



In touch > On line

The newsletter for Wiltshire Freemasons

Freemasons are going back to work



Mid August 2020

So much effort is being made....

Wiltshire Freemasonry



As many of you will know, I am not someone who expends an enormous amount of energy on talking about things that don't matter: I like to weigh up differing viewpoints and having given them a great deal of consideration, I am then quite happy to offer my opinion. It's why I now feel able to make a few comments on the quite incredible efforts being made by so many Brethren to prepare for a return to Masonic activity.

There has been much work 'behind the scenes' preparing Risk Assessments, and Lodge specific Covid-19 protocols; every aspect of the work has been carried out by energetic volunteers, and all with one aim in view, the happiness and safety of the members.

In the last newsletter the Provincial Grand Master acknowledged that for some Brethren the UGLE decision to rescind the suspension notice was seen as being a little premature, particularly in view of the restrictions on what a Lodge could and could not do with regard to the ceremonies. For others, the adaptations to the ceremonies were perceived as not being synonymous with the desire to apply Masonic symbolism to such items as the hoodwink and cable-tow. This has been subject to great debate and in a chat with the Provincial Orator I was reminded of the words of Harry Carr who said *"Symbolism is not an exact science; there are no rules by which we can measure the authenticity, or logic, or the accuracy, of one's interpretations."* I trust therefore that Lodge Committees will not allow the thought that 'there is only one way to do something' to unduly influence a decision to Initiate a candidate or Pass a Brother to the degree of a Fellow Craft.

The Provincial Grand Secretary has received notification from a number of Masonic Halls, with regard to their ability to meet the quite exacting requirements of the Government's Covid-19 Guidelines, and how they can apply them to the suggestions contained in the 'General Guidance for the Resumption of Masonic Meetings', jointly published with Supreme Grand Chapter. Brethren, it is simply amazing that Masonic Hall Committees throughout the Province have been able to undertake the work required in order to arrive at proper conclusions as to whether to open their doors or not, whilst assessing the costs for implementing any such recommendations and changes required.

Importantly, please remember that Masonic Hall committees must ensure the building is COVID-19 secure, and that the facility provides a safe environment for Masonic meetings and that all legislation has been complied with. I would remind you that the General Guidance states that the following activities are not yet permissible under the current restrictions: singing, Ceremony of Raising, and Festive Boards. It is also strongly recommended that the practice of wearing white gloves be suspended in favour of regular hand-washing/sanitising instead. Indeed, I am able to confirm that the Provincial Grand Master has mandated that white gloves and Lodge officer collars should not be worn in any Craft Lodge meeting until further notice.

I, like you, Brethren, have not attended any Masonic meetings or functions since 17th March and would dearly love to return to what we do best, the act of demonstrating Brotherly love, relief and truth. I am sure some normality is now closer at hand but in the meantime let us all please be understanding of the fact that some Brethren may be reluctant to return to active Freemasonry at this time, and I would remind all Brethren that nobody, particularly elderly or vulnerable members, should feel coerced into attending meetings – irrespective of their office.



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Celebrated author John Dickie ZOOMS into Swindon....

Wiltshire Freemasonry

On Tuesday 1st September at 7.00pm a very special event hosted by Vastern Lodge No.8977 will welcome to Wiltshire, Professor John Dickie a celebrated author, historian and academic.

Professor Dickie is Professor of Modern Italian at University College London and will speak about his latest book 'The Craft - How The Freemasons Made The Modern World' and afterwards will take part in a question and answer session facilitated by the editor.

The meeting starts promptly at 7.00pm and all enquiries to join the meeting should be made by email to pcowiltshire@gmail.com

The Lodge has been very active during the suspension period, holding a regular Tuesday evening learning and discussion meeting which has proven to be extremely popular. At the beginning of August the Lodge members welcomed Michelle Worvell, Communications Director of the United Grand Lodge of England, and during the 'lockdown' have entertained the Provincial Orator; Bro Shawn Dunbreaker, and representatives of the Royal Arch and Mark Master Masons. Visitors are always welcome.

The WMCF needs your support....

VASTERN LODGE NO. 8977
invite you to hear
Professor
John Dickie
AUTHOR HISTORIAN ACADEMIC
HOW THE FREEMASONS MADE THE MODERN WORLD
Tuesday 1st September
7.00pm
ZOOM
pcowiltshire@gmail.com

Wiltshire
Masonic
Charity
Foundation

Wiltshire Freemasons
Charity... it's in our DNA

Supporting the Wiltshire
Masonic Family and
Wiltshire Charities

Registered Charity number 1181250

In 2019 the Provincial Grand Master launched the **Wiltshire Masonic Charity Foundation (WMCF)**, a fund whose purpose is to enable a prompt response for one off applications providing essential support to Wiltshire Brethren and their dependents who have an urgent and immediate need. The WMCF will also support smaller charities within Wiltshire.

With your support the aim is to build an endowment fund of one million pounds. We hope to achieve this with monthly donations and legacies. The Foundation will invest this money to generate annual interest which will be used to pay out grants.

The WMCF will work closely with the Masonic Charitable Foundation (MCF) which is better able to provide longer term financial, family and medical support.

The **Wiltshire Masonic Charity Foundation (WMCF)** is 'your charity' and it needs your support to make it a success.

You can support the **Wiltshire Masonic Charity Foundation** by making a 'planned giving' commitment or by providing for a legacy gift in your will. For further details on how you can make a difference contact your Lodge Charity Steward or the Provincial Charity Steward Derek Gibbens.



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Freemasonry continues despite Covid-19....

Wiltshire Freemasonry



It was Benjamin Franklin who said there were only two things certain in life: death and taxes. I would like to add a third; namely the costs associated with running UGLE, the Province and your Lodge Masonic Hall or meeting place. I mention them, because it is important to realise that during the period of 'lockdown' the usual income streams have dried up. For example no bar sales, which, while incurring zero costs in terms of stock purchases also results in zero profit, and it is the profit made on bar sales which plays a significant part in providing the revenue flow which helps to keep your Masonic Hall afloat. Another element is the hall 'rental' included in your Lodge subscriptions, which incidentally also includes modest contributions to UGLE, the Province and the Masonic Charitable Foundation (MCF).

I know it's fashionable to utter a collective groan when the treasurer announces a rise in Lodge subscription rates (and long may that tradition continue) but in truth we all know that 'nothing comes for free' and despite the humorous comments suggesting the treasurer and the secretary might be enjoying a Caribbean cruise at the members' expense, we all smile and pay up. *By the way, we all know the treasurer and secretary to be thoroughly upstanding men and not at all interested in cruising.*

At the commencement of 'lockdown' UGLE and the Province issued statements in which they made it clear that there would be no increase to subscriptions in the coming year; what neither body could do was to reduce or cancel subscriptions entirely. After all the essential structure of both organisations requires an income stream to meet routine and regular expenditure; something which I am sure we all understand and appreciate. The same economic principles apply to our Masonic Halls which must meet the many associated costs of providing a facility, such as council tax, insurance premiums, utilities and essential maintenance, repairs, and improvements. Pandemic or not, such costs are still incurred.

Having spoken to a number of Lodge Treasurers, I am delighted to hear that subscription payment levels are in line with what can properly be described as 'normal' - and on behalf of your Lodge and the Province, I want to say a huge thank you to everyone who has fulfilled their obligation to the Lodge of which they are a member by paying their annual subscription.

But what of those who haven't as yet paid their dues? The first thing to say is that for some the reasons may be nothing more than it's their usual practice to pay at the last moment, while for others the issue might be a little more complicated and even associated with the loss of their employment. Brethren, my plea to anyone who is experiencing a problem in finding the money to pay their subscription, is simply this. Don't delay in making the treasurer and/or secretary aware of your predicament in order that proper consideration can be given to ways in which your annual subscription can be managed; and remember your continued membership of the Lodge is very important to everyone including the Province and Freemasonry in general.

While on the subject of possible personal crisis. Please do not forget that a support network exists to help every Freemason who requires help and assistance. The Lodge Almoner is available to offer initial help and advice; the Provincial Almoner will liaise with the welfare and support teams at the Masonic Charitable Foundation, and every member can make direct contact with the MCF using the confidential telephone helpline - remember -

IT'S OKAY TO NOT BE OKAY. IF YOU'RE NOT OKAY, DON'T HESITATE, JUST SAY.



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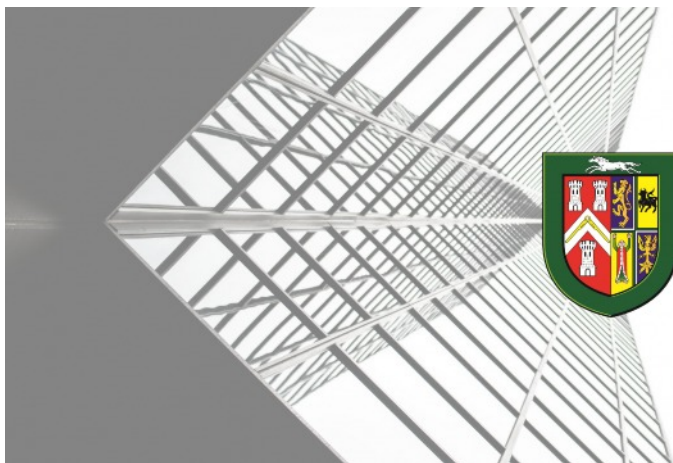
Mid August 2020

Have you seen our updated website?

Wiltshire Freemasonry

"A great colour scheme, fresher, cleaner and a more contemporary look and feel" is just one of the many positive comments made about the Province's new look website. Gone is the strident green background to be replaced by softer pastel greys. New page headers add to the overall experience making the website easier to read. <https://www.pglwilts.org.uk/> or Google Wiltshire Freemasons

- A new header reflects the open window allowing visitors to see what Freemasonry in Wiltshire is all about, while at the same time conveying the time honoured symbolism of straight undeviating lines, right angles, horizontals and perpendiculars.
- The streamlined 'drop down' menus are now easier to read with larger white text set against a soft grey background.
- New modern typefaces coupled with larger print makes reading website pages easier on the eyes, which is especially welcome to our members who experience issues with their eyesight.
- An all new landing page designed specifically for membership enquiries which can be accessed with a single click from the front page. We will be using the new membership enquiry 'landing page' URL on all our social media posts.
- Easier viewing on all platforms, whether you view the site on your mobile phone, iPad or tablet, lap top or PC - the images are crisp and clean, the typeface easy to read.
- A little bit of fun when you open the website sees the Provincial logo 'topple' into place with Wiltshire Freemasons entering from right to left - movement to bring a smile to your face.



WILTSHIRE
FREEMASONS

Young Masons enjoy social event....

Members of The Sarsen Club joined with new and young Masons in welcoming RW Bro Gareth Jones Provincial Grand Master for South Wales and Third Grand Principal to an evening organised by the Young & New Masons Inter-Club Social. Bro Gareth pointed out the important role of new and young Masons clubs in organising social activities and introducing the fun element into Freemasonry.

IMPORTANT NOTICE

While every care is taken in the compilation of In touch > On line, errors or omissions are not the responsibility of the Provincial Grand Lodge of Wiltshire or the editor. Opinions and views expressed are not necessarily those of the Provincial Grand Lodge of Wiltshire or the editor. The editor is delighted to receive your views on any article appearing in the monthly Newsletter or bi-annual Magazine.