

News Release:

17 December 2009

**FORESTERS FRIENDLY SOCIETY TO DONATE £60,000
TO MOTOR NEURONE DISEASE ASSOCIATION**

Funds to sponsor research into MND and charity care line

17 December 2009: Foresters Friendly Society today announced that fundraising activities undertaken by its members to support the Motor Neurone Disease (MND) Association raised a total of £58,000 between September 2008 and September 2009. The final total is expected to reach around £60,000 by the end of the year.

The MND Association was selected by Mr Pat Swadling as the Society's nominated charity during his year in office as the Society's President which came to an end at the Society's annual High Court meeting, staged in Manchester in September.

The year-long fundraising programme, in the Foresters Friendly Society's 175th anniversary year, was supported by members of the 250 UK branches and included a wide range of activities across the country, ranging from postcard auctions to *dunk-it!* events and prize draws. Major events included a grand charity dinner, held in Stoke, which was addressed by comedian and entertainer Nick Hancock; a last night of the proms musical evening in Wickham; and a Young at Heart festival held in Essex.

The MND Association helps to support those affected by the disease and those who care for them and funds vital research to help find a cure for this devastating disease. MND is the name given to a group of related diseases affecting the motor neurones (nerve cells) in the brain and spinal cord. As the motor neurones gradually die, the muscles stop working, leaving people unable to walk, talk or feed themselves. It is estimated that MND kills five people every day in the UK.

Pat Swadling, past President of Foresters Friendly Society and a member of the Society for 50 years, said: "I wanted to support the MND Association not least for the great work it does but also as a result of a personal connection, as my mother suffered from the disease and eventually fell victim to it in 1965. The MND Association plays an invaluable role in providing support and advice to help people living with this disease, as well as those who care for them, helping to maintain the highest possible quality of life for the patients.

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“The Association and its volunteers share many important values with Foresters Friendly Society including a commitment to looking after the interest and well being of its members.”

Pat Swadling added: “Branches of Foresters Friendly Society support a wide range of charitable causes in the UK and it is estimated that Foresters donates over £450,000 to worthy causes each year.”

MND affects around 5,000 people in the UK at any one time. Life expectancy for most people with MND is just two to five years, and around half die within 14 months of diagnosis. Professor Stephen Hawking, author of ‘A Brief History of Time’ is an exceptional case; he has survived with MND for more than 40 years.

Kevin Dann, CEO at Foresters Friendly Society, said; “As a mutual organisation in our 175th year, we're naturally committed to lending our support to the work of charities such as the MND Association which work tirelessly to support those who are experiencing times of hardship, illness or challenge.”

The funds raised by members of the Society will be used to support a range of MND Association services. This includes a two year sponsorship of *MND Connect*, the charity's care-line which advises people on all aspects of MND and offers access to further advice and practical and emotional support.

Furthermore, in keeping with the Society's ethos of supporting those in education with financial grants, part of the funding will go towards sponsoring a selected PhD medical student who is researching MND. The funds will also help with the purchase of new equipment, such as wheelchairs and special beds in order to provide the best quality of life possible.

Denise Davies, Head of Community Fundraising for the MND Association, added: “The money raised will make a real difference to families whose lives have been turned upside down by MND while funding cutting-edge research to help us find a cure. We need help from organisations like Foresters Friendly Society so we can be there for people affected by this devastating disease all the time. Foresters Friendly Society members have enthusiastically fundraised for us over the past year which we are incredibly grateful for.”

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Notes to Editors

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About Foresters Friendly Society

Foresters Friendly Society was founded in 1834 and offers a range of financial saving, investment, insurance and protection products, as well as educational grants and healthcare support for its members. All financial products come with the accompanying benefits of membership of the Society at no additional cost. There is no obligation to purchase a financial product in order to become a member. The Society currently includes over 70,000 members across 250 UK branches.

Foresters Friendly Society is the trading name of The Ancient Order of Foresters Friendly Society Limited, Foresters House, 29/33 Shirley Road, Southampton, SO15 3EW. Authorised and regulated by the Financial Services Authority. Incorporated Friendly Society No. 511F. FSA Registration No. 110029. Membership benefits are not regulated by the FSA.

About The Motor Neurone Disease Association

The Motor Neurone Disease Association has a vision of a world free of MND.

The Association was formed in 1979 by a group of volunteers who wanted to co-ordinate support, guidance and advice for people affected by this fatal condition. It now consists of 1,500 volunteers and 150 paid staff, all dedicated to improving the lives of people affected by MND, now and in the future.

The Association's network expands across 95 branches and groups, who provide local support, and raise funds and awareness of the Association. The Association provides a network of 17 MND Association Care Centres across England, Wales and Northern Ireland offering quality multidisciplinary team care and raising the standards of care for everyone with MND.

The MND Association is one of the global leaders in funding and promoting MND research and is committed to funding the highest quality research in the UK and beyond.