

West Lancashire Freemasons  
PROVINCIAL GRAND LODGE OF WEST LANCASHIRE

## Members' Pathway

**Bringing together the roles of  
Ambassador, Membership,  
Mentoring and Retrieval**

# Introduction

Over the past few years the Province of West Lancashire have introduced a number of initiatives aimed at recruiting, retaining and retrieving members, these include;

- Ambassadors to Freemasonry
- Membership
- Mentoring
- Education
- Retrieval
- Provincial Electronic Welcome Pack

To support these initiatives the Province has recently appointed a Provincial Membership Officer and a Provincial Mentor to manage and co-ordinate these activities. At around the same time, UGLE introduced "***The Members' Pathway***" to help all lodges plan for their future and "***Solomon***" to make Masonic education a regular Lodge (and Chapter) activity.

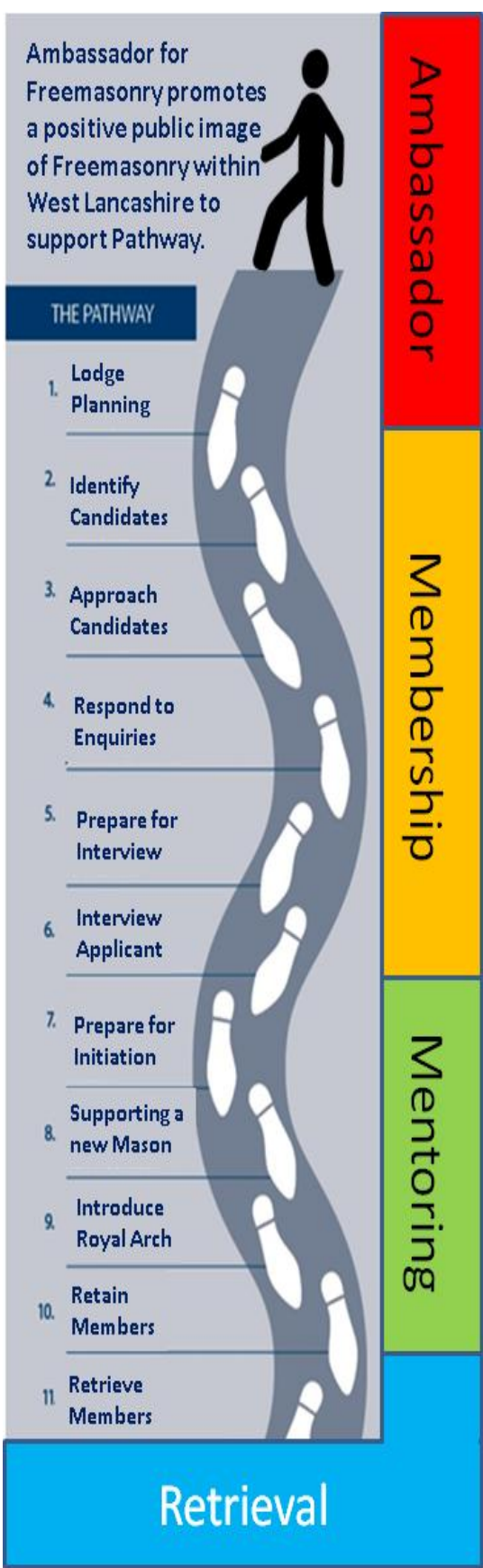
This document (based extensively on publications from UGLE) will explain the integrated approach being taken by the Province. It will hopefully demonstrate that the Provincial and UGLE initiatives do not operate independently or conflict, but operate in mutual support of each other.

For example, although not part of the "The Members' Pathway", the "***Ambassadors for Freemasonry***" initiative was introduced to promote a positive public image of Freemasonry within West Lancashire. It is an essential foundation upon which the "Members' Pathway" is built. Without a positive image of Freemasonry it would be extremely challenging to identify and recruit new members.

The "pathway" draws upon the experiences of many strong and healthy lodges across the Constitution and outlines a process to identify men who may be interested in Freemasonry (but not yet a member). It is intended to guide them along an 11 step pathway to become a committed Master Mason.

"Solomon", is the new information website managed by UGLE, containing over 700 resources and is designed for Freemasons and non-Masons. It provides a platform for Masonic learning in both the Craft and Holy Royal Arch. Its objective is to make learning a regular Masonic activity, hence membership should be more fulfilling and meaningful. In turn, it is anticipated that this should aid attendance, retention and engagement.

# Summary of the 11 Pathway Steps



## Ambassador for Freemasonry

The aim is to help West Lancashire Freemasons talk about Freemasonry with family and friends, to emphasise the positive benefits of Freemasonry and above all, to dispel some of the nonsense which has been spread about Freemasonry.

### Steps 1-6

These steps are co-ordinated by a Lodge member who takes on a "membership development role". This will often be combined with other roles in the Lodge, usually the Lodge Mentor. The purpose is to lead in the development of a Lodge membership plan and support sponsors following the introduction of prospective candidates. All of these activities are supported by the Provincial Membership Officer.

### Steps 7-10

These steps are co-ordinated by the Lodge Mentor and start immediately after the candidate has been elected. The Lodge Mentor will appoint and support a nominated personal mentor (if not himself). All of these activities are supported by the Provincial Grand Mentor.

### Step 11

The lodge Almoner will probably play a key role in retrieving lost members. This activity can be supported by the Provincial Almoner upon request.



## Bringing together the roles of Ambassador, Membership, Mentoring and Retrieval

### The Pathway (Steps 1 to 11)

1. Planning (For a person known to existing members)
2. Identifying prospective candidates
3. Approaching prospective candidates (*e.g. via the internet*)
4. Responding to enquiries from potential candidates
5. Preparing the prospective candidate for interview
6. Interviewing the applicant

7. Preparing the candidate for Initiation
8. Supporting the new Freemason
9. Introducing the Royal Arch
10. Retaining our members

11. Retrieving members

Membership

Mentoring

# Step 1: Lodge Planning

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
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Convene a meeting to discuss the future of your lodge

**Invite all members to this meeting - not just the Past Masters or Lodge committee**

- A suitably skilled, respected and experienced member of the Lodge should chair these meetings
- If appropriate, involve the Provincial Membership Officer or the Provincial Mentor.

**Create a Lodge profile**

- Describe the Lodge's key features, its characteristics, circumstances, expectations and values
- Lodge profiles help members to identify prospective candidates who are a good match to the Lodge
- Identify common features (EG sporting interests, hobbies)
- Develop a prospective member's "profile"

**Consider the Lodge in its community**

- UGLE is encouraging Lodges to become visible, recognised and respected within their communities
- Lodge profiles can be developed into promotional or informational literature for the Lodge
- The Lodge can engage in local community events and it can also organise its own private and public activities open to friends, family and other non-Masons
- The Province should be consulted before any Lodge becomes involved in public events.

**During the planning meetings, identify:**

- An enthusiastic member for the role of Lodge membership Officer(LMO) and at least one knowledgeable member to assist
- A skilled interviewer as Chairman of the Interview Panel
- Two knowledgeable members (one a Master Mason, one a PM) should be members of the Interview Panel.

**Make decisions, record them, set deadlines, assign responsibilities for action and review at intervals.**



## Step 2: Identifying Prospective Candidates

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11

Set aside a separate meeting for this issue. In advance ask all members to compile a list of people who they know and bring it to the meeting.

- Include family members, work colleagues, social club members, friends, fellow worshippers, etc
- If any person on the list does not believe in a Supreme Being his name should be removed
- Apply each name on the list to the items on the Lodge's profile and consider whether or not he would be compatible with Freemasonry and your Lodge in particular
- Avoid making any assumptions about any person's level of interest in Freemasonry, or their availability at this stage
- Group the names into categories such as:
  - Suitable to be approached for this Lodge
  - Suitable for Freemasonry but may be better suited to another Lodge
  - Don't know enough to decide
  - Not suitable to be approached.
- The people in the second and third categories may still be approached but with a view to determining their interest in Freemasonry in general rather than your specific Lodge

### Data Protection Act:

To comply with privacy & data protection requirements, all records of those who will not be approached (both physical and electronic) should now be destroyed.

# Step 3: Approaching Prospective Candidates

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## What can a Freemason say to someone who is not a Mason?

- The Board of General Purposes has stated that a Freemason is “free to reveal his own Masonic membership, except when it might appear that business, professional or personal advantage is thereby being sought for himself or another”.
- A Freemason is free to discuss any aspect of Freemasonry providing he does not breach his obligation to keep the traditional modes of recognition private or describe the detail of our ceremonies.

## What should you say?

- Describe your experience of Freemasonry and what you personally enjoy most
- Visit the West Lancashire Provincial web site for recent news ([www.westlancsfreemasons.org.uk](http://www.westlancsfreemasons.org.uk))
- Do more listening than talking – that way you can follow up topics that interest him
- Above all be honest.

## What next?

- If the person you are talking to remains open to the idea, invite him (and his partner) to a Lodge or Group social
- Try and finish the conversation by giving him something physical such as your role or the Provincial or Group website address.

## When to stop?

- Do not ‘flog a dead horse’ – you will lose friends and gain nothing for Freemasonry
- If he does not mention the subject of Freemasonry again for some time, it is acceptable to raise it again, perhaps just once more.



## Step 4: Responding to Enquiries from Potential Candidates

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This process should be managed by the Group or Lodge Membership Officer in liaison with the Lodge Secretary. If in doubt seek the assistance of the Provincial Membership Officer should be sought.

- Respond quickly to all enquiries (24 – 48 hours maximum)
- Maintain accurate records
- If the potential candidate 'goes silent', one reminder is recommended.

### Be prepared to reject unsuitable people at this stage.

- If the approach has come via UGLE or the Province, the Provincial Membership Officer will have been involved.
- He will have selected your lodge as one into which the potential candidate may fit.
- He may not be as familiar as you are with your Lodge and your preferred profile (if any) for candidates.

### Meet the potential candidate at a neutral venue, with just one or two other Lodge members present.

- Create a welcoming and informal atmosphere.
- If both parties wish to pursue the potential candidate's possible membership, arrange a second meeting on Masonic premises, preferably at the potential candidates local Masonic Hall.

### Follow up by inviting him to meet after a rehearsal

- So that he can meet other Lodge members and they can get to know him.
- Then invite him to Lodge social events so that his wife or partner can also attend and get to know others.

### If you judge the person unsuitable for your Lodge:

- Explain that yours may not be the best Lodge for him.
- Refer him to the Provincial Membership Officer - he may be an appropriate candidate for another lodge.
- Always be polite – ensure a good impression of Freemasonry.

## Step 5: Preparing the Prospective Candidate for Interview

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This Step is completed by the two people who expect to be the prospective candidate's Proposer and Second.

- Where a potential candidate was not previously known to any members, it is recommended that the Lodge Membership Officer should be one of the sponsors.
- Ensure, through informal meetings and discussions, that Freemasonry and your particular Lodge are right for the candidate and that he is right for it.
- Be open, honest, clear and direct about the commitment involved in becoming a Freemason.
- Meet informally with the prospective candidate on as many occasions as necessary to explain and discuss:
  - The nature of Freemasonry, what it is and what it is not.
  - The expectations and duties of membership, including the commitment in time and money.
  - The normal journey of a Freemason, including eventual Exaltation into the Royal Arch.
  - The specific features of your Lodge, using your Lodge profile as a resource.
- If invited by the prospective candidate, discussion may take place at his home and in the presence of his spouse or partner.
- If all parties wish to proceed, ask the prospective candidate to complete the Member Application Form and, after both sponsors have also signed it, submit it to the Lodge Secretary on his behalf.
- If any party has reservations about the prospective candidate, discuss this matter with the Lodge committee.
- Tell the applicant what will happen at the interview and assure him that you will attend with him.

## Step 6: Interviewing the Applicant



The interview panel should consist of at least one Master Mason and one Past Master.

- It is recommended that the Interview Panel should:
  - Comprise no more than three members of the Lodge, all of whom should be experienced interviewers.
  - The panel's chair should be a skilled interviewer who is an approachable senior member of the Lodge.
- The Interview Panel conducts applicant interviews on behalf of the Lodge and reports to the Lodge Committee:
  - The Master does not have to be a member.
  - The applicant's sponsors should attend to support him.
  - The sponsors (those involved in introducing the potential member) should not be directly involved in conducting the interview. They should attend to introduce him to the panel and then leave just before the interview commences (but remain to collect him when the interview is completed).
- The Interview Panel should conduct itself with a degree of formality, including the use of written invitations and decisions, which may for convenience be sent by email.
- Plan the interview and prepare open questions to obtain the information sought from the applicant.
- Use the example questions shown at Appendix 1 with skill and discretion, adjusting questions based upon the applicants previous answers.
- Conduct interviews in a proper manner, using recognised techniques for interviewing candidates.
- Meet the applicant after he has departed to decide and communicate the outcome.
- The Provincial Membership Officer will be able to offer further guidance and assistance if required.

## Step 7: Preparing the Candidate for Initiation



Taking the candidate from the successful conclusion of his interview through to his initiation represents the start of the mentoring process. Support and responsibility of the Pathway at this stage therefore passes from the Provincial Membership Officer to the Provincial Grand Mentor.

### Guidance For All Lodge Members

- The Candidate /Initiate will form a lasting impressions of Freemasonry based on his early experiences. Lodge members should understand and manage his expectations, deliver what has been promised and avoid creating unpleasant surprises.
- If the preparation for Initiation is rushed or progresses at a pace that is uncomfortable for the Candidate the consequence may be his early resignation. Plan the date of Initiation by balancing the Lodge's programme of work with the needs, circumstances and interests of the Candidate. Consider the suitability of multiple ceremonies.
- Where possible, ensure sufficient time before the planned date of Initiation for the Proposal, Ballot and Initiation to take place at different (preferably successive) meetings.
- When briefing the Candidate for his Initiation before the ceremony, strike a balance between telling him too much and not telling him enough. Too much prior information may damage the experience. Too little may leave the Candidate with unnecessary or uncomfortable apprehensions.

## The Initiation Meeting

- Arrange to collect the Candidate, take him to the meeting and return him home afterwards. On arrival introduce him to the Master and Junior Deacon before placing him in the care of the Tyler.
- Arrange for him to be sat next to his nominated Personal Mentor or a sponsor at the end of the ceremony, and next to (or as near to as practicable) one or both of them at the festive board.
- Ensure he has change so that he can contribute to the charity collection and ensure he receives a copy of the closing ode.
- Introduce him to other members of the Lodge after the ceremony.
- Explain the toasts and practices followed at the festive board and discuss with him his initial reaction to the ceremony and respond to his questions.
- Provide him with copies of any local lodge, Group or Provincial booklets, such as the “Initiate’s Guide”, as well as a simple explanation of the Initiation ceremony.
- Ensure he knows how to register on Solomon (<https://solomon.ugle.org.uk>) and give advice on which modules he should enrol.
- Ensure the Lodge or Group Mentor advises the new initiate how to download or obtain a copy of the West Lancs Electronic Welcome Pack.
- Arrange to meet with him within two weeks of his Initiation, to answer additional questions and provide further explanation. See if there are any other initiations taking place in your Group (or nearby Group) that he may wish to attend.

## Step 8: Supporting the New Freemason

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This Step starts immediately after Initiation and follows the new Freemason as he goes through the degree ceremonies and experiences elements of Freemasonry for the first time.

- At this point the new Freemason is at his most vulnerable; a significant proportion of new members leave the Craft within two years of Initiation, often before becoming Master Masons.
- Arrange to meet with the new member soon after each ceremony, to help him reflect, practice signs, address questions and relate the latest ceremony with the previous ones.
- Ensure that when he is passed and raised you recommend him to enrol for the appropriate modules on Solomon. Provincial booklets Seek & Learn / Share & Encourage refer, copies available via Group or Provincial Mentor
- If the new Freemason perceives either the ceremony or the actions of Lodge members to be anything other than positive, or if his expectations are not met, he may consider terminating his membership.
- Draw on topics for discussion with a new Freemasons but proceed at his pace and avoid “force feeding” him with what you think he should know and understand.
- Gauge the new member’s level of interest and enthusiasm and respond at that level. Look out for any discomfort or drops in interest, attendance or commitment and respond early.



- Pass on any communications or resources provided by the Lodge and the Province. Help him to find the information that he wants from the various materials he will have been given.
- Sit with the new Freemason in the Lodge and on any visits. Explain what is happening and always demonstrate correct behaviours.
- Prepare him for the ceremonies of Passing and Raising by helping him to learn the questions leading to the degree and the answers to give in open Lodge.
- Represent his needs and interests within the Lodge and be the first source of advice and guidance on Masonic matters.



## Step 9: Introducing the Royal Arch

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This Step follows the new Freemason's completion of the three degrees in Craft Freemasonry and looks at the Lodge's role in introducing him to the Royal Arch.

Advice can be sought from your Group Royal Arch Lead.

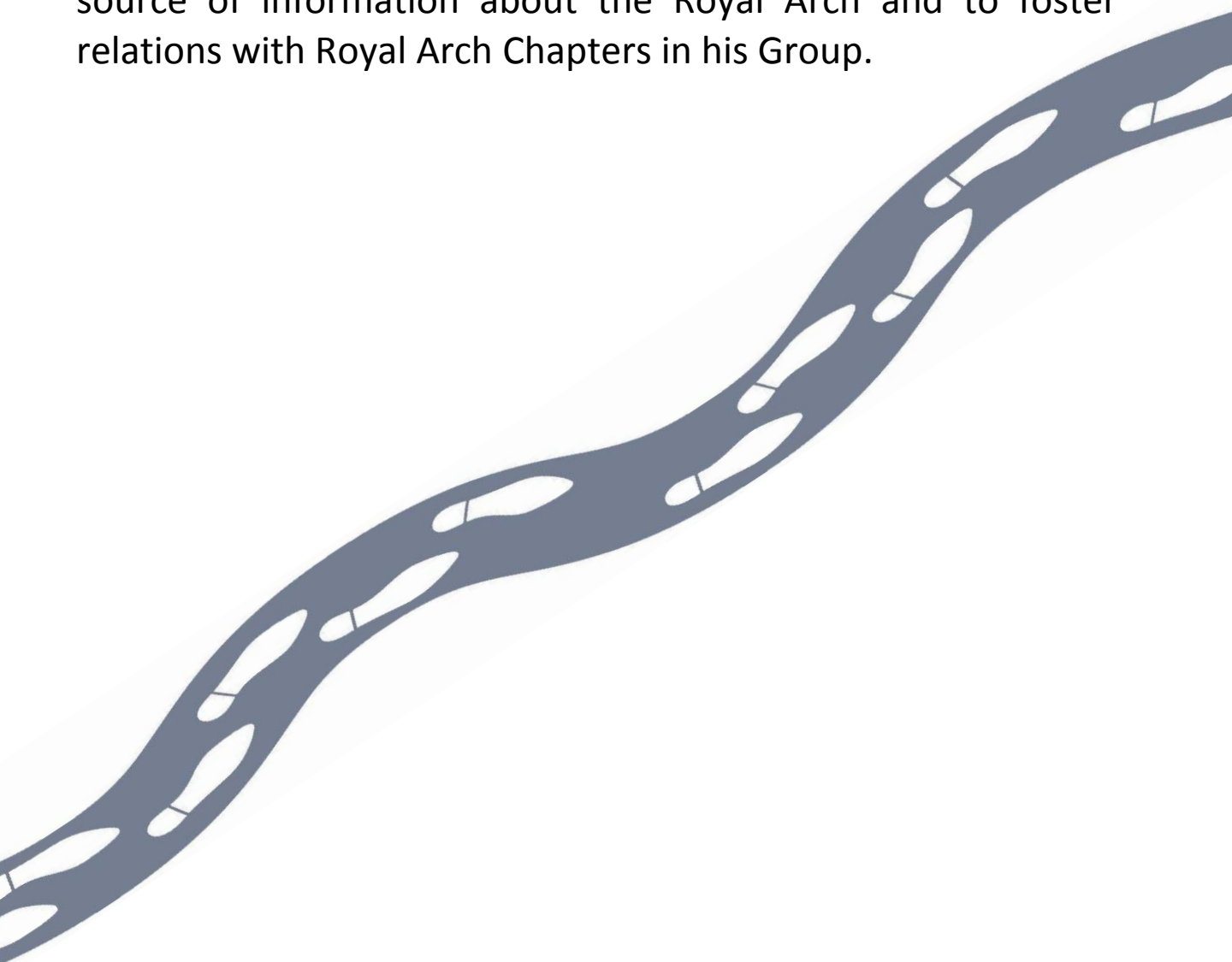
No pressure should be applied to coerce a Master Mason to join the Royal Arch or any other Order. An ideal method to introduce Royal Arch is by identifying at least one lodge per Group who may be prepared to host a "Talking Heads" event. Explain that the Royal Arch is the completion of the journey in pure Ancient Freemasonry, an ideal point to mention this is when a Master Mason is presented with his Grand Lodge Certificate. Above all emphasise the four reasons to become a Royal Arch Mason:

1. The indissoluble link between the Craft and Royal Arch as the two component parts of pure Ancient Freemasonry, exemplified by the fact that the Grand Master and Pro Grand Master automatically head both orders.
2. To complete the journey of a man from the practical principles taught in the Craft to the spiritual aspect of our nature, as explored in the Royal Arch.
3. The ceremony of Exaltation is one of the most beautiful, colourful and thought provoking in Freemasonry and in which the genuine secrets, that were lost and substituted during the Master Masons' degree, are revealed.
4. The companionship and enjoyment that comes from meeting a wider circle and from the increase in Masonic experience and knowledge. Joining the Royal Arch should increase one's enjoyment of Freemasonry.

The decision and timing must be his and he should not feel that he is a second class Freemason if he chooses to delay joining or not to join at all, you should explain that he Royal Arch may enhance his membership and enjoyment of the Craft but it is not essential to it.

The Royal Arch Representative should act as the link between the Royal Arch and the Lodge.

His role is to raise the profile of the Royal Arch, to act as a source of information about the Royal Arch and to foster relations with Royal Arch Chapters in his Group.



## Step 10: Retaining our Members

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Build a Lodge culture with a nurturing approach and continued mentoring, that considers the needs of all members and treats all members as they would wish to be treated themselves.

- Find ways to involve every member in the life of the Lodge to increase their sense of belonging, interest and commitment.
- Plan the succession of continuing offices in the Lodge, such as Treasurer, Secretary, Director of Ceremonies, Lodge Mentor etc. so that recent Past Masters can take office, develop as Masons and continue to contribute to the Lodge.
- Encourage members to consider the reading of "Nuggets" from Solomon at a lodge meeting to keep them involved and interested.
- Be alert to non-Masonic conduct, inappropriate behaviour and discouraging or negative exchanges, all of which undermine the interest and confidence of members and the harmony and health of the Lodge.
- Plan meetings to be enjoyable, interesting and informative, with a good atmosphere and good ritual, to meet the expectations of members and to assist their self-improvement.

- Ensure meetings are well prepared and conducted efficiently. Working members are accustomed to business meetings occupying the minimum time necessary. They expect the same of a Lodge, with time devoted to ceremonial or education rather than administration .
- Review Lodge traditions to confirm whether they are still relevant and serve the Lodge well. Be willing to change or evolve any traditions that are counterproductive to the future of the Lodge.
- Monitor attendance at Lodge meetings and maintain contact with those members who are not able to attend as often as they would like. Look out for any discomfort or drops in interest, attendance or commitment and respond early.
- If a brother is moving out of the area and regular attendance at the lodge becomes difficult, assist him to find a Lodge in his new location - seek guidance from the Provincial Membership Officer.



# Step 11: Retrieving Members

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This Step describes the early warning signs of a potential resignation and ways to respond to retain or retrieve the member as a valued and participating member of the Craft.

- Some members will decide that Freemasonry is not for them and will resign at an early point. With proper screening, an understanding of expectations and successful mentoring, these should be the minority.
- Warning signs may include absences from meetings, last minute apologies, late payment of dues and low levels of engagement in general.
- Lodges that recognise the warning signs and respond early can often avert resignations before they happen.
- If a resignation is due to a decline in circumstances (such as finances or health), arrange for the Lodge Almoner to offer support as appropriate.
- Consider asking a member to reconsider his resignation before formally accepting it.
- Accept that if the Lodge cannot retain a member it may still be possible for the Province to retrieve him if he moves to another Lodge, in such circumstances the Provincial Membership Officer will be able to advise.





# Appendix 1 - Example Interview Questions

Information sought	Reason
Whether he believes in a Supreme Being.	A core requirement of membership is to believe in a Supreme Being. If there is any doubt on the definition of Supreme Being, sponsors should seek formal guidance via their Lodge Secretary.
Overview of self and lifestyle (family, hobbies, work, charitable interests, other organisations).	To set a context for the rest of the interview and to provide information that can be explored further.
Suitability for this specific Lodge.	To explore and expand on the applicant's suitability for this specific Lodge and its characteristics.
Personal characteristics, qualities and values.	To get the applicant to talk about his values without first telling him about ours.
Alignment with Masonic values and principles.	To check that his values / principles are compatible with ours.
Reason for interest in Freemasonry and motives for joining.	To identify the applicant's motives and to ensure they are compatible with the Craft's values and expectations.
Existing links with Freemasons.	To identify any background in or experience of Freemasonry.
Hopes and expectations on becoming a Freemason.	To check that the applicant's expectations are compatible and can be met by the Craft and specifically by your Lodge.
Likely contribution he could make as a member.	To identify the strengths the applicant will bring to the Lodge and any likely future contribution.
Family and their opinions or support for membership.	To ensure the applicant's family is supportive and will not hinder the applicant's development if he joins.
Support for the Lodge's charitable activities.	To prepare the applicant for future charitable contributions.
Ability to meet time and cost commitments.	To ensure that the applicant is able and willing to meet the commitments expected, in time and money.
Awareness of the normal progression.	To check he knows of the normal progression through the three Craft degrees, taking office and Exaltation into the Royal Arch.
Any other information.	"Catch all" final questions.

## **Appendix 2 - Provincial Resources Available**

### **Provincial Resources for Craft**

Members' Pathway Guide

Mentoring Guide

Seek & Learn - Solomon

Share & Encourage - Solomon

West Lancashire Craft Electronic Welcome Pack

Initiates Guide

Fellow Craft Guide

Master Masons Guide

Taking Office for the First Time

### **Provincial Resources for Royal Arch**

Talking Heads Guide

Information for New Exaltees

Royal Arch - Solomon

Enhanced Exaltation

Royal Arch in Camera

West Lancashire Royal Arch Electronic Welcome Pack

## Appendix 3 - Ambassador for Freemasonry

Currently West Lancashire shows a great public interest in Freemasonry as well as pleasant experiences by existing and joining members alike.

Building membership requires active contribution by every member in the "unofficial" role of Ambassador. The aim is to attract and select new members, who would appreciate and enjoy Freemasonry in general and continue to remain active members and hopefully future leaders.

It is the role of the Lodge membership Officer (LMO) to co-ordinate and drive recruitment within the Lodge. However, he will be relying on Lodge, Group and Provincial members to act as ambassadors to:

- Speak openly and honestly about their membership
- Make an active representation in the local community
- Communicate the values, attractions and contributions of Freemasonry
- Dispel the myths sometimes associated with Freemasonry
- Talk about Freemasonry with family and friends
- Emphasise the positive benefits of Freemasonry within their local community

## Enquiries

Any enquiries about this document can be made to

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