



**THE FREEMASONS'
GRAND CHARITY**

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Dear Member

Last March, I wrote to all members of the Grand Charity to explain plans for major changes within the central Masonic Charities. A number of questions were raised and I hope that satisfactory answers were provided. Certainly, the overall response has been very much in support of the changes, so I am pleased to say that the trustees of the Grand Charity can now move to the next stage of their arrangements. That is to propose specific amendments to the Charity's governing document – the Trust Deed and Regulations – which can be found towards the back of the Book of Constitutions. The proposals will be made at the Charity's Annual General Meeting which is due to take place at Freemasons' Hall, London, on Wednesday, 9 September 2015.

Members

Currently, there are some 170,000 members of the Grand Charity, who are all those eligible to attend Quarterly Communications of the Grand Lodge, plus all Master Masons of London and Provincial Lodges. They have the right to vote at General Meetings on all matters that are not within the sole remit of the trustees (*i.e.* the Council of the Grand Charity). A proposal to amend Clause 6 of the Trust Deed will change this so that a new charity will become the sole member of the Grand Charity with effect from the end of the Annual General Meeting on 9 September 2015. Although it may seem unusual to think of there being just one member, the sole member charity itself will have its own members who will number about 120 brethren chosen from all Metropolitan and Provincial Grand Lodges.

Trustees

Other proposed amendments to the Trust Deed will give power to the Council of the Grand Charity to appoint a company as Sole Corporate Trustee in place of the current 25 trustees and the Original Trustee (which is a nominee company called Masonic Charity Trustee Ltd - MCTLtd). It is expected that the Sole Corporate Trustee will be the newly formed charity, which will have its own Board of Trustees (about 25 brethren chosen for their talents and abilities) and so in effect, they will become the trustees who replace the Grand Charity's current Council members.

If all the above amendments are approved, then at the point when the new charity becomes the Sole Corporate Trustee as well as being the sole member of the Grand Charity (which is expected to take place on 1 April 2016), the current trustees will all retire and MCTLtd will be wound up. No further elections for trustees will afterwards be required of London and Provincial members.

For the most part, all powers given to the Council under the Grand Charity's rules will automatically pass to the Sole Corporate Trustee, namely the new charity.

In addition to having members and trustees, the new charity will have a Grand President and other officers, which positions will be held by those who currently hold similar positions in the four individual Charities, but those current offices will cease to exist from 1 April 2016.

The accounts of the Grand Charity will be consolidated with those of the other three Charities and together they will be prepared and presented by the new charity at its Annual General Meeting, which is expected to take the place of the Grand Charity's AGM held during the September Quarterly Communication of Grand Lodge from 2016 onwards.

Full details of all the proposed amendments will be circulated shortly before the Grand Charity's AGM in September 2015 and they will also appear on the Charity's website, but I hope that this summary of the changes will cover sufficiently all the essential points as they might affect you as members. There will be no less opportunity for the Craft to be involved and to take an interest in this most important aspect of our organisation; indeed, because all four of the central Masonic Charities will now have an equal status under the umbrella of the new charity, there will be greater opportunities to improve the delivery of all our charitable activities.

This is a significant time for Freemasonry as a whole and so it is essential that the Council of the Grand Charity and the trustee boards of the other Charities have the enthusiastic support of the Craft. I hope, therefore, that you will enthusiastically approve of the proposed amendments to the Grand Charity's constitution, whether you are present at its AGM next September to vote in person, or not. If anyone still has any questions, please address them to me as before.

Yours sincerely and fraternally

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Richard M. Hone', written in a cursive style.

Richard M. Hone, QC
President of the Grand Charity