



GIFT AID IN THE MASONIC PROVINCE OF DOWN

INSTRUCTIONS FOR LODGE TREASURERS / STEWARDS OF CHARITIES

What is the "Gift Aid Envelope Scheme"?

In order to maximise the benefits offered by recent Government legislation in respect of charitable giving under the auspices of Gift Aid, the Province of Down have initiated a scheme which will increase the opportunities for additional income to be generated by reclaiming tax from the Inland Revenue. The best way for us to do this is by the use of pre-printed envelopes, which are completed by the donor with some personal details, and in which he places his charity donation. The scheme is only open to those members who are tax payers.

		Province of Down Masonic Charities
<u>Gift Aid Declaration</u>		(ALL details to be completed in CAPITALS)
I authorise the receiving Masonic Charity Committee to treat this donation of £	Name	Address
as Gift Aid. I will pay an amount of tax (Income or Capital Gains) at least equal to the tax that the Charity reclaims on my donations in the tax year.	Post Code	Signature
Date	This donation will be credited to the host Lodge and processed via one of the Charity Committees listed overleaf.	

Why just tax payers?

The idea of Gift Aid is that the Inland Revenue will pay to the registered charity, (in our case Holywood Masonic Charity Committee), an amount of money equal to 22% (at present) of the total monies donated to the charity by those who have paid Income Tax or Capital Gains Tax in the last year. Those who are non-taxpayers can't take advantage of the scheme. In effect the Inland Revenue are giving to the Masonic Charities a portion of the tax the donor has already paid as Income Tax.

When are the envelopes used?

The Steward of Charities should ensure that sufficient envelopes are held for each occasion a charity collection will be taken, and issue them out as required. If this is at an Installation or other formal occasion it would be best to place them at each person's dinner place, so that they can be completed by the donor before the collection is lifted. At a Masonic Church service they should be placed on each seat to be used. A stock should always be on hand as well for occasional giving, say within the Lodge room, if a collection is lifted in this way. Always remember that non-tax payers do not need one.

How is it used?

The donor simply completes (in BLOCK CAPITALS) his name, address, postcode, the date and the amount placed in the envelope, before signing his name in the appropriate space. It is then sealed and placed in the collection plate in the normal way.

Why are these details needed?

By completing these details the donor is declaring that he is a tax payer, and has paid an amount of Income Tax or Capital Gains Tax at least equal to that which can be reclaimed from the Inland Revenue for his donation. No further details are required about the donor, and no additional checks will be undertaken to verify the truth or otherwise of this declaration. In itself it becomes a legally binding declaration to the Inland Revenue.

When the collection is being counted what happens to these envelopes?

The Treasurer is now faced with a new situation which needs care and accuracy for the scheme to work. Firstly, all envelopes should be separated from the "loose money" in the collection plates. This "loose money" is treated in the future in exactly the same manner as at present. Each envelope needs to have the donor details on it accurately recorded on the pink "Gift Aid Envelopes Listing Sheet", and the amount inside tallied with the amount shown on the outside. If a discrepancy occurs, every effort should be made to contact the donor to establish the correct details. In the event that this is not possible, the actual cash or cheque value received should be taken as correct.

What is the cream coloured "Gift Aid Envelopes Summary Sheet" for?

This is used to record the total of each pink used, and to show the details of the Lodge etc., together with the Treasurer's address. Most importantly it shows the overall total collected. A Lodge cheque for this overall total, made payable to "Holywood Masonic Charity Committee" needs to be sent to the Gift Aid Treasurer along with the cream and pink forms and ALL the relevant Gift Aid envelopes. The monies collected from the envelopes should be credited to the Lodge's bank account immediately to cover the cheque issued.

Why send everything to the Gift Aid Treasurer, especially the money?

The only way to reclaim this taxed income from the Inland Revenue is via a registered charity, and so it is the Gift Aid Treasurer from Holywood Charity Committee who must do this. Only when all the paperwork is correct and is accompanied by the envelopes used and the cheque for the overall total, can a claim be considered. This means that donations collected via this scheme MUST be passed on immediately after they are received, and MUST NOT be retained in the Lodge's own funds.

What do I do with the "loose money" we have collected?

This is gathered up in the same way as it always has been, and accounted for in exactly the same way. The Treasurer of Holywood Charity Committee will continue to look for

details of all donations you are making, in order that the full extent of your giving can be accurately recorded in the Down Charity Report.

What about the VJMBF No 2 Account lodgement books?

For this scheme to work properly, all monies collected via the envelopes **MUST** be passed to the Gift Aid Treasurer at Hollywood Charity Committee, in order that the tax can be reclaimed. It is therefore impossible for you as a Lodge/Chapter etc. to forward donations directly to the VJMBF No 2 Account and also claim the tax on those donations. In this case, it will be the Gift Aid Treasurer who will ensure your donations to the No 2 Account are made and recorded. You will simply indicate that this is your wish, when making your return.

What about those Gift Aid Vouchers we can get?

The voucher scheme is growing each year in popularity and there is no plan to replace it with the envelopes. The vouchers can be used at any Masonic function in the British Isles, whereas at this time the envelopes are only available for use within the Province of Down. Both schemes operate in harmony and should not be seen as competing against each other. Vouchers should NOT be placed inside envelopes, only cash or cheques.

How do I get the envelopes? What happens if I run out?

The Gift Aid Treasurer will ensure at all times that sufficient envelopes are available in the anteroom to satisfy Hollywood's needs. Treasurers or Stewards of Charities should use however many they require from this stock, but there is no need for them to stockpile their own supplies. If the hall stock should become totally depleted for any reason, the Gift Aid Treasurer should be contacted in the first instance to ensure new envelopes are made available.

Where can I turn to for more help or advice?

The Gift Aid Treasurer will be happy to offer advice on the running of the scheme at any time. This scheme has enormous benefits for the Masonic Benevolent Institutions, but can only meet its full potential if we all "buy in" to it. It is imperative that all Stewards of Charities and Treasurers are happy and comfortable with its operation. Visits to all bodies sitting in Hollywood by the Gift Aid Treasurer can be arranged if required.

Gift Aid Treasurer

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