



Quarterly Report from the Somerset Masonic Charities - July 2014

At a recent meeting of the Management Committee of the Somerset Masonic Charities eighteen applications for grants were considered. Thirteen grants, totalling £12,150 were awarded to the following organisations which provide a wide range of support to disadvantaged people in Somerset.

Wedmore Scout Group

Wedmore Scout Group exists to actively engage and support young people in their personal development, empowering them to make a positive contribution to society. It is vibrant and growing, it is the largest Scout Group in Sedgemoor and has – 2 Beaver colonies, 2 Cub Packs and a Scout troop. Almost 100 young people meet each week, it has dedicated and well trained leaders and regular helpers, an active and effective executive committee as well as a long list of young people wanting to join the Scouts.

The group is planning to undertake work during the summer school holidays, to weatherproof and insulate the walls of the groups scout hut. When this work is being done the group wishes to take the opportunity of installing wiring through the timber frame of the hut to serve floodlighting so that more use can be made of the grass area during the autumn and winter evenings. A grant of £500 will enable them to undertake this work straight away.

Cruse Bereavement Care

Cruse provide free specialist bereavement counselling for adults, young people and children in the Somerset area. Any bereaved person, or others who are helping them, can approach us for information about bereavement and their services which includes face to face or on the telephone. Requests for support are accepted from bereaved individuals. They also provide group support as well as being active partners in the Somerset Suicide Bereavement Service.

A grant of £400 will provide the printing and supply of leaflets and supportive material for the Somerset area.

University of Bristol

The University of Bristol is, among other activities, a world class centre for Medical research particularly in the areas of clinical neurosciences, Stem Cell research, Alzheimer, Parkinson's and Multiple Sclerosis research.

The clinical research facility at Southmead Hospital will be one of the largest clinical trial centres in the UK. Currently the Parkinson's disease group receives patients across the South West and in particular from the Bath & North East Somerset area providing new treatment options for patients. A grant of £2,500 from the Royston House Fund will go towards the creation of the new clinical research centre in Southmead Hospital.

Age UK

In Bath & North East Somerset, there are approximately 33,000 people aged 65 and over, 43% of whom have a limiting long-term illness. Some many older people live alone and many find it hard to leave their house. There is no manual for growing older and there are a multitude of issues which older people face such as worrying about their health issues, about their diet, how to care for their partner, planning care, adapting their home to account for their disability, managing money and keeping warm over winter. Spending long periods of time alone with no one to talk to can lead to long hours spent worrying. Age UK information and advice service meets this need, being a trusted source of information and support to help people find a way through their issues and concerns.

A Grant of £3,000 from the Royston House Fund will be used to fund their information and advice service which will benefit over 3,000 people per year across Bath a& North East Somerset

Taunton Women's Forum

This group offers personal and social development opportunities to women, children and families. Activities include yoga, dance and a weekly evening youth club with mountain biking, football, swimming, visual arts etc. With a small grant from Sport Relief they have been able to set up an activity for young women aged 1 and over who live on the Priorswood estate in Taunton. The initial 8 weeks of the programme have been very successful and they are now seeking funding to continue the project. The young women have been really enthusiastic about the project and have been actively engaged in determining the programme of activities.

Most of the young women involved in the group have not done well educationally and have low professional and social aspirations. It is hoped to be able to offer two new activities if they are successful in securing funds – self defence and financial management skills.

A grant of £500 will help the project to be of great benefit in raising the aspirations and confidence of young women who live in this deprived neighbourhood.

Openstorytellers

This is a small community based project which works to enrich the lives of people who are marginalised because of learning and communication difficulties through the telling and sharing of stories.

Learning disabled people live very isolated lives, find it difficult to get work and to be included in community events. Openstorytellers runs courses, workshops, activities and performance for and by people with learning disabilities, helping them have a voice, to be understood and to broaden the opportunities open to them.

This is a project for young people in transition between child services and adult services. The project was started when social services told Openstorytellers that some young adults were getting into difficulties or being taken advantage of by people pretending to be their friends. A grant of £500 will help fund their operation.

Windsor Hill Wood

This is a residential woodland community which aims to provide a safe and peaceful environment for people recovering from addiction, bereavement, eating disorders, depression, homelessness etc. They provide a structured and supervised routine which includes communal cooking, gardening, animal care and woodland management. The site also hosts a forest school for local primary school children.

Volunteers are engaged on the project, living and working on site in return for full board and lodging. Their role is to provide mentoring and support to guests and also to help with the general tasks of woodland management, animal husbandry etc. Although very small, Windsor Hill Wood is a traditional working woodland. Work on site includes felling, planting and coppicing and they also carry out projects for the local community including building raised beds for a local school, a compost toilet for the on-site forest school and a bench for a local housing estate.

The grants committee agreed a grant of **£1000** towards volunteer costs.

Relate

Supporting people through difficult periods of change when relationships may struggle to survive is at the heart of the counselling provided by Relate. Last year, 132 residents from Frome and Shepton Mallet accessed their services and it is expected that the austerity of the next few years will be particularly difficult for families which will increase the need even more.

To ensure services are accessible to all in this difficult financial climate Relate runs a bursary scheme, and funding is sought to contribute towards this scheme. A client using a bursary scheme would normally be entitled to an initial consultation plus six sessions of on-going counselling, if domestic abuse is an issue then the service includes twelve sessions to ensure a safe environment is secured.

Relate can help to improve mental wellbeing and prevent family breakdown, both of which have potentially far reaching and long term personal and social consequences. Many of these families are financially disadvantaged and would be excluded from using Relate's services if there was financial help available.

A grant of **£1000** has been approved.

Star Fish Pool Appeal

The Starfish Pool Appeal has been established by 'Friends of Claremont School', a team of enthusiastic and committed volunteers. The Appeal aims to raise £1,000,000 to build and maintain a hydrotherapy swimming pool. The pool will be sited at Claremont Secondary School in Redland, Bristol. Many of the children at Claremont School have complex physical and learning disabilities. The pool will be available to the older children and young adults at the school and also other children and young adults with disabilities in the Bristol area.

This match funding application of £500 from Wraxall Lodge No.9011 will bring the total amount donated to £1,000

Wimbleball Sailability

Wimbleball Sailing Club is a foundation site of RYA Sailability where a dedicated and enthusiastic group of club members volunteer to help those with disabilities have the experience and enjoyment of going afloat in a sailing boat. Between May and September, subject to favourable weather conditions, we can take you for a sail on Wimbleball Lake. If you have the 'know how' and skills, you may be able to get a sail on your own in specially designed or adapted boats. There will be a safety boat on standby. The Club has a hoist by the water's edge, to transfer sailors on and off boats, however the approach to the hoist is steep and bumpy so it may be necessary to transfer to an off road chair placed alongside your own. We have a specialised toilet facility for the disabled, with full wheel chair access. Wimbleball Sailability is a registered charity whose objective is to promote sailing and sail training in the disabled community.

This match funding application of £250 from St. Bernards Lodge No.5361 will bring the total amount donated to £500

Pro-Active Lifestyle Swimming Water Activities club

To provide people in Somerset a way to improve their mobility by encouraging the use of water to get fit, keep fit and to adopt a healthy life-style. To improve life-style by providing outings, meetings, visits, walks and talks, thereby providing a better quality of life by stimulating an interest in a range of activities as well as water-based activities. To be aware of people who may need help in order to allow them to participate & provide a support network for members. By enabling people to keep fit, their health and wellbeing are improved putting less stress and demands on local health services. It also provides a greater quality of life and friendship. The money raised enables folks in the West Somerset area to participate in the Aqua Aerobics sessions organised by PALS. With transport provided the sessions are affordable and keep the participants mobile, active and enjoying better health.

This match funding application of £150 from St. Bernards Lodge No.5361 will bring the total amount donated to £300

St Margret's Hospice

St. Margaret's Hospice is our local charity committed to providing specialist palliative care, advice, support and respite to patients and their families living in Somerset and parts of neighbouring counties. Our care is available for those who have a terminal or life-limiting illness, for example cancer, motor neurone disease and chronic lung disease. In 2010 St. Margaret's celebrated 30 Years of Caring for the people of Somerset. Through our medical expertise, nursing skills and specialist support services, we offer physical, emotional, social and spiritual care to our patients and their families. Bereavement support is also available. Our services are also available to patients where our specialist knowledge, skills and expertise will provide relief for their specific illness, such as symptom control, breathlessness management, lymphoedema treatment, physiotherapy and occupational and complementary therapies.

This match funding application of £1,000 from Exmoor Lodge No.2390 will bring the total amount donated to £2,000

Cancer UK

This application was made through the Worshipful Master of the Prudence & Industry Lodge No.1953, whose father sadly passed away some 18 months ago of Cancer and Alzheimer's disease. W.B. Kevin Douglas became passionate about raising money for these charities during his year in office, which will see Kevin and the Lodge Treasurer Graham Turner do a sponsored parachute jump in August to raise money for these charities.

Cancer Research UK promotes the health of the public in particular by research into the nature, causes, diagnosis, prevention, treatment and cure of all forms of cancer, including the development of research into practical applications for the prevention, treatment and cure of cancer and to provide information and raise public understanding of such matters.

The W.M. has raised £850 so far and this will be match funded bringing the total amount to £1,700

David Maddern
Provincial Grand Charity Steward