

**BOARD OF GENERAL PURPOSES**

*Meetings in 2016*

In accordance with the requirements of Rule 225 of the Book of Constitutions, notice is hereby given of the dates upon which the Board of General Purposes will meet in 2016:

9 February  
15 March  
10 May  
19 July  
20 September  
15 November

**ATTENDANCE AT LODGES UNDER THE ENGLISH CONSTITUTION BY  
BRETHREN FROM OTHER GRAND LODGES**

The Board considers it appropriate to draw attention to Rule 125 (b), Book of Constitutions, and the list of Grand Lodges recognised by the United Grand Lodge of England, which is published in the Masonic Year Book, copies of which are sent to Secretaries of Lodges.

Only Brethren who are members of Lodges under recognised jurisdictions may visit English Lodges. They must produce a certificate (i.e. a Grand Lodge certificate or other documentary proof of Masonic identity provided by their Grand Lodge), should be prepared to acknowledge that a personal belief in T.G.A.O.T.U. is an essential Landmark in Freemasonry, and should be able to produce evidence of their good standing in their Lodges. It is the Master's responsibility to ensure that the requirements of Rule 125 (b) are met.

It is particularly noted that the hazard of admitting a member of an unrecognised constitution arises not only in connection with overseas visitors (or individuals resident in this country who belong to an unrecognised constitution overseas). There are Lodges of unrecognised constitutions meeting in England, and care must be taken that their members are not admitted to our meetings.

**ATTENDANCE AT LODGES OVERSEAS**

The continuing growth in overseas travel brings with it an increase in visits by our Brethren to Lodges of other jurisdictions, and the Board welcomes this trend.

From time to time, however, Brethren become involved with Masonic bodies which Grand Lodge does not recognise, e.g. in visiting a jurisdiction which, quite legitimately so far as it is concerned, accepts as visitors Brethren from Grand Lodges which are not recognised by the United Grand Lodge of England. In this connection, Brethren are reminded that it is part of their duty as members of the English Constitution not to associate Masonically with members of unrecognised constitutions, and should such a situation occur, they should tactfully withdraw, even though their visit may have been formally arranged.

To avoid this danger, and potential embarrassment to hosts, Brethren should not attempt to make any Masonic contact overseas without having first checked (preferably in writing) with the Grand Secretary's Office at Freemasons' Hall, Great Queen Street, London WC2B 5AZ, that there is recognised Freemasonry in the country concerned and, if so, whether there is any particular point which should be watched.

The Board recommends that the terms of this warning should be repeated:

- a. verbally in open Lodge whenever a Grand Lodge Certificate is presented, and
- b. in print once a year in a Lodge's summons.

Brethren should also be aware of the Masonic convention that communications between Grand Lodges be conducted by Grand Secretaries. They should therefore not attempt without permission to make direct contact with the Grand Secretary of another Constitution. This does not preclude direct contact on a purely personal level between individual Brethren under different Grand Lodges.

**METROPOLITAN GRAND LODGE OF LONDON**

Discussions are currently taking place as to the future structure at the head of Freemasonry in London, which is of such a size that it is considered expedient to amend the Book of Constitutions to allow flexibility to appoint additional Deputy Metropolitan Grand Masters. The Board recommends such a change, and also considers that the privileges in respect of salutes and a past rank collarette and jewel enjoyed by an Assistant Metropolitan Grand Master should be extended to a Metropolitan Grand Inspector.

PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF GENERAL PURPOSES: MW Pro Grand Master and Brethren, I give notice that I will move the amendments to the Book of Constitutions:

That Rule 6 be amended by deleting from the section headed "*Salutes*" the words: Within their own Metropolitan areas, present Deputy and Assistant Metropolitan Grand Masters five,\* and holders of Metropolitan Grand Ranks and Metropolitan Rank, three.

and substituting therefor the words:

Within their own Metropolitan areas, present Deputy and Assistant Metropolitan Grand Masters and Metropolitan Grand Inspectors five,\* and holders of Metropolitan Grand Ranks and Metropolitan Rank, three.

That Rule 60(c)(i) be amended to read:

(c) (i) A Metropolitan Grand Master by patent under his hand and seal or otherwise may appoint such number of Deputy Metropolitan Grand Masters, Assistant Metropolitan Grand Masters (to take rank immediately after the Deputy Metropolitan Grand Masters) and Metropolitan Grand Inspectors (to take rank immediately after the Assistant Metropolitan Grand Masters) as the Grand Master may from time to time authorise, to hold office during his pleasure and to execute forthwith all the powers and duties of such office in his name.

That Rule 248(c) be amended to read:

(c) A Past Deputy or Assistant Metropolitan, Provincial or District Grand Master, or a Past Metropolitan Grand Inspector, if a Grand Officer, may wear his Past Metropolitan, Provincial or District Grand Officer's Jewel suspended from a garter blue collarette, 1¼ inches wide, edged with gold cord. For the purposes of this Rule a Brother who before 14 March 2007 held the rank of Past Metropolitan Group Chairman shall be treated as though he were a Past Assistant Metropolitan Grand Master.

**SUSPENSION PENDING AN APPEAL**

The final paragraph of Rule 185 of the Book of Constitutions currently provides:

"Any penalty of suspension or exclusion shall remain in force pending the determination of the appeal."

In a case which recently came before an Appeals Court, the Court expressed concern that, in the particular circumstances, the successful appellant had been caused hardship by the operation of that paragraph. The Court went on to suggest that the Rule might be amended by granting a discretion to any member of the panel of the Commission for Appeals Courts, appointed annually by the Grand Master under Rule 273, to direct that the suspension be lifted pending the hearing of an appeal. The Board, having considered the matter has concluded that in appropriate circumstances a power to that effect would avoid potential injustice, and recommends an amendment to Rule 185.

PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF GENERAL PURPOSES: I give notice that I will move the amendments to the Book of Constitutions:

That the final paragraph of Rule 185 be amended to read:

Any penalty of suspension or exclusion shall remain in force pending the determination of the appeal; provided that, in the case of a suspension imposed for a fixed period, any member of the panel of the Commission for Appeals Courts appointed under Rule 273 shall have discretion, if he be of opinion that the appeal has a reasonable prospect of success and that the justice of the case so demands, to direct that the suspension be lifted until such time as the appeal shall have been determined.

### **HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN**

MW PRO GRAND MASTER: Brethren, I am so pleased to see such a good attendance at this important meeting and on a day that Her Majesty the Queen becomes the longest reigning British Monarch – I understand not until 5.30 this evening.

### **MEMBERSHIP FOCUS GROUP**

MW PRO GRAND MASTER: Brethren, I would like to thank those members who have participated in the Membership Focus Group's first two surveys. These survey results have been a great help in deciding the best way ahead for Freemasonry and have provoked much constructive thinking. You will be able to see the results of the most recent survey in the latest issue of *Freemasonry Today*, which has just been published.

The results of that second survey highlight the importance to members of being valued and included, while developing knowledge and friendships at the same time. The Membership Focus Group is next planning to survey new initiates to assess how their expectations match their experience and whether this experience changes over time.

### **THE MASONIC CHARITABLE FOUNDATION**

MW PRO GRAND MASTER: In December 2014, I announced that the Grand Master's Council and the Provincial Grand Masters' Forum had endorsed proposals from the Charities to consolidate the activities of the four central Masonic Charities. Subsequently, the proposals were endorsed by the Grand Master. Over the last nine months, all four Charities have launched consultations with their members about the proposals. Having just formally finished the Annual General Meeting of the Grand Charity, their consultation is now complete and the same process with the other Charities is due to conclude by the end of October.

Should the members of each of the other Charities follow the lead of the Grand Charity and endorse the proposals, it is anticipated that a new charity will be legally established as soon as possible and become operational on 1 April 2016. This new charity, subject to legal approvals, will be called The Masonic Charitable Foundation.

The Masonic Charitable Foundation will continue to offer the same support and services to those Freemasons and family members who need help, as well as providing support for the non-Masonic charitable causes that the Craft wishes to assist. Thus continuity of our charitable giving will be achieved.

The new charity will continue to rely on the generosity of Freemasons for its funds. The Festival system will therefore transition in favour of the new charity over the next few years.

A shadow board, comprised of trustees from the existing Charities has met and will, with the existing charities, oversee the creation of the new charity and transition from the existing four charities into a single one. The Board has elected Very Worshipful Brother James Newman as interim Chairman and Worshipful Brother Michael Heenan as interim Treasurer.

These changes will require amendments to the Book of Constitutions with formal notice of those amendments being brought to the December meeting of Grand Lodge.

In the meantime, further details about the Masonic Charitable Foundation will be made available over the next few months via a new website and general communications to the Craft.

Bringing the existing central Masonic Charities together means that the Trustees will be responsible for one of the largest charitable foundations in the country – a tremendous achievement and something of which we can all feel proud, particularly as we look towards the tercentenary celebrations in 2017.

### **RW BRO IAIN BRYCE**

MW PRO GRAND MASTER: Brethren, the Board's Report lists the names of those Grand Officers whose deaths were reported up to 21 July including RW Bro Iain Ross Bryce, Past Deputy Grand Master about whom I shall have a little more to say later. I now call on you to stand in memory of those departed Grand Officers and other members of Grand Lodge.

The Brethren stood in silence.

When talking about our Charities, I am inevitably reminded of RW Bro Iain Bryce who so sadly died in July. Apart from his dedication to our Masonic Charities, he was also a long serving Treasurer of the RNLI.

I first met him at his Installation as Provincial Grand Master of Yorkshire North and East Ridings in 1984 and in the 30 years that I knew him, I can't recall a cross word. He could upset people, can't we all, but it was normally for a valid reason. When Bro Bryce became involved in something, he gave it his full attention. Masonically he was fully involved from Lodge level, through his Province to Grand Lodge and would take on any task asked of him.

I am sure that all the Charity Presidents who were in office during his time as Deputy Grand Master will have benefited enormously from his wise counsel. He was passionate about them and held strong views on their management. His views were given in a forthright manner and were usually right. However, he would be first to admit he had got something wrong if that turned out to be the case.

Brethren I shall miss him greatly and I know that I am far from alone in that.

### **CHARITY FESTIVAL**

MW PRO GRAND MASTER: Brethren, I am pleased to tell you that since our last meeting, the Province of Bedfordshire held a Charity Festival on Saturday 7 September on behalf of The Royal Masonic Trust for Girls and Boys and it raised the wonderful sum of in excess of one and a half million pounds.

*(Applause)*

Brethren, I am sure that you will want to join with me in congratulating the Province – which you have just done – on their great success, and in particular those Masons who were instrumental in helping to raise so much money for our Charities.

### **APPOINTMENT**

MW PRO GRAND MASTER: Brethren, I have to announce that the MW The Grand Master has made the following appointment:

In his capacity as First Grand Principal, he has appointed Comp Sir Michael Snyder as Metropolitan Grand Superintendent in and over London in succession to E Comp Russell Race, *DL* who will retire on 20 October. Comp Snyder will be installed as both Metropolitan Grand Master and Metropolitan Grand Superintendent the next day.

### **ERASURE OF LODGES**

The Board has received a report that eight Lodges have closed and have surrendered their Warrants. The Lodges are:

Royal Warrant Holders Lodge, No. 2789 (London)  
Sentinel Lodge, No. 4707 (Cheshire)  
Bartizan Lodge, No. 5520 (London)  
Perfect Cube Lodge, No. 6822 (London)  
Cross in Hand of Bickley Lodge, No. 7060 (West Kent)  
Hall Place Lodge, No. 7136 (West Kent)  
Industrial Engineers Lodge, No. 7514 (London)  
Centre Point Lodge, No. 7866 (London)

Over recent years, the Lodges have found themselves no longer viable. The Board is satisfied that further efforts to save them would be to no avail and therefore has no alternative but to recommend that they be erased.