



PROVINCE OF WEST LANCASHIRE

***GUIDANCE NOTES FOR
SECRETARIES & SCRIBES E***

The Notes of Guidance to Secretaries and Scribes contained in this booklet cover the most commonly used sections of the Book of Constitutions and Regulations, and these, plus a great deal more information can be found on the advice section of the Provincial Website at:

<https://www.westlancsfreemasons.org.uk/members/provincial-office/>

However, these notes can be subject to updates, so please check the website first and if you are in any doubt whatsoever, please ring the Provincial Office on :

01772 623557

or

centraloffice@provinceofwestlancs.org

Remember : We are there to help you!

Provincial Grand Secretary

January 2020

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CHECK LIST FOR SECRETARIES & SCRIBES

What are the documents you need to send to Provincial Office in the course of your work?

1. Registration Form P

This form, which is the most important form of all, is for registering an initiate/exalte or joining member with both London and the Province and should be despatched to the Provincial office **within a week** of the event. Until it is received, the brother/companion is greatly disadvantaged as he is **NOT REGISTERED AS SUCH** and until he is, he will not be issued, for example, with his Grand Lodge or Chapter Certificate, or appear on your lodge records as a member.

In the case of an initiate/exalte or a Joining Member from another Jurisdiction, the form should be accompanied by a **cheque, payable to UGLE or SGC** to cover the registration fee. Form Ps are available from the Provincial Office.

2. Form LP and A5

This form is the only method of obtaining a Grand Lodge certificate and should be despatched **within a week** of the brother attaining his third degree. *We regularly receive requests for Grand Lodge Certificates in respect of brethren whose Form P we have not yet received. We cannot process them.* Note: Supreme Grand Chapter automatically issue SGC Certificates, but, again, only after receiving Form P, via the Province.

3. Grand Lodge/SGC Return: Form AR [Annual Return]1

The AR1 is sent to you from London and lists the members of your lodge or chapter as on their records. *Any brother or companion for whom we have not received his Form P will not appear, and conversely, any member who has died or resigned, about whom you have not told us, will appear. This then has to be disentangled.*

The timing of this form coincides with your **subscription year end** and is essentially an invoice, **which requires prompt settlement**. It is calculated on a *per capita* basis. The amount charged is calculated twelve months in arrears, so any brother who became a member during that year is chargeable and if a member is missing, he should be added manually and the amount payable amended accordingly. *In the majority of cases, missing names are because we have not received his Form P from you.*

4. Provincial Annual Return

This document is generated by the Province and is sent to all lodges and chapters in December each year. Payment is due by the end of January in the following year. Just like the AR1, it lists every member of a lodge/chapter on our records, and they are likewise charged on a per capita basis, one year in arrears. As with the AR1, missing names are usually because we have not had Form P. *Changes in the way this form is administered will be announced in the autumn of 2011*

*In the case of both Form AR1 and the Provincial Annual Return, Secretaries should make timely arrangements with their Treasurers for the provision of the necessary **cheque.***

5. Installation Return.

This form should be sent to the Province following the installation meeting of a lodge/chapter and lists the three Principal Officers, Past Masters/Principals, Charity Steward, Almoner and Secretary/Scribe E. It should be returned **within a week** of the meeting.

6. Annual Audit Certificate

This form is issued in the autumn mailing to lodges and chapters and must be returned to the Province **immediately following the next audit of lodge or chapter accounts**. Failure to return it could indicate to the Province that there is some problem with the lodge's finances, and The Provincial Grand Master and Grand Superintendent could consequently invoke his powers under Rule 74 to summon the books of the lodge/chapter.

7. Lodge/Chapter Summons

Every lodge and chapter must submit to the Province a summons **at least 14 days before** each meeting, either electronically or by post. They are all read carefully in order to help a lodge with its administration, and if a potential problem is detected in time, a great deal of difficulty can be avoided later.

If you are unsure regarding any of the above, please ring or email the Provincial Office via any of the following routes 01772 623557 and select option 4 or email advice@provinceofwestlancs.org

REGISTRATION FORM P: CHANGE OF INSTRUCTIONS

It is now a requirement that candidates' details on Form P should be completed IN THE CANDIDATE'S OWN HANDWRITING unless prevented by physical disability.

The reasons for this are as follows:

1. Grand Lodge are experiencing a large number of errors with respect, in particular, to candidates' full names. Secretaries or proposers who fill in the form on behalf of candidates, often do not know, or do not know how to spell, candidates' full names. (Similar errors occur with addresses).
2. These errors then carry over into the production of the candidate's Grand Lodge Certificate, and experience suggests that candidates can be too embarrassed at the moment of presentation to refer to the error in their name(s). As a result they find themselves with an incorrect certificate. In some cases this can result in serious complications in their later Masonic careers. For example, such errors have produced problems when a man applies to become a Royal Arch Mason. At the very least the certificate has to go back to be altered.

As a consequence,

- a. Secretaries and Scribes E should ensure that candidates' details are completed **BY THE CANDIDATE** unless prevented by physical disability
- b. When the Grand Lodge Certificate arrives, **and before it is presented**, the Secretary should check with the candidate that his names are correct and in full on the certificate.

NOTIFICATION OF DEATHS, RESIGNATIONS, CESSATIONS (Rule 148) or
EXCLUSIONS (Rule 181)

To avoid considerable potential embarrassment, particularly to widows but also to brethren and lodges, the Province must be informed

IMMEDIATELY

when a brother *dies* or *resigns*
or
ceases membership automatically after two years' arrears
or
is *excluded* from membership by the lodge or chapter

A SIMPLE LETTER OR EMAIL TO THE PROVINCIAL OFFICE IS ALL THAT IS NECESSARY, BUT IT SHOULD BE DISPATCHED IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING THE EVENT, AND SECRETARIES AND SCRIBES SHOULD **NOT** WAIT UNTIL THEIR ANNUAL RETURN TO DO SO.

CANDIDATES FOR JOINING WHO ARE NOT YET MASTER MASONS

Secretaries must see the Grand Lodge Certificate of a brother seeking to join his lodge *before a ballot is held*. (Rule 163c)

If the brother in question is not yet a Master Mason, the Secretary must instead see a Certificate of the First or the Second Degree, as appropriate. (Rule 174c)

The Secretary should advise (and indeed assist) the candidate to apply to the Provincial Office for help in obtaining this certificate. The candidate himself will also need to produce a 'clearance' certificate from every lodge(s) of which he is or has been a member.

Just as with Master Masons, *if the candidate is from another Masonic jurisdiction*, then before he does anything, the Secretary must apply to Grand Lodge (via the Provincial Office) to ascertain the standing of the jurisdiction and the lodge from which the candidate comes. *This applies equally to Scotland and Ireland*, just as to jurisdictions further afield. (Rule 163e)

COLLECTIONS & RAFFLES
AND ACCOUNTING FOR CHARITABLE
MONIES
A Guide for Lodges & Chapters

This Note of Advice deals with the laws, rules and conventions governing lodge and chapter fundraising. It should be followed meticulously by those in charge of such activities.

Part One

Any Mason (or visitor, Masonic or not) about to give of his generosity in lodge/chapter or at the Festive Board or some other Masonic event has the right to know beforehand precisely what he is being invited to give his money towards. This applies equally to raffles/tombolas/Old English/Race Nights etc as it does to collections in lodge/chapter.

He is also entitled to make certain *assumptions* unless informed otherwise.

COLLECTIONS

Various phrases are used in this context in papers of business and lodges and chapters should be careful to follow these assumptions, and if they wish to depart from them, to say so clearly *before the collection commences*. All of the following, and similar such phrases, imply that a collection is for Charity:

'To take a collection for Charity' would indicate that the funds might go to Masonic or non-Masonic Charitable destinations, while

'To take a collection for Masonic Charity' is obviously specific.

'To honour the Charities' is a phrase historically referring to Masonic Charity and brethren would be at liberty to assume that such was the destination of their giving.

'To collect alms' would imply *any charitable* destination.

Unless otherwise announced (orally in the Lodge or in writing on the summons) all collections in a Masonic Lodge are assumed to be for charitable purposes and are to be deposited in the **LODGE CHARITY ACCOUNT**. (*The nature of this account is described in Part Two below*).

Lodges and Chapters should avoid the phrase 'To take a collection' as it is not specific enough to fulfil the requirements and assumptions. A lodge or chapter is not at liberty simply to collect funds from brethren and decide later whether it should be spent on charity or not. If this phrase is employed, it must be made clear beforehand to what purpose the collection will be given: i.e. for Masonic Charity; for non-Masonic charity or for some other purpose.

It is, however, perfectly in order for collections to be taken for a purpose other than charitable (such as for **Widows' Gifts** or a **Building Fund**) but it **must be made clear beforehand** what the object of the collection is and in these cases the funds collected must not be placed in the **LODGE CHARITY ACCOUNT**, but in the **Lodge General Account** or **Lodge Social Fund Account** and subsequently drawn from that account.

RAFFLES

It is imperative to announce, *before the raffle takes place*, the destination of the proceeds of the raffle. This allows all present to decide, in advance, whether or not to participate. Most Brethren, at after proceedings, will assume the raffle will be used for Charitable purposes but, in reality, many are not so used. It is quite in order to run a raffle for **Masonic Hall** or other non-charitable projects, as long as this is made clear beforehand. A number of Lodges may run a raffle to provide **Widows' Gifts** at Christmas but this, although a nice thing to do, is not considered in law as 'for charitable purposes' and the proceeds should be placed in the **Lodge GENERAL, SOCIAL FUND, or ALMONER's Account**, not the Lodge Charity Account. **Raffles and collections cannot be used to subsidise a Lodge's administrative expenses or subscriptions.**

It is improper to specify, suggest or imply in advance how much a brother should give to a collection or contribute to a raffle.

SPLITTING THE PROCEEDS

If more than one cause is to benefit, then the proportion of the intended split of funds raised must be made clear before the activity commences. It is the practice in some areas to circulate two boxes: one for Charity, the other for, say, The Hall. This is perfectly in order as long as the boxes are **clearly labelled** with their purpose.

OTHER FUNDRAISING ACTIVITIES

The same rules and understandings apply to any fundraising activity in a Masonic context.

NON-MASONS

If taking a collection in the presence of non-Masons, care should be taken that it is not assumed that they will wish to contribute to causes which will only benefit Masons.

Part Two

LODGE (AND CHAPTER) ACCOUNTS

1. **All Lodge accounts** are strictly governed by **Rule 153** of the Book of Constitutions. All those who handle Lodge funds, of whatever nature, should be familiar with Rule 153 as amended in June 2013. It sets forth the regulations governing the way in which Lodge funds are to be managed, accounted for and presented for scrutiny.

2. In addition to its **Lodge General Account(s)** employed for the general running of the Lodge (dining, social, administrative and non-Charitable purposes), every Lodge should maintain a **LODGE CHARITY ACCOUNT**. *Lodge Charitable accounts come within the ambit of Charities Law and consequently brethren must be meticulous in their management of such accounts.*

UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES WHATSOEVER MAY THE CHARITY ACCOUNT BE USED IN ANY WAY TO SUBSIDISE SUBSCRIPTIONS

3. In addition, if the Lodge, through the Almoner, applies for and receives funds from a local or national Masonic Charity, for the relief or assistance of those dependent upon the Lodge (widows, brethren and/or their families) then the Almoner should maintain a **quite separate CHARITY DISBURSEMENT ACCOUNT** (though the account should be opened in the name of the Lodge, not the Almoner). While there is some sensitivity in the management of this account, because it concerns the private financial affairs of Lodge members or families, there is still a need for the Almoner and the Lodge to have the protection of Audit of this account, and the Provincial Grand Master will insist on this. But see below for how this might most discreetly be achieved.

MANAGEMENT OF THE LODGE CHARITY ACCOUNT

The **LODGE CHARITY ACCOUNT** is a Lodge account as defined by Rule 153. It is subject to the same annual accounting and audit requirements as the other accounts of the Lodge, and **the Treasurer should usually be a signatory of every cheque issued against it.**

This account is to be used for the holding and disbursement of all monies received or collected from the brethren with the intention of onward transmission to a Charitable cause, whether Masonic or non-Masonic. (This does **NOT** include such gifts as those to widows at Christmas or birthdays, which come from the **Lodge General Account(s)** and collections or raffles specifically for such purposes should be paid into the **Lodge General Account(s)** similarly). Funds specifically given to a particular charitable cause may only be transmitted to that cause. (Recipients need not be 'registered' Charities as long as they have obvious Charitable purposes.)

CHARITY DISBURSEMENT ACCOUNTS

These accounts have ceased operation and must be closed.

THE LODGE RELIEF CHEST

There is reluctance on the part of some Lodges to make use of the Grand Charity Relief Chest scheme for the storage of their charitable funds. They feel that by using the scheme they are somehow losing control of their money. Such is certainly not the case, and Lodges are unlikely to obtain, from a bank, interest on their funds as advantageous as that available from The Relief Chest. The funds deposited remain entirely under the Lodge's control, and Lodges are relieved of much of the burden of management of the funds, including liability to account to the Inland Revenue, which makes the work of the Charity Steward and Almoner easier. The scheme is recommended.

ACTION TO BE TAKEN BY A LODGE
WHEN A BROTHER IS CONVICTED OF AN OFFENCE OR IS FOUND
GUILTY OF MISCONDUCT (REQUIRED BY RULE 179A)

- a) **Action must be taken** by the Worshipful Master on behalf of a lodge, direct or through the Secretary, if a member of that lodge is sentenced by a civil power (at home or abroad) to a **custodial sentence** (immediate or suspended), or is issued with a **Community Order** by a court, or is placed on the **Sex Offenders' Register**, or is convicted of an offence involving **dishonesty or violence**.

Similar action must be taken in respect of any other cases which are **likely to bring Freemasonry into disrepute**. The action required is as follows.

- b) The Master must **within twenty-eight days** of hearing of the offence(s) report any such conviction or conduct as is mentioned in paragraph (a) above relating to any member of his Lodge to the Provincial Grand Secretary. (*Strictly speaking the brother so convicted has the duty to report his offences to the Master of his lodge, but, perhaps understandably, this does not always happen.*)
- c) The convicted brother, whether or not he has reported his conviction(s), **shall not**, pending the determination of his case by Masonic authority, **attend any Lodge or Chapter** without the written permission of the Masonic authority having jurisdiction thereover.
- d) Even if a convicted brother should resign from his lodge, **he remains a Freemason**, and would have to resign from the Craft as a whole before he would escape the Masonic disciplinary procedure. This course of action is available to him via The Provincial Office.
- e) Care should be taken by members of the lodge when considering or discussing a brother's **alleged conduct** before a formal conviction or finding is declared, in order to avoid exposing themselves to accusations of rushing to justice, or even defamation of character, should the brother subsequently not be found guilty. Similarly, should the brother lodge **an appeal** against a finding, judgement should be suspended until the result of the appeal.
- f) It is the duty of **every Brother** to comment or provide information in relation to a complaint or allegation of misconduct (whether such complaint or allegation is made against him or another Brother or a Lodge) if so required by The Provincial Grand Master, or the Board of General Purposes.

NOTE OF GUIDANCE TO BROTHERS COMING WITHIN THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE RULES GOVERNING MASONIC DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURE

If a Brother finds himself, as a result of his actions, involved in the process of Masonic Discipline, he has two options.

- a. To proceed with the Masonic Disciplinary Procedure as set forth in the Book of Constitutions
- b. To resign voluntarily from the Craft as a whole

These options are made necessary by the fact that even if a Brother resigns or is excluded from his Lodge he remains, of course, a Freemason. He can only avoid the consequences of this situation by choosing option (b) above.

(If a Brother opts to do nothing, then the normal procedures of Masonic Discipline will continue in his absence and without his participation, and he will be informed of the outcome at his last known address.)

Option (a)

This option offers the Brother the opportunity to appear before a Committee of Inquiry, established by command of the Provincial Grand Master, where he will have the right to explain himself, bringing forward any matters or explanations in support of his situation, and to bring Brethren to speak in his support. The committee is conducted formally according to rules established in conformity with the understandings of natural justice.

The committee can recommend to the Provincial Grand Master that he take no action in the matter; or that he issue a reprimand; or it can recommend a period of suspension from the Craft, or that the Provincial Grand Master should recommend to the Grand Master that the Brother in question be expelled from the Craft.

This process, as it is conducted with scrupulous fairness, can take some considerable time to complete and the Brother in question finally hears of the outcome from the Grand, or Provincial Grand Secretary. He can appeal the decision.

Option (b)

If a Brother would prefer to discharge himself immediately from further Masonic responsibility or proceedings, he is at liberty to resign from the Craft by completing Form VR (Voluntary Resignation) 1, and sending it, together with his Grand Lodge (and Grand Chapter) Certificate(s) to the Provincial Grand Secretary. Having done so, all disciplinary proceedings cease, as he is no longer a Freemason.

The Grand Secretary cannot accept such a resignation without the surrendering of the Grand Lodge (and Grand Chapter) Certificate(s).

IT IS ENTIRELY A MATTER FOR THE BROTHER IN QUESTION WHICH OF THESE OPTIONS HE CHOOSES, but in the absence of any indication from him, option (a) will be proceeded with until the matter is concluded.

As a result of the specific requirements of Rule 179A, Brethren should also note that in cases of convictions resulting in custodial sentence (immediate or suspended): Community Orders: Listing on the Sex Offenders' Register or any other conviction for an offence involving violence or dishonesty, pending the determination of their case by Masonic authority, they may not attend any Lodge or Chapter without the written permission of the Masonic authority having jurisdiction thereover.

If a Brother would like to discuss any of these matters further, he is free to contact the Provincial Grand Secretary, who will offer every assistance.

DECLARATION OF OFFENCES
BY POTENTIAL CANDIDATES FOR
INITIATION

Unless an offence is 'spent' under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act, candidates for Freemasonry must declare all and every court conviction; findings against them of dishonest or disgraceful behaviour; discipline imposed by a professional, trade or other tribunal, and/or whether they are awaiting or anticipating any such proceedings. To omit to do so would have severe consequences for the candidate should any of the above be discovered once he had become a Mason.

Such a declaration must be included in the Registration Form 'P' of the candidate, and unless the offence is so slight that it falls within the discretion of the Provincial Grand Master, the Province must submit the Form to the Grand Secretary in order to seek his permission for the candidate to proceed.

Proposers and Seconders therefore have a serious and substantial responsibility to make this clear to any candidate known to be so placed. He could feel himself under some personal scrutiny and statements may be required from Proposers, Seconders and the Lodge Interviewing Committee explaining why they consider such a candidate to be suitable to be a Mason.

Masonic Law on these matters is now extremely demanding and unyielding and Lodges should think very carefully whether, in some circumstances, a candidate in this position should proceed further.

This should not, however, discourage the application of a man whose, perhaps youthful, indiscretions are well behind him and whose supporters believe him to be free of the possibility of conduct '*likely to bring Freemasonry into disrepute*', which is the key phrase to be borne in mind in this connection.

DECLARATION OF OFFENCES ON REGISTRATION FORM P

A recent sequence of embarrassing situations for lodges (and their Secretaries) leads me to offer again clear advice on what to do when a candidate for initiation declares (as he must) convictions in a court of law.

The Province has recently received completed Forms P containing such declarations **AFTER THE CANDIDATE HAS BEEN INITIATED**, which are not acceptable retrospectively by Grand Lodge, who can declare the candidate not to be a Mason, *despite his initiation having misguidedly gone ahead*.

ANY FORM CONTAINING ANY DECLARATION WHATSOEVER MUST BE SUBMITTED TO THE PROVINCE BEFORE THE CANDIDATE IS PROPOSED.

There follows a **check-list** of what the Secretary must do to avoid this calamitous embarrassment for himself, his lodge and, above all, the candidate.

1. The Secretary, Proposer and Seconder must show the candidate page 2 of Form P and invite him to read it carefully himself. *If they believe declaration of an offence is likely to be necessary, they should also have studied the advice at the bottom of page 21 of the Provincial Year Book 2010-2011, and reprinted in subsequent Year Books in the section 'Notes for Guidance of Lodges and Chapters'.*

2. They ask him to declare whether or not he has been 'convicted by a Court' of any offence.

Note (a) *The key phrase is 'convicted by a Court'. One-off speeding fines which had no further implications (such as a driving ban) can usually be excluded from consideration. If so, they should **not be mentioned on the form at all.***

Note (b) *In the case of any conviction which the candidate knows for certain is 'spent' by the passage of time under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act, he need not mention it. If he chooses to do so, he still need not declare it on the Form. A person in that situation should be expected to know when or whether his conviction is 'spent'. (As examples for information, Fines and Community Service Orders are spent after 5 years; imprisonment up to 6 months is spent after 7 years; imprisonment between 6 and 30 months after 10 years, and imprisonment more than 30 months is NEVER spent.) **Any candidate who makes an untrue assertion at this point risks serious Masonic discipline, which could include expulsion from the Craft, if it later comes to light.***

3. If he needs to make a declaration, he must cross out clause 5(a) on the form and explain separately in writing the nature of the offence(s) with details. *He is at liberty to offer mitigation, and his Proposer and Seconder would also be expected to do so. Even if he simply has it in mind to say 'speeding offences' on the form or 'excluding driving offences', that is not adequate and he must make a full explanation at this point.*

4. Every Form P which contains a declaration must then be signed by The Master at the foot of page three, AND BEFORE THE CANDIDATE IS PROPOSED, it must be sent to The Province, who will put it before The Provincial Grand Master. *If he considers the matter disclosed to be sufficiently minor as to be within his discretion (which excludes any conviction for which imprisonment could have been at all possible), he will sign the Certificate of The Grand Secretary on page 4. Otherwise he will send it to the Grand Secretary with a recommendation based upon the information offered to him by the candidate, his sponsors and the lodge.*

5. ONLY WHEN THAT FORM COMES BACK TO THE SECRETARY SIGNED BY THE GRAND SECRETARY OR THE PROVINCIAL GRAND MASTER can the candidate be proposed in open lodge. *Immediately after the initiation, the Form is returned to the Province in the usual way.*

FEES AND SUBSCRIPTIONS

Would Lodges please note that the Book of Constitutions treats fees and subscriptions separately.

In framing or revising By-Laws it should be noted that Grand Lodge continues to insist that fees (for initiation, joining and re-joining) must be stated as figures. By-Laws will not be approved which attempt to make fees variable according to decisions of the Lodge from time to time. Nor will By-Laws be approved which attempt to set no fee for initiation, joining and re-joining.

Grand Lodge is aware that Lodges would not wish to set a fee level which might be considered a deterrent to candidates but the level of fee ought to be consistent with the dignity of the Craft and the value to a candidate of membership. The fee set ought at least to cover the costs of registration of the candidate with Grand Lodge and Provincial Grand Lodge, together with any tax thereon.

Subscriptions, however, (that is to say the annual membership charge levied upon members) can regularly be specified with the phrase "*of such amount as the Lodge shall from time to time decide by resolution after notice on the summons.*" But only subscriptions can be dealt with in this way.

No By-Law will be approved which specifies a date other than the 1st day of a month as the due date for payment of subscriptions. (Setting some other day of the month can create considerable problems when calculating periods of time required by certain of the rules of the Book of Constitutions: for example, Rule 181.)

PAYMENT OF SUBSCRIPTIONS BY INSTALMENTS DURING THE CURRENT YEAR

The Province would advise in the clearest possible terms that it is most unwise to permit the payment of a subscription by instalments during the year to which it applies.

*(For example, paying a subscription due on 1 January 2011 **during** 2011.)*

Most lodge and chapter by-laws state that a subscription is payable

IN FULL : IN ADVANCE, by a single specified date.

In such cases, a lodge or chapter which does not insist on observing this requirement is in violation of its own by-laws and is therefore behaving irregularly, and contrary to 'Masonic Law'.

Even in the case of a lodge or chapter where no such requirement is stated in their by-laws, the practice must be viewed as dangerous. It can render vulnerable the cash-flow of the lodge or chapter, as, should the number of brethren delaying their subscription in this way reach a critical mass (and if it is permitted, presumably every member must have the opportunity of doing so), the lodge or chapter could be rendered unable to discharge its regular financial liabilities, unless it has sufficient reserves.

A brother who is paying his subscription by instalments during the current year **IS IN ARREARS** for the entire period until he has paid in full. (Rule 147). It is possible therefore that he could be in arrears for eleven out of the twelve months of every year. A lodge/chapter allowing this practice is also making a nonsense of any provisions in their by-laws for exclusion on the grounds of arrears after a stated period of time.

A lodge or chapter is *always* carrying a retrospective debt. Treasurers should be well aware that the most significant outgoings (dues to Grand Lodge/Chapter and to Province) are payable *retrospectively*. Thus sufficient funds have to be available at the appropriate time *this year* to pay last year's bills. The Province has sad experience of lodges in this situation seeking emergency advice.

The practice has also led to the collapse of proposed amalgamations, as subsuming lodges (which are often financially weak) have to discharge their debts in full before they can amalgamate.

Grand Lodge have made it clear in their model by-laws that they would not approve new or amended by-laws which omitted the requirement to pay subscriptions in full: in advance. One acceptable alternative is to pay a subscription by instalments during the previous year, so that it is paid in full by the due date.

HONORARY MEMBERSHIP

Rule 167 Book of Constitutions stipulates certain conditions governing this class of membership. Please also refer to the booklet 'Information for Guidance of Members of the Craft'. A Brother elected to Honorary Membership must be of good standing, i.e., he is not in arrears and he is, or has within the last year been, a subscribing member of a Lodge.

Honorary Membership can involve a certain loss of status and rights, particularly if the Brother is not a subscribing member of any other Lodge.

- a) Honorary Membership of one Lodge does not affect subscribing membership of another; as long therefore as subscribing membership of one Lodge at least is maintained, the right of a member to attend any Lodge is not affected, and he may continue to attend Grand and Provincial Lodge, if qualified.
- b) However, an Honorary Member of a Lodge who has no subscribing membership of any Lodge is affected by Rule 127 section (iii) and it should be noted that this part of the Rule does limit his attendance at any particular Lodge (apart from the one of which he is an Honorary Member) to one visit only ever.
- c) An Honorary Member may attend the Lodge of which he is an Honorary Member but cannot therein make a proposition or vote upon one, except that a Past Master of a Lodge who becomes an Honorary Member of that Lodge may propose and second candidates. His name is not shown on any Returns to Grand or Provincial Lodge, therefore no annual dues are payable in respect of him and he does not have the right to attend Grand or Provincial Lodge. (But see section (e) below)
- d) No Honorary Member has the right to attend Lodge Committee Meetings even if he was a member of the Lodge Committee before becoming an Honorary Member. If an Honorary Member is invited by the Master to attend he has no right to speak unless asked to do so, nor in any circumstances to vote.
- e) If the Honorary Member holds Provincial Rank, then under Provincial By-Law 2(b), if he holds no subscribing membership of any other Lodge, he no longer qualifies as a member of Provincial Grand Lodge and could not vote at Provincial Lodge meetings. He is, however, as a courtesy, allowed to continue to wear his Provincial Regalia and to sit as a Provincial Officer in his Lodge, and in Provincial Grand Lodge. He would not be admitted to Grand Lodge.

Please ensure that the candidate for Honorary Membership is made fully aware of the above before taking the ballot.

HYMNS, PRAYERS and GRACES AT LODGE/CHAPTER MEETINGS

The Board of General Purposes considers it necessary to remind Lodges and Chapters that Pure and Ancient Masonry is open to adherents of every faith which requires a belief in a Supreme Being and that therefore any additions to the pure ceremonies of the Craft and the Royal Arch which Lodges or Chapters may make (such as Opening and Closing Hymns, Responses and Graces at the Festive Board) must not be identified exclusively with a particular form of Divine Worship such as, for example, specifically Christian practice.

Any such additions associated with whatever specific faith, must be considered to be innovations in the body of pure Masonry and as such are forbidden to every Freemason.

For example, for a Chapter (or Lodge) to employ the Grace before Dinner of 'Benedictus Benedicat' and, after Dinner, 'Benedicto Benedicatur' is in order, but to follow either of those Graces with the phrase 'Per Jesum Christum Dominum Nostrum' is entirely irregular in the context of Craft and Royal Arch Masonry. Likewise specifically Christian hymns or responses.

Lodges and Chapter are therefore asked to review their ceremonial practices in the light of this reminder in order to ensure that they are not in contravention of Masonic Law and they should note that the Province has the power of final instruction in respect of these matters, should it be necessary to employ that power.

Secretaries and Scribes E are accordingly asked to pass this document to their Director of Ceremonies, after having announced its import to their Lodge or Chapter.

JOINING MEMBERS AND EXALTEES FROM OTHER CONSTITUTIONS

Lodges have recently fallen foul of Grand Lodge as a result of a failure to observe Rule 163(e) [and in the Royal Arch, Regulation 67] governing the admission, as joining members, of brethren and companions from other constitutions. In this Province this usually means Scotland and Ireland, but by no means exclusively. There have been examples of fraudulent applications by means of fake documentation.

The following is the procedure which MUST be observed before a candidate for joining is balloted for, *however well known he may be to those proposing him.*

IN THE CRAFT

Before the ballot is proceeded with, the Secretary of the lodge must ascertain that the documentation of the candidate is authentic by contacting the **PROVINCIAL OFFICE** and providing the Grand Lodge Certificate of the candidate. This will be referred to The Grand Secretary who will indicate whether the Grand Lodge concerned is recognised, and the certificate is in order.

IN THE ROYAL ARCH

There are two different scenarios:

1. A candidate for **exaltation** who is not a member of a LODGE in our constitution.
2. A candidate for **joining** who is not a member of a CHAPTER in our constitution.

In BOTH cases the Grand Lodge or Grand Chapter Certificate of his constitution must be sent to the **PROVINCIAL OFFICE**, who will make the appropriate enquiries in London and report back to the chapter.

Grand Lodge and Chapter keep a record of such inquiries and therefore can always tell whether a lodge or chapter has complied with these Rules. There has been embarrassment recently for those failing to comply.

Certificates must always be sent by secure post because of their importance and value.

PAST MASTERS FROM OTHER CONSTITUTIONS

The situation of members of English lodges who are Past Masters from other recognised constitutions, *but who have not gone through the Chair of an English lodge*, is not simple, and caution should be exercised, particularly if it is proposed that they be installed into the Chair of one of our lodges.

If their *bona fides* as Installed Masters has been established, they can clothe and conduct themselves in our lodges as Installed Masters and be generally considered as such, but there are restrictions on what they can do by way of participation in our ceremonies. (*Note: once members of an English lodge they must wear English regalia, regardless of any seniority in their home constitution; they are entitled to wear levels on their aprons, but not to wear a Past Master's collar.*)

Except as mentioned in the next paragraph, no member of an English lodge who is a Past Master only of another constitution may preside in an English lodge (*ie* occupy the Chair). He can undertake, from the floor, certain elements of an English degree ceremony (for specific details contact The Province), *but he may not (except, again, as mentioned in the next paragraph) confer a degree.*

However, if (but only if) he is an Installed Master under the Grand Lodge of Ireland or Scotland, then by virtue of a mutual concordat between our three Grand Lodges, he is allowed (a) to take part, if requested by the Board of Installed Masters, as Installing Master (for the Inner Working only) in an English Installation ceremony and (b) *if no Installed Master under our Constitution is present*, to confer a degree to the extent that the ceremony cannot be performed by the Warden ruling the Lodge. *Past Masters from any other constitution may do neither*, though they can be present in the Board of Installed Masters.

No Installed Master of any other recognised constitution whatsoever can be elected to the Master's Chair of an English Lodge, whatever his seniority, unless he has or will have served *a full year as Warden* in an English lodge at the time of his installation, as required by Rule 105 of the Book of Constitutions. It is not possible for a dispensation to be issued to render eligible a Brother who has not served as a Warden in a Lodge under UGLE.

LODGE AND CHAPTER BADGES

1. The following notes are intended to help Lodges and Chapter in preparing designs for their badges before submitting them to the Grand Secretary or Grand Scribe E (via the Metropolitan, Provincial or District Grand Secretary or Scribe E, where appropriate) for the approval of the MW The Grand Master or the ME The First Grand Principal.
2. The Principles explained in the notes apply equally to designs – which also require approval – for Founders’ Jewels, Past Masters’ Jewels and Banners, etc.
3. However, it is not possible to foresee every problem that might arise, and it should therefore be noted that adherence to every point in the notes does not guarantee that the design will be approved.
4. The notes contain a depressing number of negatives, but design is possible. If extreme difficulty is encountered, the Grand Secretary’s office (Secretariat Department) will almost certainly be able to help further.

Lodge Badges

Arms of Armorial Bearings, and Badges

5. Lodges are recommended to adopt Badges in preference to Arms. Arms are heraldic devices borne on a shield. A Badge consists of some object or objects combined to form a design without the use of a shield.
6. The grant of Arms, which carries the right to bear them, is a Royal Prerogative. Lodges, which wish to design and assume Arms, must consult the College of Heralds.
7. No part of the Royal Coat of Arms may be assumed by a Lodge without the express consent of the Sovereign, or other Royal Person whose Arms are concerned.
8. No private Lodge is permitted to use the Arms of the United Grand Lodge of England.
9. No Arms of an individual or Corporation may be adopted without the written consent of such individual or Corporation, and in the case of consent being given the Arms must be used in their entirety. *N.B.* Even when such consent is obtained, it may not be appropriate for the Lodge to use Arms, which have been designed to represent an individual or public body, and therefore approval may be withheld.
10. No Lodge may adopt as Arms a portion of an existing Coat of Arms, even if permission be given by the holder, since such adoption would amount to the assumption of a new Coat of Arms.
11. Designs may not be approved if they are heraldic in character or attempt to avoid the Laws of Arms by using a corruption of a shield outline.
12. Arms that have become extinct cannot be used.
13. A small shield carried by a knight as part of the design of a badge is permitted, since this is only coincidental to his accoutrements; in most cases the shield is seen in perspective, and thus cannot be regarded as Arms in the ordinary sense.

General

14. Designs for Lodge Badges are sometimes submitted with the Petition for a new Lodge, but they cannot be approved until a Warrant has been granted. However, if the matter is urgent, the design may sometimes be approved subject to the grant of a Warrant.
15. Symbols foreign to the Craft, for example interlaced triangles (which are Royal Arch) should not occur. Most Craft badges have a (or the) square and compass incorporated, but these are not essential.

Religious Symbols

16. Symbols associated with one particular religion or religious denomination, for example the Cross, must not be included as a predominant part of the design. If the Lodge is named after a Saint who is depicted in the badge, then a small cross may be carried by the Saint.

Imperial Crown

17. The Imperial Crown is the one shown on Government documents and publications (e.g. British Passports, United Kingdom Driving Licences and top right corner on obverse of £5 Sterling bank notes). These vary slightly but are intended to be the same Crown, and will not be approved as part of a badge. A Saxon crown or a nondescript one (such as is shown in Plate 31 of the Royal Arch Regulations) may be allowed.

Corn and Acacia

18. A wreath composed of corn and acacia (as shown in the jewels of Grand Officers) is not allowed, since these emblems are symbolic of Grand Rank.

Chapter Badges

19. Rules on Lodges badges apply mutates mutandis to Chapter badges. Most Chapter badges are based on those of the Lodge to which they are attached, with some Royal Arch allusion in place of the square and compasses, e.g. interlaced triangles, the triple tau, etc. The Lodge's title must be changed to the Chapter's.

ELECTION OF MASTER AND TREASURER

At the meeting of Grand Lodge held on 9th June 2004, the rules governing the process of the election of Master and Treasurer were widened. The following is an explanation of the alternatives now available to a Lodge. (There is a separate note of guidance for the Royal Arch).

- A. A Lodge is absolutely free to continue to elect its Master and Treasurer in the traditional manner, as specified in Rule 105a.
- B. *If a Lodge intends to employ, as an alternative method of election, the new permissive regulations, it should proceed as follows.*

The Lodge may dispense with a ballot for Master at the 'Election Meeting' specified in its By-Laws if the name of only one qualified Brother has emerged as the candidate, as a result of the following process:

- a) if before the summons for the Election Meeting is printed, the Lodge as a whole (not the Lodge Committee) feels it has formed a consensus of opinion that there is likely to be only one qualified candidate for Master in the following year who wishes to be considered for Mastership,
 - b) The Secretary will place upon the summons for the Election Meeting a clear statement that at that meeting the Lodge intends, unless it otherwise decides *at* that meeting, to declare Bro. [NAME] as Master Elect for the following year, without taking a ballot.
 - c) At the Election Meeting, the Brother so nominated may then be declared elected without ballot by the Master if (and only if)
 - i) no other qualified member has, in the meantime, indicated to the Secretary that he wishes to be considered for election, *and*
 - ii) if no member present at the meeting calls, before the declaration is made, for a ballot to be held.
 - d) If either intervention in i) or ii) should occur, a ballot must be taken in the usual manner. If not, then the Master may simply declare the election in favour of the sole nominee.
- C. The Lodge may employ a similar method for election of **Treasurer** without ballot as long as stages a) to d) above are likewise scrupulously observed.

FORM OF WORDS: ELECTION OF MASTER AND TREASURER BY DECLARATION (Rule 105)

Election of Master by declaration

If your Lodge seeks to dispense with a ballot for the Election of Master and adopt the declaration option for the forthcoming year, the correct wording that must appear on your Lodge summons for the Election Meeting is:

'To declare (unless otherwise decided at the meeting) Brother [NAME] as Master Elect for the ensuing year'

(Note: If another candidate states his intention to be considered for Master Elect, or a formal ballot is called for, a formal ballot is to be taken).

Election of Treasurer by declaration

If your Lodge seeks to dispense with a ballot for the Election of Treasurer and adopt the declaration option for the forthcoming year, the correct wording that must appear on your Lodge summons for the Election Meeting is:

'To declare (unless otherwise decided at the meeting) Brother [NAME] as Treasurer for the ensuing year'

(Note: If another candidate states his intention to be considered for Treasurer, or a formal ballot is called for, a formal ballot is to be taken).

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

In July 2004 the Province published notes of guidance for Lodges on revisions to the rules governing the election of Master and/or Treasurer which permitted election without ballot under certain strict conditions. These permissive procedures are now gaining favour throughout the Province.

At the convocation of April 2005, Supreme Grand Chapter enacted similar, but not identical, regulations with respect to the Royal Arch. This document is intended to advise Chapters how they may now proceed in this matter.

The principal difference between the Craft and the Royal Arch in this regard is that the primary situation required by the Book of Regulations is that all officers of a Royal Arch Chapter be elected, unless the Chapter, each year, on the day of the election, resolves that the officers, except for the Principals and Treasurer, shall instead be appointed by the incoming Principals. (Regulation 48).

- a) If your Chapter invokes Regulation 48 in this way, then the following permissive procedures apply only to the election of the Principals and Treasurer.
 - b) If, however, your Chapter elects all the officers and your Chapter wishes to adopt the permissive method, then the following procedure applies to all the officers of the Chapter.
- A. A Chapter is absolutely free to continue to elect the three Principals and Treasurer [and the other officers] by ballot in the traditional manner specified in Regulation 48.
 - B. If a Chapter intends to employ, as an alternative method of election, the new permissive regulations, it should proceed as follows:

The Chapter may dispense with a ballot for the offices of Principals and Treasurer [and other officers] if the incumbent Principals have formed the opinion, before the printing of the summons for the convocation where the election will take place, that in the case of an officer for the following year who falls to be elected by ballot, there is likely to be only one candidate.

The Principals will accordingly cause this opinion to be printed on the summons to the convocation of the election meeting, specifying in each case the name(s) of the Companion(s) alongside the corresponding office(s). [see below]

At the election meeting, before the election is proceeded with, the First Principal will ask the Companions present whether any member wishes a ballot to take place in respect of any office. If no such demand is made then the Principals will declare the nominated officers elected without ballot.

If a ballot for any office is demanded by any member present then it is conducted in the usual manner.

FORM OF WORDS: ELECTION OF OFFICERS BY DECLARATION (Regulation 48)

If your Chapter seeks to dispense with a ballot for the Election of some or all Officers and adopt the declaration option for the forthcoming year, the correct wording that must appear on your Chapter summons for the Election Meeting is:

'To declare (unless otherwise decided at the meeting) Companions [NAMES] as [OFFICES] Elect for the ensuing year'

(Note: If another qualified candidate declares his intention to be considered for an office, or a formal ballot is called for, a formal ballot is to be taken).

ELECTION OF TYLER (and JANITOR)

There is often misunderstanding with regard to Rule 113 which makes provision for the Tyler of a Lodge.

As with Treasurers, Tylers are strictly controlled by the Book of Constitutions. This is because they have access to the assets and possessions of the Lodge. Hence the safeguards implied in the necessity to **elect** the Tyler and the second clause of Rule 113 which provides for the summary dismissal of an elected Tyler.

The default position, therefore, required by the *Book of Constitutions* is that a Lodge's By-Laws can only say that a Tyler shall be elected.

Nevertheless, it is sometimes the case that a Lodge decides that it wishes one of its members to be appointed Tyler (and of course the Brother in question cannot then be paid for his services). Rule 113 permits this to happen, and while the summons for the Election Meeting **must say** '*To elect a Tyler*', at that meeting a Brother may rise and propose that *on this occasion* the Lodge *appoint* a Tyler from among the membership rather than elect a Tyler who is not a member.

This must be done every year that a Lodge wishes to appoint rather than elect a Tyler. It cannot permanently replace the default position.

Therefore, the only wording in a Lodge's By-Laws which is acceptable is '**Subject to the provisions of Rule 113 of the Book of Constitutions, the Tyler will be elected by a show of hands at the meeting in**'. This wording provides the opportunity for the Lodge to apply either alternative method of having a Tyler.

All the above applies identically in the Royal

Arch.

EMERGENCY MEETINGS

An Emergency Meeting of a Lodge or Chapter is any meeting additional to the regular days of meeting specified in the Lodge or Chapter By-Laws.

The use of the word 'Emergency' does not imply necessarily that there is some urgent or unforeseen reason for the meeting.

Emergency Meetings are governed by Rule 140 of the Book of Constitutions and Regulation 59 of the Book of Regulations of the Royal Arch.

A Lodge must petition the Provincial Grand Master for a dispensation to hold any Emergency Meeting and the Provincial Grand Master has to be satisfied that there is 'good cause' for the meeting, before granting the dispensation. A Lodge must include in its petition all the business which it intends to transact at the meeting. That business must then appear on the summons convening the meeting, and no other business may be transacted at that meeting.

A Royal Arch Chapter does not need a dispensation for an Emergency Meeting, but the Content of the meeting is still governed by the regulations for emergency meetings, as below.

It is forbidden to transact at an Emergency Meeting any business which the Book of Constitutions/Regulations (and/or the Lodge or Chapter By-Laws) requires to be placed only before a Regular Meeting. For example, a candidate cannot be proposed nor (in the Craft) balloted for. Similarly Lodge accounts cannot be approved nor regular elections take place. (It is possible for a Royal Arch Chapter to install an elected Principal at an Emergency Meeting).

Furthermore, Emergency Meetings are not likely to be granted to Lodges and Chapters for the purpose simply of putting right some omission in their annual cycle of administration.

It follows, therefore, that no minutes are read at an Emergency meeting. Outstanding minutes must be read at the next Regular Meeting together with the minutes of the Emergency Meeting and confirmed together. Similarly there are no risings, as the meeting is not authorised to deal with general Lodge or Chapter business. Such business must all be referred to and reported at the next Regular Meeting.

CESSATION AND EXCLUSION RULES 148 AND 181

This notice is issued in order to assist Secretaries and others in the matter of a Brother ceasing his membership of the Lodge under Rule 148 or 181.

1. If a member of a Lodge fails to pay his subscription for two full years, then at the end of the second year (i.e. on the day his third subscription falls due) that Brother **automatically ceases** to be a member of the Lodge. The Lodge does not need to take any votes or act against him in any way, other than to inform him that he has ceased to be a member. The Lodge Secretary must also inform the Province. This circumstance should be entered on returns to Grand Lodge and to Provincial Grand Lodge as "membership ceased under Rule 148 on(DATE)."
2. Some Lodges (but not all) have built into their By-Laws a clause, invoking Rule 181 of the Book of Constitutions, by which they can **exclude** a Brother from membership more quickly than waiting for two full years of indebtedness. Such clauses can be specified from a minimum of three months indebtedness. Lodges are advised that if they set the period as more than, say, ten months, they run the risk of not having enough time to exclude him before incurring Grand and Provincial Dues in respect of that brother for a further year.

No **vote** can be taken against a Brother who is in arrears under this Rule until **after** the period of time specified in the By-Laws. Therefore, if the By-Laws specify twelve months indebtedness then the matter cannot be brought before the Lodge for decision until the **thirteenth** month, at the earliest, after the Brother's indebtedness began.

It is for this reason that Lodges are now realising that if they wish to employ such a clause in their By-Laws under Rule 181, it is better that it be set at nine months indebtedness or shorter. Many Lodges are setting it between three and six months. In this way, should the Lodge wish to exclude the Brother, this can be finalised before the Lodge enters a further Masonic year. In this case the Lodge is not liable for any further dues in respect of the excluded Brother.

The Secretary must be sure that he has given **notice** within the time requirements of Rule 181: that is to say that the Brother has received notice of the intended motion at least 14 days before the meeting (by recorded delivery) and the Brethren at least ten days notice by means of the Lodge summons. He does *not* need to wait until the expiry of the specified period of indebtedness before giving notice.

Finally, it should be remembered that whereas cessation under Rule 148 is automatic and mandatory, and irrevocable, exclusion under Rule 181 is entirely a matter for a vote in Open Lodge, by **ballot** and requiring a two-thirds majority of those present. Exclusions under Rule 181 are, therefore, not automatic and are sometimes defeated by a Lodge membership. The business agenda should therefore state '*To consider ~~if~~ **approved by ballot to exclude any member who is in arrears with subscriptions under By-Law No. and Rule 181 Book of Constitutions***'.

Exclusions under Rule 181 should be reported to Province **forthwith**, and indicated on returns to Grand Lodge and to Provincial Grand Lodge as "excluded under Rule 181 (DATE)".

LOGGES AND CHAPTERS HANDING IN THEIR WARRANTS AND CHARTERS

1. While it is always regrettable when a Lodge or Chapter decides to terminate its existence, it is extremely important for the members and in some circumstances those who depend on them Masonically, that the closure should be conducted in a business-like way and with appropriate Masonic decorum.

2. When the Lodge or Chapter feels that it is clear that a substantial majority of its members, having explored any alternatives, has reached the point where the surrendering of its Warrant or Charter is appropriate and inevitable, the following is the process which that Lodge or Chapter should follow. Two meetings are required.
 - a. The Lodge or Chapter should give Notice at a regular meeting of a proposition that it should surrender its warrant or Charter and that this proposition will be considered at the next regular meeting or at an Emergency Meeting called specifically for that purpose by Dispensation.

 - b. At the second meeting the proposition is put to those members attending and is decided by a simple majority of those present and voting. (The Master or First Principal having a second or casting vote if necessary). There is no proxy voting in Freemasonry. The closure of the Lodge or Chapter, if approved by the vote, takes effect from the moment the Lodge or Chapter has been closed in due form on that occasion, or at the end of a future meeting, specified in the Notice of Motion.

 - c. Well before the final meeting of the Lodge or Chapter clear resolutions should have been passed by the Brethren in Open Lodge or Chapter determining the destination upon closure of all the Lodge's or Chapter's assets and possessions including monies. In a few cases, such as Lodges and Chapters involved with Trusts or holding shares of various kinds, it may be necessary to seek legal or professional advice on their disposal and time should be allowed for any such matters to take their proper course as, after a Lodge or Chapter has finally closed, it has no entity and cannot continue to transact business, financial or otherwise. Nor, most emphatically, can individuals continue to do so on its behalf.

 - d. The Secretary or Scribe E is required, upon closure, to render to Grand Lodge/Chapter and Provincial Grand Lodge/Chapter a closing Annual Return and Dues in settlement of the account of the Lodge or Chapter and must also give full account of any arrears due but unpaid from the membership at the point of closure. The Secretary or Scribe E should consult the Provincial Office well in advance of closure in order to obtain the necessary documents and to be informed of the amounts involved.

3. The Lodge or Chapter must make every effort to ensure the comfortable continuing welfare of any of its Masonic dependants, whether they be Brethren and Companions or ladies and widows. The Local or Regional Care Officer will approach you to give advice on these matters. For this reason, the Lodge or Chapter must also inform the Charities Office at West Lancashire Freemasons' Charity, Central Applications Office, 2 Paramount Business park, Wilson Road, Huyton, Liverpool, L36 6AW (0151-482-4755) of the intended closure and of the arrangements to be made for its dependants and in the case of monies received from any other Masonic charitable source, direct contact should be made with them to like effect.

4. In the case of a closing Lodge which has a Chapter sharing its name and number there is no longer any difficulty in that Chapter continuing with that same name and number.

5. Care should be taken when choosing the date of closure not to disadvantage the Master or First Principal of the Lodge or Chapter if he is occupying the Chair for the first time. In order to qualify as a Past Master or Past Z he must have served in those Offices from one Installation to another. Otherwise he will fall foul of Rule 9 of the Book of Constitutions. Similarly Wardens in the Craft and Scribes, Principal Sojourners and Assistant Sojourners in the Royal Arch must have served in one of those Offices for a similar full year before they qualify to proceed to higher office.
6. Similarly, care must be taken to ensure that all members of the Lodge or Chapter understand the implications upon closure of becoming an Unattached Mason or Royal Arch Mason as a result of not already being a member of another Lodge or Chapter, or if they do not intend to join another Lodge or Chapter. This has serious implications, including barring them from appointment to or promotion in Provincial Rank. A Note of Guidance is available, from the Provincial Office.
7. If the closure of the Lodge leaves any Brethren standing as Fellow-Crafts or Entered Apprentices then the Lodge must obtain, via the Province, interim Grand Lodge Certificates for those Brethren in order that they can proceed further in another Lodge. All members should be issued with certificates under Rule 175 stating whether or not the Brother was in good standing at the time of closure.
8. It is very much hoped that despite the unhappiness and formality of the closure of a Lodge or Chapter, the Lodge or Chapter will invite the Assistant Provincial Grand Master or the Assistant to the Provincial Grand Principals and/or their Group Chairman to their final meeting in order that the formality of handing the Warrant or Charter over to him may take place but also that the history and service of the Lodge or Chapter can be suitably celebrated and recognised in a proper Masonic fashion.
9. Immediately after the final meeting the following items must be returned to the Provincial Grand Secretary's Office in accordance with Rule 190:

The Hall Stone Jewel (if appropriate)
Minute Books
Attendance Books

Account Books
Membership Books
Declaration Books

These are not destroyed but are returned to the Library of the Grand Lodge for perpetual storage and to assist with Masonic history and research.

Lodges or Chapters contemplating closure should direct any other enquiries or difficulties to the office of the Provincial Grand Secretary/Scribe E.

SUGGESTED PROCEDURE FOR MASTER CONTINUING IN OFFICE FOR SECOND YEAR

The following is the least extensive ceremonial which should be observed at the Installation of a Master continuing for a second year. A Master cannot continue in office for a third year without dispensation (Rule 155).

The Master having been re-elected, the item on the Agenda for the Installation Meeting should read "To proclaim W.Bro.....as Master".

The normal procedure is to open the Lodge in the three degrees.

No question of re-installation arises but it is desirable that Past Masters should be appointed to the Senior and Junior Wardens' Chairs and to act as Inner Guard in order that the investiture of Officers may flow smoothly. (N.B. A Past Master who is going to be appointed to an office senior to Inner Guard should not be invited to act as Inner Guard).

Either the IPM or the DC should announce that the Master is to continue in office.

No Inner working is called for, and arrangements should be made for the ceremony to start as if from after the closing of the Board of Installed Masters.

It is usual for the working Tools to be presented but not explained and for the Addresses to the Wardens (assuming that there has been a change in either Senior or Junior) and to the Brethren to be given. No Address to the Master is given.

The Warrant, Book of Constitutions, and the By-Laws being already in the possession of the Master need not be presented to him again.

The Master should not be presented with a Past Master's Jewel on this occasion, nor is the IPM re-invested.

MOVING THE MEETING DATE OF A LODGE OR CHAPTER

Rule 139 governs the moving of the day of meeting of a Lodge or Chapter. It gives rise to a great number of unnecessary inquiries to the Provincial Office. It is, in fact, very simple, and the chart below explains how you should proceed.

Dispensations cannot be issued to move a meeting more than 28 days, either way.

This rule only governs the moving of a regular meeting to another date. If that meeting is your Installation, then the Installation Ceremony also moves to the revised date.

However, separate rules come into play in the unfortunate circumstance of the Master Elect, or Principal(s) Elect, not being available for the day of Installation, and the advice of the Province should be sought in such circumstances.

WE ARE DUE TO MEET ON	SHOULD WE MOVE THE MEETING?	HOW SHOULD WE PROCEED?	
A SUNDAY CHRISTMAS DAY, or GOOD FRIDAY	You <u>MUST</u> move the meeting	Move the meeting by up to SEVEN days either way without Dispensation	Move the meeting by more than SEVEN days by requesting a Dispensation
ANY OTHER PUBLIC HOLIDAY	You <u>MAY</u> move the meeting, but you do not have to	Move the meeting IF YOU WISH by up to SEVEN days either way without Dispensation	Move the meeting IF YOU WISH by more than SEVEN days by requesting a Dispensation
A DAY OTHER THAN THE ABOVE WHICH PROVES TO BE INCONVENIENT	You <u>MAY</u> move the meeting for a reason acceptable to the Provincial Grand Master	You <u>MUST</u> apply for a Dispensation IN ALL CASES	

MOVING THE INSTALLATION

A Lodge must hold all the meetings specified in its By-Laws for its annual programme. (A meeting cannot be 'cancelled'. It can only be 'abandoned' when it has proved impossible to establish a quorum. Cancelling a meeting will jeopardise a Lodge's historical continuity.)

The By-Laws specify the meeting at which the Installation of Master must take place. The Installation must take place only at that meeting, even though the meeting may be moved by Dispensation under Rule 139 by twenty-eight days either way. ***If that meeting is moved, the Installation must go with it.***

A Lodge cannot move its Installation Meeting by Dispensation or otherwise to any other of its regular meetings. (In the special case of a Master Elect, ready and able to be installed but who cannot attend his Installation, Rule 108 applies, and the Province should be consulted).

Example

The meeting pattern of Lodge X includes the months of October, November and December.

The Lodge is due to meet on the 15th November to Install.

It can move the November meeting and thus the Installation, by Dispensation, to any day between 18th October and 13th December.

But it must also hold its regular October and December meetings, neither of which can be the Installation.

**LODGES AND CHAPTERS SEEKING
TO MOVE MEETING PLACE**

A - MOVING TO A RECOGNISED MASONIC MEETING PLACE

The removing of a Lodge or Chapter to a new meeting place is governed by Rule 141 of the Book of Constitutions, which places certain strict requirements upon the Lodge or Chapter. Among the most important are:-

1. At a regular meeting, at least seven subscribing members should give notice of motion of the desire to remove the Lodge.
2. That motion must be placed on the summons for the next Regular Meeting or if necessary for an Emergency Meeting for that specific purpose. That summons must reach the Brethren or Companions at least seven days before the meeting.

(A dispensation will be needed for such an Emergency Meeting in the Craft but not in the Royal Arch.)

3. At this second meeting, a two-thirds majority of those present and voting is necessary for the proposition to be carried.

Rule 141 recognises that it may be necessary, upon the removal of a Lodge or Chapter, also to alter some or all of the regular days of meeting of the Lodge or Chapter. If this is the case, then the changes should be incorporated in the same proposition as that to remove the Lodge.

4. The names of the proposers and the result of the vote must be clearly recorded on the minutes of the meeting and a copy of the relevant part of those minutes must be sent to the Provincial Grand Secretary. The summons for the meeting at which the proposition is to be put should, at the least, indicate that Rule 141 has been complied with. Preferably, the names of all the proposers of the proposition should appear on the summons.
5. When the Provincial Office sees the proposition to remove appear on the summons for the meeting at which the matter is to be decided, they will dispatch to the Lodge or Chapter the forms necessary for the approval of the change. From this point, the change of location is treated in the same way as a change of By-Law and, once the proposition has been approved, the forms should be completed and returned to the Provincial Office, together with a copy of the minutes referred to in number 4 above.
6. The subsequent approval of the By-Laws, if granted, fulfils the requirements of Rule 141(iii) and (iv).

B - MOVING TO A MEETING PLACE NOT YET RECOGNISED AS A MASONIC MEETING PLACE

If a Lodge or Chapter desires to remove to premises which are not already approved as a Masonic meeting place it is first necessary, before any proposition is contemplated, to ask the Province (through the Provincial Grand Secretary) to visit the premises which are the intended meeting place and to inspect them with a view to their suitability for Masonic meetings.

The inspection will require a representative of the Lodge or Chapter to be present and the inspecting party will expect to see the building disposed exactly as it is intended it should be when a Masonic meeting will be taking place in it.

Upon considering the report of the inspecting officers the RW Provincial Grand Master will decide whether the building may be authorised as a Masonic meeting place.

If authorisation is given, the Lodge or Chapter concerned should then proceed as in A above.

C - CHANGE OF GROUP

In the Province of West Lancashire the change of meeting place of a Lodge or Chapter may also imply a change of Group. The allocation of Lodges and Chapters to Groups is entirely a matter for the RW Provincial Grand Master and, if he sees fit, a Lodge which has moved home may be re-allocated to a Group more appropriate to its location.

CONDUCT OF MASONIC BUSINESS WHEN NON-MASONS ARE PRESENT

With the consent and encouragement of Masonic authority non-masons (which phrase includes ladies) are increasingly being invited to Masonic gatherings. Following enquiries from the Craft, the Board of General Purposes has thought it timely to issue guidance on the circumstances when non-masons may be present at Masonic events.

1. Non-masons may not be present at the opening or closing of a Lodge or at any time that a Lodge is open.
2. The ceremonies of Initiation, Passing, Raising and Installation can only take place validly in an open Lodge. The same validity extends to individual elements of ceremony such as the Charge after Initiation, and the Masonic Lectures associated with the ceremonies.
3. No Masonic signs or secrets may be shown or imparted outside a regularly open Lodge. Other brief portions of Masonic text may be employed when illustrating Masonic ideals to a non-Masonic audience, but elements of the ceremonies should not be recited at length.
4. The administrative business of the Lodge can only be conducted in open Lodge.
5. There is however no compelling need to adopt a mysterious or secretive attitude towards other Masonic activities, such as the laying of a foundation stone, which take place without a Lodge being open or after a Lodge has been called off or closed. The distinction here being that the event is *ceremonial* rather than *ritual*.
6. Before the planning of any such public event, the Province must be consulted.
7. Rule 178 prohibits the wearing of regalia when persons other than Masons are present unless a Dispensation has previously been given. It is highly likely that such permission will be granted for the purposes of open days, church services and any other appropriate events. But Dispensation from the Province must be sought in accordance with the Rule.
8. It is perfectly in order for non-masons to be invited to Masonic after-proceedings and an abridged Masonic Toast List may be employed though no reference to Masonic Ritual (such as in *fire*) must be made and if the Tyler's Toast is to be used it should be in its short form. [Note: there are particular problems in this regard for the small number of Lodges which remain open, or 'called-off' at the Festive Board, and are closed at the end of Dinner. The Province should be consulted in such cases, if non-Masons are to be invited to be present.]

If the Provincial Office can be of further assistance to Lodges in these matters, please feel free to contact us.

THE RETIRING OF THE ASSISTANT PROVINCIAL GRAND MASTER or the REPRESENTATIVE FROM AN INSTALLATION BANQUET

Lodges have enquired whether there might be an alternative to the current practice of the Assistant Provincial Grand Master or Representing Officer retiring from the Installation Banquet immediately following the reply of the Worshipful Master to the Toast to his health.

It is sometimes felt that this provokes an unduly large exodus from the proceedings, particularly of senior Brethren. However, the Provincial Grand Master feels he must be mindful of the burden of time which the duty of representing him places upon those who do so and he feels he must continue to ensure that after-proceedings are conducted on such occasions in a timely and dignified manner.

He has therefore approved the following **alternative procedure** which, while he expects it to be meticulously observed, will enable the Assistant or Representing Officer to remain until proceedings are concluded.

1. If it is usual to give the Toast to absent Brethren (the 'Nine o'Clock Toast') it should be given formally (without an Almoner's report) at some point between Toast No. 2 (to the Grand Master) and the Toast to the health of the Worshipful Master.
2. The Toast to the Master is proposed (followed by the Master's Song if required).
3. The Master responds to the Toast to his health.

Between now and the end of the proceedings the Master does not sit.

4. Still standing, the Worshipful Master proposes the health of the Immediate Past Master, to which there is no response.
5. After the Brethren have honoured the Toast and sat down the Worshipful Master remains standing and proposes the Toast to the Guests, to which there is no response.
6. After the Brethren have honoured that Toast the Master sits and the Tyler is summoned to propose his Toast.
7. After the Tyler's Toast has been honoured, the Brethren remain standing to their places while the Worshipful Master, accompanying the Assistant or Representing Officer, retires.

If a Lodge wishes to retain the present procedure it is entirely at liberty to do so, but if the alternative procedure is to be employed, it may not vary from the sequence of events prescribed above.

THE WEARING OF TIES IN THE CRAFT & THE ROYAL ARCH

With the advent of the 'Grand Chapter Tie', the Province feels it timely to clarify the rules governing the wearing of ties in lodges and chapters in West Lancashire.

With the exception of that handful of lodges and chapters who 'from time immemorial' have worn particular ties identifying them with their origins (old boys/university/military etc), the following rules apply:

Brethren and Companions may wear, *in both lodges and chapters*, either

A plain black tie
The Grand Lodge Tie *or*
The Grand Chapter Tie

and Brethren and Companions of West Lancashire may wear *The West Lancashire Tie*.

NOTE REGARDING THE WEST LANCASHIRE TIE

1. It may be worn in public
2. It may **not** be worn outside the Province of West Lancashire.
3. It may **not** be worn at Grand Lodge or Supreme Grand Chapter

Similarly, the Provincial Grand Masters of our neighbouring Provinces have made it clear to their members that they must not wear *their* Provincial ties in our Province.

UNATTACHED MASONS

[A] Unattached as a result of closure or amalgamation

When a Lodge hands in its Warrant or is amalgamated into another Lodge, a problem will arise for any Brother from a closing Lodge who has no other subscribing memberships and who chooses not to join another Lodge. **He could find himself in a serious Masonic situation following the closure of his Lodge. This guidance is directed at such Brethren.**

Although he remains a Freemason, if he is not a subscribing member of any Lodge, he becomes 'unattached' and must so sign himself in the Tyler's book of any Lodge he visits.

When 'unattached', a Mason remains at liberty to visit Lodges but on one occasion only to each Lodge. **He may not make a second visit to any Lodge while he remains unattached, however familiar he is with that Lodge or its members.** In effect, his Masonic life is substantially curtailed.

If a Provincial Officer, he ceases to be a member of the Provincial Grand Lodge and can only attend as a guest and cannot under any circumstances vote. In this Province, however, as a courtesy, *unattached* Provincial Officers are permitted to continue to wear their Provincial regalia at any Lodge meetings they do attend. An *unattached* Brother who is not a Grand Officer would not be admitted to Grand Lodge.

This situation does not change until he again becomes a subscribing member of a Lodge, except that if he is an Honorary Member of a Lodge then he may continue to attend *that* Lodge on a regular basis, though he cannot take part in the business of that Lodge, except to propose or second a candidate for admission, if he was formerly a subscribing member of that Lodge. **An Unattached Mason seeking once again to become a subscribing member of a Lodge or Chapter MUST SIGN THE DECLARATION on page two of Registration Form 'P'.**

Secretaries of Lodges are asked to give a copy of this letter to any Brother who, they think, may be deciding not to join another Lodge following a decision to hand in a Warrant.

Brethren who find themselves in this situation are welcome to seek advice from their Group or from the Province.

The above situation is identical for an unattached Royal Arch Mason, but his situation in the Craft is not affected if he remains a subscribing member of a Lodge. Conversely, an unattached Craft Mason can attend Royal Arch Chapters regularly if he is a subscribing member of a Chapter.

[B] Unattached as a result of exclusion (Rule 148 and 181)

Rule 127 makes it clear that a Mason who has become unattached as a result of having been excluded from a Lodge cannot attend any Lodge or Lodge of Instruction until he has again become a subscribing member of a Lodge. This means that he cannot make the one visit to any Lodge mentioned in the third paragraph above

The same situation obtains identically in the Royal Arch.

CHANGING YOUR LODGE OR CHAPTER BY-LAWS

In addition to the Book of Constitutions and Regulations, a lodge or chapter is governed locally by its by-laws. These control such matters as the days of meeting, election, and installation. They also govern certain financial matters of the lodge or chapter and they can also provide for procedures to deal with default of subscriptions, election of candidates, the composition and quorum of the lodge/chapter committee and country membership.

By-Laws, because of their importance, cannot be changed at whim. They always require a majority vote (with notice) in open lodge/chapter, and in some cases a two-thirds majority. Even then, changes are not valid until approved by The Province on behalf of Grand Lodge. It is therefore **STRONGLY ADVISED** that any proposed changes are discussed with the Provincial Office **PRIOR TO THE VOTE** to avoid delay or the need for a second vote.

It is now the *de facto* policy of United Grand Lodge and Supreme Grand Chapter that, should a lodge or chapter wish to make even one 'significant change' (the removal or addition of a meeting, subscription year-end, change of meeting place et cetera) to their By-Laws, they **MUST** adopt the Model By-Laws, in full, without exception or amendment. The Model By-Laws cover everything that it is necessary to include for the smooth running of the lodge or chapter and are all that is required for it to fully govern its affairs. Further elaboration upon the Model By-Laws is not necessary, and, as of March 2017, such elaboration will not be approved.

The Province provides easy-to-use Microsoft Word document versions of the Model By-Laws which may be completed electronically with the relevant details specific to your Lodge or Chapter. You can download These documents here:

<https://www.westlancsfreemasons.org.uk/members/provincial-office/secretaries-and-scribes/>

When the Brethren/Companions have voted to adopt by-law changes, the By-Laws and form should be returned to: Province of West Lancashire, Provincial Office, 6 Golden Hill Lane, Leyland, PR25 3NP or to By-Laws@provinceofwestlancs.org