



The Masonic Province of East Kent

Website and Social Media Guidelines

Document version 001_September 2013

Table of Contents

Introduction.....	3
Scope of this guide.....	4
General Concept.....	5
The Provincial Websites.....	6
Full website.....	6
Awareness and Recruitment website.....	7
Dos and Don'ts.....	7
Provincial Facebook.....	9
Public-Facing Facebook Page.....	9
Private (closed) Facebook Group.....	9
Provincial Twitter.....	11
Websites for Masonic Centres.....	12
Ownership.....	12
General.....	12
Purpose.....	12
Webmaster.....	13
Is there any website content that is not permitted?.....	13
Is Approval of the Website required?.....	13
Lodge Websites.....	14
Ownership.....	14
General.....	14
Purpose.....	14
Webmaster.....	14
Is there any website content that is not permitted?.....	15
Is Approval of the Website required?.....	15
Facebook for Masonic Centres.....	16
General.....	16
A Public-Facing Facebook Page.....	16
Private (closed) Facebook Group.....	16
Administrators.....	18
Facebook for Lodges.....	19
General.....	19
A Public-Facing Facebook Page.....	19
Private (closed) Facebook Group.....	19
Administrators.....	21
Twitter for Masonic Centres.....	22
Twitter for Lodges.....	24
Not Sure About It All?.....	25
Footnote.....	26
The behaviour of Individual Freemasons in Social Media.....	26

Introduction

Effective communication has always been of great importance to Freemasons so that essential information can be efficiently disseminated to members and so that our worthy tenets, beliefs and activities can be positively communicated to our local communities and the world at large.

As Masonry once evolved its communications methods from the early days of hand-delivered notes to embrace the use of the telegram, telephone and then email, so it now utilises today's communication channels, such as websites and social media. These modern channels are of vital importance in Freemasonry's continued endeavours to communicate and engage positively with its members and with the communities and wider world around it. Vital! If Freemasonry is to secure its continued existence through the recruitment of new members, it is unarguably essential to fully utilise those communication channels, which are used daily by modern man.

Websites seem an old-established custom to us now, but in reality have only been commonplace for a few short years. In East Kent, for example, the first Provincial Website was set-up just six years ago. Things have come a very long way but even now, most individual lodges do not have their own websites – something which our younger members find frustrating to say the least!

The arrival and subsequent maturing of the social media phenomenon has provided the fraternity with an immensely powerful tool, with which to communicate internally, with the world in general and more specifically with our target recruitment group. There is, in some quarters, a fear of the coming together of Freemasonry and social media; an assumption that social media is somehow inherently dangerous to the fraternity. That could only be so if a Freemason using a social media channel was un-Masonic in his choice of words or subject matter (in such cases he should probably not be a Freemason in the first place!). To fear such a thing is akin to fearing a car, lest the driver does something dangerous. The vehicle is not to blame – it is the driver!

In terms of purpose, there is no difference between communicating through a newspaper article and communicating through social media, although there are, of course, some distinctions in terms of method and approach. One such distinction is speed and reach; social media channels are instant and reach a far wider audience. Another is that, unlike a newspaper article written by (or relaying an interview with) a savvy spokesperson, any Freemason with a social media account can broadcast his thoughts to the world. Despite those distinctions, the basic rule still applies: Behave, speak and write as a Freemason ought and all will be well.

So our focus should be on the encouragement and guidance of all members to act thoughtfully, in the certain knowledge that whenever they are 'on show' so, through them, is Freemasonry. I hope this guide goes some way towards achieving that aim.

My general counsel and advice is therefore very simple; be a thoughtful and considerate Freemason in all your dealings – be that online, on a social media platform, or face-to-face with those around you. Remember those important words from our rubric, which I paraphrase: *If you never disgrace that badge [of Freemasonry] it will never disgrace you.*

WBro Roger Waltham **PSGD** AsstProvGM (East Kent)
September 2013

Scope of this guide

This guide is not intended as an exhaustive appraisal; neither is it a technical manual. What it sets out to do is provide a general guide of how to approach websites and social media and some of the issues that go hand-in-hand with those activities. It will address only two social media channels, namely Facebook and Twitter. These two are generally considered to be the most suited to our needs as an organisation (more about that below) and it is neither practical, nor relevant, to attempt to include the wide (and ever growing) number of social media channels available.

Some of the better known of those additional channels are LinkedIn and Google+ and their inclusion in this guide was considered; however it was concluded that both were more appropriate for business and professional use.

Here follow the names (in order of popularity) of the fifteen most popular (at the time of writing this guide) social media networking sites and there are many others that may also come to your notice. With the exception of Facebook and Twitter, there is neither the intention nor available resources for the Province of East Kent to engage with any of them in the foreseeable future; individual Lodges and Chapters are likewise discouraged from so doing, although there is a more relaxed view about the use of Pinterest (a picture only site). That view may change as the relationship between Freemasonry and social media evolves but for the moment at least, it is considered that Facebook and Twitter, the two most popular channels, will provide all of our social media requirements. Facebook has more than thirty million users in the UK (February 2012) of which over twelve million are men living in England. Twitter has around ten million UK accounts (May 2012).

- Facebook
- Twitter
- LinkedIn
- Pinterest
- MySpace
- Google+
- DeviantArt
- LiveJournal
- Tagged
- Orcut
- CafeMom
- Ning
- MeetUp
- MyLife
- Ask.fm

General Concept

Generally speaking, the website of an organisation – whether (in our case) that is Grand Lodge, a Province or an individual Lodge – should be the hub of all relevant information. The website should be viewed as the receptacle and showcase for news, updates and information and the shop-window to its target audience. It holds all the information, news and views. The purpose of the social media channels, is simply to drive traffic to the website by engaging with other social media users and encouraging them to visit that website.

That is not just a simple matter of providing hyperlinks to your website pages on social media posts, hoping that others will click them, although that is, ultimately, what you are trying to achieve. If you think about it, there is no point in posting those hyperlinks unless you know that a good number of people will see them (and hopefully click them). It is therefore essential that you make your social media presence vibrant and interesting, so that others will want to engage with you there often.

The general guidance, then, is straightforward: Invest time, effort and resources to ensure that your website is attractive, interesting and frequently updated; then give similar attention to your Facebook and Twitter presence so that people want to engage there with you regularly. Once you have a good social media following, you can be reasonably assured that when you post hyperlinks there to your website, they will be seen (and hopefully clicked) by many.

The more people that visit the website (and the greater the frequency of their visits) the greater the increase in the positive perception of Freemasonry within our communities and the greater the number of people who will browse the website beyond the actual item they came to view.

At the risk of labouring this important point; the more you inform people on social media about new information and updates on your website, the more people will visit that website, the more frequently they will do so, and the more likely they are to view the other areas of the website (such as the awareness and recruitment areas).

The Provincial Websites

There exists a dichotomy when considering the format of a Provincial website.

On one hand, there remains in society an incorrect but deeply rooted misconception that Freemasonry is a secret organisation with some sort of hidden agenda. That misconception fuels all sorts of bizarre and ridiculous conspiracy theories. Much work has already been done over the last decade to rectify those misconceptions but they nevertheless continue to rear their unwelcome heads. It would therefore be a great mistake to have a password controlled, member-only, access area on an otherwise publicly accessible website, as it would inevitably be wrongly interpreted that Freemasonry has something to hide after all!

On the other hand, there is information, which is only of any use and interest to members, such as downloadable documents (for example the various forms, report templates and handbooks for the use of Lodge Secretaries, Directors of Ceremonies, Almoners, Lodge Mentors and Charity Stewards) and you don't really want to have these items appearing prominently and thereby detracting from the interest of non-Masonic visitors.

There are two ways in which this apparent dilemma can be addressed.

The first is to have two, completely separate websites. One is public facing and the other is for members only. This approach has the major drawback that, just as we are telling the world that we are open, we then have a private "keep out" website, which will inevitably be spotted somewhere along the line and further fuel the fire that Freemasonry has something to hide.

The second and better option is to have everything on one site, with a distinct area for the beneficial use of members to get their downloads etc., along with a statement on the home page to the effect that there is an area of the site which members can use to access information. For example, there is a message on the home page of the Hampshire & Isle of Wight website, written by the PGM, which simply states:

I am pleased to welcome you to this Website which is open to members of the public and fellow Freemasons, to whom I will refer as brethren. There is no private section for brethren but some sections of the site are specifically for the information of brethren who may use the Website as a tool for accessing information.

That said, there is distinct benefit in having a stand-alone website designed specifically to inform people about Freemasonry *per se*, which actively encourages applications for membership.

Having carefully considered all of those aspects, the East Kent approach is to have:

1. A full website [click](#), which contains all information, news, announcements, et al, and which also has a distinct area from where members may freely access information, downloads etc..
2. An additional website [click](#) with the specific purpose of informing the public about Freemasonry and providing a place from which potential candidates may apply online for membership.

Full website

[click](#)

The full website is closely managed by an experienced and senior Provincial Officer, who through his deep understanding and awareness of the wider picture of Freemasonry, ensures that the information and items contained therein is relevant, appropriate, in keeping with the precepts of the fraternity and in the general good interests of the Province.

There is a small team, working under the management of the above Website Manager, which is responsible for posting-up new items and updates. The website is a Content Management System (CMS) format, which enables the members of the team to carry out that important function without the need for them to be skilled programmers.

There is a backroom technical man, who looks after all the technical aspects of the site. All access information for programming, hosting and everything else, is held at the Provincial Office so that the website is not exposed to difficulty should that technical person be absent or unavailable for any reason.

Most areas of the website have RSS feeds, which enable visitors to subscribe to update notifications. Thereby, when new items are posted or when something is updated, the subscribers are automatically informed (usually by automatically generated emails) of the changes/updates. These feeds are a very important way of ensuring that all new and amended posts are immediately notified through the social media channels, because the Facebook and Twitter accounts can subscribe to those feeds.

The website carries all sorts of information and news associated with the Province. That's great, but it may not answer the questions about Freemasonry in the minds of some visitors. For those visitors who want to know more about Freemasonry, the website carries hyperlinks, which will take visitors who click them to the awareness and recruitment site and to the UGLE public information site.

Awareness and Recruitment website

[click](#)

Once set-up, this site can be left un-managed for long periods. It contains information and images appropriate for people who wish to learn about Freemasonry and have their main questions answered. It also provides an online application form for anyone who wishes to be considered for membership. The content of the site, then, has no need to change regularly. There is a hyperlink on this site, which, if they click upon it, will take visitors over to the full website and all it contains.

An important aspect of the existence of such a site is that it can be utilised as a target to which traffic can be directed. For example, the url of the site can be used in public-facing social media messages. Similarly, the url can be promoted (perhaps through a QR code) at public-facing events where a display marquee or mobile exhibition unit is being deployed. Thus, from an initial interest created by the social media post or by looking at a display board on the mobile unit, people can then find out more at their leisure when they visit the website. Powerful and "customer friendly".

Dos and Don'ts

Do ensure always that the Provincial website is relevant and appropriate. Its primary function is to inform about Masonic related activities and forthcoming events, which are directly relevant to the Province.

Don't therefore clutter the website with promotional items and articles from individual lodges, which have no wider relevance to the Province. The website should not become a general notice-board for the internal activities of individual Lodges or Chapters - if an individual Lodge or Chapter wishes to promote its Ladies Night or other fund-raiser, let it do that on its own website; the Provincial website (and its team) has neither sufficient capacity nor resources to possibly accommodate such things from so many Lodges and Chapters, so such a precedent cannot be set.

Do encourage Lodges and Chapters to provide the Provincial website with good news stories and get them into the news section of the website. Such news stories could be, for example, about a significant activity or appointment of one of its members (Olympic medallist/climbed Mount Everest/became MP/etc) or perhaps about the presentation of something to a worthy cause, or a non-financial contribution to the local community (took disadvantaged people to the seaside etc). These are all invaluable sources of the 'feel-good' factor for visitors to the website. Each time something new is posted, a corresponding link should be posted on social media to encourage more people to visit the website.

Do create RSS feeds for as many pages as is appropriate and then encourage visitors to subscribe to those feeds. **Do** also connect those feeds to the Provincial social media channels so that news and updates are instantly promoted through those channels.

Do re-visit the design and format of the full website regularly to ensure that it remains attractive, vibrant and relevant to today's world.

Don't allow any form of commercial advertising or promotion on the websites – that is strictly disallowed by UGLE.

Provincial Facebook

Public-Facing Facebook Page

The purpose of the public-facing Facebook page is to inform its followers and visitors of:

- The existence of the Masonic Province of East Kent
- Activities, events and items of interest, which have been posted on the Provincial website
- Activities, events and items of interest, which have been posted on other significant Masonic websites (such as UGLE, Freemasons' Grand Charity, etc)
- The existence of an awareness and recruitment website from where visitors can get more information about Freemasonry

It is purely an information page and is absolutely NOT a vehicle by which the Province engages in discourse with visitors. Therefore, should someone wish to leave a comment to something that has been posted, that comment will go into a queue for moderation; ALL such comments, good, bad or indifferent, are deleted by the administrators and never published. To attempt to do otherwise would require full-time resources beyond our means. There is a vagary within Facebook's own systems that means the comment can be seen by the person who posted it – strange but of no consequence.

The page is set-up such that posts may only be placed by the appointed administrators and via RSS feeds, to which the administrators may have subscribed (such as the Provincial website feeds, UGLE feeds, etc..).

Anyone with a Facebook presence can find and visit the page.

As many people and other Masonic entities as possible are actively encouraged to like/follow the page.

The page will not “like” or “friend” individuals or other pages, with the exception of:

UGLE

The Masonic Charities

Other Masonic Provinces and Districts (always provided that the same are recognised by UGLE)

This page represents the public face (on Facebook) of Freemasonry in the Province of East Kent and must always act according to that huge responsibility.

Private (closed) Facebook Group

The purpose of the Facebook group is to provide a discussion forum and online community for members of Masonic Lodges within the Province of East Kent. It serves well as a multi-level communication channel; member to member (across the Province); member to Province; Province to membership; et al.

The existence of the group is visible to anyone with a Facebook presence, but its membership and the posts and comments within it are only visible to members.

Applicants who wish to join the group are asked, in a private email, to provide the name of their Lodge and the date of their Initiation. That is checked (personally by the AsstProvGM responsible for Communications) against the Adelpi database to confirm that the applicant is genuine. Only after that process is satisfactorily completed, will the applicant be admitted to the group.

The following words are written in the “about” section of the group, which is brought to the attention of all new members when they are first welcomed to the group:

Hello and welcome to the official Facebook group for the Province of East Kent.

This is a discussion forum for members of Lodges and Chapters in the Province and is only visible to group members. To be a member of the group you must be a member of an East Kent Lodge or Chapter.

It is for mature and thoughtful comments, observations and discussion of Masonic and Provincial matters. Masonic courtesy requires that each of us is personally responsible for taking care not to confuse robust, objective discussion with personal attack, sarcasm or vitriol, none of which is acceptable behaviour within this group. Please think about the words that you have used before pressing 'enter'. In short – be nice!

If you discuss aspects of ritual, remember that some of our group members are Entered Apprentices.

Very senior members of the Province will be visiting this group regularly to enjoy the various discussions and get a good flavour of what members like and dislike. So, here is the informal forum by which you can get your views, observations, thoughts and questions across to other members of the Province at all levels.

Enjoy! Be nice! Be Masonic!

Posts can be placed by any member, as can comments to those posts.

The content of posts is wide and varied, ranging from very serious discussion about Masonic related topics to the frivolous. All are accepted as being instrumental in the building and bonding of the online community.

Very occasionally there are isolated cases of inappropriate comment/behaviour/language or seemingly deliberate attempts to unsettle or undermine (known as “flaming” in social media). Offenders are contacted privately and asked to remove or modify their posts or comments themselves. If they do not do so, the administrators will step in and modify or remove. Repeat offenders are not tolerated (such behaviour being deemed as un-Masonic) and are summarily removed from the group.

The essence of the group is to encourage members to act always in the spirit of harmonious fraternity, even during the process of robust discussion.

The introduction of the Facebook group has provided a hitherto unknown opportunity for Freemasons of all ages, at all stages of their Masonic journey, in all parts of the Province, to engage with one another in an informal setting, from which a great feeling of community has developed and new friendships have blossomed between members who would never otherwise have met.

The closed Facebook group is all about: communication; community; fraternity.

Provincial Twitter

The purpose of the Provincial Twitter account is to inform its followers of:

- The existence of the Masonic Province of East Kent
- Activities, events and items of interest, which have been posted on the Provincial website
- Activities, events and items of interest, which have been posted on other significant Masonic websites (such as UGLE, Freemasons' Grand Charity, etc)
- The existence of an awareness and recruitment website from where people can get more information about Freemasonry

It is purely an information channel and is absolutely NOT a vehicle by which the Province engages in discourse with visitors.

The Provincial Twitter account does not "follow" any individual or organisation (other than UGLE, the Masonic Charities, and other Provinces or Districts recognised by UGLE, so that it can "Retweet" messages from those sources). As many people as possible are encouraged to "follow" the Province on Twitter; the larger the following the greater the reach when messages are disseminated. Those followers, ideally, will include members of the Press and media.

Whenever a new item is published on the Provincial website, a message about it (including a hyperlink) should be sent out on Twitter to encourage followers to visit the website item. This can be automated.

Messages on Twitter are called "tweets" and may consist of no more than 140 characters, including punctuation and spaces. As a result, the misinterpretation of tweets is a real problem in the Twitter community, which is why expressions such as "LOL" (laugh out loud) and smiley faces have gained such prominence. Similarly, thoughtless tweets written in a moment of pique or in the mistaken belief that the composer is being humorous, can have an unexpectedly far-reaching and extremely negative impact. Therefore, a great deal of thought should be exercised when composing a tweet and a huge responsibility consequently lies upon the shoulders of the composer.

Within a few short moments of a tweet being transmitted by the composer, it is irrevocable. All tweets must be carefully composed and worded clearly and reasonably – always!

It must also be clearly understood that, once a tweet has been sent, anyone with a Twitter account can "reply" to it and that such responses may be derogatory or worse. There is an important balance to that fact, in that it should be recognised that the readers of such vitriol, most of whom are, of course, reasonable people with common sense, will make up their own minds about the value/accuracy/relevance/appropriateness of such comments.

For generations, adverse comments have been made by opponents of Freemasonry on whatever communications channels have been available at the time, including newspapers, TV and radio. This is no different, other than the increased speed and reach inherent in social media. In the unlikely event of a very serious "attack", an offender can be reported to Twitter and their account may be subsequently suspended.

If the Province wishes to make an observation in relation to an adverse or inaccurate comment on Twitter, it can do so on its website and then use Twitter and Facebook to draw people's attention to that website item. Thereby, an engagement on Twitter, which is never desirable and is unlikely ever to have a winner, is avoided and an appropriate response to malignment can be communicated in a positive, reasoned and thoughtful manner.

UGLE, along with other significant Masonic and related entities, have embraced Twitter for some time now, without notable problem. Provided that the rules of reasonableness, thoughtfulness and Masonic behaviour explored previously in this guide are always adopted, there should be little negative side-effect, which is in any case unarguably outweighed by the enormous positives of an effective Twitter presence for the beneficial use of the Province.

Websites for Masonic Centres

Ownership

First and foremost, the ownership of the website domain and the fiscal arrangement for the hosting package MUST be with the Management Committee of the Masonic Centre/Hall, be that a Board of Directors, a Committee, or a group of Trustees. The reason for that is to ensure that:

1. There is no question as to ownership, responsibility and ultimate control.
2. It is clear to all that the purpose of the website relates to the benefit of the organisation and not any one Lodge (or indeed the personal views or interests of the webmaster).

To be clear about this; the organisation/entity must be the name on the domain and on the hosting arrangement – it is not correct for an individual person to be registered as the website domain owner or as the person with financial responsibility for the hosting package.

It is also essential that the log-in and registration details for the domain and hosting, including all passwords and usernames, are in the possession of the organisation.

The foregoing safeguards are to protect against disadvantage to the Centre in the event that a webmaster is absent or unavailable for any reason, or some kind of issue develops concerning that individual.

General

As is the case with the Provincial websites, it is recommended that there are no password protected members-only areas to the site. By all means have sections which carry items that will be mostly of interest only to Freemasons, but do not make those areas secret; allow open access. Please see related comments in the section about Provincial websites, on page seven of this guide.

Purpose

It is important to define, at the outset, the purpose of the Centre's website. This will ensure that its focus is maintained so that it does not decline into a mish-mash of content with no clear direction or usefulness.

For example, should it contain any, some, none or all of the following?

- Do you need a website – is there a sound reason for having it?
- Is it for recruitment?
- Is it for public access or just for members?
- Details of all Lodges etc that meet there along with contact details
- Details of hall hire for external hirers
- Details of hall hire for Masonic use
- News items related to local Lodges and members
- Links to the Provincial website, the Justaskone.org site, UGLE's site, and so on
- Forthcoming events
- Diary of everything – social and Lodge meetings – so that the various Lodges don't have date clashes
- Map and directions
- Caterers contact details
- Management Board members details
- Local related press and media items
- Etc etc..

Once the purpose and content type has been defined, although one should always allow for a bit of evolution, stick to it and don't deviate. That way, the website will remain useful and something of which the Centre can be proud.

Webmaster

Select the webmaster carefully. It is not just about the technical ability to build and maintain the website; it is also important that the webmaster understands the desires of the Board/Trustees/Committee and can liaise effectively with the individual Lodges. He (or she) will also need to be very conscious that everything that is on the website can be seen by anyone, anywhere in the world, and that the reputation of the Centre (and to a degree, Freemasonry itself) is in his (her) hands.

Be certain that the webmaster:

1. Is fully briefed regarding the defined purpose and required content of the website;
2. Has to report regularly in person to the Board/Trustees/Committee with an update and advance notification of domain renewal/hosting contract renewal/etc..

That said, once the ground-rules are set, the webmaster should be trusted, on a day-to-day basis, to get on with it and keep things in order and regularly updated according to the wishes of the Board/Trustees/Committee. It is entirely impractical to require every single post and update to be first approved by a committee. Choose your webmaster wisely and then let them do their job.

Is there any website content that is not permitted?

- Photographs of people must not be shown unless permission has been granted. In particular, this is VERY IMPORTANT with regard to the photographs of children or people who are in any way disadvantaged through the challenges of physical difficulty or mental health; in such cases the written permission, of a person who has legitimate responsibility for the care and well-being of that individual, MUST be gained before the photograph is used.
- Commercial, quasi-commercial or professional practice advertising is not permitted under any circumstances. Neither are hyperlinks to commercial, quasi-commercial or professional practice sites permitted. The foregoing applies regardless of whether the advertisements or hyperlinks are paid for and regardless of whether they relate to a Freemason's business or profession. There is no leeway in this matter. If you are unsure – don't do it.
- Should a commercial, quasi-commercial or professional practice business sponsor an event (or similar) then the news report (or other related items) on the website is permitted to bear the name of the sponsor, but the sponsor's website url, QR code, or contact details may not appear.
- The personal contact details of any individual should never appear on the website unless that person has given their express authority.
- To avoid automatic harvesting by spammers etc, people's email addresses should always be provided by hyperlink rather than the visible publication of the actual email addresses. For example, do not show the actual email address of a Lodge Secretary; instead, insert a hyperlink to that address.
- Generally, to ensure the usefulness and focus of the website, it is recommended that you endeavour to restrict the content to such items and information as are particularly relevant to the Centre and the Lodges and other Masonic units that meet therein. That said, there are no formal restrictions upon the content, save that it should always be within the compass of propriety. Common sense, with an eye to Masonic relevancy, is the best guide.

Is Approval of the Website required?

1. For the sake of good order and the continued good name and reputation of this Province and of the Lodges and Chapters herein, the Province of East Kent requires that you seek approval of the website. The responsibility for such approval is vested in the Provincial Website Manager. You should not go "live" with the website until such approval has been granted.
2. It is strongly recommended that the website contains the UGLE charter mark, within which is a hyperlink to the UGLE website. This confirms that your website has the sanction of UGLE. To gain approval to carry that charter mark you must first have the website approved by the Provincial Website Manager as in 1 above, who will advise at that time about making the necessary subsequent application to UGLE.

Lodge Websites

Ownership

First and foremost, the ownership of the website domain and the fiscal arrangement for the hosting package MUST be with the Lodge itself and specifically NOT with an individual member. The reason for that is to ensure that:

1. There is no question as to ownership, responsibility and ultimate control.
2. It is clear to all that the purpose of the website relates to the benefit of the Lodge (and is not a vehicle for the personal views or interests of the webmaster).

To be clear about this; the Lodge itself must be the name on the domain and on the hosting arrangement – it is not correct for an individual person to be registered as the website domain owner or as the person with financial responsibility for the hosting package.

It is also essential that the log-in and registration details for the domain and hosting, including all passwords and usernames, are in the possession of the Lodge Secretary and thus readily available so that the Lodge is not disadvantaged in any way in the event that a webmaster is absent or unavailable for any reason, or some kind of issue develops concerning that individual. If the Lodge Secretary is also the webmaster, be sure that another Lodge Officer also has possession of those details.

General

As is the case with the Provincial websites, it is recommended that there are no password protected members-only areas to the site. By all means have sections which carry items that will be mostly of interest only to Freemasons, but do not make those areas secret; allow open access. Please see related comments in the section about Provincial websites, on page seven of this guide.

Purpose

It is important to define, at the outset, the purpose of the Lodge's website. This will ensure that its focus is maintained so that it does not decline into a mish-mash of content with no clear direction or usefulness.

For example, should it contain any, some, none or all of the following?

- Do you need a website – is there a sound reason for having it?
- Is it for recruitment?
- Is it for public access or just for members?
- News items related to Lodge members
- Links to the Masonic Centre's website, Provincial website, the Justaskone.org site, UGLE's site, and so on
- Forthcoming events – social and Lodge meetings
- Map and directions
- Contact details of Lodge Officers
- Local related press and media items
- Etc etc..

Once the purpose and content type has been defined, although one should always allow for a bit of evolution, stick to it and don't deviate. That way, the website will remain useful and something of which the Lodge can be proud.

Webmaster

Select the webmaster carefully. It is not just about the technical ability to build and maintain the website; it is also important that the webmaster properly understands the desires of the Lodge. He (or she) will also need to be very conscious that everything that is on the website can be seen by anyone, anywhere in the world, and that the reputation of the Lodge (and to a degree, Freemasonry itself) is in his (her) hands.

Be certain that the webmaster:

1. Is fully briefed regarding the defined purpose and required content of the website;
2. Has to report regularly in person to the Lodge Committee with an update and advance notification of domain renewal/hosting contract renewal/etc..

That said, once the ground-rules are set, the webmaster should be trusted, on a day-to-day basis, to get on with it and keep things in order and regularly updated according to the wishes of the Lodge Committee. It is entirely impractical to require every single post and update to be first approved by a committee. Choose your webmaster wisely and then let them do their job.

Is there any website content that is not permitted?

- Photographs of people must not be shown unless permission has been granted. In particular, this is VERY IMPORTANT with regard to the photographs of children or people who are in any way disadvantaged through the challenges of physical difficulty or mental health; in such cases the written permission, of a person who has legitimate responsibility for the care and well-being of that individual, MUST be gained before the photograph is used.
- Commercial, quasi-commercial or professional practice advertising is not permitted under any circumstances. Neither are hyperlinks to commercial, quasi-commercial or professional practice sites permitted. The foregoing applies regardless of whether the advertisements or hyperlinks are paid for and regardless of whether they relate to a Freemason's business or profession. There is no leeway in this matter. If you are unsure – don't do it.
- Should a commercial, quasi-commercial or professional practice business sponsor an event (or similar) then the news report (or other related items) on the website is permitted to bear the name of the sponsor, but the sponsor's website url, QR code, or contact details may not appear.
- The personal contact details of any individual should never appear on the website unless that person has given their express authority.
- To avoid automatic harvesting by spammers etc, people's email addresses should always be provided by hyperlink rather than the visible publication of the actual email addresses. For example, do not show the actual email address of a Lodge Secretary; instead, insert a hyperlink to that address.
- Generally, to ensure the usefulness and focus of the website, it is recommended that you endeavour to restrict the content to such items and information as are particularly relevant to the Lodge. That said, there are no formal restrictions upon the content, save that it should always be within the compass of propriety. Common sense, with an eye to Masonic and Lodge relevancy, is the best guide.

Is Approval of the Website required?

1. For the sake of good order and the continued good name and reputation of this Province and of the Lodges and Chapters herein, the Province of East Kent requires that you seek approval of the website. The responsibility for such approval is vested in the Provincial Website Manager. You should not go "live" with the website until such approval has been granted.
2. It is strongly recommended that the website contains the UGLE charter mark, within which is a hyperlink to the UGLE website. This confirms that your website has the sanction of UGLE. To gain approval to carry that charter mark you must first have the website approved by the Provincial Website Manager as in 1 above, who will advise at that time about making the necessary subsequent application to UGLE.

Facebook for Masonic Centres

General

As is the case with websites, it is essential that all the log-in details of Facebook accounts are in the secure possession of the Board/Trustees/Committee.

A Public-Facing Facebook Page

Should you decide to have a public-facing Facebook page, its purpose is to inform its followers and visitors of:

- The existence of the Masonic Centre
- Activities, events and items of interest, which have been posted on the Masonic Centre website
- Activities, events and items of interest, which have been posted on other significant Masonic websites (such as the Provincial website, UGLE, Freemasons' Grand Charity, etc)

It should be considered as purely an information page and should not be a vehicle by which the Masonic Centre engages in discourse/dialogue with visitors. The page should be set-up so that all comments have to be approved/moderated. Thus, should someone wish to leave a comment to something that has been posted, that comment will go into a queue for moderation; your administrator, by default, should delete all comments, good, bad or indifferent. There is a vagary within Facebook's own systems that means the comment can be seen by the person who posted it – strange but of no consequence.

The page should be set-up such that posts may only be placed by the appointed administrators (more about administrators below) and via RSS feeds, to which the administrators may have subscribed (such as feeds from the Masonic Centre website, the Provincial website, UGLE, etc..).

Anyone with a Facebook presence can find and visit the page.

As many people and other Masonic entities as possible, should be actively encouraged to like/follow the page.

The page should not “like” or “friend” individuals or other pages, with the exception of:

The Province

UGLE

The Masonic Charities

Other Masonic Provinces and Districts (always provided that the same are recognised by UGLE)

Your page will represent the public face (on Facebook) of Freemasonry in your area and your administrators must always consciously and conscientiously act according to that huge responsibility.

Private (closed) Facebook Group

The introduction of the Provincial Facebook group in 2012 provided a hitherto unknown opportunity for Freemasons of all ages, at all stages of their Masonic journey, in all parts of the Province, to engage with one another in an informal setting, from which a great feeling of community developed and new friendships blossomed between members who would never otherwise have met. The potential exists for a similar benefit at local Masonic Centre level, which would also serve well as a multi-level communication channel; member to member (across all Masonic Units); member to Masonic Centre; Masonic Centre to membership; et al.

Should you wish to create such a private discussion forum and online community for members of Masonic Lodges and other Masonic Units that meet at your Masonic Centre, it is recommended that you set-up a 'Closed' Facebook Group. If set-up properly as a Closed Group, its existence will be

visible to anyone with a Facebook presence, but its membership and the posts and comments within it will only be visible to the group's members.

You may be interested to know that there also exists the means to set-up a 'secret' Facebook group, which is completely hidden so that even its existence cannot be seen by anyone who is not a member of it. Such connotations of secrecy, as has been explored elsewhere in this guide, should most definitely be avoided.

To endeavour to ensure that members are bona-fide and the group's posts and comments thus reasonably private (absolute privacy can never be guaranteed in an online environment), you may wish to ask applicants who wish to join the group, in a private email, to provide some qualifying information (eg the name of their Lodge and the date of their Initiation). That could then be checked with a known member to confirm that the applicant is genuine. Only after that process is satisfactorily completed, would the applicant be admitted to the group. Different 'proving' processes may suit your Centre better; the main point is that some sort of process is important to reasonably ensure the privacy of the group discussions.

Be sure to appoint a couple of vigilant and reliable administrators (more about this below) to monitor the group activity so that appropriate action can be taken should it be necessary. Such action would only be needed if group members behaved un-Masonically. The following words are written in the "about" section of the Provincial Facebook group, which is brought to the attention of all new members when they are first welcomed to the group – you could perhaps modify the same to suit your own group:

Hello and welcome to the official Facebook group for the Province of East Kent.

This is a discussion forum for members of Lodges and Chapters in the Province and is only visible to group members. To be a member of the group you must be a member of an East Kent Lodge or Chapter.

It is for mature and thoughtful comments, observations and discussion of Masonic and Provincial matters. Masonic courtesy requires that each of us is personally responsible for taking care not to confuse robust, objective discussion with personal attack, sarcasm or vitriol, none of which is acceptable behaviour within this group. Please think about the words that you have used before pressing 'enter'. In short – be nice!

If you discuss aspects of ritual, remember that some of our group members are Entered Apprentices.

Very senior members of the Province will be visiting this group regularly to enjoy the various discussions and get a good flavour of what members like and dislike. So, here is the informal forum by which you can get your views, observations, thoughts and questions across to other members of the Province at all levels.

Enjoy! Be nice! Be Masonic!

Posts can be placed by any group member, as can comments to those posts.

The content of posts should be allowed to be wide and varied, ranging from very serious discussion about Masonic related topics to the frivolous, all being accepted as instrumental in the building and bonding of the online community.

Very occasionally there may be isolated cases of inappropriate comment/behaviour/language or seemingly deliberate attempts to unsettle or undermine (known as "flaming" in social media). Offenders should be contacted privately and asked to remove or modify their posts or comments themselves. If they do not do so, the administrators should step in and modify or remove. Repeat offenders should not be tolerated (such behaviour being deemed as un-Masonic) and should be summarily removed from the group. "Two strikes and out" is a reasonable rule of thumb.

The essence of the group should be to encourage members to act always in the spirit of harmonious fraternity, even during the process of robust discussion.

Administrators

Select the Facebook administrators carefully. It is not just about the technical ability to understand the set-up of the appropriate Facebook presences; it is also important that the administrators understand the desires of the Board/Trustees/Committee and can liaise effectively with the individual Lodges. They will also need to be very conscious that everything that is on the public-facing page can be seen by anyone, anywhere in the world, and that the reputation of the Centre (and to a degree, Freemasonry itself) is in their hands.

Be certain that the administrators:

1. Are fully briefed regarding the defined purpose and required content of the public-facing page AND the different purpose of the Closed Group;
2. Have to report regularly in person to the Board/Trustees/Committee with an update and overview of activity/problem resolutions/etc..

That said, once the ground-rules are set, the administrators should be trusted, on a day-to-day basis, to get on with it according to the wishes of the Board/Trustees/Committee. It is entirely impractical to require every post or comment to be first approved by a committee. Choose your administrators wisely, empower them to act reasonably on your behalf and then let them do their job within the framework that you have set.

Facebook for Lodges

General

As is the case with websites, it is essential that all the log-in details of Facebook accounts are in the secure possession of the Lodge Secretary plus one other.

A Public-Facing Facebook Page

Should you decide to have a public-facing Facebook page, its purpose is to inform its followers and visitors of:

- The existence of the Lodge
- Activities, events and items of interest, which have been posted on the Lodge website
- Activities, events and items of interest, which have been posted on other significant Masonic websites (such as the Masonic Centre website, the Provincial website, UGLE, Freemasons' Grand Charity, etc)

It should be considered as purely an information page and should not be a vehicle by which the Lodge engages in discourse/dialogue with visitors. The page should be set-up so that all comments have to be approved/moderated. Thus, should someone wish to leave a comment to something that has been posted, that comment will go into a queue for moderation; your administrators, by default, should delete all comments, good, bad or indifferent. There is a vagary within Facebook's own systems that means the comment can be seen by the person who posted it – strange but of no consequence.

The page should be set-up such that posts may only be placed by the appointed administrators (more about administrators below) and via RSS feeds, to which the administrators may have subscribed (such as feeds from the Lodge website, Masonic Centre website, Provincial website, UGLE, etc..).

Anyone with a Facebook presence can find and visit the page.

As many people and other Masonic entities as possible, should be actively encouraged to like/follow the page.

The page should not “like” or “friend” individuals or other pages, with the exception of:

The Masonic Centre

The Province

UGLE

The Masonic Charities

Other Masonic Provinces and Districts (always provided that the same are recognised by UGLE)

Your Lodge page will represent the public face (on Facebook) of Freemasonry in your area and your administrators must always consciously and conscientiously act according to that huge responsibility.

Private (closed) Facebook Group

The introduction of the Provincial Facebook group in 2012 provided a hitherto unknown opportunity for Freemasons of all ages, at all stages of their Masonic journey, in all parts of the Province, to engage with one another in an informal setting, from which a great feeling of community developed and new friendships blossomed between members who would never otherwise have met. Similarly, there is potential benefit at individual Lodge level, in such a private, online discussion forum for the Lodge members, which would also serve well as a multi-level communication channel; member to member; member to Lodge; Lodge to membership; et al.

Should you wish to create such a private discussion forum and online community for members of the Lodge, it is recommended that you set-up a 'Closed' Facebook Group. If set-up properly as a Closed

Group, its existence will be visible to anyone with a Facebook presence, but its membership and the posts and comments within it will only be visible to the group's members.

You may be interested to know that there also exists the means to set-up a 'secret' Facebook group, which is completely hidden so that even its existence cannot be seen by anyone who is not a member of it. Such connotations of secrecy, as has been explored elsewhere in this guide, should most definitely be avoided.

To endeavour to ensure that members are bona-fide and the group's posts and comments thus reasonably private (absolute privacy can never be guaranteed in an online environment), it is appropriate to have a means of checking that those who apply to join the group are actually members of the Lodge and, only after that check is satisfactorily completed, would the applicant be admitted to the group. Of course, the administrators are likely to know the members of their Lodge so such checking may not be necessary; the main point is that the existence of some sort of 'proving' process is important to reasonably ensure the privacy of the group discussions, which is particularly important if you decide to allow members of other Lodges into your Lodge group.

Be sure to appoint a couple of vigilant and reliable administrators (more about this below) to monitor the group activity so that appropriate action can be taken should it be necessary. Such action would only be needed if group members behaved un-Masonically. The following words are written in the "about" section of the Provincial Facebook group, which is brought to the attention of all new members when they are first welcomed to the group – you could perhaps modify the same to suit your own Lodge's Facebook group:

Hello and welcome to the official Facebook group for the Province of East Kent.

This is a discussion forum for members of Lodges and Chapters in the Province and is only visible to group members. To be a member of the group you must be a member of an East Kent Lodge or Chapter.

It is for mature and thoughtful comments, observations and discussion of Masonic and Provincial matters. Masonic courtesy requires that each of us is personally responsible for taking care not to confuse robust, objective discussion with personal attack, sarcasm or vitriol, none of which is acceptable behaviour within this group. Please think about the words that you have used before pressing 'enter'. In short – be nice!

If you discuss aspects of ritual, remember that some of our group members are Entered Apprentices.

Very senior members of the Province will be visiting this group regularly to enjoy the various discussions and get a good flavour of what members like and dislike. So, here is the informal forum by which you can get your views, observations, thoughts and questions across to other members of the Province at all levels.

Enjoy! Be nice! Be Masonic!

Posts can be placed by any group member, as can comments to those posts.

The content of posts should be allowed to be wide and varied, ranging from very serious discussion about Masonic related topics to the frivolous, all being accepted as instrumental in the building and bonding of the online community.

Very occasionally there may be isolated cases of inappropriate comment/behaviour/language or seemingly deliberate attempts to unsettle or undermine (known as "flaming" in social media). Offenders should be contacted privately and asked to remove or modify their posts or comments themselves. If they do not do so, the administrators should step in and modify or remove. Repeat offenders should not be tolerated (such behaviour being deemed as un-Masonic) and should be summarily removed from the group. "Two strikes and out" is a reasonable rule of thumb.

The essence of the group should be to encourage members to act always in the spirit of harmonious fraternity, even during the process of robust discussion.

Administrators

Select the Facebook administrators carefully. It is not just about the technical ability to understand the set-up of the appropriate Facebook presences; it is also important that the administrators understand the desires of the Lodge. They will also need to be very conscious that everything that is on the public-facing page can be seen by anyone, anywhere in the world, and that the reputation of the Lodge (and to a degree, Freemasonry itself) is in their hands.

Be certain that the administrators:

1. Are fully briefed regarding the defined purpose and required content of the public-facing page AND the different purpose of the Closed Group;
2. Have to report regularly in person to the Lodge Committee with an update and overview of activity/problem resolutions/etc..

That said, once the ground-rules are set, the administrators should be trusted, on a day-to-day basis, to get on with it according to the wishes of the Lodge. It is entirely impractical to require every post or comment to be first approved by a committee. Choose your administrators wisely, empower them to act reasonably on your behalf and then let them do their job within the framework that you have set.

Twitter for Masonic Centres

The purpose of a Twitter account for your Masonic Centre would be to inform Twitter followers of:

- The existence of your Masonic Centre
- Activities, events and items of interest, which have been posted on the Centre's website
- Activities, events and items of interest, which have been posted on other significant Masonic websites (such as the Provincial website, UGLE, Freemasons' Grand Charity, websites of Lodges at your Centre, etc..)
- Interesting and informative information from other Masonic Twitter sources (such as the Provincial Twitter account, UGLE, The Freemasons' Grand Charity, etc..)

It is purely an information channel and is absolutely NOT a vehicle by which the Centre should engage in discourse/dialogue with followers or others who may comment on what you have sent out.

You should not "follow" any individual or organisation other than appropriate Masonic entities (such as the Province, UGLE, the Masonic Charities, and other Provinces or Districts recognised by UGLE) so that you can "Retweet" messages from those sources. Do not "follow" any individuals – not even members of Lodges that meet at the Centre. However, you should actively encourage as many people as possible to "follow" you on Twitter; the larger the following the greater the reach when messages are disseminated. Those followers, ideally, will include members of the local Press and media.

Whenever a new item is published on the Centre's website, a message about it (including a hyperlink) should be sent out on Twitter to encourage followers to visit the website item. This can be automated.

Messages on Twitter are called "tweets" and may consist of no more than 140 characters, including punctuation and spaces. As a result, the misinterpretation of tweets is a real problem in the Twitter community, which is why expressions such as "LOL" (laugh out loud) and smiley faces have gained such prominence. Similarly, thoughtless tweets written in a moment of pique or in the mistaken belief that the composer is being humorous, can have an unexpectedly far-reaching and extremely negative impact. Therefore, a great deal of thought should be exercised when composing a tweet and a huge responsibility consequently lies upon the shoulders of the composer. The world can see what you have tweeted and the reputation of Freemasonry itself can be tarnished by an incautious tweet. So choose your composer(s) very carefully!

Within a few short moments of a tweet being transmitted by the composer, it is irrevocable. All tweets must be carefully composed and worded clearly and reasonably – always!

It must also be clearly understood that, once a tweet has been sent, anyone with a Twitter account can "reply" to it and that such responses may be derogatory or worse. There is an important balance to that fact, in that it should be recognised that the readers of such vitriol, most of whom are, of course, reasonable people with common sense, will make up their own minds about the value/accuracy/relevance/appropriateness of such comments.

For generations, adverse comments have been made by opponents of Freemasonry on whatever communications channels have been available at the time, including newspapers, TV and radio. This is no different, other than the increased speed and reach inherent in social media. In the unlikely event of a very serious "attack", an offender can be reported to Twitter and their account may be subsequently suspended. Never be drawn in and always avoid the temptation to post lightning fast reactions; be careful and be considered – we were, after all, taught to be cautious.

If the Centre wishes to make an observation in relation to an adverse or inaccurate comment on Twitter, it can do so on its website and then use Twitter and Facebook to draw people's attention to that website item. Thereby, an engagement on Twitter, which is never desirable and is unlikely ever to have a winner, is avoided and an appropriate response to malignment can be communicated in a positive, reasoned and thoughtful manner, which, of course, is the Masonic way.

UGLE, along with other significant Masonic and related entities, have embraced Twitter for some time now, without notable problem. Provided that the rules of reasonableness, thoughtfulness and Masonic behaviour explored previously in this guide are always adopted, there should be little negative side-effect, which is in any case unarguably outweighed by the enormous positives of an effective Twitter presence for the beneficial use of your Centre.

Twitter for Lodges

The purpose of a Twitter account for your Lodge would be to inform Twitter followers of:

- The existence of your Lodge
- Activities, events and items of interest, which have been posted on the Lodge's website
- Activities, events and items of interest, which have been posted on other significant Masonic websites (such as the Masonic Centre's website, the Provincial website, UGLE, Freemasons' Grand Charity, websites of Lodges at your Centre, etc..)
- Interesting and informative information from other Masonic Twitter sources (such as the Twitter accounts of other Lodges at your Centre, the Centre's account, Province, UGLE, The Freemasons' Grand Charity, etc..)

It is purely an information channel and is absolutely NOT a vehicle by which the Lodge should engage in discourse/dialogue with followers or others who may comment on what you have sent out.

You should not "follow" any individual or organisation other than appropriate Masonic entities (such as your Masonic Centre, the Province, UGLE, the Masonic Charities, and other Provinces or Districts recognised by UGLE) so that you can "Retweet" messages from those sources. Do not "follow" any individuals – not even Lodge members. However, you should actively encourage as many people as possible to "follow" you on Twitter; the larger the following the greater the reach when messages are disseminated. Those followers, ideally, will include members of the local Press and media.

Whenever a new item is published on the Lodge's website, a message about it (including a hyperlink) should be sent out on Twitter to encourage followers to visit the website item. This can be automated.

Messages on Twitter are called "tweets" and may consist of no more than 140 characters, including punctuation and spaces. As a result, the misinterpretation of tweets is a real problem in the Twitter community, which is why expressions such as "LOL" (laugh out loud) and smiley faces have gained such prominence. Similarly, thoughtless tweets written in a moment of pique or in the mistaken belief that the composer is being humorous, can have an unexpectedly far-reaching and extremely negative impact. Therefore, a great deal of thought should be exercised when composing a tweet and a huge responsibility consequently lies upon the shoulders of the composer. The world can see what you have tweeted and the reputation of Freemasonry itself can be tarnished by an incautious tweet. So choose your composer(s) very carefully! Within a few short moments of a tweet being transmitted by the composer, it is irrevocable. All tweets must be carefully composed and worded clearly and reasonably – always!

It must also be clearly understood that, once a tweet has been sent, anyone with a Twitter account can "reply" to it and that such responses may be derogatory or worse. There is an important balance to that fact, in that it should be recognised that the readers of such vitriol, most of whom are, of course, reasonable people with common sense, will make up their own minds about the value/accuracy/relevance/appropriateness of such comments.

For generations, adverse comments have been made by opponents of Freemasonry on whatever communications channels have been available at the time, including newspapers, TV and radio. This is no different, other than the increased speed and reach inherent in social media. In the unlikely event of a very serious "attack", an offender can be reported to Twitter and their account may be subsequently suspended. Never be drawn in and always avoid the temptation to post lightning fast reactions; be careful and be considered – we were, after all, taught to be cautious.

If the Lodge wishes to make an observation in relation to an adverse or inaccurate comment on Twitter, it can do so on its website and then use Twitter and Facebook to draw people's attention to that website item. Thereby, an engagement on Twitter, which is never desirable and is unlikely ever to have a winner, is avoided and an appropriate response to malignment can be communicated in a positive, reasoned and thoughtful manner, which, of course, is the Masonic way.

If, at any time, you feel that you are no longer able to manage the Facebook or Twitter accounts properly, you can always simply close the account and start again when things improve.

Not Sure About It All?

Websites, Twitter and Facebook are tremendously powerful communication tools, which are at our disposal for little or no financial cost. Consequently, they are greatly recommended and will undoubtedly help the fraternity to evolve as society itself evolves.

However, the Masonic world will not end should your Lodge or Masonic Centre choose not to get involved just yet. Whenever you feel that you are ready and have the membership resources to set it all up and manage it effectively; that will be exactly the right time. So, if you are not under great pressure from the membership to make it happen, just hang back for a while. The online route is absolutely inevitable but it's OK if you want to make that tomorrow because you don't have the right people and other resources to do it right, today. Don't do it unless you can do it right. Going off half-cocked will lead to tears!

On the other hand, be sure not to hold back just because the senior Lodge members do not understand it; create a sensible framework/reporting structure and make sure you have ownership of the log-in and account details, select your administrators carefully, and then leave them alone to get on with it. If your framework and reporting structure is robust, you should have little to fear. If you are unhappy with what develops, you can always shut it down!

Footnote

The behaviour of Individual Freemasons in Social Media

This subject is often overlooked but is so very, very important to the good name and reputation of Freemasonry.

Many members have Facebook, Twitter and other Social Media accounts and are very active therein. It is an excellent way for people to engage daily with their friends, families and acquaintances. Some channels are used extensively for business and the workplace and within those networks it is not uncommon for people to build professional and business networks consisting of a thousand or more other people. So, in principle it is undoubtedly a force for good.

There are some negatives, of course. Perhaps the biggest of those is when a Freemason forgets to behave as he ought on his Facebook or Twitter account. That un-Masonic behaviour is instantly there for the world to see.

Consider this as an illustration. Peter belongs to a Lodge in Cityville and he has a Facebook account. He becomes Facebook "friends" with John - someone he met and got along with very well when, with their respective wives, they shared a table at the Lodge Ladies Night. John is not a Mason and happens to be a journalist. One day, Peter is "tagged" in a photograph, taken at his brother's stag weekend, in a less than Masonic pose. The very instant that the tagged photograph shows on Peter's Facebook page, it appears also on John's home page. If you now let your imagination get to work about what John could do with that photograph, this important point is well made!

Similarly, it would not reflect well if foul language or thoughtless and distasteful comments were written on Peter's "wall".

It is so very easy for our fraternity to be brought into disrepute by the un-Masonic actions of a single member. That has always been the case but with Social Media it is instant, wide-reaching and very visible.

Our constant endeavour must be to encourage Freemasons to be thoughtful in all their dealings, for when an individual member is on show, so too is Freemasonry itself.