

## Briefing and Reference Notes for Craft and Royal Arch Installation Representatives for the Masonic Season 2022 / 23

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 – 2022 / 23.

We are all aware that Freemasonry, in common with other organisations and the public generally, has gone through an unprecedented period during the last two years or so, caused by the Coronavirus pandemic. During that period meetings were obviously affected. Your role as a Representative at Installation meetings, is therefore very important in delivering a positive message and encouraging Lodges and Chapters to get back to business.

Set out below are the updated briefing notes which are for your reference and to provide useful background information. Despite us making a successful return to our meetings, in certain instances Brethren and Companions are still a little reluctant to return; to that end it is important that the sentiments contained in the first four 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!

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, Chapters and Halls. Your contribution towards these aims is greatly appreciated.

### **This message is for both the Craft and the Royal Arch Representatives:**

- Emphasise the need to “make every meeting count”! Masonry must be enjoyable and fun; be inclusive – make every member feel important, involved and that they belong.
- Stress the need for Lodges and Chapters to make every effort to bring “slow returners” back to meetings. Be patient and show an understanding of the concerns that some members might still have.
- Encourage Lodges and Chapters to support the Province, their Districts and Halls in their initiatives to reinvigorate Masonry in East Lancashire.
- Encourage the inclusion of non Masons and “family” at every opportunity.

### **1. Vision of RWPGM/MEGS**

- a. In the coming months the Province will align its strategy with the developing UGLE / SGC Strategic Roadmap - “The Future - 2022 and Beyond”.
- b. Being a Freemason is a matter of choice, so membership of our fraternity should be enjoyable and fulfilling.
- c. Our key principles continue to be Integrity, Friendship, Respect and Charity. Brethren should demonstrate those values. We should seek to be **open and inclusive**.
- d. The Province's priorities for the 2022/23 season are **Membership**, (in terms of attraction, retention and retrieval in both the Craft and the Royal Arch), and the **2026 Festival**.
- e. Brethren should feel comfortable in speaking openly about being a Freemason outside the Lodge and in the community; to be “Ambassadors for the Craft”.
- 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 celebrations.
- g. All **new members** need to be fully informed about the importance of the Holy Royal Arch in completing their Masonic journey. 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 seriously consider joining **when the time is right for them**.

- h. The Province had been preparing for some time for the introduction of the 2026 Festival. This was formally launched in March 2022. The launch banquet was a great success. It is important that we give this priority to achieve a successful outcome; the set target whilst challenging is achievable. The support of all the Brethren and Companions is essential.
- i. Freemasonry must be fun and every aspect of it should be towards that aim. Masonry is a family, and every member of that family (including our extended family members) should feel valued, respected, that they belong and that they are able to influence decisions which affect their membership and their enjoyment. Be proud, be inspired and tell others about it.

## 1. Membership

- 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. The same can be said in the Royal Arch. The role and responsibility of the Lodge Royal Arch Representative is to attract new memberships, but we all have a part to play in encouraging new members into the Royal Arch
- 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. An updated Pathway version is available via: <https://b.ugle.org.uk/membership/members-pathway> This will result in quality candidates joining and ensure the long-term sustainability of their Lodge. Quality Craft Masons are the lifeblood of quality Chapters. Quality candidates result in quality Masons, good ritual, added enjoyment, improved retention, and increased membership.
- 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. Lodges will be supported in Pathway activities by the District Membership Officer, District Mentor and other District Officers. The Provincial Grand Membership Officer and Provincial Grand Mentor are also available to be called upon whenever assistance is required.
- f. Membership and closing the "Membership Gap" – (*the net difference between member gains and losses*) – is a high priority for UGLE and the Province; please support your Lodge Membership Officer, Lodge Mentor and the District Officers in their efforts towards this aim.
- g. 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.
- h. The UGLE Digital Marketing Campaign has proven the benefit of using Social Media to attract new members. PGLEL intend to replicate this process locally under the direction of the Provincial Grand Membership Officer, [WBro Mo Afsa]. The details of prospective members will be passed to the District Membership Officer for initial screening, prior to being passed to a suitable Lodge – those that have in place a Lodge Plan.
- i. Retention and the return of members following the lock down is an area in need of attention. Some Brethren and Companions will need encouragement to return; perhaps all that is needed is a phone call to remind them that a Lodge / Chapter is having an important/enjoyable event.
- j. Emphasise the work of the Provincial Grand Mentor, WBro/EComp Jo Glass and the Team of District and Lodge Mentors. The appointment of Companion Glass as 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.

- k. 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.
- l. 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. Awareness and recognition by the Lodge and its members, of this role, is vital.
- m. 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.
- n. 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.
- o. Identify 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.

## 1. The East Lancashire 2026 Festival

- a. The Festival Appeal, for the Masonic Charitable Foundation was launched in November 2021, at the Annual Meeting of Provincial Grand Lodge, with a superb launch banquet beneath Concorde at the Runway Visitors Centre, Manchester Airport.
- b. **During the 5 years of Fundraising we hope to raise £2.4M** - through individual, Lodge and Chapter donations, fundraising events and support from other Orders, Provinces and the ELMC. This target is challenging but achievable. At his Installation in March 2022, the RWPGM said, *"In the years running up to the Festival, we can look forward to many more happy social and fundraising events, not losing sight of the fact that the bedrock of a Festival total to be proud of, will be the personal financial commitment each of us individually makes.*
- c. Most Provinces engage in a Festival Appeal every 11 years. These Appeals usually run for 5 years and culminate in a Grand Festival Banquet at the end of the fundraising period. Festival income from 44 Provinces fills the 41% funding gap the MCF needs to perform its valuable work.
- d. This work is both Masonic and non-Masonic and includes: Giving Young People the Best Start in Life, Preventing Loneliness and Isolation in the Elderly, Supporting the Hospice Movement, Funding Medical Research, Supporting Disaster Relief, and helping Freemasons or their Dependents in need with Daily Living Costs, Health, Care and Well being, Education, Residential, Nursing and Dementia Care, as well as having an Advice and Support Team – all supported by the network of Provincial Almoners, Welfare Officers, Charity Stewards and their Lodge and Chapter counterparts.
- e. 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**. If one is selecting between Festival and ELMC, then we would prefer you to support the Festival. The best way to support the Festival, is by making a regular payment to the MCF, by direct debit, using the portal on the MCF website. Lodges might consider the use of Gift Aid envelopes for their collections. This will result in an additional 20% income to the Festival. The Festival Brochure explains all the methods that can be used for fundraising and donating.
- f. The Province and ELMC, alongside the MCF, will continue to support our masonic beneficiaries throughout the Festival, and we will continue to support non-masonic good causes on behalf of the Brethren, with circa £500k available to us through the Festival period for this purpose.

Remember, 80% of the support our East Lancashire Beneficiaries receive comes from the MCF. The MCF and ELMC work hand-in-hand to ensure every eligible person gets all that they need, and the ELMC has more than sufficient reserves to meet its obligation during the Festival Appeal period.

- g. It is important for the Brethren to understand the work of the MCF, its financial needs, the support it gives locally in East Lancashire, the excellent work done by the MCF during the pandemic and its relationship with our own Charity, the ELMC. Take time to research current topics on the **MCF website** - [mcf.org.uk](http://mcf.org.uk) - within the “**Better Lives**” magazine and on our own **Festival Pages** and choose one or two to engage the audience with.
- h. “**Woe and Wow**”, stories from the MCF can be used to capture both the hearts and minds of the brethren. Emotional engagement can go hand and hand with intellectual engagement to encourage financial support of the Festival, and other Festival related activity. The activity of the MCF is diverse – mention the £500K + given for charities supporting Ukraine and the £4.7M donated during the pandemic.
- i. In 2015 the former 4 central Masonic Charities merged to form the Masonic Charitable Foundation – which has become more efficient and effective in the application of support on our behalf. In the 6 years since its formation, just within East Lancashire, the MCF has awarded **over 1000 Grants** to Freemasons and their families amounting to well over £2M. This has gone towards daily living costs during difficult times and towards health, care and support for children and young people to give them the best start in life. During the same period the MCF has supported 82 non-masonic charities within our Province and each District with Grants amount to well over £700K. To date, Covid related grants in East Lancashire amounted to over £130K. So, in those 6 years the MCF has supported East Lancashire with in excess of £2.8M. Nationally the MCF has given >£100M since 2016, some £52K per day.
- j. Raise the profile of the Lodge Festival Representative (usually the Lodge Charity Steward) and take time to engage with him privately too; see how he is getting on and judge whether he needs more central support. Did he have a message to give in Lodge? Thank the Lodge and the brethren for the work they have done thus far and encourage them to take up further fund-raising opportunities. The honorific system is designed so that brethren, ladies and Lodges can proudly display the work they have done, but also to stimulate them to do more
- k. Encourage the brethren to involve family and friends in their fundraising work and events. **Communication is key to success.** Our charity work is probably the greatest of three ‘hooks’ we have to help engage with the outside world, alongside the social and ritual side of what we do. Above everything else, we want the Festival period and our fundraising efforts to be fun,

## **1. Hewlett Court and the East Lancashire Masonic Charity [ELMC]**

- 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. Advise that a major £1.6 million development , 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. Brethren and Companions might consider arranging a visit to Hewlett Court to familiarise themselves with that work and to meet the residents. They would be made very welcome.
- c. 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 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 – circa 80% from the MCF and the remainder from the ELMC. We would not be able to do this without the financial donations the brethren make outside the Festival periods, so thank you.

- d. The ELMC is taking a back seat during the Festival period, knowing that the Province's prime focus for fundraising must be the Festival. The Charity is well placed with reserves to continue its core activities of providing for those in need from our wider masonic family during the Festival period. Through its Grants Committee and their funds, alongside the Province's access to funds, and with support from the MCF, we have the means by which we can continue to support non-masonic good causes, charities and disaster response in our local communities throughout the Festival.
- e. The ELMC promotes its charitable work via the ELMC website, [all members should be encouraged to view it regularly] the Hewlett Court Newsletter and both the ELMC's and Hewlett Court's social media resources – Facebook, Instagram and Twitter.
- f. We cannot speak highly enough of the brethren and the voluntary work they do on our various Committees- the Board, the Benevolence Committee, and the Comforts Fund, Young Peoples, Grants, Hewlett Court Advisory, Fund-Raising, Museum, Investment and Charity Stewards Committees. Of particular mention is the amazing job that Julie Ward, Beverley Schofield, Karen Hall, and the rest of the Hewlett Court and ELMC teams have done during the pandemic, especially in keeping residents safe, well, entertained and happy throughout.
- g. 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.

## 1. 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 is 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](mailto: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.

## 2. The Province

- a. The Province is here to help and support Lodges and Chapters. If your District 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, 17th November 2022 and the Royal Arch Annual Meeting on 16<sup>th</sup> March 2023; 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. 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!