

The 2017 Festival – Frequently Asked Questions

1. Introduction

The purpose of this document is to assist Lodge / Chapter Charity Stewards answer questions raised by Brethren / Companions regarding the 2017 Festival in support of the Royal Masonic Trust for Girls and Boys (RMTGB).

Charity Stewards who may require further clarification or have any questions that are not addressed in this document should in the first instance contact **W.Bro. Cemlyn Rees Williams PAGDC**, who is a member of the Festival Committee and has kindly agreed to operate a dedicated 2017 Festival Information Centre. Contact details are as follows:

Email: festivalinfo@nwmasons.org

Phone: 01492 540795

2. What is a Masonic Festival?

A Festival is a major fund-raising project, spread over a number of years to benefit one of the four central Masonic Charities, namely the Freemason's Grand Charity, the Royal Masonic Benevolent Institution, the Royal Masonic Trust for Girls and Boys and the Masonic Samaritan Fund.

This ingenious system was apparently devised in 1942 when, due to the Second World War there were a great number of disadvantaged Freemasons, wives, widows and children.

Each major charity has one Masonic Province or groups of smaller Provinces "In Festival" each year and each province is "In Festival" every 10 years. The period of a Festival is usually between 5 and 10 years.

The Festival System is so called because at the end of a period of fund raising, there is a festival banquet attended by as many of the Brethren and their ladies as is possible, at which a symbolic cheque for the total sum raised is presented by the R.W. Provincial Grand Master to the President of the particular charity.

3. What does the Royal Masonic Trust for Girls and Boys do?

The RMTGB mission statement is – "To relieve poverty and advance the education of children of a Masonic family and, when funds permit, support other children in need."

Further information about the RMTGB has already been forwarded to every member in the Province together with letters from the R.W. Provincial Grand Master and the Secretary of the NWMBA.

4. Why is the Province of North Wales running a Festival?

Our last Festival was in 2006 when we raised just over £2.3m for the Freemasons Grand Charity. It is now our turn again.

The 2017 Festival – Frequently Asked Questions

5. What do I get out of the North Wales Festival?

You will be replenishing the RMTGB fund so that it is available for others and in case you; your family or other dependents need it. It is one of the Fundamental Principles, to which we agreed when we became a Freemason; that we help Brother Masons and their dependents receive care and attention should they need it, and should they need help, to receive it.

6. What is the 2017 Festival Target?

The R.W. Provincial Grand Master has set a target of £2.75m.

7. What is required from me?

The R.W. Provincial Grand Master is asking all Brethren / Companions from within the Province of North Wales to support the Festival, by making a financial commitment by regular donations preferably by standing order directly to their Lodge / Chapter Charity Account or to the RMTGB or if a Brother / Companion wishes, to both. Also to get involved with the Festival's events and activities, through their Lodges, Chapters and at a Group level.

8. How can I give to the Festival?

The best method of making a donation is by completing a regular payment promise for the term of the Festival, and a Gift Aid Declaration which if you are a UK taxpayer will enhance your donation by some £0.25p for every £1.00 donated. Some Brethren prefer to make personal cash donations rather than by standing order, this method is equally welcome and can also be Gift Aided.

9. What about the North Wales Masonic Benevolent Association (NWMBA)?

Individual donations made via Lodges and Chapters are submitted via the annual Charity Return by the Charity Steward to the NWMBA and held in the Brothers name within the "A" Fund.

The balances in the NWMBA "A" Fund will be sent to the RMTGB on a quarterly basis throughout the Festival period. This means that it is very important for Charity Stewards to ensure that all members' donations, including those mandatory payments collected from members' Lodge subscriptions together with any Lodge donations are paid to the NWMBA within one month of the end of the Lodge / Chapter financial year.

10. Will there be a Festival Jewel and if so what is the Qualification for obtaining one?



A Brother will immediately be entitled to a Steward's Festival Jewel once he pledges a sum of £500 or a Patronage and hence a Patron's bar on the Jewel if he pledges £1,000, payable either:

- By a monthly Standing Order payable to either their Lodge or the RMTGB or a combination of both, or
- By regular donation(s) by cash/cheque.

The Jewel may be worn throughout the entire Festival Period and is provided free of charge.

A Jewel Entitlement Application Form is available from the Lodge / Chapter Charity Steward.

The 2017 Festival – Frequently Asked Questions

11. I already have an existing standing order payable to the Lodge / Chapter Charity Account, should I now stop this arrangement?

No - please do not change any existing arrangements. If you wish to take out a second standing order payable to the RMTGB then this would be a personal matter for the Brother / Companion concerned.

Many Brethren already operate an existing (open ended) Standing Order payable to their Lodge. Such monies as are currently standing to their credit since the end of the 2006 Festival will count and will be taken into consideration with regard to their pledge for either £500 or £1,000.

12. If I have already signed a Gift Aid Form for the NWMBA via the Charity Steward, do I need to sign a Gift Aid Form for the RMTGB?

If you have made a donation directly to the RMTGB then it will be beneficial to you and the RMTGB to Gift Aid your donation provided of course that you are a UK Resident and Tax payer.

It is permissible to have multiple signed Gift Aid forms with different Charities in operation at any one time.

13. I am considering donating by means of a Standing Order. Does it matter whether it is with the Lodge / Chapter or the RMTGB?

It does not matter who is the beneficiary. The Donors Festival Account will include the total of any money deposited via his Lodge / Chapter and/or the RMTGB.

14. How will I know how much I have donated and what my current Festival balance is?

Both the NWMBA and the RMTGB will provide the Charity Steward with a Lodge / Chapter donor statement showing the amount given by each member of the Lodge / Chapter; this amount will include the tax recovered, provided of course that a gift aid form has been signed.

The statements will be issued to each Charity Steward on a quarterly basis throughout the Festival Period.

15. I am a member of more than one Lodge / Chapter in the Province, how will my contributions be recognised?

When making a donation a donor may nominate only one Lodge / Chapter per donation and it is he who decides to which Lodge / Chapter that individual donation is to be credited. However the sum total of all his contributions to all his nominated Lodges / Chapters will count towards his personal contribution total. Both the NWMBA and the RMTGB use computer databases that are able to calculate by individual name and by individual Lodge / Chapter.

16. Will there be a Lodge / Chapter Honorific?

We envisage an Honorific being agreed for Lodges and Chapters. Further information will be made available shortly.

The 2017 Festival – Frequently Asked Questions

17. Why should I sign a Gift Aid Form?

Only UK residents (including members of UK Armed Forces and Crown Servants) who are taxpayers should complete a Gift Aid Declaration form. A Gift Aid Declaration may be made to accompany a single gift, or a fixed sum, monthly or annually over a period of time.

When an individual makes a donation either to the RMTGB or the NWMBA via the Lodge Charity Return, Income Tax is added thereto at the Basic Rate, and the RMTGB / NWMBA are subsequently able to obtain a refund of this tax from the Inland Revenue. The refund is then applied to the Individual donor's Festival account.

It is very important to ensure that the Gift Aid Declaration is signed and dated.

18. Can a Lodge / Chapter make a Donation to the Festival?

It is possible for a Lodge to make a donation to the Festival by either submitting the money via the annual Lodge Charity return or by presenting a cheque to a visiting Provincial Ruler or the Representative of the R.W. Provincial Grand Master.

In the case of a Cheque presentation the donation must not include member's donations but should only be money raised in Alms collections, at social events held by the Lodge / Chapter or from any surplus funds. The donation will go to the credit of the respective Lodge / Chapter Festival Account held in the NWMBA "A" Fund.

19. Should a Lodge / Chapter retain cash in their Charity Account?

In view of the agreement for the Province to send funds from the NWMBA to the RMTGB on a quarterly basis, it is important to ensure that the NWMBA "A" Fund cash flow is not restricted by Lodges / Chapters holding onto cash in their Charity Account.

It has been agreed that both the NWMBA and the RMTGB will apply a nominal interest rate (currently 1.75% above Bank Rate) to funds held in the name of a Lodge / Chapter. It is therefore of benefit to the Lodge / Chapter not to hold onto cash but rather deposit it to the NWMBA "A" Fund.

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*2017 Festival FAQ's  
12 March 2011*