



# MASONIC PROVINCE OF WEST LANCASHIRE

## Data Protection Act 2018 Guidance Notes for Secretaries and Scribes Ezra

### a. Preamble

The Data Protection Act 2018 (the Act) comes into effect on 25<sup>th</sup> May 2018, and the Province of West Lancashire has obtained guidance with regard to the impact the new regulations will have on the way it, and its constituent Groups, Lodges and Chapters administer the personal information of its members.

### b. Does the new Law affect me?

The good news is, that no significant changes are required to the way Freemasonry currently operates. Whilst it is true to say that all Secretaries and Scribes Ezra will need to adhere to certain guidelines regarding the communication and storage of data, no additional duties will be involved in the administration of personal data of members, beyond those already necessary.

### c. Consent

It is important for members to know that a Data Protection Statement has been present on the Registration Form P since 2002. Since this time, all candidates for Initiation, Joining and Re-Joining have consented to their data being held and processed by United Grand Lodge and where applicable, Supreme Grand Chapter. UGLE recently undertook to 'fill in the gaps' and sought permission from those members who had not signed a Form P since 2002. UGLE also moved to ensure that every member was aware that their data will be held and processed by UGLE / SGC, the Province of West Lancashire, its constituent Groups and any Lodges / Chapters of which they are, or have been a member. The Act makes it quite clear, that if a governing entity has a 'legitimate interest' in the holding and processing of personal information for which permission has been previously given, no further consent is required.

### d. Principles of Data Management

Secretaries and Scribes Ezra need to be aware of, and adhere to, certain principles of handling personal information. By its very nature, it is a list of *don'ts and musts*, but nevertheless contains positive practical advice, and below are nine key points that should be considered.

#### i) Fairly and lawfully processed

Do not transmit to, or share personal information with anyone, with the exception of UGLE / SGC, the Province of West Lancashire and its constituent Groups. Documents containing personal information must be disposed of securely. ie shredded or burned.

#### ii) Processed for limited purposes

Data must only be used for masonic purposes. Any use for commercial or other benefit is inappropriate and would constitute a masonic offense. This can be difficult to manage at times - for example, a member may approach the Secretary/Scribe E to circulate details of a village fete - whilst this seems innocuous, it is not appropriate.

#### iii) Adequate, relevant and not excessive

The data collected on the Registration Form P is all that is required for the purposes of masonic administration. Separate guidance is being issued by the Provincial Care Team to cover communication with partners, families and widows.

#### iv) Accurate

It is important that information is kept up-to-date. Checks should be made to ensure that telephone numbers, and in particular email addresses are correct, and the Province should be notified of any changes as and when they occur.



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v) Not kept for longer than is necessary

Whilst the data relating to members and former members will be kept in perpetuity (except upon specific application), data relating to specific candidates who choose not to continue their application to become a mason, should be securely disposed of upon notification of their withdrawal.

vi) Processed in line with their rights

A member has the right to request to see all the information held about them. Locally, this may include information regarding their payment history and festival donations. An application to view their centrally held information and masonic CV should be made by e-mailing the Provincial Office. (centraloffice@provinceofwestlancs.org)

If a brother wishes to revoke certain core permissions, please see parts I and II of the data protection notice on the blue guidance form (attached) to establish if the request is compatible with his membership of the Craft.

vii) Secure

Computerised membership records must not be stored on Memory Sticks or other removable media. It is recommended that secure cloud-based file storage is used (e.g. Dropbox). This will also ensure that information is correctly backed up.

Please note, if member's personal information is stored on a cloud and subsequently transferred to a different cloud provider, please inform the Data Protection Officer (see paragraph f ) within 24 hours, confirming that all personal information has been securely deleted from the cloud by the cloud provider, including the deletion of all back-ups.

Additionally, please ensure your home computer is adequately protected with suitable anti-virus, firewall and anti-spam software, thus protecting your computer against viruses and any spyware software, which can be used to obtain personal information.

It is recommended practice to check your Wi-Fi security settings to ensure your network is secure, and thus prevent any unauthorised connection. This can be carried out, by simply enabling the security features of your wireless router or network.

If in the event of your computer being hacked, and you believe members' personal information has been compromised, it is essential that you notify both the Data Protection Officer and the Provincial Grand Secretary.

Please keep the storage of personal information on paper to a minimum. If, however, you need to store paper-based personal information, please ensure it is securely locked away in filing cabinets or cupboards.

Please be careful when transporting personal information. Briefcases containing members' personal information should be kept out of sight, preferably inside your car boot, and not left on the passenger seat.

Secretaries and Scribes Ezra must take care to ensure that their actions do not inadvertently lead to data being shared. The most obvious example of this when sending e-mails to more than one person, the 'Blind Copy field' (BCC) must be used. If help is needed with this, please contact the Provincial Office.



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viii) Not transferred without adequate protection

Personal data must never be transferred without appropriate security. If electronic membership lists are being sent to the local Group Secretary for example, the document must be password protected. There are excellent tutorials on how to password protect Excel documents et cetera, available online.

ix) Personal data breach

If you believe a members' personal information (for example, name, address, DOB, email address, contact number) has been compromised, please report this to both the Data Protection Officer and Provincial Grand Secretary immediately, or within 24 hours. The Province is required to report personal data breaches to the ICO (Information Commissioner's Office) within 72 hours, so it is vital they are notified in order to comply with their legal obligations.

The Province, assisted by the Provincial Data Protection Officer, will then investigate the potential data breach and implement an agreed plan of action in order to mitigate a reoccurrence.

**e. General Information and Advice**

It is of course fully acknowledged, that Secretaries and Scribes Ezra are volunteers, and that the important work they carry out should be enjoyable and rewarding. Hopefully these guidelines provide a helpful, clear and concise reference for most of the questions and queries that may arise as a result of the new Data Protection Laws.

First and foremost, as a fraternal organisation, the main consideration with regards to the management of data by Secretaries and Scribes Ezra, is the privacy of their members, and ensuring that stored information is not compromised or used for non-masonic purposes.

**f. Any Questions?**

The Provincial Grand Master has appointed Bro Michael Threlfall (the younger one!) as Data Protection Officer. The purpose of this role is to provide a resource for Secretaries and Scribes Ezra, and to monitor and audit how data is used within the Province. Michael can be contacted at [dataprotectionofficer@provinceofwestlancs.org](mailto:dataprotectionofficer@provinceofwestlancs.org)

Peter Taylor.  
Provincial Grand Secretary.  
23<sup>rd</sup> May 2018.