

## **The role of the Director In Matters Concerning Benevolence**

### **A. Invitation to attend meetings of the Managing Trustees**

Upon installation a Director assumes a substantial degree of involvement in matters concerning Benevolence.

There is an open invitation to Directors to attend meetings of the Managing Trustees. A new Director is encouraged to take the opportunity to attend a meeting soon after his installation. Attendance will give the Director a valuable insight into the workings of the Managing Trustees and an understanding of how disbursements are made and decisions arrived at. This knowledge will be very useful when attending and advising Circle Benevolent boards within his Province.

Arrangement for attendance should be made with the Clerk to the Trustees.

### **B. Alternative Procedure**

The alternative procedure allows a claim to be submitted through the Director rather than through the Circle Benevolent Board.

Some Members, particularly those who have held high office, are reluctant to approach the Circle Board and are embarrassed to admit need, particularly if the Circle Board consists of sons, nephews, past pupils, fellow parishioners, former employees etc. The Trustees will give sympathetic consideration to a claim with one signature provided that the signatory is a Director and the usual criteria are met.

Financial assistance supported directly by the Director might also be provided for a Brother who:

- has held a significant position in the Circle or the Province;
- has been or is involved in the Circle Benevolent Board;
- a Brother who has been a member of a National Council or the former Grand Council.

### **C Within National Councils**

The Director should familiarise himself with the contents of the Catenian Benevolence website and any documents on Benevolence issued to Circles from time to time.

The Catenian Association Benevolence and Children's Fund was set up when the Charity Commission for England and Wales approved the amalgamation of the General Fund the Children's Fund in a scheme dated 29<sup>th</sup> May 1991 and amended in 2014, 2015 and 2021.

The scheme is managed, administered and regulated autonomously by nine Managing Trustees who are Members of the Association. The Central Council is the 'Appointing Council', which appoints each Trustee for a renewable five year term of office.

Prior to appointment or re-appointment of each Managing Trustee, a consultation takes place between the Trustees and Central Council. This usually involves the Association Secretary and Chairman of the Managing Trustees. The Association Secretary informs Central Council of the Managing Trustees' skill shortages and requirements.

#### **D. Within the Province**

A Director should familiarise himself with the current rules and regulations which refer to Benevolence. In particular he should ensure that the Rules concerning the Circle Benevolent Board are observed and, if necessary, advise a Circle which does not comply with its benevolence responsibilities. The Clerk will advise.

#### **E. Circle Benevolent Board**

A Circle Benevolent Board consists of three Members of the Circle plus the Director. The Circle Members are appointed (or re-appointed) annually at the first Circle Council Meeting of the Catenian year. The Circle President is not an ex officio Member of the board, but he has the responsibility of ensuring that the Board Members are appointed and ensuring that it meets at least once per year.

The Director should encourage Circles to retain the same Members of the Benevolent Board in order to build up experience and expertise and to preserve the confidentiality, in particular to follow any guidance given by Central Council with regard to compliance with the law regarding Data Protection.

When dealing with Circle Benevolent Boards a Director should:

1. Ensure that he is informed of meeting dates and, if possible, attend.
2. Not be judgemental when discussing the merits of a case
3. Stress the need for absolute confidentiality
4. Ensure that the Board discusses every Member and every widow (or other dependants of a deceased Member). Indicators of possible need for Benevolence include reluctance to attend Circle functions or after Circle meals, late payment of subscriptions or requests for waivers, loss of employment or downturn of own business and failure to maintain property (especially widows).
5. Ensure that all Circle Board Members are known to other Circle Members
6. Ensure that Circle Boards (plus Members of Provincial Council) are aware of the alternative procedure for submitting application.
7. Never pre-empt the outcome of an application. All disbursements have to be approved at a formal meeting of the Managing Trustees. There is an Emergency Committee which has limited but usually effective authority to give help between meetings. Disbursements made by the Emergency Committee have to be approved at the first meeting of the Managing Trustees following the disbursement.

#### **F. General Advice When Submitting Applications**

1. Ensure that the applicant is in receipt of all State and Local Authority Benefits to which he/she is entitled. The website [www.turn2us.org.uk](http://www.turn2us.org.uk) is a useful resource for checking what benefits may be available.
2. Ensure that the application form is completed accurately.
3. If in doubt about the merits of the case, allow the Managing Trustees to make a decision.
4. Encourage the Circle Board to advise on cutting back on all unnecessary expenditure, downsizing property, and perhaps considering bankruptcy. Advice could be sought from an outside professional body and the Managing Trustees will consider paying for it.
- 5. If in any doubt do not hesitate to ask the Chairman, Clerk or any Managing Trustee for help and advice.**