



Special Meeting of Provincial Grand Lodge.

1st February 2019 - PGM's Address.

Brethren, it is my pleasure once again to welcome you all to this Special Meeting of our Provincial Grand Lodge which has been so well supported since it was introduced 8 years ago. 2019 is of course the 150th anniversary of the amalgamation of the Province of Hampshire and the Province of Isle of Wight and we mark this anniversary by the Oration which you heard earlier in the meeting, and which will be available to Lodges throughout the year. I thank W.Bro George Mars, our Provincial Grand Orator, for his research and

commitment in producing and delivering such a meaningful and informative Oration at this Special Meeting.

There are other Events which will mark the Anniversary, but before I mention them, I must thank you all for your support for this meeting, and of course I thank our guests the Heads of Other Masonic Orders in the Province, who have already been introduced. We very much appreciate their support of this meeting, and the brethren being honoured.

This meeting is Special because, as I say in the Agenda, it provides a mechanism for me to honour brethren whose love of the Craft is apparent in all that they do; and who have continued to serve regardless of any personal preferment, or indeed the hope or expectation of such. It also enables me to promote and honour brethren for their service as Visiting Officers. For reasons which will be obvious to you, I exclude those latter brethren from what I am about to say, which is that the honours conferred this evening are not an earnest of future performance. You brethren have proved your commitment, and your support – you are an inspiration to all, and so the honour is very much for what you have done; albeit I know you will continue to support as always. But there is no such commitment attaching to the honour.

The reverse applies of course to the Visiting Officers! These brethren are not promoted until they have demonstrated their ability as Visiting Officers which is a vital role within the Province. The promotion to PPJGW recognises their ability and commitment, and ensures they have a rank commensurate with their responsibility for the Lodge to which they are attached.

Returning now to the 150th Anniversary, quite apart from delivery of Bro George's Oration in those Lodges who request it, we shall mark the anniversary by the Service of Thanksgiving at Winchester Cathedral on the 10th March; and again at the Grand Ball to be held at Cowes Yacht Haven on the Island on 1st June. The Winchester Cathedral service will be attended by many civic dignitaries and representatives of charities which we support, and I have no doubt that our brethren and their families will be out in force to celebrate the occasion.

The Grand Ball will be great fun for all those fortunate enough to obtain tickets, which were sold out within hours of going on sale. This is a real problem for us – whether a celebratory Grand Ball, dinner after the Annual General Meeting, or lunch after a Quarterly Communication, we simply cannot find venues large enough to accommodate all those brethren who wish to attend. In many respects, a good problem to have.

Since our Special Meeting last year there have been a number of important changes to the Provincial Cabinet – we have a new Deputy PGM, three new Assistant PGMs, and a new

Membership Chairman. I decided that the Membership Chairman should be a member of the Cabinet for reasons which I hope are blindingly obvious. Membership is key to all that we do as an organisation – from recruitment, through mentoring, re-engagement, and the whole Masonic Experience which should focus on personal development and enjoyment.

The same applies to our Lodges. All Lodges should have a Lodge Membership Officer which is a key appointment and is as important to Lodges as the Membership Chairman is to the Province. Brethren fulfilling this responsibility in Lodge must be fully briefed and wholly supported by the members of the Lodge.

The Lodge Membership Officer should be fully involved in the Lodge's 5 year plan, the concept of which has been embraced by the majority of Lodges in the Province but in some cases the plan, once agreed, becomes neglected. The 5 year plan is a dynamic document – it will evolve and change as the Lodge and its members evolve and change, and once in place, it should be reviewed regularly and kept up to date.

Lodge Membership Officers and the Five Year Plan are just two examples of changes introduced following my appointment as Provincial Grand Master. There are many others, endorsed or initiated by Grand Lodge. And we have seen a massive difference to Freemasonry within the Province.

Those Lodges which have embraced the changes are thriving and experiencing growth, with young men queueing to join and loving their Freemasonry. It is a joy to see – to attend such Lodges and in many cases to see the transformation which has taken place.

Regrettably, we still have some Lodges stuck in the past – struggling to find Initiates, struggling to retain their members, struggling to get sufficient members to attend Lodge to make it a meaningful experience. And doing nothing about it. The pathway for the future is very clear. Interestingly, and rather helpfully, it is called The Members Pathway. It is a Grand Lodge initiative and has been heavily publicised in Freemasonry Today, throughout the Province, and across the Constitution. It is tried and tested, in that many Lodges in this Province, and other Provinces, are using the Pathway to very good effect. It is effectively a Guide to assist Lodges to attract, introduce, and retain members.

It starts with Lodge Planning, involving every member of the Lodge. Fundamentally how do we, as a Lodge, go about attracting members. It emphasises that this is the responsibility of every member of the Lodge. It is not difficult to implement; and it works. One has to question why all of our Lodges have not adopted The Pathway. Often it is misguided – brethren living in the past anticipating that something will happen, and that all will come good. The thinking seems to be that Lodges don't need to plan because they have never

planned in the past. Well, quite simply, the world has moved on – if you want a future, you must decide what future you want, and how you will get there. Which is basic planning.

Let me move on to Consecrations. Next month I will be Consecrating Vectis Services Lodge on the Isle of Wight, my 9th Consecration in as many years. All these Lodges are special – and they are also special interest Lodges providing a vehicle for brethren with a particular interest, to join together as Freemasons and enjoy their passion in like company.

Some brethren from struggling Lodges have criticised the Consecration of New Lodges at a time when they are struggling. The response to that criticism is straightforward. Those Lodges which are struggling need to address the reason themselves. Only they can do something about it. The Pathway for them is clear. If they do not follow it, then can it really be said that the position would be any different if I decided not to form new Lodges. Each Lodge which I have Consecrated has created an enthusiasm, a vibrancy amongst not only its members, but those who join them, have visited them, or who simply meet in the same Centre. They are playing their part in taking the Province and Freemasonry forward in the modern era. Members of struggling Lodges should take note.

Many of our members wish to learn more about the Craft than they will get from the ritual, and Grand Lodge have recognised this with the introduction of the learning facility called Solomon. This has been well publicised and any brother who wishes to explore beyond the ritual can register and use the facility. Our Learning and Development Team within the Province will ensure that the benefits of Solomon are fully utilised within the Province – there is no compulsion here, just the provision of a facility for use by those who so decide.

Brethren, let me return to the main purpose of this meeting. It is a celebration for those brethren who have been honoured, and on their behalf, I thank you all for your attendance and for joining in the celebration. I also thank those involved organising and managing this meeting – The Provincial Grand Secretary and his team at the Provincial Office, the Provincial Grand Director of Ceremonies and his team of Deputies, and the Provincial Grand Stewards Lodge who have been working throughout the day and who will continue until the job is done.

Brethren, it is a real privilege to lead our wonderful Province, and I close by paying tribute to all those brethren across the Province who are playing their part to ensure the future, and growth, of Freemasonry in Hampshire and Isle of Wight – from Grand Offices, Provincial Officers, Area Officers, and Lodge Officers, through to those men who are now being initiated into our Lodges and are playing their part by introducing their friends to the Craft. Involvement and enjoyment right across the board will bring its own rewards.

Michael J Wilks - Provincial Grand Master.

OVERVIEW OF
OUR WORK IN

HAMPSHIRE AND ISLE OF WIGHT

IN 2017/18

We helped **144**
people from the
masonic community



Support for masonic
families totalled
£355,207



This includes:

£234,930 of grants
for daily living expenses

£67,854 of
support for health needs

£52,422 to cover
educational opportunities
and quality care



14 people accessed
our counselling careline

Our Advice & Support
Team carried out **48**
home visits to support
the masonic community



We also supported **14**
of your local charities with
£149,133 in
grants



"When my daughter became ill four years ago, we took in our two young grandchildren – we didn't realise just how much two extra mouths to feed would increase our outgoings and we started to struggle. Thankfully the MCF agreed to help us out, not only with the everyday stuff, but also with grants for karate, swimming and gymnastics lessons. The children used to be so shy, but it's really brought them out of their shell. The MCF have been absolutely wonderful."

Roy, freemason and grandfather



Masonic
Charitable Foundation

To find out more
about our work, visit
impact.mcf.org.uk

A very informative infographic from the [Masonic Charitable Foundation](http://www.mcf.org.uk) who provide support within our Province to our Brethren, their families and charities within our local communities. — with [North East Area of Hampshire Freemasons](#), [North Central Area of Hampshire Freemasons](#), [South West Area of Hampshire Freemasons](#), [South Central Area of Hampshire Freemasons](#), [South East Area of Hampshire Freemasons](#) and [Solent Area of Hants & IOW Masons](#).

The Farnborough Concert Band

of the Royal British Legion



Entrance will be strictly by TICKET ONLY
A Maximum of around 120 tickets will be available

Saturday 9th March 2019

Farnborough Masonic Centre

7:00pm for 7:30pm

The Farnborough Concert Band of the Royal British Legion was formed in 1987 and consists of over 50 enthusiastic musicians who enjoy performing and entertaining. The band has been selected to play at the Ceremony of Remembrance at the Menin Gate, Ypres, Belgium in May 2019 in remembrance of the thousands of soldiers who lost their lives in World War 1. The concert is to recognise the recent support from the H&IOW NEA and available to all as a thank you.