



# PROVINCE OF EAST LANCASHIRE



## **Briefing and Reference Notes for Craft and Royal Arch Installation Representatives for the Masonic Season 2021 /22**

Brethren and Companions.

Thank you for agreeing to act as a Representative of the Right Worshipful Provincial Grand Master / Most Excellent Grand Superintendent during the forthcoming season – 2021 / 22.

As we are all aware that Freemasonry, in common with other organisations and the public generally, has gone through an unprecedented period, caused by the Coronavirus pandemic, during which time it has not been possible for Lodges or Chapters to meet, at least in their usual setting. Many have of course used Zoom to keep in touch. Your role as a Representative at Installation Meetings is, therefore, even more important than usual. Coming (hopefully) out of the pandemic, the message is a joint one for both the Craft and Royal Arch.

Set out below are the updated briefing notes which are for your reference and to provide additional background information.

However, this year it is likely that your response will, by necessity, need to be a little different from the norm. That fact being acknowledged and at the risk of stating the obvious, it is important that the sentiments contained in the first eight bullet points are communicated and emphasised.

It goes without saying that your response should be given in a positive, enthusiastic, and concise manner; it is accepted that this is a constant aim of us all!

As we return to some form of normality, please use this opportunity to generate interest, to encourage involvement, to rekindle the commitment of our members and to try to ensure that Brethren are working to protect and secure the long-term future of our Lodges and Halls. Your contribution towards these aims is greatly appreciated.

1. Welcome the Brethren / Companions back to their meetings; thank the members for all that they have done during lockdown and whilst under local restrictions.
2. Emphasise the need for them to “make every meeting count”! Masonry must be enjoyable and fun; to be inclusive – make every member must feel important and ensure that they are involved.
3. Stress the need for Lodges and Chapters to make concerted efforts to bring “slow returners” back to meetings and show an understanding of the concerns that some members might have about doing so.
4. Encourage them to support the Province and their Districts in their initiatives to reinvigorate Masonry in East Lancashire following this very difficult period.
5. Request that they all support their Masonic Halls – many have experienced very difficult times in the last 12 - 18 months and need a period of consolidation and stabilisation.
6. Emphasise the importance of attracting and retaining new members. Encourage Lodges to build on the success of the Lodge Planning initiative and to adopt other steps of the Members Pathway. Equally, that the Holy Royal Arch is highlighted and included as part of discussions with new members.
7. Flag up the forthcoming East Lancashire 2026 Festival for the MCF and request that members prioritise the Festival in their charitable giving to ensure a successful outcome.
8. Encourage the inclusion of “family” at every opportunity. Lodges and Chapters might consider a “big bang” social event to bring people together and provide that sense of belonging that we have all missed so much.

## 1. Vision of RWPGM/MEGS

- a. Masonry should be enjoyable – it is a hobby, and we are all volunteers!
- b. The key words continue to be Tolerance, Integrity, Kindness and Belonging. Brethren should demonstrate those values.
- c. The Provinces priorities for the 2021/22 season are **Membership**, (both in terms of attraction and retention in both the Craft and the Royal Arch), and the forthcoming **Festival**.
- d. All **new members** need to be fully informed about the importance of the Holy Royal Arch in completing their Masonic journey and the wish of the RWPGM that they seriously consider joining **when the time is right for them**.
- e. The Province has been preparing for the introduction of the new Festival in 2021. It is important that we give this priority to achieve a successful outcome; the support of all the Brethren and Companions will be greatly appreciated.
- f. Brethren should feel comfortable in speaking openly about being a Freemason outside the Lodge and in the community. To be “Ambassadors for the Craft” and to include, wherever possible, family, and non-Masons in our social activities. This is equally the case for existing members discussing their Royal Arch membership.
- g. Freemasonry must be fun and every aspect of it should be towards that aim. Masonry is also a family, and every member of that family (including our extended family members) should feel valued, respected, and able to influence decisions which affect their membership and their enjoyment. Be proud, be inspired and tell others about it.

## 2. Membership

- a. Building on the success of the Lodge Planning initiative Lodges are encouraged to identify and adopt other Steps of the Pathway. This will result in quality candidates joining and ensure the long-term sustainability of their Lodge. Remember, quality Craft Masons are the eventually the lifeblood of quality Chapters.
- b. Quality candidates result in quality Masons, good ritual, added enjoyment, improved retention, and increased membership.
- c. Lodges will be supported in Pathway activities by the District Membership Officer, District Mentor and other District Officers. The Provincial Membership Officer is also available to be called upon whenever assistance is required.
- d. Membership and closing the “Membership Gap” – (*the net difference between member gains and losses*) – is a high priority; please support your Lodge Membership Officer, Lodge Mentor and the District Officers in their efforts towards this aim.
- e. This season will see the launch of a Marketing campaign and a process to deal with Online enquiries – “Project Welcome”. A small committee chaired by the Provincial Membership Officer, WBro Mo Afsa has been set up to develop and introduce this approach.
- f. Retention of members will be a major issue on returning to our meetings. Some Brethren will need encouragement to return. Emphasise the work of the Provincial Grand Mentor, WBro Jo Glass and the Team of District and Lodge Mentors. The appointment of Companion Glass as also the Mentor for the Royal Arch cements that indissoluble link and that membership of the Craft should be a natural, progression to the Royal Arch.
- g. It is appropriate to emphasise the importance of new and existing members and their families ‘belonging’ within the fraternity. This is a key theme of Mentoring and supports our approach to being open and proud of our membership, of retaining our members and attracting new ones.
- h. Refer to the work of the Learning and Development Committee, the availability of Solomon. That the materials that are available online to make meetings interesting, challenging and enjoyable. Encourage the use of “nuggets” to enhance those meetings.
- i. The importance of the Holy Royal Arch should be highlighted. It is important that the Lodge Royal Arch Representative does all he can to encourage the Brethren to become Companions at **the appropriate time** and to see it from the outset as a natural step.

- j. It is important that the appointment of a Lodge RA Rep' is given considerable thought so that the individual appointed is appropriate for the task, is supported by all his members and is enthusiastic AND proactive in his work.
- k. Emphasise the need for effective communication to showcase Freemasonry – both in Lodges, Chapters and with the public. Share good news stories, be proud of who we are and what we do. This is an important tool in attracting new members.

### 3. The East Lancashire 2026 Festival

- a. Advise members that the Province will launch its new Festival for the **Masonic Charitable Foundation** during the autumn.
- b. In preparation for the Festival a Festival Committee has been formed which will be Chaired by WBro Chad Northcott.
- c. For the duration of the Festival this will be the Provinces priority for Charitable giving; **avoid "mixed messages"!**
- d. A target will be set and will be communicated at the launch. The target will be challenging but achievable and should also be seen as a priority in charitable giving within Chapters also.
- e. Encourage members to sign up to regular payment promises. This will be a major source of income.
- f. Advise of the excellent work done by the MCF during the pandemic and the support that is provided generally for our members and their dependents in East Lancashire. It is interesting to note that in 2019/20 the MCF approved 130 grants totalling C£290K for Brethren and dependents in East Lancashire. These include young people, daily living expenses and health care. It is important to "win hearts and minds" through these good news stories.
- g. Importantly the MCF now provides one unified face for Masonic assistance and our giving nationally. This affects the way in which applications for assistance are managed.
- h. Our 'Provincial Welfare Officers' and other visiting volunteers facilitate the application process (*this does not reduce the important role of Lodge/Chapter Almoners and the vital work they undertake in looking after the pastoral care of their Brethren*).
- i. Members are strongly urged to keep abreast of the work of the MCF via Freemasonry Today and also their website at – [www.mcf.org.uk](http://www.mcf.org.uk)

### 4. Hewlett Court

- a. Advise that a major £1.86 million development at Hewlett Court, our own residential home, primarily funded via a legacy, that provides up to date accommodation and facilities is now complete. Additional work has also taken place to refurbish other areas.
- b. The vital work undertaken at Hewlett Court, including the dedicated service of all the staff, provides a fantastic environment for many members of our extended Masonic family.
- c. Brethren and Companions might consider arranging a visit to Hewlett Court to familiarise themselves with that work and to meet the residents.
- d. The ELMC, based at Hewlett Court remains a key part of the work of the Province and **in advance of the Festival** Lodges and Chapters might consider it first for any charitable giving they are able to provide. It should be noted that other charities and community groups have been and are, well supported by both the ELMC and the MCF.
- e. The ELMC is rapidly evolving to meet the changing society we live in and the needs of our members. It currently supports upwards of 750 beneficiaries.
- f. The ELMC website provides a wealth of up-to-date information. All members should be encouraged to view it regularly - after all, it is **OUR CHARITY!**
- g. Brethren and Companions might consider joining those other members of the Province and their wives / partners who give regularly and who are **Friends of the ELMC**? The ELMC website explains how to do this at: [www.elmc.co.uk](http://www.elmc.co.uk)

## 5. Donations to Charity

- l. In recent years UGLE have requested, via a survey, information about donations made to charity across the Province – **not by individual Lodges/Chapters**, but aggregated. Please advise Brethren and Companions and seek their assistance but also reassure them that **it is not a competition!**
- m. You will all appreciate that such information is difficult to obtain.
- n. To try to provide an accurate figure, Representatives are requested to establish as many details as possible at the Installation meeting and to communicate this information to the Provincial Grand Charity Steward – [elgcs@gmail.com](mailto:elgcs@gmail.com)
- o. In order to assist, Lodges and Chapters are being asked to provide details of donations made during the year on the Installation Worksheet / Report that is completed and handed to you in advance of the Installation meeting.
- p. You may also wish to include reference to this information in your Installation Report that is submitted to the Assistant Provincial Grand Master/Assistant to the Provincial Grand Principals.

## 6. The Province

- a. The Province is here to help and support Lodges and Chapters. If your District Officers (RADO) cannot assist, please first try the Provincial Website and if that route is unsuccessful contact the Provincial Office.
- b. Advise the members of Annual Meeting at Blackburn which is the 18th November 2021 and the Royal Arch Annual Meeting on 17<sup>th</sup> March 2022; additionally, the responsibility of the Master/Wardens/Principals to attend! Indeed, it is their obligation to represent their Lodge/Chapter on that important occasion; reinforce that Master Masons / Companions are welcome at that Meeting.
- c. The Annual Meeting is an important occasion in the Provincial calendar, and it gives all our members the chance to enjoy a superb day, make new friends and see East Lancashire at its best - particularly if they conclude the day by attending the banquet.

## In Conclusion

- a. Try to personalise your response to the individual Lodge/Chapter and members.
- b. Where possible use examples to illustrate your points. *Freemasonry Today and Better Lives* often provide excellent references and key issues which you may be of use to support any comments that you wish to make.
- c. Do not attempt to cover all the items contained within these Briefing Notes.
- d. Aim to cover everything you wish to say in no more than 10 minutes by selecting three or four key messages, having regard to the needs and interests of all those in attendance.
- e. Finally, remember, these are briefing notes, and not a script!