

PROVINCIAL GRAND LODGE OF SOMERSET

DRAFT GUIDANCE NOTES FOR PROVINCIAL STEWARDS

These notes outline the procedures and protocol to be followed on Membership Challenge Visits (MCV) to Craft Lodges by the Provincial Grand Stewards when supporting The Provincial Grand Master, Deputy Provincial Grand Master or Assistant Provincial Grand Master.

Note: The Deputy PGM & Assistant PGM's attend **in their own right and do not represent**.

1. The notes are intended as a general guide for the Provincial Grand Steward as to his duties at a MCV, but are not exhaustive and do not cover the many different situations with which a PrGStwd would need to deal as he sees fit at the time. Circumstances may arise when for a particular reason the PGM, DPGM or APGM may wish to vary the procedures outlined.

2. The Provincial Team will be advised of the dates on which the official visits are to be made. If you are unable to attend could you please arrange a 'swap' and let one of the Provincial Deputy Grand DC's know by phone as soon as possible. Should you have a special Lodge(s) you would like to attend in your official capacity during the year we will try to arrange this if at all possible, as long as sufficient notice is given. The Secretary of the Lodge concerned will be informed of the names of the Provincial Team who will be attending the Membership Visit along with contact details. The Secretary will also have been asked: -

- To ensure that the Provincial Team receives a summons (e-mail) and that one has been sent to the Ruler attending.
- To supply the Lodge DC's name and the telephone number when sending the summons to enable the **PrGStwd to make contact with the Lodge DC in advance** of the meeting to discuss the agenda, items in paragraph 3 below, and ensure the proposed ceremonial complies with Provincial policy. In the case of any proposed variation the PrGStwd should seek approval of the Provincial Ruler as soon as possible before the meeting.
- To arrange that the Lodge DC makes himself available before the meeting commences for a brief run through of the procedures.
- To request that a parking space be reserved for the Ruler where possible.

3. At the meeting with the Lodge DC (where not finalised beforehand – see paragraph 7 below) the PrGStwd should ascertain:

- That the Lodge DC, if required will select no more than 6 Somerset Provincial Grand Officers to form the Escort in addition to the Lodge DC and Lodge ADC. The actual numbers may need to be small depending upon the size of the Lodge room and how many of the provincial team are attending.
- In which degree the Salutations are normally given in that particular Lodge and at which point in the proceedings the Salutations will be given.
- That the seating in the Lodge is correct and marked for the Ruler and the Provincial Team, including himself.
- That the PrGStwd's seat provides him with easy access to the floor of the Lodge.
- That at the Festive Board:

Note: This needs to be pre-arranged with the Lodge prior to the seating plan being published.

- The seating is correct for the Ruler and that the Provincial Team are suitably

dispersed amongst the members of the Lodge. It will be suggested to Lodge Secretaries that their Dining Steward might consider putting like with like. i.e. should the Provincial Grand Charity Steward be amongst those attending, he should sit with the Lodge Charity Steward.

The PrGStwd should place his wand outside the door of the Lodge ready for his use, and the holding block should be placed by his seat in the Lodge beforehand. If the Salutations are given in the 3rd Degree the PrGStwd should ensure that a block is placed conveniently in the West, should he need it, from whence he will give the salutations.

4. The PrGStwd is primarily concerned with:

- The **escort in** and reception arrangements for the Ruler and Provincial Team, (Note 5).
- The **Salutations** to the PGM, DPGM and the APMG's

The PrGStwd should not be expected to assist in or advise on the normal ceremonial of the Lodge, unless specifically requested to do so by either the PGM, DPGM or APMG. The work of the Lodge during the visit is entirely a matter for the WM and his Lodge Officers.

5. Procedures

- The PrGStwd should ensure that all Grand Officers, Acting Provincial Grand Officers and any possible VIP's stay outside the door of the Lodge, to enter the Lodge with the Provincial Team. The procession usually takes place immediately after the Lodge is opened in the First Degree.
- Whilst the Lodge is being opened the PrGStwd will line up the Ruler, Grand Officers and Provincial Grand Officers in reverse order at a convenient part of the anteroom, leaving room near the Lodge door for the Past Provincial Grand Officers who will be coming out of the Lodge as an escort if required.
- Please note that the order of precedence in processions and seating, places the Provincial Grand Wardens between the Ruler(s) and Grand Officers.
- The Lodge Tyler should seek the admission of the PrGStwd in the usual way by saying e.g. "W Bro (John Smith), Provincial Grand Steward **requests** admission". It is advisable to write or print a piece of paper or card with your name and rank upon it for the convenience of the Tyler and Inner Guard.
- On entering the Lodge the PrGStwd will salute the WM from a position in the West behind the pillars or about one quarter way up the Lodge in front of the SW's Chair. The wand should be transferred to the left hand for saluting. The sign is cut after addressing the WM.
- PrGStwd will say "Worshipful Master, RW Bro Raymond Guthrie, Provincial Grand Master **for** The Province of Somerset, or VW Bro Benjamin GW Batley, Deputy Provincial Grand Master **of** the Province of Somerset, or W Bro Anthony R Guthrie, Assistant Provincial Grand Master **of** the Province of Somerset or W Bro Russell K Woodland Assistant Provincial Grand Master **of** the Province of Somerset accompanied by a number of Grand Officers (if any present) and Provincial Grand Officers is without and **demands** admission"
- WM replies – "Admit him" PrGStwd returns wand to right hand, steps, returns wand to left hand and gives a further salute and says "WM, is it your wish that an escort be formed?" WM replies "It is". PrGStwd cuts sign, returns wand to right hand.
- PrGStwd "Those Brethren who are Officers of the Provincial Grand Lodge of Somerset and have been so nominated to take part in the Escort will form a double column in the South to escort the RW Provincial Grand Master (or the Deputy Provincial Grand Master or

Assistant Provincial Grand Master) into the Lodge. Brother Director of Ceremonies, Brother Assistant Director of Ceremonies”

The Lodge DC's then take their position at the front of the escort i.e. nearest the West. When the column has been formed the PrGStwd will then say “Forward Brethren” and follows the Escort from the Lodge.

The Inner Guard should be briefed beforehand to open the Lodge door wide. The Lodge DC's lead the column to meet the awaiting column outside and form up in reverse order. The Lodge DC and ADC will lead the escort back into the Lodge.

- When the PrGStwd arrives (if from rear of column, as in most Lodges), he briefs the escort on what the procedures are for the escort (most will have carried out this duty many times). He will then ask the Ruler if he is ready to enter. If the answer is in the affirmative, he enters the Lodge, stands at the open door and says “Brethren you will rise to receive the RW PGM **for** the Province of Somerset” (or The DPGM or The APGM **of** the Province of Somerset). When the shuffling has finished the PrGStwd will say “Forward Brethren”.
- If there is only one Lodge DC he heads the left hand column, and the PrGStwd heads the right hand column. They proceed up the North side of the Lodge, halting when they reach the East and turn inwards. If the Lodge is not very wide they will parade each column either side of the pillars. The PrGStwd then turns and proceeds slowly to the West between the two columns, making sure that they are far enough apart. He should time his progress so that he reaches the West just as the Ruler enters.
- Should both Lodge DC's lead the column the PrGStwd will wait in a convenient place in the Lodge for the Ruler to enter.
- The Ruler will then salute the WM between the Pillars.
- The PrGStwd will then lead the Ruler from the West slowly and with great dignity to the East. The PrGStwd then side steps to his right and turns to his left so that the Ruler can walk past him to his seat. The PrGStwd takes a pace forward, turns to his right and faces the Ruler and they acknowledge each other with a court bow (head only). The Ruler then sits, the PrGStwd turns about and court bows to the Provincial Grand Wardens if present then the Grand Officers who proceed in pairs (if there is room) through the column, in order, to their seats, followed by the other Active Provincial Grand Officers. You should brief them before entering that they should walk through in pairs and both court bow to the WM before taking their places. (Court bow only – head only inclined forward **not** from the waist).
- Having seen that they find their seats, he invites the Past Provincial Officers to come through the column and return to their seats and finally the Lodge DC and ADC. He then faces the Lodge and says, “WM and Brethren be seated”.
- The WM will then welcome the Ruler and the Provincial Team and **proffer the gavel to the Ruler**.
- The Lodge work then proceeds.
- It is worthwhile mentioning that an escort is not essential if you have a good number of the Provincial Team in attendance. You must use your judgement to determine whether an escort is necessary or practical given the space available at some venues.

6. Salutations

At the appropriate time, i.e. either after the minutes have been read and matters arising (if any) have been dealt with or after the Lodge is opened in the 3rd Degree if appropriate, the PrGStwd will proceed to the West and salute the WM (placing his wand in his left hand if in the 1st Degree or in the wand holder if in the 3rd Degree) and say e.g. “Worshipful Master and Brethren, your Lodge is honoured by the presence of RW Brother Raymond Guthrie, he is the Most Excellent Grand Superintendent in and over the Province of Somerset and

the Provincial Grand Master for the Province of Somerset, and I call on you to rise (then once all standing) and salute him with **7**, taking your time with me, to order Brethren". (Remember to step and stand to order, passing the wand to the left hand). When the salutations are completed you will then say, "WM and Brethren be seated".

Another example of a salutation would be: VW Bro Benjamin GW Batley, Past Grand Sword Bearer of the United Grand Lodge of England and the Deputy Provincial Grand Master of the Province of Somerset, and I call on you to rise and salute him with **5**, taking your time with me"

Or "W Bro Anthony R Guthrie, Past Senior Grand Deacon of the United Grand Lodge of England and the Assistant Provincial Grand Master of the Province of Somerset, and I call on you to rise and Salute him with **5**, taking your time with me"

Or "W Bro Russell K Woodland, Past Junior Grand Deacon of the United Grand Lodge of England and the Assistant Provincial Grand Master of the Province of Somerset, and I call on you to rise and salute him with **5**, taking your time with me"

Once completed ask the Brethren to be seated. Then wait until the Ruler has responded and then return to your seat, taking care at all times to square the Lodge and to acknowledge the Lodge DC before resuming your seat. You will note that you need to announce their Grand Rank first followed by their Provincial Grand Rank. There will be no further salutations. This revised procedure is set out in the version of the Lodge DC's Handbook.

7. Outgoing Procession

- The Lodge DC will organise the outgoing procession but it will be essential that the PrGStwd discusses and advises the Lodge DC of the usual protocol. Normally the Ruler prefers to accompany the WM if the WM processes out. The Lodge DC should be made aware that the WM is expected to accompany the Ruler in the procession. Directly behind them are the Lodge Wardens. Any other Rulers would then be arranged with the most senior behind the Lodge Senior Warden. Then Provincial Grand Wardens, Grand Officers, Provincial Grand Officers and VIP's Etc
- If the Lodge does not have a retiring procession. Immediately after the Lodge is closed and the closing Hymn and the National Anthem (if sung) has been sung, the PrGStwd will say "The Brethren will remain standing whilst the RW Provincial Grand Master, (or the Deputy Provincial Grand Master or the Assistant Provincial Grand Master) accompanied by the WM retires from the Lodge. Will the Provincial Grand Officers of Somerset, please form a double column in the South to escort the PGM (or DPGM or APM) from the Lodge (pause), Provincial Grand Wardens, Grand Officers, Provincial Grand Officers". These brethren having formed up should turn inwards. The PrGStwd will then court bow to the Ruler then to the WM, who will proceed together through the column **lead** by the PrGStwd followed by any other Ruler, Provincial Grand Wardens, Grand Officers, Active Provincial Grand Officers and Past Provincial Grand Officers, etc. who will fall in behind. Confer with the Lodge DC in all cases to ascertain any Lodge variations.

8. Festive Board

Before dining the Ruler will be entertained by the WM and members of the Lodge, but the PrGStwd should ensure that he is readily available to the Ruler should he be required and he should ensure that the Ruler is being looked after properly.

- The PrGStwd will check with the Lodge DC that the Ruler is received by the Brethren at the festive board, immediately preceding the WM when everyone else has taken their places. The Lodge DC makes the announcement of his entry. The PrGStwd will lead the Ruler to his seat.
- Check the correct toast list is being used
- The PrGStwd should ensure that the Ruler is well looked after during the meal and that, when the Ruler is going to reply to the appropriate toast, he should stand behind the Ruler.
- During the course of the Festive Board, he should ascertain from the Ruler at what time, or at what point in the proceedings, he wishes to retire and convey that information to the Lodge DC. If the evening is progressing in a timely fashion, then the Ruler will normally stay until the end of the proceedings. However if there is considerable delay in the serving and consumption of the meal or if the Lodge DC is slow to make progress through taking wine and then the official toasts, the PrGStwd should encourage the Lodge DC to accelerate the process to avoid the need for the Ruler to depart before the end of the formalities.
- The Rulers have set a guideline of four and a half hours for a MCV. This has been communicated in bulletins to Lodge Secretaries and is also contained in the Lodge DC's Handbook. Should the need arise that the Ruler does wish to retire before the end of formalities, the PrGStwd will ask the Brethren to stand to order at that time by announcing e.g. "Brethren you will rise while the RW PGM, (or the DPGM or the APM) retires". The PrGStwd accompanies the Ruler and sees him to his car.

9. General Points

- Always try to ensure that the Ruler's driver is well looked after.
- Dress will normally be morning dress with short coat, or dark suit and Provincial tie. Provincial Officers on duty **do not** wear dinner jackets with black or Provincial bow ties, irrespective of what the Officers or Brethren of the Lodge wear and no matter what it says on the summons regarding dress. When on duty the Royal Arch Jewel & Tercentenary Jewel are only to be worn.

W Bro Garry Sharp
PrGDC
Amended April 2024