



Welcome to the second edition of the PCT Bulletin. As we await the next stage in the reduction of Covid restrictions we are now all looking forward being able to meet again in our Lodges. How much we will be curtailed by ongoing advice? will we have to wear masks? will our ceremonies need modification as a result of social distancing?, whatever happens it will be good to get back, meet our friends and catch up with the backlog of ceremonies.



**PGM at front of queue for PSA test**

R. W. Bro. Mark Estaugh will be one of the early birds to receive a PSA test at our Dartford session on 10th July

**Healthy Options for the Festive Board**

The PCT have contacted the Halls and Centres around the Province suggesting that caterers should be encouraged to include a 'healthy option' among the choices on their menu lists. Of course, the Lamb Shanks and Steak and Kidney Pud will still be available but hopefully, it will provide an option for the more diet conscious Lodges and Chapters. Perhaps every Lodge and Chapter should consider having at least one healthy meal a year.

**Weight Loss Initiative**

It is pleasing to see that, although the initiative is officially over, a large number of Brethren are continuing their progress and keeping in touch through the initiative's WhatsApp group.



**PCT Careline to remain open in the 'new normal'**

The PCT Careline will now continue indefinitely. Although the original intention was to provide support during lockdown it has proved so useful to so many Brethren and Companions that it will now carry on.

Team leader, Phil May, expressed his delight 'I am extremely grateful to our volunteers for continuing the project' - 0203 404 0423

**PROSTATE CANCER – GET CHECKED OUT BEFORE IT’S TOO LATE**

Long ago I was tasked with producing the first Prostate Cancer brochure for distribution in Doctor's surgeries on behalf of, what was then, The Prostate Cancer Charitable Trust.

Obviously I couldn't just go ahead and write it without knowing more, so I spent time with a number of UK researchers. What I learned was frightening.

This was at a time when, statistically, one man in the UK died of the disease or its side-effects roughly every 45 minutes (which probably exceeded the mortality rate of breast cancer). Quite rightly vast sums were being spent on breast cancer research but Prostate problems were the Cinderella, with many uninformed people regarding it as just something nasty that old men got 'down below'.

In recent years much has changed, some GPs even include a PSA test at their well-man clinics but there is still no mass testing. Treatments have evolved and life expectancy with early diagnosis has improved beyond anyone's wildest imagination but if you have symptoms you should not wait until 10th July but see your GP immediately.

EARLY DIAGNOSIS is the key, which is why the PCT, in association with the Graham Fulford Charitable Trust, run regular testing days for the Brethren of West Kent.

*The next will be held at Dartford Masonic Centre on 10th July; spaces are now limited but email George Buckberry [g.buckberry@btinternet.com](mailto:g.buckberry@btinternet.com) for details.* Tests will also be available for diabetes, the latter being available to Brethren, their families and close friends, although booking through George Buckberry is essential.

***COVID Restrictions - If a delay in the ending of lockdown necessitates postponement we will notify everyone that has booked as soon as possible***

*David Hedges - PCT PR Officer.*



## What is the PSA Test?

The Prostate Specific Antigen test is in many ways similar to, the now familiar Covid testing, except that it requires a blood sample rather than a swab. The sample is checked for what are, in simple terms, anti-bodies related to problems with the prostate gland.

One of our professional phlebotomists will take a blood-sample from your arm which will be sent, along with your 'blood form', to the laboratory for analysis.

You will be notified of the result and should it indicate that further investigation is necessary you are encouraged to contact your GP as soon as possible.

If you get a positive result, don't start worrying, the test, as good as it is, is only an indication and the result may reflect other issues.

For patient confidentiality and GDPR it is ESSENTIAL that each applicant uses their personal email address when booking a test.

Once you have requested a test (see page 1) you will be sent instruction which contains an internet link and password to enable you to complete your booking.

At the end of the booking process you will be supplied with a 'blood form'; please ensure that you print it, complete it and bring it with you.

You are requested not to arrive earlier than your booked appointment time as strict Covid measures will be in operation. You will also be required to wear a mask unless you are exempted.

***If continued lockdown necessitates postponement you will be notified by email***

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## Lodge Widows

As reported in the last issue, the PCT is now working closely with the Provincial Grand Almoner and his team to ensure that contact is maintained with the widows of our Brethren that have passed to the GLA and that our fullest support is available to them.

As part of this the PCT will be arranging for any new widows to be sent a condolence card from the Provincial Grand Master, together with contact details. This is not intended to replace or interfere with the work being done by Lodge Almoners but it will reinforce the support and assistance that the Craft can offer .

## Widows cont.

For this to work properly it is essential that Secretaries submit the WK90 form to Bromley without delay. If for any reason that is not possible we ask that the Lodge Secretary or Almoner emails us -

[pastoralcareteam@westkentmasons.org.uk](mailto:pastoralcareteam@westkentmasons.org.uk) quoting Widow in the subject box.

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## Take Diabetes seriously...

**For the first time PCT is offering a Diabetes test at our next PSA session.**

**The team's medical man, David Campbell, has a few sobering thoughts on the subject**

Type 2 Diabetes is a serious lifelong condition. It develops when your insulin producing cells can't produce enough insulin. Or when the insulin you do produce doesn't work properly. This leads to high blood sugar levels. If left untreated, high blood sugar levels can cause serious health complications.

Do you have any of the following?

Going to the toilet more often, especially at night.

Feeling more tired

Losing weight without trying

Genital itching or thrush

Cuts and Wounds taking longer to heal

Blurred vision

**If you have any of these symptoms don't wait until 10<sup>th</sup> July for one of our tests - seek advice from your GP straight away**

Further information can be found at [www.diabetes.org.uk](http://www.diabetes.org.uk)

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*The PCT would like to thank all those Brethren and friends who have given support to the PSA testing on 10th July. From the Dartford Masonic Centre to the Brethren of the Widows Sons Motocycling Group, who are acting as couriers to get samples to the laboratory as soon as possible; to George Buckberry for dealing with the administration and all the helpers on the day.*

*Without their help and that of many others in the background, the day would not be possible*

**Thanks are also due to Colin Wright who, back in 2016, instigated the Provincial PSA testing.**

## FACTS -

Since the Provincial PSA tests started in 2016

1871 Brethren have been tested

146 Brethren required further investigation

After further investigation 22 Brethren were diagnosed with Prostate Cancer, although this figure is anecdotal because we only know the outcome if Brethren choose to tell us.

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### Good News from Colin Wright -

Back in the team following a negative biopsy result on a fast-growing suspicious lump that was removed from my mouth. Good news on both counts.

Another piece of good news is that everything is in place for our next PSA session at the Dartford Masonic Centre on July 10<sup>th</sup> 2021. Also available on the day will be an instant Diabetes type 2 test.

**The Masonic Charitable Foundation.** This organisation really is helpful.. There is hardly a subject which might cause concern that the MCF are unable to assist with. Three of the people that I have referred, have all received helpful results.

An interesting recently released article from the MCF states that, with Masonic support the University of East Anglia have developed a new test to detect Prostate Cancer It is a non-invasive urine test. Good news for those of us that have experienced the dreaded DRE check. Full information in the link below. It is well worth reading.

Brethren as restrictions are being eased please keep safe and I hope to see you at our Dartford Masonic Centre on the 10<sup>th</sup> of July for our continuing PSA sessions and the newly introduced Diabetes Type 2 test.

### Colin Wright

*Editor's note – the link to the University of East Anglia is as follows- [www.uea.ac.uk/news/-/article/new-prostate-cancer-urine-test-shows-how-aggressive-disease-is-and-could-reduce-invasive-biopsies](http://www.uea.ac.uk/news/-/article/new-prostate-cancer-urine-test-shows-how-aggressive-disease-is-and-could-reduce-invasive-biopsies)*

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The Bulletin is edited and produced by PCT member David Hedges who wishes to thank everyone that has contributed to this edition.



## 2026 Festival

The Prostate Cancer research at UEA was part financed by the Province of Norfolk together with the MCF... clearly valid use of our charity giving.

With over a year of lockdown we now have a lot of catching up to do with the fundraising for our own 2026 MCF Festival. Half a million pounds has already been transferred to the MCF but with £2m+£2026 left to reach the target, we need to work hard; give what you can, support the events and look for ways to fundraise within your Lodge, Chapter or Centre.

*If you want to raise funds and help your fitness you could do far worse than joining the Gordon Davie Memorial Walk at Chislehurst on 22nd August. Either your Lodge Charity Steward or Almoner should be able to give you the entry form, if not contact us –*

[pastoralcareteam@westkentmasons.org.uk](mailto:pastoralcareteam@westkentmasons.org.uk)

*showing 'Gordon' in the subject line. You can choose to walk one, four or eight miles, that's up to you...the only important part is your sponsorship money!*



## Early Detection of Melanoma is Essential

### More from our Medical Guru, David Campbell

Melanoma is the most serious form of skin cancer. If detected early most cases of melanoma can be cured by surgical removal. The earlier this is done, the better the long term outlook's likely to be.

Get To Know your Skin, if there is an abnormality on your skin that is -

CHANGED - It is new or seems to have changed since you last saw it.

NOT GOING AWAY - Once a new lesion has appeared and it remains on the skin for longer then 6-8 weeks.

ODD - It simply looks strange; worries you or seems to be different from other lesions on your skin.

You should get it looked at by a doctor

**THE FACT THAT IT LOOKS OK IS NOT A DIAGNOSIS**



If you have an issue of any kind that is effecting your well-being and you need support, just call our Careline. Six experienced and well respected Brethren are awaiting your call.

All calls are confidential