

# Discover Freemasonry in West Lancashire

INTEGRITY  
FRIENDSHIP  
RESPECT  
CHARITY



PROVINCE OF WEST LANCASHIRE

# What are your guiding principles?

Freemasons use four important guiding principles to help define their path through life: integrity, friendship, respect and charity.

In today's world filled with uncertainty, these principles ring as true as they have at any point in the organisation's history.

One of the oldest social and charitable organisations in the world, Freemasonry's roots lie in the traditions of the medieval stonemasons who built our cathedrals and castles.



*"As a newcomer, I was overcome by the friendliness and warmth of my reception. It's difficult to explain the sheer joy and pride it gives me to have become a member of this wonderful organisation."*

JAMIE  
HEBER LODGE

Membership is open to people from all backgrounds and the organisation's aim is to empower members to be the best they can be – it's about building character, supporting members as individuals, and helping them make a positive contribution to society.

*"Freemasonry has had a profound effect on my life, subtly changing my attitudes and behaviour for the better."*

JOHN  
STARKIE LODGE



Freemasonry provides a structure for members to come together under these common goals, enabling people to make new friendships, develop themselves and make valuable contributions to charitable causes.

# ■ INTEGRITY:

## Building good people

Rather than working on buildings like the masons of old, today's Freemasons focus on building themselves as people of integrity, and membership provides the structure to help achieve that goal.



*"Learning the lessons of Freemasonry and meeting and spending time with men of integrity, it can't help but influence you. You find integrity becomes like a golden thread running through your everyday life."*

JONATHON  
BORSDANE LODGE



*"Freemasonry uses the analogy of the building of King Solomon's Temple to get across some important lessons. Taking these on board has helped me to build myself into a better person."*

ANDY  
ANFIELD LODGE

At an individual level, being a Freemason gives members a sense of purpose, supporting and guiding them on their journey through life. Collectively, members are bonded through a sense of unity and equitability – principles fundamental to Freemasonry.

## THE HISTORY OF THE HANDSHAKE

Historically, stonemasons travelled from place to place to secure work. At this time, handshakes were commonly used as a means for stonemasons to identify themselves, proving their level of experience and indicating what position they held. Today, in recognition of this practice, handshakes are used ceremonially as a way of identifying the various levels within Freemasonry.

# FRIENDSHIP:

## Building together

One of the oldest social organisations in the world, Freemasonry is not defined by an ideology.

It is open to people from all religions and political persuasions, and provides the common foundation for friendships between members, many of which will last for life.



*"Mine is a vibrant lodge and our practice evenings, and our lodge meetings certainly provide a platform for some good fun, banter and high level of camaraderie. Myself, my wife, family and friends have really enjoyed the friendship and conviviality that our socials and ladies' evenings offer."*

PAUL  
GOODWILL LODGE



Being a Freemason means something different to each person who joins, but whether looking to make acquaintances or develop their own potential, all members share a sense of togetherness that strengthens their ability to succeed and grow.



*"Freemasonry offers a bond of friendship which I think is unique. All the brethren have gone the extra mile to make me feel welcome and I now have a wider circle of good friends."*

MARTIN  
BALDWIN LODGE

## BUILDING FRIENDSHIPS FOR LIFE

From university schemes, to new masons clubs, to special interest Lodges, Freemasonry gives members many opportunities to make friends for life. Finding bonds with people who share common interests and meeting people from all different backgrounds are only some of the ways Freemasonry can help cultivate lasting friendships.

# RESPECT:

## Building unity

With a membership of more than 200,000 people drawn from communities across the UK, Freemasonry brings people together irrespective of their race, religion or any other perceived differences that can divide us as a society.

*"No matter what your background, race, religion, or what you do for a living, respect and a warm welcome are always guaranteed.*

*It's something I really love about Freemasonry and always look forward to my meetings."*

ROY  
CORINTHIAN  
LODGE







*"I always thought that I needed to be wealthy or highly successful to become a Freemason. I learned that I was accepted with open arms by people from all walks of life. Regardless of status or position, we meet together as one big happy family."*

PAUL

LANCASTER CASTLE LODGE

Our members are proud to be Freemasons, and they are encouraged to talk openly about what the organisation does and what it means to be part of it.

## FEMALE FREEMASONS

There are two female-only Grand Lodges, the Honourable Fraternity of Ancient Freemasons (HFAF) and the Order of Women Freemasons (OWF). The HFAF and OWF follow exactly the same ritual and wear the same regalia as male Freemasons – and they often work closely with community and charity projects.

Female Freemasons Annie Besant and Charlotte Despard were prominent figures in the push for universal suffrage in the early twentieth century. Besant was a British theosophist and women's rights activist who also established the first UK lodge of the International Order of Co-Freemasonry (Le Droit Humain) in 1902. Despard, an Anglo-Irish suffragist, pacifist and novelist, was a founding member of various reformist organisations whose presence lives on today in the North London pub named in her honour.

# CHARITY:

## Building compassion

Kindness and charitable giving are deeply ingrained within the principles of Freemasonry. The organisation provides a support structure that helps members make positive contributions to communities and worthwhile causes through fundraising events or volunteer work.



*"My experiences in the lodge have helped me recognise the importance of our donations and encouraged me to support the Masonic Charitable Foundation raising money through my sporting efforts, knowing that every penny will go to a deserving cause. The support it gives people is unparalleled."*

ADAM

OLD MASONIANS LODGE

Individuals can make an important contribution at local, national and global level by giving both their time and money. Thanks to their efforts, Freemasonry is one of the largest charitable givers in the country, contributing more than £48m to deserving causes in 2018 alone. Freemasons don't only donate money – over 5 million hours of volunteer work was undertaken by Freemasons in 2018.



*"Charity is one of the three virtues but unique in its ability to give satisfaction to the giver and solace to the beneficiary. It is an act of kindness and understanding towards other people."*

BARRY

WARRINGTON LODGE OF CONCORD



## FREEDOM OF THE CITY

In 1894, facing financial crisis, Manchester City Football Club was offered a helping hand by the Freemasons. In acknowledgement of the organisation's act of charity, the club adopted Masonic colours, giving them the light blue shirts that are so recognisable to football fans today.

# Membership

Becoming a Freemason means you'll be joining more than 200,000 members throughout England and Wales as well as Districts overseas.

Membership is open to any man over the age of 18 irrespective of their race or religion, and women are invited to join one of two female-only Grand Lodges: The Order of Women Freemasons and the Honourable Fraternity of Ancient Freemasons.

In total, we have more than 7,000 Lodges, with students also able to join one of the 81 University Scheme Lodges.

*"I liked the thought of doing the exact same thing and using the same words as a man just like me over three hundred years ago."*

WAYNE  
HAND AND  
HEART LODGE



Lodge meetings are typically held in two parts. The first involves more administrative procedures, such as proposing and balloting for new members and receiving news about charitable fundraising.

The second part focuses on ceremonies, which might relate to areas such as the admittance of new members or the installation of the Master of the Lodge and his officers – a process made up of three degrees, or stages, each one marked by a special ceremony.

True to the sense of friendship and togetherness among Freemasons, meetings are also social events, providing an occasion for members to dine together.

Outside of the Lodge, activities include community fundraising and volunteering activities as well as a varied programme of events where spouses, partners and families are welcome.



## FINDING THE RIGHT FREEMASONRY FOR YOU

Over 300 Lodges meet in West Lancashire, in every town and city, and a warm welcome awaits in each. Also, certain lodges cater for specific interests. Pro Patria Lodge attracts members from the ex-military community, and there is a Bikers' Lodge, and more. A dedicated Membership Team is on hand to explain everything and give the appropriate advice.



# Freemasonry in West Lancashire

We know that Freemasons have been operating in West Lancashire since as long ago as 1646 when Alias Ashmole, in the earliest recorded account of admittance into Freemasonry, was initiated into a lodge in Warrington. It is an intriguing thought that whilst Roundheads and Cavaliers were engaged in the bitter English Civil War, Freemasons were meeting in peace and harmony in this very Province.

*"The Masonic Hall  
in Liverpool is  
steeped in history  
and architectural  
beauty, the ideal  
choice for the subject  
of a documentary  
produced as part  
of my course."*

FINN  
MEDIA STUDENT  
LIVERPOOL CITY  
COLLEGE







*"I get great pleasure from visiting lodges around the Province, some old and full of history, some more contemporary. Not only do I make new friends but also get to enjoy the differences their traditions bring. And I do enjoy a nice meal and a pint in the bar afterwards."*

PHIL  
NEWBY BRIDGE LODGE

West Lancashire has around 8,000 members and its Lodges serve an area from the Manchester suburbs in the south to Barrow and the Lake District in the north. There are over 330 active Lodges that meet at 50 locations, predominantly Masonic Halls, but including hotels, pubs, schools, golf and private clubs, a village hall and a synagogue. Although each lodge has its own membership, visiting brethren are always welcome to enjoy the diversity of traditions, surroundings and friendship.

## AND FINALLY

We hope you have found this booklet of interest, and that it has answered a few questions and perhaps dispelled some myths.

Because of its size our Province is divided into 19 groups of Lodges. Each group has a Membership Officer with local knowledge who can provide information and guidance about the lodges that meet in any particular area. Contact can be made with them by visiting our website at [www.westlancsfreemasons.org.uk](http://www.westlancsfreemasons.org.uk).



## PROVINCE OF WEST LANCASHIRE

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OF ENGLAND

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