



FREEMASONS OF THE PROVINCE OF DURHAM

SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDE

Keeping pace with communications is a challenge for any organisation and Freemasonry is no exception to this rule. But keep up we must as the written letter slowly becomes a thing of the past and even email these days seems to be too slow for a world that moves at a frantic pace.

Social media is the fastest growing form of communication and love it or loath it, it is here to stay, used correctly it is an amazing communications tool as it amplifies any message posted by connecting groups of people instantly with a single click. With this in mind, social media when misused can be as harmful as it can be rewarding.

The following suggested guidelines are not here to curb any enthusiasm towards social media and masonic activity but are provided to help us all embrace the future and reap the undeniable benefits of such communications platforms for ourselves and the Craft. Please always remember that, where the law permits, our Province reserves the right to monitor use of social media and operates a zero tolerance approach with regard to misuse which may be harmful to the reputation of the Province or Freemasonry in general.

GUIDELINES

We understand that the use of social media is, for most a private matter but must stress that anything posted online is available for all to read and in most cases will be available for viewing for a long time. Therefore, those using social media and choosing to make reference to Freemasonry, please consider the following guidelines.

- Do not post anything online that you would not be happy to share with a non-mason, i.e. member of the public;
- That your comments or postings are in accordance with the principles and tenets of the Craft, if in doubt the Book of Constitutions is there for your guidance.
- That you are personally responsible for the comments you make. Always try and remember that you are speaking as an individual and not 'on behalf' of your lodge, Province or Freemasonry in general.
- Do not blog or Tweet about private lodge matters.
- Remember that information posted online can remain there for extended periods of time. Do not disclose any of the methods of recognition i.e. signs, tokens or words.
- Ensure that you respect copyright, privacy and confidentiality and all other applicable laws.

- Do not reference other brethren or publish their photographs without prior consent.
- If creating a group for Freemasons to chat and share information, ensure it is closed but it should never be 'secret' or 'hidden'.
- Remember what may seem funny to you could easily be offensive to others - Think before you post.
- Be polite and respectful to others, even in times of serious discussion and debate.
- Do not publish material which is defamatory of, or injurious to, any other person or organisation and avoid criticism, harassment or vilification in all cases and at all times.
- A Freemason is taught to be cautious and already knows to avoid conversation concerning race, creed and politics; also, not to offend through personal insults or obscenity - in summary, not to engage in any conduct which would be unacceptable within Freemasonry itself.
- Avoid all propaganda vehicles (especially in these uncertain times) most of these posts are biased and of a misleading nature, there to promote a political cause or point of view.
- Be aware of your association with Freemasonry and ensure that your profile and content is consistent with how you would wish to present yourself externally, always remember how far social media can extend.
- Adhere to the 'Terms of Use' of any sites and seek to conform to the cultural and behavioural norms of the social media platform being used.
- Avoid adding posts and comments when under the influence of alcohol or at such a time that you may regret later what you have posted, remember masonic discipline extends to social media.

As a last guide remember to be nice, respectful, thoughtful, helpful, open and friendly or in short 'Remember to be a Mason'. If we all think before we post we can harness this awesome communications tool and interact with others, masons and non masons alike and spread the word of our outstanding fraternity to a much wider and diverse audience.

If you require any further information, please contact:

The Provincial Communications Officer - Michael Graham - mgraham@pglDurham.org

Website: www.durhamfreemasons.org

Facebook www.facebook.com/durhamfreemasons

Twitter: www.twitter.com/PGLDurham