

**THE CATENIAN ASSOCIATION BENEVOLENT AND CHILDREN'S FUND.  
ANNUAL REPORT OF CHAIRMAN 2022/2023**

During the course of the past year the Trustees have met on six occasions. All of the meetings have taken place on a face-to-face basis at the Catenian Association Head Office in Coventry. On a small number of occasions some trustees or visitors have joined the meetings by Zoom. The Board has considered and made appropriate awards in respect of new applications for financial help, repeat applications, and reviewed other cases on a biennial basis. The Emergency Committee has also continued to act on many occasions, to ensure that any of the qualifying beneficiaries have not needed to wait for financial help. In the event of an emergency, help is often provided within 48 hours of the request being received. Details of the many cases considered by email were password protected, to ensure that strict confidentiality was maintained.

The nine Managing Trustees who served during the year are:-

Mark Allanson (Chairman of the Investment Committee)

David Arundale (Resigned 21<sup>st</sup> March 2023)

David Brinkley

David Cawdery (Vice Chairman)

John Colligan

Peter Devine (Chairman)

John Hogan

Denis Murphy

Kevin Rafferty

The Trustees have a wide spread of expertise, which enables the Board to analyse in great detail the cases presented to them and to provide the most appropriate and effective form of financial help required. In this way, many of the underlying problems giving rise to the application are often resolved, and future stability is achieved.

Following the retirement of David Arundale at the March Meeting, the Trustees are assessing their Skills Matrix and will seek to recruit a replacement Trustee in the coming year.

Confidentiality remains the overriding principle when dealing with applications for financial help. Applicants for assistance, whether from members or dependants, can be re-assured that their particular situation will be handled with the utmost sensitivity and confidentiality, by both the Board of Trustees and by members of the Circle Benevolent Boards.

Circles have an obligation by Rule, to ensure that they have an effective Circle Benevolent Board in place, which should meet at least once a year with the responsible Director, who is an ex officio member of the Circle Board. The CBB remains the main agency through which the majority of cases are presented to the Managing Trustees, though in exceptional circumstances, cases can be presented solely by the responsible Director. The Managing Trustees can only deal with the applications that they receive and remain concerned that many potential cases are not being met, either due to the reticence of the individuals concerned or a lack of vigilance by CBBs or the wider membership of the Association.

The Charity's website [www.catenianbenevolence.org](http://www.catenianbenevolence.org) displays all of the information required to enable potential applicants for help and to be able to navigate the system. During the course of the previous year Virgin Money Giving ceased to operate. They have now been replaced by an alternative supplier called Stockcrowd and donations can again be made to the charity through the Website. The Vice Chairman, David Cawdery, is thanked for the work he has undertaken to progress this arrangement.

At the start of the year the Trustees received formal complaints from their employee, the Clerk, about the conduct he had been subjected to by two Senior Members of Central Council when one was also a serving Trustee and the other held the Honorary position of Company Secretary to Catena Trustees Limited, the Custodian Trustee of the Benevolent Fund. In accordance with Employment Law and Best Practice, there was an independent investigation into both complaints by the HR Partner at Stone King Solicitors. Following the Investigation the following Findings were made within the subsequent Decision Notice:-

- 1- The first Complaint was not upheld and both the Clerk and the Trustee agreed that there had been a misunderstanding.
- 2- The second Complaint was upheld against the Association Secretary and the following Findings were made:-
  - i) He had bullied and harrassed the Clerk,
  - ii) He had committed Gross Misconduct in Office and;
  - iii) He had, without just cause, tried to have the Clerk dismissed from his employment.

After receiving advice from the Charity Commission, I became compelled to report the above matter to the Commission as a Serious Incident Report (SIR) in December 2022 along with recommendations identified within the Decision Notice to reduce the risk of a reoccurrence of such a risk. The Commission formally accepted the Report along with the recommendations.

Central Council were notified of the SIR on 16<sup>th</sup> December 2022. I requested talks to discuss the recommendations made to and accepted by the Charity Commission and in particular that Central Council should cease to be the Appointing Body of the Benevolent Boards Trustees. Central Council failed to respond to my correspondence of 16<sup>th</sup> December 2022 until May 2023 after several chaser emails. On the 27<sup>th</sup> June 2023 I received an email from the Chairman of Central Council confirming that Central Council object to being removed as the Appointing Body of Trustees.

I am pleased to report that the other recommendations, contained within the Decision Notice and accepted by the Charity Commission, are being acted upon and that in relation to professional training, places offered to Central Council, GBNC and the Bursary Fund Trustees have been accepted and that they will be represented at the training events organised by the Trustees.

The Managing Trustees acknowledge and thank the following, for the efficient and effective administration of the Fund during the past year. Brother Phil Roberts, Clerk to the Trustees, Brother Mark Allanson, Chairman of the Investment Committee and the members of that

committee, the Senior Administrator and Staff at Head Office, the members of the Circle Benevolent Boards and the Directors involved generating new cases, and providing information to enable the Board of Trustees to review existing cases.

Brief details of awards made during the past year are set out below.

**Peter Devine.**

**Chairman July 2023.**

	<b>2022/23</b>	<b>2021/22</b>	<b>2020/21</b>
New applications	18	7	20
From members	15	5	15
From defendants	3	2	5
Re-applications	26	37	25
From members	21	29	19
From dependants	5	8	6
Disbursements			
Grants	£115,450	£165,028	£209,289
Unsecured loans	£785,524	£663,884	£455,021
Total	£900,974	£828,912	£664,310
Number of meetings held in the year	6	6	6
Loans reviewed in the year	66	71	57