. Please see below a comparison with what you may get from the UGLE Relief Chest, the comparison is based on 0.3% a month from the Relief Chest.

Please note the rates will be subject to change depending on the Bank of England base rate and what UGLE are forecasting.

A donation of £15,000 for a year would earn approximately £45.06 with the relief chest.

The same donation would earn approximately £240.00 for the festival total from MMH.

A donation of £10,000 over a two year period would earn approximately £60.17 with the relief chest. The same donation would earn approximately £320.00 for the festival total from MMH.

Please note: The MBF does not credit the individual with the interest this is an amount credited to the Festival Total.

