

Freemasonry

A guide to membership




Building Friendships, Shaping Lives, Supporting Communities, through Timeless Traditions



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During our 300-year history, we have focused on our core principles of Integrity, Friendship, Respect and Charity, and they continue to guide us today as we support our members and wider communities to build better lives together.

What is Freemasonry?

We are a unique members' organisation which has thrived for over 300 years. With no political or religious affiliations, we comprise members from all over the world seeking to expand their horizons and support their communities.

We meet in Lodges where we have ceremonial traditions that encourage us to be more tolerant and respectful, and to actively fulfil our civic and charitable responsibilities. We also make time to eat, drink and meet together, and form lifelong friendships.

To find out more about the history of Freemasonry please visit:

www.ugle.org.uk/discover-freemasonry/history-freemasonry


Freemasonry worldwide

Each Province and District is comprised of Lodges, and it is a Lodge that you join when you become a member. There are currently over 175,000 Freemasons, belonging to more than 6,300 Lodges in England and Wales and 720 overseas. Membership gives you access to all of them and the fun that comes with them.

The United Grand Lodge of England (UGLE) oversees Lodges spanning 48 Provinces (regions across England and Wales) and 32 active Districts located overseas.

UGLE is universally regarded as the Mother Grand Lodge of organised Freemasonry. In addition to our Provinces and Districts, we also recognise over 200 Grand Lodges around the world.

Freemasonry brings together an incredibly diverse range of individuals.

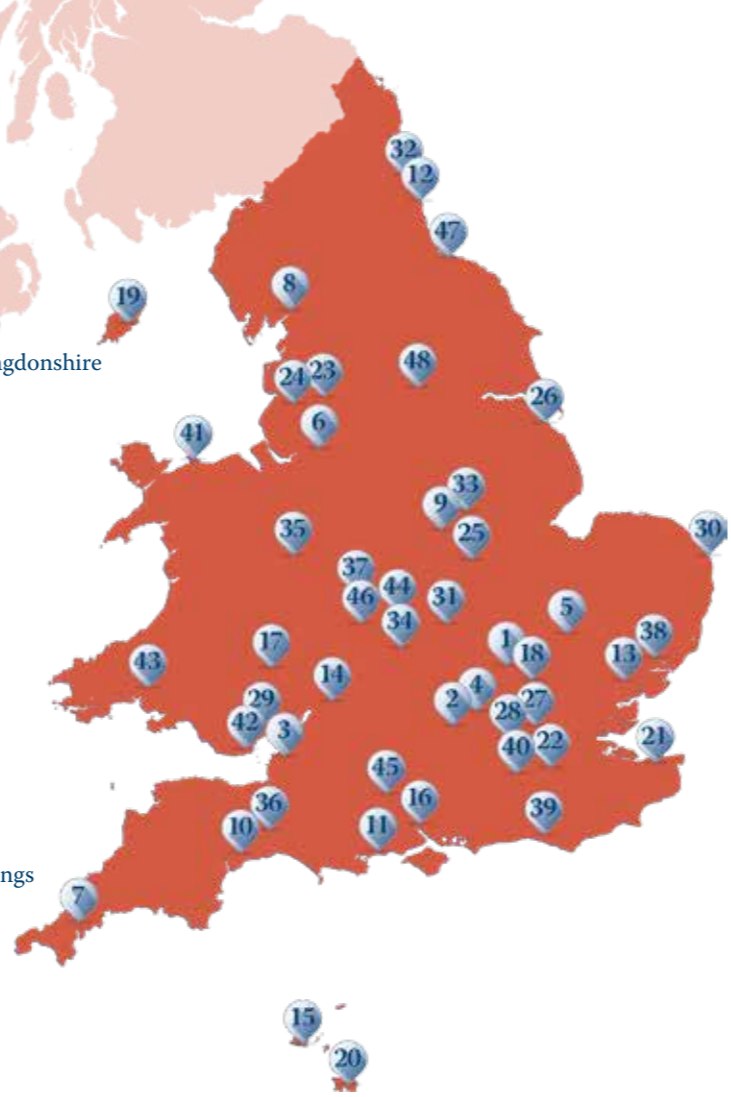


A Grand Lodge is the governing body of Freemasonry within a particular territory, where territory usually means a country or state.



Provinces

- | | |
|-------------------------------|--|
| 1. Bedfordshire | 26. Lincolnshire |
| 2. Berkshire | 27. London |
| 3. Bristol | 28. Middlesex |
| 4. Buckinghamshire | 29. Monmouthshire |
| 5. Cambridgeshire | 30. Norfolk |
| 6. Cheshire | 31. Northamptonshire & Huntingdonshire |
| 7. Cornwall | 32. Northumberland |
| 8. Cumberland & Westmorland | 33. Nottinghamshire |
| 9. Derbyshire | 34. Oxfordshire |
| 10. Devonshire | 35. Shropshire |
| 11. Dorset | 36. Somerset |
| 12. Durham | 37. Staffordshire |
| 13. Essex | 38. Suffolk |
| 14. Gloucestershire | 39. Surrey |
| 15. Guernsey & Alderney | 40. Sussex |
| 16. Hampshire & Isle of Wight | 41. North Wales |
| 17. Herefordshire | 42. South Wales |
| 18. Hertfordshire | 43. West Wales |
| 19. Isle of Man | 44. Warwickshire |
| 20. Jersey | 45. Wiltshire |
| 21. East Kent | 46. Worcestershire |
| 22. West Kent | 47. Yorkshire, North & East Ridings |
| 23. East Lancashire | 48. Yorkshire, West Riding |
| 24. West Lancashire | |
| 25. Leicestershire & Rutland | |



Districts

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1. Cyprus | 26. South America, Northern Division |
| 2. Gibraltar | 27. South America, Southern Division |
| 3. Bengal | 28. Trinidad & Tobago |
| 4. Bombay | 29. North Island, New Zealand |
| 5. Madras | 30. South Island, New Zealand |
| 6. Northern India | 31. Eastern Archipelago |
| 7. Sri Lanka | 32. Hong Kong & The Far East |
| 8. East Africa | |
| 9. Ghana | GROUPS |
| 10. KwaZulu-Natal | 33. Malta |
| 11. Namibia | 34. Montreal & Halifax |
| 12. Nigeria | 35. Portugal |
| 13. Orange Free State | 36. South West Pacific |
| 14. Sierra Leone & The Gambia | |
| 15. South Africa, Central Division | |
| 16. South Africa, Eastern Division | |
| 17. South Africa, North | |
| 18. South Africa, Western Division | |
| 19. Zambia | |
| 20. Zimbabwe & Malawi | |
| 21. Bahamas & Turks | |
| 22. Barbados & the Eastern Caribbean | |
| 23. Bermuda | |
| 24. Guyana | |
| 25. Jamaica & the Cayman Islands | |



Lodges meet throughout the year, with social events providing an occasion for members new and old to come together and network.

Members are encouraged to visit other Lodges under UGLE. Visiting gives members the opportunity to meet and make connections with people they would not normally have the chance to meet, knowing they share the same values.

Our headquarters in London at Freemasons' Hall, welcomes more than 200,000 people from across the world every year, including members visiting for meetings and guests attending special events. It is open to the public and offers free tours of the building including a museum and café – for details visit:

www.ugle.org.uk/freemasons-hall

Special Interest and University Scheme Lodges

From the Universities Scheme and New and Young Masons Clubs, to special interest Lodges, Freemasonry gives members many opportunities to make a wide circle of friends for life. Finding bonds with people who share common interests and meeting people from all different backgrounds are only some of the ways Freemasonry can help cultivate lasting friendships.

www.universitiesscheme.com

Legendary Freemasons

Over three centuries Freemasonry has attracted many people from Kings to astronauts. Many were and are leaders in their respective fields. There are far too many to name, but here is a small taster:

Royalty and leaders



George IV, Horatio Nelson, Harry S. Truman, George Washington, Winston Churchill, Edward VII, Arthur Wellesley, Davy Crockett, Frederick the Great, William Taft, Gerald Ford, Andrew Johnson, Warren Harding, Andrew Jackson, Edward VIII, James Garfield, Douglas MacArthur, Teddy Roosevelt, William McKinley, George VI, James Monroe, Franklin D. Roosevelt, William IV.

Arts and sports



Rudyard Kipling, Irving Berlin, Oscar Wilde, William Hogarth, Roy Rogers, Darryl Zanuck, Arthur Conan Doyle, Robert Burns, Harry Corbett, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Harold Lloyd, Gilbert & Sullivan, Nat 'King' Cole, Edward 'Duke' Ellington, Clark Gable, Josephine Baker, John Wayne, Harry Houdini, Audie Murphy, Peter Sellers, Jack Dempsey, 'Sugar Ray' Robinson, Gene Autry, William 'Count' Basie, Harry Cohn, Joe Frazier, John Entwistle, D.W. Griffith, Louis B. Mayer, Alf Ramsey, Oliver Hardy, Jerome Kern, Alexander Pushkin, Harpo Marx, the Warner Brothers.

Science and industry



Alexander Fleming, Joseph Lister, Edward Jenner, Virgil Grissom, Andre Citroen, Henry Ford, Edwin 'Buzz' Aldrin, James Watt, Henri Dunant, Thomas John Barnardo, Ernest Shackleton, Captain Robert Scott, Samuel Colt, Gustave Eiffel, John Glenn, Charles Samuel Myers.

Helping communities

Building on timeless values, Freemasonry helps you develop yourself, make lifelong friendships and play a more active role in today's society.

UGLE provides a support structure that helps members make a positive contribution to their communities and other worthwhile causes, through fundraising events and volunteer work. The funds we raise are generated by our many members each giving small amounts.

Through grants to local and national charities, Freemasons are helping to tackle some of the most important issues facing society.

Helping our members and their families

Grants are also awarded to alleviate financial strain faced by members and their families in crisis or distress.

Funded entirely through the generosity of Freemasons and their families, the aim is to build better lives by enabling opportunity, advancing healthcare and education, and promoting independence.

For more details about the Masonic Charitable Foundation (MCF) and all their work please visit: www.mcf.org.uk

To be a force for good by providing support, care and services to Freemasons and their families in need, and supporting other charities to help the most disadvantaged in society.

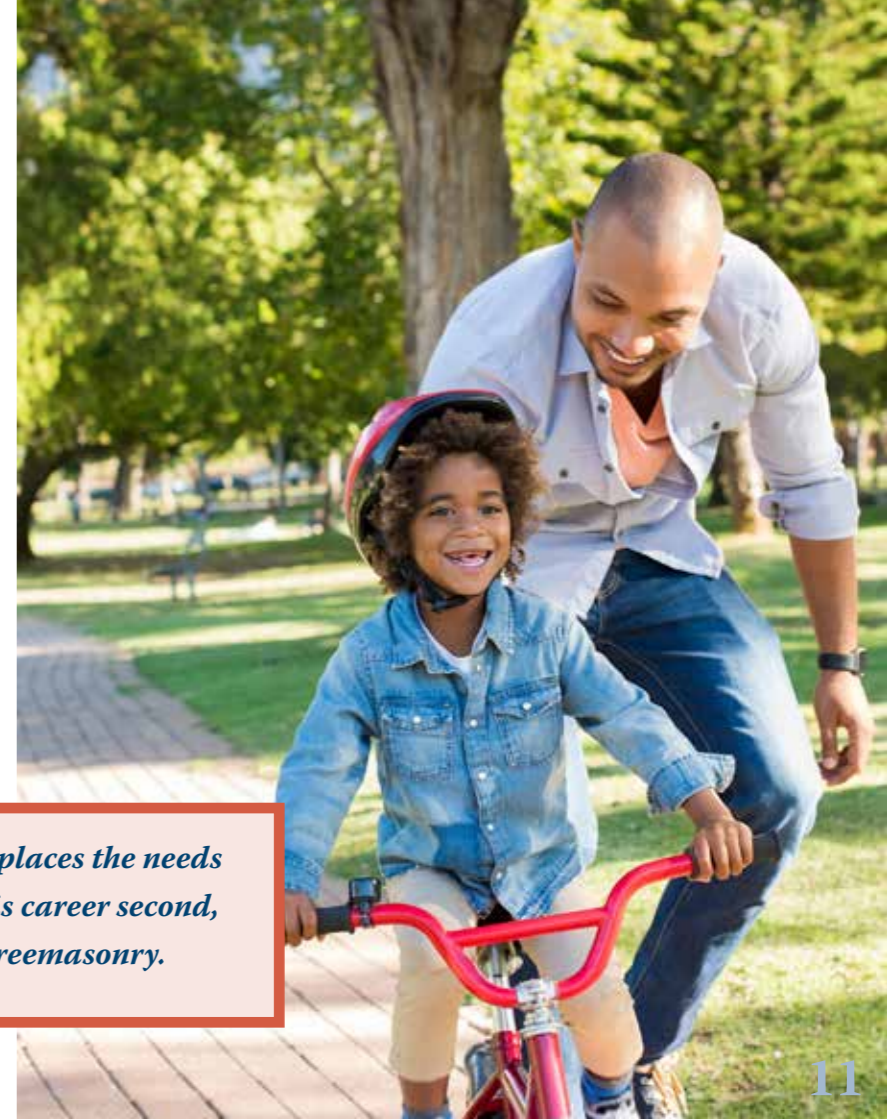
On a journey based on centuries-old traditions, we are encouraged to live by our core values of Integrity, Friendship, Respect and Charity in our private and public lives.

Your family and Freemasonry

Freemasonry is all about building character and supporting members as individuals. We encourage all members to be open with their family about membership and what that teaches and brings to them personally, so please share the information available to you.

Lodges organise a range of social events to which family and friends are very welcome. These can include dinners, dances, community fundraising and less formal occasions such as barbecues and live music events. Many members' partners become friends and often help organise some of the events.

Freemasonry asks that every member places the needs of his family first, his obligations to his career second, and after these his enjoyment of Freemasonry.





What are the qualifications for joining?

You must be male, at least 18 years old and have completed your secondary education; be of good character and hold a belief in a supreme being.

What will be expected of me?

Members can do as much as they wish. Participate as much as you can and ask questions. The administration, ceremonial, accounting, fundraising and general running of the Lodge is carried out voluntarily by its members.

What is the time commitment?

Each Lodge has a different schedule of meetings. Most meet between four and ten times a year. Lodges also hold social events, providing an occasion for members, their partners and families to come together.

How much will it cost?

There is a one-off joining fee and each Lodge will charge an annual subscription to cover its running costs. The membership team will discuss the options in your area with you.

Lodge meetings are normally followed by a dinner, with the cost depending on the venue. There is no requirement to attend the dinner if you are unable to, but you will likely find the socialising to be a highly enjoyable part of your experience as a Freemason.

Members are invited to donate to charity but this should always be within your means and it is entirely up to you how much you wish to contribute.

What is the dress code?

The usual dress code is a dark suit, white shirt, black shoes and black (or other suitable) tie. Some Lodges are more formal and members wear dinner suits.

Why do we wear regalia in Lodges?

Wearing regalia is historical and symbolic and has its roots in the use of aprons by ancient operative stone masons. Members wear different aprons depending on which level they have reached within Freemasonry. Just like a uniform, these serve to indicate to members where they rank in the organisation.

“What I enjoy most is being part of something meaningful, which challenges me and provides friendship and support all at the same time.”
Tony - Walesby Forest Lodge

Can women join?

There are two separate female-only Grand Lodges in the UK, which have about 5,000 members based here and abroad. To find out more please visit:

The Order of Women Freemasons
www.owf.org.uk

HFAF – Freemasonry for Women
www.hfaf.org

How to join?

There are two routes. You can be recommended by someone you know who is already a member or you can fill out the online enquiry form located on the UGLE website:

www.ugle.org.uk/contact-us/interested-in-becoming-a-freemason

From there, your enquiry will be sent to the most appropriate Province or District for where you live and/or work, and we will then contact and introduce you to a suitable Lodge. The Lodge will give you the opportunity to ask any questions and to find out more.



I joined Freemasonry to spend more time with my father, to meet different people from outside of my own social circle and give something back to my community in the terms of charity. I joined at 37 – I should have joined when I was in my late 20s.

Paul - Lodge of Stability

What happens next?

Your journey starts with the First Degree Ceremony – your Initiation into Freemasonry. Upon arrival you will be greeted by a member of the Lodge, who will assist with any questions you have and explain the process.

The First Degree Ceremony reminds you that all are equal – it is the responsibility of those that do well to look after those less fortunate.

For more information, please visit:

www.ugle.org.uk/discover-freemasonry/frequently-asked-questions



For me, Freemasonry replaced almost everything I lost when leaving the army. The values, camaraderie, teamwork, discipline, respect, a sense of belonging – and much more.

Paul - Wiltshire Lodge of Fidelity



Publications

Freemasonry Today is a quarterly magazine published on behalf of UGLE, featuring Freemason news, interviews and articles. The magazine is posted direct to all Freemasons, free of charge.

It is also free to view online: www.freemasonrytoday.com/magazine



Find out more



www.westwalesfreemasons.org



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