The Member’s Benevolent Trust: Chairman’s Report 2013

The Institute of Materials, Minerals and Mining (IOM3) has become the Institute for the Materials sector and as various specialist institutes have joined, some have brought with them their benevolent fund. In 2003 several existing funds merged to form The Member’s Benevolent Trust, which now exists to serve all the members of the Institute (and their dependents), whether they come from an institute that had a benevolent fund or not. Due to the generosity of members who add a small donation (with Gift aid) to their annual subscription, and to donations from some of the local societies, we are able to supplement the investment income which is derived from legacies and significant donations from private individuals. This year we are very grateful for a special donation from the Institute based on the number of votes cast for the Governance Changes in 2012.

In 2013 we were able to help thirty four beneficiaries, a slight increase on 2012. This includes three overseas members, at a total cost of £11,000 who have suffered severe financial hardship and have very small pensions. However, the number of UK based significant cases dropped to three, (for £10,200) as two we have helped for many years passed away. We give Christmas "hampers or vouchers" to members or widows who are surviving on very low pensions, and this year we spent £11,000 helping 21 widows. Finally we were able to help five new cases at a cost of £8,531, but we expect these cases to need further help in the years to come as their situation worsens.

The pattern of help we are asked to provide is reflecting the hardship some members experience with the rising cost of living as they become frail. Some go into Care homes and find that the local authority limits the help it can give and they may be asked to pay part of their costs if the Care home they choose costs more than the Local Authority can pay. Where a member has entered into an Equity Release scheme and the money has run out he may be required to move to a cheaper Care home. The Trustees have to decide what level of support is appropriate, if any, to enable a member to keep the standard of living and care he was used to. This is where the MBT Visitors and Officers have to collect the details and decide how the Trust Fund's limited resources can best be used. Several of the Local Societies have set up small groups of members to keep an eye open for members or their spouses in need and we are very grateful for this grass roots support.

Marketing of the MBT has intensified this year, with the new website up and running, plus leaflets have been sent to local Societies to distribute and a "pop up" banner has been produced that can be used at meetings or exhibitions. So far the response has been limited, but the more it gets publicity the better. So if you know a member or dependant in need do put them in touch with the MBT.

I retire as Chairman at the AGM and it has been a privilege to serve the members of my "mother" Institute the Plastics and Rubber Institute and the IoM3 for over fifteen years. 2013 has been difficult year for the MBT and I thank Gavin Bowyer for the support he has given me and Steve Dawe who has kept the finances in good order as shown in the Hon Treasurer's report.

David Oxley
Chairman