



## **bUGLE UGLE/MCF CORONAVIRUS RESPONSE** **MEMBER UPDATE**

### **UGLE Covid-19 response group update:**

On the 13 April UGLE implemented an emergency structure – in response to Covid-19 – consisting of a lead Provincial Grand Master and Province for each of the Regional Communication Groups (RCG) to manage our response to the Coronavirus emergency. In addition to the Grand Secretary and the Chief Executive of the Masonic Charitable Foundation, they form the UGLE Covid-19 response group.

The aim of the Covid-19 Group is to foster closer operational working within and between the RCGs in order to deliver visible and effective help, on a national scale, to our members and members of the wider community.

£1m has been donated by the MCF, the Freemasons' charity, and this fund will be evenly split to provide each RCG with £100,000 to allocate to such projects.

Since its creation the group has met on two occasions and is currently investigating initiatives to:

- The manufacturing of Personal Protective Equipment through local contacts.
- Creating meals on wheels services from Masonic Halls with professional kitchens.
- Supporting initiatives to feed the homeless.
- Provide vital equipment for the research effort and the Health Service.

As we ramp up these national campaigns, championed by various Provinces, our thanks go out to Freemasons up and down the country who have made the following donations. This is just the tip of the iceberg:

### **Food Donations:**

#### **The 3 Pillars-Feeding the Homeless**

The 3 Pillars are now feeding 128 Street Friends, 7 days a week, spending nearly £1,400 per week.

#### **East Kent Freemasons donate £50k**

East Kent Freemasons are releasing £50,000 from its Disaster Relief Fund as part of the Cornwallis East Kent Freemasons' Charity. The money will go to help, food banks, local charities and other local good causes in East Kent as part of COVID-19 relief effort.

#### **Somerset food bank donation:**

4,300 food parcels (approximately, total of £13,000) have been donated to food banks since the 6 April through eight Masonic halls (at least 16 food banks benefited).

**Buckinghamshire food bank donations:**

4 deliveries throughout April and May to 36 residents of the Masonic Housing Association totalling £3,200. Supporting foodbanks in Slough, High Wycombe, Chesham, Aylesbury, and Milton Keynes. This started on the 26 March with weekly deliveries totally £250 per week, per foodbank. Each weekly delivery of £250 can feed 70 families for 3 – 4 days

**Social projects:****Free car parking and use for Masonic Halls**

Freemasons in Essex and Dorset are offering their **buildings for use by the NHS** and opening up their adjoining car parks to NHS and other emergency workers free of charge. Freemasons in Surrey and West Kent are also offering the same services.

**IPad donation**

Further responses to the Call to Arms include Freemasons in North Wales who are helping patients stay in touch with their families using technology. They have donated £5,000 to purchase 50 Tablet PCs to help North Wales NHS patients. The tablets will provide comfort to patients and their families who have been separated at the most worrying time.

**Blood Bikes Support**

With frequent donations provided by Freemasons, Devon Blood Bikes are delivering essential blood, medication, patient notes, medical equipment, tissue samples and donor breast milk to hospitals, air ambulances and to patient's homes throughout.

**Tameside A&E Nurse and East Lancs Freemason Purchases Ambulance to Aid in Covid-19 Crisis**

Tameside A&E Nurse, and member of King Edward 3329 John Gilmour has made a spectacular effort in the Covid-19 crisis by purchasing an ambulance in order to assist positively diagnosed yet stranded patients get home in order to safely isolate. Repairs and the costs of running the vehicle are being undertaken by local members of the community in the forms of services from local tradespeople and donations. Thus far John has raised over £2,700.

**Launch of Covid-19 relief chest**

We are also launched a national UGLE Covid-19 relief chest, which the MCF will match fund donations made to it, up to £1m. We are asking members to support this with charity collections through virtual pub nights, quizzes or Lodges of Instructions they may be attending.

You can contribute in various ways including:

**By Text:**

- To donate £5 text COVID19 to 70500
- Follow the link in the text reply and complete your details and the Lodge/Chapter to be credited.

**Online**

- Visit <http://everydayhero.co.uk/event/COVID-19>
- Click on "Start Fundraising" and create an account
- Follow the instructions and fill in details of your sponsored event and your goal amount, save the page, share with friends and family and start fundraising

- You can log in and make updates and changes to your page, upload progress photos and your donors can Gift Aid any donation they make.

#### **By Credit/Debit Card:**

- *Phone:* To make a donation call our dedicated line on 020 3146 3352 (open Monday-Thursday 9.30am-4.30pm, Friday 9.30am-3.30pm)
- Online: <http://everydayhero.co.uk/event/COVID-19>

#### **Take part in our [#TimeToToast](#) Twitter campaign**

On the 23 March 2020 UGLE invited the whole country to toast 'absent friends, and those working on the frontline in the NHS' at 9pm every Saturday (from UGLE Twitter account @UGLE\_GrandLodge) during the crisis.

Since the launch we have toasted delivery drivers, care workers (which led to a massive response for PPE equipment) and police officers. This Saturday we will be toasting refuse workers – so please take part!

The campaign led to us trending at #19 on Twitter - the first time this has ever happened for Freemasonry. Which shows how open our members are - and how proud they are - of their Freemasonry.

#### **UGLE national press release issued**

On the 12 April we issued a press release entitled - **Freemasons vow to help protect the elderly during Covid-19 crisis**. This was picked up by The Telegraph. The release explained how:

- Freemasons across England and Wales are joining forces to provide essential PPE equipment to care homes to protect the vulnerable and the staff who care for them.
- Freemasons are using Masonic Halls with professional kitchens to produce meals on wheels, often delivered by Light Blues and Widows Sons.
  - Buckinghamshire and Derbyshire are producing 600 meals a week for needy families and Brethren.
  - Leicestershire and Rutland, Buckinghamshire, North Hants & Hunts and Somerset are all support projects to help local foodbanks.
- A dedicated Covid-19 group will now spearhead a national campaign to ramp up production in order to supply care homes and others who need help.

The response from members included:

#### **1,600 visors for care homes**

In just two days, Scunthorpe Freemasons made 1,000 full-face visors to protect carers working for the RMBI. The work was done at the premises of Cymarc Engineering, which normally makes components for the rail sector and the motorbike industry.

#### **Donations in Wales of visors**

In Wales, Freemasons from the Aberpennar Masonic Lodge, Aberdare donated 100 safety visors to surgeries North Cynon Valley. North Wales Freemasons donated £2,250 to help produce PPE face

visors, after Joseph Mearman – from St David’s Lodge – set up a 3D printer system to make visors for local hospitals.

Face shields to protect frontline and key workers are also being made by Freemason Colin Breckons from Norwich. He is making the face shields using his 3D printers and giving them away free to the NHS and other key workers. The donation came from Freemasons and he has been inundated with requests and says there is a struggle to find the plastic needed for the visors, of which he aims to make at least 2,000.

#### **Moorfields Eye Hospital Visor Donation**

Freemason Sean Fitzgerald from Valence 5388 Lodge, which meets in Upminster, also donated 500 packs of antiseptic wipes to the Carers Trust and 500 visors to NHS Moorfields Eye Hospital.

Many more projects are in the pipeline, each championed by a Lead PGM from their own regional group, and many Provinces are joining existing initiatives around the country to step up their impact and effectiveness.

Please let us know what you, your Lodge and Province are doing – We’d love to know!

Email: [COVID-response@ugle.org.uk](mailto:COVID-response@ugle.org.uk)