



The Provincial Grand Lodge of Hampshire and Isle of Wight

R.W.Bro. Michael J. Wilks
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Dear Brethren,

The Provincial Grand Master does not always get his own way!

After I announced my retirement and the appointment of V W Bro Jon Whitaker as my successor, I had a discussion with Jon during which I stated that I did not want any retirement gift from the Province. It had been my privilege to serve the Province and I was looking forward to spending my last few months on a long goodbye, meeting and thanking so many brethren and Lodges across the Province for their support. That was thwarted by the pandemic and suspension of Freemasonry. My decision not to have a parting gift was thwarted by my successor!

Jon and I had a lovely outside lunch with our wives Kay and Lynn on the last day of my tenure as ProvGM (carefully observing social distancing of course) during which Jon handed me a cheque for £7000 from the brethren of the Province to do as I wished. I wasn't expecting that, having made my position clear! That said, I do very much appreciate the thoughts behind the gift, and I thank all those who contributed.

I have discussed with Kay how best we can utilise the gift. Our thoughts turned to the Area Charity Presentations which we have been privileged to attend, and in particular to those small local charities formed by those deeply affected by a traumatic incident in their own families and driven by a desire to minimise the impact of such traumatic events on others. A gift of a few hundred pounds can make a huge difference to those charities and their beneficiaries. In every Area, there are charities which fall into this category and so (with the permission of the Deputy in Charge of the Province) I have asked the ProvGChStwd to oversee donations to such charities, nominated by the Area Charity Stewards, on the basis of £1000 per Area.

We have not yet decided what to do with the remaining £1000 – but we will probably treat the family to a day away when things return to normal.

That's it from me brethren. Kay and I have had a wonderful time over the past 10 years, and we have met some lovely people during the numerous events which we have attended on your behalf. We have made some great, enduring friendships. Please accept our heartfelt thanks.

Sincerely and fraternally,

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