

Visit by Michael Douglas to Elm Bank on the 30th November 2009

On Monday 30th November 2009, Richard Douglas, the Chief Executive of the Masonic Samaritan Fund, accompanied by Elaine Hansen, the Care Adviser for the RMBI and the Manager of Ecclesholme, Bev Niland, visited Eccles Masonic Hall, Elm Bank, at the invitation of the Regional Care Officer W. Bro. Paul Webster PPrJGW.

Our APrGM W.Bro. Jonathon Clipsham and the Provincial Grand Almoner, W Bro. Roy Pyne were also in attendance together with members of the Groups and Partners. This was not an appeals meeting on behalf of the 2010 Festival but an informative evening.

Richard Douglas explained that the fund was established in 1990 out of the Royal Masonic Hospital Samaritan Fund and meant that help was now available locally, rather than having to travel to London for treatment, the fund covers all quarters of the globe under the Constitution of United Grand Lodge of England

He went on to explain the help available, and to whom, and the criteria for receiving assistance from the fund. He also highlighted a new scheme which has been piloted in West Lancs and is for respite care for carers, this is to enable carers to be able to have free time knowing that the person is being cared for in their own home. This respite care is intended to be used in the home for short periods of perhaps half day or even a couple hours when necessary. Some of the services can be found in the leaflet Health and Care support for Freemasons and their Dependents, which is freely available.

Some startling statistics were given such as that between 1990 and 2009 four hundred and twenty seven applicants received £2.42m and that since our festival started 5 years ago applicants in this province have received £1.04M. He also asked us to note that by 2025 there will be 1.9 million people over the age of 90 years thus increasing demand on welfare services and by the same year there will be 1m people suffering from dementia, and that the MSF hopefully would be able to give support to those needing it

Elaine Hansen explained her role as a Care Advisor for the RMBI, stressing that she was always available to assist Almoners when necessary, this is done through LCO's and RCO's as the point of contact for her.

All three of our visitors were pleased to answer questions during the meeting and privately afterwards

The final line is The Fund may make it happen.



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