



LEVEL 3: UNIT RESOURCES

Attract > Attracting Members > *Engaging through Social and Community Events*

Social and community events are great opportunities to make Freemasonry visible, to promote your Lodge and engage with those who are not Freemasons.

SOCIAL EVENTS

- Historically, the traditional Lodge social event was the annual “Ladies Night / Lodge Ball”, a formal event usually restricted to members and their close family.
- In the last twenty years, Lodge social events have become more diverse and frequent.
- Social events now range from the formal to the informal, even casual or impromptu, and from the restricted to members and close family to those open to a much wider group.
- As such, they now offer rich opportunities to bring those contacts you identified in “**Identifying potential new members**” [support material] into a Freemasonry environment and to demonstrate what is attractive about your Lodge in particular.
- The following will help when planning social events that have an “attraction” objective:
 - Consider what sort of social events will appeal to those you identified as likely future members.
 - Take into account the needs of their partners and family members.
 - Include “family-friendly” elements in the programme.
 - Use every day and inclusive language in promotional materials, rather than the traditional language of Freemasonry or that of the ritual.
 - Consider moving away from “Ladies Nights” to “Annual Lodge Banquet / Ball” or “Annual Dinner” (not all women wish to be referred to as ladies, and not all our partners are female).
 - Include tours of Masonic facilities and be ready to answer questions (see “**Your personal statement**”) [support material].
 - Include small elements of your Lodge’s traditions to give a taster of what Freemasonry offers.
 - Encourage members to mix with visitors and make them welcome.

WHITE TABLE EVENTS

- Many Lodges run “White Table” meetings as part of their annual programme. These vary in purpose and format but typically have some or all of the following features:
 - A gathering of those who are not Freemasons together with some who are
 - Open to friends, wives / partners and other family members
 - Sometimes after a short Lodge meeting
 - A talk on Freemasonry, held in the Masonic meeting room or elsewhere
 - An opportunity for questions and answers
 - A meal following, but not a Festive / Social board.



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- Seek the support of your Province when planning a “White Table” meeting.
- The Provincial Membership Officer and Communication Officer are likely to have a lot of experience of such events. They may also be able to point you toward a particularly good and knowledgeable speaker, given enough advance notice.
- They will also be able to provide display and promotional materials.
- Subject to local guidance and protocols, it is permissible for those parts of “White Table” meetings in the Lodge room following a Lodge meeting to be held with Freemasons remaining in regalia.
- Indeed, sometimes the differences in regalia feature as part of a talk and discussion. Equally, sometimes the Lodge officers remain in position so that aspects of the form of the Lodge can be shown.
- Detailed guidance on what business may be conducted with non-Masons present is included in the booklet, **“Information for the guidance of members of the Craft.”** [support material] For example:
 - The VSL and the Square & Compasses should be closed
 - The tracing boards should not be displayed
 - The Wardens’ columns should be in the closed position, unless non-members have been brought in while the Lodge is called off
 - No knocks should be used by the Master or Wardens
 - No salutes should be given and no signs, tokens or words should be used.
- The thread **“Preparing your message”** [support material] will also help you prepare White Table meetings.
- Seek local advice on conducting White Table meals (note: these are not festive or social boards).
- As a general point, all purely Masonic toasts would commonly be omitted, and all firing must be omitted, limiting toasts to the following, at most:
 1. The King
 2. The Grand Master (*as a mark of respect*)
 3. The Provincial Grand Master (*if present*)
 4. The Worshipful Master (*as the presiding officer on the occasion*)
 5. The Visitors (*generally with no response, unless there is a visitor present representing a particular visiting group or who particularly wishes to respond*).



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THE LODGE AT COMMUNITY EVENTS

- In every community there are opportunities for local organisations to contribute and to promote themselves. Examples include, but are not restricted to:
 - Running information stalls at local community events (such as shows, fetes, carnivals, Pride events)
 - Leaflet displays in public places (such as libraries, railways stations, swimming pools, etc)
 - Offering to provide talks for local organisations (such as Rotary Clubs, Probus, etc)
 - Attending occasions with which Freemasonry would like to be aligned in peoples' minds (such as Remembrance Services, civic or charity events, etc)
 - Supporting, sponsoring or donating towards other local organisations and worthy causes (such as youth organisations like football teams, Scouts, Guides, cadet forces, etc)
 - Providing a service (such as marshalling or catering) to other community organisations for their events and activities.
- No Lodge, and no member acting in their capacity as a Freemason, should participate in any community event with a political purpose or party political element.
- Before organising your Lodge's involvement in any event involving contact with people who are not previously known to Lodge members (i.e., the public), and before contacting or in any way engaging with the media (local or national), seek advice from your Metropolitan / Provincial / District Communication Officer.
- At all times, all approaches or questions from the media must be referred to your Metropolitan / Provincial / District Communication Officer.
- Invite local Lodges of the Order of Women Freemasons (OWF) and / or Freemasonry for Women (the Honourable Fraternity of Ancient Freemasons or HFAF) to take part in the event on an equal basis as your Lodge.
- Your Provincial Communications Team can help facilitate contact with the OWF or HFAF.
- Your Metropolitan / Provincial / District Communication Officer will ensure that:
 - The event is an appropriate one for Freemasonry to be connected to and that there is no risk of damage to the reputation of the Craft.
 - Brethren with appropriate skills and experience are involved in public or media facing roles.
 - Those involved are suitable briefed and have a current understanding of relevant policies.
 - All necessary insurance policies and relevant civic and other permissions are in place.
- A Lodge can also hold its own private and public events, perhaps alone or working with other Lodges, to raise awareness and visibility. These include:
 - **Private events:** White table meetings and social events (such as formal dinners or banquets, informal socials, garden parties, barbecues, quiz nights, golf days or other sporting events)
 - **Public events:** Open days or evenings at the Lodge meeting place, or religious services and processions.



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- Consider what promotional equipment and materials will be needed to create the impression of an attractive, well organised and respected organisation.
- All promotional materials, including leaflets, stands, website, social media, presentation slides, clothing, merchandise, etc, should use UGLE's logos and follow its brand identity and other guidelines and policies (eg, social media policy and guidelines), as well as comply with local guidance and requirements from the Lodge's Province.
- Seek help and support from those in your Metropolitan / Provincial / District Grand Lodge who have the skills and experience necessary to engage the public in Freemasonry discussions.

WHAT NEXT?

At all community events you will need people who can discuss Freemasonry in more detail and a system of capturing contact details from those who want to know more or who express an interest in joining.

The next thread, **"Explaining what Freemasonry means to you"** [support material] will help those who discuss Freemasonry with others, whether they be personal contacts or members of the public.

All Provinces run enquiry systems that screen people for their suitability to become Freemasons and direct those suitable to Lodges that can meet the enquirer's needs. While it may be tempting to "grab" an enquirer for your own Lodge, the best interests of enquirers and Lodges are served when the enquirer is put in touch with a Lodge that suits him. "Checking suitability" explains this in more detail.