

# LONDON AMBULANCE SERVICE BENEVOLENT FUND

## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING FOR THE PERIOD

1<sup>st</sup> April 2009 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2010

Chairperson's Annual Report

31 March 2010

The chairperson of the London Ambulance Service Benevolent Fund is the responsible person for overseeing the efficient and effective management of the fund and under the constitution of the Fund is also required to report annually on the performance of the Fund during the previous 12 Months, including the current position, and any foreseen or possible changes that may affect our members during the year ahead.

In keeping with the above it is my responsibility to submit a report in preparation for the Funds Annual General Meeting, which has traditionally been fixed within our constitution to take place within the first Quarter of the year following the financial year being reported on. **Our financial reporting period now covers the financial tax year April 1st to March 31st and also avoids any conflict with other organisations and our own corporate tax commitments each year.**

This is now the second year that my report will cover the above 12 month financial period, which falls into line with our financial reporting responsibilities. This allows the publication for each year in the future of a full financial analysis to be published. This will only be after an acceptance by the executive committee at our Annual General Meetings, which should take place within an approximate and predetermined period each year. This can of course be delayed depending upon the amount of problems or normal difficulties that we regularly face.

The future Annual General Meeting's will cover an agenda that includes the various reports on our performance during the Funds previous financial year, (1<sup>st</sup> April to 31<sup>st</sup> March) plus any recommendations that may be required to maintain or improve the position or performance of the Fund. The AGM will also consider the election or re-election of the management and executive committee as required under the constitution and Bye Laws of [the Fund](#)

### **How did we perform in 2009/10**

Considering the Funds total reliance upon volunteers to carry out the day to day tasks and also maintain the integrity and efficient management of the fund, I can only, once again report my admiration for the dedication of our volunteers. 2009/10 has continued to be a particular challenging year for the executive committee as the overall financial uncertainty within the Banking system in the UK did not improve sufficiently to allow us to take our eye off the ball. As guardians of the Fund the executive committee had to consider various reports regarding certain financial institutions and take action if necessary to protect any of the Funds assets or investments that may be at risk. I believe that by agreement and advice from our long term independent accountant all the necessary action was taken. Currently our financial position as advised by our accountant appears healthy, but we do need to keep a watching brief for any future fiscal changes that may have some effect upon our Fund. Despite of the current situation happening around us I am able once again to report that the Benevolent Fund continues to maintain its position within the service, offering assistance to members in a variety of ways, ranging from financial assistance, counseling, benefit payments, convalescence and recuperative facilities and advice.

It seems from a layman's point of view that each year I say that, the previous year was once again a year of further achievements. Well for 2009/10 it is true that the Ben fund team exceeded all expectations. This was set against a continuing background of financial crisis which threatened to affect our record of fiscal guardianship of the fund. Therefore it was necessary to strengthen and consolidate improvements made for the renewal of our existing convalescent & respite facility. In our last financial analysis we had identified this as an increased asset investment, giving the fund part protection to our future financial position. This decision had not been taken lightly and much debate and advice had been considered by the executive committee including a visit to the location of our facility prior to the change over. It was agreed that negotiations for the exchange of our existing facility to a new and upgraded facility should take place with the aim to conclude before the new 2009 season started. Once again despite the difficulties that faced us and the ongoing financial uncertainties within the UK, The exchange was achieved on time and our individual executive committee members, remained focused and committed to the aims of the Fund. Therefore I wish to convey my personal thanks to these dedicated volunteers, without them our fund could not function effectively.

**Our Almoner and the service Staff Support Officer, Tina Vince has to deal with bereavements, severe accidents, marital problems, loss of accommodation, hardship, severe financial difficulties, and so many other varied problems that the average person would be at a loss to deal with. The provision of support to our members in need is of a varying nature and sometimes demands immediate or urgent action and Tina deals with all of this on a daily basis usually at the time of the members greatest difficulty. Members that have dealt with Tina during their moment or moments of crisis will witness to how they have been dealt with in a compassionate and committed way and were able to rely upon the Fund and the support offered in their time of greatest need.**

Our convalescence and recuperative lodge facility at Milford-on-Sea Hampshire would now be beginning its 9th year of full use for members suffering or recovering from a severe or debilitating illness. During 2009, we allocated all weeks but a few which proved to be most beneficial to the members or their dependents that were unfortunately in need of this service. Again all visitors were full of praise for the facility and our chosen site and I feel sure that this will continue even more so with our new facility delivering a very pleasant and medically beneficial experience during 2010.

Last year I reported that the success of this project and the provision of this facility can only be described as an outstanding implementation and achievement for the Benevolent Fund and the members in most need. These words cannot reflect how well this project has served our members that by necessity used this facility and without exception benefited from their visit. To date approximately 205 visits by members in need have been made to this facility. It is now our priority task to ensure that our new facility continues to deliver the same success and more in the coming years.

**2011 Diaries** Due to difficulties with our suppliers the benevolent fund diaries will not be available for 2011, but we will continue to seek other suppliers or alternatives.

Our Web Site [WWW.benfund.info](http://WWW.benfund.info) continues to provide information and easy publication of our quarterly Newsletter (including draw winners) and any special notices or newsletters at any time during the year. Also on the current projects page (what is this facility) we have published some initial picture of our new facility. This will be improved as we progress.

## 2010/11. The Year Ahead

Each year I try to predict how the Benevolent Fund will perform and in particular how events within the LAS will affect or influence the management of our fund. Over the years I have become to realise that without a crystal ball or some insider knowledge some things will change and have an effect on the Fund, but others will have no effect. In fact this has always been the case and we have always been resilient enough to keep the management of the fund on an even keel.

What we do each year is to adopt a flexible approach to the way ahead in terms of additional benefits or projects that will enhance the support that our members currently enjoy. What we finally look to achieve during the coming year will be dependent upon the outcome of the Annual General Meeting, but I have no doubt that our aims and objectives will be to continue to improve the provision of meaningful assistance to our members and the extremely good work already achieved and to build upon this for the future.

During 2010, we in the UK face a General Election and much of how the Benevolent Fund progresses or in fact manages its affairs will probably be dependent upon the government in power. However you can rest assured that whatever the outcome our executive committee will remain on top of it and make the sensible decisions that They have always done. This years AGM will most probably be delayed until we know the outcome and any legislation that may affect The Fund.

Every year I remind our members that the Fund is managed by the members for the members.

So much so that this has become our byword or motto. However, the Fund could not exist without our volunteer members of the executive and management council, a task for which we are always seeking new volunteers and **if any of you wish to consider helping, give Tina or myself a call and we will give you details of what is required of you. You will be surprised how little is required of you.**

Finally, I am sorry for the repeats within my report, but as each year goes by it becomes more and more difficult to find the words that are adequate enough to express how I continue to experience the immense personal satisfaction in keeping the Benevolent Fund on track, introducing new projects or schemes and experiencing the reward of knowing how much good we can do for our members most in need. I also know this feeling is shared by every member of the executive committee and therefore I wish to convey my personal thanks to the Benevolent Fund team for the way they have carried out their responsibilities. I also feel sure that you will all wish to join me in thanking each one for all they have done for us over the years.

**A .J. Garrett**  
**Chairperson**  
**London Ambulance Service Benevolent Fund**

