



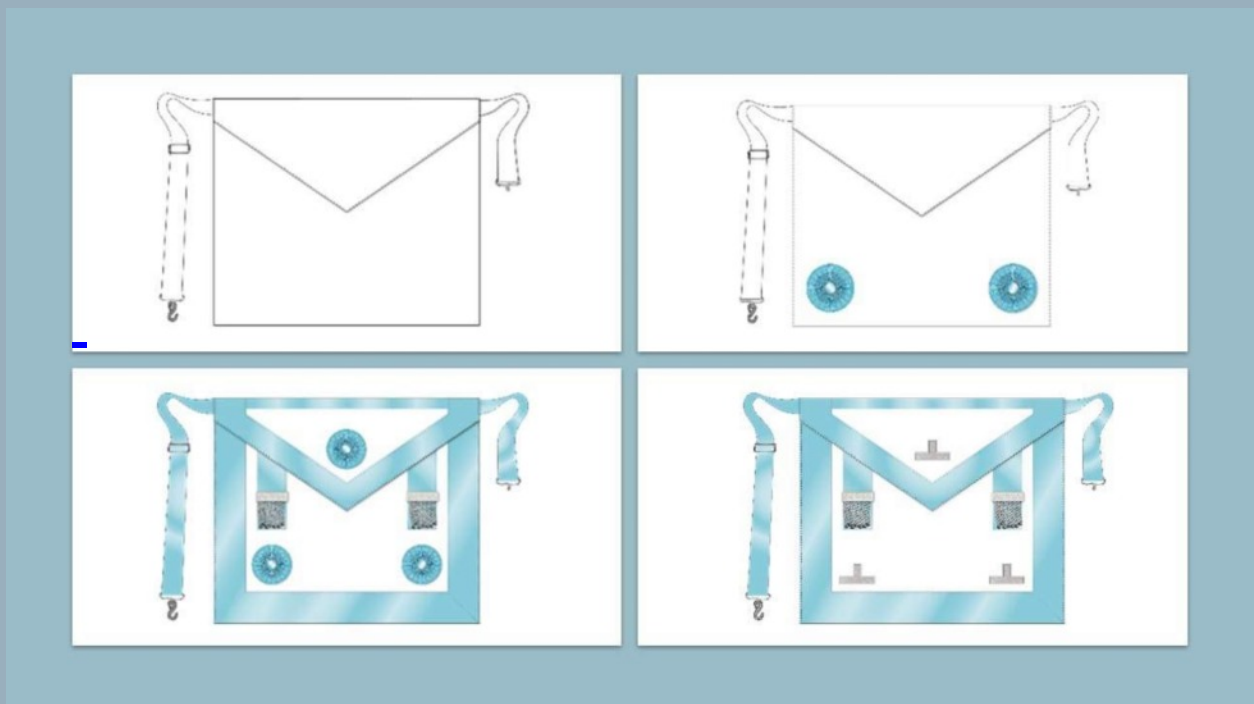
# Wiltshire Freemasons

Attracting | Engaging | Growing

## ETIQUETTE GUIDANCE

And things we thought you might like to know

2023



Integrity



Respect



Friendship



Charity

[www.wiltshirefreemasons.org.uk](http://www.wiltshirefreemasons.org.uk)

## A message from the Provincial Grand Master....



Most if not all organisations, have a set of rules to which its members are expected to conform. Freemasonry is not unique in that respect. Indeed some might say that we led the way when Dr Anderson published the first Constitutions of the Free Masons in 1723.

The Constitutions is similar in structure to the Old Charges that governed medieval (and later) stonemasons' Lodges. This was intentional. It positioned the 1723 Constitutions and the Grand Lodge of England as a continuation of that which preceded it, a technique that affords legitimacy in tradition-based societies. But the ideas promoted by the Grand Lodge of England were not mediaeval. They were new and materially different.

For over three centuries Anderson's Constitutions have formed the basic laws of Freemasonry throughout the world and governed the working of the principles as set out at the beginning of Speculative Masonry.

To understand and appreciate the impact of Anderson's Constitutions consider this: In 1730 it was taken by the Grand Lodge of Ireland as the model for the Irish Constitutions. It was re-printed verbatim by Benjamin Franklin in 1734 for use in America. And it provided the basis for the Constitutions of the Antients Grand Lodge, and of America's State Grand Lodges.

While By-Laws, and the Constitutions are classed as rules; just as important are the customs that control behaviour in social groups or social situations. This is often referred to as 'etiquette' and for many doing what is 'right and proper' over and above what falls with the strict rule of law is a mark of common decency.

Etiquette isn't just about old-fashioned politeness or outdated rules about opening doors. At its core, good etiquette is the oil that keeps society running smoothly. What we call 'good manners' is really a list of agreed-upon social rules that let everyone know what to expect when interacting with others. In short, Masonic etiquette is the exercise of proper behaviour within the Lodge and towards a Brother.

To understand what etiquette truly is requires an open mind and an appreciation that just because 'it' whatever 'it' is has been practiced for what seems like forever, is no justification for demanding that it be enshrined in aspic. Etiquette is in a constant state of change and is more a 'work in progress' than one could ever imagine.

The wording on the scroll or ribbon of the seal of Grand Lodge is Audi, Vide, Tace which translates as Listen, Observe, be Silent a good motto for the wise Freemason. It is not an attempt to silence the newly made Brother, far be it either said or implied. It is simply to encourage the 'apprentice' to listen and to observe as he strives to make a daily advancement in Masonic knowledge.

Finally, while you have joined an ancient and honourable institution that is no reason why you can't have fun, so do enjoy yourself as you immerse yourself in the experience of being not just a Freemason but more especially a Wiltshire Freemason.

My very best wishes



## A brief reminder

When you became a Freemason you made a number of promises and gave certain assurances to the Brethren of your Lodge. For example you promised that you would act and abide by the established customs of the Order, you indicated your support of the Lodge and promised a regular attendance at its meetings, and you gave an assurance that you would be an active participant in the Lodge.

Before you completed your application to join, you may have received leaflets to give you an insight into Freemasonry and what we practice and believe. During the course of being interviewed you were informed that an essential condition of membership is a belief in a Supreme Being. Freemasonry recognises no distinction of religion, it is open to members of every Faith group believing in a single Supreme Being, and emphasises the duties of loyalty and citizenship. It actively discourages its members from discussing religious or political questions in Lodge or at the supper table or in general conversation with its members. It does not mean that a Freemason is not entitled to an opinion on such matters, but they should not be discussed between Brethren as such topics can create disharmony, and dissension.

You would have been informed that your Lodge meets on certain days and asked whether or not this would be an issue for you. Doubtless you asked and were advised what to wear at a Lodge meeting; and you would have been reminded that charity is in a Freemason's DNA and you would be asked to contribute to the Lodge charity work.

Finally, you were told that Freemasonry is not in any financial sense a mutual-benefit society. Being a Freemason offers no financial advantages binding or obliging one Freemason to deal with another, or to support him in any way in business or employment. Any attempt to gain such an advantage is against the general principles of Freemasonry.

During your time as a member of the Lodge you will be introduced to the Mentor, who will no doubt encourage you to make a daily advancement in Masonic knowledge; a phrase which can strike terror into the heart of any Freemason. What the phrase means is that you make every effort to learn more about Freemasonry - what it means to be a Freemason - the history of Freemasonry - its symbols, how it operates and the principles of Integrity, Respect, Friendship and Charity.

Even the most experienced Freemason will admit that 'every day is a school day' meaning there will be many things they learn during a lifetime in the fraternity. Please do not be embarrassed to ask for help and advice. It's a great way to learn and there will always be someone who will help you as you step into the wonderful world of Wiltshire Freemasonry.

The rules governing the organisation of the Lodge and those under the United Grand Lodge of England are set out in the Book of Constitutions, and the Lodge Byelaws copies of which will have been presented to you at your Initiation.

The Lodge is presided over by the Worshipful Master, who is elected by the brethren each year for a period of one year. He rules and directs the Lodge with the assistance of his Wardens whom he appoints. The Master also appoints the Officers of the Lodge for his year of office, except for the Treasurer who is elected by all the brethren, and sometimes the Tyler. Although the appointments are only for one year it is usual for some offices to be held by the same Brother for a number of years to provide continuity, e.g. that of The Secretary and The Director of Ceremonies.

In this booklet you will be introduced to what is referred to as the '**etiquette**' of Freemasonry, that is the often unwritten code which supplements the rule book and guides an individual's behaviour.

## **Remember the Motto.**

In his introduction the Provincial Grand Master referred to the wording on the scroll or ribbon of the seal of Grand Lodge which is Audi, Vide, Tace and translates as Listen, Observe, be Silent, a good motto for the wise Freemason. It is not an attempt to silence the newly made Brother. It is simply to encourage the 'apprentice' to listen and to observe as he strives to make a daily advancement in Masonic knowledge. You will learn a lot about the etiquette practiced in your Lodge by listening and observing. However, you must always feel free to ask why something is said or done.

### **• Top Ten basics.**

1. If you are unable to attend a meeting you should tender your apology to the Secretary before the meeting, he will make sure it is recorded. In today's technical world there is no excuse for not informing the Secretary or his assistant.
2. When you attend a Lodge Meeting you must remember to sign the attendance book. In your own Lodge simply write your name. When visiting write your name, your Lodge name and number, plus your Masonic rank. EA, FC or MM.
3. If the Director of Ceremonies conducts you to a seat, on reaching it you should face the Director of Ceremonies and give a Court Bow before sitting. The Court Bow is given by a nod of the head, not a bow from the waist.
4. When addressing the Worshipful Master in open Lodge the sign (salute) should be held until you have finished speaking. After discharging the sign you resume your seat.
5. Brethren should refrain from talking in the Lodge during the ceremony. Even whispering can be heard around the Lodge room and can be distracting to those involved in the ceremony.
6. If you are called on to 'give greetings' and you feel confident about responding you should do so using the following words *"Worshipful Master, Brother Wardens and Brethren, I bring you warm and fraternal greetings from the (Name and Number of your own Lodge)", and then sit down.* Always remember it is 'greetings' you bring and not congratulations, that being the privilege of the Brother who responds to the visitors' toast.
7. Inform the Dining Steward well in advance of your intention to be present and send him the name and rank of any guest that you intend to bring, together with detail of any dietary requirement for yourself or your guest and the appropriate payment..
8. In the dining room the Brethren should stop talking immediately the Worshipful Master gavel, and remain silent whilst the Worshipful Master is talking or toasts are being proposed or responded to.
9. When proposing or responding to a toast do not tell a joke of a political or religious nature, neither should you tell a joke or story which is at all smutty or likely to give offence.
10. Every Lodge has a Charity Steward and he will ask you to contribute to the Lodge Relief Chest. You may also be asked to make a small donation to the Alms, and in the dining room you will be asked to buy raffle tickets. You will not be expected to give anymore than you can reasonably afford. Whatever you give is entirely up to you.

**Having been made aware of the Top Ten here are a few more.**

## ● Payment of subscription

11. The Lodge Treasurer will always be grateful for prompt payment of your annual subscription. If you have difficulty in making a single payment please notify the Treasurer who will work out a payment plan suitable to your circumstances.

## What to wear.

12. The governing body of Freemasonry (The Board of general Purposes) has made it quite clear what they consider the proper dress for a Freemason. (re-affirmed in 2002). Dark (preferably black) suit, black shoes and tie, and a white collared shirt.

13. It is permitted on a reciprocal basis to wear the Wiltshire Provincial Craft tie in Craft Lodges in Cornwall, Devon, Somerset, Dorset, Hampshire & Isle of Wight, Jersey, and Guernsey & Alderney. subject to local permissions. Ties of other Orders are not allowed in a Craft Lodge or Chapter (see 28)

14. It is perfectly acceptable for any Freemason to wear morning dress (a black jacket and striped trousers). However, local custom and etiquette may suggest that only Provincial Officers wear morning dress.

15. Some Lodges request their members to wear evening dress (black tie). Check with your Lodge as to the required dress.

## Regalia.

16. The first thing to remember is that you must wear the apron of the degree to which you have been admitted. If you are a new Freemason your Lodge will normally provide you with an EAF or FCF apron.

17. If you are visiting a Lodge the Tyler will provide you with an apron.

18. In Wiltshire Lodges the apron is worn outside the jacket.

19. Your apron should be tied firmly and securely with the top of your apron touching the middle button of a three button jacket and the second button of a two button jacket. Your apron is not a sporran. Secure it in such a manner as not to allow it to slip down.

20. If you are an Entered Apprentice the flap of your white apron may be worn up or down. Check with your Lodge Director of Ceremonies who will advise you.

21. In most Wiltshire Lodges EAFs and FCFs wear white gloves. If your Lodge doesn't don't worry, that's their tradition. If visiting another Lodge, explain your Lodge custom to the Director of Ceremonies and he will advise what you should do.

22. If you are the Master of a Lodge you will wear a MM apron and the Collar of the Office. A WM wears his Collar only in his own Lodge, the annual meeting of Provincial Grand Lodge, and the Quarterly Communication meetings at Grand Lodge.

23. If you are a Past Master you must wear the collar and jewel of a Past Master until such time as you receive a collar of a higher rank. (e.g. a Provincial Grand Officer does not wear a Past Master's collar either under or over his Provincial collar).

24. If you are deputising for a Lodge officer, you must wear the collar of that office unless the officer is present, in which case you do not.

25. If you are a Provincial Officer and hold an office in the Lodge, you wear the Lodge collar over your Provincial collar.

## Other Masonic Orders.

26. The rules regarding mixing Masonic regalia are very clear - you can't do it. When attending a Craft Lodge you cannot wear the regalia of another Order. And it doesn't just refer to the aprons and collars of other Orders.

27. The exception to the rule is that you should, if qualified to do so, wear the Royal Arch jewel and it is always worn as the first jewel on the left breast nearest the heart. (The Royal Arch isn't another Order it is an essential part of pure Antient Masonry).

28. You can also wear the Wiltshire Royal Arch tie in a Craft Lodge. However, it is the wish of the PrGM that Wiltshire Freemasons wear a Craft tie in a Lodge, and the Royal Arch tie in a Chapter.

29. It is permitted on a reciprocal basis to wear the Wiltshire Provincial Craft tie in Craft Lodges in Cornwall, Devon, Somerset, Dorset, Hampshire & Isle of Wight, Jersey, and Guernsey & Alderney. It is also permissible to wear the Wiltshire Royal Arch tie in Chapters of the Provinces named.

30. It is not 'good form' or etiquette to wear a Wiltshire Craft tie in a Royal Arch Chapter of another Province and vice versa.

31. Ties of other Orders are not allowed in a Craft Lodge or Chapter.

## Jewels.

32. Masonic jewels can best be categorised as collar jewels and breast jewels, and then as jewels issued by the UGLE, the Province, and your Lodge.

33. If qualified to do so you should wear the Royal Arch jewel and it is always worn as the first jewel on the left breast nearest the heart.

34. Again, subject to qualification the next jewel is the UGLE Tercentenary jewel, followed by the Provincial Festival jewel (when in Festival and until it has been designated a permanent jewel) and then by any Lodge jewel (which in Wiltshire should only be worn in the Lodge to which they refer).

35. Provincial Officers (of this Province) and Grand Officers do not tend to wear Founders, Past Masters and other Lodge specific jewels.

36. Collar jewels are those worn by officers present or past of Grand Lodge, the Provincial Grand Lodge and active officers of your Lodge.

## Military Medals.

37. It might come as a surprise to many former and serving members of the armed forces to discover that the wearing of military medals is not advocated by the Book of Constitutions. Indeed Rule 239 is explicit in determining that *The regalia, clothing, insignia, and jewels to be worn are as hereinafter prescribed, and no Brother shall be admitted into any meeting of Grand Lodge, or of any subordinate Lodge, without the clothing appropriate to his rank under the Grand Lodge.* Further to this, in Rule 241 Brethren are reminded that *No Masonic jewel, medal, device or emblem shall be worn in the Grand Lodge, or any subordinate Lodge...*

**N.B.** Masonic etiquette dictates that it is inappropriate to wear civil or military decorations and medals with Masonic regalia. When we enter the Lodge Room we leave our distinctions of ordinary life behind us and are all Brethren. (Graham Redman - Masonic Etiquette Today)

## **Lapel Pins.**

38. The wearing of lapel pins has become common-place and with very good reason. First and foremost the purchase of a lapel pin is generally made in support of a charitable cause. Secondly, it is a means of identifying with a particular Masonic Order, or just telling someone that you are a Freemason (e.g. the Forget-me-not). Contrary to some widely made comments, the UGLE does not involve itself in the approval of lapel pins or to their wearing (other than at Grand Lodge meetings). However, etiquette dictates that 'less is more' and that the only lapel pins to be worn in a Wiltshire Lodge or Chapter are those associated with charities, the Craft and the Royal Arch.

## **Saluting.**

39. Saluting a senior Freemason is a sign of respect.

40. The method of saluting in each degree can be properly explained to you by your Lodge Director of Ceremonies. It is really important that salutes are given in the correct manner, after all they are meant as a mark of respect. As with any form of salute the actions should be precise.

41. You always take a 'short step' before saluting. There is no definition for a short step and sometimes it can be as simple as 'stepping on the spot'. What it definitely isn't is an exaggerated stride.

42. Avoid any flamboyant or unnecessary flourishes, flicks or gestures and remember salutes are all about right angles and squares.

## **Thumb Up or Thumb Down.**

43. At the end of a Lodge meeting and when the Lodge has been formally closed by the Senior Warden, the IPM or in some cases the Director of Ceremonies closes the Volume of the Sacred Law concluding with the words *fidelity, fidelity, fidelity*. The rubric of the Emulation Ritual instructs the brother to '*touch left breast lightly with right hand with each word fidelity*'. This is a sign of reverence as the closing is conducted in the First Degree. Therefore the thumb of the right hand should be down.

44. During the saying of a prayer by either the WM or the Chaplain, a sign of reverence (the thumb down) is used.

## **Obligations.**

45. The sign to be used when an obligation is taken in open Lodge is as follows:

First degree - the first degree sign

Second degree - the sign of Fidelity (that is with the thumb extended in the form of a square i.e. thumb up).

Third degree - the penal sign of the degree

## **Visiting other Lodges**

46. Being a Freemason and only attending your own Lodge meetings is to deny yourself much of the enjoyment that Freemasonry offers. It is by getting out and about, that you will appreciate the true fellowship of the Craft. Visiting other Lodges is one of the joys of Freemasonry and you are encouraged to visit Lodges within the Province.

47. If you are invited by a Brother to attend his Lodge as his guest remember it is 'good manners' to reciprocate his kindness and invite him to your Lodge as your guest.

## **Giving Greetings.**

48. Many Lodges have adopted the proposal from the PrGM that one Brother brings greetings from all the visitors. A few Lodges ask all visiting Brethren to give greetings from their Lodge. The etiquette is that the greeting is kept short and that it is restricted to greetings and not to congratulations. The latter is the prerogative of the brother responding to the visitors' toast. If you are asked to give greetings keep it simple. Wait for the Director of Ceremonies to indicate it is your turn to speak, then rise, salute with the Entered Apprentice salute and say "*Worshipful Master, Brother Wardens and Brethren, I bring you warm and fraternal greetings from the (Name and Number of your own Lodge)*", and then sit down.

## **Festive Board or Supper Table**

49. The Festive Board or Supper Table or, as it is more commonly known, dining, should be considered as much a part of a Masonic Meeting as the Ceremony in the Lodge, and protocols are to be observed which are just as important as those in the Lodge Room. However the atmosphere is of course more relaxed and it is at the dinner table that you will have the opportunity to get to know the Brethren of your Lodge and the visitors, some of whom will be regular attendees.

50. The gestures and clapping which follow some Masonic toasts are called '*masonic fire*' or '*firing*'. It is a very ancient custom and is sometimes performed in a Lodge with a '*firing glass*' which has a toughened base and is banged on the table. There are several theories about the origins of Masonic fire but generally it may be regarded as a signal of respect or honour.

51. The first toast 'The King and the Craft' might have struck you as unusual especially as the King is not a Freemason. However, the Monarch and the Craft have been linked since the earliest days of organised Freemasonry, and loyalty to the Crown as the lawfully constituted authority is an essential principle of English Freemasonry. It is given in this form when the Monarch is not a Freemason. Should the occasion arise where The King is a Freemason, the toast would be 'The King' and there would not be a reference to the Craft.

52. Whenever the Worshipful Master strikes his gavel, followed by the two Wardens sounding their gavels, please be quiet. This is a courtesy which must be observed. To continue talking is disruptive of the proceedings and shows a lack of good manners.

## **The Visitors' Speech**

53. There is a possibility, that as a visitor, you could be called upon to respond to the toast to the visitors. If you are uncomfortable undertaking this role do not be embarrassed to decline. If you do accept the responsibility please remember it is not appropriate to criticise another Lodge's working, but rather to congratulate the Brethren on the way they conducted the ceremony.

## **More Information**

54. When addressing or referring to a Lodge Officer at a Lodge meeting or the Festive Board use the rank that he holds e.g. Worshipful Master, Brother Junior Warden, Brother Secretary etc, or his Masonic rank and his surname. Note that when using the office, only the Worshipful Master is pre-fixed with "*Worshipful*" in all other cases (other than when referring to the PrGM, Deputy PrGM, or Assistant PrGM) regardless of the holder's Masonic rank, the address is pre-fixed with "*Brother*".

55. When addressing a Brother by his Masonic rank, it is correct to use his surname in isolation. If, however, his Christian name is used it is polite to always include his surname.

## More Information

56. If you write a letter to a Freemason, it's important that you never include a Masonic rank or other Masonic references such as Lodge details etc., in the address on the envelope.
57. Never use the Coat of Arms belonging to Grand Lodge.
58. Never use the Coat of Arms belonging to Provincial Grand Lodge without at first receiving permission (in writing) from the Provincial Communication Officer.
59. If you wish to take a photograph at a Masonic meeting (remember you can't take photographs during a meeting) it is polite and proper to ask permission of anyone included in the image. Do not presume everyone will be okay with their picture appearing on social media.
60. Always remember, if you propose a friend into Freemasonry, it is your duty to him and to the Lodge to act as his personal mentor.
61. Do not be in too much of a hurry to join other Orders beyond the Craft. Take time to enjoy the Order you have joined and discover the joy of pure Antient Freemasonry.
62. Your Craft Lodge will almost certainly be aligned to a Royal Arch Chapter. While there is no requirement to join a particular Chapter, it is often the case that you will be invited to join by Brethren you know. The Provincial Grand Master and Grand Superintendent is very clear that when you join the Royal Arch is entirely up to you.
63. Your Lodge will hold rehearsals in order to achieve a high standard of workmanship in a meeting. This is similar to a training session and it is a very useful way for you to learn more about the intricacies of a ceremony. You will be made welcome and in the medium to long term you will benefit from attending.
64. The Provincial Learning & Development Team run various courses throughout the Province. These are well advertised and well worth attending.

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This pamphlet is recommended to you by the Provincial Mentoring Team, the Provincial Membership Team, and the Provincial Learning & Development Team who would be pleased to answer any questions you may have.

Every Freemason must belong to a Lodge, and you have been welcomed into your Lodge by its members, who are now your Brothers in Freemasonry. The Lodge, your Lodge, is where you will learn about the duties you owe to the Craft, and is the place where you will discover what makes being a Freemason so special. Make time to get to know your fellow members, and never be afraid to ask for their help and advice.

Your Lodge Mentor together with your Proposer and Secunder into Freemasonry will guide you as you take your first tentative steps in your journey especially as you navigate the pathway of Masonic etiquette.

All Freemasons are encouraged to make a daily advancement in Masonic knowledge. Some Freemasons do this through their own research, while others are happy to ask for help and assistance. As a new Freemason we recommend you visit <https://www.pglwilts.org.uk/news/preceptors-notes>

# WILTSHIRE FREEMASONS



This booklet is one of a series produced and published by the Provincial Learning and Development Team as part of the MEMBERS' PATHWAY programme.

Each of the booklets is designed to help a Freemason understand the important step he has taken, and to answer a few of the many questions he may be asking about the ceremony he has experienced or Freemasonry in general. It does not claim or intend to be the definitive or absolute answer to every question. Freemasonry being a progressive science offers its members the opportunity to make a daily advancement in Masonic knowledge.

Errors and omissions are inevitable. If you spot a mistake or consider something of importance has been missed out, please contact the editor [pcowiltshire@gmail.com](mailto:pcowiltshire@gmail.com)

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