



Keeping in Touch

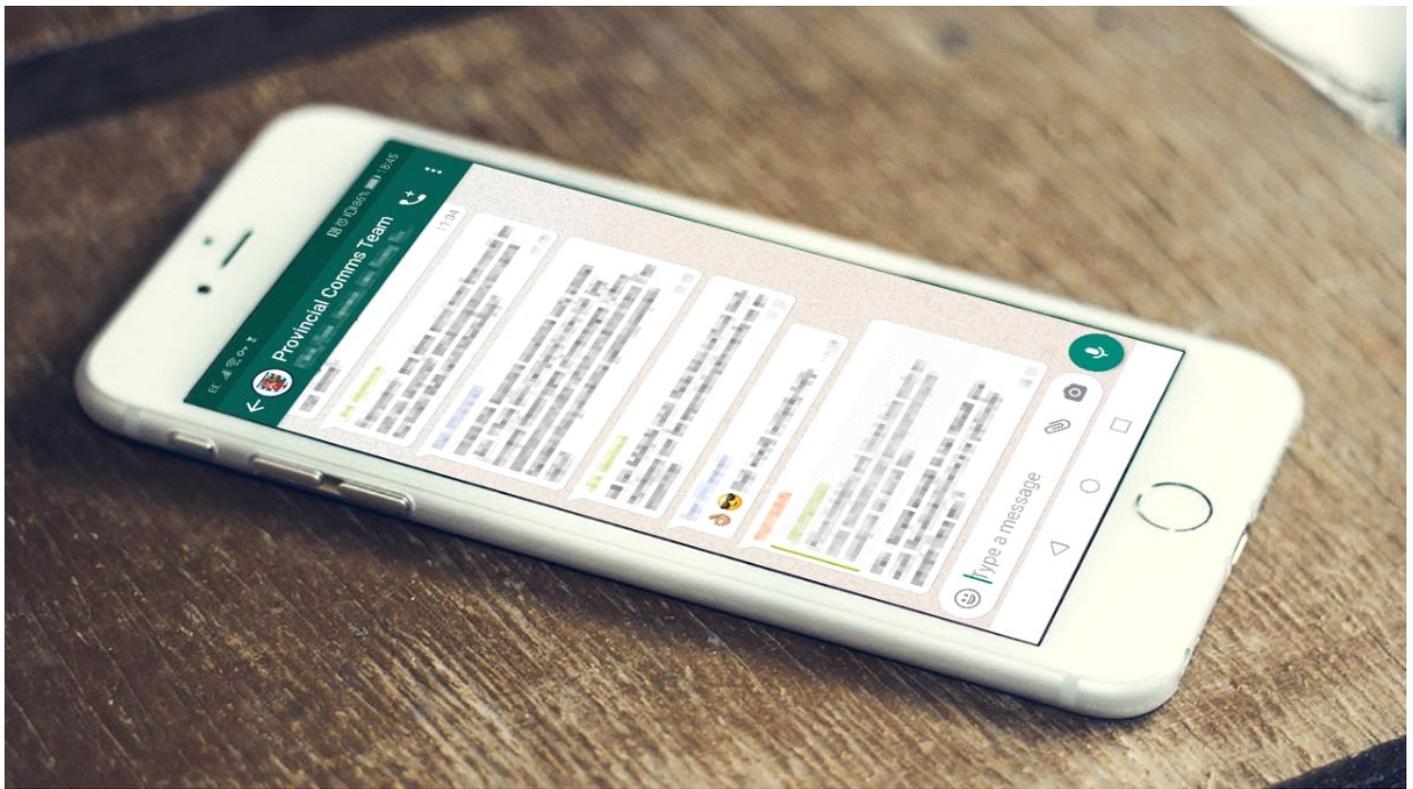
Brethren,

With Masonry suspended until at least July, it is important that we make every effort to keep in touch and reinforce the bonds of brotherhood that tie us together. We have many members who are isolated, whether because of their age or because they fall into one of the categories classed as more at risk by the health services. For their sake, especially, we need to find new and innovative methods of reaching out and connecting that, as an organisation, we may not have tried before.

This month's edition of the Provincial Newsletter focuses on some of the digital tools that Lodges are already using to bridge the divide created by the current 'lockdown'. Not every option will be suitable for every Lodge and, of course, there are many other products and services available beyond those mentioned but, in these unprecedented circumstances, now is as good a time as any to dip your toe in the water and try something new.

If your Lodge has embraced the digital world or been looking at different ways of staying connected, why don't you tell us about it? You can tag the Province on social media or contact us with your stories using the links at the end of this email.

Terry Mitchinson
Provincial Communications Officer (PGL Herts)



WhatsApp

Many Lodges are already using the smart phone messaging application WhatsApp, as a way of communicating with each other. The appeal of using WhatsApp lies in its simplicity – it is essentially like sending SMS text messages – and the ability to set up ‘group chats’, where messages are visible to all other members in the group (as the name implies). For Secretaries and Directors of Ceremonies etc, this gives them the ability to get messages out to the whole Lodge much faster than email, as messages are all sent and received instantaneously. As a result, it also a great social tool and can be used as a forum for general conversation and discussion.

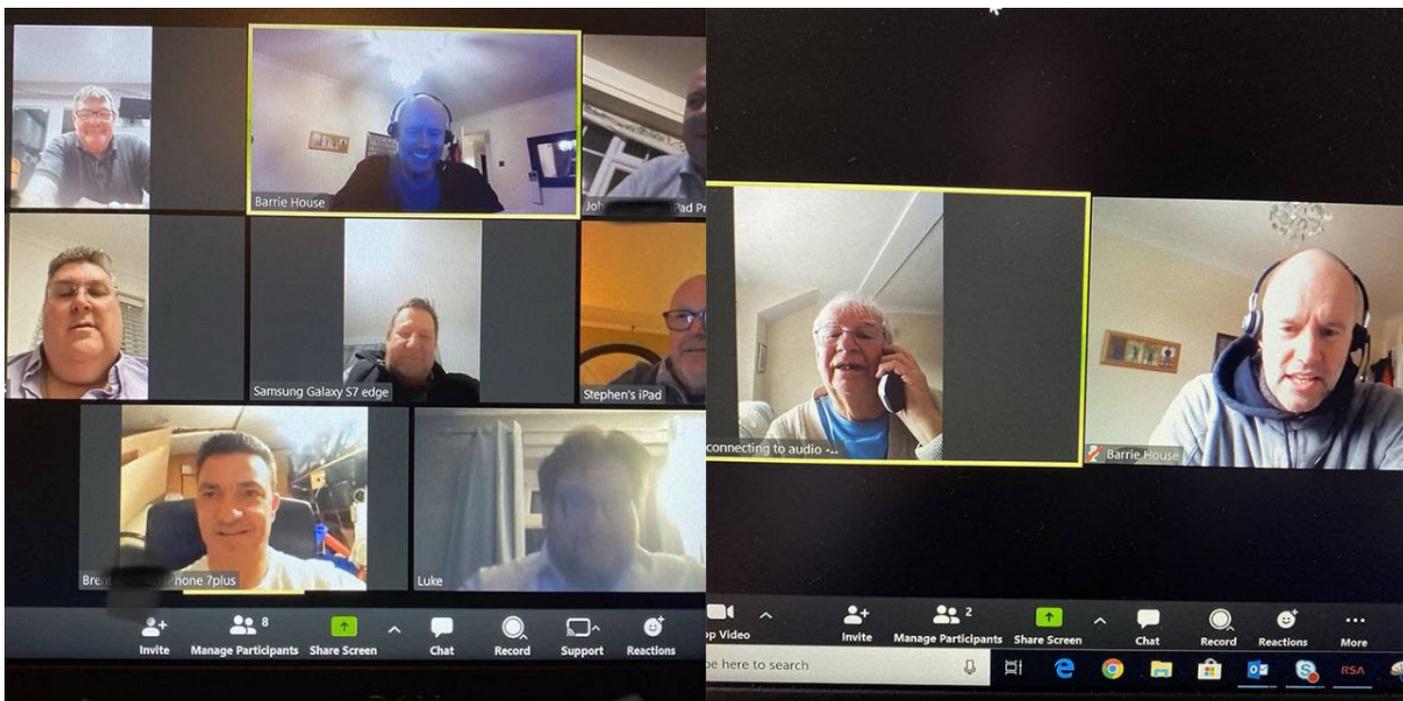
As well as basic text, you can also share photographs, videos, website links and documents; opening up even greater possibilities for intra-Lodge communication. WhatsApp is also the realm of the ubiquitous ‘emoji’ – small faces or icons – that can be used to convey additional meaning or context (our favourite is the winky face).



WhatsApp is owned by the social media giant, Facebook, but boasts end-to-end encryption. What this means is that anything you send via WhatsApp is completely secure and cannot be read by third parties. As with all things, however, you should always take care before sharing any private information.

Care should also be taken to ensure that any discussion in group chats is respectful of all members in the group – you may find an off-colour joke very amusing, but others may not. Likewise, be sure to remember your obligations when it comes to the discussion of politics etc. Please also be aware that everyone’s phone number can be seen by all members of a WhatsApp group and so be sure to ask before adding your friends or Brethren.

WhatsApp is available via the app stores on both Android and Apple OSX.



Zoom

Zoom is one of many services offering the ability to video conference over the internet; a practice more commonly associated with business meetings at multinational companies than with Freemasonry. However, in these increasingly unusual times, services like this offer a great means to not only have a conversation with several members of the Lodge at once (which you could do using WhatsApp, for example) but to actually be able to see each other face-to-face. Most communication is non-vocal after all!

What sets Zoom apart from other services is that it is completely free for up to 40 minutes and lets you have as many people as you want in the meeting (you can upgrade to a paid version for a monthly fee that will allow you to host longer meetings). It is also incredibly easy to set-up and use.

Other Provinces are also helping their members embrace some of the possibilities this kind of technology has to offer with the Province of Lincolnshire producing [this handy instructional video for using Zoom](#).

Whilst Grand Lodge are wholeheartedly behind Lodges adopting services like Zoom as a means to keep in touch and even practice their ritual, they have been at pains to stress that it is not permitted to use these services to practice or demonstrate the 'physical' elements of the ceremonies, due to the ability for video meetings to be recorded and potentially distributed inappropriately.

[Find out more about Zoom by clicking here](#)

Provincial Grand Lodge of Hertfordshire

Home Create 1 1

Send Message

It has been written long ago that St Alban introduced Freemasonry into Britain when he formed the f...
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Community See all

Invite your friends to like this Page

1,411 people like this

1,510 people follow this

Anthony Wright and 26 other friends like this or have checked in

5 check-ins

About See all

Provincial Grand Lodge of Hertfordshire
@pgherts

Home About Posts Events Photos Reviews Community Create a Page

Posts

Provincial Grand Lodge of Hertfordshire
27 March at 21:12 · 🌐

It's 9 o'clock and the toast is to Absent Brethren! 🍷

A special shout-out to everyone who is following the Government's advice and isolating at home or practicing social distancing. We know it's hard but the more careful we are now, the sooner we all get to see each other again! Stay strong, stay safe and stay at home!

#happyherts... See more




Fleet House, 10 Parkway, Port... Chat

Somerset Freemasonry

Andy Home Create

Contact Us Send Message

Write a post...

Photo/Video Tag friends Check in

Photos



ABOUT SOMERSET FREEMASONRY

Welcome to the Somerset Freemasons facebook page

Welcome to the Somerset Freemasons facebook page.

Our aim is to bring you news and information about ...
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Facebook

Facebook is probably one of the most well-known of the social media 'platforms' and has over 2 billion users around the world. It is used by individuals as a way of keeping in touch with friends and relatives but also by companies and organisations (like us) as a way of advertising themselves and communicating with their customers or members.

Individuals set up their 'profile' by filling in some basic details about themselves and uploading one or more photographs. They can then search for other people they know (and people they know can search for them) and 'friend' them. Once 'friends', users can then post updates about their lives, including photographs and videos,

'share' news articles and other third-party content and send messages to each other.

The biggest attraction about Facebook is that you can maintain a connection to a large web of family, friends, acquaintances and, of course, other Brothers! It is a great way to see what is going on in other people's lives; all their key moments and the major events happening to them. It is also a great way to interact with others as part of a shared experience when major events are occurring; like the current global pandemic for example. It can be very comforting to know that people all around the world are going through the same things that you are!

As with all online activity, there can be a darker side to Facebook and much has been made in recent years of their use of private user data as a commodity that can be sold to the highest bidder. This does not include information such as your bank details etc that can be used to steal from you, but can include personal information and data such as what subjects you search for most or what photographs you tend to 'like' most often – information that enables other companies to target their advertising and increase their sales. Many people see this as being just as much an invasion of privacy, so caution must always be used whenever you choose to share information about yourself online (this is true in all walks of life!)

[Facebook can be found by clicking here](#)



pglherts [Edit Profile](#)

9 posts 153 followers 175 following

PGL Herts

Click the link below to find out how you can sign up to help 1.5 million people stay safe 🙌👍

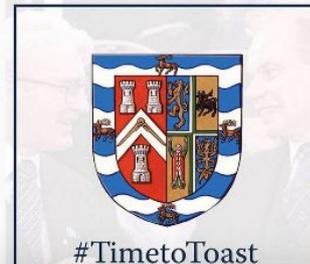
pglherts.org/2020/03/the-nhs-needs-you

POSTS

IGTV

SAVED

TAGGED



Instagram

Instagram is owned by Facebook but, whereas the former is for reading or sharing all different forms of media, Instagram is only about photographs and videos. It is also only really for use on smart phones or tablet computers, with limited functionality on a computer or laptop.

Like all social media platforms, users create a profile for themselves and can then add photographs and videos of things in their lives. This can be of social occasions, holiday snaps, photographs of your walk in the countryside last week or even of a particularly well-presented meal in a restaurant (when not in lockdown, of course)! These are then publicly visible to others, who can 'like' your posts (a virtual mark of approval).

Instagram is increasingly popular as it appeals very much to your visual senses – who doesn't enjoy seeing photographs of amazing scenery or cute animals?!

It is also a great way to share photographs of our Masonic activity; whether that's us enjoying a drink in the bar after a meeting or presenting a cheque to a local charity. However, it is vitally important that care be taken when posting this kind of content – in the first instance, to ensure that nothing private (masonically-speaking) is being shared with the world at large and, secondly, that anyone shown in the photos or videos has expressly given their consent to them being used in this way. Not everyone wants to be a social media star!

[Instagram can be found by clicking here](#)

PGL Herts
1,182 Tweets

PGL Herts
@pgherts
Provincial Grand Lodge of #HappyHerts. If you're interested in becoming a Freemason or would like to know more message us or visit our website.
Hertfordshire pgherts.org Joined October 2011
69 Following 2,623 Followers
Followed by Michelle Worvell - United Grand Lodge of England, FreemasonryForWomen, and 22 others you follow

Tweets Tweets & replies Media Likes

PGL Herts @pgherts · Mar 27

Somerset Freemasons
5,870 Tweets

Somerset Freemasons
@PGLSomerset Follows you
Official Twitter feed of the Provincial Grand Lodge of Somerset
Somerset, UK somersetfreemasons.org Joined December 2012
2,647 Following 5,086 Followers
Followed by Backwell Lodge, Somerset RoyalArch, and 72 others you follow

Tweets Tweets & replies Media Likes

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TO ARGENT BROTHERN AND TO THE CAREERS LOOKING AFTER THE VULNERABLE SEPDUARY 2014

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Twitter

Twitter has the dubious distinction of being Donald Trump's social media platform of choice. Aside from this, it has over 100 million active users every day, who use the site to post short messages or 'tweets'. These can be about anything and everything; from their opinions on current affairs to a blow-by-blow narration of their daily lives and everything in between! Formerly, 'tweets' were limited to 140 characters so, by this very nature, the content posted to Twitter is snappy and concise (often with some very imaginative abbreviations to keep below the limit).

The most attractive thing about Twitter is that it provides a 'real time' way of watching events unfold around the world. By using 'hashtags' (the hash symbol '#' followed by a word or phrase) to assign categories to what people are posting, you can view every tweet on a given topic as they are posted. The current situation is a great example of this – searching for '#coronavirus' will show you thousands of the latest posts from different countries, governments and agencies as they deal with the rapidly evolving and changing situation. On a lighter note, searching for '#happyherts' will show you a run-down on everything going on in the Province of Hertfordshire, and #TimetoToast will show you posts from people toasting absent friends.

Unfortunately, as with all things, there is a darker side to Twitter, with so-called 'trolls' using the platform to harass and insult individuals (generally public figures or celebrities); relying on the relative anonymity that the internet can provide. As a user, we all have a responsibility to act with care when posting our own content or when commenting on others' – generally speaking, if you wouldn't say something to someone's face, it's probably better not to post it!

[Twitter can be found by clicking here](#)



Keep in Touch with Us!

We also want you to keep in touch with us! We may not be meeting, but we would still like to hear about your Lodges and members. Are you trying anything new during the suspension? Have your members been going the extra mile to support the local community? Do you have events planned for later in the year, after things have (hopefully) improved? Let us know!

You can email your stories to your area communications team at aco@pglSom.org or the web team at webteam@pglSom.org. Those of you on social media can also tag @somerseffreemasons on Facebook, and @PGLSomerset on Twitter