

FOREWORD

Benevolence and Charity are so truly the essence of Freemasonry and we should be proud of what we do to help others, whether they be masons, their dependents or the general public. “Help today, when and where it is needed” should be our guiding principle.

This book sets out the formalities of OMMBA but much more importantly it reminds each of us what the Association can do to help a distressed brother or his family in time of need and how we, as Mark Master Masons, can help. As the Royal Ark Mariner ritual so aptly says, “Always have a hand and heart ready to help a distressed brother.

As we are approaching the start of the Oxon Mark Festival period OMMBA will have an important part to play. It will be the channel through which some monies raised for the Festival will pass. Whenever legal and practically possible Gift Aid should be used in order that the appropriate tax can be reclaimed greatly increasing the amount raised.

We should remind ourselves that through the good offices of the Mark Benevolent Fund, we as Mark Master Masons enormously contribute to worthy causes and give enormous assistance to other members of the community, not only in Great Britain but all over the world. It is by this great gift of charity that we win the esteem of our fellow men.

Whilst much of what OMMBA does requires our financial support, either individually, or through our Lodges, it is just as important that we all support our Almoners – let them know if a brother or his family is ill or needs help; keep in contact with widows or brethren who can’t attend; and volunteer to help when and where you can.

OMMBA has performed many valuable services since its foundation. It can act even more quickly than the Mark Benevolent Fund which we all know can act with great speed in emergencies. Since its foundation it has been supported with great enthusiasm by the Province and long may this continue.

His Honour Ian Alexander QC
Provincial Grand Master
Dated the 8th day of April 2017

1. OMMBA

The Oxfordshire Mark Masonic Benevolent Association (OMMBA) is a registered charity. It exists to establish a fund for the relief of Mark Master Masons of the Province of Oxfordshire (including in some cases past members of the Mark Degree) and their dependants who may be in necessitous circumstances. It also exists, as can be seen from its Objects set out in the By-Laws, to support other Masonic Charities and Charities within the County of Oxfordshire.

2. ORIGINS

OMMBA has its origins as far back as 1971 when the former Mark charity BOMBA was formed to serve the charitable interests of the then Mark Province of Berkshire and Oxfordshire. With the eventual separation of Berkshire and Oxfordshire into separate Mark Provinces, BOMBA continued to serve the interests of both Provinces. In 2007 the decision was taken to separate the Charity in the same manner as the two Provinces. OMMBA came into being in January 2008 on registration of charitable status by the Charity Commission.

3. ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

All members of Mark and Royal Ark Mariners Lodges within the Province are members of the OMMBA but it is operated by a Committee consisting of the five Principal Officers and four co-opted members. The five Principal Officers will be registered as Trustees and are legally responsible to the Charity Commission for the proper management of the Association.

4. FUNDING

To enable OMMBA to continue its charitable works all Mark Master Masons and Royal Ark Mariners within the Province are encouraged to make regular donations to the Association either directly or by way of generosity received from Lodges via alms collections, raffles, or social events.

In addition to monies generously raised when OMMBA was principally concerned with assistance to its own members and their families and to small County charities, (which will continue), will be added the much greater sums to be raised to fulfil our masonic obligation to the Mark Benevolent Fund Festivals, our own coming to its fruition in 2025.

5. GIFT AID

OMMBA is “Gift Aid” registered with the Inland Revenue thereby enabling the Association to recover the income tax at the standard rate on donations made by individual UK tax payers.

It is therefore very beneficial to the Association for Brethren to make a Gift Aid declaration when making a personal donation to OMMBA or when signing a covenant or standing order in OMMBA’s favour. Gift Aid envelopes are also available for smaller donations and for use by individual Brethren when Lodge charity collections are made for the declared purpose of benefiting OMMBA. Gift Aid envelopes for this purpose may be obtained from the Lodge Charity Steward.

It is essential to be aware that it is unlawful for an individual brother to make a claim for Gift Aid on any alms monies received from multiple Brethren or raffles.

6. REQUESTS FOR ASSISTANCE

Requests for assistance should initially be made via the individual Lodge Almoner or, in his absence, via the Provincial Grand Almoner. In the unlikely absence of both Almoners, and where a request cannot be delayed, any member of the Committee will be pleased to receive and initially action consideration of an urgent request for assistance. It, nonetheless, remains essential that both the Lodge Almoner and Provincial Grand Almoner are informed of the application at the earliest possible opportunity.

Lodge Almoners should immediately forward applications for assistance on receipt of them to the Association’s Secretary without delay

7. AID AND ASSISTANCE.

OMMBA has since its beginning provided aid and assistance to members or their families as and when necessary. It will continue to do this but in the future it will also be the vehicle through which monies will be raised for Masonic Festivals.

8. COMMUNICATION

Good communication is an essential part of the management of an organisation such as OMMBA. For OMMBA to be successful every member of the Mark Province of Oxfordshire needs to be a good communicator. It is only possible to provide assistance if it is known that a need for assistance exists. Please keep your Lodge Almoner informed of any instance where his services may be of use.

Place the name and telephone number of your Lodge Almoner with your personal documents and make your family aware of the desirability of contacting him should the need arise.

9. PRINCIPAL OFFICERS AND CONTACTS

President

RW Bro His Honour Ian D.G.Alexander Q.C.

Provincial Grand Master

Tel: 01993830484

Email: idgalexander@gmail.com

Chairman

W Bro Ian Watson Wright Deputy Provincial Grand Master

Tel: 07973114364

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Deputy Chairman

W Bro Duncan McQueen PPrGJW Tel: 01235 520600 email : duncanmcqueen013@aol.com

Treasurer

W Bro Kenneth L Jones, PrGChStwd. Tel : 01235 523064^[11]_[SEP]email : ken_jones945@btinternet.com

Secretary

W.Bro Keith H.Rogers PrGAlmoner

Tel: 01235 529064

E.Mail: keithrogers@hotmail.co.uk

10. OMMBA BY-LAWS

1. Title

The association shall be called the Oxfordshire Mark Masonic Benevolent Association herein after called the Association.

2. OBJECTS OF THE ASSOCIATION

The Objects of the Association shall be to establish and maintain a fund, hereinafter called the Fund, to which its Members may subscribe. The Fund, or any part thereof, may be applied by the Committee as constituted in by-law 4 for any or all of the following purposes, namely:

- . (a) The Committee may make grants for the relief of Mark Master Masons who are or were members of Mark Lodges or Royal Ark Mariner Lodges in the Mark Province of Oxfordshire, or their wives/partners, widows, widowed mothers, spinster sisters, or their children being in every case in circumstances of need. Emergency grants up to a maximum of £500 may be made if agreed by the Chairman, Treasurer, and Secretary and put before the next Committee Meeting for ratification.
Widows who remarry should not necessarily be excluded from OMMBA grants.
- . (b) The Committee may make donations to any one or more of the below listed Charities, namely:
 - . The Grand Lodge of Mark Master Masons Fund of Benevolence.
 - . The Grand Charity of the United Grand Lodge of England.
 - . The Masonic Trust for Boys and Girls.
 - . The Royal Masonic Benevolent Institution.
 - . The New Masonic Samaritan Fund.
 - . The Masonic Charitable Foundation
 - . Other trusts or bodies within the County of Oxfordshire established for registered charitable purposes.

3. MEMBERSHIP

The Members of the Association shall be of two classes, namely:

- (a) All Members of Mark and Royal Ark Mariner Lodges within the Province of Oxfordshire.

- (b) Such other persons who are willing to subscribe to the Association. Members of class 3(b) shall have no voice in the management of the Association.

4. MANAGEMENT

The management of the Association shall be vested in the Officers and the Committee of the Association. The Officers shall be: The President together with a Chairman, a Deputy Chairman, a Treasurer, and a Secretary.

The Committee of the Association shall consist of the Officers, the Provincial Grand Charity Steward, the Provincial Grand Almoner plus two Charity Stewards and two Almoners of a Mark and/or Royal Ark Mariner Lodge within the Province, co-opted on a yearly basis by the President on the recommendations of the Provincial Grand Charity Steward and Provincial Grand Almoner. Such Charity Stewards or Almoners need not be from the same Mark or Royal Ark Mariner Lodge but each should be from a different Masonic Hall or meeting place. A quorum of the Committee shall be at least 4 members but must include the Secretary of OMMBA and either the Chairman or Deputy Chairman who shall have a casting vote.

5. CONSTITUTION

The Offices shall be filled as follows:

- (a) The Provincial Grand Master of the Mark Masonic Province of Oxfordshire as President. Alternatively, the Provincial Grand Master of the Mark Masonic Province of Oxfordshire may, at his discretion, appoint another subscribing member of the Mark Masonic Province of Oxfordshire to the office of President at his pleasure, in which case the Provincial Grand Master of the Mark Masonic Province of Oxfordshire shall, ex officio, be an additional Officer.
- (b) The Chairman and Deputy Chairman shall be appointed by the Provincial Grand Master of the Mark Masonic Province of Oxfordshire .
- (c) The Treasurer and the Secretary shall be elected annually at the Annual General Meeting.
- (d) The Committee may pay the working expenses of the Association from the Fund.

6. MEETINGS

The Annual General Meeting of the Association shall be held on the same day and at the same venue as the Annual Meeting of the Province.

The Committee shall meet regularly but specifically on the days of but prior to the Provincial Annual Meeting and The Royal Ark Mariner Assembly and as and when needed on such days, at such times and venues as fixed with at least 14 days' notice by the Secretary, after consultation with the President and Chairman.

7. SECRETARY

The Secretary shall have access to the register of the names and addresses of all members of the Province and of the Almoners and Charity Stewards of Lodges as kept by the Provincial Grand Secretary if and when he considers it necessary for the better performance of his duties.

The Secretary shall keep a register of the names and addresses of all members of the Association who are only members by virtue of By-Law 3(b).

The Secretary shall record the Minutes of all meetings and circulate the same to the members of the Committee within 10 days of any meeting.

8. TREASURER

The Treasurer shall keep proper records of all receipts and disbursements and prepare in conjunction with the Secretary a report to be presented at the Annual General Meeting of the Association together with the Audited Accounts of the Association.

9. AUDIT

The accounts of the Association shall be examined by a committee of not less than two persons who shall be elected at the Annual General Meeting.

The financial year shall be from 1st January to 31st December and the examined accounts shall be presented at the following Annual General Meeting.

10. BANKING ARRANGEMENTS

All monies received shall be banked in the name of the Association and all cheques shall be signed jointly by the Treasurer and the Secretary.

11. CONFLICT OF INTEREST POLICY

Officers or Committee members of the Association may not benefit financially or materially, either directly or indirectly, by their service to the Association.

An Officer's or Committee Member's interests, if in conflict with the interests of the Association, must be declared to the Association upon which the Officer or Committee member concerned must withdraw from any discussion or decision relating to those interests.

Failure to comply with the above shall be initially addressed by the President and/or the Chairman in accordance with the information contained in Charity Commission document "Guide to Conflicts of Interest for Charity Trustees version 03/04".

12. INTERPRETATION OF BY-LAWS

Any question of dispute as to the meaning of these by-laws, or any differences between the Association and any member thereof, shall be referred to the Committee whose decision shall be final.

13. ALTERATION OF BY-LAWS

These by-laws may only be amended by the Annual General Meeting of the Association and then subject only to notice of any such amendment being deposited with the Secretary at least five weeks before such meeting. No amendment shall be made to these by-laws which will cause the Association to cease to be a Charity in law.

14. OWNERSHIP OF THE FUND

(a) The Fund and all subscriptions received or receivable from members shall be the absolute property of the Association.

(b) In the event of the Association being wound up any surplus funds after meeting all known liabilities shall be transferred to the Grand Lodge of Mark Master Masons Fund of Benevolence.