

PROVINCIAL GRAND LODGE OF DERBYSHIRE

ATTRACTION OPEN MEETINGS – GUIDANCE NOTES

1.0 Introduction

An Attraction Open Evening is a specific lodge meeting planned with a view to encouraging new members to join Freemasonry. The meeting itself can either fall on a Regular Meeting date, or may, subject to the normal approvals, be held as an Emergency Meeting.

The overall idea is to present Freemasonry in a positive light, at a relaxed and informal gathering, to an invited audience of potential new members. Some of these invitees may have shown an interest in Freemasonry in the past, and some may be friends or acquaintances who may just be curious, sufficient for you to think they may be potential candidates in the future.

Whilst there is no “one size fits all” approach to any attraction event, this guidance note gives a suggested approach, based on lessons learnt from earlier events.

2.0 Planning Stage

As with most events, the degree of success, or otherwise, will be determined by the amount of effort that is put in at the planning stage. It is suggested that any lodge should consider the following approach.

STAGE 1A PRE-PLANNING	
1A.1	Consider whether you wish to organise an Attraction Open Meeting as a single lodge endeavour, or whether you wish to engage with other local lodges, to have a combined recruitment meeting. (For example, a combined masonic hall endeavour.)
1A.2	Ask the Lodge Secretary(s) to do a straw poll amongst the Lodge Members, to identify whether there might be sufficient non mason guests interested, to make arranging an attraction meeting worthwhile. Firm commitment of attendance is not required at this stage.
1A.3	Once a rough idea of the likely potential invitees is known, agree with the Lodge Committee(s) whether they wish to proceed. (No absolute guidance can be given as to suitable numbers to make an event worthwhile, as this will very much depend on the size of the lodge(s), the festive board location and capacity, and the support of all members to seek attendees.) When making any decisions, be prepared for guest numbers to reduce, once a firm commitment to attend is requested.

STAGE 1B PLANNING	
1B.1	Appoint a small sub-committee to take charge of running the attraction event. If more than one lodge is involved, make sure the sub-committee includes representatives from each lodge. Appoint an overall event manager (Lead Manager) and Secretary from the sub-committee.
1B.2	Agree within the sub-committee the date of the attraction event. Typically a 4 month long planning stage would be considered appropriate.
1B.3	Agree within the sub-committee, if more than one lodge is involved, which lodge will take the lead in applying for any dispensations (if needed for an Emergency Meeting) as well as taking charge of running the actual meeting.
1B.4	Speak with the Provincial Office who will provide people to sit on your organising sub-committee from a small group of individuals who have already organised and led the delivery of similar events.
1B.5	Plan a series of monthly meetings to monitor the progress in making arrangements for the attraction event.

3.0 Organising Stage

Once a sub-committee and Lead Manager and Secretary are in place, it is suggested that there are a number of further planning stages to go through. These are summarised as follows:

STAGE 2 ORGANISING STAGE	
2.1	The Lead Manager & Secretary to keep in touch with the members of the lodge(s) to ensure a live list of potential invitees is maintained. Keep “pressure” on the hosts of any invitees (guests), to make sure accurate information about guest numbers is always available. Report these numbers to the monthly sub-committee meetings.
2.2	The Provincial Office representatives on the organising sub-committee will advise who will attend the actual Attraction Open Meeting from Province.
2.3	Agree who will do any presentations at the attraction event. (See sections 3.5/3.7/3.8)
2.4	Agree with the Provincial Office what advertising and promotion material is available to be used at the attraction event. Arrange for collection.
2.5	Agree the location and price of any festive board arrangements. (See section 5.0) Consider whether you wish to charge the guests for any meals taken. (In some recent recruitment events, the guests have not been charged. This is the preferred approach.)

2.6	Consider having a “take away” pack for guests available. This could include the Provincial Booklet “Information for a Prospective Member”.
2.7	Make sure you plan the full format of the recruitment event, and that the work of delivery is shared out amongst the various sub-committee members.

4.0 The Format of the Attraction Event

It is essential that any Non Mason guests who attend, should

- a) experience a relaxed and friendly meeting, and
- b) experience a full and enthusiastic lodge room atmosphere, and
- c) experience a lively and enjoyable festive board, and
- d) go away with a positive image of Freemasonry sufficient to encourage them to join.

An Attraction Open Meeting is an opportunity for us to show Freemasonry in a positive light. Be proud of what we do, the Province of Derbyshire, and your own lodge. Approach the Attraction Open Meeting with enthusiasm. We have a great product, don't undersell it!

It is suggested that the following format should assist in the above aims, if space in the lodge rooms permits.

STAGE 3 THE MEETING FORMAT	
3.1	Guests should be accompanied to the lodge rooms, so they are not arriving without support. (Smart Casual Dress Code for guests.)
3.2	A Provincial Officer, and a single Senior Lodge Member should be available to welcome the guests into a separate room outside the temple (possibly the lodge ante room), to make them feel welcome and at ease. The two welcoming officers should be robed.
3.3	The rest of the Freemasons attending should then robe, in a separate area, and enter the Lodge as usual. There should be no formal procession into or out of the Lodge.
3.4	Make sure seats are reserved for the invitees to sit next to their respective hosts. In the case where the hosts are taking an active part in any short ceremony (WM, Wardens, etc.) reserve seats as near as possible to their respective positions in the Lodge.
3.4	The Lodge is opened and any lodge business is then conducted. The Lodge is then closed. Keep the meeting length short!
3.5	During the lodge ceremony, the two welcoming officers will give a short presentation to the guests outside the Lodge, about Freemasonry in general, and our charitable activities. (This will normally be by the “nominated experienced Provincial Representative” and one other nominated officer.)

3.6	After the Lodge is closed, the guests will be asked to enter the Lodge, accompanied by their respective hosts who will collect them. This is the first time that the guests will see a full lodge room and everyone in their regalia.
3.7	The Provincial Representative, from the two welcoming officers, will then give a presentation to the guests about each of the Lodge Officers, indicating each in turn. He will also give a brief description of the lodge furniture and layout, and describe the various regalia in use. Extra aprons may be required. (Throughout, he should not use "Masonic Language". Keep it plain and simple.)
3.8	Each of the lodges represented at the meeting should then give a brief description of their lodge. For example, when formed, when they meet, number of members, examples of special interests of the members (eg interests outside of the lodge). Keep all presentations short, (a max of 5 to 10 minutes), light hearted and informative.
3.9	The WM should ask for questions. Be prepared to have some questions planted amongst a couple of Masons attending, if none of the guests ask anything.
3.10	On completion of all presentations, and the Q&A session, the WM should thank all for attending and invite them to the festive board. There should be no formal procession out of the Lodge, all Brethren and guests leaving together.

All presentations are to be verbal presentations only. Do not use Powerpoint or other electronic presentation media. Choose your speakers carefully and choose those speakers who can engage an audience. Ensure each speaker has a clear brief, and a clear time frame. i.e. not to long!

An example timetable of the above, and the subsequent festive board, from an earlier recruitment event, is provided below. This will need to be adjusted to suit your own event:

6.00pm Members to arrive with guests.

6.20pm Members to be seated in Lodge.

6.20pm Start presentation to guests outside the temple.

6.30pm Open the Lodge by WM and his Officers. (Officers from the Lodge leading the event.)

6.30pm to 6.45pm Conduct the business of the lodge meeting.

6.45pm Close the Lodge.

Guests are now met by their respective "Proposer" and invited into the Lodge to their reserved seats.

7.30pm Finish in the Lodge.

8.00 pm Arrive at the Festive Board.

8.15pm Sit down to eat.

9.30pm Festive Board complete.

10.00pm Meeting finished and all depart.

To make this an impressive event, it is essential that as many of your lodge members attend as possible. If more than one lodge is part of the recruitment event, then members from all lodges should attend. The lead lodge will, however, take up the officer positions in the Lodge.

5.0 The Format of the Festive Board

At the festive board, a relaxed meeting is encouraged.

STAGE 4 THE FESTIVE BOARD FORMAT	
4.1	Produce a seating plan ensuring that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • guests are seated next to their respective hosts. • any provincial officers attending are spread around the room. • like minded people are seated together to encourage good conversation.
4.2	There is no need to have a formal top table. Use round tables if possible, or small square table arrangements, to facilitate good conversation groups.
4.3	Make sure the WM and the Director of Ceremonies are seated on the same table so that the festive board mechanics can be easily delivered.
4.4	The Provincial Office can help with producing personal menu and order of festive board ceremony cards if needed. A typical example, from an earlier event, is given in Appendix B.
4.5	Use the toast list provided in Appendix A. Toasts should not be honoured.
4.6	<u>There should be no raffles.</u>
4.7	Allow 30 minutes after completion of the festive board, for final questions and discussions between members and guests, before the end of the meeting.
4.8	Aim to complete the meeting in full by 10.00pm to avoid any complaints about “late nights” etc.

6.0 Final Stage – After the event

STAGE 5 AFTER THE EVENT	
5.1	Put arrangements in place to collect information from the respective hosts to make sure no potential candidates are lost.

7.0 Further Reading

Additional information about what can or can't be said at open events, is available in the publication “Guidance for Open Events and Public Engagement” which is available from the

Provincial Office. It is recommended that this document is read in full prior to any attraction event.

The introduction to the above document is copied here for information:

*We are often asked by our members planning to address the public **“What can we say and what can’t we say”?***

The short answer is that signs, tokens and words are always kept private because they are part of our tradition and it is important that the promises we made when we joined are not broken – not because the organisation would be damaged (they are all available on the internet and in books anyway) but because if we can’t keep a simple promise about something that has no meaning to, and is of no use to non-members, we must surely be lesser people than we could otherwise be. There is little else that can’t be discussed and what we say will depend much on our audience and the questions they ask us.

Appendix A

Toast List

The Queen and the Craft

The Grand Master

Grand Officers

The Provincial Grand Master

The Deputy Provincial Grand Master

Provincial Officers

The Worshipful Master

Masonic Charities

Absent Brethren

The Visitors

The Tyler's Toast

There is no need for any responses to any toasts, and all should be delivered in a sharp manner. (Toasts announced, all stand to toast, and sit down immediately.)

Menu

Toast List

The Queen and the Craft

The Most Worshipful The Grand Master
His Royal Highness the Duke of Kent, K.C., C.C.M.C., C.C.V.O., A.D.C.

The Most Worshipful Pro Grand Master, Peter Geoffrey Lowmides
The Right Worshipful Deputy Grand Master, Jonathan Spence
The Right Worshipful Assistant Grand Master, Sir David Hugh Wootton
And the rest of the Grand Officers, Present & Past

The Right Worshipful Provincial Grand Master, Arthur Steven Tarley

Vegan & Vegetarian Options Available

The Deputy Provincial Grand Master
Very Worshipful Brother Ian Robert Copestake, P.G.S.W.D.B

To Finish

The Assistant Provincial Grand Masters
Worshipful Brother Martin Giles, P.G.C.D. &
Worshipful Brother Martyn Richard Bailey, P.S.C.D.
And the rest of the Officers of Provincial Grand Lodge Present & Past

Sticky Toffee Pudding

with caramel sauce & coconut ice cream

The Worshipful Master

Masonic Charities

Absent Brethren

The Visiting Brethren

The Tyler's Toast

ANDREW ROBERTS

St Oswald Lodge No.850
Date of Warrant 15th December 1860

Flyfishers' Lodge No.9347
Date of Warrant 3rd September 1989

Derbyshire Dales Lodge No.9436
Date of Warrant 12th June 1991

**"Happy have we met
Happy have we been
Happy may we part
And happy meet again"**



ashbourmemasons.org.uk

Ashbourne Freemasons



St Oswald Lodge
No.850



Derbyshire Dales
Lodge No. 9436



Flyfishers' Lodge
No.9347

Welcome you to their joint open evening
Thursday 11th November 2021

W BRO ANDREW ROBERTS
E14

Appendix B

Example Dining Cards