



# In touch > On line

The newsletter for Wiltshire Freemasons



Freemasons remember the fallen

November 2020

Here we go again....

Wiltshire Freemasonry



It was an American DJ 'Marshmello' who penned a song with almost no words other than the line 'Here we go again' - and Brethren while it is not a recording I would recommend that you listened to, it does give me the opportunity to write about the further suspension of Masonic activity which came into effect on Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> November. The decision was not unexpected given that the Government had announced a second lockdown which will remain in place until Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> December; and as we enter this period it is important that we remain positive.

However, Lockdown doesn't mean shutdown. The suspension doesn't mean we can't practise what it means to be a Freemason, in fact we are reminded that we should always practise out of the Lodge those excellent precepts we are taught within. Living Freemasonry is not just about attending meetings, it is as much about what we do, as what we call ourselves. Indeed Freemasonry is more about what we do in our communities as opposed to our Masonic meetings.

Brethren I know that many of our Lodges have made arrangements to maintain contact with members during the past few months. I have been pleased to hear about the many initiatives set up by Lodges and to commend the practise of them to every Lodge. I wish to emphasise four very specific actions you can take to make a difference.

Make a weekly phone call to a Brother or Lodge widow - even if you've tried before, try again. Write a fun quiz or fun talk and deliver it to your lodge on Zoom, it's a great way to socialise. Take the time to learn about the Royal Arch from your Royal Arch Representative, and explore SOLOMON the online learning tool, and make a daily advancement in Masonic knowledge. Finally, if you use Social Media please like and share the Province's Facebook posts, and retweet our Twitter comments.

November is the precursor of winter and another period of lockdown at this time isn't good for our mental health. For some of our Brethren, these dark days may just be the trigger which sparks a bout of anxiety and depression. If you are a Brother suffering as a result of Covid-19 or the loneliness of 'lockdown' or you know of a Brother who is experiencing difficulties- there is help available from the Masonic Charitable Foundation supported counselling helpline. You can call them today, and all calls are confidential 0800 035 60 90

This pandemic is affecting us all in different ways and if you need help, do not be too proud to ask for it. The Provincial Almoner will engage with the MCF on your behalf, and subject to fulfilling their criteria you may be eligible to receive help. However, it is important to point out that most MCF staff are working from home, and that a number of medical treatment options are not currently being considered at the present time. There is little to be gained from 'thumping the table' or 'making demands' - the MCF teams are working with the Provincial Almoner to bring more services online, but we have to accept that, just as the NHS is struggling to cope with elective surgery, so to is the MCF.

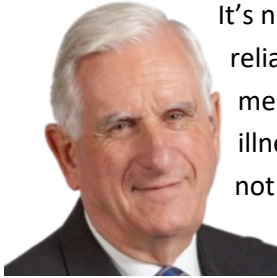
Finally, Brethren I am delighted to announce three important promotions in the Province (see p4 for more detail). Members of the Provincial Executive play a key role in the management of the Province and I am confident the appointment of Simon Leighfield, Phil Still and Rob Evans in their respective offices will provide the expertise and energy required to take Wiltshire forward into new and exciting times. I wish you well and ask you to keep safe and keep well.



November 2020

## Growing our membership is vital....

Wiltshire Freemasonry



It's no secret that the long term future of any membership dependent organisation is reliant upon a steady stream of new people joining its ranks. Freemasonry is a membership organisation. Sadly some of our members pass away as a result of illness or advancing years and we are reminded that "The wisest among us knows not how soon." Some of our members move away in a geographical sense while others have grown apart in an emotional sense having perhaps become disenchanted with Freemasonry; and a very small number leave our ranks due to economic and social reasons. Every loss is hard to bear and has an affect not only on the Lodge but also the Province and the wider family of Freemasonry. We need to not only stem the flow, but also take action to grow our total membership. Neither task is easy but if we don't address them of one thing we can certainly be sure, and that is we won't have an organisation on which to build and what remains will become less attractive to join and wither and die away.

In recent years the Province of Wiltshire has bucked the national trend with record numbers of men enquiring about Freemasonry which has resulted in many of our Lodges conducting double (or more) Initiation ceremonies in order to welcome new members. Covid-19 has put an unwelcome brake on matters but I am glad to note that despite only being able to operate with the 'rule of six' Lodges are slowly but surely coming to terms with the UGLE adaptations and putting into place plans to conduct future Initiations. We have 94 candidates allocated to Lodges waiting to be initiated (of which 31 have not yet completed Form Ps with a large number having not yet been interviewed) and 9 waiting to be allocated to a Lodge by the Divisonal Officer, and a further 10 who have made membership enquiries in the last few weeks. It would be good if all the Form Ps could be completed and interviews could be carried out as soon as practicable as we could then more accurately assess the true number of potential initiates.

Part of my role as Divisional Officer Co-ordinator has been to review the way in which the Province manages membership and in particular new and prospective members.

I am sure you will agree that keeping in touch with potential members during these particularly difficult days is very important, and that every effort should be made to maintain close contact and engage in regular communication with every person who has expressed an interest in becoming a Wiltshire Freemason. It is vitally important that we do everything we can to enhance the experience of the applicant, and to make them feel even more 'wanted'.

What I am very aware of is that Covid-19 has created a barrier to meeting new members and the rule of six is not conducive to making a new Brother feel 'at home' in a truncated meeting format. Consequently I am planning to hold a series of open ZOOM meetings for potential and possible candidates (who have completed their Form P) and their partners to meet and **ASK ME ANYTHING**. This forum will enable not only the potential candidate but also his partner to ask any questions they might have, and to receive answers to their questions.

I would like to take this opportunity to say thank you to every secretary who has provided the essential detail which has enabled me to contact and invite potential and possible candidates to attend an **ASK ME ANYTHING** meeting.



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## The rule of six proves no obstacle to an Initiation....

Vale of Avon Lodge No.8432 which meets in Chippenham held a very special meeting only hours before the latest suspension of Masonic activity came into effect; and what a meeting it turned out to be. Operating within government guidelines, and adhering to the rule of six, the Brethren conducted an Initiation ceremony and welcomed Bro William Batchelor as their newest member into the Wiltshire Masonic family. Immediately following the ceremony Bro William said "I was told the ceremony was going to be a little different from normal, but it was an amazing evening." Lodge secretary Ivan Carey said the evening was marked by "excellent teamwork, flexibility and a strong 'can do' attitude." The Lodge is now looking forward to undertaking two Passing ceremonies.



## Or to an Installation meeting....



LODGE OF FRIENDSHIP AND UNITY NO.1271

Congratulations to the Brethren of Lodge of Friendship and Unity No.1271 who have decamped to The Leigh Park Hotel and Country Club where are able to meet under the rule of six. At their November meeting they proclaimed Bro Tony Brinkworth as Master for the ensuing year, and he in turn appointed his Wardens and officers. The Lodge didn't forget the traditional reading of the eulogy to Captain Jenkins, a member who was killed in action on October 1915.

CONGRATULATIONS TO EVERY LODGE WHICH HAS MET UNDER THE RULE OF SIX

Wiltshire Freemasonry





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## New appointments for 2021....

The Provincial Grand Master is pleased to announce the following Provincial appointments which will take effect at Provincial Grand Lodge on Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> October 2021.

**VW Bro David Davies:** Deputy Provincial Grand Master VW Bro David Davies **PGSwdB** having been in office for four years, has expressed his wish to retire immediately prior to the annual meeting, and the Provincial Grand Master has been pleased to accede to David's request. RW Bro Philip Bullock in paying tribute to David's service said, "I have been very fortunate in having David as my deputy, he has been a great support, an honest critic, and a trusted friend. His work across the Province has been undertaken with consummate skill and little fanfare, which reflects the nature of the man."

**W Bro Simon Leighfield:** The Provincial Grand Master is pleased to announce that on Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> October 2021 he will appoint and invest W Bro Simon Leighfield APrGM as the 25<sup>th</sup> Deputy Provincial Grand Master of Wiltshire. The occasion of Simon's appointment will be exactly 30 years since his father VW Bro Maurice Leighfield was invested as Deputy Provincial Grand Master of Wiltshire in October 1991.

**W Bro Phil Still:** The Provincial Grand Master is pleased to announce that on Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> October 2021, he will appoint and invest W Bro Phil Still PrGSec as the 13<sup>th</sup> Assistant Provincial Grand Master of Wiltshire.

**W Bro Rob Evans:** The Provincial Grand Master is pleased to announce that on Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> October 2021, he will appoint and invest W Bro Rob Evans PrAGSec as the Provincial Grand Secretary.

We offer our congratulations to David, and the Brethren taking up their new appointments.

Wiltshire Freemasonry

**PROVINCIAL APPOINTMENTS**

**Phil Still**  
Assistant Provincial Grand Master

**Simon Leighfield**  
Deputy Provincial Grand Master

**Rob Evans**  
Provincial Grand Secretary

WILTSHIRE FREEMASONS  
EFFECTIVE THURSDAY 7th OCTOBER 2021



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### Just Ask One - a new initiative from Wiltshire....

Provincial Grand Master Philip Bullock has launched a new membership initiative **Just Ask One** which is supported with a dedicated website page <http://justaskone.info/> created by Vastern Lodge member Mark Newman. As Membership Officer Colin Cheshire makes clear in his article on p2, we are a membership organisation and as such we do need to attract new members to Freemasonry; and while it is difficult for some of our members to acknowledge the idea that we should actively promote Freemasonry as a worthwhile organisation to join, the reality is that we cannot rely on the historical 'only by introduction' method of welcoming new members. Some Brethren have suggested that the internet is an imprecise tool with which to recruit, this view might be correct if there was no further process for the interested person to have to experience. The excellent Pathway Programme, introduced by UGLE and supported by the Province, provide the necessary safeguards to make sure that enquirers to Freemasonry are interviewed and properly questioned before a decision is made as to their suitability for membership. With so many people, across all age groups utilising the internet it is imperative that Wiltshire Freemasons take advantage of the opportunities it offers.

Discover  
Freemasonry  
in Wiltshire

INTEGRITY  
FRIENDSHIP  
RESPECT  
CHARITY

JUST ASK  
INTERESTED IN FREEMASONRY?

[justaskone.info](http://justaskone.info)

**Just Ask One** complements the JUST ASK scheme introduced by UGLE and used with success by the Provincial Communication Team when 'out and about' with the Provincial Display Unit. It provides an easy to view portal with images to encourage the visitor to JUST ASK and link to an easy to fill out an enquiry form.

Freemasonry

Wiltshire

### Please be patient, asks Gary Dolphin....

The Covid - 19 virus has affected just about every aspect of our lives, with family life being disrupted, working life made difficult, and access to the NHS services, particularly for elective treatments, all but impossible. In April 2020 the NHS 'bought up' almost every private hospital bed in the country on a 'just in case' basis. We now know they didn't use them all, but the unintended consequence was that surgeons who would have used the facilities were unable to do so. The net result of the closure of the NHS to non-covid sufferers is a waiting list for treatment which some 'experts' predict will take many months, even years to reduce to pre-covid levels.



What may come as a surprise to many members is that the MCF Grants and Enquiries Team have continued to work from home to provide support, and process claims during the periods of lockdown. Unfortunately, a result of the limited availability of clinical beds has been a restriction on the number of categories of medical and social support for which the MCF has been able to accept applications. However, I am able to report that the MCF is constantly reviewing the situation and is hoping to open up some of the restricted categories as soon as circumstances allow them to.



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## Supporting Fiat Lux Lodge No.9773 and the M.C.F.

Wiltshire Freemasonry

In the old days this attractively designed horse brass would have been attached to the top of the bridle of a heavy horse. It is being produced now as a most desirable reminder of the absence of our beloved Masonic meetings due to the coronavirus pandemic.

The humble forget-me-not has been an emblem of Freemasonry for many years and stems from the legend surrounding German Freemasonry during WW2.

In recent years the subject has been researched and as much as we would like to believe that the little forget-me-not lapel pin was worn as a point of recognition during the dark years of the war no evidence of this has ever been found.



The most poignant final paragraph of one research paper concludes:- The history of the forget-me-not, is laden with legend and symbolism. And quibbling over historic accuracy merely clouds the true intent of the story. Legends like these are not told to teach us historical fact; they are meant to teach us enduring truth, or even truths, plural. And the truths of the forget-me-not are these; We must never forget our duty to the poor and distressed. We must never forget to persevere through troubled times, as light and life will always spring anew. We must never forget those who have come before us; the sacrifices they made, and the love that they shared with us. We must never forget our duty to honour their memory, and continue their legacy of brotherly love, relief, and truth. Amor fraternus, levatio, veritas. Forget. Me. Not."

*Brent Williamson, Millersville Masonic Lodge No. 126 Indianapolis, USA*

The horse brass including base, is supplied boxed with a copy of the Masonic legendary history. Retail price £22.00 plus UK postage £3.00.

A wholesale option for five or more is available at £17.00 per brass plus bulk postage.

Overseas postage available at the appropriate rate.

For further enquiries or orders contact

Jim Speed, 102 Forest Road Melksham Wiltshire SN12 7AE  
email: [jimspeed42@gmail.com](mailto:jimspeed42@gmail.com) Telephone 01225 708121

*Commissioned on behalf of Fiat Lux Lodge No.9773 by Jim Speed and Peter Harper, each brass has a threaded stud and supplied with a lathe turned polished oak base for display purposes. Profits from sales will be donated to the Masonic Charitable Foundation Covid-19 appeal.*



Absent Brethren



**Masonic**  
Charitable Foundation