



Benevolent & Children's Fund News

March 2026



The Catenian Benevolent Fund – Benevolent & Children's Fund (catenianbenevolence.org)

The Trustees of the Benevolent Fund meet six times per year and the most recent meeting was on 17th March 2026. On this occasion all nine Trustees were present either in person (seven) or by video conference (two).

As this was the last meeting in the Catenian year 2025/26, a summary of the Trustees activities in the year is given below, after a report of the meeting itself.

It was a busy agenda, with 40 cases being considered including 16 applications for assistance. Twelve awards were made, with four applications being deferred for further information. Grants awarded came to £10,100 and loans to £272,022, in total £282,122. The Emergency Committee had been called into action five times since the previous meeting in January. Loan repayments received amounted to £48,700.

Eight cases were reviewed. These are cases where a loan has been made previously and remains outstanding. The Trustees review such cases at intervals of no longer than two years. Occasionally, a beneficiary might offer to start making repayments: more often, it is appropriate to offer additional assistance: most often the file is put away for a further review in two years time.

A further 16 cases were considered, either as a result of actions arising from previous meetings or from correspondence received.

Seven letters of thanks, an unusually large number, had been received since the last meeting, for which the Trustees are very grateful. Such letters are often quite moving but all are received with delight and recorded in the Minutes.

RESERVES

	18/01/2026	15/03/2026
Equities	£5,812,368	£5,532,471
Bonds	£890,320	£883,259
Property Fund	£998,497	£998,497
Total	£7,701,185	£7,414,227
Cash held for investment	£72,298	£137,387
Cash at Bank	£207,000	£61,128
Total Reserves	£7,980,483	£7,612,742

There had been two transactions in the portfolio since the previous meeting, both being on 5th February:

- Sale of 20,000 shares in Polar Capital Technology Trust, Raising £98,400;
- Transfer of £60,000 from cash held for investment to the bank.

CHANGE TO A CHARITABLE INCORPORATED ORGANISATION (CIO)

It was agreed that instructions be given to the Trustees' solicitor to make the required changes to the Constitution referred to in the report of the January meeting. The amendments have been agreed between the Trustees and Central Council. The final wording of the amendments will be reviewed to ensure that they reflect what is intended and the Constitution will then be submitted to the Charities Commission for registration.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Arising from concerns expressed at the previous meeting that a few Circles may be using the availability of the Benevolent Fund as a “marketing tool” for recruitment to the Association, a letter was approved for publication to members on this matter together with a change to the Trustees’ policy on providing assistance to newly recruited brothers. The letter and revised policy are attached to this report and will be published in Catena in May.

SUMMARY OF 2025/26

To summarise the activity in the financial year, April 2025 to March 2026, (previous year in brackets):

21 grants awarded – £287,832 (21 - £219,081);
27 loans awarded – £1,026,548 (21 - £1,197,968);
Total assistance offered – £1,314,380 (£1,417,049);
6 loans repaid – £117,080 (8 -£537,882);
47 loans reviewed (58);
23 thank you letters received (18);
1788 items of correspondence received in the office (1966);
1291 items of correspondence sent (1388).

The next meeting of the Trustees is on 19th May 2026.

ATTACHMENTS

1. LETTER TO BROTHERS
2. POLICY CONCERNING APPLICATIONS ON BEHALF OF NEWLY ENROLLED BROTHERS & THEIR DEPENDANTS



**THE CATENIAN ASSOCIATION
BENEVOLENT & CHILDRENS FUND**

5 Oak Court, Pilgrims Walk, Prologis Park

COVENTRY CV6 4QH

Registered charity no 214244

Phone 024 7622 4533

Dear Brothers,

USING THE BENEVOLENT FUND TO PROMOTE MEMBERSHIP

A small number of instances have come to the notice of the Trustees that the existence of the Benevolent Fund has been used as an opportunity to promote membership recruitment.

This has become apparent in applications for assistance from recently enrolled brothers (i.e. in the previous two years or so).

For reasons of Data Protection, it is not possible to quote individual examples but a hypothetical case could be where an interest only mortgage is due to expire in a few years but no provision has been made by the mortgagee to repay it on expiry of the agreed term.

It is clear that some aspiring members have been advised by some Catenians of the availability of the Fund as part of the recruitment process. There is no suggestion at this time that new members are enrolling simply for the benefit of the Benevolent Fund.

The number of cases is very small at present but the danger of their becoming commonplace should be obvious to all, especially to those recruiting at Circle, Province and National level. The Benevolent Fund may be seen as a wonderful marketing tool, a "Unique Selling Point" for membership. However, if used in that way, it could in the long run attract new members whose purpose is to avail themselves of the Fund to assist in a problem that they know is coming. It could become a unique tool for bankrupting the Fund, or at least causing it severe financial difficulty.

It is not for the Trustees of the Benevolent Fund to direct Membership Officers and other brothers on how to recruit new members but they do ask that due diligence is done in relation to Rule 1 of the Association, which states that membership is "open to Catholic laymen and permanent deacons over the age of 18 years **who on enrolment have the capacity to discharge the Obligations of Membership**". Having the capacity to discharge the obligations of membership must include surely the capacity to make provision for your own and your family's financial future as far as is known and is practicable.

That does not require a full statement of financial health to be provided before enrolment but it does suggest that it should be explained pre-enrolment, if the Fund is discussed at all, that a call on the Fund relating to existing or anticipated difficulties that are known before enrolment is not likely to succeed.

The Trustees' policy on Assisting Newly Enrolled Brothers, first issued in January 2024, has been updated to include this new situation and is attached for information.

Yours sincerely & fraternally

John Hogan
Chairman of Trustees

POLICY CONCERNING APPLICATIONS ON BEHALF OF NEWLY ENROLLED BROTHERS & THEIR DEPENDANTS

Rule 1 of the Catenian Association states that membership is “open to Catholic laymen and permanent deacons over the age of 18 years who on enrolment have the capacity to discharge the Obligations of Membership”. The President’s words to the candidate at his enrolment include, “should a Brother suffer misfortune, our concern is to aid him in full measure.”

The paragraph above suggests that a brother should be in a reasonably stable financial position on enrolment, not necessarily wealthy but able to cope, and that should he suffer misfortune after enrolment his brothers and the Association, including the Benevolent Fund, will support him in full measure.

From time to time, the Trustees receive applications on behalf of brothers who have recently enrolled, sometimes only a few months before making the application.

It is quite feasible for a brother or his dependants to suffer some misfortune soon after enrolment but which could not be foreseen at the time of enrolment. For this reason, the Trustees consider that access to the Fund should continue to be available to all brothers on enrolment.

However, it can be seen in some applications that the financial difficulties giving rise to an application for help existed or could reasonably be foreseen before the brother’s enrolment. In these circumstances, the Trustees will normally consider the application to be out of scope.

Adopted by the Trustees on 16th January 2024
Amended by the Trustees on 20th January 2026