



**PROVINCE OF NORTHAMPTONSHIRE AND
HUNTINGDONSHIRE**

MASONIC MENTORING AND EDUCATION

INTRODUCTION AND GUIDANCE NOTES

FOREWORD

It is a sad fact that a number of younger Brethren experience their three degree ceremonies and then fall by the wayside either by terminating their membership or by just not attending Lodge meetings. An anonymous freemason wrote:-

I'M THE GUY

“I’m the guy sitting by himself on the side. I asked to join, I paid my dues and I promised to be faithful and loyal.

I’ve come to the meetings, but hardly anyone pays attention to me. I’ve tried to be part of the group but everyone seems to talk to and sit with their own friends.

I want to get involved, but I’m not sure how to do it. The same guys always seem to do the work but they don’t seem interested in having anyone new join them.

I missed a few meetings after joining, and no one asked me at the next meeting where I had been. Everyone says “Hi”, but no one really seems interested in me.

I want to get involved, I want to know more. I want to be part of the group, but right now I’m thinking about the game I’m missing on TV. “

**IF THE BROTHER IN “I’M THE GUY” SOUNDS FAMILIAR,
THEN YOU WILL UNDERSTAND THE NEED FOR A
MENTORING PROGRAMME.**

MENTORING PROGRAMME

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the Mentoring Programme is to ensure that every new member enjoys being a Freemason, understands what it is about and becomes involved in his Lodge both in the work and all its activities.

Lodges who have accomplished this objective have benefited from keen, enthusiastic and committed members who are not only an asset to their Lodge and Freemasonry in general, but also keen to encourage their friends to join as well.

One person alone cannot achieve this objective. The Lodge as a whole must welcome, involve and value its new members. We are receiving them into our Order and their attitude and reaction to us and to masonry in general will depend on how we treat them.

This booklet is intended to provide a framework for a Lodge to implement a Mentoring Programme as well as guidance for those Brethren who take on this very important role as Mentor.

THE MENTOR

We will first look at the Mentor and his role and then how the Lodge can make it possible for him to achieve the objectives.

The Oxford Dictionary defines a Mentor as “An inexperienced person’s advisor” and whilst the Candidate’s Sponsors will often assume the role of Mentor it may be an advantage to have a third party involved who can focus on the new Brother for the first two or three years of his membership of the Lodge and oversee his education and introduction to Freemasonry.

It is the Mentor's responsibility to ensure that a new member is made to feel welcome, to understand Freemasonry and to appreciate what is required of him. In turn the new member needs to understand what he may expect from Freemasonry through involvement in the work and activities of the Lodge.

To be able to do this the Mentor must be an enthusiastic Mason, keen to take on the role and be a good communicator. He will need to be an experienced and knowledgeable Mason who is probably but not necessarily a Past Master of the Lodge.

THE LODGE

It is the responsibility of every Lodge to look after its members and to ensure that a Mentor is appointed for each of its Candidates. Whilst Lodges may adopt various procedures for doing this, it is recommended that the Worshipful Master should appoint a senior and experienced Brother to fulfil the role of Mentor Coordinator (MC). This Brother should not shoulder the responsibility of acting as a Lodge Mentor for, as we have seen, each Candidate needs his own guide or Mentor to whom he can relate. Rather the MC would select two or three Brethren of experience and knowledge to act as individual Mentors for future newly initiated Brethren.

GUIDANCE NOTES

These notes are intended to be for guidance only. Many Lodges will already have Mentoring procedures in place for some of the points and it is intended that these notes should be complementary rather than be in conflict with them.

The appointment of a Mentor cannot be too soon. If he is to be one of the Candidate's Sponsors this is easily achieved but if he is to be one of the Lodge's designated Mentors then he should be involved as soon as possible so that the Candidate can have someone to refer to from the start.

Ideally he should be provisionally allocated prior to the Candidate's Lodge Committee interview with careful matching of personalities and mindful of practical matters such as ease of contact. He should then attend the interview so that he can be introduced to the Candidate when the Committee confirms that his (the Candidate's) name will be put to Lodge for ballot.

INITIAL MEETING BEFORE THE BALLOT

The Sponsors meet the candidate and his family at the Candidate's home or at another convenient location to answer any questions they may have regarding Masonry. The following points in particular should be considered in the discussions with the Candidate: -

1. Does he believe in a Supreme Being?
2. Are his moral and intellectual standards satisfactory?
3. What are his motives for joining Freemasonry?
4. Does his family support his wish to become a Freemason?

In further discussion explain the procedure and reasons for Balloting for new members and that he will have to be interviewed by a Lodge Committee and why. Further explain that a Brother will be appointed subsequent to his interview to act as his Masonic Mentor.

The Candidate and his family must also be given copies of the five Grand Lodge booklets namely: -

1. What is Freemasonry
2. Freemasonry and Society
3. Freemasonry and Religion
4. Regular Freemasonry and Public Affairs
5. Freemasonry's External Relations

Together with: -

1. The QCCC Ltd. Booklet “Notes for a Candidate for Freemasonry”
2. And the two videos “The Freemasons” and Freemasonry Today - Tomorrow”

The Candidate and his family will get their first authoritative information about the Craft from this meeting. It is vital to ensure that it creates a favourable impression.

AFTER THE LODGE INTERVIEW

Upon the election of the Candidate for Initiation the Lodge should send the Candidate a congratulatory letter which should confirm the proposed date of his Initiation, the fees he will have to pay and the correct dress code for the evening.

The Sponsors or Mentor must then ensure that the Candidate is aware of what is expected of him at his Initiation and find out if he has any particular Masonic friends or associates who would like to be invited (or to assist) in the conferral of the Degrees.

Finally the Sponsors or Mentor should ensure that the Brother to be and his lady are invited to any forthcoming open Lodge functions that they may meet other members of the Lodge and their ladies and so take their first steps in becoming a member of the wider Masonic Family.

THE NIGHT OF THE INITIATION CEREMONY

The Sponsors should bring their Candidate to the Masonic Centre and also give him a lift home afterwards. The Master should make him welcome on his arrival. He should be introduced to the Tyler and the Junior Deacon who should put him at his ease and explain that he is not expected to say anything unless he is prompted to do so. When the Lodge is being opened he should, preferably, not be left on his own, but if he is it should be explained that the Tyler will come and collect him after a short while

At some convenient point in the Ceremony, perhaps either after the Charge or after presentation of the Book of Constitutions and by - laws, the Candidate should be formally introduced to his Mentor who then goes to sit with him in the North East. After the Meeting the Mentor, in cooperation with his Sponsors, must look after the Candidate by showing him where to leave his Apron, taking him to the Bar and seeing that he is introduced to the Brethren.

At subsequent meetings the Mentor should sit with the Candidate both in the Lodge Room and afterwards at the Festive Board, making sure he is introduced to as many of the Lodge members as possible. The Mentor should also explain the form and protocol of the Festive Board.

AFTER INITIATION

THE MENTORS WORK

The candidate meets with the Mentor for a minimum of FOUR times. A recommended time limit for all the sessions is between one and a half and two hours including discussion.

They meet either in the Lodge Room (preferably) or in the Candidate's or Mentor's home: -

- 1 Following the First Degree prior to the Second Degree.
- 2 Following the Second Degree prior to the Third Degree.
- 3 Following the Third Degree.
- 4 One or two months after the third session to discuss the continuing Education Programme as designed by the Lodge and the Province.

Through these meetings the new Mason should come to know and understand his duties as a Master Mason and to be aware of his rights and privileges. He should also be taught how to visit other Lodges and the Mentor should take the opportunity to arrange visits to other Lodges where he can see the Ceremony he has recently taken part in. Above all the Candidate needs, through the Mentoring Programme, to gain a sound understanding of the history, traditions and work of the Craft as a whole and of his own lodge in particular.

It must be stressed that the duties of a Mentor continue until his charge has become involved in a Lodge of Instruction. Do not leave the newly made Mason alone to fend for himself after the Third Degree. For far too long new Candidates have been brought into the Craft, enthusiastic and eager to become active members, only to be neglected (however inadvertently) by their Lodge. A properly educated, orientated, and interested new Mason is an **ACTIVE** member of his Lodge. The Mentoring Programme is a key first step to membership retention and expansion.

N.B. If there is to be a meeting where a superior Degree Ceremony or an Installation is to take place and the Candidate has to leave the Lodge for a while, the Mentor or an appropriate member of the Lodge should accompany him. This is an excellent opportunity for further instruction especially if there is another new Mason in the same position.

MEETING PROGRAMME

At each of the four meetings the Candidate should have to hand, for more detailed reference, the Book of Constitutions and the appropriate Peterborough booklet. A copy of the relevant Mentoring Programme booklet covering the discussion subjects detailed below for each meeting should also be provided. These booklets are newly published and cover the stages of Entered Apprentice, Fellowcraft, and Master Mason.

FIRST MEETING

To discuss: -

1. Brief History of Freemasonry.
2. The Initiation Ceremony.
3. Sign, Token and Word.
4. Introduction to Lodges of Instruction.
5. Organisation of the Lodge.
6. Seating in the Lodge.
7. Festive Board.
8. Masonic Etiquette and Protocol
9. Visiting other Lodges.
10. Questions and Answers for the Second Degree.
11. Sources of Information

SECOND MEETING

To discuss: -

1. Second Degree Ceremony.
2. Sign, Token and Word.
3. Masonic Regalia - Entered Apprentice to Worshipful Master.
4. Officers of the Lodge
5. Province of Northamptonshire and Huntingdonshire
6. Questions and answers for the Third Degree
7. Sources of Information

THIRD MEETING

To discuss: -

1. Third Degree Ceremony.
2. Signs, Token and Word.
3. Five Points of Fellowship.
4. Governance of the Craft.
5. Provincial and Grand Ranks Regalia.
6. Masonic Charities: -
 - National and Local.
 - Roles of Charity Steward and Almoner.
7. Further consideration of Lodges of Instruction.
8. Sources of Information
9. Further reading recommendations.

FOURTH MEETING

To discuss:-

1. Joining the Lodge of Instruction.
2. Learning the Ritual.
3. The way forward to the Master's Chair.
4. Duties and responsibilities of Lodge Officers.
5. Appointment and Promotion to Province and Grand Lodge.
6. Grand Lodge Certificate.
7. Joining the Royal Arch.
8. Other Masonic Orders.

LODGE OF INSTRUCTION

It is regretted that so many new Brethren are left to their own devices and to fend for themselves after they receive the Third Degree. If the Lodge can retain their interest during this most critical period of their Masonic careers and give them guidance and encouragement until they have had time to identify areas of interest and activity for themselves, they will develop into working active Masons. Otherwise they are likely to stop attending after a few meetings and either lapse into chronic indifference, or find their way to some other more attractive activity. It is therefore important that the Mentor and the Sponsors introduce the Candidate to a Lodge of Instruction as soon as possible after he has become a Master Mason.

CONCLUSION

If the Mentoring Programme is followed, the Lodge will have a new member with a clear understanding of the fundamentals of Freemasonry and who will have met and enjoyed the company of the members of the Lodge. By joining the Lodge of Instruction he will have become involved in the ritual and ceremonial proceedings of our Order and should therefore be in a position to thoroughly enjoy his Freemasonry. In short, by looking after, taking care of, and instructing the new Brother, the Lodge has gained a valuable new addition to its membership and the Craft in general is strengthened with a strong link in the chain.

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