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Press release – for immediate release

## **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."

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**Contacts:**

Livia Ferreira, Public Relations Manager, United Grand Lodge of England

*Email:* [lferreira@ugle.org.uk](mailto:lferreira@ugle.org.uk)

*Telephone:* +44 (0) 20 7395 9208 *Mobile:* +44 (0) 7539 578699

Michelle Worvell, Director of Communications and Marketing, United Grand Lodge of England

*Email:* [mworvell@ugle.org.uk](mailto:mworvell@ugle.org.uk)

*Telephone:* +44 (0)20 7395 9290 / *Mobile:* +44 (0)7538 512 669

For further information about the **Masonic Charitable Foundation**, please contact Guy Roberts, Press Officer ([groberts@mcf.org.uk](mailto:groberts@mcf.org.uk) | 020 3146 3311 / Mobile: 07789 922 769)

**Notes to Editors:**

The attached photograph shows nurses wearing face visors funded and delivered by Freemasons in Wiltshire.

**About the United Grand Lodge of England:**

- ) The [United Grand Lodge of England](#) was founded at the Goose and Gridiron Pub in London in 1717.
- ) It has 48 Provinces across the country and more than 7,000 Lodges, with students over 18 able to join one of the 85 University Scheme Lodges.
- ) Freemasons use four important guiding principles to help define their path through life: integrity, friendship, respect and charity.
- ) One of the oldest social and charitable organisations in the world, Freemasonry's roots lie in the traditions of the medieval stonemasons who built our cathedrals and castles.
- ) Membership is open to people from all backgrounds and the organisation's aim is to empower members to be the best they can be – it's about building character, supporting members as individuals and helping them make a positive contribution to society.

Michelle Worvell, Director of Communications and Marketing

Freemasons' Hall, 60 Great Queen Street, London, WC2B 5AZ

Telephone: +44 (0)20 7395 9290 Mobile: +44 (0)7538 512 669 Email: [mworvell@ugle.org.uk](mailto:mworvell@ugle.org.uk)

[www.ugle.org.uk](http://www.ugle.org.uk)  [@UGLE\\_GrandLodge](#)  [UnitedGrandLodgeofEngland](#)

- ) Freemasonry is one of the largest charitable givers in the country, contributing more than £48m to deserving causes in 2018 alone. Freemasons do not only donate money – more than 18.5 million hours of volunteer work was undertaken by Freemasons in 2018.

**About the Masonic Charitable Foundation:**

- ) The Masonic Charitable Foundation (MCF), the Freemasons' charity, is one of the largest grant-making charities in the country.
- ) Funded entirely through the generosity of Freemasons and their families, the MCF awards millions of pounds each year to local and national charities that help vulnerable people, advance medical research and provide opportunities for young people.
- ) The MCF also helps to fund vital services such as hospices and air ambulances and regularly contributes to worldwide appeals for disaster relief. In total, MCF support helps to improve the lives of thousands of people every year in England, Wales and internationally.
- ) As well as providing grants to charities, the MCF supports Freemasons and their families with a financial, health or family need.
- ) Visit [www.mcf.org.uk](http://www.mcf.org.uk) for more information.