



PROVINCIAL GRAND LODGE
OF LEICESTERSHIRE & RUTLAND

SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY



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Introduction

The purpose of this document is to equip Lodges with the right information and set of guidelines to enable the creation of a Lodge website.

The guidelines contained within this document have been created in conjunction with the policies of the United Grand Lodge of England, and should be used in conjunction with other communication platforms, such as Social Media.

The Province of Leicestershire & Rutland can also provide assistance in the setting up of your new website, either through guidance, or the use of a website created on a pre-approved template, and handed over to you to manage.

Social Media Policy

United Grand Lodge of England (UGLE) and the Province of Leicestershire and Rutland recognise that the Internet can be an important medium in the process of informing both Freemasons and the public.

Social Media (namely Facebook, Twitter and Instagram) can be used to:

To promote Freemasonry in general

Build and increase engagement of Freemasonry with our local community

Build a network of Followers and to keep them informed of Lodge activity

Engage potential new members to Freemasonry

Direct users to Lodge websites for more information

Lodges using Social Media

Lodges within the Province are encouraged to use Social Media but insists these are used responsibly. Please be aware that there are regular time commitments to be borne by Lodge members. If your Lodge wishes to use social media then you will need to obtain prior approval from the Provincial Grand Lodge of Leicestershire and Rutland. Please contact the Provincial Communications Officer in the first instance. You will also need to identify suitable member(s) who will manage the Social Media on a daily basis and respond to any queries received promptly.

With the growth of Social Media use, there is also a need for consistency with regard to policy matters. Lack of control over access to and the placing of information on the Internet may cause problems. The Province of Leicestershire and Rutland has therefore produced these policies in addition to those issued by UGLE which must be followed.

To ensure accuracy and consistency on these policy matters all Lodge Social Media platforms must be pre-approved by the Provincial Communications Officer W.Bro. Richard Barnett (barnettrichard1@gmail.com).

Social Media use by Lodges which contain material which is considered by the Provincial Grand Lodge of Leicestershire & Rutland to be injudicious or contrary to policies laid out here will be required to amend or remove this material. Refusal or dilatory response would be likely to render the Lodge or Brother involved to Masonic disciplinary action.

Hosting

The current guidelines relate to all Social Media and Blogging platforms but specifically: Facebook (www.facebook.com)

Twitter (www.twitter.com)

Instagram (www.instagram.com)

General

The current UGLE guidelines for Social Media can be obtained from the Provincial Communications Officer.

Inform the Provincial Communications Officer of your designated Social Media Manager including contact details.

Wherever possible, the Title for the platform should be: Lodge Name, Number (eg. Wyggeston Lodge No.3448)

Include links to Lodge website.

Once your platform has been approved by the Province, include 'Approved by the Provincial Grand Lodge of Leicestershire and Rutland' and a link to the Provincial website (www.pgllleics.org.uk) in the profile.

All images used must be royalty free and, where appropriate, the Lodge must own the copyright of any images, or have the written consent from the copyright owner.

Once approved, please provide the live links of Social Media Platforms to the Provincial Communications Officer where live streams will be included on the specific Lodge page of the Provincial Website.

The Provincial Communications Officer will monitor each Social Media platform to ensure it is properly used. If any non-compliance is detected the Social Media Manager of that lodge will be informed and asked to modify the content.

On an ongoing basis, please inform the Provincial Communications Officer of a change of Social Media Manager (name and contact details)

Social Media Strategy

To build a portfolio of important 'Follows' (Twitter)/'Likes' (Facebook & Instagram)'

Following other users on Twitter is an indication of backing and must be used with caution. However, it is suggested that only the following should be 'Followed'/'Liked':

- UGLE
- Freemasons' Hall London
- Freemasonry Today
- Freemasons Library & Museum
- Official Feeds of Provincial Grand Lodges within the UGLE constitution
- The Masonic Charitable Foundation
- Leicestershire & Rutland Lodges
- Leicestershire & Rutland Masons
- Other UGLE Lodges
- Other known notable Masons (e.g. Provincial Officers involved with the day-to-day management of Provincial activities, or it is known that they have undertaken exceptional work as part of their Freemasonry)
- Local/National Supported Charities (eg. Warning Zone, LOROS, Rainbows)
- Local Press/Journalists

To regularly Post items of Lodge news and interest

To Repost [retweet (Twitter)/Share (Facebook)] items posted by others

Engagement in Social Media is important and items posted by others can be shared with your own Followers. Re-posting other users' good news is an effective way of promoting Freemasonry in general and it promotes goodwill in other users

Re-posting is permissible but always re-post the originator's post rather than a re-post.

Items should only be re-posted from those you are following provided the content is positive and of a masonic nature.

Posting

Think before you post! Bear in mind that everything posted on a public site is available for all to see and could be accessible for many years. Posts must therefore promote the principles and tenets of the Craft. Therefore do not engage in any conduct online that would not be acceptable in the company of freemasons or that is unlawful. For example, do not make derogatory remarks, bully, intimidate, harass other users, use insults or post content that is hateful, slanderous, threatening, discriminating or pornographic.

Trust is the key element in building relationships online. Build trust by keeping a respectful tone, even when disagreeing with others, and by responding to comments in a timely and polite manner. If you make a mistake, try to correct it promptly.

Try to avoid use of abbreviations and other common shorthand used for texting or online. Do not post as singular when posting as a Lodge use the plural: we, us, our etc.

You should aim for a small number of posts each week, picked for the engagement they're likely to generate - e.g. Facebook/Twitter/Instagram users like to share emotive stories in particular.

Images are required for each post where appropriate as it is a proven means of increasing engagement.

When posting for Facebook, Instagram and Twitter label with the following topics using hashtags: #Freemasons and the place where your Lodge meets (eg. #Leicester)

When the platform allows, the use of icons & emoji's are encouraged, but please use sensibly, for example to encourage people to look at a specific image or link, use 🗨️ or for musical stories use 🎵

Do not use social media platforms to exchange information that is private to Freemasonry unless access is restricted to a tightly controlled closed community with each participant having been cleared for receipt of such information and the site has been checked for appropriate security levels. Public sites are not appropriate sites for internal communication with other Brethren.

When using your Lodge social media account, do not “like”, comment or promote personal messages, such as sports announcements or political statements, keep it for Freemasonry only.

The following MUST NOT be included on any Social Media platform:

- Lodge Minutes/Summons
- Any personal contact information - Security and confidentiality are paramount.
- Advertising
- Any detail of ritual
- The phrase or like phrases to “Freemasonry is not a religion...”
- “Freemasonry is not a secret society...”
- Endorsement of any business (your own or others) by following or reposting items these or particular products

Risk Management

Key risks are:

Anti-Masonic activists may use the Twitter account to vent their feelings about the organisation causing negative publicity.

To avoid potential negative posting by others, consider immediately blocking those who follow/like where their profile suggests they might have an ulterior motive.

Reply courteously to any post and be as helpful as possible. If a person further insists and becomes a nuisance then consider blocking/reporting them.

Any derogatory statements/photos/links should be removed immediately and the poster blocked and reported to the host provider.

Set alert notifications to allow real-time monitoring

Set the “Profanity blocklist” to “High” on Facebook and Twitter to eliminate offensive language. A list of terms to be blocked can also be created.

Social Media accounts could be compromised allowing malicious individuals to post on behalf of the Lodge.

The password to the accounts must match high complexity standards. (Mixed capital / lower case letters / numbers) and changed regularly.

Individual Brethren using Social Media

Social Media use by a Member of a Masonic nature or which includes Masonic material and are established by or in connection with Lodges is also permissible.

If a Brother refers to or has an impact on Freemasonry, the disclaimer “The views expressed are my own” is required.

If material posted is considered by the Provincial Grand Lodge of Leicestershire & Rutland to be injudicious or contrary to policies laid out here, it will be required to be amended or removed. Refusal or dilatory response would be likely to render the Brother involved to Masonic disciplinary action.

Facebook

For a private presence, a “Facebook Group” should be used using the setting of 'Secret Group' so it does not appear in listings and only those invited are able to join.

For a public presence, a “Facebook Page” is appropriate.

Do not tag members in uploaded photographs. If they wish to they can tag themselves.

Twitter

#FF (Follow Friday)

#FF is a Twitter interaction to encourage users to recommend people that they follow and so increase the followers for recommended feeds. Follow Friday messages can be posted with the following restrictions:

Only those approved Twitter feeds listed above should be recommended. Avoid recommending individual's Twitter feeds unless they are known notables

Instagram

It is possible to create a single post on the Instagram mobile app, and post to your Facebook and Twitter account simultaneously. This can be setup by linking your accounts.

Instagram is more of an “image first” platform, so please ensure that your images are of a good quality. A stock of images is available on the Provincial Flickr account that are free for you to use, search within flickr for Leicestershire & Rutland Freemasons.

Reposting on Instagram is not allowed, however by use of the app “repost”, you are able to like and share posts by others such as UGLE and Provincial Grand Lodge.

If you require any further advice or information please contact the Provincial Communications Officer at barnettrichard1@gmail.com. For an example of Social Media platforms for Wyggeston Lodge, No.3448 please see the following:

www.facebook.com/Wyggeston www.twitter.com/WyggestonLodge
<https://www.instagram.com/wyggestonlodge>

And for Granite Lodge please see:

<https://www.facebook.com/Granitelodge2028/>
<https://twitter.com/GraniteLodge>
<https://www.instagram.com/granitelodge2028>

It is possible from time to time that the Provincial guidelines may be altered; please keep familiar with the latest edition. Where, and when, possible Social Media Managers shall be informed by email if there are major changes.