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**FINANCIAL ADVISERS REPORT FOR MFT BOARD MEETING ON
11TH OCTOBER 2004**

Since the last Trustees Meeting, I have made a large number of visits to registrants up and down the country providing a range of advice, including mortgages, budgeting, advice on how to purchase a property, getting back into the work place, building queries, bankruptcy and how to write wills.

The number of debt cases seems to have diminished, this may be due to Skipton Fund payments but it is my hope that all the work that I have done over the last few years has finally got the message through to those registrants who are likely to spend themselves into debt!

From the very few enquiries I have received following Skipton Fund payments, my advice has been to reduce/eliminate debt and mortgages where possible and to put some of the remaining funds away for a rainy day or other specific projects, such as renovations, central heating or a new car.

There are still a reasonable number of enquiries regarding registrants wishing to move to more suitable accommodation, for example a house to a bungalow or to set up home for the first time. Once again, it is a matter of counselling the registrant to ensure that debt does not become a burden and that they do not overstretch their finances by too large a mortgage.

The most common problem is the plight of widows and the fact that they do not have sufficient funds for every day living.

Pending the Trust establishing a specific policy for widows, it does appear that the current trend is to reduce income to a base figure of approximately £100 per month. In many cases, this will lead to real hardship and my concern is that these often very vulnerable people will be forced to seek funds from highly expensive and sometimes unscrupulous loan companies.

Would it possible to facilitate an interim policy which would avoid the difficulty in the short term but would not necessarily commit the Trust to excess funds over the longer term?

Some older widows, who I believe have not been in touch with the Trust for many years, have also contacted me for financial advice. The main problem is, that although they have been careful with their savings, funds have been used over time for everyday living, bringing up their children, for example, leaving them at retirement with little or no savings. To compound the situation, because of their role as carers, they often receive very little in the way of pension. These are not lazy people, they have just never been paid very much.

I have attended two weekend events "Something for the Weekend" and the "Bereavement Weekend". Both these events were extremely valuable in providing face to face contact and meeting many more people than would normally be the case in a single visit. I was completely booked up on "Something for the Weekend" and virtually the same on the Bereavement Weekend. There is clearly still a strong need for financial advice around the registrants and their families.

I appreciate that all the Trustees are very busy people but I do believe that visiting some of these weekends and talking to the longer term registrants would be of value. Having spent some 12 years talking with the members of the Trust it puts a different complexion on the problems of medically disadvantaged people and their families.

Susan Daniels
5th October, 2004