The North Central Communications Pack

Helping every Lodge tell its story

Hampshire & Isle of Wight Freemasonry — North Central Area

Welcome

Every Lodge has a story to tell.
It might be the story of a new member joining, a charity being supported, a social evening, a long-serving member, an historic Lodge building or simply a group of friends enjoying an evening together.
The purpose of this Communications Pack is to help every Lodge in the North Central Area communicate confidently, consistently and positively.
You don't need to be a marketing expert, photographer or social-media professional.

Good communication is simply about telling people what your Lodge does, who you are and why you enjoy being part of it.

The North Central Area will support Lodges by sharing and amplifying good content through Area channels, with appropriate content being shared more widely through Provincial channels.

Our aim

40 Lodges + 13 Chapters = hundreds of stories every year.
Our job is to help those stories reach the people who might be interested in Freemasonry.

A. Setting up your Facebook Page

Every Lodge is encouraged to maintain an active Facebook Page.
A Facebook Page gives your Lodge a public presence and provides a simple way for local people to discover who you are, what you do and how to find out more.

Before you start

Ideally, your Lodge should have at least **two administrators** for the Page.
This means the Page doesn't depend on one person and can continue if the person responsible changes.

Your Page should include

Page name

Use a clear and consistent name, for example:
Lodge of Example No. 1234
Avoid unnecessary abbreviations that someone outside Freemasonry might not understand.

Profile picture

Use an approved Lodge logo.

Cover photograph

Consider using:

- Your Lodge building
- A suitable Lodge photograph
- A community activity
- A local landmark

About section

Keep it simple.
Explain:

- Where you meet

- The general area you cover
- A little about the Lodge
- What sort of activities you undertake
- How someone can find out more

Contact information

Make sure there is an appropriate contact method.
This might be:

- A Lodge email address
- An approved contact form
- A Provincial/North Central enquiry route

Do not publish personal telephone numbers or personal email addresses unless the individual has specifically agreed.

Check the Page regularly

A Facebook Page that hasn't been updated for 12 months gives a poor impression.
You don't need to post every day.
1 or 2 good posts each month is much better than lots of low-quality posts.

B. What to post

The easiest way to keep your Page active is to think about six types of content.

1. PEOPLE

People are interesting.
Introduce members and tell their stories.
Examples:

- Meet one of our members
- A new member's experience
- Long-service recognition
- Why someone joined
- A member's community involvement
- A member's interesting occupation or hobby

Example

> Meet John, who has been a member of our Lodge for more than 20 years. We asked him what first attracted him to Freemasonry and what he enjoys most about being a member today….

2. COMMUNITY

Show how your Lodge contributes to the local community.
Examples:

- Charity donations
- Volunteering
- Community projects
- Food banks
- Local groups
- Youth organisations
- Hospices
- Schools
- Fundraising

Where possible, **make the community organisation the hero of the story**, rather than simply saying "Freemasons gave £X".
Tell people what the support means.

3. FRIENDSHIP & SOCIAL LIFE

Freemasonry isn't only about formal meetings.
Tell people about the friendships and social activities.
Examples:

- Family evenings
- BBQs
- Curry nights
- Quiz nights
- Walks
- Sporting events
- Christmas events
- Informal gatherings
- Social visits

These posts can help potential members understand the wider experience of belonging to a Lodge.

4. HISTORY

Many Lodges have fascinating histories.
Consider sharing:

- Lodge history
- Historic photographs
- Old Lodge buildings
- Centenary celebrations
- Interesting former members
- Local history
- Masonic artefacts

Old photographs can make excellent social-media content.

5. FREEMASONRY EXPLAINED

Use your Page to answer questions people might have.
For example:
What is Freemasonry?
Why do people join?
What happens at a Lodge meeting?
Who can become a Freemason?
How much time does Freemasonry take?
What does a Freemason actually do?
What is the difference between a Lodge and a Chapter?
Don't assume people understand Masonic terminology.

6. EVENTS

Promote things people can actually attend.
Examples:

- Open days
- Charity events
- Talks
- Concerts
- Exhibitions
- Community events
- Social evenings
- Family events

Always make it clear:

What?
When?
Where?
Who is it for?
How do I find out more?

C. What and where not to post

Think before you post.
A good rule is:

"Would I be happy for this to appear on the front page of the local newspaper?"

If the answer is no, don't post it.

Never publish

- Private Masonic information
- Personal information without permission
- Personal contact details without permission
- Details of another person's Masonic membership without consent
- Confidential Lodge business
- Private meeting discussions
- Information about candidates or prospective members
- Anything that could compromise someone's privacy
- Political campaigning or political statements on behalf of the Lodge
- Offensive, discriminatory or inflammatory material
- Arguments with members of the public
- Unverified claims
- Content that could bring Freemasonry or the Lodge into disrepute

Be particularly careful with photographs

Do not assume that because someone attended an event they automatically consent to being photographed and published online.
Check consent where appropriate.
If you're unsure, **don't publish the photograph until you've checked.**

D. Photography guidance

You don't need an expensive camera.
A modern mobile phone is usually more than capable of producing good social-media photographs.

Do

Get close

People should be clearly visible.

Take action photographs

Photographs of people doing something are generally more interesting than rows of people standing still.

Take several photographs

Don't rely on one photograph.

Take both portrait and landscape photographs

Portrait photographs work particularly well for mobile phones and social media.

Look at the background

Check that there isn't anything distracting or inappropriate behind the people you're photographing.

Capture genuine moments

Smiles, conversations, handshakes, community activities and informal moments often make the best photographs.

Avoid

- Blurry photographs
- Very dark photographs
- Tiny people in a huge room
- Unflattering or embarrassing photographs
- Photographs containing confidential information
- Photographs of people who have not consented where consent is required

Remember

People are more interesting than rooms.

A photograph of six members helping at a community project is usually more engaging than a photograph of an empty Lodge room.

E. How to write a good post

You don't need to write an essay.

A good social-media post usually needs only four things:

1. A reason to read

Start with something interesting.

2. What happened?

Tell people the story.

3. Why does it matter?

Explain the benefit, enjoyment or significance.

4. What next?

Give people a reason to engage.

A simple formula

WHAT + WHO + WHY + NEXT

WHAT happened?
WHO was involved?
WHY is it interesting?
WHAT can the reader do next?

Instead of this:

Lodge 1234 held its regular meeting last night.

Try:

A warm welcome for our newest member!

Last night members of the Lodge welcomed John as he began his journey in Freemasonry.

John told us that friendship and the opportunity to become more involved in his local community were two of the reasons he decided to find out more about Freemasonry.

We wish him every success as he begins his journey with us.

Much more interesting.

F. Example posts

1. Community

Supporting our local community

Members of [Lodge Name] were delighted to visit [Organisation] this week to present a donation of £XXX.

The donation will help [brief explanation of what the money will achieve].

We're proud to support organisations that make such an important difference in our local community.
Thank you to everyone involved in making this possible.
#NorthCentralFreemasonry #HampshireFreemasonry

2. New member

A warm welcome to [Name]
Last night we were delighted to welcome [Name] as the newest member of [Lodge Name].
We asked him what made him want to find out more about Freemasonry.
"[Short approved quote]"
We look forward to sharing the next part of his journey.
Welcome to the Lodge!

3. Social event

Friendship beyond the Lodge room
Last weekend members and their families from [Lodge Name] got together for an evening of food, conversation and plenty of laughter.
Freemasonry is about friendship as well as our formal meetings, and evenings like this are a great opportunity to spend time together away from the Lodge room.
A great evening was had by all!

4. Open event

Come and meet us
Ever wondered what Freemasonry is really about?
Members of [Lodge Name] will be opening our doors on [DATE] and we'd love to meet you.
You'll have the opportunity to:
• Meet local Freemasons
• Look around our Lodge
• Ask questions
• Find out what Freemasonry is really about
• Meet the people behind the organisation
📍 [LOCATION]
📅 [DATE]
⏰ [TIME]
To find out more, contact [APPROVED CONTACT ROUTE].

5. Meet a Freemason

Meet [Name]
[Name] joined [Lodge Name] [X] years ago.
We asked him what he enjoys most about being a Freemason.
"..."
For [Name], it's the friendships he's made and the opportunity to support his local community that make Freemasonry special.
Everyone has a different reason for joining. What's yours?

6. History

Did you know?
[Lodge Name] was founded in [YEAR], making it one of the oldest Lodges in the area.

Over the years, generations of members have met here, formed friendships and supported their local community.
Here's a photograph from [YEAR/ERA].
Can you recognise anyone?

G. Hashtags

Don't use dozens of hashtags.
A few consistent hashtags help connect Lodge content with Area and Provincial content.
Suggested starting point:

Core

#NorthCentralFreemasonry
#HampshireFreemasonry
#Freemasonry

Add relevant ones where appropriate

#Friendship
#Community
#Charity
#Hampshire
#IsleOfWight

Use hashtags naturally rather than filling the end of every post with a long list.
The Area can provide a current recommended hashtag list and update it when required.

H. How to tag Area and Province

When appropriate, tag the official North Central Area and Provincial social-media accounts.
This allows the Area to see your content and consider sharing it.

When should you tag the Area?

Particularly when you have:

- A community story
- A charity story
- A new member
- A significant Lodge anniversary
- An interesting historical story
- A public event
- An open day
- A particularly good photograph
- A story that could interest people outside your Lodge

Important

Tagging the Area does not guarantee that the post will be shared.
The Area will select content according to relevance, quality, appropriateness and the wider communications plan.

I. How to advertise an event

Give people all the information they need.

The 7-point event formula

1. What is it?
"White Table Evening"
2. Who is organising it?
"Lodge of Example"
3. When?
Saturday 14 June
4. Where?
Example Masonic Hall, Example Street

5. What will happen?
Tour, refreshments, informal discussion, opportunity to ask questions.
6. Who can attend?
Be clear about whether the event is open to the public, families, invited guests etc.
7. How do I find out more?
Give one clear contact/enquiry route.

Start advertising early

Ideally:

4–6 weeks before

Initial announcement.

2–3 weeks before

Reminder + photographs/video.

1 week before

Countdown.

1–2 days before

Final reminder.

After the event

Photographs + thank you + results.

J. How to handle comments

Most comments will be positive or simply curious.
Be friendly.

If someone says:

> "Looks like you had a great evening!"

Reply:

> "We certainly did! Thanks for your comment."

If someone asks:

> "How do I find out more about joining?"

Reply:

> "Thanks for getting in touch. We'd be very happy to help. Please send us a private message and we'll put you in touch with someone who can answer your questions."

Move personal conversations away from public comments.

If someone is critical

Don't argue.
Don't get defensive.
Don't get drawn into an online debate.

Instead:

- Remain polite
- Answer factual questions where appropriate
- Correct misinformation calmly
- Move sensitive conversations to private communication
- Escalate serious issues rather than trying to handle them yourself

If someone becomes abusive

You do not have to tolerate abuse.
Do not engage in an argument.
Follow Facebook's moderation tools and seek advice where necessary.

K. How to deal with an enquiry

This is one of the most important parts of the whole strategy.
A Facebook Page isn't simply about getting likes.
It can become the **front door to your Lodge**.
If someone says:

> "I've been thinking about joining. How do I find out more?"

Respond promptly.

Ideally, acknowledge the enquiry as soon as reasonably possible.
Don't leave someone waiting for weeks.

Thank them

> "Thanks very much for getting in touch and for your interest in Freemasonry."

Don't interrogate them

You don't need to ask lots of personal questions through Facebook.

Use the approved enquiry route

Move the person to the appropriate North Central/Provincial contact process.

Record the enquiry appropriately

Make sure the person responsible knows that an enquiry has been received.

Follow up

Someone who has taken the time to contact you is showing genuine interest.
Don't let the enquiry disappear.

L. GDPR, consent and privacy

Social media creates additional responsibilities because content can be seen and shared far beyond the original audience.
The basic principle is:

If in doubt, ask.

Before publishing photographs or personal information, consider whether the people involved have given appropriate permission.
Be particularly careful with:

- Children
- Vulnerable people
- Personal contact details
- Names and photographs
- People who are not Freemasons
- Details of individuals' Masonic membership
- Personal information about prospective members
- Private conversations
- Addresses
- Telephone numbers
- Email addresses

Never assume

> "They were happy to have their photograph taken, so they must be happy for it to be posted online."

Those are different things.
Use appropriate consent processes and follow current Provincial/UGLE guidance.
UGLE's Digital Ambassadorship guidance should be treated as the primary reference for Masonic social-media activity.

M. Who to contact for help

Nobody should feel that they have to manage social media alone.

Lodge Communications Contact

Each Lodge should appoint at least one person responsible for communications.
They should act as the link between the Lodge and the Area.

North Central Area Communications Team

The Area team can provide support with:

- Facebook setup
- Content ideas
- Photography
- Writing posts
- Event promotion
- Sharing Lodge content
- Video
- Communications campaigns
- Handling difficult situations

If your Lodge has a story:

Tell us about it.

We can help you decide how best to tell it and whether it would be suitable for wider Area or Provincial promotion.

The North Central Content Checklist

Before posting, ask:

Is it interesting?

☐ Would someone outside the Lodge care?

Is it positive?

☐ Does it reflect well on the Lodge and Freemasonry?

Is it understandable?

☐ Would someone who knows nothing about Freemasonry understand it?

Is it safe?

☐ Have we protected personal and private information?

Do we have appropriate consent?

☐ Are photographs and personal information being used appropriately?

Is it accurate?

☐ Have we checked names, dates, amounts and other facts?

Is there a reason to engage?

☐ Have we given people something to respond to, attend or find out more about?

The Golden Rules

1. Be human

People connect with people.

2. Tell stories

Don't just announce things.

3. Show, don't just tell

Photographs and video bring stories to life.

4. Celebrate the community

Make the difference you're making the focus.

5. Keep it simple

Short, clear posts are often best.

6. Be consistent

A few good posts every month are better than a burst of activity followed by silence.

7. Protect people's privacy
Think before you publish.
8. Don't argue online
Be polite, factual and professional.
9. Ask for help
The Area is here to support Lodges.
10. Remember the ultimate goal
Awareness → Interest → Engagement → Visit → Enquiry → Membership

One final thought
Every Lodge in North Central is different.
Some are large.
Some are small.
Some have beautiful historic buildings.
Some have fascinating histories.
Some have incredibly active social lives.
Some do enormous amounts of community work.
Some have members with amazing stories.
That's the strength of North Central Freemasonry.
We don't need every Lodge to look the same.
We need every Lodge to be **visible, authentic and connected to its community.**
Your Lodge has a story.
Tell it.
North Central Area Communications Team
Hampshire & Isle of Wight Freemasonry