



Provincial Grand Lodge of Durham

September 2008

ADVICE ON MASONIC SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES

Masonic web sites and electronic communications are subject to guidance issued by The Board of General Purposes. This guidance does not permit "guest books" and "chat rooms" on Masonic websites. To prevent inappropriate content they would need to be monitored 24/7 and this is not practicable or worthwhile.

Recent developments from the "chat room" idea including such sites as "Face Book" and "You Tube" are considered as potentially dangerous to individuals, as a number have found when applying for jobs and the prospective employer has trawled the net and found them "enjoying" themselves at social functions and being blissfully unaware that someone at the event has used a mobile phone to take indiscreet photos and posted them without the permission of those involved!

There are many examples of material being posted on both these systems deliberately to discredit or embarrass individuals. Whilst there is potential for good there is an even greater potential for damage (witting or unwitting) and whilst Grand Lodge accepts they cannot stop individual Freemasons setting up groups on social networking sites the Board of General Purposes does not endorse the practice.

The Provincial Grand Lodge of Durham supports and endorses the view of Grand Lodge and Freemasons in this Province are requested not to use social networking sites for communication or publication of Masonic matters or to set up groups with a Masonic theme.

If any such sites or groups are set up they will be "unofficial" and Freemasons in the Provincial Grand Lodge of Durham should not participate in this type of communication.

Advice on setting up Lodge websites is freely available on request from the Provincial Website Working Party at pwwp@durhamfreemasons.org.uk