



# In touch > On line

The newsletter for Wiltshire Freemasons

Freemasons are going back to work



Mid August 2020 Thank you for all you have done....

Wiltshire Freemasonry



As we enter the month of September I am keenly aware of the change in mood of many Brethren as Masonic Halls throughout the Province make their final preparations to welcome Lodges from an enforced period of rest, to a return to labour. I do congratulate every member who has given so freely of their time and talent to undertake the work required to determine whether or not their facility could be made Covid-19 secure. Having spoken with the Provincial Grand Superintendent of Works, I know that herculean efforts have been made to prepare risk assessments, safe operating procedures, specific Covid-19 protocols, and physical signposting, all with one purpose in mind, that being the safety and well being of Brethren who are able and wishing to return to Lodge activities. I am also cognisant of the disappointment of Brethren who sadly have not been able to 'sign off' on a clean bill of health for their facility, or in other cases, are unable to fulfil the standards required by local authorities from who they rent accommodation.

Now that a resumption of Masonic activity is underway I have been asked by some of our members as to what it is that I expect from Lodges; to which my response is simple and straightforward. Return to labour in a safe manner, having regard to the welfare of every member, and above all with the intention of enjoying the opportunity to meet with friends and practise Freemasonry. I feel sure there will be a little 'rustiness' in the ritual, which I am confident will be only temporary.

I know that for some Brethren the adaptations to the ceremonies have not been well received, indeed detailed correspondence on the matter has been entered into at both Provincial and Grand Lodge level. In a response to the Province's proposed alternative modifications to the Initiation ceremony, UGLE advised that after much discussion between the Grand Director of Ceremonies, the secretary of the Emulation Lodge of Improvement and the Grand Secretary the adaptations which had been formulated must be adhered to when performing any of the ceremonies covered by them, including that of Initiation. I am sure Brethren that you will recall that such is the nature of our Constitution that as some must of necessity rule and teach, so others must of course learn, submit and obey. The decision to make adaptations to our ceremonies has been made, and it is incumbent on each of us to recognise they have been made with the very best of intent. I trust that Lodge Committees will not allow the fact that there are changes to the ceremonies to negatively influence a decision to Initiate a candidate or Pass a Brother to the degree of a Fellow Craft.

In the last issue of **In touch > On line** the Deputy Provincial Grand Master wrote of how much he was looking forward to to returning *to what we do best, the act of demonstrating Brotherly love, relief and truth*. He concluded his remarks by saying, *I am sure some normality is now closer at hand but in the meantime let us all please be understanding of the fact that some Brethren may be reluctant to return to active Freemasonry at this time*. I am very happy to echo those those sentiments, and to remind every Brother that nobody, particularly elderly or vulnerable members, should feel coerced into attending meetings – irrespective of their office.

Finally, I have spoken in the past about the wonder of ZOOM, the online video conferencing facility which was almost unheard of before March. It has proven to be a lifeline to many Lodges since 'lockdown' and I am sure it will continue for the months to come to be a facility which provides a means for members to communicate safely and conveniently.



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Thank you for supporting the WMCF....

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In 2019 the Provincial Grand Master launched the **Wiltshire Masonic Charity Foundation (WMCF)**, a fund whose purpose is to enable a prompt response for one off applications providing essential support to Wiltshire Brethren and their dependents who have an urgent and immediate need. The WMCF will also support smaller charities within Wiltshire.

With your support the aim is to build an endowment fund of one million pounds. We hope to achieve this with monthly donations and legacies. The Foundation will invest this money to generate annual interest which will be used to pay out grants.

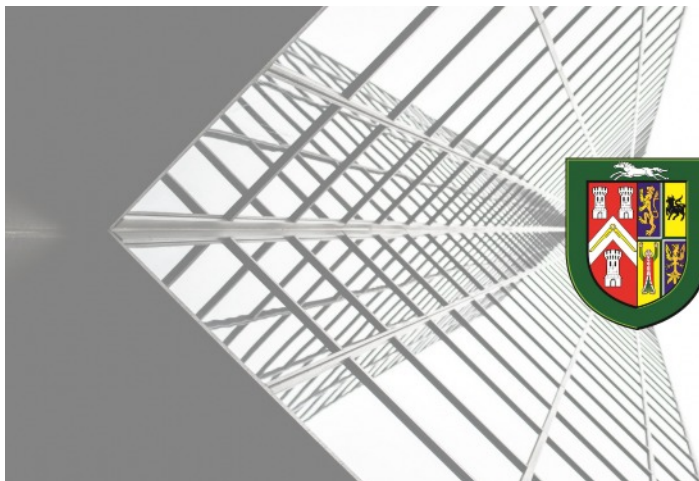
The WMCF will work closely with the Masonic Charitable Foundation (MCF) which is better able to provide longer term financial, family and medical support.

The **Wiltshire Masonic Charity Foundation (WMCF)** is 'your charity' and it needs your support to make it a success.

You can support the **Wiltshire Masonic Charity Foundation** by making a 'planned giving' commitment or by providing for a legacy gift in your will. For further details on how you can make a difference contact your Lodge Charity Steward or the Provincial Charity Steward Derek Gibbens.



Have you seen the 'wobble'....



WILTSHIRE  
FREEMASONS

Thank you to everyone who has commented on the 'wobble' - and for those of you who haven't seen it, all you have to do is visit the Provincial website [www.pglwilts.org.uk](http://www.pglwilts.org.uk) and watch the shield logo give a little 'wobble' as the words WILTSHIRE FREEMASONS zooms in from right to left.

Finding links to Wiltshire Freemasons has to be made as easy as possible. We know that enquiries to our website are only as effective as it is to reach the front page, and that's why Wiltshire Freemasons has to be number one on Google, and out of 187,000 possible results we do come top of the list in an impressive 0.42 seconds. That's just one of the reasons the Wiltshire Freemasons website receives a significant number of Internet enquiries for membership. (Tested on 27<sup>th</sup> August at 17.57hrs).



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Covid-19 secure a message from Sandy Steele-Davis....

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As someone with a lifetime's involvement with the building trade I believe I am qualified to make an assessment on the incredible work undertaken by the many Masonic Hall Committees across the Province; and let me assure you that it can best be described in one word - **amazing**. I have been privileged to witness the care and attention given to making sure that every aspect of the Government's Covid-19 guidelines has been adhered to, and that the exacting protocols as set out Public Health England have been strictly complied with. In short, nothing has been left to chance, and all conceivable risk scenarios have been covered with the single aim of providing a safe and secure environment for Brethren to return to Freemasonry.

Of course it would be a brave or perhaps more appropriately a foolish man who would lay claim to have eliminated all risk, and I don't propose to be that man. But I am persuaded that everything has been done to reduce any risk to what a reasonable person would consider to be an acceptable level. Clearly the work undertaken by the Masonic Hall committees is only a part of the total process; the second element is responsibility of the users of the facility. Each Masonic Hall has produced a risk assessment, plus a schedule of protocols which every unit using the hall must sign up to and meticulously follow. These standard operating procedures reflect the minimum amount of compliance required by every individual to ensure the safety of everyone using the hall. I am sure that no one will be found wanting in their diligent conforming to the standards as set out.

Physical distancing, the wearing of masks, washing of hands and generally being careful to avoid unnecessary contact are actions for which each individual is personally responsible. Please do your very best to do your bit to help the hall management, the end result will surely be worth it.

I am pleased to confirm the following Masonic Halls and Lodge meeting locations have declared themselves Covid-19 secure, and open for business. **(1)** Calne Masonic Hall **(2)** Chippenham Masonic Hall **(3)** Corsham Masonic Hall **(4)** Highworth Community Centre **(5)** Ludgershall Masonic Hall **(6)** Salisbury Freemasons' Hall **(7)** Swindon Masonic Centre **(8)** Westbury Masonic Hall. Due to the need to observe physical distancing, each of the venues is limited in terms of numbers of Brethren able to attend. Naturally, Lodge members have precedence and visitors will be strictly limited and allowed to attend only under controlled conditions. Sadly there will be no festive board at any Lodge meeting.

## STOP PRESS.....

The Provincial Grand Master has received the very sad news that W Bro Paul Connor **PAGDC** passed away on the morning of Friday 28<sup>th</sup> August. Paul was a dedicated and committed Freemason, always smiling and ever willing to proffer sage advice. Paul served the Province in a number of important roles, most notably as Provincial Grand Secretary, an office in which he excelled. Paul was diagnosed a few years ago with Motor Neurone Disease the effect of which resulted in his being incapacitated and unable to continue his Masonic activities. The Province send their sincere condolences to Paul's wife Ann with the message that 'Paul lived respected and died regretted'







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Provincial Grand Mentor David Little tells us “That’s especially true during this strange period when personal contact of all types is severely restricted.” As a result David has assembled a team of experienced Freemasons who he believes will make sure that Mentoring Matters in Wiltshire are a number one priority. But what exactly is Mentoring?

Freemasonry has witnessed an increasing realisation and acceptance that many Brethren, especially but not exclusively those newly admitted to the Craft, would benefit from a more coordinated and comprehensive approach to their Masonic integration and education. The concept of mentoring, of having a Brother assigned to another specifically to assist with advice, explanation and support has the potential to help foster greater understanding in and increased enjoyment of Freemasonry; a clearly desirable and beneficial development for every Mason regardless of rank or seniority.

Mentoring is also an established and effective method of individual development in a wide variety of organisations within both the commercial and voluntary sectors. Mentoring is now being taken up enthusiastically with many Brethren already enjoying the benefit of this process; it is now generally being delivered on a Province-wide basis within Wiltshire.

It is the wish of the Provincial Grand Master that all Lodges appoint a suitable individual to the office of Lodge Mentor. It is not intended to be over prescriptive as to who should fill this pivotal role – a Lodge is best placed to know the relative strengths and weaknesses of its membership. However, Masters should take time to consider who is best suited to this appointment, remembering that mentoring is a vocation and not every Brother is suitable or indeed able to be a Mentor. Every Brother appointed should understand the need and commitment to fully engage with the training programme and regular workshop meetings.

The Lodge Mentor’s responsibility is to organise and coordinate the selection and allocation of individual personal mentors within a Lodge, this makes sure that each Brother who needs or wants mentoring has an appropriate, experienced and sympathetic member assigned to him.

There are substantial benefits to be gained from the mentoring approach. Mentoring has the potential to positively influence levels of individual satisfaction and enjoyment; to improve recruitment, retention and involvement; to influence the age profile and increase transparency through a more informed membership. The importance of mentoring in the Province has been reflected in a strengthening of the Provincial Mentoring Team by the introduction of three Divisional Mentoring Officers.

Remember the Provincial Mentor and the Divisional Mentors value all feedback you may give, not just on the effectiveness of the framework but also on the nature of the available support material and its relevance. Finally, don’t forget that support is readily available from your Divisional Mentor if you need it.

**IMPORTANT NOTICE**

While every care is taken in the compilation of In touch > On line, errors or omissions are not the responsibility of the Provincial Grand Lodge of Wiltshire or the editor. Opinions and views expressed are not necessarily those of the Provincial Grand Lodge of Wiltshire or the editor. The editor is delighted to receive your views on any article appearing in the monthly Newsletter or bi-annual Magazine.