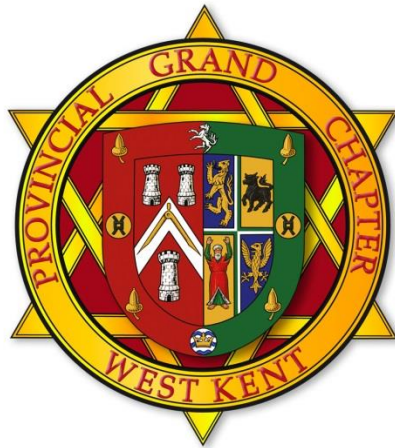


Province of West Kent



The Chapter Scribe E Handbook

FOREWORD

This Manual has been prepared primarily for the information and guidance of Chapter Scribe Es. It should be used to supplement and not replace the relevant Laws and Regulations contained in the Book of Constitutions and the booklet entitled "Information for Guidance of Members of the Craft".

The role of a Secretary, whether it is in public, private or Masonic life is a major contributor to the smooth running of any organisation. It is recognised that their attention to detail and forward planning is of paramount importance.

Supreme Grand Chapter is the supreme superintending authority for Freemasonry, part of that authority is delegated to the ME Grand Superintendent for the administration of the Province of West Kent. As the Provincial Scribe E, I and my team within the Provincial office ensure the delivery of the administration of the Province, particularly the annual meeting of Provincial Grand Chapter. And we in turn depend on every Chapter Scribe E in so many respects: summonses, by law changes, dispensations, personal celebrations, annual returns, honours applications; the list really does go on.

This handbook as is here to assist but also, to save time. If, as a Chapter Scribe E you have a particular problem you should, in the first instance, consult the Book of Constitutions and this Manual. If appropriate guidance cannot be found, please check the Provincial website which contains most of the information you require.

In the event that you still cannot find an answer to your problem you should contact the Provincial Office. Very rarely will there be a problem, which has not been dealt with on a previous occasion by one of the staff in the Provincial Office. We are here to help you but it would help us if you used all the other tools as described – including this book – in the first instance.

I would like to acknowledge the incredible work done in producing this Handbook by the Province of East Lancashire, and their Scribe E, E Comp Peter Michael Taylor.

This manual is a condensed yet comprehensive guide regarding the various administrative challenges that a Scribe E may face. There is much within these pages to interest and enlighten.

Finally, please revisit the Provincial website on a regular basis. The Royal Arch pages will be constantly evolving and will hopefully be able to make your responsibilities and queries even easier to address.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Paul Christopher". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'P'.

Provincial Grand Scribe E

General Rules:

All communications to the ME Grand Superintendent must be addressed to the Provincial Grand Scribe E at: pgsec@freemasons-westkent.org.uk or by post to:-

The Provincial Office
Oakley House
Bromley Common
Kent
BR2 8HA

Telephone No: 020 8462 9249.

Likewise, all letters, forms or Returns must **not** be sent to the Grand Scribe E. Please send them to the Provincial Office, at the address shown above. Any correspondence sent to the Grand Scribe E direct will be forwarded to the Province.

On no account should the prefix 'Companion', 'E Comp', etc. or a Masonic rank be included with the name and address on an envelope being sent through the post. Chapter records should be kept in a place of safety and in conditions that will ensure that they are still legible in the future. Some Chapters use their own banks or a local archive facility. A note of where all records are kept should be placed in the current Minute Book and referenced when a new Minute Book is brought into use.

Finally, and most important, you are the communication hub of your Chapter. It is of great importance to the Province, and your Chapter that you disseminate information in full, clearly and promptly to all your members. Similarly, any communications from your Chapter should be clearly and promptly communicated to the appropriate recipient.

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1 SUMMONS

1.1 GENERAL

The Summons for every Chapter Meeting must be sent a **minimum of fourteen days** before the Meeting. Email distribution is both welcomed and encouraged.

Summons should be sent to:

- All Chapter Members
- The Deputy Grand Superintendent, 2nd & 3rd Provincial Grand Principals
- The Assistant to the Provincial Grand Principals
- The Provincial Grand Scribe E, at the Provincial Office *[this copy to be held by the Provincial Secretariat and will be available for the MEGS]*
- The Hall Manager (or equivalent)
- Any visitors

Masonic Titles or Ranks must not be shown on envelopes.

If the presence of the ME Grand Superintendent or the Deputy Grand Superintendent is desired at any special Meeting of the Chapter, initial contact should be via the Provincial Grand Scribe E. To assist in an adequate planning process, a minimum of twelve months notice is requested.

It should also be noted that by virtue of their Office the ME Grand Superintendent, his Deputy, the 2nd and 3rd Provincial Grand Principals can demand admission into any Chapter in the Province and therefore do not need 'invitations' to attend Regular Meetings. However, should they wish to dine, then some communication beforehand may be desirable.

The Provincial Grand Scribe E must be informed in advance if a Senior Provincial Officer from another Province, i.e. anyone wearing a Chain of Office, is to visit a Chapter in West Kent.

1.2 VISITS TO CHAPTERS ABROAD

The following notice should appear on the summons of each Chapter at least once every year:

"Companions travelling abroad are warned that they should not visit Chapters under other jurisdictions until they have found out by application to the Grand Scribe E at Freemasons' Hall via the Provincial Office about the existence of Regular Masonry in the country they are visiting and the address to which Masonic enquiries in that country should be directed".

1.3 ABBREVIATIONS AND TITLES

A Companion is entitled to use Excellent Companion immediately he has been installed as Third Principal of the Chapter.

The proper abbreviation for an Active Officer of Supreme Grand Chapter is, e.g. GStB or Past Rank as, e.g. PGStB. The correct abbreviation for an Active Provincial Grand Officer is 'Prov', e.g. 'ProvGStB'. At the end of his Active term the Officer will assume the Past (Active) Rank of 'PProvGStB'. The correct abbreviation for a non-Active Provincial Grand Officer is 'P', e.g. 'PPGStB'. Full stops after each letter should not be used. There should be no spaces between PProv and GStB, i.e. PProvGStB.

1.4 NAMES OF HONORARY MEMBERS

Where the names of Honorary Members are printed on the Summons they should be listed in the following order- Rule 2 of the Book of Constitutions, Royal Arch Section, refers: -

- ME Grand Superintendent
- Past ME Grand Superintendent
- Deputy Grand Superintendent
- Past Deputy Grand Superintendent
- 2nd Provincial Grand Principal
- Past 2nd Provincial Grand Principal
- 3rd Provincial Grand Principal
- Past 3rd Provincial Grand Principal
- Assistant to the Provincial Grand Principals (in order of seniority)
- Past Assistant to the Provincial Grand Principals (in order of seniority)
- Provincial Grand Scribe E
- Past Provincial Grand Scribe E
- Provincial Grand Director of Ceremonies
- Past Provincial Grand Director of Ceremonies
- Grand Officers (in order of precedence)
- Provincial Grand Officers (in order of precedence)
- Past Provincial Grand Officers
- Other Companions

Abbreviated titles are permissible if printing space is limited.

The Provincial Office will always be pleased to advise on the order to be followed in any particular instance. The list must be amended and the order revised whenever an honorary member receives a new rank or appointment.

It should be noted the above are Honorary members by virtue of respect to rank. The exception to the above is where there is a distinguished honorary member by virtue of a special occasion. E.g. Chapter Consecration Team, Centenary Celebration Team, a distinguished visitor(s) were made honorary member(s) "To commemorate the [occasion] the following distinguished visitors were granted honorary membership".

1.5 PRECEDENCE ON THE SUMMONS

The following order of precedence should be observed. Summons [Rule 2 of the Book of Constitutions, Royal Arch Section, refers]. When listing Officers on the Summons, it should be noted that the Immediate Past First Principal (IPZ) is not an Officer of the Chapter but it is permissible to indicate the name of the IPZ after that of the Three Principals.

- First Principal
- Second Principal
- Third Principal
- Scribe E
- Scribe N
- Treasurer
- Director of Ceremonies
- Almoner
- Charity Steward
- Principal Sojourner
- First Assistant Sojourner
- Second Assistant Sojourner
- Assistant Director of Ceremonies
- Organist
- Assistant Scribe E
- Steward [s]
- Janitor
- The addresses, telephone numbers and post codes of the Scribe E and Treasurer must be included on the Summons.
- Whilst the office of Chapter Mentor is not yet recognised by Supreme Grand Chapter, if a member has been appointed to that office, his contact details could be added onto the summons, but his name should not be included within a list of Officers of the Chapter.

1.6 SUGGESTED WORDING OF AGENDA ITEMS

OPENING

To open the Chapter

DISPENSATION

To read the Dispensation (if any)

CIRCULAR

To read the circular convening the Meeting

MINUTES

To read and if approved, confirm the Minutes of the last Regular Meeting of the Chapter held on [and the Emergency Meeting held on] or

To consider and if approved, confirm the Minutes, previously circulated, of the last Regular Meeting of the Chapter held on , [and the Emergency Meeting Minutes, previously circulated, held on].

BALLOTS (Read out Details in open Chapter)

To Ballot for as a Joining Member / Re-joining Member.

[E] Comp residing at a (profession/occupation),

[Unattached formerly] A Member [Past Z] of Chapter No: [list all Chapters of which he is / has been a member of]

To Ballot for as a Candidate for Exaltation [W] Bro

Residing at (Profession/Occupation) Raised on in Lodge No:

A Member [Past Master] of Lodge No: [list all Lodges of which he is / has been a member of]

EXALTATION

To Exalt [W] Bro elected on date

CERTIFICATE

To present Grand Chapter Certificate(s)

ALMONERS REPORT

To receive a report from the Chapter Almoner

ALMS

To make a Collection for Good Causes the word “Alms” restricts the use to which the collection can be applied.

AOB

To receive subscriptions and transact any other Masonic business

CLOSING

To close the Chapter.

**** The foregoing is for a standard Chapter Agenda ****

*** The following are suggestions to cover alternative Agenda items ***

ELECTIONS

To elect for the ensuing year:

1. The Three Chapter Principals by ballot. *If there is only one nomination for each Principal this should be printed on the Summons and then the First Principal can declare them Principals-Elect for the ensuing year. (RA Reg 48 of the Book of Constitutions refers).*
2. A Treasurer by ballot. *If there is only one nomination this should be printed on the Summons and then the First Principal can declare him Treasurer for the ensuing year. (RA Reg 48 refers).*
3. A Janitor
4. To elect Companions to serve as Examiners, in accordance with By-Law No
5. To elect Companions to serve on the Chapter Committee, in accordance with By Law No
6. To appoint a Chapter District Representative.
7. To elect a Chapter Charity Representative.

ANNUAL ACCOUNTS

To receive the Report of the Treasurer and consider the Accounts for the year ended dd/mm/yy along with the Examiners report.

INSTALLATION

Installation of the Principals Elect E.Comps. [Name] assisted by the Past Z's of the Chapter. (Elected at the Regular Meeting held on [date]).

APPOINTMENT AND INVESTITURE

To appoint and invest Officers of the Chapter not at the Installation.

HONORARY MEMBERSHIP

To Ballot for as an Honorary Member, [E] Comp [Name, rank].

NOTICE OF MOTION

E.Comp. Treasurer will give notice of Motion that at the next Meeting he will Propose "that the Annual Subscription be increased from £... to £ with effect from ...".

PROPOSITIONS

Pursuant to notice given on to consider a Proposal by [name], Seconded by [name], "that the Annual Subscription be increased from £ to £ with effect from [date]".

To consider a Proposition by [name] Seconded by [name] that a Past First Principal's Breast Jewel be presented to [name].

To consider a Proposition that a grant / payment of any sum of money exceeding the sum stated in the Chapter By-Laws be made.

LECTURE

To receive a Lecture / Paper entitled / or Masonic work by [name].

CALL CHAPTER OFF

To Call the Chapter Off. *Under new Rules there is **no** need to Call Off' a Chapter if the Chapter is holding a demonstration of the Ritual it follows (according to Chapter practice). However, if the Chapter proposes to receive visitors who are not members of the Royal Arch or demonstrate a Ceremony which is not practised within the Royal Arch then the Chapter needs to be called off.*

CALL CHAPTER ON

To Call the Chapter On.

PROVINCIAL DEPUTATION

To receive [ME Grand Superintendent, [and/or] Deputy Grand Superintendent [name][and / or] 2nd Provincial Grand Principal, [name] [and/or] 3rd Provincial Grand Principal [name] [and/or] Assistant to the Provincial Grand Principals [name] accompanied by a Provincial Deputation.

CHAPTER CENTENARIES / ANNIVERSARIES

To receive the ME Grand Superintendent, the Deputy Grand Superintendent, 2nd Provincial Grand Principal, 3rd Provincial Grand Principal, Assistant to the Provincial Grand Principals accompanied by [either] a Provincial Deputation [or] assisting Officers.

To celebrate the Centenary of the Chapter [or] the 30th / 40th 50th / 60th Anniversary of [E] Companion [name] Exalted on

1.7 MINUTES

Each Chapter will have its own style for the writing of Minutes. As a general guide the Minutes should be concise and reflect accurately those present (including guests), what took place and who did what at the Meeting. The Minutes, particularly if circulated, should not contain Ritual.

Chapters may wish to include as a footnote to each set of Minutes a note of any item of topical news either national or local. This footnote should not form part of the main Minutes but will be a useful guide for the benefit of future Chapter historians. It is permissible for Chapter Minutes to be typed / word-processed and pasted into the official Minute Book. **Loose leaf Minute Books are not acceptable.** To save time in Chapter, Minutes can be circulated in advance with the Summons for the Meeting.

A note should be included on the first page of every new Minute Book of where the previous Minute Books are stored.

Chapter Scribe E's are the custodians of the Minute Books and they must be kept in a safe and secure location, as they will be required to prove continuous working when the Chapter celebrates an anniversary. It is recommended that an inventory of all Chapter records is maintained and audited annually.

2 CANDIDATES

2.1 APPLICATION FORM - REGISTRATION FORM 'P'

The Supreme Grand Chapter Registration Form 'P' is the form to be used when a Candidate applies to join a Chapter whether it is as an Exalte, a Joining member or as a Re-joining member and must be fully completed in all cases. Rule 159 and Regs 66 & 67.

Great care should be taken when completing the Form as any omissions / errors will inevitably lead to a delay in the Candidate being registered as a Member. As the Chapter Scribe E it is your duty to examine the Form to ensure that it has been fully and accurately completed.

After the Candidate has been admitted as a member of the Chapter, the Registration Form 'P', together with any fee due to Supreme Grand Chapter must be sent to the Provincial Grand Scribe E (Any cheque should be payable to, 'Supreme Grand Chapter of England'). Do not include the Provincial Registration fee, as this will be collected at the time the Provincial Annual Return is sent to your Chapter, prior to the Installation Meeting.

Note: Please do not send Registration Forms direct to Supreme Grand Chapter, as they are processed by the Provincial Office.

2.2 CANDIDATES FOR EXALTATION

The Registration Form 'P' must be filled in and signed, initially, by the Candidate, the Proposer and Secunder. Subsequently the Form will need to be signed by the First Principal and then fully completed and signed by the Scribe E.

In view of a number of embarrassments that have occurred, it is strongly recommended that the Exaltation of a Candidate does not take place at the same Meeting as the ballot.

2.3 CANDIDATES

Before a candidate can be proposed into a Chapter he must have been a Master Mason for at least 4 weeks [RA Reg 65 Book of Constitutions]. Such a proposition may take place either at a regular convocation or by notice in writing transmitted by the proposer to the Scribe E at least 14 days prior to the next convocation.

2.4 BALLOT IN OPEN CHAPTER

Before the ballot is taken, a candidate for Exaltation must have completed a Form 'P' which is submitted to the Chapter Scribe E. He must also produce his Grand Lodge Certificate, along with a clearance certificate in respect of every Lodge he is or has been a member of, even if any such Lodge has subsequently closed, in accordance with RA Reg 67 Book of Constitutions.

Note: the ballot cannot take place at an Emergency Meeting.

There is some misunderstanding on the subject of taking two or three ballots at the same time. It is quite in order for a single ballot covering a variety of subjects (Candidates for Exaltation, Joining, Re-Joining etc) to be taken. Should there be a negative vote, then it is mandatory that individual ballots be taken.

2.5 DETAILS ON SUMMONS

Scribe E's are reminded of the need to adhere **strictly** to the requirements of RA Reg 66 of the Book of Constitutions and ensure that **in all cases** the Summons for the meeting at which the ballot is to take place **must** include the following details on all Candidates for Exaltation:

- Full Name (*Surname and all Forenames*)
- Profession or Occupation (*A precise definition of occupation, or former occupation if Retired, is essential*)
- Home Address (*A full address should be given, not a P.O. Box Number*)
- Names of Proposer and Seconder
- Date of Raising
- Member of Lodge[s]

Unless all the details listed above appear on the Summons, any ballot and subsequent Exaltation, will not be valid.

2.6 EXALTATION

A candidate can be Exalted at the same meeting that a successful ballot has taken place.

2.7 CANDIDATES FOR JOINING OR REJOINING

A Candidate for Joining, or Re-Joining, must apply, by being Proposed, Seconded and balloted for in the same way as an Exalte. Before the ballot, the Candidate must produce his Grand Chapter Certificate and Clearance Certificates from **all** Chapters of which he is or has ever been a member, even if any such Chapter has subsequently closed. If this is not observed the Chapter becomes liable for any outstanding dues, which the Candidate may owe to another Chapter. The same details must be given on the Summons for Joining and Re-Joining Members, including the names and numbers of all the Chapters of which he is or has been a member.

2.8 JOINING MEMBER FROM ANOTHER CONSTITUTION

If the Companion applying to join the Chapter was exalted in a Chapter under another Constitution (e.g. the Scottish Constitution) action must be taken as set out in RA Reg 67 Book of Constitutions. It is essential that he makes the declaration set out in that Rule and is presented with a Book of Constitutions on or before entering the Chapter as a member.

2.9 NEW MEMBERS AND MENTORING

All new Members should have a Mentor to guide them through their Masonic journey. The Province has a well-defined policy on Mentoring which is available on the Provincial Website and you should ensure that the Chapter Mentor is aware of the new member and takes positive action to assist. Help can be obtained from your District Mentor and the Provincial Grand Mentor.

3 HONORARY MEMBERSHIP

3.1 ELECTION OF HONORARY MEMBER

Under RA Reg 167, Book of Constitutions, a Chapter may elect (by ballot after notice on the Summons) to Honorary Membership any Companion of good standing (i.e. he must not be in arrears). You should note that, unlike Candidates for Exaltation and Joining, when balloting for an Honorary Member, they do not need to have been previously Proposed and Seconded. A Chapter wishing to make an Honorary Member must first obtain the agreement of the Companion concerned. The Companion must be worthy of the distinction by reason of his services to the Royal Arch or to the Chapter which is seeking to elect him and who is, or has within the last year, been a subscribing member of a Chapter. Honorary Membership must be granted sparingly and must not be used to avoid the payment of fees or merely because the Companion has served a long number of years.

3.2 IMPLICATIONS TO BE OUTLINED BEFORE ELECTION TO HONORARY MEMBERSHIP

Chapters desirous of conferring Honorary Membership upon a Companion should take care that all the implications outlined below are fully understood, not only by the Companions, but also by the intended recipient, who may even find himself debarred from attendance at Grand Chapter under Rule 9 (unless qualified under RA Reg 2,) and from other privileges, rights and advantages of continued subscribing membership. Honorary Membership should not be conferred because of seniority, age, infirmity or finance. It should only be granted to members who have performed exceptional services either to the Chapter or Freemasonry in general over and above that which can be reasonably expected. Honorary Members are not entitled to be considered for Provincial Honours, whether it be a First Appointment or Promotion.

3.3 STATUS OF HONORARY MEMBER

An Honorary Member may attend the Chapter of which he is an Honorary Member. If he is not a subscribing member of any other Chapter he is to be treated as an unattached Mason and can only visit a Chapter once under Rule 127(iii) of the Book of Constitutions, he cannot make a Proposition or vote upon one, except that, a Past First Principal who becomes an Honorary Member of a Chapter and has been a subscribing member of it may Propose and Second Candidates. His name is not shown on any Returns to Supreme Grand Chapter or Provincial Grand Chapter; no Chapter or Provincial Grand Chapter Annual Dues are payable in respect of him, and his former entitlement to attend Grand Chapter and Provincial Grand Chapter by virtue of his membership of the Chapter of which he has become an Honorary Member lapses. The Chapter is only entitled to issue a Summons for the Meeting. No other Chapter documentation should be sent.

3.4 RIGHTS OF HONORARY MEMBER

Honorary Membership of one Chapter does not affect subscribing membership of another; so long, therefore, as subscribing membership of one Chapter, at least, is maintained. The right of a member to visit other Chapters and to attend Grand Chapter and Provincial Grand Chapter, in this instance, is not affected.

Note: Companions qualified under RA Reg 2, retain the right to attend Grand Chapter.

3.5 RESTRICTIONS OF HONORARY MEMBERSHIP

a) Attendance at Chapters.

An Honorary Member, who is NOT a subscribing member of **any** Chapter, is prevented by Rule 127(iii), Book of Constitutions, from attending, more than once, a Chapter of which he is not an Honorary Member. This Rule does not limit attendance at Chapters of Instruction. This rule also applies to any Companion who is not a subscribing member of any Chapter.

b) Attendance at Chapter Committee Meetings.

An Honorary Member does not have the right to attend Chapter Committee Meetings, even if he was a member of the Chapter Committee before becoming an Honorary Member. If an Honorary Member is invited by the First Principal to attend; he has no right to speak unless asked to do so. He has no right to vote in any circumstances.

3.6 TERMINATION OF HONORARY MEMBERSHIP

Honorary Membership can be terminated in the same manner as subscribing membership, either by the resignation of the Honorary Member or by Exclusion under Rule 181. Of course, should the Honorary Member become a subscribing member of the Chapter, in accordance with Rule 66 of the Book of Constitutions, Royal Arch Section, his Honorary Membership will, naturally, be ended.

3.7 AUTOMATIC HONORARY MEMBERSHIP

It is not in accordance with the spirit of the letter of Rule 167 to make Honorary Membership devolve automatically upon the holders of certain Offices in other Chapters. Where reciprocal hospitality is desired between two or more Chapters, this should take the form of an annual motion to the effect that the persons concerned should be considered as Honoured Guests of the Chapter during the ensuing year.

4 DISPENSATIONS

4.1 GENERAL

A Dispensation is a license of exemption to vary any usual action, e.g. A First Principal in the Chair of more than one Chapter at the same time, (must be approved by Provincial Grand Chapter and the appropriate fee paid) change of date, other than a Bank Holiday conflict within seven days (this does not include the Saturday between Good Friday and Easter Sunday), change of Meeting Place or to hold an Emergency Meeting. A Dispensation will be granted if the circumstances are of sufficient importance and are agreed as such by the ME Grand Superintendent.

Application for a Dispensation should be made to the Provincial Grand Scribe E not less than two months before the date of the Meeting at which it is required. The Dispensation must be issued before the Summons is printed for that Meeting. The fees for Provincial Dispensations are detailed on the Provincial Secretariat's website.

As a general rule, a Dispensation should be read immediately preceding the item of business which it authorises. The exception to this is any Dispensation that authorises the holding of the Meeting itself (Emergency Meeting, Change of Date etc), in which case the Dispensation must be read as the first item of business after the Opening.

Chapter Scribes E should not assume that simply because they have made application that it will be granted. The ME Grand Superintendent will require sufficient proof that a need exists before granting such a Dispensation. Please ensure that the fullest details are given in the 'comments' section when applying.

4.2 CHANGE OF VENUE AND / OR DATE OF REGULAR MEETING

A Dispensation is required in either of these events and application must be made to the Provincial Grand Scribe E and the Dispensation must be read as the first item on the agenda, after the Opening. Online application Forms and information on Fees for Provincial Dispensations are detailed on the Provincial website.

4.3 MULTIPLE CEREMONIES

Multiple Ceremonies can prove to be special but, arguably, can detract from the individuals own enjoyment of the Ceremony.

4.4 EMERGENCY MEETINGS

Unlike the Craft, a Dispensation is NOT required in the RA to hold an emergency meeting. However, only the business for which the meeting is called may be transacted.

The Minutes of the previous Chapter Meeting must not be confirmed at an Emergency Meeting. The Minutes of the Emergency Meeting itself must be confirmed at the next Regular Meeting, together with the Minutes of the previous Regular Chapter Meeting.

5 CONFERRING OF DEGREES: ROLE OF THE SCRIBE E

5.1 BEFORE THE EXALTATION CEREMONY

The Scribe E must:

- Ensure that Form 'P' has been completed and signed by the Candidate, his Proposer and Secunder.
- Ensure that the full details of the Candidates' profession or occupation is available.
- Check with the Proposer / Secunder that the Candidate is able to attend the Meeting and will be dressed according to Masonic etiquette.
- In conjunction with the Treasurer collect all dues applicable to Supreme Grand Chapter / Provincial Grand Chapter and the Chapter.
- Make sure that the By-laws and any other relevant information is available for the Ceremony.

5.2 AFTER THE EXALTATION

Immediately after Exaltation the Scribe E must:

- Send in the completed Form 'P' together with the appropriate fee (made payable to 'Supreme Grand Chapter') to the Provincial Grand Scribe E.
- Complete all Chapter Records / Register.
- Advise the Masonic Hall (if required) of new the member.

Note: Delay in undertaking the above will result in a delay in the member being registered as a member.

5.3 GRAND CHAPTER CERTIFICATE

A Grand Chapter Certificate is automatically issued by Supreme Grand Chapter when they receive the candidates completed Registration form 'P' after his Exaltation. The Companion is entitled to a Grand Chapter Certificate as proof of his having been Exalted into Royal Arch Freemasonry and it should be presented to the Companion in a timely manner. It is desirable that an item, 'To present a Grand Chapter Certificate' be included on the Summons. Grand Chapter recommends (RA Reg 69 Book of Constitutions) that the Grand Chapter Certificate should be presented in Open Chapter and the fact recorded in the Minutes.

6 OFFICIAL VISITS

6.1 INSTALLATION MEETING

The occasion of the Installation Meeting of the Chapter will usually be marked by a visit from one of the rulers of the Province or one of the ME Grand Superintendent's Representatives. It should be noted that the Deputy Grand Superintendent, the 2nd & 3rd Provincial Grand Principals represent themselves by virtue of being chain bearers and they should never be referred to as the Representative of the ME Grand Superintendent.

The simple way to remember this fact is that anyone wearing a 'chain of Office' as an Active Officer of the Province represents themselves and should be offered the Sceptre.

The Representative of the ME Grand Superintendent is the most senior member present at an Installation Ceremony and should be greeted as the senior Grand Officer (assuming he is a Grand Officer) even if there are other Grand Officers present who hold a higher Grand Rank. He should also be seated at the immediate right of the Second Principal in the Chapter and at the Social Board.

The name of the Representative will be advised to the Chapter Scribe E well in advance of the Meeting date. A summons should be sent to him as quickly as possible. A letter of welcome and some facts about the Chapter and the Principals Elect, is always appreciated by the Representative. If the Provincial Grand Director of Ceremonies / Provincial Deputy Grand Director of Ceremonies are to attend they should also be sent a Summons. They will liaise with the Chapter Director of Ceremonies regarding the procedure in Chapter and at the Festive Board.

The Representative of the ME Grand Superintendent will usually respond to Toast to Provincial Officers and may refer to Toast to Grand Officers (if a Grand Officer).

6.2 ANNIVERSARY OF MEMBERS

The Province recognises the 30th, 40th, 50th, 60th and 70th anniversaries in Freemasonry of members. It is not necessary for the Companion to have served all his time in the same Chapter or indeed the same Province. It is important therefore to maintain a record of when your members were Exalted (especially joining members) so that anniversaries can be monitored. The annual return can also assist with this information. The Provincial Office should be contacted approximately 12 months prior to when the Chapter wishes to celebrate the occasion. Arrangements will then be made for the Assistant to the Provincial Grand Principals for the area, accompanied by the Provincial Grand Director of Ceremonies or one of his Deputies, to attend the Celebration Meeting. No other business should be undertaken at that Meeting as it detracts from the individual.

The Chapter Scribe E will be notified in due course if a Provincial Deputation will be in attendance. assist the evening, the Chapter Scribe E should send to the Senior Official attending (via the Provincial Office), a summary of the Companion's notable achievements in both personal and Masonic life. If required, the Assistant to the Provincial Grand Principals will make a home visit for a Companion who is celebrating an anniversary but is unable to attend Chapter Meeting due to illness or disability. Further information and guidance is available on the Provincial website. Please ensure you revisit the site regularly as it is being constantly updated with new Royal Arch pages.

6.3 JUBILEE MEETINGS: BANNER DEDICATIONS: BIBLE DEDICATIONS

The Provincial Grand Scribe E should be notified a **minimum** of 12 months prior to the planned date of the occasion. Where a Banner is to be dedicated a copy of the proposed design must be sent to the Provincial Grand Scribe E who will obtain approval of Supreme Grand Chapter. Full assistance for the correct design of a new Banner can be sought via the Provincial Office. Approval **must** be sought before committing to the expense of a new Banner.

6.4 CENTENARY MEETINGS

The Provincial Grand Scribe E should be notified two to three years in advance of the Centenary anniversary of the Consecration of a Chapter. The Provincial Grand Scribe E will give advice on the procedures to be adopted when applying for a Centenary Warrant and the form the celebration should take. The Province will formally petition the ME First Grand Principal approximately one year prior to the effective date of the Centenary and apply for the Centenary Warrant, the cost of which will be met by the Chapter. Supreme Grand Chapter may require proof of the uninterrupted existence of the Chapter for 100 years (RA Ref 91, Book of Constitutions). This can usually be evidenced from the Minute books, but Grand and Provincial Annual Returns can also be used. It is important for Chapters to record where old Minute books are stored.

6.5 AMALGAMATION OF CHAPTERS

Chapters wishing to Amalgamate should discuss the proposals at an early stage with the Provincial Office and the Assistant to the Provincial Grand Principals for the Area, who will allocate an Amalgamations Officer to assist the Chapter(s). The formal procedure can take over twelve months (see Guidance Notes on the Provincial Secretariat's Website).

The members of the Chapter must be able to evidence that they have worded through the proposal and can demonstrate that the Amalgamated Chapter will be viable and sustainable.

6.6 NEW CHAPTERS

Petitions for new Chapters must be submitted at an early stage to the Provincial Grand Scribe E. Certain criteria would, however, have to be met in order for approval for a new Chapter to be obtained. These would include that:

- a special case would have to be made that a new Chapter was needed
- a minimum number of 30 Companions were committed to the new Chapter
- the newly Constituted Chapter would not disadvantage existing Chapters in the area
- the proposed new Chapter would be financially sustainable

The application for a Warrant for a new Chapter must be made on a printed form, which can be obtained by Province, from Supreme Grand Chapter.

6.7 REHEARSALS WITH PROVINCIAL / DEPUTY GRAND DIRECTOR OF CEREMONIES

If your event is to be attended by the Provincial Grand Director of Ceremonies and / or one of his Deputies, he will arrange a practice for the event and whilst every effort will be made to accommodate the normal Chapter practice night(s), availability of the Provincial Team may necessitate a practice on another night. There will, in most cases, be a practice on the day prior to the Tyling time and the Provincial DC will designate which Chapter Officers must attend these practices, with the Chapter arranging substitute Officers if the Office holders are unavailable.

The Provincial Grand Director of Ceremonies, or his Deputy, will take sole charge of the event and his decisions must be complied with. This may mean some variation to normal Chapter practice (e.g. placing of Chapter furniture on the floor, squaring the Chapter, etc). This will be necessary to enable the Provincial Team to operate to Provincial Protocols, rather than having to adapt to each Chapter's individual workings. Such changes will apply to this Meeting only and not to any subsequent Meetings of the Chapter.

The Provincial Grand Director of Ceremonies, or his Deputy, will take charge of the Social Board. Proceedings will, again, differ from the Chapter's normal practices in such areas as number and sequence of Toasts, and the timing of wine taking. No announcements of any kind are to be made except by the Provincial DC or with his expressed approval.

6.8 COST OF CENTENARIES AND BI-CENTENARIES

The cost of Warrants will be advised by the Provincial Office via Supreme Grand Chapter. Other costs include the hospitality and meals for the Provincial Deputation, printing of Chapter Histories and, if required, Centenary Jewels. All these costs will be advised well in advance of the Meeting. Many Chapters find it useful to form a small Sub-Committee in order to deal with these events. The Provincial Grand Scribe E will invite the Chapter Scribe E and any Sub-Committee members, to a briefing meeting in order to discuss the administration in more detail.

7 MEMBERSHIP

7.1 CHAPTER REGISTER

The Chapter Scribe E is responsible for keeping a paper and electronic register of members of the Chapter, both past and present. This includes their dates of Exaltation, Joining or re-Joining together with their dates of birth, titles, addresses, professions or occupations and the dates and reasons for Exclusion or Cessation of Membership. (RA Reg 61, Book of Constitutions).

7.2 CHAPTER RECORDS

The Chapter Scribe E should also keep a paper or electronic record of appropriate information on all members relating to such matters as personal details e.g. date of birth, occupation, address, and telephone numbers etc. attendance, work carried out and Offices held. The Provincial Grand Scribe E will on occasion request such information when updating his records, in consideration of appointment to Provincial or Grand Rank. The Chapter Charity Representative should also maintain records of donations made, by the Chapter to Masonic and non-Masonic Charities.

7.3 DATA PROTECTION ACT

Supreme Grand Chapter and the Province are registered under the Data Protection Act. Records of members will be used for Masonic purposes and details of certain Chapter Officers will be published e.g. the Provincial Almanac, Provincial website and other appropriate media. Chapter Scribes should draw this to the attention of members. No aspect of their personal information may be processed or disclosed outside of agreed arrangements without the express permission of the individuals concerned.

7.4 SUBSCRIPTION ARREARS

Rule 145 of the Book of Constitutions states that no Chapter may by its By-Laws or otherwise provide that any subscribing member thereof shall not be entitled to receive Summonses, or be disqualified from holding Office therein. However, the same Rule 145 does provide for a Chapter in its By-Laws to specify that members who are in default in the payment of their subscriptions for some specified period, but not less than three months after their becoming due, shall be deprived whilst so in default of all or any of the rights of voting, Proposing or Seconding Candidates and being appointed or elected to Office.

It is strongly recommended by Province that Chapters include a default of subscription period of less than 12 months in their By-Laws which will enable them to effect the exclusion procedure outlined in 7.7.

If such a provision is not made in the Chapter By-Laws then no Companion of that Chapter can be considered to be in arrears until having defaulted for a period of two full years, when he will automatically cease to be a member as detailed in Section 7.6.

7.5 RESIGNATION OF A CHAPTER MEMBER

A member of a Chapter may at any time resign his membership (either immediately or at a later specified date) by written notice to the Scribe E or orally at a Chapter Meeting. The resignation takes effect on the date the resignation is received by the Scribe E or the date tendered in Open Chapter, unless a later date is specified. No acceptance of the resignation is necessary, and the resignation must be communicated to the Chapter at the next Regular Meeting and noted in the Minutes.

Subject to the provisions of Rule 183, Book of Constitutions, after notification or communication to the Chapter the resignation is irrevocable. Scribes are particularly advised to note very carefully the date on which they received either orally or in writing any such resignation from a member for this may well have a very important bearing on any subsequent actions. The Chapter Scribe E must inform the Masonic Hall / Meeting place Secretary, Province and Supreme Grand Chapter (via Province) at the earliest opportunity of any such resignations to ensure their records are fully maintained and up to date.

A Companion, on resignation, is entitled to a Clearance Certificate showing his status at resignation. (See Section 7.17).

A Companion, who has resigned from a Chapter in arrears with his subscriptions, is still entitled to receive a Clearance Certificate, but such Certificate must indicate that he is in arrears of subscriptions.

7.6 CESSATION OF MEMBERSHIP FROM A CHAPTER

Irrespective of any provision made in the Chapter By-Laws, any Companion who is two full years in arrears with his fees automatically ceases to be a Member of the Chapter in accordance with RA Reg 71, Book of Constitutions. It is most important that Supreme Grand Chapter, via the Provincial Grand Scribe E, are notified of the name and period of indebtedness of a Companion who ceases membership under this Rule and the fact must be announced at the next Meeting of the Chapter and recorded in the Minutes. Should a Companion clear his debt after Ceasing membership under Reg 71, he is clear to become a Member again only by Regular Proposition and ballot in accordance with Reg 66. The Grand Scribe E must be informed via the Provincial Grand Scribe E, in order that such facts can be accurately recorded in their files.

7.7 EXCLUSION OF A MEMBER (FINANCIAL)

A Chapter, in its By-Laws, may provide that a Companion be considered for exclusion if his subscriptions are not paid at the end of a shorter period (which must be a minimum of three months) than that stated in RA Reg 71, Book of Constitutions. In these particular circumstances, the full requirements of Craft Rule 181 must be followed, an outline of which is given here:

- A written (Private and Confidential) notice must be sent to the member concerned by Recorded Delivery or Registered Post to his last known address.
- A written notice to all members not less than ten days before, or an item on the relevant Summons for, the Meeting of the intention to Propose such a Resolution (the member must not be named at this stage).
- At the Meeting at which the Resolution is to be considered, the name of the Companion must be announced to the Companions, by the First Principal. The vote must be taken by ballot (not a show of hands). If carried by two-thirds of the members present, the effective date of exclusion will be the date of the Meeting.
- The name of every Companion excluded from a Chapter must be communicated, as soon as is practicable, to the Provincial Grand Scribe E, so that his personal record may be updated.

Should the Companion concerned subsequently pay the arrears of his subscription, whether he re- applies for membership or not, the Provincial Grand Scribe E must be notified.

7.8 EXCLUSION OF A MEMBER (OTHER CAUSES)

A Chapter may also consider a Resolution to exclude any member for sufficient cause (again under Craft Rule 181), in which case the procedure outlined in Section 7.7 must be followed. In addition the complaint made against the Companion must be identified in his Private and Confidential letter, stating the date and time of the Meeting at which the Resolution is to be considered, in order that he may attend and answer the complaint, or answer them in writing should he so prefer.

Chapters considering this course of action are strongly advised to seek the views of the Provincial Grand Scribe E before proceeding.

Note: A Companion can only be excluded from and by a specific Chapter. Expulsion of a Companion from the RA can only be carried out by United Grand Lodge (See Section 7.12).

7.9 SUSPENSION OF A MEMBER

A Companion offending against any Law or Regulation of the Royal Arch to the breach, of which no specific penalty is attached, shall be liable to admonition or suspension (Rule 179B). If a Companion is suspended, the penalty may apply to membership of a particular Chapter or Chapters, or to some, or all, of his Masonic privileges and such a Companion remains liable for his share of proper expenses incurred by the Chapter during his suspension.

7.10 ATTENDANCE AT CHAPTERS

In the case of any Companion who has ceased to be a subscribing member of every Chapter of which he has at any time been a member, he becomes unattached; the following provisions of Rule 127 Book of Constitutions shall apply:

- If he comes within the provisions of this Rule by reasons of his Cessation under RA Reg 71 or exclusion under Rule 181, Book of Constitutions, he shall not be permitted to attend any Chapter, or Chapter of Instruction, until he again becomes a subscribing member of a Chapter.
- If he came within the provisions of this Rule by reasons of his expulsion from the Craft or his resignation from the Craft under Rules 183A or 277A, his right to attend any Chapter or Chapter of Instruction shall be forfeited.
- In any other case he shall not be permitted to attend any Chapter more than once until he again becomes a subscribing member of a Chapter. Upon such attendance he shall append the word 'unattached' to his signature in the Attendance Book, stating therein the name and number of the Chapter of which he was last a subscribing member.

7.11 RESIGNATION OF A PAST FIRST PRINCIPAL

A Past First Principal who has resigned from a Chapter in good standing will, on re-joining any Chapter under the English Constitution, again become a member of Supreme Grand Chapter. However, if he has resigned without having paid all his subscriptions, or been excluded, he cannot become a member of Supreme Grand Chapter until he has again duly served the Office of First Principal (Rule 9).

7.12 EXPULSION OF A MEMBER

No Chapter has the power to expel a Companion (as opposed to Exclude) from the Craft in accordance with Rule 76. The term 'Expulsion' is used only when a Companion is removed from the Craft by the United Grand Lodge Appeals Court procedure.

7.13 RESIGNATION FROM THE ROYAL ARCH

If a Member should wish to resign from the Royal Arch, as opposed to the more usual, resign from a Chapter, Rule 183A of the Book of Constitutions applies. Application so to do must be made on the appropriate form, to the Grand Scribe E via the Provincial Grand Scribe E. The Provincial Grand Scribe E must be informed and will advise on the procedure and supply the required form.

7.14 DEATH OF A MEMBER

The Chapter Scribe E must inform the Provincial Grand Scribe E of the death of any member as soon as possible. Please do not wait for the Annual Return [See Section 16.3].

7.15 VACANCIES OF CHAPTER OFFICES

[a] Officers:-

If a vacancy should occur in a Regular Office that Office can be filled for the remainder of the year by the election or appointment (according to the normal method of filling the Office) of a fully paid-up subscribing member, not serving a Regular Office in the Chapter at the time the vacancy occurred. If an election is required, ensure that notice appears on the Summons.

[b] Death of First Principal:-

If a First Principal should die or be removed from Office then the Immediate Past First Principal, or in his absence the Senior Past First Principal present, occupies the Chair. The Chapter shall at the next regular Convocation elect by ballot a Principal to take his place from the among the qualified Companions, if any, not already serving in or elected to a regular office which expression shall include that of Principal. (RA Reg 54, Book of Constitutions).

[c] Absence of the First Principal:-

The Immediate Past First Principal, or in his absence, the Senior Past First Principal of the Chapter, or if no Past First Principal of the Chapter be present, the Senior Past First Principal who is a subscribing member of the Chapter shall occupy the First Principal's Chair (RA Reg 55 Book of Constitutions).

[d] First Principal Elect:-

In the case of his death, incapacity, inability to attend the Installation or resignation, RA Reg 55 Book of Constitutions shall apply. In all cases the Provincial Grand Scribe E should be consulted.

[e] Treasurer:-

In the case of the protracted absence of the Treasurer a dispensation to elect a Companion to carry out his duties may be obtained from the Provincial Grand Scribe E. (RA Reg 57 Book of Constitutions).

7.16 CHAPTER MEMBERSHIP LISTS

Once a year the Provincial Grand Scribe E will send to Chapter Scribes a list of the members of their Chapter, as held on the Adelphi. To enable the database to be kept up to date Scribes must check and, if necessary, correct any errors [Section 9.3].

7.17 MEMBERS CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE

A Companion, when resigning from a Chapter, or when he is to become a Joining member of another Chapter, will require a Clearance Certificate. This Certificate covers the status of the Companion, at the time of resignation or in the case of joining another Chapter, his current status. It is important the Scribe E liaise closely with the Treasurer to ensure the Companion is clear of all financial liability to the Chapter. (RA Reg 70 Book of Constitutions applies). If he is not, then this must be recorded on the Certificate, quoting whether he has ceased to be a member under RA Reg 71 Book of Constitutions, or excluded under Rule 181 of the Book of Constitutions.

The Certificate, which should always be sent to the Companion himself, need only be a written statement on Chapter headed paper and signed by either the Scribe E or Treasurer of the Chapter. It should be issued as soon as possible following a request by a member. If a Companion is under suspension this must be included in the Certificate and if not handed to the Companion in person it should be sent to him, marked 'Private and Confidential', to his last known address. In cases where the Certificate is being issued to a Companion who has resigned from the Chapter, it is important to advise the Companion to keep the Certificate in a safe place, should he need it again at any time in the future.

No Certificate shall be granted to a Companion who has been expelled from the Craft or who has resigned from the Craft under Rule 277A Book of Constitutions.

8 MASONIC STANDARDS AND DISCIPLINE

The respect and perception of Freemasonry depends upon the maintenance of high standards by all Companions. It is the duty of every Companion to:

- [a] Respond to any requirement from Masonic authority for comment or information on a complaint or allegation of misconduct (Rule 179A).
- [b] Attend a disciplinary committee when so required (Rules 74, 75, 232 and 234).
- [c] Attend upon a person or persons nominated by a competent Masonic authority when so required (Rules 74 and 234).
- [d] Report to the First Principal of each Chapter of which he is a member, or, in the case of an unattached Companion, to the Grand Scribe E, any conviction resulting in a custodial sentence (immediate or suspended) or a Community Service Order being imposed on him. (Rule 179A).

It is the duty of the First Principal and Scribe E of a Chapter similarly to report to the Provincial Grand Scribe E, any conviction and also any other conduct likely to bring Freemasonry into disrepute (which includes, but is not limited to, criminal convictions or proceedings involving dishonesty, moral turpitude or breach of professional standards).

It is the duty of a Provincial Grand Scribe E to report to the Grand Scribe E any conviction resulting in a custodial sentence (immediate or suspended) or a Community Service Order as well as such other conduct as may in the opinion of the ME Grand Superintendent brings Freemasonry into disrepute.

Whether or not he has complied with his duty under Rule 179A, a Companion, who following conviction by a Court, has received a custodial sentence (immediate or suspended) or in respect of whom a Community Service Order is made, commits a Masonic offence if, without the written permission of the competent Masonic authority, he attends any Chapter or Chapters pending the determination of his case by Masonic authority (Rule 179a).

In other cases, if appropriate, the ME Grand Superintendent, or the Grand Scribe E, as the case may be will consider the desirability of inviting the Companion to abstain voluntarily from Masonic activity, pending the hearing of his case by Masonic authority. The Companion will be warned that his willingness or refusal to comply with the invitation may be taken into account if Masonic misconduct is subsequently established. If such an invitation is accepted, the First Principal of every Chapter of which the Companion is a member will be informed, and this particular consequence should be drawn to the Companion's attention in the invitation itself, the ME Grand Superintendent will inform the Grand Scribe E forthwith.

8.1 MASONIC AUTHORITIES CONCERNED WITH CONDUCT

Masonic authorities concerned with conduct are:

- The Chapter
- The Most Excellent Grand Superintendent.
- The Board of General Purposes elsewhere.
- Appeals Courts.
- The Panel for Clemency.
- Grand Chapter.
- The First Grand Principal.

8.2 THE PRIVATE CHAPTER

Under Rule 181 Book of Constitutions any Chapter may, by resolution passed by at least two-thirds of the members present, exclude a Companion for 'sufficient cause'. What constitutes 'sufficient cause' is generally a matter for the members of that Chapter. The procedure to be adopted is laid down in Rule 181 but before embarking thereon Chapters are asked to seek the advice of the Provincial Grand Scribe E.

Exclusion is from that Chapter alone and does not directly affect the Companion's membership of other Chapters or (subject to their own Rules) other Masonic Orders. An excluded Companion who is not a subscribing member of another Chapter becomes unattached, but remains subject to the jurisdiction of the ME Grand Superintendent or the Board of General Purposes, as the case may be.

If any Companion who has been excluded from a Chapter seeks to join another Chapter, the circumstances of such exclusion shall be stated to the Chapter before the ballot is taken, the better to enable the Companions to exercise their discretion as to his admission (Rule 163(d)).

An excluded Companion may within three months make a complaint against his exclusion. If the First Grand Principal (or ME Grand Superintendent within his area of jurisdiction) is satisfied that the exclusion was without sufficient cause or that the provisions of Rule 181 have not been complied with he may order him to be reinstated (Rule 182).

A letter or other notification of resignation received after a notice has been served upon a Companion in accordance with Rule 181 that a Resolution is to be proposed to exclude him does not prevent the Chapter considering and voting upon the resolution (Rule 183).

The name of every Companion excluded from a Chapter must be reported to the Grand Scribe E and where appropriate, to the Provincial Grand Scribe E (Rule 181).

The ME Grand Superintendent or the Board of General Purposes (as appropriate) may take further action (see 8.3).

8.3 MOST EXCELLENT GRAND SUPERINTENDENT

The ME Grand Superintendent is empowered to determine any Masonic complaint or irregularity in his area and has the power to admonish or suspend (Rule 75). He may (but is not obliged to) order the reinstatement of a Companion wrongly excluded from a Chapter under Rule 181 [Rule 182(b)]. He may also deprive a Provincial Grand Officer of his Office (if any), rank and privileges. (Rule 68(f)).

The Provincial Grand Scribe E must report all cases of suspension (and all but the least serious cases of admonition) to the Grand Scribe E (Rule 75). In cases of suspension the Grand Scribe E will normally inform Provincial Grand Scribes, the relevant Chapter Scribes and certain other Masonic bodies of any final penalty imposed.

The ME Grand Superintendent has no power to erase a Chapter or expel a Companion but may pass a recommendation, for such a penalty to the Grand Scribe E; he may also recommend that a Companion be invited to resign from the Royal Arch (Rule 76). In either case, the Companion is automatically suspended until the case has been considered by an Appeals Court (or the Companion has accepted an invitation to resign).

An appeal against a decision of the ME Grand Superintendent can be made to an Appeals Court (Rule 185). If the ME Grand Superintendent, who imposed a penalty of suspension (or his successor), is satisfied that circumstances have changed, he has power to remit all or part of the remaining period of suspension (Rule 179(iv)).

8.4 APPEALS COURTS

The powers of an Appeals Court are set out in Rules 277 (recommendations for expulsion or erasure) and 278 (appeals). It can confirm or rescind the decision of the Board or the ME Grand Superintendent, or increase or reduce a penalty imposed. A penalty of expulsion or erasure confirmed or imposed by an Appeals Court takes effect automatically 90 days after the Grand Scribe E has sent written notice to the Companion or Chapter, unless a plea for clemency is made.

If an Appeals Court imposed a penalty of suspension it, or a differently constituted Appeals Court if satisfied that circumstances have changed, has power to remit all or part of the remaining period of suspension (Rule 179(iv)).

8.5 THE PANEL FOR CLEMENCY

The Panel for Clemency is constituted under Rule 280. Its powers are set out in Rule 277 (i) (C) to (E). It can:-

- [a] Grant a plea for clemency and substitute a penalty of admonition or suspension.
- [b] Reject the plea, in which case expulsion or erasure becomes immediately effective.
- [c] Grant leave for the plea to be made in the Grand Chapter.

8.6 SUPREME GRAND CHAPTER

Supreme Grand Chapter retains authority to expel a Companion or to erase a Chapter (Rule 4), but the circumstances in which it will exercise that authority are very rare.

Supreme Grand Chapter may also hear a plea for clemency referred to it by the Panel for Clemency under Rule 277 (a) (i) (E), and if such a plea is granted the interim penalty of suspension continues in force subject to the right of the Companion or Chapter to apply to an Appeals Court for the suspension to be lifted (Rules 277(b) and 179(iv)).

8.7 MOST EXCELLENT GRAND PRINCIPAL

The ME First Grand Principal may (but is not obliged to) order the reinstatement of a Companion wrongly excluded from a Chapter under Rule 181 (Rule 182(a)). He may also deprive a Grand Officer of his Office (If any), rank and privileges (Rule 24).

8.8 MASONIC DISCIPLINARY COMMITTEES

Rules 75 and 232(b) enable the ME Grand Superintendent or the ME First Grand Principal and the Board of General Purposes respectively to set up a Committee to investigate Masonic complaint or irregularity.

The Committee in West Kent will normally comprise of the Deputy Grand Superintendent, Assistant to the Provincial Grand Principals of the area and the Provincial Grand Registrar. The Chapter to which the Companion belongs will be invited to attend the hearing to give the Chapter views on the matter. The functions of a Committee are to:-

- [a] Consider reports from Chapters about the conduct of individual Companions referred to it by the appropriate authority.
- [b] Investigate and consider complaints from Masonic and non-Masonic sources referred to it by the appropriate authority and determine what has occurred.
- [c] Determine whether or not Masonic misconduct has occurred.
- [d] Recommend to the ME Grand Superintendent that no penalty be imposed or that the Companion or Chapter concerned be admonished, suspended from Masonic activity for a stated period, or reported to the Grand Scribe E with a recommendation that the Companion be invited to resign from the Chapter or that he be expelled or the Chapter be erased. Minutes of the proceedings of a disciplinary Committee will be taken and those together with all supporting papers before the Committee and recommendations of the Committee will be retained by the Provincial Grand Scribe E. The Companion concerned and his Chapter(s) will be informed, in writing, of the decision of the ME Grand Superintendent.

9 RETURNS

During the course of the 'Masonic Year' you will be required to complete and submit three Returns, at varying times dependent on the Chapter By-laws (two for SGC and one for Province). The three Returns are detailed below and all should be submitted to the Provincial Office, regardless of where they originate.

9.1 INSTALLATION RETURN – SUPREME GRAND CHAPTER

The purpose of this form, which is commonly referred to as the LP&A4, is twofold. First, it advises Supreme Grand Chapter of the names of the Three Principals in Office during the year commencing on the day of the Installation. Second, it advises the names of the Past First Principals both of and in the Chapter who are current members and thereby entitled to attend the Convocations of Supreme Grand Chapter. It is most important that this form is signed by the newly Installed First Principal on the day of Installation and sent, promptly, to the Provincial Grand Scribe E who will ensure that the information contained therein is recorded and forwarded to the Grand Scribe E. Failure to do so could mean that anyone named on that form and presenting themselves for verification at Supreme Grand Chapter could well be refused admission. If any of the Principals are **not** present at the Installation, then immediately they are Invested, the Chapter Scribe E **must** inform the Provincial Office, who will forward to Supreme Grand Chapter the date(s) of the Investiture.

This Form is, currently, posted out as part of the pack sent to all Chapter Scribes annually, in January. A further form, should it be required, is also included with the Supreme Grand Chapter Annual Returns.

9.2 ANNUAL RETURN – SUPREME GRAND CHAPTER

The Annual Return from Supreme Grand Chapter, commonly referred to as the AR1 is email out to the Chapter Scribe E and Treasurer prior to the financial year end of the Chapter. This usually, but not necessarily, coincides with the Chapter Installation, dependent upon the By-Laws of the Chapter. It contains a list of the members of the Chapter together with the fees payable to Supreme Grand Chapter. On receipt, the list of members should be checked thoroughly and members who have died, been elected as Honorary Members, resigned, ceased membership under RA Reg 71 or have been excluded under Rule 181, if not already notified, should be indicated together with the appropriate dates. On completion and duly amended where necessary, it should be returned to the Provincial Grand Scribe E together with a cheque for the appropriate amount made payable to Supreme Grand Chapter.

Dues must be paid for all Companions who have been subscribing members of the Chapter **for all, or part, of the previous year**. You should retain a copy for your own records; the Chapter Treasurer will be required to produce it, together with all other invoices, for the Chapter Auditors. Queries on or about this form should be sent in writing, either by email or post, to the Provincial Grand Scribe E who will direct the same to Supreme Grand Chapter. Failure to submit the Return promptly will render the Chapter liable to penalties. The Three Principals and Past First Principals shall also not be permitted to attend Supreme Grand Chapter.

If desired payment relating to the SGC Annual Return may be made by electronic bank transfer. Details will be provided with the Provincial Annual Return but will include similar text:

Payment is preferred by BACS transfer. Please tick here if you have paid by this method (___)

Supreme Grand Chapter of England Bank details are: Barclays Bank

Sort Code: 20-32-37 A/c Number: 70875104

Payment Reference: CXXXX AR YYYY (where XXXX= Chapter Number & YYYY = Year)

Date Paid by BACS ___/___/___ (**write on the Annual Return**)

(Note that a reference of Chapter number is essential to ensure that the payment is properly recorded against the Chapter payment).

9.3 ANNUAL RETURN - PROVINCIAL GRAND CHAPTER

All Scribes E will receive a copy of the membership list compiled from the database of Provincial Grand Chapter together with an invoice for the dues payable. This will be sent, by email, at the same time as you are notified of the identity of the Installation Representative. The Return should be checked thoroughly for accuracy (including members' addresses), corrections made, and returned to the Provincial Office so that accurate records are retained relative to your particular Chapter. The Province updates the records of membership of the Chapter including, Exaltees and Joining Members, Members who have died, been elected to Honorary Membership, resigned, ceased membership under RA Reg 71 or have been excluded under Rule 181. These should be indicated on the form together with the appropriate date, if not already notified. It is essential that the schedule is completed accurately.

When completing the Return, it is essential that the column headed, Chapter Office 'New', is filled in as fully as possible, as this information will appear on each members individual confidential datasheet. It should be remembered that Annual dues must be paid for all Companions who have been subscribing members of the Chapter **for all, or part of, the previous year**. Failure to make a Return will preclude the members thereof from attending Provincial Grand Chapter.

On completion, the form should be returned to the Provincial Grand Scribe E together with the invoice and cheque made payable to Provincial Grand Chapter. The invoiced amount **must be paid in full** and payment of these dues MUST be received by the Province within 28 days of the due date in accordance with Provincial Grand Lodge By-Law 19, and Provincial Grand Chapter By-Law 9. Any queries will be resolved as quickly as possible following the receipt of payment. A copy of the Chapter accounts should also be sent.

If desired payment relating to the Provincial Annual Return may be made by electronic bank transfer. Details will be provided with the Annual Return but will include similar text:

Payment is preferred by BACS transfer. Please tick here if you have paid by this method (___)

Provincial Bank details are: Barclays Bank

Sort Code: 20-14-33 A/c Number: 70738056

Payment Reference: C_____ Date Paid by BACS ___/___/___ (**write on the Annual Return**)

(Note that a reference of Chapter number is essential to ensure that the payment is properly recorded against the Chapter payment).

10 BY-LAWS

10.1 PROVINCIAL BY-LAWS

The By-Laws of Provincial Grand Chapter are available from the Provincial Grand Scribe E.

10.2 CHAPTER BY-LAWS

By-Laws are usually framed upon formation of a Chapter and at its subsequent Consecration they are approved and a copy sent to the Provincial Grand Scribe E who, in turn, ensures that a copy is sent to Grand Chapter. These are filed by both Grand and Provincial Grand Chapter and are used as a check to see that the proceedings of each Chapter are carried out within the terms of those By- Laws. Supreme Grand Chapter has 'model' By-Laws which must be used as a template for Chapter By-Laws.

10.3 ALTERATIONS TO CHAPTER BY-LAWS

If a Chapter wishes to amend one or more of its By-Laws, you, as the Chapter Scribe E are advised to speak to the Provincial Office first, in order to assure yourself that the action you are about to take, and in many cases advise the Chapter to take, is both permissible and correct. It is also strongly recommended that Chapters follow the model By-Laws.

Having determined the amendments required these should be approved in open Chapter by Notice of Motion and ballot. The Chapter Scribe E should then complete the online form and submit the By-Laws for approval. A complete set of the new By-Laws will be sent to the Chapter Scribe E to be signed by the First Principal and Chapter Scribe E and returned to the Provincial Office. The Province will then obtain the approval and signature of the Provincial Grand Scribe E on behalf of the ME Grand Superintendent. One copy will be returned to the Chapter, a copy will be sent to Supreme Grand Chapter and the Province will retain a copy. The Chapter Scribe E must then issue every member of the Chapter with a copy of the new Chapter By-Laws.

No amendment to the By-Laws can become effective until approved by the ME Grand Superintendent on behalf of the Most Excellent First Grand Principal.

10.4 PERMANENT CHANGE OF VENUE and / or MEETING DATES

Amendments to By-Laws must be approved, inter alia, in respect of a permanent change of venue and / or dates of Meetings. The Provincial Grand Scribe E must be consulted at an early stage of any changes. (See also 4.2).

10.5 MODEL BY-LAWS

Model By-Laws are issued by Grand Chapter which cover facets usually required by the members and are recommended to any new group of Companions considering the formation of a new Chapter. A copy of the Model By-Laws is available on the Provincial Office. The adoption of these model By-Laws is strongly recommended when making major revisions to existing (and possibly outdated) Chapter By-Laws. Words and figures in italics should be altered to suit the Chapter and its members. Please note that if the Model By-Laws are not followed it will require the approval of Grand Chapter before any new By-Laws can come into force. This will take a considerable length of time so Chapters are advised, most strongly, to adopt the Model By-Laws.

10.6 BY-LAWS TO BE PRESENTED

Scribes are reminded that it is essential for all Exaltees, Joining Members and newly Installed First Principals, to be presented with an up to date copy of the Chapter By-Laws.

10.7 SCRIBE E's SERVICES

A Chapter in its By-Laws may provide that the services of its Scribe E be equivalent to the appropriate subscription to the Chapter.

Annual Dues for Supreme Grand Chapter and to Provincial Grand Chapter are still payable for a Chapter Scribe E whose subscription is paid by the Chapter.

10.8 REPRINTING BY-LAWS

When reprinting the Chapter By-Laws the following text should be included: 'Reprinted incorporating all amendments approved by the ME Grand Superintendent on behalf of The Most Excellent First Grand Principal, up to and including (date of last approval)'.

11 AMALGAMATION OF CHAPTERS AND SURRENDER OF WARRANT

11.1 THE AMALGAMATION OF CHAPTERS

It is now permissible under RA Reg 45A of the Book of Constitutions, for Chapters to amalgamate but it first requires the approval of the ME First Grand Principal. Chapters that wish to amalgamate should contact the Provincial Grand Scribe E immediately they are sure of their intention. There is an information pack available from the Provincial Secretariat website which details the procedure which should be followed for the Amalgamation and Closure of Chapters. You will be allocated an Amalgamations and Closures Officer with whom you must closely liaise.

11.2 SURRENDER OF A CHAPTER WARRANT – CLOSING THE CHAPTER

Chapters that are considering this action, please contact the Provincial Grand Scribe E immediately for further advice.

12 GRAND RANK: PROVINCIAL GRAND RANK

12.1 GRAND RANK

Recommendation for Grand Rank is the sole prerogative of the ME Grand Superintendent. Companions of eminence and ability, members of recognised Constitutions, who have rendered service to Freemasonry, may, by appointment of the ME First Grand Principal, be constituted members of the Supreme Grand Chapter and with such rank and distinction as he may think proper. The ME First Grand Principal is also empowered to confer the rank of a Past Grand Officer on any Companion of ability who is a member of the Supreme Grand Chapter in accordance with RA Reg 5, Book of Constitutions.

12.2 PROVINCIAL GRAND RANK

Appointments to, and promotions in West Kent Provincial Grand Chapter are the sole the prerogative of the ME Grand Superintendent.

12.3 FIRST APPOINTMENTS

The Book of Constitutions and Supreme Grand Chapter govern the number of first appointments that can be made to Provincial Grand Rank. There are usually more Chapters who have a member who could be considered for Provincial Honours than the number of ranks available. Each year the Provincial Grand Scribe E will send a form for those members that are being considered for Provincial rank setting out the criteria for Provincial Grand Rank, to enable the Chapter Scribe E to provide additional information about the member.

In order that the necessary information in respect of each Candidate for consideration can be collated for submission to the ME Grand Superintendent's advisers, it is essential that the **form is completed in full and returned by the specified date.**

Letters of appointment will be sent to the recipients of Provincial Honours. Their acceptance or refusal must be communicated to the Provincial Grand Scribe E **no later than the date specified.**

If a recipient does not reply it will be deemed as a refusal of the offer and dealt with appropriately.

No correspondence from the recipient or Chapter can be entertained by the Provincial Grand Scribe E in connection with the rank offered. In such cases contact should be made with the relevant Assistant Provincial Grand Principal.

12.4 PROMOTIONS

Promotion in Provincial Grand Rank is not automatic and depends on the work done by that Companion for the benefit of the Chapter, Province and work in his community.

12.5 ADDITIONAL GENERAL INFORMATION

The information supplied by the Chapter Scribe E on the Provincial Annual Returns is of vital importance, as it provides the information of the work done.

The honour conferred on a Companion is that of being appointed one of the Officers, present or past, of the Province, irrespective of the rank of that Office. Rank is not only a reward for past services, but is to be regarded as an opportunity and incentive for further service to Masonry.

The rank is conferred in respect of an individual's merit and not in respect of the merits of his Chapter. In assessing the merits of a Companion, particular regard is paid to the interest he has shown in his Chapter's affairs and his service to his Chapter or the Province through his Masonic career to that date. It is most important that applicants, when compiling a Provincial Honour nominations form, include as much information as possible.

13 RULES - BOOK OF CONSTITUTIONS

13.1 ALPHABETICAL LIST OF HEADINGS WITH CORRESPONDING RULE/REG

A quick reference guide to the more useful Rules / Regs referred to in this manual are listed below. They are taken from the 2014 Edition of the Book of Constitutions.

ADMISSION OF VISITORS	Rule 125
- Disqualification to visit	Rule 127
ANNUAL RETURN OF MEMBERS	Reg 61
Accounts Examiners – Election	Rule 153
BY-LAWS	Rule 136, 137, 138
CANDIDATES - Qualification for Exaltation	Reg 65
- Enquiries from other localities	Reg 67
- For Exaltation	Reg 66
- From Ireland and Scotland	Reg 67
- For joining	Reg 66
- Election of	Reg 66
- Rejection on Ballot	Reg 66
- Responsibility for fees	Reg 68
CESSATION OF MEMBERSHIP TWO YEARS IN ARREARS	Rule 71
CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE	Reg 70
EXCLUSION - Permanent	Rule 181
GRAND CHAPTER CERTIFICATE	Reg 69
HONORARY MEMBERS	Rule 167
CHAPTER COMMITTEE - Election	Rule 154
CHAPTER OF INSTRUCTION	Reg 74
CHAPTER OFFICERS.....	Reg 48
CHAPTER PROPERTY.....	Rule 143, 190
CHAPTER SUBSCRIPTIONS	Rule 145
FIRST PRINCIPAL	
- Election	Reg 48
- Installation	Reg 58

- Death or incapacity of First Principal Elect	Reg 54
- Continuation in Office of First Principal	Reg 51
- Postponement of Installation	Reg 58
- Qualification for First Principal's Chair	Reg 50
- First Principal's period of Office	Reg 51
- First Principal of more than one Chapter at the same time	Reg 52
- Death of First Principal and other contingencies.....	Reg 54
JANITOR - Election of	Reg 48
MEETING DATES	
- Time and Place	Rule 137
- Prohibitive days	Rule 139 a, b,
- Alteration of	Reg 58
- Emergency Convocation.....	Reg 59
MEMBERS - Register of	Reg 61
MINUTES - Recording of	Rule 144
MISBEHAVIOUR IN CHAPTER	Rule 180
OFFICERS - Vacancy in Regular Office	Reg 55
RESIGNATION	Rule 183
SUBSCRIPTIONS - Arrears	Rule 145, 181
TREASURER - Duties of	Rule 153
- Election of	Reg 48

14 REFERENCE BOOKS: FORMS : FILES : LEAFLETS

The following are deemed desirable "Working Tools" of a Chapter Scribe E.

14.1 BOOKS FOR RECORDS

- Register of Members and Past Members
- Attendance Book
- Minute Book
- Declaration Book

14.2 BOOKS AND BOOKLETS OF REFERENCE

- Book of Constitutions
- Constitutions and Regulations of Grand Charity
- Information for Guidance of Members of the Craft
- Information on Masonic Charities
- Grand Charity Relief Chest Handbook
- Masonic Year Book
- Masonic Conduct - Guide to Investigations
- Provincial Almanac
- Freemasonry - What's it all about (including DVD)

14.3 FORMS

- Annual Return (AR1) for Supreme Grand Chapter of England
- Annual Return for Provincial Grand Chapter
- Installation Return (LP&A4) for Supreme Grand Chapter of England
- Registration Form P - to Register a new Chapter Member

15 QUICK CHECK LIST

15.1 ANNUAL RETURNS

Supreme Grand Chapter (AR1) - this will be sent direct to you, near to the Chapter financial year end and becomes due on the last day of the financial year, as per the Chapter By-Laws. The Return and required payment should be sent in to the Provincial Office within one month. Please ensure that the cheque is made payable to, '**Supreme Grand Chapter of England**'. Remember that payment **must** be made for all Companions who have been a member during the last 12 months, irrespective of whether or not they are still a member at the time that payment is required.

Provincial Grand Chapter - this will be sent prior to your Installation, together with notification of your Installation Representative. The Return, together with payment and notification of all Chapter Officers, should be sent to the Provincial Office immediately following the Installation. Please ensure that the cheque is made payable to, '**Provincial Grand Chapter**'. It is also possible to make payment by direct bank transfer, details of which are sent with the Return. Remember that payment **must** be made for all Companions who have been a member during the last 12 months, irrespective of whether or not they are still a member at the time that payment is required.

Installation Return - this is sent out as part of the annual pack posted to all Chapter Scribes in January. A second Installation Return is included with the Annual (AR1) Return. Complete the form immediately following the Installation. The front of the form requires you to indicate who has been Installed / Invested as; First Principal, Second Principal and Third Principal and to list all Past First Principals of and in the Chapter. On the reverse of the form you are required to indicate who has been Invested as Almoner and Charity Steward and have it signed by the First Principal and Scribe E. The form must be returned to the Provincial Office immediately following the Installation.

15.2 CHAPTER MEETINGS

Double Ceremonies should be avoided, if possible.

15.3 MEMBER DETAILS

Change in membership details, such as addresses, telephone numbers, Exaltees, Joining Members, Honorary Members, deaths, resignations, exclusions etc, should be notified to Province, using the online form on the Provincial Secretariat's website, as soon as is practicable. **It is important to notify the Provincial Office of the death of a member immediately it is known by you.** This is to ensure that no further communications are sent, addressed to the deceased, causing obvious upset to family.

15.4 PROVINCIAL GRAND CHAPTER MEETING

Will be held on the second Friday in November. You will receive full details from the Provincial Office. Arrange for the Chapter to be represented and distribute the Notice convening the Meeting in accordance with the instructions issued. Distribute to appropriate members of the Chapter.

15.5 PROVINCIAL ALMANAC

The Provincial 'Year Book' is compiled following the Provincial Grand Chapter. It is now available on line as a PDF file and circulated to Scribes E. If information about your Chapter is incorrect, please use the email address pagse@freemasons-westkent.org.uk to send in any corrections

15.6 REGISTRATION FORM 'P'

Ensure that the Registration Form is fully and accurately completed before submitting to the Provincial Office. Failure to do so will result in the Form being returned and cause an inevitable delay in the Candidate becoming registered as a Member. Any accompanying cheque payment should be made payable to, 'Supreme Grand Chapter of England'. Details of current Registration Fees are available on the Provincial Secretariat's Website and are also notified to each Scribe E, annually, by SGC.

15.7 SUMMONSES

Must be sent to: all Chapter Members (including Honorary), Provincial Office and all official visitors named on the letter from the Office. It would be helpful if the names, addresses and telephone number of the Scribe E, Treasurer, Almoner and Charity Representative were detailed on the Summons.

Please ensure that full details of Exaltees and Joining Members are included on the Summons, as required by RA Reg 66.

When emailing a copy of the Summons it would be appreciated if it could be sent as one PDF document to pgcchaptersummons@freemasons-westkent.org.uk

If there is to be an official visitor to the Chapter then the Provincial Office will send an email containing the following text so that the summons can be sent to the visitor directly.

Dear Comp Scribe E

The method of sending information from the Provincial Office to the Chapter Scribe E, regarding an official visit, is changing for all visits after the 1st March 2019.

Please find attached official letter of Introduction, giving details of the forthcoming Official Visit to your Chapter, together with a current list of subscribing members.

The list of subscribing members is strictly confidential and once you have finished with it for the purpose of this meeting all hard and electronic copies must be destroyed and or deleted.

The Official Visitor(s), his escorting DC and escorts if applicable are copied into this email and I would be obliged if you would **"REPLY All" to the e-mail attaching a copy of your Summons for this meeting. You may also wish to enter in your summons, "To welcome the Official visitor (by including his name and Rank").**

If it is an Installation meeting please also find attached a letter requesting Information. This information is strictly confidential, it and must be e-mailed separately and ONLY to the Official Visitor.

Please note that under this new streamlined system there will be no reminders sent from the Provincial Office.

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APPENDIX A ACTIVITIES FOR A SCRIBE E IN A CHAPTER YEAR

The following timeline depicts the key events in a Chapter year that the Scribe E has to attend to.

Event	Scribe E Action
January	
End of Lodge Financial Year	Submit Annual Returns (to SGC and Province) (Sent by SGC & Province to Scribe E and Treasurer)
Convocation prior to Installation Convocation	Ballot or Declare for the ensuing year Principals, Treasurer, Janitor, Auditors, Committee
Installation Convocation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Send Summons to Province • Send Approved Accounts to Province • Send Information to Provincial Rep • Send Installation Return LP&A4 to Province
Any Regular or Emergency Convocation	Send Summons to Province
Candidate for Exaltation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supply Form P to Proposer • If living out of Province get clearance from Province or MetGL covering his home area • Ensure form properly completed by Candidate, Proposer and Seconder • Include full details on next Summons • MEZ to sign Form P • Ballot at Convocation (if ok Exalt) • Or Exalt within one year
After Exaltation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Send Registration & Fee to Province • Send Request for Grand Chapter Certificate to SGC
Candidate for Joining	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supply Form P to Proposer • Ensure form properly completed by Candidate, Proposer and Seconder • Obtain Clearance Certificates • Include full details on next Summons • MEZ to Sign Form P • Ballot at Convocation
After Joining	Send Form P to Province
Any Dispensation	Send Request to Province with Fee
Exclusions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Usually for non-payment of dues under by-law 6 • NoM to be given and reason at one Convocation (no name(s) given) • Scribe E to send Recorded Delivery letter to advise person(s) and give opportunity to resolve. • Next Summons to carry the NoM when proposer will provide detail for the ballot
December	