

The United Grand Lodge of England

FREEMASONS DIG DEEP TO RAISE MORE THAN £1 MILLION FOR THOSE IMPACTED BY COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Freemasons across England and Wales have raised more than £1 million to support those affected by the Covid-19 pandemic. Despite the continuing lockdown preventing Lodges from meeting and holding charitable collections, Freemasons have used technology to keep raising money to support its national response.

Online and text donations have been pouring into the Freemasons' Covid-19 Community Fund from Freemasons up-and-down the country. The half a million pounds raised from individual Freemasons and their Lodges is being doubled by the Masonic Charitable Foundation (MCF), the Freemasons' charity, bringing the fund's total to more than £1 million. The total could exceed £2 million as donations continue to flood in.

This fundraising is in addition to the £2.5 million the MCF has already allocated to fund more than 50 local projects around the country, and a major grant of £250,000 to Age UK's coronavirus emergency appeal.

Projects that Freemasons have chosen to support involve the provision of much needed face visors, and other PPE, to health workers in hospitals and care homes. In addition they have donated more than 1,000 tablets to hospitals, made thousands of food donations to local food banks on a weekly basis, and cooked meals for the vulnerable and isolated.

In several cases local Freemasons have been directly involved in the manufacture of PPE using laser printers and cutters, while others have been delivering supplies to food banks and meals to vulnerable people in their areas.

There has also been a major donation of hundreds of tablets and smartphones to more than 50 hospitals, care homes and hospices, to help patients stay in touch with their families while normal visiting is suspended. In London alone, 115 tablets have been provided to The Royal London, Queen Mary's and St Thomas' Hospitals, while more than 200 tablets have been given so far in Kent, Surrey and Sussex and over 50 tablets in North Wales. Other regions of the country will see deliveries in the near future.

All this is in addition to the estimated £45 million that Freemasons across England and Wales give to charity every year and the 18.5 million hours of practical assistance they provide to those in need.

Dr David Staples, CEO of the United Grand Lodge of England said: "Once again Freemasons are making a major contribution in response to a national crisis. The million pounds already raised will be added to our significant contribution to the fight against Covid-19, including the provision of vital PPE to key workers, tablets to the sick or elderly in hospitals and food to the most vulnerable. I'm sure Freemasons will keep giving to our fund so we can keep providing vital support."

David Innes, Chief Executive of the MCF, said: "Covid-19 has created an unprecedented national crisis and I'm absolutely delighted that Freemasons have reacted with their usual generosity. A huge amount of critical support has already been provided and we'll continue to deliver help and support where it's most needed."