

**CONSTITUTION and BY-LAWS**  
**of**  
**THE DOWN MASONIC WIDOWS' FUND**

As revised

"At a Special Meeting convened for the purpose on 10th March 2014."

- 1) The Fund shall be known as, and designated, "THE DOWN MASONIC WIDOWS' FUND".
- 2) The sphere of the Fund's operation shall be confined to Lodges which are in connection with the Fund by donations or contributions, as hereinafter provided, and meeting in the Province of Down outside a six-mile radius of Belfast.
- 3) The objects of the Fund's operation shall be to afford assistance to deserving, destitute, or indigent Widows and families (including the mother and sisters) of Freemasons, who have been subscribing members of a Lodge in the Masonic Province of Down, outside a six-mile radius of Belfast, by grants or by such other means as the General Committee may find best suited to the necessities of the applicants.
- 4) The affairs of the fund shall be managed by a General Committee, consisting of the President, Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Vice-Presidents, Treasurer, Assistant Treasurer, Gift-Aid Treasurers, Secretary, Assistant Secretary, and the Trustees of the Fund (together the "Officers"). In addition to the foregoing, every Lodge, Chapter, Council, Preceptory and Prince Mason Chapter subscribing annually, including personal subscriptions, shall have power to elect two Representatives to the General Committee (together known as the "Members").
- 5) The Chairman, Treasurer and Secretary shall constitute the Executive Committee and shall have power to grant to any person entitled to benefit under Bye-Law 3 a sum not exceeding an amount to be determined from time to time at the Annual General Meeting.
- 6) There shall be not more than eight Trustees of the Fund. Vacancies shall be filled, as and when thought fit, by the General Committee at an Extraordinary General Meeting or the Annual General Meeting; and thereupon all the Trust Funds belonging to this Fund shall, by the continuing or surviving Trustees or Trustee, or the Executors or Administrators of such survivor, be transferred into the names of the full body of Trustees then empowered to act in such trusts. No person shall be appointed a Trustee who is not at the time a registered Master Mason, subscribing to a Lodge connected with the Fund, and from within the Fund's sphere of operation as described at paragraph 2 above.
- 7) The Trustees shall invest such sums as the General Committee may from time to time direct in such stocks, funds, shares, property or other investment as the Trustees shall, after obtaining appropriate advice, in their absolute discretion think fit, and pay the investment income to the Treasurer for the use of the Fund, with power of changing and transposing such investments from time to time and in all respects as if they were absolutely entitled thereto beneficially without being answerable for any loss which may be occasioned thereby.

The Trustees shall have power to borrow or raise money for the objects of the Fund on such terms and on such security as the Trustees may think fit. The Trustees then empowered to do so may execute any such document effecting such security.

- 8) No portion of the investments held by the Trustees shall be withdrawn except by the unanimous consent of the Trustees, failing which by resolution passed by the votes of not less than two-thirds of the qualified voters present and voting at an Annual General Meeting or at an Extraordinary General Meeting of the General Committee.
- 9) There shall be an Annual General Meeting of the General Committee in the first quarter of each year, and Extraordinary General Meetings as required, to admit applicants to the benefits of the Fund, to make temporary grants or yearly grants, payable half-yearly, and to transact all business relevant to the management of the Fund.
- 10) At the Annual General Meeting the General Committee shall: -
  - a. Elect at least three Patrons who would have no voting rights.
  - b. Elect a President, Vice Presidents, Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Treasurer, Assistant Treasurer, Secretary, Assistant Secretary and Gift Aid Treasurers to serve as officer bearers to the General Committee for the ensuing year.
  - c. Revise all renewal grants and to consider applications for new grants.
  - d. Receive and approve the Annual Reports and Financial statements.
  - e. Appoint Auditors
- 11) Each meeting of the General Committee shall be opened and ruled by the Chairman and in his absence by the Vice-Chairman or by The President, a Vice-President, or in the absence of any such Officer by a member of the General Committee chosen from those present. In the case of an equality of votes at any meeting, the Chairman shall have a second or casting vote, and in every case the Chairman's decision shall be final.

At any meeting of the General Committee forty five shall form a quorum. If a quorum does not attend within one hour from the time specified in the summons no business shall be transacted.
- 12) An Extraordinary General Meeting of the General Committee shall be convened by the Secretary or by direction of any meeting of the General Committee; or on the requisition in writing of seven members of the General Committee, stating the object for which such meeting is to be held; or by direction of the Chairman, in writing. At least four days' notice of such meeting to be given and no business other than that specified in the notice convening the meeting to be transacted.
- 13) The Treasurer shall take charge of the cash, and keep proper accounts thereof (including records for necessary returns made to HMRC), and shall hand over cash to the Trustees when directed so to do by the General Committee; and shall make all such payments and disbursements out of the funds in his hands as the General Committee may direct; and shall keep his books always ready for inspection of the General Committee.
- 14) The financial year shall end on 31<sup>st</sup> January. Any lodge, Chapter, Council, Preceptory or Prince Mason Chapter which has failed to subscribe for the previous year, as provided by Bye-Law 4, shall not be entitled to elect Representatives onto the General Committee.

15) Every application for a grant of money must be in writing, on the approved form, properly completed, and shall be delivered to the Secretary of the Fund at least seven days previous to the meeting at which the application is to be considered.

The application shall be made by a Lodge of which the deceased was a member, and shall be signed in open Lodge by a Past or Actual Master and the Secretary or Treasurer of the Lodge, who shall have knowledge of the applicant.

The application must also be recommended by the local Charity Fund-raising Committee.

The seal of the Lodge shall be affixed to the application, which shall be accompanied by such other information as may be required by the General Committee.

16) All grants shall be reviewed annually, and before renewal a satisfactory report from the local Charity Fund-raising Committee must be received by the General Committee. If such report is not sent in the General Committee may withhold or withdraw the grant. For new applications a Lodge representative must be present at the meeting at which the application is to be considered.

17) The General Committee may decline to consider applications from Lodges which have not subscribed in the current year to the Fund.

18) The General Committee shall have power to make grants of sums not exceeding an amount to be determined from time to time at the Annual General Meeting, to settle the form of applications for grants and the questions to be answered thereon, and all applications and Annual Reports must be on the Forms approved by the General Committee, which Forms shall be supplied by the Secretary on application. Additional grants may be made to a Widow or family (as defined at bye-law 3 above) in special need as agreed for each case by the Executive Committee and approved by the General Committee at the next Annual General Meeting.

19) In the case of death, resignation, or removal from office of any Officer or during the year, the vacancy may be filled by the appointment of a nominee by the Trustees subject to the appointment of such nominee being ratified at the next Annual General Meeting.

20) The General Committee shall have power, by resolution of two-thirds of the members present, subject to bye-law 11, at a meeting specially summoned for the purpose, to remove any Officer or Member connected with the Fund.

21) Notwithstanding anything contained in the foregoing laws, no person who is not a subscribing Master Mason shall be a member of the General Committee.

22) The Constitution and By-Laws of the Fund shall not be repealed or altered, or any new one enacted, except at the Annual General Meeting when notice to do so has been given, or at an Extraordinary General Meeting convened for the purpose.

23) If a dispute arises between members about the validity or propriety of anything done by the members under this constitution, and the dispute cannot be resolved by agreement, the parties to the dispute must first try in good faith to settle the dispute before resorting to mediation.

Patrons:-

M. W. Grand Master of Ireland  
Rt. W. Provincial Grand Master of Down  
M. Ex. District Grand King of Down

President:-

Rt. W. Bro. Desmond. H. Smyth

Vice President:-

Rt. W. Bro. Ernest J Woods

Chairman:-

Rt. W. Bro. W. G. Ian Ritchie

Vice Chairman:-

W. Bro. J. Alan Hanna

Treasurer:-

Rt. W. Bro. Robert Winters

Secretary:-

Rt. W. Bro. Noel W. Sufferin  
1 The Grange, Lisburn, BT28 3XX

Trustees:-

W. Bro. H. Edgar Kelly  
W. Bro. J. Alan Hanna  
Rt. W. Bro Douglas Thompson  
W. Bro. Ivan McCartney  
Rt. W. Bro. Noel W. Sufferin  
Rt. W. Bro. W. G. Ian Ritchie  
Rt. W. Bro. Desmond. H. Smyth  
W. Bro. Eric J. Williamson