

Dear Brethren,

Following the Director of Ceremonies meeting at Newquay on 30 October, please see the outlined items and content discussed below (in no particular order) for your information.

While many of these points may already be standard practice, I wanted to confirm and document them in case anyone was unsure. Please have a read of the below points and disseminate them to the relevant Brethren as needed.

Signs. Please ensure that if able, all members take a symbolic s..p when giving a sign. Basic stuff, but the sign is not complete or correct unless the r...t h..l is in the hollow of the l..t f..t. Likewise discharging the sign, particularly in the 1st degree, unless your ritual specifically states it, the hand should not be clenched on discharge of the sign.

Saluting Provincial Wardens: This has come up a few times, so to confirm, only Active Provincial Grand Wardens of the Province of Cornwall are saluted if they attend a meeting. In this case, Past Wardens remain seated when the lodge is called to order to salute the active Wardens and remain seated when the Active Wardens give their thanks. Past Wardens stand in reply to the general provincial salutations. This differs to the Mark degree, which is likely where the confusion arises.

Grand Officers: We often refer to them as "Grand Lodge Officers," this is not correct. Just as we say "Provincial Grand Officers" rather than "Provincial Grand Lodge Officers," we should simply use "Grand Officers" instead of "Grand Lodge Officers."

Salutations: Salutations adhere to Rule 6 of the Book of Constitutions, with the senior active ruler present being saluted first, regardless of who is the Presiding Officer. E.g. If an APGM is the Presiding Officer, but the PGM is also in attendance – the PGM is saluted first. The same applies to the preamble when giving toasts, the Senior officer present must be acknowledged first, regardless of who is the Presiding Officer.

Seating: To contradict the above, the Presiding Ruler is always seated immediately next to the WM, both in the meeting and at the Festive Board. For example, if an APGM is the Presiding Officer but the PGM is also in attendance, the APGM is seated next to the WM.

Wands: We spoke a little about the use of wands and their practicalities, here's a brief write-up that may be nice to read or pass on to your ADC and Deacons –

In Masonic lodges, wands serve as symbols of authority and distinction. These instruments are far more than decorative accessories; they are badges of office, representing the dignity and responsibilities of the officers who carry them. Each officer designated with a wand, usually the Director of Ceremonies, Assistant Director of Ceremonies, Deacons, and sometimes Stewards, uses it as a visible sign of their role, underscoring their connection to the ceremonial work and their duty to uphold the lodge's solemnity and order.

It is essential to treat Masonic wands with respect and reverence, recognising them as symbols of office rather than functional tools. Using a wand as a pointer or for casual gestures detracts from its symbolic value, diminishing its role in the ritual and the respect it commands. Proper use involves carrying the wand with poise, and maintaining a subtle and respectful stance that reinforces the serious nature of the lodge's proceedings.

Historically, wands in Masonic ritual represent the authority and direction given to those who guide and support the Worshipful Master's work. When an officer holds a wand, it signifies their duty to lead with decorum and assist in conducting the ritual with grace and precision. This helps instil a sense of solemnity among all members, reminding everyone of the greater purpose and principles of Freemasonry.

In summary, Masonic wands should be handled with care and respect, befitting their status as badges of office. They symbolise authority and tradition.

Master Elect: Before taking his first Obligation, the Master Elect must remove his gloves and collar, irrespective of rank. The WM's collar must be directly placed on the shoulders at the point of investiture. It is acceptable for the WM to replace his collar below the Master's collar after he has been invested if he wishes.

Inner Working: It is common for the Lodge Chaplain to start reading the Inner Working prayer before the Master Elect has had an opportunity to kneel with the s... of f..... Please speak to your Chaplain in advance to ensure that he does not begin the prayer until the M.E. is kneeling. A suggestion was put forward that the WM does not say 'turn to the E...' and 'let us pray' until the M.E. is kneeling.

Lodge Collars for Active Officers: Lodge officers who hold either Active Provincial or Active Grand Rank should not be invested with or wear a lodge collar over their active collar, but instead, when being invested, the collar should be placed over their arm.

The only exception to this is when the officer is the WM of his lodge, in which case he will wear the Master's collar whilst in his lodge. This only applies to Active Provincial and Active Grand Officers; Past Provincial and Past Grand Officers will continue to wear lodge collars.

The Festive Board: Please see the separate document outlining procedures and protocols for festive boards.

Reading Ritual, Ritual Preparation, and Sharing the Load: Reading from the book should be avoided at all costs, and we as DCs must be very mindful not to allow this to creep in as 'the norm'

Supporting our brothers as DCs through pre-planning, assisting in overcoming learning difficulties, and delegation is key. We should never deny a Brother the opportunity to progress through the chair because ritual isn't his strong suit, but we certainly shouldn't put him in a position where reading is his only option - so we must consider members' comfort levels with memorisation and performance.

The WM (or any member) reading from the book should not be the go-to solution. Establishing the capability of a brother beforehand and then assigning and delegating sections of the ceremony well before allows members to prepare and build confidence, and is one of our key responsibilities as DCs.

On the subject of ceremonies, reading, etc. If you haven't, I would encourage you to read this article by Charles Hopkinson-Wolley, the Assistant Grand Master, who wrote this article when he was Grand Director of Ceremonies, elaborating further -<https://www.ugle.org.uk/discover-freemasonry/blog/charles-hopkinson-woolley-experience-Freemasonry>

Prompts: In a well-run lodge, prompts should come sparingly and only from designated prompters, such as the Immediate Past Master or the Director of Ceremonies. When necessary, prompts should be subtle and reserved for moments where meaning may be compromised, with a discreet prompter providing silent guidance to preserve the flow.

The ultimate aim is a dignified, respectful ceremony that centres on the candidate's experience. Heartfelt, authentic delivery carries much more weight than word-perfect precision recited in a detached tone, or a ceremony read from the book.

Please also see the document 'Strategy to Minimise Reading Ritual'

PGL Meeting: All current Worshipful Masters will again be invited to parade into Provincial Grand Lodge next year, on Saturday, 11th April 2026, at Redruth School.

We are keen for every Lodge to be represented in this procession, so please ensure your Worshipful Master is aware of the date and that either he or an appropriate representative will attend on behalf of your Lodge. (Last year, only four Lodges were unrepresented – let's aim for a full turnout this year)

In addition, all Brethren raised since April 2025 will be personally invited to attend the meeting. These Master Masons will process in front of the PGM and act as a Guard of Honour during his procession into Provincial Grand Lodge.

Imagine the sight of 70–80 light blue Master Masons proudly forming the Guard of Honour – what a memorable and inspiring experience this would be for them at such an early stage in their Masonic journey!

Direct invitations will be sent to Worshipful Masters, MMs and Lodge Secretaries in due course, but please start talking about it now.

As Directors of Ceremonies, I would also ask you to take ownership of encouraging attendance – particularly among your Light Blues. If possible, escort them yourselves, offering guidance and explanation throughout the event. For many, this will be their first experience of Provincial Grand Lodge, and your support will help make it a truly positive and educational occasion.

Simon