







BUILDING TOGETHER

Digital Quick start guide

V1 MAY 2025



This contents page is interactive: Click on the page you wish to read.

CONTENTS

- 4 Introducing Bulding Together
- 6 UGLE / SGC Strategy
- 9 The Membership Challenge
- **10** Who is Involved?
- f 11 Why is Building Together important?
- 12 Introducing the Hub, Elements and Threads



SHAPE

Review & Plan

- **14** Reviewing your Unit
- **16** Creating a unit Outline
- **17** Creating a Development Plan
- **18** Succession Planning

Membership Action Plan

- **19** Preparing Your Message
- 20 Your Personal Statement
- 21 Identifying Potential New Members



ATTRACT

Attract Members

- **22** Promoting your Lodge
- 23 Engaging through social and community events
- **24** Explaining What Freemasonry Means to You
- 25 Expectation Management from the first point of contact

Interview Prospective Members

- 27 Managing Enquiries
- 28 Screening
- 29 Interview Process
- **31** Expectation Management











Attracting Future Companions

- **32** Promoting your Chapter
- 34 All Companions are RA champions
- 35 RA reps
- **36** Where Prospective Companions Come From

Screening Prospective Companions

- 38 The right Chapter
- **39** Commitment

Expectation Management

- 40 Meetings/Festive Board
- **41** Regalia



ENGAGE

Support the New Member

- 42 Developing Understanding
- 43 Encouraging Participation
- **44** Planned Mentoring

Continued Support

- Fostering fun, enjoyment and satisfaction
- 46 Guiding a member's learning
- 48 Supporting personal learning
- 19 Helping a member relocate
- 50 Continuing your journey

Re-engaging inactive members

- 1 Tracking attendance and apologies
- Recognising signs of dissatisfaction
- Engaging with absent members



RESPOND

Poor Engagement

- 54 Connecting with Unattached Members
- 55 Resignations & Next Steps
- Lessons Learnt from Resignations
- **57** Recognising the need to review

Alternative Futures

- 58 Unit Options
- 59 Creating Efficiencies in a Unit









Introducing BUILDING TOGETHER

Pathway and Archway into one membership journey tool supporting Brethren and Companions work to grow their Lodges and Chapters. Within the material some concepts have been introduced which are different from material which you have seen before, some of these key changes are listed below:-

Key concepts

- When enquirers apply to join a Lodge, expectations are set that the Individual is joining FREEMASONRY and not just a Lodge. It comprises four ceremonies; three in a Craft Lodge and one in a Royal Arch Chapter, at a place of your choosing.
- Introduction of Mentors in the Royal Arch

- A Lodge Mentor and a Personal Mentor are the key people to help a Brother continue their journey to the Royal Arch
- All Companions are Champions of the Royal Arch
- The Building Together Model uses Five Hubs through which users navigate to resources, aspects relating to the Royal Arch are in all five Hubs. Attract and Continue focus on the journey from enquiry to joining (Member of Public to a Brother, and from a Brother to a Companion) and should be seen as mirroring each other as a process BUT using different vocabulary as the individual joining a Lodge will have little understanding of practices and traditions where as a Master Mason joining a Chapter will be able to understand and appreciate examples based on experiences from the Craft.
- Do not fall into the belief that Royal Arch material is only in Continue.









Vocabulary

As content was harmonised it became necessary to develop a collection of terms, many of which are collective nouns, to describe groups or processes. These are not for use in ritual or intended to be introduced constitutionally but save writing out multiple variations in Building Together which may differ slightly across the Craft and Royal Arch.

- Units has been used as a collective noun when referring to Lodges and Chapters
- 2. **Provinces** has been used as a collective noun to include Provinces, Districts and the Metropolitan area

- 3. Provincial Building Together Membership Group (PBTMG) is the collective noun for Provincial Officers supporting local delivery of Building Together and helping Units
- 4. Building Together Delivery Group (BTDG) is UGLE & SGCs group who manage BUILDING TOGETHER







UGLE/SGC STRATEGY



When faced with a document outlining the Strategy for the coming years, there is always a danger of regarding it as something of relevance only to UGLE/SGC – "nothing to concern ordinary members".

Actually, the opposite is true, since the Strategy will only succeed with the full involvement of all members.

This means we all need to have a *clear and shared understanding of the direction we are going*, ensuring actions can contribute over time to a stronger, more secure future for our Lodges and Chapters.

We must now focus our energy on attracting new members (not necessarily young!) making sure that both new and established members find Freemasonry fun, enjoyable, satisfying and encouraging them to remain members for life. This way we will reverse the decline in numbers of recent years (which some Provinces, have already started to address using the resources contained within the Members' Pathway and Archway that have now been harmonised into Building Together) but we first need to understand why we have been losing more members than we have been gaining.









Both United Grand Lodge of England and Supreme Grand Chapter function in many areas as one organisation with a shared leadership and common values—the UGLE Strategy for Freemasonry is therefore an integrated one that reinforces the fundamental connection between the Royal Arch and the Craft.

Participation in the Royal Arch provides a new dimension to our members' experience and a more complete understanding of what it means to be a Freemason in the United Grand Lodge of England. It is an established fact that those who progress into the Royal Arch are far more likely to remain engaged with Freemasonry in general than those who limit their experience of what Pure Antient Masonry has to offer.

The success of the Royal Arch is therefore directly related to the success of our Lodges. A clear and shared understanding of this will ensure that our actions can contribute over time to a stronger, more secure future for Freemasonry in the 21st Century and beyond.

Our Lodges Our Chapters Our Future



Attracting Members – Growing Freemasonry









The practical advice offered in **BUILDING TOGETHER** directly addresses the main challenges our Units face. But to achieve the desired results, many Units need to be prepared to make changes where necessary—to try something new—or to stop doing something if it isn't working for your Unit.

We are rightly proud of our traditions, but as the years pass, these 'traditions' often accumulate, and some become outdated or unhelpful.

A key aspect to success of the Strategy is adoption of a different mindset— a YES IF... approach, not No Because.

When something new is proposed, be prepared to say YES we can achieve these goals IF we change this or that, rather than say no because we have always done it 'our way'.

You will then be able to face the future with renewed enthusiasm and measure your success in terms of increased member satisfaction and a return to a more secure future.









THE MEMBERSHIP CHALLENGE

In recent years Freemasonry has unfortunately been losing more members than it has been gaining and **The Membership Challenge**, which every Unit is asked to address, is essentially to reverse that trend. It is an intrinsic part of the Strategy for 2022 and beyond.

Although you might see figures referring to the size of the Challenge at UGLE / SGC level, or Provincial level, it is your individual Unit figures which are the most relevant to define what actions will be needed at Unit level.

Your Unit records or even Provincial records can provide the membership statistics for the previous 5+ years, which will show how many members have been lost and how many new members have joined – whether the trend is positive or negative.

When considering how to close the gap between gains and losses, the most reasonable and practical approach would be to increase the gains and at the same time reduce the losses.

This will require determined effort over time, involving all members, arranging events to attract new members, finding ways to involve every member in the life of the Unit to increase their sense of belonging, interest and commitment, and being alert to the early signs of poor attendance or late payment of dues, ready to step in to offer support and encouragement as appropriate.

THE MEMBERSHIP CHALLENGE TOTAL GAINS TOTAL GAINS











Introducing the Unit Membership Team

Using the Building Together successfully relies on the **Unit Membership Team** (Membership Officer, Mentor, and Almoner, amongst others) and the support your members give them.

All units are encouraged to find someone to take on each role, even if, due to availability, it has to be combined with another. Every member of the Unit, from the newest to the most experienced, should have the opportunity to contribute to Unit and Membership Development. A willingness to embrace change as part of inspiring and motivating Unit members will be a pre-requisite for success.

Building Together recognises individual Provinces and Units have created different structures to support members at various stages of their journey; it is flexible and not prescriptive.

The Provincial Building Together Membership Groups are also available to guide and support Units.









Why is **BUILDING TOGETHER IMPORTANT?**

BUILDING TOGETHER contains practical ideas drawn from the experience and successes of Units over recent years in engaging members, ensuring meetings are well planned and enjoyed by all, stemming losses and growing memberships.

It should be the catalyst to help re-build our Units and re-engage our membership capitalising on the great PR Freemasonry has received because of the incredible community support provided, for example, during the Covid crisis.

It will allow us to showcase all that is great about Freemasonry, demonstrating how we champion our values of **Integrity, Respect, Friendship and Service.**

It will also help to answer questions such as:

- Who might be interested in Freemasonry?
- How do we present Freemasonry to prospective members?
- How do we support new and existing members?
- How do we make meetings enjoyable and appealing so that expectations are met and members get involved?









Introducing THE HUB, ELEMENTS AND THREADS

BUILDING TOGETHER has been developed to direct the member with ease to the support materials they need.

It is presented as a pentagon illustrating the continuing cycle of review, plan and do that evolving and improving Units go through. The aim is to help create stronger, more vibrant Units, with happy members who demonstrably enjoy their Freemasonry.

THE HUB

The Hub is the starting point when using BUILDING TOGETHER, the five sections of the hub are shown here. SHAPE, ENGAGE and RESPOND contain material which relates to both the Craft and the Royal Arch. ATTRACT and CONTINUE focus on the journey from enquiry to joining (Member of Public to a Brother, and from a Brother to a Companion) and should be seen as mirroring each other as a process BUT using different vocabulary as the individual joining a Lodge will have little understanding of practices and traditions where as a Master Mason joining a Chapter will be able to understand and appreciate examples based on experiences from the Craft.











THE ELEMENTS



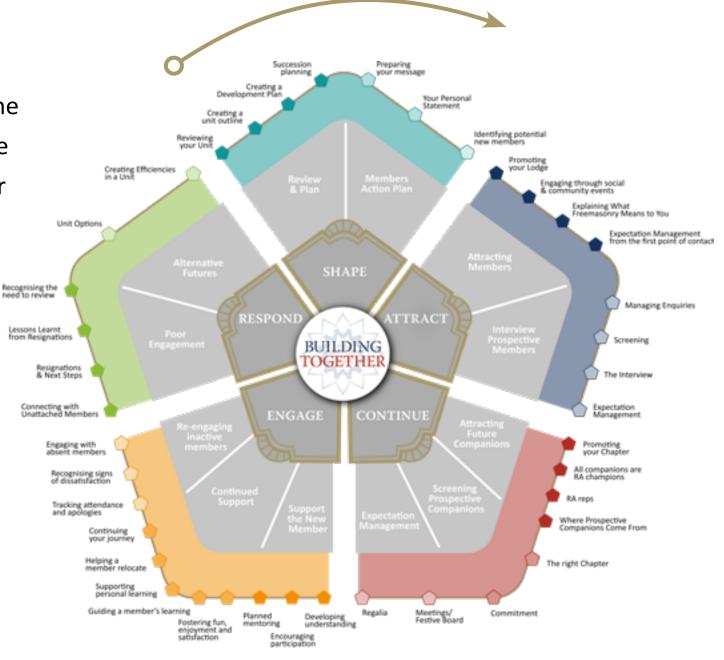
Each Hub section expands to Elements, where major topics are introduced which relate to areas of Unit activity.

THE THREADS

Finally extending from the Elements are the Threads. The forty threads break down the Elements into subtopics. Building Together has been designed so the content of the Threads is available online, through solomon.ugle.org.uk

This guide has a short summary of each Thread. These are presented visually working clockwise. Remember work from **HUB > ELEMENT > THREAD** to find the materials you want.

This Interactive PDF version includes links to detailed web-based guidance, linking between resources to help you navigate between the threads.









A quick start guide to BUILDING TOGETHER



SHAPE

- Review and Plan
- Reviewing your unit

The first stage in any plan is a review of your current situation, to identify issues that need attention, and which should be built into a plan. This applies to membership Units in Freemasonry (ie, Lodges and Chapters) as much as anything else. Throughout "BUILDING TOGETHER" we refer to Lodges and Chapters as "Units."

"Reviewing your Unit", describes how a Lodge or Chapter can "take stock" and review their current situation, consider whether it is attractive to likely members and lay the foundation for a plan to shape the future. We recommend that every Unit return to this process at regular intervals, whether it is successful or is struggling.









Once a Lodge Outline has been developed, you are able to start considering the Lodge's **strengths**, **weaknesses**, **opportunities** and **threats**.

List everything relevant to each area and then look to agree specific actions to enhance/promote the strengths and opportunities, reduce or remove the weaknesses and threats.

Thread link: Reviewing Your Unit



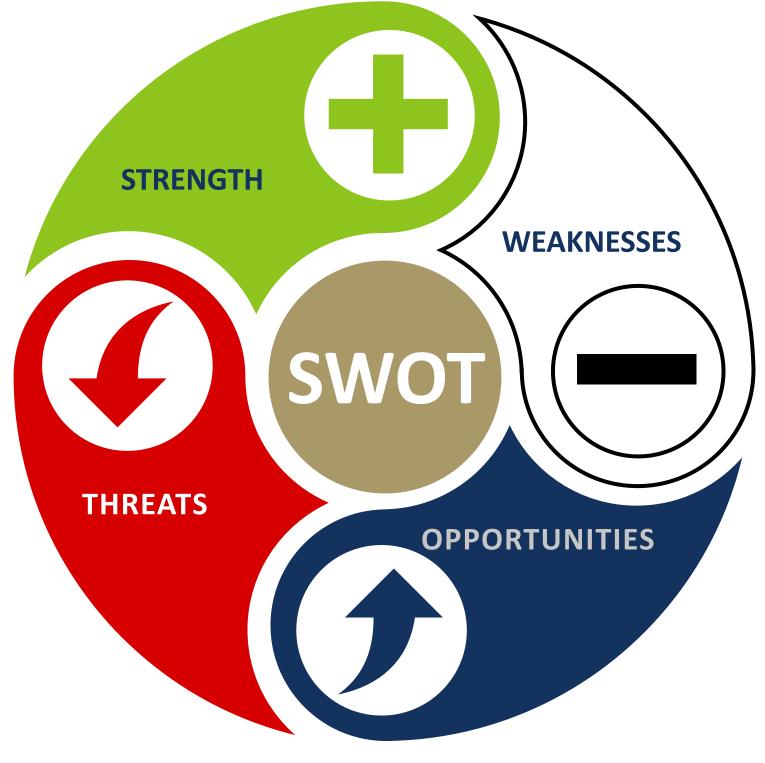






















- **Review and Plan**
- Creating a Unit Outline

What are we? captures the results of a Unit review in a Unit Outline. A **Unit Outline** is an honest self-assessment of your Unit at a particular point in time. It describes the Unit's key features and especially its characteristics, circumstances, expectations and values. It should answer all the questions a person interested in membership might ask.

The Unit Outline is not intended to act as a brochure or any other form of promotional material. It is written for members, an internal audience, using the language of Freemasonry.

However, it is the basis for developing all promotional materials, such as a Lodge or Chapter Information Sheet, which are aimed at those who are not members.







Techniques for Profiling Candidates



Motives for Joining











- Review and Plan
- Creating a Development Plan

Creating a Development Plan, describes how to bring together members of your Lodge or Chapter to plan how you will develop over the next few years. The plan will ensure that the outcomes of your review are turned into positive actions over an agreed period of time.

- 1. Create a forum for discussion about the future of the Lodge or Chapter that is open to all members and not just the members of the Committee or the Past Masters / First Principals. This could be by inviting all members to planning meetings or by opening out some committee meetings to all members.
- 2. Start by reviewing the Lodge or Chapter as it is now. Include a SWOT analysis examining the unit's Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats.

- Involve all members in the review and discussions.
- **4.** Ask every member
 - What they like about the Lodge or Chapter and what they wish to see continue?
 - b) What they don't like about the Lodge or Chapter and what they wish to stop?
 - c) What they would like to see introduced?
 - d) Think of these in turn as Green, Red and Amber actions.

Follow the process detailed in the Thread to establish a plan to deliver positive outcomes over an agreed period of time.

Thread Link: Creating a Development Plan











- Review and Plan
- Succession Planning

A succession plan is used to plan for the rotation and succession of available people into key roles. In a Unit, it is used to identify members who are interested in certain offices and to ensure that the Unit does not become over dependent on a few members.

This thread includes guidance for building your unit's succession plan and a template for doing so.

It is as important to plan the succession through both progressive and non-progressive offices as it is to plan ceremonies. This allows for the preparation and training of new Officers, so that there is a smooth transition and handover to Brethren & Companions taking on new roles, and also highlights where members are potentially in a role for too long.

A simple spreadsheet can be created that identifies all of the Offices within the Unit and planned ceremonies for the forthcoming year and beyond, which will enable each Officer to be able to plan ahead (rather than, as all too often happens, trying to sort out Officers on the night).

Thread Link: Succession Planning















- Membership Action Plan
- Preparing Your Message

Once you have agreed your Lodge or Chapter's plan for development, the next stage is to prepare members to engage with those who are not members.

Having a prepared message will help members respond with confidence to questions from those who might be interested.

A Unit information sheet provides the main information a prospective member may ask in a format that will be useful to them and assist you, the member, in being able to explain about the Unit.

Key points about Unit Information Sheets:

 You can use the Unit Outline, which will have been completed at an earlier stage in the planning process, as the basis for writing a Unit Information Sheet.

- The **Unit Outline** is an honest self-assessment intended for internal use,
- An **Information Sheet** is written for those who are not members and is used to promote the Lodge or Chapter.
- It should be written in a language the audience understands, not the language of the ritual.
- Lodge Information Sheets should be written in everyday language.

 Chapter Information Sheets can be written for Craft Freemasons.

Additional Resources

- The booklet, "*Discover Freemasonry*", uses everyday language to describe Freemasonry.
- The booklet, "Discover More", uses language aimed at Craft Masons.

Thread Link: Preparing Your Message

















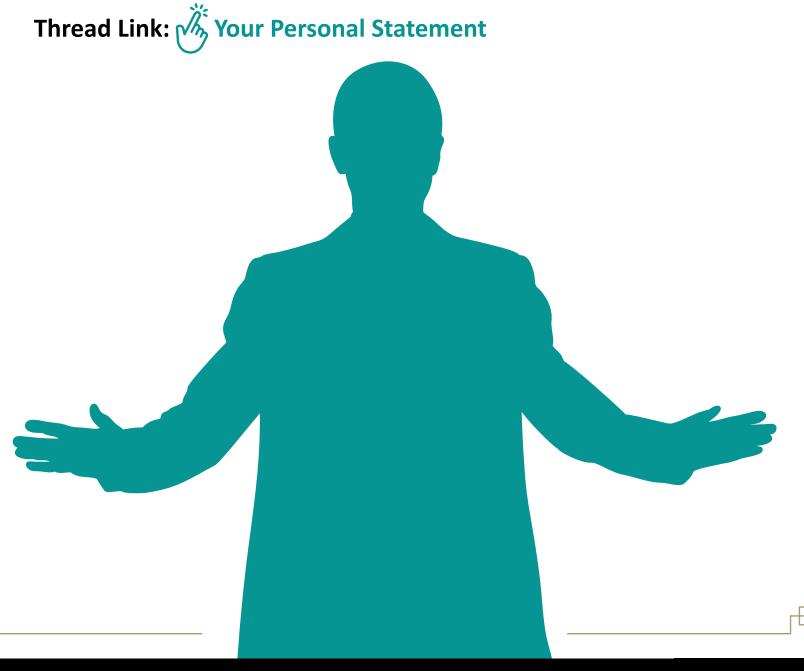
- Membership Action Plan
- Your Personal Statement

If you are likely to be discussing Freemasonry with people who are not Freemasons, or the Royal Arch with Craft Masons, it is important to be in a positive frame of mind, proud of your membership, honest and clear about what membership means to you.

It helps to consider these issues in advance, to clarify your own thinking about the subject. Some people may choose to develop a series of phrases that they use, for others they may just use our Values of Integrity, Friendship, Respect and Service as talking points.

This thread will help you prepare a succinct "personal statement" to address questions such as, "What is Freemasonry?" or "Why are you a Freemason?" or "Why should I join the Royal Arch?" In the Attract Hub we

expand this with **Explaining to others what membership means** to you", offers guidance how to use this when speaking with those who are not Freemasons.

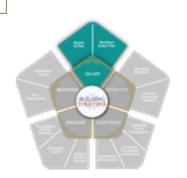












- Membership Action Plan
- Identifying Potential New Members

The traditional route for new members to join Freemasonry is through long standing friends, family members and colleagues. The personal recommendation of a candidate by an existing member is recognised and respected by the other brethren. Candidates who come through this route are often referred to as sponsored candidates, this is known as a **Direct Enquiry as they have made** an enquiry to a Freemason that they know.

In the case of the Royal Arch, potential new members are already Craft Freemasons and may already be known to existing Companions.

The growth of the internet and social media, coupled with UGLE's increased openness, have introduced other routes into membership

for people attracted to what Freemasonry can offer but who do not know a Freemason themselves often referred to as an **Independent Enquiry (as they have made contact independently of knowing a freemason)**. UGLE and its Provinces now run a sophisticated system to receive, screen and allocate enquirers to Lodges that are best suited to them.

The future health and strength of your Lodge, and ultimately your Chapter, will benefit from you understanding the balance between these two routes and why and how people seek to join a membership organisation. The following data, from both outside and inside Freemasonry, explains these points and lead to an approach that will help you identify future members.

Thread Link: Identifying Potential New Members

















- Attracting Members
- Promoting Your Lodge

If you want to attract new members to your Lodge, your message must have something that is attractive and appealing. The responsibility for making this happen is shared across all members.

Lodges whose members are able and willing to engage with others will be more successful at attracting new members. We cannot expect others to do this for us.

If you have followed the guidance in the Shape Hub Elements of Building Together, all your members will have identified what this is for your Lodge.

We know that far more people get their news through local and social media than the national press. So, these channels are the most appropriate to make your Lodge or Chapter visible and communicate what it offers.



The detail of this thread gives you points to reflect and consider before looking to reach out to **PERSONAL CONTACTS** or **ENGAGE WITH PEOPLE THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA**.

Thread Link: Promoting Your Lodge or Chapter











- Attracting Members
- Engaging through Social and Community Events

Lodges with a strong social element and which are engaged in and have visibility in supporting community based events and projects are generally more successful at attracting new members.

Each of us knows a large number of people from various facets of our lives, including family, friends, work colleagues, members of other organisations we belong to. Many may have some curiosity about Freemasonry and creating an opportunity for them and their wives and partners to meet us socially is a fantastic opportunity for us to introduce them in a low-key way to who and what we are – and may lead to them wishing to join.

Lodges engaging in community/charity events have an incredible opportunity to promote what Freemasonry stands for, while also raising awareness of the local Lodge and its members.



The full thread looks at different type of **SOCIAL EVENTS** from **WHITE TABLES**, **COMMUNITY EVENTS** and highlights points for consideration which a Lodge Membership Team may wish to consider.

Thread Link: Engaging through Social and Community Events











- Attracting Members
- Explaining to others what Freemasonry means to you

Freemasonry means many different things to each of us, but there is a common thread through our key values of Integrity, Friendship, Respect and Service.

When explaining what Freemasonry means to you, it is helpful to use your own words and not overcomplicate it with the vocabulary used in Lodge.

Your thoughts should be personal to you in answering any questions. Be honest, anticipate the difficult questions and be in a position to respond to them positively and without being defensive, using everyday language.

There are numerous leaflets and online documents that you can provide to the inquiring individual.

If you need help explaining what it means, look at the UGLE website or your Metropolitan, Provincial or District Grand Lodge website.

Areas you may wish to consider are reviewed in greater detail in the full thread which you can access below:-

Thread Link:
Explaining to others what
Freemasonry means to you











- Attracting Members
- Expectation Management from the first point of contact



An essential part of the membership process is matching potential candidates to a suitable Lodge, this can mean on occasion introducing a friend to a Lodge where you are not a member – simply because it meets at a better location, time of the week for them and means there is a greater chance they will remain a member (remember that doesn't stop you visiting that Lodge if they join).

At this early stage in someone's journey when enquiring about freemasonry there is the opportunity to set expectations and highlight *One Journey One Organisation*, remember someone who is not a member may never have heard about the Royal Arch but by explaining that when you join "you take three ceremonies in your Lodge and a fourth in a Royal Arch Chapter at a time of your choosing" you help give some context and lay the foundations of what they may expect.







Every Lodge has different characteristics and it is crucial for a Lodge to understand what they represent, what they find important and what they want to achieve for the future so that they can match the potential candidate's expectations with what the Lodge has to offer. While it may go against the grain, it is better to find a more appropriate other Lodge than to draw in a potential member and risk losing him because their expectations cannot, for whatever reason, be met.

An easy way to understand this is to create a Lodge Information Sheet. This could even take the form of a promotional leaflet and be used by the members when interacting with potential new members and explaining more about the Lodge.

In summary, the Lodge Outline is an honest self-assessment of the Lodge intended for internal use. The Lodge Information Sheet is based on the Lodge Outline but is written for those who are not Freemasons, in everyday language, and is used to promote and explain the details of your Lodge.

Please liaise with your Provincial Membership Team as they may well have a preferred template for such information or be able to give you guidance.

Thread Link: Expectation management from the first point of contact













- **▼ Interview Prospective Members**
- Managing Enquiries

Direct Enquiries (formerly known as Sponsored Candidates) are those already known to a Lodge member (often seen as the traditional route); **Independent Enquiries** (formerly known as unsponsored candidates) are those who generally enquire through social media or websites, etc.

It is essential for both is that a Lodge Membership Team has a process in place on how to manage the enquiry.

Provincial Membership Teams will have a process in place for **Independent Enquiries** (an example of which is shown in the support material for this thread) prior to introduction to a suitable Lodge. But for **Direct Enquiries** this process is led and managed by your team completely.

The graphic opposite gives some visual prompts as to key points to consider when engaging with a **Direct** or **Independent Enquiry** however, detailed guidance can be found in the thread using the link at the end of this page.

Good practice suggests:



Set up a Lodge Screening
Panel (a couple of members)



Meet the candidate at a neutral venue



Discuss expectations

► both their's and the Lodge's



Additional meetings

▶ gather more information/ get to know them



Introduction to Lodge members – after the LOI or at a social event (including online events)



Invite them to social events

— ladies' night etc



Discuss the timeline regarding becoming a member



Discuss cost and fees (a chance to use your Lodge Information Sheet).

Thread Link: Members Enquiry Management















- **▼ Interview Prospective Members**
- Screening Process

Screening is quite simply a single conversation or perhaps a series of informal conversations with the person enquiring about membership prior to the Lodge Interview.

This re-enforces the expectation management already highlighted but seeks to ensure that the person looking to become a member understanding what Freemasonry is about, re-set any of the common misconceptions as to what freemasonry is by using examples from your own experiences.

Guidance on what you might discuss and how to shape this conversation can be found in detail by visiting the thread below. In addition to the support material which gives specific guidance and additional resources that may prove useful.

Thread Link: Screening























▼ Interview Prospective Members

The Interview

It is recommended that the interview is conducted by three Lodge members to create a positive experience for the applicant. Ideally, at least one of the interviewers should know the candidate or have met him during the Enquiry Management phase, and is therefore seen as a friendly face.

Preparation for Interview:

- Informal meetings
- Be open, honest, clear and direct about the commitment involved in becoming a Freemason
- Answer any questions and if you don't know the answers say so, find out and go back to the applicant
- Explain the process interview, proposal, ballot, initiation and potential timescales
- Set date for interview.

Interview:

- No more than three to four members of the Lodge to deliver a friendly environment
- Structured process
- Use example questions with skill and discretion
- Communicate the outcome in a timely manner.

If enquiry management and preparation for the interview have been conducted properly, the actual interview should not hold any surprises.

Specific Guidance on how to conduct the interview, invite the candidate for their interview, examples of questions, guidance on interview techniques plus guidance on how to make a decision and communicate the outcome to the candidate can be found below in the thread and support material:

Thread Link: The Interview





























▼ Interview Prospective Members

Expectation Management

The candidate will form a lasting impression of Freemasonry based on his early experiences (both positive and negative!) and the expectations of the candidate and those of the Lodge members need to be carefully managed and aligned.

The preparation for the initiation should not be a rushed process as there is a balance between the needs of the candidate and the Lodge's programme of work.

When briefing the candidate for his initiation, strike a balance between telling him enough so that he is prepared and not telling him too much, which can spoil the occasion.

Some points to consider are shown in summary in the graphic opposite however a detailed summary with guidance can be found in the full thread and support materials listed below:

Condider the following for the candidate:



Arrange a lift to and from the meeting



Introduce him to members after the meeting



Introductions – WM, JD and Tyler



Explain the toasts



Ensure he has a bottle of water as he waits for the ceremony



Maintain contact after the meeting



Sit him with a member after the ceremony



Introduce to LOI



Ensure someone hosts him at his first full meeting and explains what is happening.



Have some cash for him for charity collections etc

Thread Link: (Expectation Management

















- Attracting Future Companions
- Promoting your Chapter

The Continue Hub, focuses on how a Royal Arch Chapter can ensure they have the correct resources to promote their Chapter and how each Companion can be empowered to speak with knowledge and confidence of what it means for them to me a member of The Royal Arch.

• When promoting your Chapter you are speaking to an audience of Master Masons. In contrast to when someone is at the start of their journey you will be speaking to Brethren who can understand and appreciate some aspects of masonic culture and practice.

- Developing a Chapter Information Sheet which can be used by prospective candidates is key to ensuring future members are able to make an informed decision on what day of the week, time, location, cost and frequency of when their Chapter may meet.
 Matching a Master Mason to a Royal Arch Chapter which is not a good fit for their pre-existing commitments, could in the long term, prove detrimental to their membership of the Royal Arch.
- In addition to developing your Information sheet, the talking heads presentation and discover more booklet are resources which you will find useful.









By reading the thread and support material you will be better placed to understand the steps Companions and the Chapter Membership Team will need to take to support Master Masons in their Journey to be Companions and maintaining their engagement;

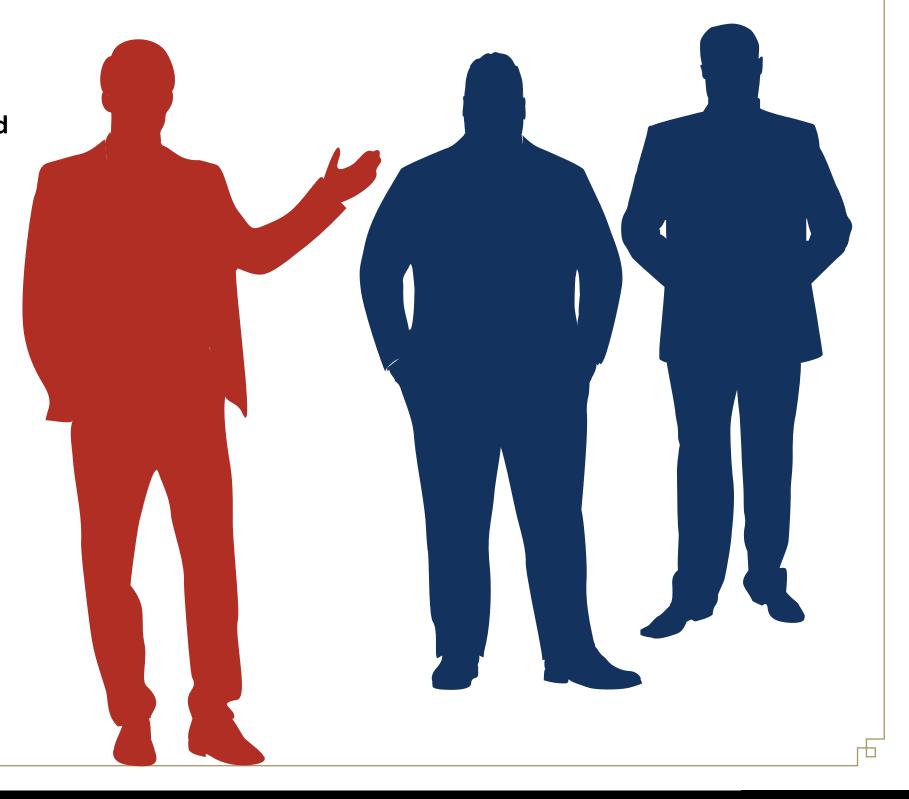
Thread Link: Promoting your Chapter





















- Attracting Future Companions
- ♠ All Companions are RA Champions

All Companions have the opportunity to be Royal Arch ambassadors. Ensuring that we highlight the fun and enjoyment which is derived from membership of the Royal Arch is a key way to encourage Master Masons to look to continue their journey.

Companions have already developed a series of valuable materials, listed in this Thread as support materials, which can be vital in helping members explain what the Royal Arch is. Taking the skills you have developed in your Lodge, build your statement as to 'what benefits/ pleasure you get from being a member of your lodge, now look at how you can use similar language to explain to Brethren about Royal Arch Chapters.

Why Join & Discover More are two functional support materials, and no matter how experienced a Companion you are, utilising the resources in the Engage Hub, which relate to further learning and mentoring about the Royal Arch (including the Welcome Companion Booklet), will ensure the basis of your knowledge is enhanced.

Knowing what not to say is also essential. Phrases and descriptions that may have once been told to you or you may have overheard could be wrong, but it has become customary to use them. The support material, *What not to say*, provides companions with a useful resource to ensure they can act as informed Companions.

On this occasion, the text in the extended thread matches what is written here, BUT these SUPPORT MATERIALS are essential reading:

Thread Link: All Companions are RA Champions



















- Attracting Future Companions
- Royal Arch Reps

Not all Provinces have Royal Arch Representatives, some use different titles such as Royal Arch Liaison Officers and many other variations. For the purpose of Building Together we have used the term Royal Arch Rep as this is most commonly understood.

- A non-collared office in a Lodge, the Royal Arch Rep is the Lodge's
 Champion of the Royal Arch, this does not exclude any other
 Companion advocating the Royal Arch as all Companions
 should be Royal Arch Champions.
- The Royal Arch Rep should work in conjunction with the Lodge Mentor and personal mentors of EAs, FCs and MMs to help give context to the Royal Arch and support the Lodge mentoring team in signposting suitable Royal Arch Chapters which meet in locations, dates and times that would meet the needs of the Brother.

No Brother should be influenced to join a Chapter which does not meet their needs simply because this is a Chapter associated with the Lodge, it is important the meeting schedule meets the Brother / Future Companions needs otherwise we create the first step on the journey to future dissatisfaction.

A full review of ways in which a Royal Arch Representative can contribute and resources available can be found in the full thread together with a suite of support materials.

Thread Link: Royal Arch Reps















- Attracting Future Companions
- Where Prospective Companions Come From

Prospective Companions can only come from Lodges and invariably Lodges that are successful in generating new members through well managed attraction events and a programme of good mentoring and support will be those who provide engaged Master Masons keen to continue their journey.

Traditionally many Companions join their Royal Arch Chapter owing to a link it may have with the Lodge of which they are a member. It was not so much an evaluated choice for the Brother as to which Chapter they join, but a well-established path trodden by other members. This type of journey is perhaps most common where the Lodge and Chapter share the same name.

Feeder Lodges can fit the description to the left, however in some Provinces some Royal Arch Chapters have sought to take the good practice from Archway (or adapt the Members' Pathway ideas) and look to engage with all of the brethren of all of the Lodges that meet at their Centre / City ensuring Brethren have an awareness of that Chapter for when they look to continue their journey.

Provincial Royal Arch Promotion Events—Many Provinces are using the One Journey, One Organisation approach to stage Provincial (sometimes broken down to area depending on the province's size) events to engage with Brethren eligible to join the Royal Arch and unattached Companions.







These events rarely promote a specific Chapter but look to inspire Master Masons to continue their journey. Then, based on their desired days of the week to meet, locations, frequency, and budget, a suitable chapter can be identified, and an introduction made.

The text above duplicates the full thread and should you wish to read as a PDF you can do so here:

Thread Link: Where Prospective Companions Come From











- Screening Prospective Companions
- The Right Chapter

Continuing your journey as a Freemason and joining a Chapter is seen by many as a logical progression on your journey of learning and discovery.

Unfortunately, errors by well-meaning Royal Arch Representatives confusing encouragement with pressuring may have blinkered some individuals' perception of the Royal Arch.

This can be further compounded by the reality that owing to absence of mentoring as a new Companion they fail to understand the significance of symbolism they have experienced within the ceremony.

These are not traits unique to the Royal Arch, some Lodges have experienced issues with the production line of initiates who leave quickly owing to lack of support; on rare occasions some members respond well to

the sink or swim approach and develop their own route to access support and guidance but this is rare!

Successful Lodges provide Brethren with an engaging programme of events supported by mentoring, which means that those looking to join a Royal Arch Chapter invariably will expect similar engagement and support once they become Companions.

Just as Lodges are encouraged to screen prospective candidates, Royal Arch Chapters are encouraged to ensure that:

- 1. Is the Prospective Companion right for their Chapter?
- 2. Is the Chapter right for the Prospective Companion?

If either is in doubt, other Chapters should be considered.

Thread Link: The Right Chapter











- Screening Prospective Companions
- Commitment

There are a number of differences between Craft and Chapter membership, all of which have associated financial commitments, from the frequency of meetings to the increased up-front costs associated with joining.

Time should be spent with Prospective Companions as part of the screening process, ensuring that, not only are they not overcommitting financially, but that they have:-

- Time for an additional commitment
- Bandwidth in terms of commitment to learning new ritual, this can be an opportunity to informally introduce the various offices in the Royal Arch and discuss their desire to progress once a member. This interest should be balanced against their Work, Family and Craft commitments to ensure the Prospective Companion isn't overcommitting.

This discussion on commitment should be friendly and informal, using examples relating to the Brothers' experiences in their Lodge so they can easily understand and appreciate.

As highlighted in other material, using the Chapters'
Information Sheet and Discover More can be helpful resources
for this discussion.

This text duplicates the full thread a PDF copy you can find here:













- Expectation Management
- Meetings / Festive Boards

A Prospective Companion looking to join the Royal Arch only has their experience gained in their Lodge. It is likely they only have one Craft Membership at the time they are looking to Continue their journey of discovery and as such they have little to base their expectations on.

The Chapter's Information Sheet is a key resource when explaining to Prospective Companions;-

- Meeting Frequencies both actual meetings and rehearsals (invariably Royal Arch Chapters meet on much reduced frequency compared to Lodges)
- Costs, both in subscriptions and purchase of regalia

- **Difference in Vocabulary and Officers,** it may prove beneficial to explain who some of the KEY ROYAL ARCH OFFICERS are and compare them to roles that they will understand from the Lodge ie: ScribeE is the Secretary etc.
- The Number of Ceremonies
- The Discover More Booklet and Why Join support material can be a helpful basis for discussion.

This text duplicates the full thread a PDF copy you can find here:













- Expectation Management
- Regalia

For a Prospective Companion joining the Royal Arch is hopefully an experience that they are looking forward to, some candidates however can be surprised at the associated upfront costs:

Prospective candidates may be surprised by the upfront costs of purchasing regalia. Remember, Brethren complete two ceremonies before they buy their Master Mason's Apron, yet in the Royal Arch, candidates are expected to buy their regalia before they join.

The candidate's sponsor, Chapter Membership Officer, Lodge Royal Arch Rep and / or the Brothers Lodge / Personal Mentor can all play a role in setting expectations about regalia

- Ensuring the candidate understands that this will be what they wear until they go into the "equivalent of the WM's Chair" as such they will get good few years wear.
- Signposting options for where they can buy the regalia, ensuring they buy the right items. (This signposting may also include the option of Pre-Loved Regalia if the Province runs such a scheme, and the member would be interested in that option).
- They should also remind the Prospective Companion that when they come to the meeting where they join, in addition to bringing their new Royal Arch Regalia, they should bring a Master Mason's Apron.

This text duplicates the full thread a PDF copy you can find here:













- Supporting the New Member
- Developing Understanding

From their first meeting, the new Brother or Companion is presented with a huge amount of information.

They will want to make sense of this and learn at their own pace and in their own way about the organisation they have joined. While a lot of written and video material is available to them, it is important that they can be guided through it by a Personal Mentor who understands their interests as an individual and the priorities of their Lodge.

Liaise with your Provincial Membership Team regarding the use and availability of any such materials and ensure the materials are not just 'dumped on' the new member but are explained. Don't overwhelm him with too much information. Signpost the new Brother / Companion to the Solomon resource and demonstrate how to navigate the site and get the most from it.

Unit rehearsal meetings are an important part of the Understanding process as it is generally a more relaxed environment for questions to be asked.

Thread Link: Developing Understanding



















- Supporting the New Member
- Encouraging Participation

Units that conduct good ceremonial and ritual, have vibrant festive boards and have a social element outside of meetings tend to be the most successful Units regarding membership.

Participation can be split into three areas:

1. Meeting attendance:

- Ensure they know the dates
- Discuss timing of attendance before the meeting
- Meet them well ahead of any meetings to run through any signs, movements etc
- Discuss their progression within the Unit
- Encourage them to deliver pieces of ritual
- Designate someone to accompany them out of the meeting if they have to retire for any reason.

2. Visiting other units:

- Explain the protocol of visiting and inviting
- Take them to see an initiation at another Unit
- Encourage them to invite masonic guests to meetings.

3. Unit social events:

- Encourage their attendance
- Explain that they can invite friends, family etc (if applicable)
- Get them involved in the events.

Provincial Grand Lodges also have many special interest Units and numerous different clubs that will enhance a members' enjoyment of his Freemasonry. Liaise with your Provincial Membership Team to find out more.

Thread Link: Encouraging Participation











- Supporting the New Member
- Planned Mentoring

The new Brother or Companions has just entered a new world and requires assistance to guide them while they take the initial steps on their masonic journey.

This can be achieved by appointing a member of the Unit to take on this responsibility acting as their Personal Mentor.

Thought also needs to be given as to who is best suited to undertake this important role.

Think back to when you joined your first Lodge or Chapter; what could you do to help him?

Thread Link: Planned Mentoring

Regular contact

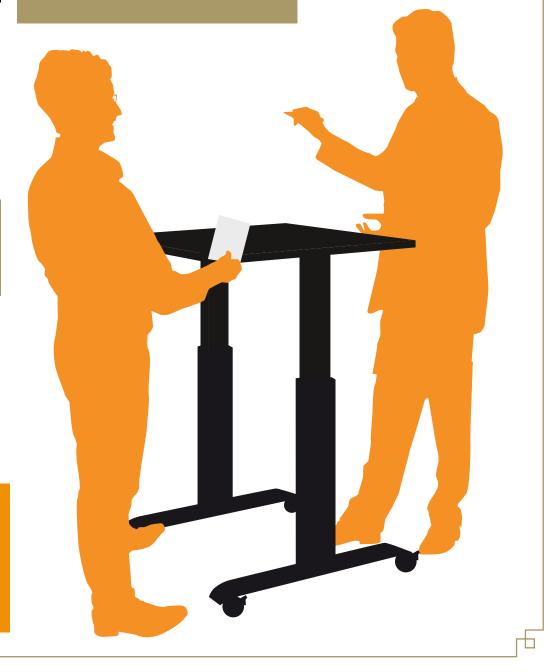
Explain what is happening and why

Introduce him to the members of the Unit

Ensure that he is not left alone at meetings or practice

Guide him through masonic protocols and traditions of the Unit.

Familiarise them with the venue and rooms within it













- Continued Support
- Fostering Fun, Enjoyment and Satisfaction

Freemasonry should be fun and exciting, throughout your masonic journey regardless of time served.

Members who are happy with their Unit and who are comfortable and satisfied as Freemasons will attract visitors and new members.

Light Blues Clubs are a fantastic addition to a new member's experience. With Past Masters' Lodges, Past Principals' Chapter, Provincial and Grand Officers' Mess a great way to continue fostering fun, enjoyment, satisfaction and learning.

Provinces will have many various clubs and special interest Units that may interest, especially for the new Brother / Companion looking to make their first visits.

Any new member may need some assistance and encouragement to look beyond activities taking place at the Unit level. Social media, websites and internal communications are important avenues to be explored by new members.

Thread Link: Fostering Fun, Enjoyment and Satisfaction

















- Continued Support
- Guiding a Member's Learning

Learning about Freemasonry, developing an understanding of it and taking part is central to our enjoyment of it. New members in particular (Brethren and Companions) have a need for new learning and these needs fall into two parts.

The first is what Freemasonry wants or expects them to learn, so that they can participate.

The second is what they wish to learn about Freemasonry, to satisfy their own interests and motives for joining.

Experienced members also find that at different times in their membership they need to learn new things, especially as they approach the chair, become a Past Master (or PZ), take on continuing office in a Unit and, perhaps, become Metropolitan / Provincial / District or Grand Officers.

The Thread gives guidance for Units, to help them guide a new and existing member's learning in those aspects that Freemasonry wants or expects them to learn. In addition to guidance on different approaches to learning styles depending on an individual's needs (see learning for Conditions support material).











Guidance on unit Protocol:

- How to wear Regalia correctly
- How to give the signs, tokens and words
- Addressing members of the Lodge / Chapter and guests
- Fire at the festive board
- Visiting.

IN CRAFT:

Preparation for Passing and Raising:

- Questions and answers, support and practice
- Correct regalia and options for purchase.

At a Meeting:

- Sit with them
- Explain process
- Voting/balloting.

Undertaking Ritual:

- Discuss with them no pressure!
- Provide positive encouragement
- Time to practise.

Thread Link: Guiding a Member's Learning

















- Continued Support
- Supporting Personal Learning

It is important to discuss with the new and junior member how he would prefer to access information with regards to learning.

Learning Can Be Undertaken By:

- Personal research
- Supplied reading
- Books
- Websites
- Discussion
- Online resources UGLE webinars, Solomon Live, etc.

Solomon online is a superb repository for learning and new members should be encouraged to register. The Lodge of Instruction (LOI) / Chapter of Improvement (COI) should also be considered the foundation for any learning that the new member undertakes. What is most important is that new and junior members are allowed to set the pace of any development so that it remains an enjoyable part of their discovery of Freemasonry.

More detail can be found in the full thread:

Thread Link: Supporting Personal Learning















- Continued Support
- Helping a Member Relocate

Migration is the process of assisting members find a new Unit when they relocate across Provincial boundaries or abroad. Its purpose is to help members find new Units well suited to them and to enable them to continue their membership without a break in service. Achieving this purpose involves three elements.

First, through active mentoring and engagement, Unit Officers should be aware of a change in any member's circumstances. PRE-MIGRATION encourages engagement with members to anticipate and support any changes in circumstances, such as decorating ready to move or interviewing for a new job.

Secondly, with the awareness of a member's plan to relocate, Secretaries / ScribeE / Mentors, with the consent of the Member, should complete UGLE's Migration form. Completion of this migration form triggers the

Thirdly, where a receiving Province's membership team will contact the migrating member and support him in finding a new masonic home without breaking their membership.

Supporting a member to Migrate

When discussing migration with a member, be sure to present them with fair and impartial advice; remember that if a member is to move whilst they may be a loss to your Unit, it would be a great shame for them also to be a loss to Freemasonry and who knows they may occasionally visit! www.ugle.org.uk/migration

Thread Link: Helping a Member to Relocate











- Continued Support
- Continuing Your Journey

BUILDING TOGETHER is introducing the approach which encourages brethren to set the expectation of a prospective member that they are joining Freemasonry not just a Craft Lodge.

At the point of Initiation, Passing and Raising the brother receives further explanation as to the context of their journey. This can be supported by the optional Contextual Narratives, which are not ritual but explanations which will aid a Brother's understanding at key stages of their journey. To learn more about these resources please speak to your Provincial Team.

Having become a Master Mason the Brother is now able to continue their journey of understanding and join the Royal Arch. The traditional Lodge Member tasked with this duty is the Lodge Royal Arch Rep and whilst their contribution is invaluable in promoting the Royal Arch The Lodge Mentor and a Brother's Personal Mentor are the individuals who

are best placed to discuss with the Brother the commitment, time and associated costs joining the Royal Arch has – by doing this they will be able to facilitate an introduction to the **Best Chapter for The Member** which may not be the one traditionally associated with the Lodge. However it is more important that we keep a future companion engaged by placing them in a Chapter which meets on a day, location and time that best works for them, than we do maintain a tradition feeding just to one Chapter and subsequently lose the member.

The full thread reviews this subject in greater detail and is suggested reading for all Companions who should be champions of the Royal Arch.

Thread Link: Continuing Your Journe









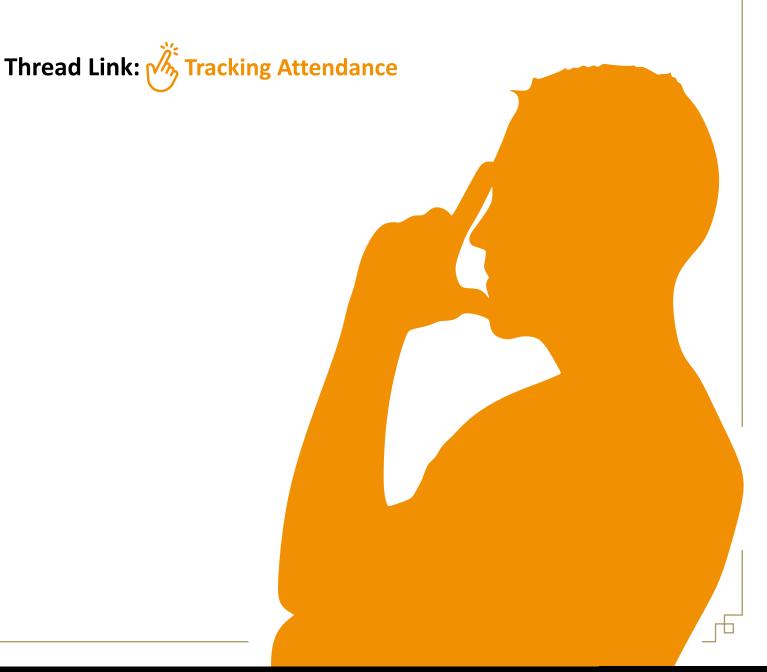


- **Re-engaging inactive members**
- Tracking attendance and apologies

Tracking attendance and apologies is a vital tool to indicate the health and viability of your Unit.

Resignations are often preceded by periods of absence, relative to the individual's normal pattern of attendance. Therefore, a break in pattern and diminishing attendance is a warning sign of possible issues, whether they relate to reduced interest, dissatisfaction or a change of personal circumstances. It makes sense for Units to monitor individual attendance, and to make enquiries if absences vary or increase from their normal pattern.

How this is done varies depending on if your Province uses Hermes, so please visit the thread which details a number of approaches depending on the tools you have available.













- Re-engaging inactive members
- Recognising Signs of Dissatisfaction

The reality is Freemasonry isn't for everyone, however good screening and expectation management can reduce this being an issue. Sometimes we have to face the reality that membership may not be right for the individual however efforts should be undertaken to establish if membership of a particular Unit isn't right for the individual or membership as a whole is and issue, common reasons include:

- Difficulty attending because the Unit does not suit work or family circumstances.
- Disappointment or dissatisfaction.
- Difficulties with another member or members.
- Changes in circumstances such as age, transport, health, family, employment, or financial issues.

When this is the case one of the following warning signs may have been demonstrated and members are encouraged to be on the look out for the following:

Warning signs



Reduction in Attendance:

A key indicator of potential resignation is a reduction in attendance or participation.



Changes in Circumstances:

Members experiencing changes in circumstances or difficult times may resign just when the Unit could provide help and support.



Significant Events:

Changes in attendance patterns often follow events that others may have missed or underestimated, but are significant to the member concerned.



Relocation:

Those who move home or make other lifestyle changes may consider resigning from the Unit. See the entire section devoted to this topic (Helping a member relocate).



Personality Differences:

Personality differences or issues may prompt members to leave their Unit, although they might be content to continue in active membership of another Unit.



Additional Warning Signs:

Unwillingness to take office, commit to ritual, or assist with Unit activities; lack of preparation before meetings or events; delays in paying Chapter subscriptions; not responding to calls, emails, or letters.



Thread Link: Recognising Signs of Dissatisfaction











- Re-engaging inactive members
- Engaging with Absent Members

Members who don't attend meetings, fail to give apologies and are perhaps in arrears with fees could be considered 'already lost' to a Unit.

If your Lodge / Chapter is following the good practice outlines in 'Tracking attendance and apologies' hopefully you will not have a member in the situation described above, however should you find you do the following are points to consider:

• Who in the Unit has the best relationship with the member, do they speak / meet with them outside of meetings and are they willing to have a discussion with them?

If no one has a pre-existing relationship with the absent member contact your Provincial Retrieval Team which will then be able to reach out to the absent member and act as a neutral party.

Full guidance on how to engage with non attending members is found in the full thread here:

Thread Link: Engaging with non-attending members













- Poor Engagement
- Connecting with Unattached Members

Once a Freemason has resigned from all of their Lodges / Chapters, they are termed "unattached" and there are rules governing his rights to visit other Lodges / Chapters.

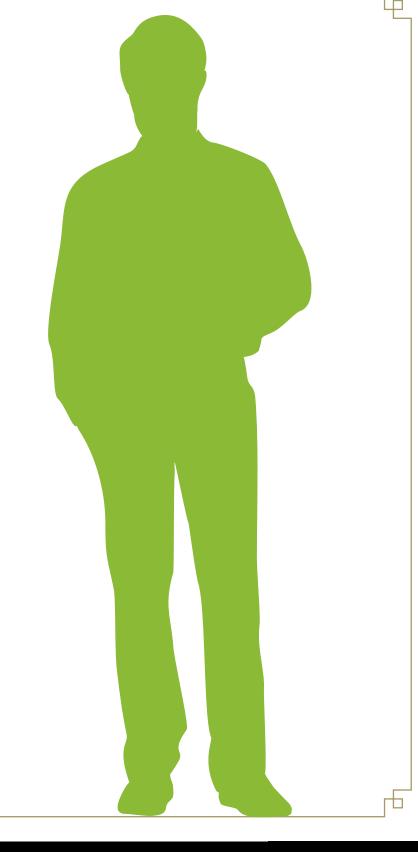
Contact with unattached freemasons should be done with the consent of a former member. Should an individual contact a Unit stating that they are an unattached Freemasons and they are not known to members enquiries should made via the Provincial Office before engaging with the Unit.

Further guidance on connecting with unattached members is contained within the full thread accompanied by a list of the rules and regulations governing unattached masons.

Thread Link: Connecting with Unattached Members

















- Poor Engagement
- Resignations & Next Steps

Freemasons who resign from a Unit are often reluctant to disclose to members of the same Unit their full REAL reasons for doing so. However, understanding the real reasons for a resignation is essential if you and your **Unit Membership Team** are to make your Unit more attractive and improve your management of membership matters.

This is because:

- 1. Unless you understand why a member really resigned, you are unlikely to be able to correct the issue and retain their membership.
- 2. Without knowing why people resign from your Unit, you are unlikely to prevent the issue from recurring in future.
- 3. Therefore, understanding the real reasons members resign helps you to correct issues and prevent them from happening again.

GUIDANCE FOR UNITS AND PROVINCIAL TEAMS is listed in detail in the full thread.

Thread Link: Resignation

& Next Steps













- Poor Engagement
- Lessons Learnt from Resignations

Loss of members from your Unit will invariably be disappointing. Whilst we would hope that the reason individuals leave is shared with the Unit in many cases the reason stated does not match that which was the main / final reason the exit came.

Provinces that operate Retrieval Teams are able to work impartially with members on their exit from Units. The hope is that with engagement, the member may relocate to another Unit or, at minimum, leave Freemasonry with a more positive outlook on the organisation that they may have had.

When you experience resignations as a unit, you can contact your **Provincial Team** and ask for guidance and support. They may well be able to assist you in an impartial review. However, if you feel able as a unit, this can be done by yourselves.



Guidance on lessons learnt from resignations is detailed in the full thread with additional material signposted:

Thread Link: Lessons Learnt from Resignations











- Poor Engagement
- Recognising the need to review

Recognising the need to review your Unit is crucial in ensuring its relevance, sustainability, and value to members. Whilst reviews can be scheduled, sometimes circumstances dictate when you should start a review.

When reviewing your Unit, using the threads in the Shape Hub [supported by material in the other hubs], members should ensure that discussions remain focused on activities and roles and not individuals within the Unit. Occasionally, having someone who is not a member of the Unit as a meeting facilitator can ensure a balanced discussion and if concerns develop, can help the Unit seek assistance from the Province to address any concerns which may relate to individuals.

Specific guidance on the steps to consider in the review are listed in the full thread and include:

- 1. Declining membership numbers
- 2. Member engagement being low
- **3.** Outdated offerings
- 4. Lack of Clear Value Proposition
- 5. Poor feedback or Member Complaints
- 6. Internal Challenges

Thread Link: Recognising the need to review your Unit is crucial in ensuring its relevance











- Alternative Futures
- Unit Options

Traditionally, a Unit that struggles to engage an active membership and secure enough members attending to be quorate will eventually drift to closure (operating until no longer viable is an option if that is what members want). This does not have to be the case, should members wish to embrace change.

The most common options are summarised below:

Items of good practice will be added over time; in the meantime, any member wishing to discuss the options below should contact their Provincial Membership Team.

- 1. Working with the Provincial Membership Team to reinvigorate the Unit
- 2. Re-purposing as a Special Interest Lodge or Chapter
- Looking to Merge with another Lodge or Chapter
- $oldsymbol{4}_{oldsymbol{\bullet}}$ Relocation of the Unit to another Masonic Jurisdiction
- **5.** Staged Closure

These five options are reviewed in more detail in the full thread and in the support material a model of good practice for closure of a Unit is outlined.

Thread Link: Unit Options















- Alternative Futures
- Creating Efficiencies in a Unit

Traditions are embedded within our organisation and meetings however on occasion some traditions must evolve to meet the changing needs of the membership.

Changes in working practices, family and economic pressures have changed with the Pandemic switching many people to hybrid or remote working.

When looking at options for efficiencies in your Unit any changes should be balanced with maintaining enjoyment and dignity associated with a meeting.

Suggested options of creating efficiencies during and after the meeting are detailed in the full thread, examples include:

- 1. Sing the opening and closing odes during any procession into and recession out of the Lodge / Chapter,
- 2. Adjust start and finish times to be convenient for current members and likely applicants
- 3. Circulate minutes in advance of the meeting, rather than reading them and after the meeting
- **4.** Consider whether meals with many courses are always wanted or whether two would suffice
- 5. Encourage all speakers to be brief but not perfunctory
- Aim to conclude formal proceedings of the Festive Board within an agreed time so members who need to leave can do so 'without feeling guilty'

Thread Link: Creating Efficiencies in a Unit



















Please remember this guide is a summary of **BUILDING TOGETHER** – more details are available online at



and your **Unit Membership Team**are your first point of contact for guidance and support.

Digital Edition May 2025