

PGM Address to Promotions meeting 30th Nov. 2018

Good evening Brethren, it is such a pleasure to see so many of you here today to celebrate the Promotion of your friends and colleagues.

First of all, may I offer my congratulations to all of those Brethren whom I have had the Privilege of Promoting to their well-deserved new rank this evening. They are all key people in their Lodges and Masonic Halls and I wish them many happy years to enjoy their new positions.

Since our last Annual Meeting we have welcomed 55 new Master Masons in the Craft and 27 new Exaltees into the Royal Arch Chapters and I am sure you will all keep a watchful eye on them and be ready to mentor, support and advise them in order that they get the most out of their new situations.

There are some other Brethren I would like to point out to you all.

At my installation I announced the launch of the Durham Light Blues Club and I am pleased to report that the membership has already increased to 60 and some of them are here today.

You will all have heard that this new club has been formed to foster broader association across the Province and facilitate events that these newer Masons and their friends and families can enjoy. It is open to Brethren from entered apprentice to Past Masters as long as they do not have a Provincial Rank. Hence the "Light Blues". Some of the members attended Agricola's "Pork or Pig" night to help with the consumption of the roast and enjoyed a great night out. More events are planned including a social bowling night in Washington and a visit to Eanred Lodge social in December.

Would any Light Blue members present please stand up and be recognised?

Welcome and I wish you well in your endeavours.

You will also probably be aware the Provincial Executive for the Craft and the Provincial Executive for the Royal Arch have been combined and formed into a new Provincial Team who will work together across the Province and significant efforts will be made to lift the profile of the Royal Arch. Numerous support initiatives for this are being considered.

For some time, we have been concerned that the various working groups we have are in some ways working in isolation from each other and we feel that a review of overlaps and duplication will demonstrate that a restructure is necessary. Work has started on this already. Over the next few months we will assess the effectiveness of our current structures and will develop a Provincial Management group working alongside the Provincial Team that will review and direct all of our activities. We hope to engage a lot more Grand Officers and experienced Masons to join this group.

The main areas will be Finance systems, Asset Management (including Masonic Centres), Learning and Development. Almoners support, Retention and attraction of members, Mentoring, Benevolence / Charity Management, communications, maintaining the Festival impetus, Events management, I.T. infrastructure and digitising of Secretariat reports forms etc.

A Review of the Honours system is already underway, and we hope to have a presentation of the proposed improvements by early March next year.

Restructure of the communications team is also underway and will be announced very shortly. We are still short of a Volunteer for a Royal Arch Co-ordinator and some contributors. A special training session for volunteers is being arranged for early in the New Year

The website is already being updated and redesigned to make it easier to use and more informative we hope this will be ready in the first quarter of 2019.

The Badging of all of our communications (Logos letterheads etc.) is being updated and will be rolled out by the New Year.

We have made tremendous progress over the past few years in many areas but if we are to remain relevant to this generation, we need to change our game and the initiatives we are discussing along with those coming out of the United Grand Lodge and Supreme Grand Chapter we hope will be worthy of enthusiastic participation.

None of this will happen overnight, we need to take a measured approach, properly timed, with realistic targets and with experienced and enthusiastic volunteers to join the various groups as they are needed.

The new Provincial team are fully committed to this approach. It is your Province Brethren, if you think you can contribute in any way please let us know. We are all volunteers and I am convinced that we have the right people to make decisions and implement improvements that will be to the benefit of Masonic Halls, Lodges, Chapters, Brethren and Companions alike.

We will do our best to keep everyone informed as we proceed, hopefully without communication overload.

Brethren I feel privileged to have the opportunity to lead this great Province in a time that I believe will be transformational to Freemasonry in general and our Province in particular. I am looking forward to working with you all to achieve the best we can be and have lots of fun on the way. Thank you for your support (past and present) your encouragement and hopefully your help in the future.

On your behalf I would like to express our gratitude to the Provincial Secretariat, The DC team, The Stewards Lodge and the Management and Staff of the Lancastrian centre for making this evening possible and if you cannot stay for the Festive board have a safe journey home.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to wish all of you and your families a very Happy Christmas and a Prosperous and healthy New Year.

Thank you for your attention Brethren.