

Provincial Fraternal Visits Protocol

The Provincial Grand Master, RW Bro Ray Guthrie, is continually looking for ways to improve communication between Brethren, the Lodges in the Province and the Provincial Executive. He is also very keen that our fraternal link with the Royal Arch should be strengthened. To this end Provincial Fraternal Visits may now include Senior Members of the Royal Arch.

These visits will be attended by either the Provincial Grand Master, the Deputy Provincial Grand Master or one of the Assistant Provincial Grand Masters, accompanied by a Provincial Grand Steward who will act as Provincial DC for the evening. They will also be accompanied by Members of the Provincial Team, Provincial Executive and may also include Members of The Provincial Royal Arch Chapter Team. The object of the visit is to allow the Provincial Ruler and Members of the Provincial Team to enjoy an ordinary meeting of the Lodge and join the Brethren afterwards at the Festive Board. This will give members of the Lodge the opportunity to discuss any Masonic questions or concerns that they may have with Senior Members of the Province. It will also give the Provincial Ruler and his Visiting Team the opportunity to communicate the latest News from the Province in a less formal setting than the Installation Meeting.

To mark the importance of these visits the following protocol should be observed;

- The summons for the meeting will state the name of the Provincial Ruler in attendance
- An item on the Agenda, immediately after the Lodge has been opened will indicate that the Lodge will receive the Provincial Ruler, who will be formally introduced into the Lodge by his Acting DC. The Worshipful Master will proffer him the Gavel
- After the adoption of Minutes (or matters arising) salutations will be accorded to the Provincial Ruler by the acting Provincial DC
- The Provincial Ruler and Members of the Team will retire after the Closing of the Lodge with the Master under the direction of the Lodge DC. If it is not the custom of the Lodge to retire in procession, the Lodge DC will ensure the Brethren remain standing while the visiting Team retires from the Lodge with the Worshipful Master.

At The Festive Board, it is the Provincial Ruler's wish to sit with the Lodge Membership Officer and Lodge Mentor. Other Members of the Team should, wherever possible be sat with their opposite number in the Lodge (ie; Wardens, Charity Steward, Deacons etc)

Members of the Royal Arch should be sat with the Lodge RA Representative along with any Master Masons of the Lodge who may be interested in becoming Royal Arch Companions and completing their Craft Journey. Members of the Visiting Team should not be sat together. This will give Lodge members the chance to converse freely with members of the Visiting Team. Toasts should be short and to the point and the Toast to the Province should be given by one of the Junior Officers of the Lodge which the Provincial Ruler will respond to.

Arrangements for the Provincial Fraternal Visit will be co-ordinated by the Provincial Deputy Grand Director of Ceremonies in conjunction with individual Lodge Secretaries. Visiting Brethren will pay their own Dining costs.

Details of the date of the visit and who is attending can be found by clicking the following link:

<https://www.somersetfreemasons.org/provincial-fraternal-visits-protocol/>

Secretaries and DCs of Lodges are advised to bookmark the link in order that they can return to the page to check nearer the time just exactly who will be attending. The acting Provincial DC will contact the Lodge DC before the visit takes place to clarify any points of procedure.

A fraternal visit by its very name indicates that it is an occasion that should be enjoyed by all concerned, the Provincial Grand Master sincerely hopes that this will be the case and that these visits will prove valuable to both the Province and Individual Lodges.

W Bro Garry Sharp
Provincial Grand Director of Ceremonies