



PROVINCE OF EAST LANCASHIRE



Circular No: 253

To: Lodge Secretaries / Chapter Scribes
Craft & RA Cabinets
Area Officers

27 September 2023

Dear Lodge Secretary / Chapter Scribe E,

Letter from the Grand Master

At the recent Quarterly Communication, held at the International Convention Centre, Newport, South Wales on 13 September 2023, the Most Worshipful Pro Grand Master, Jonathan Spence, presented a letter, from the Most Worshipful Grand Master, HRH The Duke of Kent, which is replicated in full, here;

“Dear Brethren and Companions,

I have been giving much thought over the past year to the Strategy for Freemasonry, 2022 and beyond, one of the key elements of which is succession planning. Succession planning is, or should be, the concern of everyone who holds an office in Freemasonry, including myself as Grand Master.

Over the last fifty years or so life has become immensely more complex and the calls on the time of everyone have become more numerous and more pressing. This is as true of Freemasonry as it is of the world in general. Those of us who hold high positions in Freemasonry have both more to do and – no less important – more decisions to make.

Ever since the formation of the United Grand Lodge, on the Union of the Premier and Antient Grand Lodges in 1813, the Grand Master has been either a member of the Royal Family or a Peer of the Realm. I believe that this is a tradition that members of the Craft under this Grand Lodge value, and would wish to continue.

I have been very fortunate to have had the support of a succession of Pro Grand Masters as my principal advisers, and I am anxious that when I no longer feel able to continue as Grand Master my successor should be able similarly to call on the support of a Pro Grand Master. The complexity of modern life makes this, I believe, an imperative.

As our Rules stand at present, only a Prince of the Blood Royal is entitled to make such an appointment.

Since 1917, when King George V by Letters Patent restricted the list of those who are entitled to be designated a Prince or Princess, Princes of the Blood Royal have become noticeably fewer in number, and the duties and tasks that devolve upon them correspondingly greater, than when the Rule was originally framed. I therefore hope that the Grand Lodge will agree to a modest change in the Rule to widen the number of potential Grand Masters able to appoint a Pro Grand Master, and suggest that the change should be to enable the son of a Prince of the Blood Royal to make such an appointment.

Edward, Grand Master”

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Subsequent to the announcement, an amendment to Rule 16 of the Book of Constitutions was approved, as follows:

Rule 16 of the Book of Constitutions be amended to read "The Grand Master, if a Prince of the Blood Royal, or the son of a Prince of the Blood Royal, may appoint a Pro Grand Master."

Your sincerely and fraternally,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Prince Williams". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath the name.

Provincial Grand Secretary / Scribe E