

Minutes of the Education & Training Committee **Monday, 16th November, 2009**

Present:

V. Thomas, D. Young, R Hirst, J. Benson, T. Sherman, G. Crawford and A. Kersley

Apologies:

D. Jackson and J. Boughton

Minutes and Matters Arising

The Minutes of the last Committee Meeting, held on August 10th 2009 were accepted as circulated and there were no matters arising, other than those on today's agenda.

Reports from the various sub committees

Libraries and Museums/Officer Training

Jim Boughton had submitted a written report to the Committee containing the following items.

1. Due to Margaret McCarthy having an operation, further progress on the Northampton Library had been slow, although cataloguing was nearly complete.
2. Following discussions with Reg Hirst, Jim has volunteered to take on more responsibility for Masonic Officer Support and Training. His aim is to work toward assembling 'job descriptions' for all the Officer roles, for use by Lodges. These would be supported by the continuation of the Training meetings. He also suggested that LoI Preceptors and DCs should be included in a support and training role within each Lodge.

It was agreed by those present that, when the Library Catalogue is complete, we should attempt to find volunteers to 'man' the Library at specific times and manage the access and reading service. The Catalogue might then be made available for download from the Provincial Web site. **Jim to action.**

It was raised as to whether the Province could finance a PC with Internet access to be housed in the Library, to assist with accessing the Catalogue and for other Masonic Research.

Viv Thomas agreed to raise this as an action point at the next Executive Meeting.

The members also agreed with JB's idea for the development of 'job descriptions' and his approach to this.

Jim Boughton to action.

Lodges of Instruction

J. Benson explained that R Turpin, D Young and himself had been holding discussions on how Lodges of Instruction could be supported and improved for the future. There was a great deal of discussion on this, culminating with Viv Thomas proposing that the Province hold an annual Mentors/Preceptors meeting at Northampton. The idea would be to involve representatives from all Lodges, to brainstorm new ideas and to start to explain our hopes for the development of learning via the LoIs. **Viv Thomas to action.**

The concept of creating "Dining" or "Study" clubs was discussed. The current version at Brixworth is very successful and may be a format that could be adopted by centres around the Province. Alan Kersley reported that there is a common thread in the "dailyadvancement.com" forum demanding more learning material and opportunities. More discussion required on this, as it may be linked to the previous item.

Mentoring

Reg Hirst has been holding Mentoring meetings around the Province over the last few months – to ensure that all are aware of the available material, the Province's expectations, and to try and establish regular communication. He has gathered some 60 email addresses of Mentors and already asked for an 'end of year' update from them. It was noted that most Lodges are now acknowledging the position of Mentoring Co-ordinator in their list of Officers, which is good news. MC's are also now listed in the Yearbook.

Orations

Viv Thomas and Derek Young have been reviewing the 50+ official Orations from Grand Lodge and have reduced them down to around 20 that they feel should be of interest to Lodges. There is now a full programme of dates for these to be presented at around the Province, but Derek is happy to take enquiries for next season.

In addition to the official Orations, Derek has prepared a further 20 short papers, for use by Lodges as part of their normal meetings, or at LoIs. He also stated that he would be pleased to accept contributions from other Masons around the Province.

Derek then spelled out his Strategy for the future of Orators and Orations in the Province, which is to be discussed and agreed before further information can be provided.

Demonstrations

Trevor Sherman gave an extensive report on the huge success of the Demonstration Team. Below is a synopsis of his report.

- 1) "Lodge night 1759" has now been presented seven times and there are now 6 further bookings, 2 out of the Province
- 2) Two further plays – "How and Why the Royal Arch" and "The Working Tools – a new perspective" are now beginning and have bookings already.
- 3) Articles have appeared in the "Password" and "The Square" magazines, with "Freemasonry Today" featuring one in the next issue.
- 4) A revised fee structure is being introduced and it is expected the Demo Teams will be self-funding in the year ahead. It is to be pointed out that the Players actually pay £10 each for their own meals, so the financial burden on any Lodge is kept to a minimum.
- 5) Membership of the Team is growing and Trevor is delighted with the flexibility and professionalism of those taking part.

IT Database (dailyadvancement.com)

Alan Kersley reported that the site continues to grow but could still do with more contributions and members. He is writing a front page article for the Password and intends to remind the Lodge Secretaries to announce the site again to their members. Derek Young suggested that it couldn't be found in the Yearbook and perhaps some space could be made to include this in the future editions?

There are some interesting discussions taking place around the subjects of LoIs, learning, proficiency and promotion, and especially the "Questions and Answers" section of the site, which is most popular. Viv Thomas suggested that the site be added as a topic to be introduced by Acting Officers visiting Lodges around the Province, in their reply to the Provincial Toast. **Viv Thomas to action.**

Website

Gerry Crawford reported the following additions to the Provincial Website –

- 1) The Programme for Orations around the Province
- 2) The Education Committee Meeting Minutes for Brethren to download
- 3) A new Site Search facility, which he would be grateful for feedback on

Use of the site has been up 56% year-on-year. The most popular sections are the News pages and the Lodge/Meeting Search facility.

Closing

There being no other business, the meeting was closed at 15:20pm.
The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, 16th February, 2010 at 1.30pm.