

# Discover Freemasonry in Somerset

INTEGRITY  
FRIENDSHIP  
RESPECT  
SERVICE



**Somerset  
Freemasonry**

# What are your guiding principles?

Freemasons use four important guiding principles to help define their path through life: integrity, friendship, respect and service.

In today's world filled with uncertainty, these principles ring as true as they have at any point in the organisation's history.

One of the oldest social and charitable organisations in the world, Freemasonry's roots lie in the traditions of the medieval stonemasons who built our cathedrals and castles.



*"Having only been a Freemason for a short time, I am in awe of the warmth and welcome I have received. Joining Masonry is one of the best decisions I have ever made."*

JOHN  
BENEVOLENT LODGE

Membership is open to people from all backgrounds and the organisation's aim is to empower members to be the best they can be – it's about building character, supporting members as individuals, and helping them make a positive contribution to society.

*“Freemasonry is so diverse – you never know who you will meet. One thing is certain though – we all hold the same core values.”*

SCOTT  
ROYAL NAVAL  
LODGE



Freemasonry provides a structure for members to come together under these common goals, enabling people to make new friendships, develop themselves and make valuable contributions to charitable causes.

# INTEGRITY:

## Building good people

Rather than working on buildings like the masons of old, today's Freemasons focus on building themselves as people of integrity, and membership provides the structure to help achieve that goal.



*"I enjoy being part of something so steeped in tradition. It's uplifting to see things done properly and be able to apply those teachings to one's own daily life."*

DAVID  
TYNTE LODGE



*“Freemasonry brings out the best in people. You discover things inside yourself that you never thought possible. Helping others becomes second nature and it’s a great feeling.”*

NORMAN  
LODGE OF PERPETUAL  
FRIENDSHIP

At an individual level, being a Freemason gives members a sense of purpose, supporting and guiding them on their journey through life. Collectively, members are bonded through a sense of unity and equitability – principles fundamental to Freemasonry.

## THE HISTORY OF THE HANDSHAKE

Historically, stonemasons travelled from place to place to secure work. At this time, handshakes were commonly used as a means for stonemasons to identify themselves, proving their level of experience and indicating what position they held. Today, in recognition of this practice, handshakes are used ceremonially as a way of identifying the various levels within Freemasonry.

# FRIENDSHIP:

## Building together

One of the oldest social organisations in the world, Freemasonry is not defined by an ideology.

It is open to people from all religions and political persuasions, and provides the common foundation for friendships between members, many of which will last for life.



*“We meet regularly, sometimes formally at masonic meetings and sometimes down the pub. You meet people from other Lodges and they may ask you to visit their Lodge as their guest. Freemasonry has a fantastic social life.”*

HARRY  
SAINT KEW LODGE

Being a Freemason means something different to each person who joins, but whether looking to make acquaintances or develop their own potential, all members share a sense of togetherness that strengthens their ability to succeed and grow.



*“We don’t discuss religion or politics at our meetings. There are so many other topics to discuss over dinner. You always find something to talk about because we all have the same values in common.”*

BEN  
ROYAL SOMERSET  
LODGE

## BUILDING FRIENDSHIPS FOR LIFE

From university schemes, to new masons clubs, to special interest Lodges, Freemasonry gives members many opportunities to make friends for life. Finding bonds with people who share common interests and meeting people from all different backgrounds are only some of the ways Freemasonry can help cultivate lasting friendships.

# RESPECT:

## Building unity

With a membership of more than 200,000 people drawn from communities across the UK, Freemasonry brings people together irrespective of their race, religion or any other perceived differences that can divide us as a society.

*“Freemasonry has no boundaries. It respects and welcomes men from all walks of life and any religion or race. You are always equal amongst your brethren.”*

ROBERT  
PARRETT & AXE  
LODGE





*“As Freemasons we have started to become more involved with the public. I have been amazed by the warm welcome we have received when we have taken part in local events dressed in our regalia.”*

GRAHAM  
LODGE OF LOVE  
& HONOUR

Our members are proud to be Freemasons, and they are encouraged to talk openly about what the organisation does and what it means to be part of it.

## FEMALE FREEMASONS

There are two female-only Grand Lodges, the Honourable Fraternity of Ancient Freemasons (HFAF) and the Order of Women Freemasons (OWF). The HFAF and OWF follow exactly the same ritual and wear the same regalia as male Freemasons – and they often work closely with community and charity projects.

Female Freemasons Annie Besant and Charlotte Despard were prominent figures in the push for universal suffrage in the early twentieth century. Besant was a British theosophist and women’s rights activist who also established the first UK lodge of the International Order of Co-Freemasonry (Le Droit Humain) in 1902. Despard, an Anglo-Irish suffragist, pacifist and novelist, was a founding member of various reformist organisations whose presence lives on today in the North London pub named in her honour.

# SERVICE:

## Building compassion

Kindness and charitable giving are deeply ingrained within the principles of Freemasonry. The organisation provides a support structure that helps members make positive contributions to communities and worthwhile causes through fundraising events or volunteer work.



*“Freemasonry teaches us to think about charity and the needs of others. Over the years Somerset Freemasons have donated over 50,000 teddies to local hospitals to comfort children in distress. I know our donations go where they are supposed to and are applied to the maximum effect. It doesn't need to be a fortune – every little helps.”*

ROGER  
COLUMBANUS LODGE

Individuals can make an important contribution at local, national and global level by giving both their time and money. Thanks to their efforts, Freemasonry is one of the largest charitable givers in the country, contributing more than £53m to deserving causes in 2023 alone. Freemasons don't only donate money – over 5 million hours of volunteer work was undertaken by Freemasons in 2023.



*“Contributing to local charities such as the Dorset & Somerset Air Ambulance makes me feel deeply connected to my community. I am so proud to see the Masonic Square & Compasses displayed on the bodywork.”*

DAVID  
SAINT ALPHEGE LODGE



## BURSARIES

For a decade Somerset Freemasons will have provided bursaries to hundreds of disadvantaged young people to enable them to develop personal key life skills through taking part in the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme in Somerset, many achieving their Bronze, Silver or Gold Award.

# Membership

Becoming a Freemason means you'll be joining more than 200,000 members throughout England and Wales as well as Districts overseas.

Membership is open to any man over the age of 18 irrespective of their race or religion, and women are invited to join one of two female-only Grand Lodges: the Order of Women Freemasons and the Honourable Fraternity of Ancient Freemasons.

In total, we have more than 7,000 Lodges, with students also able to join one of the 81 University Scheme Lodges.

*"The social side of Freemasonry is amazing. I love the traditional values and seriousness of the ceremonies but I also enjoy socialising with my friends."*

GAZ  
ADAIR LIGHT  
BLUE CLUB



Lodge meetings are typically held in two parts. The first involves more administrative procedures, such as proposing and balloting for new members and receiving news about charitable fundraising.

The second part focuses on ceremonies, which might relate to areas such as the admittance of new members or the installation of the Master of the Lodge and his officers - a process made up of three degrees, or stages, each one marked by a special ceremony.

True to the sense of friendship and togetherness among Freemasons, meetings are also social events, providing an occasion for members to dine together.

Outside of the Lodge, activities include community fundraising and volunteering activities as well as a varied programme of events where spouses, partners and families are welcome.



## FINDING THE RIGHT FREEMASONRY FOR YOU

There are many specialist Lodges in Freemasonry. *Somerset Fairway Lodge* for example, is one of a vast number found throughout the country. The Lodge is for those who are keen golfers. Other specialist Lodges include a variety of sports, as well as motoring and young member Lodges.

# Discover Freemasons' Hall

Originally built as a peace memorial to honour the thousands of Freemasons who fought during the First World War, Freemasons' Hall is the home of the United Grand Lodge of England.

The stunning Grade II listed Art Deco building sits in the heart of London's West End and welcomes more than 200,000 people from across the world through its doors every year, including members visiting for meetings and guests attending special events.



TRIP ADVISOR QUOTES:

*'Beautiful architecture and very interesting displays'*

*'It's a great place to visit'*

*'An amazing experience'*

*'A stunning building and a very interesting museum'*



#### TRIP ADVISOR QUOTES:

*'An absolutely superb guided visit'*

*'Join one of the free tours for an unforgettable visit'*

*'A magnificent building, very friendly, helpful and informative staff and volunteers and an excellent (free) tour. Lots to see and a really interesting insight into the world of Freemasonry'*

Members of the public can visit Freemasons' Hall from Monday to Saturday, with guided tours showcasing the architecture and history of the building, which comprises 22 Lodge Rooms, the Museum of Freemasonry, Letchworth's shop, Board and Committee rooms and administrative offices.

An in-demand venue, Freemasons' Hall has been hired as a location for many major films and television programmes in recent years, including Spectre, Sherlock Holmes, Assassin's Creed and Spooks.

## AN ART DECO MASTERPIECE

Freemasons' Hall is one of the last remaining Art Deco buildings in England still used for its original purpose. Did you know, the mighty bronze doors to the Grand Temple weigh one and a quarter tonnes each and the original cloakroom can hold 1,700 coats, bags and top hats?

The building and Museum of Freemasonry are open to the public Monday-Saturday; be sure to take a guided tour to discover all that Freemasons' Hall has to offer.



# Somerset Freemasonry

## Somerset Freemason Lodges



[www.somersetfreemasons.org](http://www.somersetfreemasons.org)