

Foundation.

The Down Masonic Widows Fund was founded in 1893 as the idea of a Doctor Thomas Cromie who was so ashamed of the poverty of some of his patients, who were widows of deceased brethren, that he decided to do something about it.

The objective of the fund was to afford assistance to deserving widows.

The Down Masonic Widows' Fund is a registered charity with the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland and conforms to all the rules and regulations of this independent regulator of charities in the Province.

Annuitant Applications

The Fund covers the Masonic Charity Districts of Banbridge, Bangor, Downpatrick, Newry and Newtownards. We currently have 120 widows who benefit financially from being on the fund.

Applications should be completed by the Lodge in the first instance and these will then be forwarded to the District Charity Committee where they will be ratified and then sent to the Fund secretary for consideration by the Trustees.

Application forms for new applicants can be downloaded from our web site or obtained from the secretary of the Fund.

www.downwidows.org/NewApplications.pdf

Bereavement Grant

. When a Lodge member passes away the Almoner together with the Lodge Secretary should make application to the Treasurer of the Down Masonic Widows' Fund for the payment of a bereavement grant, for the benefit of the deceased Brother's widow.

Widows do appreciate that the friends of her late husband want to help as much as they can during a difficult time for their family. A letter of request to the Fund Treasurer is all that is required.

A sample letter can be found at

www.downwidows.org/BereavementGrant.pdf

After a period of 6 to 8 weeks, further contact should be made to see how the widow is coping without being intrusive, and to confirm that she has cashed the cheque. This is a good opportunity for the Almoner to assess any further needs which the widow might have.

The Almoner or visiting Brother should make discreet enquiries from relatives and friends to ascertain that the widow is in financial need, perhaps even on a temporary basis. It may be the case that the widow has a temporary cash flow problem and does not have access to immediate funds to pay for the funeral or refreshments afterwards, until such times as the estate is settled. This can sometimes be a matter of months. He should also confirm that the deceased Brother was the main bread winner of the family.

We would encourage Lodges to act speedily so that the widow receives the grant when perhaps she most needs it

Role of Steward of Charities

Raising and collecting money

Providing Gift Aid Scheme envelopes

Keep accurate records of donations

Dispersing funds when required

Forwarding all forms to your local District Charity Committee

Encourage Brethren to support Charities

Liaise with the Lodge Treasurer to ensure funding is available to the Charities

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Ladies Afternoon Teas

Ladies Afternoon Teas have proved extremely popular. Each District Charity Committee should arrange this at a suitable time and venue.

If any Brother or widows have ideas which they feel could benefit our widows' please do not hesitate to bring it forward to the Fund Trustees as detailed overleaf.

Points for the Almoner.

- Be aware of the aims, activities and Bands of The Down Masonic Widow' Fund.
- Have a basic knowledge of benefits available from Government Agencies.
- Maintain a record of the names and contact details of brethren and Lodge widows.
- Maintain regular face-to-face contact with Lodge widows.
- Be sensitive and preserve confidentiality always
- Make immediate contact with the families of recently deceased brethren.
- Suggest to the widow that she has a friend or relative present when you visit with her.
- Agree a time convenient with all parties, as to who will attend any meetings or discussions.
- Always identify yourself and leave a contact card with your name and telephone number.
- Ensure widows are aware of their rights under General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)
- Keep written and accurate records of all visits, and comply with GDPR rules at all times.
- Ensure the information entered on forms is complete, verified and accurate.
- Ensure forms are fully signed & authorised by the Lodge and the District Charity Committee.
- Report at each Lodge meeting, while always preserving confidentiality.
- Always act in accordance with the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland rules.
- **Seek advice from Fund Trustees if unsure**

Officers:-

Patrons:-

M. W. The Grand Master of Ireland
R. W. Provincial Grand Master of Down
M. Ex. District Grand King of Down

President

R. W. Bro. Desmond H. Smyth.

Chairman

R. W. Bro. W. G. Ian Ritchie.

Treasurer

R. W. Bro. David R. Woodrow.

Secretary

R. W. Bro. Noel W. Sufferin.

Asst Secretary

R. W. Bro. Eric J. Williamson.

Trustees

R. W. Bro. Noel W. Sufferin.
R. W. Bro. W. G. Ian Ritchie.
R. W. Bro. Desmond H. Smyth.
R. W. Bro. Eric J. Williamson.
R. W. Bro. David R. Woodrow
R. W. Bro Ian A. Kirkpatrick
R. W. Bro Samuel Snodden
W. Bro. J. Gerald Anketell

Contact The Down Masonic Widows' Fund

Secretary Contact details:

Email:- admin@downwidows.org
Mob: 07802 699061 Home: 02892 665306

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Treasurer Contact details:

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The Down Masonic Widows' Fund

Founded 1893



www.downwidows.org

Registered with
The Charity Commission for Northern Ireland
NIC100079

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