



CATENIAN
BURSARY FUND

To Directors, Provincial Charity Officers (for forwarding to Circle Charity Officers) to include in their next report –

The HYBRID meeting took place on 6 May 2025

The Chairman opened the meeting with prayers as usual for this online meeting.

Kevin Campbell (Association Secretary), Mary Taylor, Sébastien Moerman, Karol Grabowski and Jean Harkin had sent their apologies due to prior commitments.

Graham Green, Charles Boulton and Jayne Hunt were present in Coventry; Andy Smith, Habib Karim and Kevin McKenna, joined by ZOOM; we welcomed Gerry McCormack (GB National VP), as an online observer and Terence Donnelly (Director, P10) as an in-person observer.

Matters arising

A brief discussion about Circles and Provinces borrowing the new banners; Trustees felt that, with the cost of postage being so high, it would be far better and more cost-effective if Provinces bought the two Bursary Fund banners themselves and then arranged for them to be loaned out to local Circles whenever Bursary cheques were presented or they were needed for Provincial Public Speaking events. Directors can enquire about the cost of the banners by contacting the Secretary to the Board (see contact details at the end of this report).

Discussions are still taking place about the optimum procedure for moving away from cheques as a means of presenting Bursary Awards. Trustees were informed that some cheques had not been cashed by successful awardees (some were returned to the Secretary by post); this is another reason to move away from cheques.

FLAME '25 was very successful for the Bursary Fund representatives who had been approached by former recipients who emphasised the contribution that the awards had made to them.

Secretary's Report

There is now ONE Bursary Fund video in circulation and all Provinces are asked to ensure that this is used. Again, if there is any uncertainty about which one to use, please contact the Secretary to the Board for clarification.

There has been some correspondence with Cork Circle and as a result some applications for awards are now appearing from young people in that area.

A very nice thank you letter was received from a recipient.

Correspondence has been received about changing how awards are made. This was discussed at length and Trustees felt that we should keep to our current criteria: that awards are made to CATHOLICS between the ages of 16 and 24, whose religious referee vouches for them as Catholics.

Two awards have been made, using money held in the Terence Graham sub-fund, to students undertaking teaching qualifications at St Mary's University in Twickenham (the only remaining Catholic University in England). Both candidates were excellent and will undertake their projects in Africa during the summer vacation, prior to taking up full-time teaching posts in September.

Lourdes and Individual Projects Applications

A high number of Individual Project Awards and Lourdes Awards have been adjudicated recently, with no issues. Trustees discussed the level of guidance that is offered by pilgrimage leaders since a number of applications have shown up as located near "Central Circle"!

Financial report and Investment Portfolio

Income over the year ending in March 2025 has increased to £133k, mainly due to a few legacies that have been received.

Expenditure has increased at a greater rate than in previous years, with £85.5k going on Lourdes awards and £56.6k going to Individual Awards. Overall, this represents a small overspend within the year.

Reserves (represented by Investments) are still higher than prior to COVID but while Trustees have met the demand for awards, with that demand exceeding our current income, they find themselves in need of a new strategy for raising funds. This prompted a long discussion and resulted in a small subgroup being formed to work on a strategic plan.

Ideally, more Association members would commit to a regular donation; current statistics show that only 28% currently do so. Trustees discussed the merits of limiting awards and spreading the limited resources of the charity more thinly. However, in the light of how much positivity it creates with the young people who receive awards, and recognition by the Catholic hierarchy that this is one of the best things the Association does, the Trustees felt that the best approach would be to encourage more charitable giving from members by making access to the donation forms more straightforward.

Website Refresh

Discussions are being held with CCS about how to link the main Association website and the Bursary Fund website to enable members to find the donation form more easily. No other issues have arisen with the new website.

Risk Register

At each meeting, Trustees consider one aspect of our Risk Register. On this occasion the discussions centred around financial risk, including raising funds (see items above), cash flow management, investment policies, fraud and potential errors.

Other matters:

An advert for new Trustees has been sent to Catena and is expected to appear in the June 2025 edition. The advert has also been shared through Catenian social media outlets. Closing date is 30 June, and interviews are expected to take place during July. Requests for an application pack should be addressed to admin@catenianbursary.com

Next Meeting

Our next meeting will be on Tuesday July 8th 2025 at 11:00 am. This will be an ONLINE meeting with Trustees on Zoom. GBNC Directors are welcome to join us as observers (requests to the Secretary, please).

Karol Grabowski

Secretary and Trustee

Catenian Bursary Fund

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