



MCF Strategy 2018 – 2022

Introduction

Since its creation in April 2016, the Masonic Charitable Foundation (MCF) has become the largest independent Masonic charity for both our community and the wider population. It brought together four well established Masonic charities to become one of the largest grant-making foundations in the UK. Charity is one of the core pillars of Freemasonry and the work of MCF promotes this proud and generous principle to the Masonic community and the wider public. As a single unified charity our size and resources, both operational and financial, enable us to play a greater role, have greater influence and make a significant impact in our Masonic community, the charity sector and wider society.

In a time when health and social care services are under pressure, an ageing and often more isolated population requires support, and many households are struggling financially, there are numerous opportunities for MCF to have a positive impact. Through our activities MCF hopes to build better lives by encouraging opportunity, promoting independence and improving wellbeing. Our support is funded entirely from the generous donations of Freemasons, their families and friends.

Our Vision and Mission

Our vision reflects the long-term change that we want to see and actively contribute to achieving. The work of MCF focuses on two distinct areas of support and our vision for these areas is shown below:

Our Vision for Society

Everyone has the opportunity to lead positive, active and fulfilling lives, especially those that are in need, disadvantaged or marginalised.

Our Vision for the Masonic Community

Masonic families are healthy, stable and secure thereby providing them with the opportunities to participate actively in their community and succeed in life.

Our mission statement describes what we will do to achieve our vision.

Our Mission Statement

To be a force for good by providing support, care and services to Freemasons and their families in need, and supporting other charities to help the most disadvantaged in society.



Our Values

As we deliver our enhanced programme of support and services to the Masonic community and beyond, we need to pay attention to the manner in which we do so. Our values will provide guidance for how we carry out our activities ‘the MCF way’, and for how we behave and communicate with each other and the communities we support every day. Throughout the charity we adhere to the following values:

Responsive to need

We are a listening and inclusive organisation which identifies need and provides essential support to the communities with which we work.

Making a difference

We are compassionate and dedicated to changing people’s lives in ways that are shown to have a positive impact.

Striving for excellence

We work in a professional, collaborative and innovative way to provide the best service to our supporters, our beneficiaries and one another.



Our Strategy

There are **three** strategic goals which will help us achieve our Mission.



We will enhance our support and services

As a unified charity, we now provide support and services across a wide spectrum of need to people of all ages, and to charities supporting all sections of society. To be at our most effective, we must adapt to the changing needs of the communities we support and, where possible, extend the range of our support and services, always ensuring they are delivered effectively.

There are over 160,000 charities in England and Wales competing for funding from grant-making foundations such as ours. Identifying the most deserving causes and effective charities is a challenge and requires intelligent decision making. In line with our Mission, the charities and causes that we support will be those which help people that face poverty, distress or are disadvantaged from participating actively in society, overcoming obstacles or leading fulfilling lives.

As our main donors, the support we offer to Freemasons and their families in times of need will remain our primary purpose. The majority of Freemasons and their partners are reflected in our ageing population which is living longer, with increasingly complex and expensive care needs. It is essential that we help meet the needs of older Freemasons, their wives and partners by supporting them to live as independently as possible in their own homes and communities, or in one of our RMBI care Homes.



We will improve our ways of working

The Masonic community is relatively small in charitable terms and we have no remit to raise funds from the general public. Furthermore, our fundraising efforts must compete with the many increasing demands on the limited resources of our supporters. Through our activities we must engage with the younger generation of Freemasons and encourage the whole Masonic community to support Festivals and other fundraising initiatives. To do this we must build and strengthen our relationships with the United Grand Lodge of England and with Metropolitan, Provincial and District Grand Lodges in recognition of their role as the primary link to our donors and beneficiaries. We will need to shape and communicate our messages carefully to ensure everything we do is understood, valued and relevant.

There is increasing pressure to provide evidence which shows that the way we spend our donors' money is having a positive impact, in the knowledge that our donors can choose to support other charities and causes. We need to improve our understanding of the value and impact of our grant-making, support and services, and adapt and change in response to what we learn.

We will honour the past 230 years of Masonic charity and the legacy charities from which MCF was formed, whilst creating a modern and effective governance structure and vibrant staff culture. Using these legacies as a solid foundation, we aspire to be needed, adjusting our range of support and services to ensure that MCF continues to provide appropriate support to those in need for generations to come.



We will raise our profile

As a new charity, it is essential that we embed the MCF and its activities within the consciousness of the Masonic community. It is vital that the support and services we provide are known about and understood by Freemasons and their families in need. At the same time we must build pride in our donors and supporters, without whom we cannot deliver our Mission.

We aim to be better known across society as a whole so that the generosity and charitable actions of the Masonic community are widely recognised and fully understood.

We must take advantage of our size and scale to find a voice in the sector, taking prominent positions on issues affecting our beneficiaries and speaking knowledgeably about the needs of the communities we support. As a leading charitable foundation in the UK, we aim to adopt a profile befitting our scale in order to support the charity community and encourage shared learning, best practice and transparency.



How we will deliver our Strategy

Enhancing Our Support and Services

We will extend the range of our support and services in response to the changing needs of our beneficiaries, and support charities to help those in need across England, Wales and internationally. We will achieve this by doing the following:

Extending support to the Masonic community

- Change our enquiry line into a helpline for the Masonic community to turn to for direct support, advice and signposting, with the aim of it becoming a recognised first point of call in times of need for Freemasons and their families.
- Identify the evolving needs of the Masonic community to develop a better understanding of how we can help them, providing a comprehensive range of direct grant support and the provision of services, including the emotional and mental health needs of the Masonic community.
- Establish partnerships with other organisations which provide services that can complement our support in order to meet a wider range of needs.
- Develop ways to expand our support package to benefit the Masonic community not in crisis; and to provide support in new ways to help in dealing with life's challenges.
- Identify ways to utilise technology to improve our applicant, beneficiary and stakeholder experience, including developing online tools to help applicants establish whether they qualify for our support.
- Reach and support a greater percentage of the Masonic community, and identify vulnerable, isolated or disadvantaged groups, such as widows, who may benefit from our support.

Supporting charities and causes important to the Masonic community

- Move to a more focused model of funding charities, resulting in targeted grant-making that helps to ensure greater impact for the grants we give.
- Support smaller charities with larger grants for core costs to help them continue to operate in times of increased lack of funding from local and central government.
- Partner with national charity sector bodies to help achieve the outcomes to which we aspire, taking a lead from the experts in the field.
- Grow our Metropolitan and Provincial matched funding programme to support effective grant-making and impact at a local level.
- Work with Community Foundations in Festival Provinces to distribute grants to worthwhile and effective local charities, involving the local Masonic community in decision-making, monitoring and promotion.
- Move to funding new research studentships to contribute to scientific understanding rather than subsidise existing research costs.
- Be among the first to respond to disasters and emergencies, both nationally and internationally, working closely with Metropolitan, Provincial and District Grand Lodges directly affected, liaising with international aid charities that have the infrastructure and experience to deliver the greatest impact where it is needed most.



Extending elderly care support directly and in partnership with other specialist providers

- Investigate ways of enhancing our package of support for those with care needs, both in their own homes and elsewhere.
- Work with carefully selected expert partners to provide care, where appropriate and affordable.

Through the RMBI Care Company

- Continue to provide high quality care for older Freemasons and their families across our network of care Homes in England and Wales.
- Rebuild some existing sites and improve facilities in other locations that require upgrades, and expand the charity into new locations that are currently underserved.
- Develop assisted living facilities for those Freemasons, their wives and partners who wish to retain a degree of independence, to complement our established care Home offering.
- Work with nationally recognised partners to position RMBI Care Company as an exemplar provider.

Improving Our Ways of Working

We will measure the impact of our grant-making, services and support and evolve what we do accordingly. We will strengthen our relationship with UGLE and the Masonic community, and ensure we are in a position to support those in need for generations to come. We will achieve this by doing the following:

Building relationships with the Masonic community through UGLE, Metropolitan, Provincial and District Grand Lodges

- Work in partnership with UGLE to ensure MCF activities complement their ambitions and dovetail with their 2015 - 2020 strategic vision “to become openly recognised as the premier fraternal organisation within their communities”.
- Support the activities of Almoners, Charity Stewards, Communications Officers, Members, our colleagues in the Districts and others that help us to identify those in need, raise funds and spread the word about what we do.
- Work with Metropolitan, Provincial and District charitable funds to ensure our support complements local grant-making most effectively, and extend the Relief Chest Scheme to all Masonic organisations and individuals.
- Agree a programme of fundraising with Metropolitan Grand Lodge and those areas not currently in the Festival programme that acknowledges the support MCF offers to those living in those areas, and which complements the generous contributions given by all other Provinces.
- Learn from good practice happening locally and listen to the voice of the Freemason ‘on the ground’, particularly our Members.
- Determine the most effective and consistent way to support the masonic community in Districts and Inspectorates beyond England, Wales and the Islands.



Ensuring our support and services have a positive impact on those we assist

- Identify the changing needs of the Masonic community to develop a better understanding of how we can help them.
- Collect evidence of the impact of our activities and adapt our support package based on what we learn.
- Focus on the impact and social change achieved through our grants, rather than the number of grants awarded and the amount spent.
- Be clear on the outcomes we hope to achieve through our support and services and ensure those outcomes have a positive impact.
- Develop and embed a programme of assessment, measurement, evaluation and review to monitor how well we are achieving our aims.

Creating a sustainable charity for future generations

- Employ the best people and support them to develop their professional knowledge and skills, and become an employer of choice for people wanting to work in the care industry or charity sector.
- Identify trustees and committee members with the right skill-set, experience and vision to guide our strategy over the next five years and beyond and provide them with the support they need to carry out their responsibilities.
- Utilise modern workplace practices and technologies to ensure we have efficient, effective and secure systems in place.
- Be financially prudent and apply wise and informed judgement when managing a diverse investment and property portfolio, focused on delivering long-term gains to ensure our inherited endowment continues to grow and is secure and robust.
- Learn from our peers and aspire to best practice and innovation in the sector.

Raising Our Profile

We will become known throughout Freemasonry and reach out to wider society to be recognised as a leading charitable foundation in the UK. We will achieve this by doing the following:

Improving communications at all levels of Freemasonry

- Define a consistent core message that engages our audiences, and which is regularly and frequently shared in all our communications.
- Work with Metropolitan, Provincial, District Grand Lodges and other partners to develop complementary messages for specific appeals, Festivals, projects, initiatives and other promotional activities.
- Continue to have a presence in Provinces that are out of Festival, to maintain and build upon the relationships we established during Festivals.
- Acknowledge and celebrate our donors and their generosity, and recognise their fundraising efforts.
- Define and develop a range of communication channels, both new and traditional, suited for both core and local messages.



Raising our profile beyond the Masonic community

- Build awareness and recognition of our impact and achievements to enhance the value and reputation of MCF.
- Carry out charitable activities that engage the wider public in our work.
- Collaborate with other organisations to communicate our messages to new audiences, especially those that may be interested in Freemasonry.

Adopting a proactive role in the charity sector

- Play an active role in the charity sector, contributing to charity effectiveness debates by sharing our experience and expertise.
- Aspire to best practice and transparency in our grant-making, advice, care provision and fundraising activities.
- Influence policy makers to help ensure the communities we support are not forgotten or disadvantaged.
- Host and facilitate sector and policy events, and sponsor or contribute to publications linked to our work and the groups and causes we support.
- Identify friends and allies within the charity sector to work with and who can help deliver our vision.



Our Success

As part of delivering our new strategy, we will build in success measures to ensure we can monitor our progress and be held accountable to our donors, the Masonic community and other stakeholders. These include increasing the number of applicants and families that we support, offering a greater range of appropriate support and services, increasing the number of people actively participating in Festival fundraising appeals, being able to demonstrate a proven impact of our activities, having more articles and coverage in the press and media, and facilitating and contributing to sector events in support of the charity community.



The Masonic Charitable Foundation builds better lives for Freemasons, their families and the wider community by encouraging opportunity, promoting independence and improving wellbeing.

For Freemasons, for families, for everyone

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