



## **Quarterly Report – April 2014 From the Somerset Masonic Charities**

At a recent meeting of the Management Committee of the Somerset Masonic Charities fifteen applications for grants were considered.

11 Grants, to the total of £6,325 were awarded to the following organisations. These awards will serve to provide a wide range of support to disadvantaged people in Somerset.

### **Escape Support Group –**

This is a Somerset based charity that specialises in providing activities, days out and short breaks for children with disabilities, their siblings, parents and carers. The charity is staffed and governed by parents who have children with disabilities themselves.

The young people are given the chance to share experiences that will enhance and enrich their lives, which other children and families often take for granted. Activities offered include swimming, day trips during the school holidays, events specific to the children, events specific to carers and the much appreciated 'Annual Special' which is a mini break away somewhere exciting. Activities are accessible to everyone regardless of need or disability, and costs are subsidised to ensure affordability for all. Funding has been requested towards the running costs of the charity to enable them to continue to offer support to parents, siblings and the children with special needs to unlock their full potential as a family as well as individuals.

A grant of £400 has been approved by the Committee from the Grassroots fund.

### **Fair Frome**

This is a charitable organisation set up last year to help alleviate poverty in the Frome area. Welfare reform has meant that more people are now living in poverty, and often struggling with basic necessities, like food and fuel. This charity is working with other organisations to deliver services that can make a difference to people and improve their capacity to 'bounce back<sup>1</sup>' when things are tough. A kitchen utensil project, which aims to distribute packs of kitchen items and equipment to local families and individuals to cook a meal at home has already been launched. Plans are also underway to open a Frome food box distribution point at the Cheese and Grain, to support the work of the Warminster and District Food bank.

The application was made to the Somerset Community Foundation, to assist in their Community Dining Project where people will come together at community centres across the town to learn how to book on a budget and enjoy a nutritious meal together. The project will be delivered in the Mount, Welshmill and Keyford areas of Frome which are ranked just outside the 20% most disadvantaged neighbourhoods in England. The Committee was pleased to award a grant of £500 from the Grassroots fund.

## **Headway Somerset**

Headway has been working with the Yeovil Hospital therapy team as a referral organisation for over 18 months, mainly catering for young patients with Neuro injuries usually as a result of road traffic accidents. Although there is a post treatment centre in Taunton, it is over used and under-resourced.

This, Yeovil Neuro Discharge Pilot - is 12 week project to be piloted at Yeovil District Hospital. To enable staff to work alongside the Neuro Rehabilitation Team, so that they can prepare more adequately patient and family members for discharge to home.

Headway as a charitable organisation can bring expertise that is not currently at Yeovil for patients who often have other injuries like broken bones and are discharged by orthopaedic specialists without the dedicated expertise that Headway can offer, by helping to signpost these patients to other agencies.

This pilot project will bring in Headway earlier in the process to act as an advocate in the discharge process.

The Committee are pleased to approve a grant of £500 from the Grassroots fund.

## **I-Pad For Schools - Wrington pre-school**

I-pads are now an established tool in education, with a proven power to transform the classroom to new ways of thinking. **The Yatton Lodge of Hospitality (9299)** has identified a need to provide these tools to the Wrington Pre-School and supported that appeal with a collection amounting to £250. Following an application to the Committee for Match Funding, of or

The Committee awarded a grant of £250 thereby bringing the Total to £500, for this worthy cause.

## **Myeloma UK**

Registered as a charity in 1997, is the only organisation in the UK focused on myeloma. Which helps patients to live longer and with a better quality of life.

They achieve this by accelerating the discovery and development and access to new treatments, while helping patients and their families cope with everything a diagnosis of myeloma brings.

**The Lodge of St George (3158)** having selected this as their chosen charity has made application to the Committee under the Match Funding Scheme. The Committee has been pleased to support that application with a grant of £275. This enables the lodge to make presentation of £550.

### **Nailsea Disability Initiative**

Exists to promote the care, education and advancement of persons, their families and carers, who have any form of disability, and who resides in the district and surrounding area of Nailsea. It provides a free 'shop-front' drop in centre as well as a home visit service that brings information and support to the vulnerable and disabled in respect to a wide range of issues.

The Committee awarded a grant of £500 from the benevolent fund.

### **Parks Active Living**

This Active Living Centre in Minehead welcomes and support older people in the community by offering friendship and a range of activities throughout the day. The Centre is open on Wednesdays & Fridays from 9.30 am to 3.00pm and two staff members supported by volunteers provide a hot lunch and refreshments, activities such as games, gentle chair exercises, special interest days, music, arts and crafts.

Currently they buy in the meals from a local provider. They are now seeking funding to employ the services of an in-house cook so they can better meet the individual dietary needs of clients and improve the nutritional value of the food. When the running of Active Living Centres was passed from Adult Social Care to voluntary organisations in January of last year between 12 and 17 clients attended the Parks each week. Already this has risen to between 30 and 34 which clearly show there is a demand for the service. A proportion of them come via referral from Social Services or health professionals but most come through personal contact or a concerned family member. Most of the clients are elderly and living alone and suffer from issues of isolation and reluctance (or inability) to cook for themselves.

The committee has approved a grant of £500

### **Ridgeway Hill Group**

Are a group of physically disabled persons who come together from all over the Somerset Levels Area and meet each week in Langport. With the purpose of providing a safe environment and meeting place, outside of an individual's residential home.

There are two part time staff members to fund as well as rent to pay, and the Group requests assistance with their costs so as to maintain the viability of this happy and vibrant group.

The appeal to the committee emphasised that the group provides for many a singular opportunity for individuals to get out of their home, to learn new skills and re-integrate into the community.

The group like others was previously funded by the County Council and it is not the aim of the Somerset Masonic Charities or its Committee to make up the short fall created by such cut-backs, but conversely they were impressed by the vitality of the membership and its goal to preserve what appears to be a much needed facility within the Levels district. Although the group is restricted in size by the size of its premises.

The committee was pleased to offer the help that is so obviously needed here, with a grant of £1,500 from the benevolent fund.

### **Samaritans Weston Super Mare**

The organisation is well known as the primary telephone and drop in centre to support suicidal, depressed and lonely or worried people.

The office in Weston-Super-Mare deals with some 10,000 telephone calls and 900 emails each year, the request is for assistance to upgrade the computer and telephone equipment.

The Committee awarded a grant of £500 from the benevolent fund.

### **Somerset Child Contact Centres**

This is a not for profit organisation and a member of the National Association of Child Contact Centres. They work with children up to the age of 15 during the unsettling time of parent separation, ensuring quality time with the estranged parent and other family members.

Family breakdown can be traumatic for children. Evidence suggests that children from broken homes are more likely to suffer from negative outcomes such as poor school performance, teenage pregnancy, crime, unemployment and poverty. This project goes some way to alleviate these negative outcomes by maintaining contact. The effect of the withdrawal last year of Legal Aid for family matters (unless there is an element of domestic violence) means that many more parents involved in the court process are without legal representation.

The four Somerset centres work with around 90 families in the course of the year, around 120-130 children. Each family uses their services for an average of 6 months.

The Committee have been pleased to allocate a grant of £400 from the Grassroots fund, towards operational costs.

### **Taunton Association for the Homeless**

Somerset's largest charitable organisation, able to supply accommodation and support to the homeless, as well as to those at risk from being made homeless.

They are entirely dependent on public generosity and donation and the current premises at Lindley House (51 beds) suffer considerably in general wear and tear, and requires constant maintenance. The organisation urgently requested assistance, so that they might upgrade the ground floor of the main residence.

The Committee was pleased to award the requested grant of £1,000 from the benevolent fund.

**David Maddern**

**Provincial Grand Charity Steward**