

Briefing Notes for Craft and Royal Arch Installation Representatives for the Masonic Season 2023 / 24

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 – 2023 / 24.

Your role as a Representative at Installation meetings, is very important and enables you to deliver a positive and encouraging message on his behalf.

Set out below are the updated briefing notes which are for your reference and to provide useful background information. It is important that the message you convey on behalf of the RWPGM / MEGS is structured around these points.

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!

Please use this opportunity to generate interest, encourage involvement, and increase the commitment of our members and to ensure that we are all working to protect and secure the long-term future of our Lodges and Chapters. Your contribution is greatly appreciated.

Vision of RWPGM/MEGS

- a. Our aspiration is that Freemasonry continues to flourish in the Province, is enjoyed and valued by our members and their families and is held in high regard within our local communities.
- b. The Province will align its strategy with the UGLE / SGC Strategic Roadmap - "The Future - 2022 and Beyond".
- c. Being a Freemason is a matter of choice, so membership of our fraternity should be enjoyable and fulfilling.
- d. Our key principles continue to be Integrity, Friendship, Respect and Service. We should seek to be **open** and **inclusive**. Speak about being a Freemason in our communities and be "Ambassadors for the Craft".
- e. In addition to developing our Strategy the Province's priorities for the 2023/24 season are **Membership**, (in terms of attraction, retention and retrieval in both the Craft and the Royal Arch and addressing the Membership Challenge), and the **2026 Festival**.
- f. Consider, wherever possible, including family, and non-Masons in our activities both social and whenever the opportunity presents itself at our meetings when "called off" - perhaps during personal or Lodge / Chapter celebrations.
- g. All **new members** need to be fully informed about the importance of the Royal Arch in completing their Masonic journey – **One journey, One organisation**. Companions should speak freely and positively of their membership in the Royal Arch within their Craft Lodges. It is the express wish of the RWPGM that those Brethren who are not members of the Royal Arch join **when the time is right for them**.
- h. The 2026 Festival was formally launched in March 2022. It is important that we give this priority to achieve a successful outcome; the set target of £2.4 million whilst challenging is achievable. However, in order to achieve success, it is essential that a larger number of our Brethren make personal payment promises. The figure for those that have thus far done so stands at around 20%. The support of all the Brethren and Companions is essential.
- i. "Make every meeting count"! Freemasonry must be fun, and every aspect should be towards that aim. Be inclusive - Masonry is a family, and every member of that family (including our extended family members) should feel important, involved, valued, respected, that they belong. **Be proud, be inspired** and tell others about it.

UGLE Strategy – “The Future – 2022 and Beyond”

The main elements of that Strategy are set out below in a simple diagrammatic form for your convenience – “The Strategy on One Hand”.



The Craft and the Royal Arch. We are one organisation.

One journey, one organisation!

Both Orders should work seamlessly together

The Royal Arch should be introduced at an early stage

Brethren should see progression to the Royal Arch as a natural step in their Masonic journey

Brethren should be encouraged to join the Royal Arch when the time is right for them

Unattached Companions are encouraged to join a Chapter that is right for them, to rediscover the joys of membership. The Province can assist with that choice.

Acknowledging our Membership Challenge.

Unless we accept and acknowledge that there is a challenge, we cannot address it

Be aware of the challenge in your own Lodge or Chapter

Compare the membership of the Lodge now and at an earlier date to illustrate that point

Develop a strategy to address the issues that are relevant to your circumstances

Attracting new Members.

Use the Members Pathway to develop your approach to attracting new member

Ensure every member is engaged and involved

Review and adapt your approach at least annually

Enjoy the benefits of a healthy and vibrant Lodge

Retaining existing Members.

Make sure every Brother is made welcome and feels that he belongs

Involve the wider Masonic family

Follow up on Brethren that miss a meeting and be aware of their needs

Foster inclusiveness so that all members feel that they can contribute

Willing to innovate. A 'yes if' attitude.

Adopt a “Yes if” **NOT** a “no because” attitude

Within the boundaries of our Constitutions, don't be afraid to try new approaches

Ensure that Lodge and Chapter traditions are meeting the needs of its members today

Seek more opportunities to involve family and friends – and not just at social occasions

Membership:

Our aim is to have a happy, thriving Membership.

- Freemasonry is a force for good within the lives of our families, the extended Masonic family, friends, and our communities.
- We should adopt a “yes if” attitude and overcome any “no because” (“*we have always done it that way*”) reservations.
- Masonry offers something more: -
 - Personal development.
 - Lifelong friendships.
 - A variety of social activities for our families & friends.
 - An organisation that actively supports those less fortunate than us, in our own society, the local community and across the world.
 - In an increasingly fractured world, we offer consistency, security, and stability.
 - Our values enable our members to outwardly exemplify tolerance, decency, kindness, and respect.
 - But are we doing enough with the opportunities we have as Freemasons?
- Our Membership Challenge, we need to: -
 - Face the challenge head on. Yes, attract more members. Vitally, we also need to retain the ones we have.
 - Be fit and ready for the challenges of the 21st century and be willing to adapt.
 - Be an open, public facing example of enjoyment and support.
 - Talk openly about our Membership, what it means to us and how it has enhanced our lives.
 - Welcome innovation within the boundaries of our traditions and constitutions.
- Community Engagement:
 - We should involve ourselves in Community activities through volunteering.
 - Communicate our financial support and demonstrate our physical support.
 - Look for new ways to engage with the public.
 - Our response to the pandemic is a shining example as to why we are a force for good in society.
- Be proud of who we are, what we do and tell other people about it.
- Membership Beyond the Craft and into the Royal Arch
 - The Royal Arch completes the Craft story.
 - Every time we open to the 3rd degree, we are receiving instructions to find what can only be revealed in the Royal Arch – there is a direct link with the Exaltation Ceremony.
 - Membership should be an aim for all Master Masons - when the time is right for them.
 - Most Royal Arch Chapters consist of members from several Lodges, expanding our network of Masonic friends.

Engagement:

- a. Whilst most Lodges have appointed a Lodge Mentor and a Lodge Membership Officer ALL Lodge members should be involved in attracting new members and ensuring that they enjoy their experience in the Craft and retain their membership. The Mentor and Membership Officer need the support of the Brethren to successfully complete their task. Similarly in the Royal Arch most Chapters have appointed a Chapter Mentor, and they likewise need the support of each Companion to assist them with their duties.

- b. Mention that over 70% of Lodges in PGLEL now have documented Lodge Plans. Building on the success of the Lodge Planning initiative Lodges are encouraged to identify and adopt other elements of the Members Pathway. The core elements are – Plan > Attract > Engage > Retrieve.
- c. Encourage Lodges to review their Lodge Plan annually and to involve all members in that activity.
- d. Stress that the concepts and guides within the UGLE Members' Pathway will help Lodges increase the size and satisfaction of their membership. Ensure that the concepts and guides, within the UGLE Members Pathway with regard to the Royal Arch are also observed.
- e. Membership and closing the "Membership Gap" – (*the net difference between member gains and losses*) – is a high priority for UGLE/SGC and the Province; please support your Lodge Membership Officer, Lodge Mentor, Chapter Mentor, and the Area Officers in their efforts towards this aim.
- f. 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 this from the outset as a natural step. This should be mentioned as part of the Craft interview process, and it is crucial that at least one of the interviewers is in the Royal Arch.
- g. 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. In essence all Lodge members, who are members of the Royal Arch, should assist the Royal Arch Representative in his task to promote membership of the Royal Arch. Awareness and recognition by the Lodge and its members, of this role, is vital.
- h. Ensure that every meeting counts. Try to make meetings enjoyable and fulfilling. Where appropriate the involvement of family members is encouraged, both in the Lodge/Chapter Room (after Calling Off) and at Festive Boards. Members should leave a meeting, wanting more and looking forward to the next Meeting.
- i. Refer to the work of the Learning and Development Committee, the availability of Solomon. That there is material available online (<https://solomon.ugle.org.uk/>) to make meetings interesting, challenging and enjoyable. Encourage the use of "Five Minute Nuggets" to enhance those meetings and to involve newer members.

The East Lancashire 2026 Festival:

- i. Our target for the Festival is £2.4M. Thank Lodges / Chapters for all that they are doing.
- ii. Prepare your information in advance of attending the Installation meeting. The Provincial website contains the current progress against target and information on how to give, forthcoming events, Festival news, and Festival newsletters. The MCF website is a great resource for current MCF news and about the Charity itself. Additional information is also available in the "Better Lives" magazine. Within the MCF website our microsite is where members can set up their donation plans online.
- iii. Consider speaking to the Area Charity Steward prior to attending. He can tell you how the Lodge is performing. At the meeting, take time to engage (about the Festival) with the Lodge Festival Representative, the new Master and those individuals who 'drive' the Lodge. These are the ones who can get the rest of the members 'on-board'.
- iv. Make sure you are wearing your Festival Tie and Jewel. You are an ambassador for the Festival, and as a Grand Officer/Chain Bearer should be knowledgeable and offer enthusiastic encouragement. Consider taking paper regular payment forms with you. The hand on the shoulder / face-to-face approach works best - but please remember- there will be some who genuinely can't afford to give or some who are beneficiaries of the MCF.
- v. There is one Provincial Message to give when Members are seeking advice on masonic giving, "**Support the Festival**". Avoid any mixed messages; **Festival Giving is the Province's priority**.
- vi. Encourage the Brethren and Companions to involve family and friends in their Festival fundraising activities and events and make it fun. Then publicise them! **Communication is key to success**.

- vii. The Provincial Grand Master is grateful to the hundreds of kind, generous and supportive people who have freely given their time and money for our Festival Appeal or who have participated, or supported the many Fund Raising events taking place throughout the Province. There is still much work to do – only 1 in 5 brethren are making regular monthly payments. It is only through regular payments that we will successfully meet our challenging but achievable target of **£2.4M**. Encourage this approach to giving.
- viii. The total pledged so far should be reported to the Brethren / Companions, reminding them that this figure is a forecast assuming all maintain their regular monthly payments until their Direct Debit end date (current total is available on the Provincial website).
- ix. The Masonic Charitable Foundation is the biggest Foundation in the country which gives to other charities. Briefly talk about its work and choose a 'Woe or Wow' story to capture the hearts and minds of the brethren and / or talk about the work of the MCF generally:
(Follow this link to an associated document which will be updated regularly).
- x. We are very grateful for Lodge and Chapter donations, Please encourage the use of Gift Aid envelopes in Lodge / Chapter and/or at the Festive Board, this will result in an additional 20% income to the Festival. (scanning QR codes is the alternative to Gift Aid envelopes) and encourage the Lodge towards fundraising events and activities.
- xi. It is important that the Brethren understand the work of the Masonic Charitable Foundation (MCF). The MCF was established in 2015 after the amalgamation of the original 4 charities – the Grand Charity, the Masonic Samaritan Fund (MSF), the Royal Masonic Trust for Girls and Boys (RMTGB) and the Royal Masonic Benevolent Institution (RMBI) and celebrates its 7th birthday this year.
- xii. The amalgamation has been a great success, removing the complexity in the application process (only one form now!) and creating one combined masonic support department dealing with needs.
- xiii. Since its formation the MCF has awarded over 38,000 grants to support vulnerable and disadvantaged Freemasons or their families. It has also given over 4,300 grants to help fund the work of local and national charities that are supporting communities across England and Wales.
- xiv. The MCF is unique in that it does not raise money from the public; instead, its work is entirely funded through the generous donations of Freemasons, their families, and friends. Approximately 40% of this funding is from the Festival system.
- xv. There are two facets to the charity – Support and Services for Freemasons or their families (circa 70%), and Grant Funding to non-masonic charities that operate within the core aims of the MCF – reducing loneliness and isolation in later life and supporting the needs of disadvantaged young people to help offer them the best start in life - (circa 30%). In the 2021/22 Financial Year the MCF gave £5.8M to non-masonic charities and £13.7M in grants given to Individuals and their families.
- xvi. During that period, £7.3M helped masonic families and individuals with essential living costs, £3.9M focussed on the health and well-being of individuals and over £1.3M supported the children and grandchildren of Freemasons.
- xvii. Since its formation 7 years ago, within East Lancashire, the MCF has awarded 1200 grants to support Freemasons and their families totalling some £2.5M. 200 grants to support children and young people, 700 grants to relieve financial hardship and over 250 grants to fund health and medical treatments.
- xviii. In those 7 years, within East Lancashire, the MCF has awarded 114 grants to local charities totalling almost £1M. In addition, East Lancashire has benefited from the MCF's National Strategic Partnerships with Age UK, Hospice UK, Home Start UK, and the Cranfield Trust.
- xix. In total, nationally, the MCF has given over £120M and supported over 3000 charities. This equates to about £50,000 every single day.
- xx. REMEMBER: The MCF is here to help members of our Lodges and Chapters and their eligible family members. Encourage members to look out for those who may need our support, whether it be for financial, health – including mental health needs, or to support children or older relatives who may have care needs. The only thing more heart-breaking than some of the stories we hear, is the knowledge that there are people out there who have no idea that the MCF may be able to help them.
- xxi. The reality is that in any year – the MCF puts back into East Lancashire far more than we give them in donations. See the infographic below for a detailed report on how the MCF has benefited our needy during the MCF's last financial year.

Our impact 2021/22

In East Lancashire

Local community



22

grants awarded to charities



£193,737

in grants given to charities



Individuals and families

161 disadvantaged and vulnerable Freemasons or their families supported with grants totalling **£440,259**



7

people accessed our free and confidential counselling service



£291,060

was awarded to help cover the costs of everyday living



£65,768

was provided to support health, care and wellbeing



£83,431

was given to help support the education of children and young people

And beyond

This year we awarded a total of **£19.6M** to support the work of **726** charities and help **3,281** individuals and families across England, Wales, the Channel Isles, the Isle of Man and internationally.

Read our full Impact Report!

Scan the QR code using your phone camera or visit impact.mcf.org.uk/poster



The East Lancashire Masonic Charity [ELMC] and Hewlett Court

- a. The East Lancashire Masonic Charity is our own Provincial Charity of which we are rightly very proud, particularly Hewlett Court – our own fully refurbished residential / sheltered accommodation home. There is a waiting list for those seeking to reside at Hewlett Court, but we would be pleased to see the home being marketed amongst the brethren.
- b. The home has recently benefited from a £1.6 million development, which was primarily funded via a legacy. This provides up to date accommodation and facilities. Additional work has also taken place to refurbish other areas.
- c. The ELMC is taking a back seat during the Festival period, knowing that the Province’s prime focus for fund-raising must be the Festival. The Charity has sufficient reserves to continue its core activities: Providing for those in need from our wider masonic family, and continuing to support non-masonic good causes, charities and disaster response in our local communities.
- d. Although the Festival is currently the charitable priority of the Province, Area visits to Hewlett Court to see the work first hand, and to support them through your presence, are encouraged and would be appreciated.
- e. Our Officers and staff at ELMC and Hewlett Court are fully supportive of the Festival. Indeed Stephen Thomson (who chairs the ELMC Fund Raising Committee), Julie Ward (ELMC Operations Director) and Karen Hall (ELMC Admin) all perform important roles on the Festival Appeal Committee, making good use of their transferable skills.
- f. The Fund Raising Committee are behind various Festival Fund Raising Events including the now Annual Provincial Quiz, the Holcombe Hike, the 2024 Walk the Province and so on.
- g. Hewlett Court has hosted and will continue to host varied events in support of the Festival. Your support of these events will be welcome. The ELMC’s Young People Committee, to support the Festival and “to give something back², is running ‘It’s a Knockout’” in 2024 and “The Soap Box Derby” in 2025, and we hope all Areas will participate in these.
- h. Circa 80% of the support given to Freemasons and their families in East Lancashire is provided by the Masonic Charitable Foundation. The remainder comes from the ELMC.
- i. Through the ELMC Grants Committee we continue to support non-masonic good causes, charities and disaster response in our local communities. To enhance this during the Festival period the MCF has given us an additional £30K which we are dispersing to specially chosen registered charities in each of the Provincial Areas, and £10K per year to match fund ELMC supported initiatives. This will help raise the profile of the MCF within the Province and the profile of Freemasonry and masonic charity in our local communities.
- j. The ELMC promotes its charitable work well – via the [ELMC website](#), the Hewlett Court Newsletter and both the ELMC’s and Hewlett Court’s social media resources – Facebook, Instagram and Twitter.
- k. We cannot speak highly enough of the Officers of the ELMC and the voluntary work they do on our various Committees- the Board, the Benevolence Committee the Comforts Fund, Young Peoples, Grants, Hewlett Court Advisory, Fund-Raising, Museum, Investment and Charity Stewards’ Committees. For special mention is the sterling work that Julie Ward, Beverley Schofield, Karen Hall, and the rest of the Hewlett Court and ELMC teams do, which has enabled Hewlett Court to be ran as a successful business, augmenting our available funds through its profits.
- l. The prime role of the ELMC is to keep in touch with, assess the needs of and provide support – financial and otherwise to our Beneficiaries. This is a team effort by the ELMC, the Committee of Benevolence, the Provincial Grand Almoner, the Province’s Welfare Officers and the MCF. At any one time there are circa 650-700 Beneficiaries who include widows, brethren, married couples, spinsters, bachelors, young people, widows of closed Lodges and Hewlett Court residents. Their stories are often, of necessity, private, but collectively they receive several hundred thousand pounds of funding each year. We would not be able to do this without the financial donations the brethren make outside successive Festival periods, so thank you.
- m. A good summary of the work the ELMC does can be found in the [Annual Reports](#) published each year and made available at the September Annual General Meetings

Donations to Charity

- a. 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!** This information is requested for publicity purposes at a National level.
- b. You will all appreciate that such information is difficult to obtain. 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 – elpgcs@gmail.com
- d. 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.
- e. 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.

The Province

- a. The Province is here to help and support Lodges and Chapters. If your Area Officers cannot assist, please first try the Provincial Website and if that route is unsuccessful contact the Provincial Office.
- b. Advise the members of Annual Meetings at Blackburn, for the Craft, 16th November 2023 (21 November 2024) and the Royal Arch Annual Meeting on 21 March 2024; additionally, the responsibility of the Master/Wardens/Principals to attend! Indeed, it is their obligation to represent their Lodge/Chapter on those important occasions; reinforce that Master Masons/Companions are welcome at those meetings.
- c. The Annual Meetings are important occasions 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 banquets that follow.

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 find 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. However, there is an expectation that the RW Provincial Grand Master / Most Excellent Grand Superintendents aspiration, as set out as the first bullet point under Vision, the Membership Strategy and the Festival would be referred to in some form.
- e. 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.
- f. Finally, remember, these are briefing notes, and not a script!