



# Guidelines For Lodge Almoners 2007

## Introduction

The office of Almoner is one of considerable antiquity (originating as a monastery office in mediaeval times) and has always been one of great importance, embracing the virtues of caring and charity in the fullest sense.

The Almoner of a private lodge will be mainly concerned with the welfare of his own members, their dependants and the widows of deceased members. He should, however, be aware of the support and guidance that can be obtained through the Provincial Grand Almoner, particularly in cases of distress where financial assistance, over and above that which might be provided by the lodge alone, may be required.

Several books have been written about the Almoner's role – these Guidelines are intended to provide a summary of the more important functions and duties.

## Principal Duties and Responsibilities

Generally speaking a Lodge Almoner will need to operate both passively and actively. In the former case he will be notified by the lodge secretary, or otherwise, that a particular brother or widow is unwell or in need of assistance – the Almoner can then investigate and take the necessary action. On the other hand, if a particular member has not been in contact with the lodge for several meetings, or is unexpectedly absent, the Almoner should take the initiative and find out why.

Clearly, the members should keep the Lodge informed, in a timely way, in cases of illness or other difficulty, to allow the Almoner do his job effectively. But, as premised, the Almoner should not rely entirely on this mode of working.

The principal duties may be summarised as follows.

1) Maintain a list of members, their dependants and

widows, with contact details (*see form on next page*)

2) Periodically monitor the well being of those on the list and record cases of illness, accident and other problems that fall within the Almoner's domain

3) Arrange for suitable communications (personal visits, phone calls, emails and letters), according to the wishes of the individuals concerned.

4) Organise additional communications from members at special times of the year (eg birthdays), particularly at Christmas, when cards, gifts of money or other suitable presents would be especially welcomed.

5) Advise the Provincial Grand Almoner of the serious illness or death of a Grand Officer or a present Provincial Grand Officer. (The lodge secretary is required to inform the Provincial Grand Secretary in such cases)

6) Family permitting, attend and/or arrange for the lodge to be represented, at the funeral of a deceased member and notify the Provincial Grand Almoner in the case of a Grand Officer or a present Provincial Grand Officer, so that the Province may be represented.

7) Contact the Provincial Grand Almoner if you have a member or dependent in need of financial or other assistance that can not be met by the lodge.

8) Ensure that all your important records and transactions are carefully filed and passed on to your successor when you retire from office, so that he has a sound base from which to take over.

## Membership Records

The following is an example of a record that the lodge Almoner may ask each of the lodge members to complete and return to him.

## Associated Activities

Arising from the main duties discussed earlier, certain associated actions may need to be addressed.

### Absentees and Resigned Members

Your contact with members who do not attend regularly, or even those who have resigned in recent years, may be an inducement to them to 'return to the fold'. If you find they have problems with mobility or travelling expense, you may be able to arrange transport for them.

The Province is very anxious to know the precise reasons why members resign. Sometimes these are not at all clear and are not always the reasons that the resigning brother at first gives, perhaps because of embarrassment. The Lodge Almoner may be of considerable help in such cases and may even resolve the cause of resignation.

In certain cases, particularly where a member has intimated that he may rejoin at some time, it may be worth reinforcing that sentiment by maintaining regular contact, e.g. by sending a summons or an annual newsletter. If a member has resigned through his ill health, or that of his partner, he could well be included on your list of contacts.

## Christmas Greetings

By providing a copy of your contact list (widows etc) you could encourage all members of the lodge to send cards at Christmas time. It is important that, in doing so, they should identify themselves as members of the lodge.

## Financial Records

As Almoner, you will no doubt be sending greetings cards, flowers, gifts and the like. It is important that you maintain a record of these transactions, if possible with receipts, so that you may reclaim your expenses from the lodge treasurer.

## Summary

The Province wishes you well in your vitally important role as a lodge Almoner.

*If you need further information or have any suggestions as to how these Guidelines could be improved, then please contact the Provincial Grand Almoner:*

Adrian P Hawkins, 19 Roman Way, Carshalton Beeches, SM5 4EF  
Email: surreymarkalmoner@hotmail.com  
Telephone: 020 8643 7085

### Lodge Almoner Information *Confidential*

*Please print clearly and return to Lodge Almoner*

Member's full name \_\_\_\_\_

Date of birth \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone number(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Email address \_\_\_\_\_

Full name of Wife or Partner \_\_\_\_\_

Date of birth \_\_\_\_\_