



Area Committee Handbook

2007

Area Committee Handbook:

This handbook is presented as a reference and guide for Area Committees recognised by the “NewstrAid Benevolent Fund”, otherwise known as “OLD BEN”, the charity dedicated to the benefit of individuals in the distributive section of the newspaper and magazine publishing industry.

Since 1839, Area Committees have played a stabilising part as the local eyes and ears of the charity, alert both to the needs of beneficiaries and to the opportunities of raising funds.

The Charity’s office at Dunmow is available to co-ordinate and assist Area Committees in their formation and continuing development

NewstrAid Benevolent Fund

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Area Committees.

In order to extend the activities of the NewstrAid Benevolent Fund and achieve its objectives Area Committees may be formed from all three sectors of the news trade.

A well constituted Area Committee will have members from retail, wholesale and publishing – both newspapers and magazines, along with distributors and logistical firms. Apart from ensuring their effectiveness, the benefit of all three sections of the trade meeting to promote a joint objective benefits each individual member and their respective businesses.

Recognition will only be given by the Board of Trustees of the NewstrAid Benevolent Fund to properly constituted bodies.

Area Committees exist to fulfil two primary functions:

1. Raising Awareness of the charity.

The charity can only help those people who we know about and who know about us. It is a tragedy when people who desperately need our help are simply not aware of us. An effective area committee will ensure, by all sorts of means, that those within the news trade in the area and those who have left it, know about NewstrAid and the help available.

Events, such as Quiz Nights, Golf Days, Greyhound Nights, etc help raise the profile and should be used to “spread the word” about NewstrAid. Articles or pictures in local newspapers, leaflets sent to newsagents via wholesalers and attendance at local trade shows all help. If an area committee knows of an event or show at which they could raise NewstrAid’s profile, Great Dunmow is always willing to advise and even attend where possible. Speaking to Great Dunmow as soon as possible will help ensure assistance can be given.

2. Fund raising.

The funds that area committees raise are a vital source of help for the people NewstrAid assists. Without the fund raising efforts of area committees, NewstrAid would, quite simply, not be able to do the work we do.

There are many ways that area committees raise funds:

- 200 Clubs:

Run in conjunction with the areas wholesalers, 200 Clubs can be extremely good at both fund raising and profile raising. The awarding of monthly prizes is an excellent opportunity to “spread the word” about NewstrAid and the help it provides.

Details regarding the setting up and, more importantly, the regular re-generation of an area’s 200 Club can be obtained from Great Dunmow.

- Events:

The variety of events that an area committee can operate to raise funds and raise the profile of the charity is limited only by an area committee's imagination.

One vital aspect of holding an event, though, is that it is vital to both ensure the work involved is divided up between everyone on the committee and to ensure that every means possible is used to persuade people to attend.

Advice and help can be obtained on all aspects of holding an event from Great Dunmow. The experiences of other area committees can be shared this way as well.

Some suggestions for events are:

- Race Nights
- Greyhound Nights
- Quiz Nights
- Summer Fun evening
- BBQ
- Sponsored Walks
- Bangers and Bingo Nights.

Registration of Area Committee Officers

It is considered essential that an Area Committee appoints the following officers and that names, addresses and telephone numbers are registered with the charity's Office in Dunmow.

- Chairman
- Vice Chairman
- Treasurer.
- Honorary Secretary (preferably a wholesaler or local newspaper representative with access to office facilities)
- Honorary Auditors

Members of the Committee need to familiarise themselves with the charity's "Memorandum and Articles of Association". These, together with advice and ongoing help including the provision of necessary stationery for the Secretary, are available from the charity's office and can also be downloaded from the web site – www.newstraid.org.uk.

Where a local almoner is not a member of the area committee, it is recommended that they either be invited to join the area committee or kept informed of the work of the area committee.

Agreeing the Area

To avoid overlapping, new committees should agree their area with the charity's Office where an up to date regional record of active committees is maintained. It is worth noting that many Area Committees adopt wholesale house boundaries as guidelines.

Meetings

Area Committee meetings should be held as required but it is suggested that this should be not less than bi-monthly in order to maintain momentum.

An Annual General Meeting must be held as soon as possible after the end of the financial year. At which time the committee's Officers for the following year should be elected. The financial year is from 1st January to the 31st December.

The representative who will be responsible for advising the charity's office of all the committee's activities should also be appointed at this time.

Area Committees should appoint someone (usually the Secretary) to produce a set of minutes for the meeting, in order to remind everyone what has been discussed and agreed. A copy of the minutes should be sent to Great Dunmow, so they can be shared with other Area Committees.

The charity's full Annual General Meeting for all NewstrAid members is held in London and Area Committees are invited (as per the Memorandum & Articles of Association) to send two members attend and vote.

Managing the Funds

For many years NewstrAid Area Committees have carried out a remarkable amount of successful fundraising which has resulted in many hundreds of thousands of pounds being made available to our beneficiaries, to improve the quality of their lives at times of great need. The Trustees are constantly aware of the debt they owe to area committees and are rightly proud of the support they receive from them.

During this time, the trustees have taken care not to impose bureaucratic procedures on area committees, which might inhibit their local activities. Nevertheless, there has been a gradual but significant tightening of charity law over the last ten years, culminating in the latest Charities Act, which became law in November 2006.

Because of this, and the incorporation of NewstrAid in January 2007, the trustees are advised that all charities over a certain size have a legal requirement to have a written Financial Controls system in place and, consequently, have issued this revised Area Committee Handbook which details the system to be followed. The Financial Controls system must contain full details of all funds received and all funds spent.

A bank account should be opened by each Area Committee of the charity in the name of the “*(name of area)* **Area Committee – NewstrAid Benevolent Fund**”. All cheques should be signed by at least two officers of the Committee and at least three members of the Area Committee should become signatories.

It may be more profitable to open a building society account, instead of a bank account, where interest would be payable on the balance.

However, if the Committee does decide to start a normal bank account, check the situation with regard to Bank charges. With gentle persuasion, some Bank Managers may be sympathetic and willing to waive charges for the charity! However, it does help if the treasurer knows the particular Bank Manager.

A record (either manual or computerised) needs to be kept of all income and expenditure by the treasurer. This needs to be reconciled with the monthly bank/building society statement and counter-signed by one of the other designated signatories.

Keep a working balance in your account but please remit funds to the charity’s office at the earliest opportunity so that the monies can be put to good use. Maintain enough funds in the account to avoid bank charges and to fund the next forthcoming event. But over and above that funds are of little use sitting in the bank account, when the Charity has so many beneficiaries in need.

A full record of monies raised by each area during a financial year is kept at Dunmow. Cheques should be made out to the NewstrAid Benevolent Fund.

Each Area Committee should submit an annual statement of account at the end of the charity’s financial year, December 31, and the deadline for submission of accounts to Great Dunmow is mid-January. A copy of the relevant form can be found at the end of this document.

The Treasurer should submit the accounts for audit by the Honorary Auditors, prior to their submission to Great Dunmow each year. If the gross income of the Area Committee exceeds £10,000 in any one year, it is necessary that an independent auditor is asked to verify the accounts. Special arrangements have been made with Independent Examiners Ltd to provide this service, in order to comply with Charity law. They can be contacted via Great Dunmow and are available to answer queries relating to the accounts and assist with any account preparation work that might be needed. It is advisable to plan this audit well before December 31st each year.

Expenses incurred by members of the Area Committee whilst undertaking their work on behalf of the charity are refundable from the Area Committee accounts. Full details, including receipts, should be kept with the accounts. All payments need to be

authorised by one of the signatories, other than the person making the claim. NewstrAid asks that all expenses are, of course, kept to a minimum and advantage taken of such savings as off-peak travel and shared car usage, etc.

When funds are raised from local functions a statement of account should be kept and a copy forwarded to the charity's Office.

All personal donations should be sent straight to Great Dunmow. Donations from UK taxpayers may be eligible for Gift Aid tax recovery. Cheques should be made out to NewstrAid Benevolent Fund.

Should an Area Committee wish to employ the services of a professional external fundraiser, prior consultation with Great Dunmow must be had, owing to the requirements of the Charity Commission.

Help and advice may be obtained from the charity's Office at any time. We are here to help. Examples of the simple book-keeping necessary for an Area Committee are available from the Treasurer. Although an area committee can be formed to raise funds for NewstrAid all money is destined for the general charity fund. The charity's office therefore needs to be made aware of any fund raising activity at the planning stage.

The NewstrAid Benevolent Fund.

The Charity's registered office is at Great Dunmow, Essex. The office is situated above the Barnetson Court Old Ben Home.

As well as running the charity, the staff at Great Dunmow are there to help Area Committees in any way they can and welcome any opportunity to talk to and meet area committee members. Do not hesitate to give them a call at any time to ask for their advice and help.

Registered address:

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Email: oldben@newstraid.org.uk
Website: www.newstraid.org.uk

Officers of the Charity (based at Great Dunmow):



CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

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ASSISTANT WELFARE OFFICER

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ACCOUNTANT/TREASURER

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DEPUTY WELFARE OFFICER

Jill Hempleman
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The Board of Trustees:

The Charity is registered with the Charity Commission, registration number 1116824 and is run by a Board of Trustees, to whom the officers of the Charity report.

Chairman: Jeff Bardsley

Vice Chairman: Mel Lewis

Trustees: Tom Boyle

Rowland Brown

Neil Jagger

Dick Dyerson

David Holliday

Ingrid Jones

DEC Kitching

Mike Mirams

Ken Moreton

Frank Mustard – also Chairman of the Welfare Committee.

Terry Perry

Simon Prodger

Ed Ram

Ron Rushbrook

Richard Webb

The Welfare Committee:

All requests for assistance reported to the Charity are discussed by Welfare Committee. The membership of the Welfare Committee is made up of almoners from across the country. Our Welfare Officer will provide them with as much information as possible about each case and they will then decide what help, if any, NewstrAid is able to provide. In urgent cases, our Welfare Officer will discuss the case with the Chairman of the Welfare Committee and any actions then agreed upon will consequently be re-evaluated by the full Welfare Committee.

The help NewstrAid provides:

The Memorandum & Articles of Association for the NewstrAid Benevolent Fund, describe the Charity's objective as:

To relieve persons who are in condition of need or hardship and to relieve the distress caused thereby through the provision of welfare for persons who are, or have been, employed in the selling and distribution of newspapers, magazines and periodicals ("The Trade") in the United Kingdom, including their immediate family and dependents. Engagement, either full or part-time, shall normally have been for a minimum of ten consecutive years. Distribution shall be deemed to be from receipt of the said publication from the machine until received by the reader.

The service provided by NewstrAid has developed over the past decade into more than just the provision of benefit to supplement the retirement pensions and state benefits of retired Trade people, and support of orphaned children.

Our help now extends to the disabled and to young families, and sometimes even to people who are still working. Grants in all cases are at the discretion of the Welfare Committee.

We advise where we can and, in cases where we are not qualified to advise, such as in legal matters or where there are serious debts, we direct people to where they can receive professional help, for example, to the Citizens' Advice Bureau.

We are now concerned with the general welfare of our beneficiaries in a world which is becoming more difficult and confusing, particularly for the elderly.

Our help takes 4 forms:

1. Financial

The majority of NewstrAid's funds are used to provide support for people who live in their own homes nationwide. Applicants for financial assistance do not have to be Members of the Charity to benefit. Conversely, persons who are Members do not have a "right" to benefit. Grants are ex gratia, awarded only according to the criteria of trade connection and need.

Beneficiaries are advised to declare their NewstrAid benefit on official forms if requested to do so, but are asked not to describe it as a pension. Described as such it could be treated as income and reduce state help commensurately. Queries received by beneficiaries from the Benefits Agency or Council Finance Departments are dealt with by the Welfare Officer.

People are helped annually in a variety of ways, depending on circumstances:

- **Annual ex-gratia payments** to help the elderly, the disabled and families with children, where there could be problems of long-term sickness, redundancy and family breakdown

- **Samaritan Grants** (one-off grants) to assist with sudden financial problems, the replacement of household items or the provision of outdoor electric scooters, wheelchairs or other disability aids not provided by the state
- **Possible help with shortfalls on residential or nursing home fees**, when the weekly charge is not fully covered by state funding
- **Interest-free loans** from the Jane Steele Fund to enable home owners to effect costly repairs to their homes, chargeable to their estates on their disposal.

NewstrAid works closely with other charities, and this is important. It helps us to spread the cost if a large sum of money is required for a particular applicant, or if one-off grants are needed frequently. On our application form we ask for other occupations and Forces Service, for this purpose. There are also charities related to specific illnesses and disabilities, which can be approached for contributions.

Conversely, other charities often apply to us for similar joint assistance.

2. Advisory Services

Every beneficiary's state benefits are checked to ensure that everyone is in receipt of their full entitlement.

Advice is given where necessary to apply for Income Support, Housing Benefit, Disability Living Allowance, Attendance Allowance, how to go about getting Domestic Help and Personal Care in one's home, how to get a relative into Residential Care with appropriate state funding, how to apply for Council help with repairs etc.

3. Visiting Service by Almoners

The NewstrAid Welfare network is held together by our Almoners, our voluntary visitors, who lend a personal touch to the delivery of help, so much so that their visits are often as welcome, particularly to the lonely elderly, as the cheques they bear.

Some almoners still work in the News Trade. Some are retired, but still wish to be active within the Industry, to try and support the less fortunate. They are mainly attached to Area Committees, but there are many who operate independently for us in their own local areas.

Our almoners are the eyes and ears of the Charity, well placed to be alerted to the problems of colleagues who have fallen on hard times and support. They are the human face of the charity, Providing personal contact with beneficiaries and a link with the Trade to which many have devoted much of their lives and on which the look back with nostalgia. The almoner's role is to:

- Get to know their beneficiaries' circumstances – financial, health, accommodation, mobility and special problems.

- Note any changes during their visits and to inform the Welfare Officer by means of our established reporting system of any problems, so that prompt action may be taken to alleviate need.
- Ensure that accurate financial details for existing or new beneficiaries are returned to the Welfare Officer at each beneficiary's annual review.
- Deliver benefit cheques personally, if possible, three times a year.
- Be the beneficiary's local point of contact and to be available at short notice if there is an emergency.

Application forms for new cases are available from the Welfare Officer at the Charity's Office and should be submitted with the fullest possible information for the consideration of the Welfare Committee, which meets six times per year.

4. Accommodation

NewstrAid's Homes provide excellent accommodation and care.

Barnetson Court in Great Dunmow provides residential care. The Home is set in peaceful and attractive grounds and is only a short walk from the High Street.

Sheltered housing is available in Seaford, East Sussex (bungalows) and in Lilleshall, Shropshire (flats). In both locations there is a resident Warden, communal room, minibus etc. Both Seaford and Lilleshall are run by the NewstrAid Benevolent Fund's affiliated Charity, The Old Ben Homes, registered charity number 25169.