

The Grand Lodge of Mark Master Masons of England
and Wales and its Districts and Lodges Overseas



**MINUTES OF THE
COMMUNICATION OF GRAND LODGE**

held on Tuesday, 10 March 2026

at 1.30p.m. in the Grand Temple, Freemasons' Hall
60 Great Queen Street, London, WC2B 5AZ

PRESENT

DEPUTY GRAND MASTER
R.W.Bro. Prof. Denovan Keith Wilson

ASSISTANT GRAND MASTER
R.W.Bro. Peter David Williams

PAST PRO GRAND MASTER
M.W.Bro. R. J. Smith

PAST DEPUTY GRAND MASTER
R.W.Bro. H. K. Emmerson
R.W.Bro. F. C. Spencer

PROVINCIAL AND DISTRICT GRAND MASTERS

R.W.Bro. M. A. CooperDistrict Grand Master for Germany
R.W.Bro. J. Verbist District Grand Master for Belgium
R.W.Bro. D. R. Clancey Provincial Grand Master for North and East Yorkshire
R.W.Bro. K. A. Beardmore..... Provincial Grand Master for West Lancashire
R.W.Bro. G. J. DeaconProvincial Grand Master for Hampshire and Isle of Wight
R.W.Bro. G. R. Hicks Provincial Grand Master for Dyfed
R.W.Bro. S. RawlingsProvincial Grand Master for Bristol
R.W.Bro. S. C. HallbergProvincial Grand Master for Lincolnshire
R.W.Bro. P. C. Voisey Provincial Grand Master for Somerset
R.W.Bro. I. W. Wright..... Provincial Grand Master for Oxfordshire
R.W.Bro. T. QuinnProvincial Grand Master for London
R.W.Bro. R. F. Richardson..... Provincial Grand Master for Sussex
R.W.Bro. J. S. Evans Provincial Grand Master for North Wales
R.W.Bro. R. A. Walton Provincial Grand Master for Northumberland
R.W.Bro. D. J. BoswellProvincial Grand Master for East Anglia
R.W.Bro. C. C. AdkinProvincial Grand Master for Nottinghamshire
R.W.Bro. G. D. SeemanProvincial Grand Master for Berkshire
R.W.Bro. J. H. Smith..... Provincial Grand Master for East Lancashire

R.W.Bro. G. R. Horstman Provincial Grand Master for Cheshire
R.W.Bro. G. Hutchinson Provincial Grand Master for Derbyshire
R.W.Bro. B. P. Gargett Provincial Grand Master for Gloucestershire and Herefordshire
R.W.Bro. S. Lee Provincial Grand Master for Wiltshire
R.W.Bro. K. D. Bristow Provincial Grand Master for Buckinghamshire
R.W.Bro. J. D. Harrison Provincial Grand Master for Hertfordshire
R.W.Bro. D. C. Purdie Provincial Grand Master for Devonshire
R.W.Bro. K. J. Spencer Provincial Grand Master for Staffordshire and Shropshire
R.W.Bro. D. N. Hanson Provincial Grand Master for Durham
R.W.Bro. J. V. C. French Provincial Grand Master for Surrey
R.W.Bro. P. J. Furness Provincial Grand Master for Cornwall
R.W.Bro. J. D. Sowerby Provincial Grand Master for Northampton, Huntingdon and Bedford
R.W.Bro. V. H. Pomeroy Provincial Grand Master for Dorset
R.W.Bro. J. T. Bolton Provincial Grand Master for West Yorkshire
R.W.Bro. A. Theocharous District Grand Master for Cyprus
R.W.Bro. J. Finlay Provincial Grand Master for Essex
R.W.Bro. B. W. Dykes Provincial Grand Master for Monmouthshire
R.W.Bro. P. J. Hyde Provincial Grand Master for Middlesex
R.W.Bro. A. R. Armbrister Provincial Grand Master for Warwickshire
R.W.Bro. A. S. Lee Provincial Grand Master for Leicestershire
R.W.Bro. P. W. Davies Provincial Grand Master for South Wales
R.W.Bro. Revd J. T. Parker Provincial Grand Master for Worcestershire
R.W.Bro. M. T. Summers Provincial Grand Master for Kent
R.W.Bro. A. M. Henton, *KStJ* Provincial Grand Master for Channel Islands

HOLDER OF THE ORDER OF SERVICE TO MARK MASTER MASONRY

R.W.Bro. P. H. Rollin, P.Prov.G.M., East Anglia (1998–2010)

PAST PROVINCIAL AND DISTRICT GRAND MASTERS

R.W.Bro. R. J. Wade, P.Prov.G.M., Kent (2003–2008)
R.W.Bro. G. F. W. Isaac, P.Prov.G.M., Cornwall (2004–2014)
R.W.Bro. R. S. H. Hussey, P.Prov.G.M., Surrey (2004–2014)
R.W.Bro. G. E. Bonham, P.Prov.G.M., Northamptonshire and Huntingdonshire (2006–2017)
R.W.Bro. R. L. Munday, P.Dist.G.M., Spain (2007–2013)
R.W.Bro. P. J. Sands, P.Prov.G.M., Berkshire (2007–2013)
R.W.Bro. J. B. Truswell, P.Prov.G.M., West Yorkshire (2007–2015)
R.W.Bro. C. D. Radmore, P.Prov.G.M., Hertfordshire (2008–2018)
R.W.Bro. F. J. Shaw, P.Prov.G.M., Dorset (2008–2015)
R.W.Bro. P. A. Norman, P.Prov.G.M., East Anglia (2010–2020)
R.W.Bro. D. F. Ashbolt, P.Prov.G.M., London (2011–2019)
R.W.Bro. R. S. Mac, P.Prov.G.M., Warwickshire (2012–2017)
R.W.Bro. R. J. Olliver, P.Prov.G.M., Berkshire (2013–2021)
R.W.Bro. A. I. Torrance, P.Prov.G.M., Kent (2013–2021)
R.W.Bro. His Hon. I. D. G. Alexander, *KC*, P.Prov.G.M., Oxfordshire (2014–2019)
R.W.Bro. T. D. Sheern, P.Prov.G.M., Essex (2015–2024)
R.W.Bro. D. E. Tremaine, P.Prov.G.M., Buckinghamshire (2015–2022)
R.W.Bro. A. P. Beaumont, P.Prov.G.M., Wiltshire (2016–2022)
R.W.Bro. P. J. Balsom, P.Prov.G.M., Devonshire (2016–2022)
R.W.Bro. K. M. Blackburn, *OStJ*, P.Prov.G.M., Isle of Man (2017–2022)
R.W.Bro. E. R. Garty, P.Prov.G.M., Middlesex (2017–2024)

PAST GRAND WARDENS

R.W.Bro. R. A. H. Morrow, P.G.J.W., 2004
R.W.Bro. M. R. Aish, P.G.J.W., 2013
R.W.Bro. G. F. Redman, P.G.J.W., 2014

R.W.Bro. J. A. Harrison, P.G.J.W., 2018
R.W.Bro. J. C. Edgcumbe, P.G.J.W., 2019
R.W.Bro. Lt Col. J. C. Chambers, P.G.J.W., 2019
R.W.Bro. R. Guthrie, P.G.J.W., 2021
R.W.Bro. B. D. Harry, P.G.J.W., 2021
R.W.Bro. J. C. Whitaker, *JP, DL*, P.G.J.W., 2022
R.W.Bro. D. Aspinwall, P.G.J.W., 2023
R.W.Bro. G. H. Lee, P.G.J.W., 2023
R.W.Bro. N. A. B. Grout, P.G.J.W. 2023
R.W.Bro. W. A. Divall, P.G.J.W. 2023
R.W.Bro. M. F. Barnes, P.G.J.W. 2023
R.W.Bro. S. D'O. Duckworth, P.G.J.W. 2024
R.W.Bro. Dr N. F. J. Scott-Moncrieff, P.G.J.W., 2024
R.W.Bro. J. P. Clendinning, P.G.J.W., 2025
R.W.Bro. J. C. Roberts, P.G.J.W., 2025

GRAND OFFICERS OF THE YEAR

R.W.Bro. Lt Cdr A. P. D. Hannagan, *RD, MStJ*.....Grand Senior Warden
R.W.Bro. P. E. Rubie-Todd Grand Junior Warden
V.W.Bro. N. D. MilburnGrand Master Overseer
V.W.Bro. D. M. Wheeler Grand Senior Overseer
V.W.Bro. B. Hughes Grand Junior Overseer
V.W.Bro. The Revd P. P. Paterson, P.G.M.O..... Grand Chaplain
R.W.Bro. W. A. Divall, P.G.J.W..... President of the General Board
R.W.Bro. J. R. G. Hilditch, P.Prov.G.M. (Oxfordshire) Grand Treasurer
R.W.Bro. His Hon. Judge K. C. Cutler, *CBE*, P.G.S.W. Grand Registrar
R.W.Bro. I. N. Clark, P.Prov.G.M. (Surrey) President of the M.B.F.
R.W.Bro. D. M. Heath, P.G.J.W. Grand Secretary
R.W.Bro. C. M. L. Davies, P.G.J.W.....Grand Director of Ceremonies
V.W.Bro. V. J. Driver, P.G.J.O. Grand Inspector of Works
W.Bro. A. A. Black.....Grand Sword Bearer
V.W.Bro. Revd A. W. Avery, P.G.J.O. Deputy Grand Chaplain
R.W.Bro. D. R. Clancey, Prov.G.M. (N&E Yorkshire).. Deputy President of the General Board
W.Bro. L. G. Clement.....Deputy Grand Registrar
R.W.Bro. K. J. Hicks, P.Prov.G.M. (Cornwall)..... Deputy President of the M.B.F.
W.Bro. A. C. Jennings Deputy Grand Director of Ceremonies
W.Bro. R. G. Harrison Deputy Grand Director of Ceremonies
W.Bro. A. J. Brown, P.Dep.G.D.C. as Deputy Grand Director of Ceremonies
W.Bro. M. A. Evans Deputy Grand Inspector of Works
W.Bro. J. W. Lane Deputy Grand Sword Bearer
W.Bro. I. M. H. Bennett Grand Senior Deacon
W.Bro. M. R. Constant Grand Senior Deacon
W.Bro. A. C. Howlett-Bolton Grand Senior Deacon
W.Bro. J. M. Rimmer Grand Senior Deacon
W.Bro. M. J. Stocker Grand Senior Deacon
W.Bro. E. J. Carter Grand Junior Deacon
W.Bro. R. E. S. Cawston Grand Junior Deacon
W.Bro. K. P. C. Hendle Grand Junior Deacon
W.Bro. M. Jessop Grand Junior Deacon
W.Bro. B. Kennedy Grand Junior Deacon
W.Bro. Revd Dr S. A. Thorn Assistant Grand Chaplain
W.Bro. S. Rajput Assistant Grand Registrar
W.Bro. D. Mersh, P.G.S.D..... Assistant Grand Secretary
W.Bro. Lt Col. M. C. A. Caseman-Jones, *TD*.....Assistant Grand Secretary

W.Bro. N. Daines	Assistant Grand Director of Ceremonies
W.Bro. G. K. Jeffery	Assistant Grand Director of Ceremonies
W.Bro. J. R. Ormston	Assistant Grand Director of Ceremonies
W.Bro. Dr J. P. Shervington	Assistant Grand Director of Ceremonies
W.Bro. K. R. Williams	Assistant Grand Director of Ceremonies
W.Bro. C. D. C. Griggs	Assistant Grand Superintendent of Works
W.Bro. P. C. Bunyan	Assistant Grand Sword Bearer
V.W.Bro. M. Rizzardi, P.G.J.O.	Grand Organist
W.Bro. C. Thomason	Grand Standard Bearer
W.Bro. J. W. Read	Grand Standard Bearer
W.Bro. D. C. T. G. Roberts-Jones, P.G.J.D.	Deputy Grand Organist
W.Bro. P. Harrison	Assistant Grand Standard Bearer
W.Bro. W. O. Davies	Assistant Grand Organist
W.Bro. D. M. Eldridge	Grand Inner Guard
W.Bro. G. C. Lambeth	Assistant Grand Inner Guard
W.Bro. R. J. H. Austin	Grand Steward
W.Bro. J. J. Cunningham	Grand Steward
W.Bro. S. J. D. Daly	Grand Steward
W.Bro. G. L. Ellis	Grand Steward
W.Bro. J. C. Fitzgerald	Grand Steward
W.Bro. S. Harman	Grand Steward
W.Bro. M. V. Hoare	Grand Steward
W.Bro. T. F. Jessopp	Grand Steward
W.Bro. P. D. Lapage	Grand Steward
W.Bro. J. Letham	Grand Steward
W.Bro. A. C. Maurier	Grand Steward
W.Bro. R. G. Palmer	Grand Steward
W.Bro. I. S. Paul	Grand Steward
W.Bro. B. C. Povey	Grand Steward
W.Bro. D. J. Ratchford	Grand Steward
W.Bro. M. A. Rees	Grand Steward
W.Bro. L. B. Richardson	Grand Steward
W.Bro. R. Scott	Grand Steward
W.Bro. C. S. Trizis	Grand Steward
W.Bro. G. J. Waddoups	Grand Steward
W.Bro. M. West	as Grand Tyler

OVERSEAS BRETHREN

BELGIUM

- V.W.Bro. F. Clarembaux, P.G.J.O.
- V.W.Bro. D. Shields, P.G.J.O.
- W.Bro. G. E. A. Denys, P.G.S.D., Dep.Dist.G.M.
- W.Bro. P. Neefs, Dist.G.Sec.
- Bro. R. J. F. Wensel
- Bro. A. J. L. Streat

CHANNEL ISLANDS

- W.Bro. C. Whittaker, P.A.G.D.C., Dep.Prov.G.M.
- W.Bro. M. B. Le Conte
- W.Bro. R. D. Hague-Holmes
- Bro. J. D. Haslam

CYPRUS

- W.Bro. R. Hynes, P.A.G.D.C., Dist.G.Sec.
- Bro. J. E. Greenwood

GERMANY

W.Bro. N. Schoen, P.A.G.Swd.B., A.Dist.G.M.
W.Bro. A. G. Cox, A.Dist.G.Sec.

ITALY

W.Bro. Dr G. Onorati, P.A.G.D.C., A.Dist.G.M.
W.Bro. M. A. Canepa
Bro. S. Loddo

ROMANIA

W.Bro. F. Serban, P.A.G.D.C.
Bro. T. C. Calimanescu
Bro. I. Sucala Gorgos
Bro. C. Teodorescu
Bro. M. F. Trofin

SOUTH AND EAST CARIBBEAN

W.Bro. J. P. Aspinall, *MBE*

SRI LANKA

W.Bro. D. S. Rose, P.G.J.D.

Harmonia Lodge of M.M.M. No. 1919 (Serbia)

Bro. M. Djurković
Bro. N. Dordevic

Bermuda Lodge of M.M.M. No. 33

W.Bro. D. S. Dill
W.Bro. L. W. Outerbridge
W.Bro. A. M. Rietig
W.Bro. M. E. Smith
Bro. H. E. Aitken
Bro. J. Lewis

GUESTS FROM FOREIGN CONSTITUTIONS

R.W.Bro. I. P. Ellston, G.S.W., South East Asia

HEADS OF ORDERS

R.W.Bro. P. R. Clement, *OStJ*, P.Prov.G.M. (South Wales)..... Grand Master – KT
R.W.Bro. G. L. Flight, P.G.S.W.Grand Sovereign – RCC
R.W.Bro. K. J. Jones, P.G.S.W.Grand Master – RSM
R.W.Bro. T. F. Jackson, P.G.S.W.Grand Master – AMD
R.W.Bro. A. C. Sweeney, P.G.S.W. Grand Supreme Ruler – OSM
R.W.Bro. D. K. Williamson, P.G.S.W. Lt.G.Cdr – Supreme Council 33rd Degree
W.Bro. Dr P. Mycock, P.G.J.D. First Grand Master Mason – The Operatives
V.W.Bro. C. G. Maiden, P.G.S.O. Grand High Priest – KTP
V.W.Bro. V. Thomas, P.G.J.O.Grand Master – KBHC
V.W.Bro. A. W. Llewellyn, P.G.J.O. Supreme Magus – SRIA

And a number of Past Grand Officers, Masters, Wardens, Overseers, Past Masters and other Brethren.

Report of Proceedings

1. OPENING

Grand Lodge was opened in Due Form and the Right Worshipful Presiding Officer was saluted under the direction of the Grand Director of Ceremonies.

2. IN MEMORIAM

The Right Worshipful Presiding Officer referred with great regret to the number of Brethren called to higher service since the last Communication of Grand Lodge. He mentioned in particular the loss of M.W.Bro. John Herbert Prizeman, Pro G.M.; R.W.Bro. Brian Morris Batty, P.Prov.G.M. (West Yorkshire); R.W.Bro. Nigel Robert John Woodhouse, P.Dist.G.M. (Germany); R.W.Bro. Edwin Bryant Goodwin, P.G.J.W.; and R.W.Bro. Alan Oldfield, P.G.J.W. In total, there were 95 Grand Officers detailed in the report of the General Board. The Brethren stood to order while the Grand Chaplain offered prayer.

3. CONFIRMATION OF THE MINUTES

The Minutes of the Communication of Grand Lodge held on Tuesday, 9 September 2025, which had been circulated with the Summons, were taken as read, approved and adopted.

4. REPORT OF THE GENERAL BOARD

The Report of the General Board for the six months ended 31 December 2025, as printed in **Appendix A** of the Summons, was taken as read, approved and adopted.

5. FINANCIAL STATEMENTS OF THE GRAND LODGE OF MARK MASTER MASONS

The Grand Treasurer addressed Grand Lodge as follows:

'Right Worshipful Presiding Officer and Brethren, I present the Financial Statements of the Grand Lodge of Mark Master Masons for the period ended 31 August 2025, as shown in **Appendix B** of the Summons for this meeting. Income shows a modest increase compared to the prior year, but expenditure has been held at level consistent with prior year. The operating deficit before taxation has therefore been reduced from £662,000 to £442,000 pounds, as was predicted last year.

'Although that operating deficit is still slightly higher than budgeted, I'm not concerned. Importantly, our balance sheet remains strong in reserves and cash, and we are well managed by our financial team at head office to whom I extend my sincere thanks. Right Worshipful Presiding Officer and Brethren, I commend these Financial Statements to Grand Lodge.'

6. FINANCIAL STATEMENTS OF THE MARK BENEVOLENT FUND

The Grand Treasurer addressed Grand Lodge as follows:

'Right Worshipful Presiding Officer and Brethren, I present the Financial Statements of the Mark Benevolent Fund for the year ended 31 August 2025 as shown in **Appendix C** of the summons for today's meeting. The Financial Statements show donations of income of £1,647,000, an increase of over £300,000 compared to the prior year. The Trustees continue to fully utilise the income in the charitable activities of the Fund, making grants of £2,759,000 in the financial year – almost double the previous year. This includes £1.2 million of major capital grants as announced last year.

'The Fund Balance Sheet continues to be strong at nearly £20 million, notwithstanding the spend on these major grants. Messrs Crowe UK have again given a clean audit report on these accounts. Right Worshipful Presiding Officer and Brethren, I commend these Financial Statements to Grand Lodge.'

7. ELECTION AND PROCLAMATION OF THE GRAND MASTER

The Right Worshipful Presiding Officer called upon Worshipful Brother Mocky Khan who addressed Grand Lodge as follows:

'Right Worshipful Presiding Officer, and Brethren, it is a great honour for me to rise today to propose the re-election of Most Worshipful Brother His Royal Highness Prince Michael of Kent, Knight Grand Cross of the Royal Victorian Order, as Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Mark Master Masons of England and Wales and its Districts and Lodges Overseas.

'Brethren, leadership within our Order is not defined by ceremony alone, but by constancy, judgement, and service. Throughout his tenure as Grand Master, His Royal Highness has demonstrated all of these qualities in full measure. He has led with quiet authority, with dignity, and with an unwavering commitment to the principles upon which Mark Masonry is founded.

'Under his guidance, the Order has continued to prosper both at home and overseas. Our Provinces and Districts remain united in purpose, confident in direction, and secure in the knowledge that the Mark Masonry is led with wisdom and care. The strength of our charitable work, the stability of our governance, and the harmony we enjoy across the Order all reflect this steady leadership.

'From an Oxfordshire perspective, that leadership is both recognised and appreciated. The encouragement given to Provinces, the respect shown for local endeavour, and the clear sense that every Brother's contribution matters have strengthened loyalty and engagement at every level.

'Brethren, at a time when continuity and sound judgement are more important than ever, the Order is well served by the experience, example, and commitment of our Grand Master. His leadership has provided reassurance, unity, and direction, and it continues to inspire confidence throughout the Mark.

'For these reasons, and with the greatest pleasure, I propose that Most Worshipful Brother His Royal Highness Prince Michael of Kent be re-elected as Grand Master for the ensuing year.'

The proposition was seconded by the President of the General Board and carried with acclamation by the Brethren present, whereupon the Grand Director of Ceremonies proclaimed:

Be it known that HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS PRINCE MICHAEL GEORGE CHARLES FRANKLIN OF KENT of Kensington Palace in the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea in the County of Greater London; A Knight Grand Cross of the Royal Victorian Order; A Knight of Justice of the Most Venerable Order of the Hospital of St John of Jerusalem; Honorary Vice-Admiral of the Royal Naval Reserve; Honorary Colonel in His Majesty's Army; Honorary Air Marshal of the Royal Air Force; Provincial Grand Master for Middlesex in the United Fraternity of Antient Free and Accepted Masons of England; Past Grand Scribe Nehemiah in the Supreme Grand Chapter of Royal Arch Masons of England; Sovereign Grand Inspector General 33rd Degree and an Honorary Member of the Supreme Council 33rd Degree in the Ancient and Accepted Rite for England and Wales and its Districts and Chapters Overseas; Grand Master, etc., etc., etc., etc., etc., has this day been elected Most Worshipful Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Mark Master Masons of England and Wales and its Districts and Lodges Overseas and of the Ancient and Honourable Fraternity of Royal Ark Mariner; whom may the Great Overseer and Supreme Commander of the Universe long preserve.

8. ELECTION OF THE GRAND TREASURER

The President of the General Board proposed that R.W.Bro. James Robert Guy Hilditch, P.Prov.G.M. for Oxfordshire, be re-elected as Grand Treasurer for the ensuing year.

The proposition was seconded by the Grand Secretary, put to Grand Lodge and carried unanimously.

9. MARK BENEVOLENT FUND

The President of the Mark Benevolent Fund advised the Brethren that the trustees of the Mark Benevolent Fund had made grants totalling **£650,250** to the following worthy causes during the six months ended 31 December 2025:

Celtic Warriors Wheelchair Rugby Club	£32,391
Association Priority for Humanity – District of Romania (total of 6 grants: £5,500; £5,000; £4,500; £4,000; £3,500; £3,000)	£25,500
5th Whitley Bay Scout Group	£25,000
Evergreen Primary School PCTA (Bishop Auckland)	£25,000
ShelterBox – Jamaica (Hurricane Melissa)	£25,000
ShelterBox – Pakistan (Flood Relief).....	£25,000
Scarborough Sea Cadet Corps	£25,000
The Garwood Foundation	£25,000
HorseHeard	£24,730
Scarlets Wheelchair Rugby Club.....	£23,775
Essex Voluntary Blood Service.....	£23,045
Abbotts Bromley Sports Association.....	£23,012
Yelverton Community Projects.....	£22,961
DocBike Dorset.....	£22,798
Leicester Tigers Wheelchair Rugby Club	£21,044
York Minster Fund.....	£20,000
Rays of Sunshine	£19,325
Cheriton Primary School PTFA (Kent).....	£19,156
SERV Surrey & London.....	£18,678
Cheltenham Tigers Wheelchair Rugby Club (£11,096; £3,457)	£14,553
Saracens Wheelchair Rugby Club.....	£13,823
The League of Mercy.....	£13,000
Penrith Pumas Wheelchair Rugby Club (£7,088; £5,630).....	£12,718
Solent Sharks Wheelchair Rugby Club (£10,722; £1,157).....	£11,879
The Wargrave Bowling Club	£11,471
The Bulls Wheelchair Rugby Club.....	£11,384
Brighton Buccaneers Wheelchair Rugby Club	£11,289
Katie's Lymphoedema Fund	£10,599
Newport First Responders.....	£10,000
The Cavalier Centre (Part Perry RDA Ltd)	£10,000
Norfolk Knights Wheelchair Rugby Club (£7,835; £2,162).....	£9,997
Berkshire Banshees Wheelchair Rugby Club.....	£9,705
London Wheelchair Rugby Club.....	£8,196
Drama Expressions for Children.....	£7,805
Irene Taylor Trust.....	£7,522
Slow Food Kitchen Barbados	£7,500
Coventry Stampede Wheelchair Rugby Club	£5,150
Glasgow Wheelchair Rugby Club.....	£4,674
Hearts of Gold West Cumbria.....	£3,796
Masonic Fishing Charity Somerset Branch	£3,645
Stoke Mandeville Maulers Wheelchair Rugby Club.....	£1,960
Brighter Opportunities for Special People	£1,160
Wales 5s Wheelchair Rugby Union	£1,140
Ospreys Wheelchair Rugby Club	£869

10. ANNUAL DUES

The President of the General Board proposed that the standard rate of registration and other fees payable by Lodges to Grand Lodge for the financial year 1 September 2026 to 31 August 2027 shall be as set out in the schedule in the summons for this meeting.

The proposition was seconded by the Grand Secretary, put to Grand Lodge and carried unanimously.

11. NOTICE OF MOTION

The Grand Secretary gave notice of motion that at the next regular Communication of Grand Lodge, due to be held on Tuesday, 9 June 2026, changes to the Constitutions and Regulations will be proposed.

12. TO CALL OFF MARK GRAND LODGE

Grand Lodge was called off.

13. THE MARK BENEVOLENT FUND ANNUAL REVIEW

The Grand Secretary addressed Grand Lodge as follows:

'As has become customary, this March Communication of Mark Grand Lodge gives us an opportunity to celebrate what we do, quietly and often subconsciously, as Freemasons, as Mark Masons and as members of our communities, to support those less fortunate than ourselves or those who may just need some support or encouragement to get them to where they want to be. We will hear from the 2026 M.B.F. Festival President about everything he has lined up for the celebratory event in July and how he and his team have gone about the tasks of raising those funds. Then the President of the Mark Benevolent Fund will tell us about their successes in 2025 and how he and his fellow trustees approach their tasks. Finally, we will hear about how the Grand Master's Keystone Fund has supported the first tranche of bursary applicants since its launch last year. The verve and enthusiasm that Mark Brethren show for charitable giving is quite extraordinary.

'Brethren, as honorary secretary of the Mark Benevolent Fund, I thank you for your kind generosity towards it. As you watch this celebration which is about to unfold, you can be very proud that it is your charitable giving that makes this possible and that is at the heart of everything that the Mark Benevolent Fund can achieve. Shortly, in the President's address, you'll hear the astonishing amount that the Mark Benevolent Fund was able to disperse in 2025. I don't want to spoil the surprise, but be assured that this simply wouldn't be possible without your support and the support of those outside the Masonic family that you are able to encourage to join in the fundraising endeavors. Brethren, let us sit back, relax, and enjoy looking back at 12 months of generous giving and appreciate the work that we have been able to fund.

PROCESSION 1—M.B.F. TRUSTEES WITH PORTAL JEWEL

'To begin with, we welcome our Mark Benevolent Fund Trustees, a band of Brothers who work tirelessly to ensure that every application from a worthy cause and every petition from a Brother is appraised even-handedly and swiftly so that aid can be delivered in the shortest possible length of time. In addition, they travel the length and breadth of the country representing the Mark Benevolent Fund at cheque handovers and presentation events, and are often called on to talk about the modus operandi of the M.B.F. to both Freemasons and non-Freemasons who are keen to learn more about the work that we are able to achieve. So please welcome into the Grand Temple our Mark Benevolent Fund trustees:

R.W.Bro. I. N. Clark, P.Prov.G.M. (Surrey), Pres.M.B.F. [carrying the Portal Jewel]

R.W.Bro. K. J. Hicks, P.Prov.G.M. (Cornwall), Dep.Pres.M.B.F.

R.W.Bro. R. F. Richardson, Prov.G.M. for Sussex

R.W.Bro. G. Hutchinson, Prov.G.M. for Derbyshire

R.W.Bro. A. R. Armbrister, Prov.G.M. for Warwickshire

R.W.Bro. R. J. Olliver, P.Prov.G.M. (Berkshire)

V.W.Bro. I. Wolstencroft, P.G.J.O.

[The Portal Jewel was placed on the dais and trustees returned to their seats]

PROCESSION 2—2026 HAMPSHIRE & ISLE OF WIGHT FESTIVAL TEAM

'We now turn our attention to what, for many, is the highlight of the Masonic year, the Mark Benevolent Fund Festival. Each year a different Mark Province takes up the challenge to host the Annual Festival. Plans begin many years in advance of their Festival. For example, we know that planning is already well underway for the 2035 Festival in Derbyshire.

'This year's Festival will be hosted by the Mark Province of Hampshire & Isle of Wight. Taking time out from their fundraising duties as they push for the line to achieve a total they can be proud of, I'm very pleased to introduce the 2026 Hampshire & Isle of Wight M.B.F. Festival Committee:

R.W.Bro. George Deacon, Provincial Grand Master and Festival President
W.Bro. Ian Small, Deputy Provincial Grand Master – Festival Chairman
W.Bro. Richard Cox – Fundraising Manager/co-ordinator
W.Bro. Ian MacGrain – Festival Weekend Manager
W.Bro. Alan Dean – Festival Secretary
Bro. David Hewitt – Provincial Grand Treasurer
W.Bro. Robert Brown – Merchandise and Procurement
W.Bro. Mike Lewis – Merchandise Accounting and Distribution
W.Bro. Ian Glistler – Preloved Regalia Sales
V.W.Bro. Nigel Wilkinson, Provincial Grand Charity Steward
W.Bro. Adrian Bolton, Deputy Provincial Grand Charity Steward
V.W.Bro. John Burrell, Assistant Provincial Grand Master – Special Consultant

PROCESSION 3—GRAND MASTER'S KEYSTONE FUND AWARDS PANEL

'In July 2025, the Grand Master's Keystone Fund opened its doors to welcome applications for grants of bursaries encouraging and financially supporting individuals with their educational, vocational and performance studies. This year the focus of this meeting is very much on the success of this endeavour and the recipients of those first bursaries. To deliver this initiative we needed a team that were able to dedicate themselves to the task at hand and harness their combined experiences and expertise into a cohort where the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. Brethren, would you please welcome into Grand Lodge, the Grand Master's Keystone Fund awards panel and bursary recipients:

W.Bro. John Shervington, A.G.D.C.
W.Bro. Dennis Hill, Dep.Prov.G.M., Staffordshire & Shropshire
V.W.Bro. Tony Harvey, P.G.J.O.
Mrs Ruth Drury, Coordinator of the Grand Master's Keystone Fund
Miss India Seaton with her sponsor, W.Bro. Scott Dunn, P.Prov.G.S.W.
Mr William Shopland with his sponsor, W.Bro. John Brownell, P.Prov.G.S.O.

'Brethren, having welcomed the various representatives into Grand Lodge, let's have a look at some of the incredible work that your fundraising has supported.

[VIDEO 1: 'M.B.F. in the Community' – messages of thanks from 2025 grant recipients.]

M.B.F. FESTIVAL—HAMPSHIRE & ISLE OF WIGHT—18 JULY 2026

'Ladies, gentlemen and brethren, I'm sure you can't help but be touched by those testimonials, and I must pass on my thanks to those charities for taking the time to share their gratitude to us for the endeavours that they have been able to do thanks to your generous giving.

'The flagship event of our fundraising year is the Mark Benevolent Fund Festival. Last year we were in the shadows of the dreaming spires of Oxford as the Province of Oxfordshire played host. This year we head to the south coast to the Province of Hampshire and Isle of Wight. To tell us more about preparations for the 2026 Mark

Benevolent Fund Festival, I'm delighted to invite this year's president, R.W.Bro. George Deacon, Provincial Grand Master for the Province of Hampshire and Isle of Wight, to speak to us this afternoon.'

The Festival President addressed Grand Lodge as follows:

'Right Worshipful Presiding Officer, ladies, gentlemen and brethren, it is both an honour and a pleasure to be invited to give you an update on the 2026 Festival of the Mark Benevolent Fund. We do so, of course, in the shadow of the loss of our Most Worshipful Pro Grand Master. For me, that loss is felt personally, as well as masonically, as he was my predecessor as Provincial Grand Master of Hampshire and Isle of Wight for many years. Most Worshipful Brother John took great pride in his Province and in its unwavering commitment to the Mark Benevolent Fund. He was delighted by the enthusiasm shown here for our charitable work, and I know he would be immensely heartened to see that same spirit continuing so strongly today.

'This year's Festival will be held at the Old Thorns Hotel and Resort in Liphook, on the eastern edge of Hampshire. It is an excellent venue, capable of accommodating all who wish to stay, and it will host events across both the Friday and Saturday evenings.

'Friday night promises to set the tone for a joyful weekend. I am told it will very much be a party evening, complete with a themed sea shanty band and buffet – an opportunity to relax, renew friendships, and perhaps raise a glass together in true Mark spirit.

'On Saturday, there will be a variety of daytime activities. For those wishing to explore, tours are being arranged to Winchester Cathedral, Portsmouth Historic Dockyard, Gunwharf Quays, and – somewhat worryingly – to a gin and rum distillery! For Brethren preferring a more tranquil pace, the hotel offers excellent golf facilities, as well as a spa and pool for those in need of gentler recreation.

'The highlight of the weekend will, of course, be the formal black-tie Gala Dinner on Saturday evening. We shall be serenaded by the Royal Marines Association Band, before the grand reveal of the total raised – the culmination of several years of dedicated fundraising, not only within Hampshire and the Isle of Wight, but across England and Wales.

'Earlier today you will have seen my festival team parade into Grand Lodge. I publicly thank them for their tireless efforts since COVID, and for their imagination, energy, and ingenuity in finding new ways to raise funds while ensuring that enjoyment and fellowship remain at the heart of all we do.

'I am deeply grateful for the support we have received from across the country. That willingness to stand together to support one another's festivals is typical and perhaps unique among Mark Master Masons. I see many of you wearing the Festival pin this afternoon, and I thank you sincerely. We have already filled 450 of the 500 available places for the July weekend, and some 60 per cent of those bookings are from other Provinces. We look forward to welcoming you to Hampshire and Isle of Wight.

'We are, of course, but one part of the wider Mark Benevolent Fund, and we have benefited greatly from the guidance and encouragement of Mark Grand Lodge. I particularly thank R.W.Bro. Ian Clark, President of the Mark Benevolent Fund, and his team. Though too many to name individually, I must mention W.Bro. Darren Coleman-Head, Charities Manager at M.M.H., for his constant support, and Linda Read, Charities Finance Manager at M.M.H., who has long been regarded as a close friend of the Province.

'Brethren, I thank you sincerely for your generosity, your enthusiasm, and your commitment to the Mark Benevolent Fund. You will make the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Festival a success. I look forward to greeting many of you in July, and to those unable to attend, you have my heartfelt gratitude for your continued support in another remarkable year of fundraising.'

The Grand Secretary continued as follows:

'Thank you, George, for that very kind update. I'm sure I speak for many of us that we look forward to enjoying your company and that of your festival committee come July at the splendid event you've got lined up for us.

'Ladies, gentlemen and brethren, it would be impossible for the charitable giving we receive to be dutifully and swiftly dispersed to petitioners and worthy causes without the tireless work of the M.B.F. trustees. Here to tell us more about the Mark Benevolent Fund's success over the past year is R.W.Bro. Ian Clark, President of The M.B.F., whom I'm delighted to invite to speak to us.'

The Festival President addressed Grand Lodge as follows:

'Right Worshipful Presiding Officer, ladies, gentlemen and brethren, it is my honour and privilege to address you briefly to reflect on the successes of the Mark Benevolent Fund in 2025.

'Before addressing you, may I say how pleased I am to see recipients of the Grand Master's Keystone Fund here with us and sharing their pleasure and the benefits of receiving bursaries from our fund. W.Bro. John Shervington will tell you more about the successes of the Grand Master's Keystone Fund later.

'The last year has been another highly successful year for the Mark Benevolent Fund. The Province of Oxfordshire hosted the 157th M.B.F. Festival at the Examinations Schools at the University of Oxford. We extend our congratulations to R.W.Bro. Ian Wright, the Festival President, and his committee for hosting a delightful evening, during which we discovered that £600,000 had been raised for the M.B.F.

'Previously you were told that the Trustees had authorized two significant capital grants: one for Blood Bikes operating in England and Wales, and another for Wheelchair Rugby Clubs, as well as the Great Britain Wheelchair Rugby Team in preparation for the 2028 Paralympics. Thus far £641,000 has been paid to clubs across England and Wales. In 2025 the M.B.F. gave £665,538 to Blood Bikes and we held a celebratory day with their representatives from across England and Wales at Mark Masons' Hall in September 2025. Such has been the success of the close relationship with Blood Bikes that some provinces have built on that and provided more funding from their own resources.

'In 2025 the Worthy Causes Committee of the M.B.F. received a record 130 applications from charities and other worthy causes and approved grants of **£2.2 million**. Additionally, I am pleased to inform you that grants were made to worthy causes by Provinces and Districts totalling **£621,846**. Details are included in a copy of the Review which will be available to you at dinner.

'Previously Trustees have expressed their concerns about the number of applications for grants from our own members. Indeed, in 2024 we only received eleven petitions for relief. We put considerable effort into this issue, and I am pleased to report that in 2025 that increased more than fourfold to forty-seven. We must not and nor will we be complacent, remembering that Canon Portal, our Founder, stressed that there should not be any delay in supplying assistance to those in need. Our guiding principle, "Bis Dat Qui Cito Dat" or "He gives twice who gives promptly", is still relevant today and practiced by us.

'All this can only be achieved by the dedication and hard work of all the Trustees who give selflessly of their expertise and time to turn round applications from Worthy Causes and Petitioners without delay. My thanks to all of them and to the support staff at Mark Masons' Hall.

'My closing message is one of thanks to you all for your support for the Mark Benevolent Fund, remembering that it is your Charity. Be proud of what the M.B.F. is doing. Be proud of your charity. Thank you for your attention.'

The Grand Secretary continued as follows:

'Thank you, Ian, for that very kind update on the activities of the Mark Benevolent Fund and, indeed, a personal thank you for your stewardship of that particular body of trustees.'

'Ladies, gentlemen and brethren, as I said earlier, our focus this year is very much on the Grand Master's Keystone Fund. I'm constantly surprised and cheered to see how many G.M.K.F. jewels and collarettes are being worn at our meetings across all of our Orders. This Fund really does seem to have captured the imagination and has been incredibly well supported. To tell us more about its origin, development and current operations, I'm delighted to introduce W.Bro. John Shervington, chairman of the Grand Master's Keystone Fund Awards Panel.'

The Chairman of the Grand Master's Keystone Fund Awards Panel addressed Grand Lodge as follows:

'Right Worshipful Presiding Officer, ladies, gentlemen and brethren, it is my honour and privilege to address you as the Chairman of the Grand Master's Keystone Fund Awards Panel. As I'm sure many of you are aware, the Fund was renamed and repurposed in the Quarterly Communication of July 2023 from the 150th Anniversary Keystone Fund to its current form, in order to celebrate our Grand Master, M.W.Bro. HRH Prince Michael of Kent's 40 years of service to the Mark Degree. A steering group was then formed under auspices of R.W.Bro. Archie Torrance, President of the Mark Benevolent Fund at the time, and as a result of hard work and a great deal of effort we were able to award our first bursaries from 1 July last year.'

'As the Grand Secretary has mentioned, the purpose of the Fund is to grant bursaries to encourage and financially support individuals with their educational, vocational and performance studies. For example, we fund necessary equipment and materials, text books, course visits, etc. We do not generally cover living expenses and course fees, unless under exceptional financial circumstances. As such, we are not an emergency charity but aim to add value.'

'The Awards Panel consists of six members, all of whom bring different skills and experience to the table, and we meet quarterly to assess applications. We have a commonwealth athlete who now is also a coach, a Headmistress with an interest in the performing arts, as well as two M.B.F. trustees: a Prestonian Lecturer with high rank in the scouting movement, and the Metropolitan Craft Grand Secretary. We are extremely fortunate to have Mrs Ruth Drury, who will be well known to some of you, especially in the Province of Yorkshire for her support of Festivals, as our Scheme Co-ordinator, which is a voluntary position.'

'Applications are received through the Mark Masons' Hall website via a well-constructed and easy to use portal, with a comprehensive FAQ section. Since last July we have received 16 applications, of which we have approved 11, giving a total of approximately £40,000 – the top award being £5,000.'

'Today is a celebration, not only of the generosity of our members from all the orders administered from M.M.H. in supporting the fund, but of the incredible impact the award of bursaries has made in improving the opportunities available and quality of life of the recipients. To date over 40 Provinces, 360 units and over 2,500 individuals have supported the fund and we hope to use this meeting as a springboard to inform and update the members on our progress and have formed a Comms team to disseminate the good news.'

'I would like to finish by thanking the Panel Members for their very hard work, and the staff at M.M.H., including Darren, Charities Manager, Linda and Colette from Charities Finance, Kerry from Finance, and also Vimee, their excellent Communications Officer, for their help and support. Thank you for your kind attention.'

The Grand Secretary continued as follows:

'Thank you, John, for giving us some background about the Grand Master's Keystone Fund. Now that we know how it originated, how it operates and who administers it, it is time to find out about some of the good work it has actually gone on to achieve.

'Our next speaker, W.Bro. Alan Brumwell, Deputy Grand Secretary, is unable to join us. However, I am very pleased to introduce a Brother who really doesn't need any introduction as he has for so long been the conduit between Mark Masons' Hall, our Provinces and Districts and our worthy causes. I am pleased to invite W.Bro. Darren Coleman-Heald, Charities Manager, to speak on behalf of W.Bro. Brumwell, grandfather of G.M.K.F. recipient Frankie Brumwell.'

The Charities Manager addressed Grand Lodge as follows:

[VIDEO 2: Frankie's ice hockey team practicing on their rink.]

'Right Worshipful Presiding Officer, ladies, gentlemen and brethren, our Deputy Grand Secretary sends his apologies and has asked me to present his experience of the Grand Master's Keystone Fund to you all. On behalf of Alan's grandson Frankie, and his mum and dad, James and Amanda, I'm delighted and grateful to have this opportunity to tell you about their experience of the Grand Master's Keystone Fund Bursary Scheme and the profound impact it's had on them.

'Frankie is an extremely talented ice hockey player. From the moment he first put on a pair of ice skates at the age of two, it was clear that he was a natural and Alan has taken great joy in watching him develop at an impressive rate. He has attracted the attention of not only his own coaches, but also those from opposing teams and from overseas. Frankie has competed in tournaments throughout the UK, mainly for his club in Chelmsford, as well as several tournaments overseas in Helsinki, Riga and Prague, as part of the Elite British Selects, a body which focuses on talented young ice hockey players who are still too young to be picked for England. Now, at the age of 11 he has reached another important milestone in his development and his future in the game. Last December, Frankie was selected to play for England and now has a busy few months ahead of him with overseas tournaments lined up.

'Now, this is all great news of course, but those overseas trips in particular are expensive. All parents want is to help their child fulfil their ambition and I know Frankie's parents have had sleepless nights worrying about it. As grandparents, Alan and his wife do what they can, but it's tough, especially in these difficult times. So, you can imagine Alan's excitement when R.W.Bro. Archie Torrance, Past President of the M.B.F., mentioned the launch of a new bursary scheme.

'The scheme went live in July 2025, and they made a straightforward online application. Then the nervous wait for the decision. But, to much joy, and relief of the family, the Awards Panel made a grant of £5,000 and its effect has been huge. A massive weight was lifted, and they now look forward with excitement rather than worry.

'This grant has made it possible for Frankie to compete in the overseas tournaments which are so crucial to his development, as well as contributing to the cost of kit. Alan admits he was absolutely astounded when he learned how expensive ice hockey kit is. As a growing lad, Frankie recently needed new skates and body armour such as shin pads and shoulder pads. £1,200 of kit was made possible by the G.M.K.F.

'Ladies, gentlemen and brethren, Alan has been a Craft mason for 43 years and a Mark Mason for 30 years. Masonry has changed his life for the better, more than he can say. He is immensely proud to be a Mason, but never more so than now. The charitable side of Masonry brings so much to so many, but he has never, until now, been directly on the receiving end, or experienced such pride in seeing his own family benefit from our marvellous fraternity and the generosity of its members.

'In particular, it is inspiring to know that the Grand Master's Keystone Fund, through its Bursary Scheme, is prepared to take that leap of faith and invest in our children's future. Thank you for your kind attention.'

The Grand Secretary continued as follows:

'Thank you, Darren, for reading Alan's words for us. I must admit, Brethren, that I watched the video several times yesterday and young Frankie is quite a talent. I know little about ice hockey, but seeing those young lads whip around the rink and the accuracy with which they play at such a young age is a true inspiration. It's such a shame that Alan and Frankie weren't able to tell the story here themselves today. We do wish Alan very well and a swift recovery.

'Ladies and gentlemen, before we close this segment, let's check in with another G.M.K.F. recipient:

[VIDEO 3: G.M.K.F. recipient Lily Cook, a physiotherapy student, expressed her thanks for the award.]

'Ladies, gentlemen and brethren, as we rejoice in having shared in this feast of fraternal fundraising in today's celebration of the work of the Mark Benevolent Fund, it gives me enormous pleasure to invite the Presiding Officer, R.W.Bro. Prof. Denovan Wilson, Deputy Grand Master, to address us.'

The Presiding Officer addressed Grand Lodge as follows:

'Thank you, Grand Secretary, for the opportunity of addressing a few words to Grand Lodge, supplemented by the ladies and gentlemen or brethren who joined us during the processions, and may I now say to them welcome to this meeting of celebration of the work of the Mark Benevolent Fund.

'We've heard some wonderful presentations in the last hour which has reminded me of a number of things, the first of which is the motto of the M.B.F, "He gives twice who gives promptly". It's so deceptively simple that it can roll off the tongue and the meaning of it be lost. Brethren, in my experience, people who need help usually need help now, they need it swiftly, so, therefore, that motto is a driving force behind the Fund and its philosophy and long may that continue.

'We've also heard about the generosity of the brethren. Again, that is fundamental to the success of the Fund. We put a few pounds into a collection, but when thousands upon thousands of brethren throughout the Order do the same thing, that money accumulates as it goes through the provinces and down to Mark Benevolent Fund, and by the time it gets there it's a colossal figure, with which the M.B.F. can do so much great work. We have been reminded about the importance of the trustees. Brethren, they work swiftly and diligently to handle all the applications that come in and, within a very short space of time, a decision can be reached and money can be on its way to whichever charity needs it.

'We've also been reminded of the importance of the Festival system, and I'd like to thank R.W.Bro. George Deacon for telling us all about what's planned for their celebration in July. George, it's always a pleasure to hear you speak, and you have our very best wishes for a very good result from the culmination of many years of fundraising.

'We've also heard from the chairman, R.W.Bro. Ian Clark, about the scale of what is going on, Brethren. During the course of the last year, the M.B.F has received no fewer than 130 applications for funding and it's wonderful to hear about the response, with quite an incredible amount of money going out in grants. Brethren, this is something we can all be really proud of.

'I had been looking forward very much to the review of the Grand Master's Keystone Fund. It really means so much to me and to all of us here to hear how the Fund is assisting younger people with their aspirations for their future, either in academic life,

or performance and sporting endeavours. It's not a surprise to me that this cause has been taken to the hearts of everybody in all the Orders administered from Mark Masons' Hall. It's wonderful to see the first bursaries being awarded after so much preparation over the last couple of years. Now to all the heads of the other Orders who are here today, I thank you for all that you do. It really has been a joint effort and it's wonderful to see.

'I've had the opportunity of speaking with one of the recipients today already: Miss India Seaton is an organic chemist pursuing a PhD. And I'm looking forward to speaking to Mr William Shopland at lunch time – he is a Master's degree student studying sustainability, planning and environmental policy. I hope that the help you're both getting is moving you forward towards your aspirations in the various things that you've chosen, and we will take interest in that.

'Ian, thank you for all that you do in the leadership and management of the Fund, and can I also thank all the people who contribute to its success. May I thank all those who who took part in the delivery or preparation of the presentations we have heard today, and I wish you all well.'

The Grand Secretary continued as follows:

'Ladies, gentlemen and brethren, it wouldn't be a M.B.F. celebration without a recap of the worthy causes we have helped to support in this video montage.'

[VIDEO 4 – Charity Montage Video.]

'Well, ladies, gentlemen and brethren, £2.2 million! A total of which we can all be very proud of, and what better way can there be to conclude this celebration of everything that is good about the Mark Benevolent Fund. All that remains for me to do is, on behalf of the Rulers, Trustees and Brethren, to thank the recipients and sponsors of the Grand Master's Keystone Fund for taking time out of your busy schedules to spend your Tuesday with us, and to give us an opportunity to meet with you and learn more about your various endeavours. Congratulations on your individual and collective achievements and thank you for allowing us to play a small part in them. We very much look forward to enjoying your company at the drinks reception and during the meal which will follow.

'Brethren, before they retire from our meeting, please join me in showing your appreciation for our charity representatives.'

[The guests retired from the Grand Temple to a reception in the Gallery Suite.]

14. TO CALL ON MARK GRAND LODGE

The Right Worshipful Presiding Officer called on Mark Grand Lodge.

15. ADDRESS BY THE MOST WORSHIPFUL PRO GRAND MASTER

The Right Worshipful Presiding Officer addressed Grand Lodge as follows:

'In the absence of our Grand Master, M.W.Bro. HRH Prince Michael of Kent, it is my honour to preside on his behalf, and to bring to you his warmest best wishes. We are of course delighted that he has been re-elected as our Grand Master. We wish him well and look forward to seeing him in due course.

'We have also re-elected our Grand Treasurer, R.W.Bro. James Hilditch. We congratulate him and thank him for looking after our finances so effectively. I know he values the support he receives from Gary Newell, our Financial Controller, and would be grateful if our thanks were passed on to him too.

'Brethren this year will undoubtedly be sadly remembered as the one in which we lost our much-loved brother, Most Worshipful Brother John Herbert Prizeman. In tribute to him I would like to share with you some reflections on his contribution to Masonry and the legacy he has left.

'John often said that he saw Masonry as a journey. A journey which for everyone starts in the same way, by being admitted as an Entered Apprentice and being invested with a white apron. He never lost sight of this. John began his journey in 1972 when he was initiated in Merdon Lodge No. 5135. He filled his early years working at the grass roots, joining more lodges, joining other orders and going through the chairs in many, and excelling in them. In time his enthusiasm, capability and contribution were acknowledged, and he began to receive Provincial and Grand Lodge appointments in several Orders; a very significant one being his appointment as Provincial Grand Master for the Mark Province of Hampshire and Isle of Wight in 2007. There he gained lasting admiration and affection for his ability as a manager and leader.

'His more recent appointments include being Deputy President, then President of the M.B.F., Assistant Grand Master, Deputy Grand Master and, since 2022, as Pro Grand Master. For over fifty years, John made valuable and lasting contributions at all levels in Masonry. As Pro Grand Master, John was a wonderful ambassador who promoted the Mark here and abroad. The development of mutually supportive relations with other Orders was a priority for him. His work with his counterpart in Craft was a good example of this. His address about the Companion Orders at a meeting of UGLE was a significant contribution for which he received a standing ovation.

'John was a fine leader whose natural ability and desire to engage with brethren at all levels was well received and admired. As was his beaming smile, his mischievous sense of humour, the twinkle in his eye, his energy and his passion for the Mark. John was a leader who could inspire us, motivate us and mobilise us.

'Brethren, in early January John said how much he hoped to be here to preside over this meeting – and how we would have greeted him. Sadly, this was not to be. But his contribution, the things he set in place, and his general approach will have a lasting and beneficial effect on us and the Mark. I am sure you will endorse this brief tribute to him, and remember him with gratitude and affection. May John rest in peace "in that house not built with hands eternal in the heavens".

'Brethren, the year-to-date has been as busy as ever with the usual administration, installations and visits, and this is set to continue. I would like to make specific mention of only two visits.

'The first was to attend the Masonic Service of Remembrance, held at the National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire on Saturday, 1 November. This was a very well attended and moving occasion at which the heads of all Masonic Orders were invited to take part in the procession and to lay wreaths on behalf of their Orders, as an expression of support for our Armed Services. At noon today, here in this building, each Head of Order signed up to the **Armed Services Covenant**.

'The second visit was to a meeting of the Warwickshire Installed Masters Lodge No. 1400, at which there was a demonstration of the Ceremony of Advancement. All the offices were occupied by Right Worshipful Brethren from around the provinces and from Grand Lodge. It was a wonderful opportunity for brethren from near and far to meet and join in an enjoyable ceremony in a lodge environment. The ritual was at an Oscar winning standard. A footnote is that I was the candidate and never have I seen the work rejected and heaved over with such enthusiasm!

'Brethren, it is now my great pleasure to introduce and welcome our distinguished brethren from home and away. I ask that you bridle your enthusiastic applause and release it when I have named all of them.

'First, I welcome our past Rulers in the persons of the Past Pro Grand Master, M.W.Bro. Raymond John Smith; the Past Deputy Grand Masters, R.W.Bro. H. Keith Emmerson and R.W.Bro. Francis Charles Spencer, who I thank for his willingness to fill the role of Deputy Grand Master today.

'We are also delighted to have strong support from the following Heads of Orders:

R.W.Bro. Paul Clement, *OStJ*, the Most Eminent and Supreme Grand Master of the Great Priory of the United Religious, Military and Masonic Orders of the Temple;

R.W.Bro. Graham Flight, Grand Sovereign of the Grand Imperial Conclave of the Masonic and Military Order of the Red Cross of Constantine;

R.W.Bro. Kessick Jones, Grand Master of the Order Royal and Select Masters;

R.W.Bro. Thomas Firth Jackson, Grand Master of the Allied Masonic Degrees;

R.W.Bro. Andrew Sweeney, Grand Supreme Ruler of the Order of the Secret Monitor;

R.W.Bro. David Kenneth Williamson, Lieutenant Grand Commander, Supreme Council 33rd Degree – also a Past Assistant Grand Master in United Grand Lodge of England;

W.Bro. Dr Paul Mycock, First Grand Master Mason of the Worshipful Society of Free Masons;

V.W.Bro. Chris Maiden, Grand High Priest of the Grand College of Holy Royal Arch Knight Templar Priests and the Order of Holy Wisdom;

V.W.Bro. Dr Vivian Thomas, *JP*, Grand Master of the Knights Beneficent of the Holy City;

W.Bro. Tony Llewellyn, Supreme Magus of the Societas Rosicruciana in Anglia.'

[The Right Worshipful Presiding Officer then welcomed guests from overseas and asked for acclamation from Brethren for all the guests in attendance.]

'Before I close this meeting, I wish to thank the Grand Secretary and all the members of his team for their work in planning and delivering this meeting and for all their work for the Order during the year. My thanks also go to the Grand Director of Ceremonies and his team for the excellence of the ceremonial we have seen today, and on the many visits we make during the year.

'Brethren, thank you for being here. I hope you've enjoyed the meeting and that when it is time for you to go home you have a comfortable journey. May the Great Overseer of the Universe keep you in his special care.'

16. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Grand Secretary reported that there was no further business.

17. CLOSING

Grand Lodge was closed in Due Form.

