

The Provincial Mentor will also act as a first port of call for all matters going outside the boundaries drawn and act as signpost to other appropriate agencies for external referrals.

For example, the Province has engaged a fully qualified professional counsellor, with internationally recognised qualifications - MA Counselling, MBACP, who is available to all Brethren for advice and support.

This service is at the expense of the individual mentee concerned but is nominal in price and will ensure that appropriate professional help is on hand for any serious situations outside the mentoring relationship but within the spirit of Brotherly Love, Relief and Truth.

In conclusion

We hope that Lodges will take the initiative and embrace these ideas and give their Lodge a steady stream of well nurtured talent for the future.

We are looking at having a Mentoring Co-ordinator in each Lodge who matches the parties and monitors progress for the Lodge.

Your experience and knowledge of the membership in your own Lodge will be invaluable in identifying the right calibre of Mentor.

Be in no doubt that the future of Freemasonry is in the hands of our newer Brethren.

But in whose hands are they?

Who is shaping those that will shape the future of the Order?

As a Masonic Mentor you will not only be helping your charge to embark on a full and enjoyable Masonic career, but you will also be safeguarding the future of your lodge.

And who knows?

Maybe the future of Masonry is you!

THANK YOU

How do they do that?

The key to doing this is to take everything one step at a time. The Candidate has a great deal of information to assimilate and the Mentor has a wealth of knowledge to impart. Controlling access is perhaps one of the most important tasks, for the process must be governed by the Candidate's ability to digest the information and not by any wish on the part of the Mentor to proceed quickly to the next stage.

It is therefore important to bring some structure to the programme and identify what the Candidate needs to know and when he needs to know it. This is perhaps best achieved by splitting the programme into four stages, namely

Stage 1. What is expected of me? These are all the basic questions, such as: When do we meet? Who's who? What are the fees that I owe? What's a Warden etc?

Stage 2. What do I have to do next? Once the basic 'administrative' side is dealt with, the next stage is to ensure an understanding of the relationship of the three Degrees and the symbolic meaning of each as he completes them in turn. It is only with a full understanding of our ceremonies and their meanings that a new brother will realise the essence of Masonry. Without this, he will never become fully engaged in the Craft and it will be impossible for him to maintain further interest.

Stage 3. Do I belong? This is when the question arises "Now that I understand it, do I fit in, is it for me?" The answer to this can only be 'yes', if the first two stages have been completed. This is when the Mentor asks if the Candidate wishes to be involved in performing part of the Ceremony and ensures that he is fully immersed in the social activities of the Lodge.

Stage 4. How can I advance? At this stage we have a brother who is enjoying his Freemasonry, has struck a happy balance with his home/work/Masonic life and wishes to progress further. Such progression could be 'up the ladder' towards Worshipful Master, or into an acting role such as Charity Steward or Treasurer. It is here that a Mentor will guide his charge along a sure path, guiding him in the right direction and providing support and encouragement whenever required.

There are a number of practical activities that will allow all the above to happen and these are given to the Mentors in a pack at the Mentoring Workshops organised by the Provincial Mentor.

What will happen in the future?

There will be a programme of Mentoring Workshops, complemented by an annual review where Mentors can meet, discuss their experiences and share best practices and ideas.

The support of the Provincial mentoring team will be available throughout the Province, acting as mentors for the Mentors. This currently consists of 4 Brothers and the Provincial Mentor is seeking to recruit others with a training and development background to complement that team.

Why do we need it?

It is a sad fact that recent years have seen a steady decline in the number of Freemasons within the United Kingdom. That is not all; two further worrying trends compound the situation. Many of our newer brethren leave within the first 5 years of their Masonic life and the number of active masons in each Lodge is often declining.

It is this situation that has prompted our Province to implement the Mentoring programme. It has the full support of the Provincial Grand Master and is seen as an integral part of the development of Freemasonry in this Province, through the recruitment, retention and return of lost members.

What's happening in the Province?

A Programme has been designed and implemented to create Masonic Mentors in Lodges to help them with the retention and engagement of our newer brethren. This was launched in 2009 at 14 introductory Mentoring Workshops held in various locations, at which 80% of our Lodges were represented.

In 2010, we are moving to the next phase of workshops specifically targeted at those Brethren who have agreed to be involved as Mentors. At these workshops, the role of the Mentor is explained and those attending are given a pack with useful information on how to carry out their duties.

What does a Mentor do?

The role of a Mentor is to ensure that a new brother becomes engaged with and integrated into the ideas and aims of our Order.

By “engaged with and integrated into”, we mean someone who is committed to their Freemasonry; regularly attends their Lodge and takes an active role in Lodge life. By comparison someone who is ‘disengaged or not integrated’ may be a Mason by right of membership, but not in tune with the aims of the Order, not regularly attending and certainly not trying to apply their Masonic learning to their everyday lives.

But isn't that what the Proposer and Seconder are meant to do?

In an ideal world, the answer to this is YES. Many new masons are fortunate to be proposed by committed and active members, but unfortunately this does not always mean that either the Proposer or Seconder is able to effectively act as Mentor, for a number of reasons, either or both may:

- Hold an office in the lodge and may not be able to spend quality time with their Candidate on a Lodge evening
- Be relatively new to Freemasonry themselves and may not have the experience and knowledge required
- Be unable to attend a Lodge, or, as in some cases, stops attending altogether

It is in such situations that a Mentor is essential, to provide the Candidate with support, advice and above all, friendship.

Short paper for Lodges on Mentoring – The Warwickshire Way

This paper is designed to be read out in open Lodge to give a brief explanation of the Masonic Mentoring programme, its background, current activities and future developments here in Warwickshire. On behalf of the Provincial Grand Master, I ask you to deliver this paper in your Lodge and to encourage the adoption of the scheme.

Brethren, let me ask you a simple question. Where does the future of Freemasonry lie?

“Ah, that’s easy” I hear you say, “it’s in the hands of the younger Masons.”

But in whose hands are they? Who is shaping those that will shape the future of the Order?

As I look around this room I can see that it is filled with a great deal of Masonic experience, experience that is held by those with a love and a passion for their Freemasonry.

We must harness this knowledge and hand it on to the next generation.

To this end the Province has launched a programme of ‘Masonic Mentoring’ where it is looking for those that embody all that is good about the Craft and care for its future.

We will provide Masonic Mentors with a structured training and support programme to enable them to stimulate, engage and develop young, talented Masons to take a thriving Freemasonry well into this new Century.

This paper is designed to provide a short overview of the subject; its background, current progress and future developments here in the Province of Warwickshire.

What Is Masonic Mentoring?

Mentoring is a process where an individual can pass on his Masonic knowledge and experience to a less experienced Brother. Mentoring is widely used in the business world as part of a person’s career development, and what we are trying to do is to map that process in an appropriate form into our Masonic lives.

By appropriate we mean tailored to each individual Mentee’s needs in an agreed and unobtrusive manner, which is within the boundaries of personal growth and Masonic values. A separate paper on boundaries is available on the website for Mentor’s to study.

Think back to when you first came into Masonry and you will realise that entering Freemasonry can be a daunting and, often, overwhelming time. The very nature of our organisation often leads to men joining us with little, or even no, idea of what is fully expected of them and what they can gain from membership. A Mentor should be there to help during these formative and crucial years.

But, I hear you thinking, that is the job of the Proposer or Secunder. At this point I must stress that a Masonic Mentor in no way takes the place of a Proposer or Secunder, but is there to provide support and guidance in ways which I will shortly explain. Similarly, the Mentor does not intrude on the work of the Preceptor of the Lodge of Instruction – rather the two complement one another. The Mentor handles the spiritual and social integration, whilst the Preceptor guides the individual in his ritual work.