# Discover Freemasonry

INTEGRITY
FRIENDSHIP
RESPECT
SERVICE

# What are your guiding principles?

Freemasons use four important guiding principles to help define their path through life: integrity, friendship, respect and service.

In today's world filled with uncertainty, these principles ring as true as they have at any point in the organisation's history.

One of the oldest social and charitable organisations in the world, Freemasonry's roots lie in the traditions of the medieval stonemasons who built our cathedrals and castles.

*"Whilst I have only had the honour of being a Freemason for a year, I'm humbled to have found the intimacy and warmth of our brotherhood, an experience truly unlike anywhere else."*

AMANDEEP
CARIBBEAN LODGE

Membership is open to people from all backgrounds and the organisation's aim is to empower members to be the best they can be – it's about building character, supporting members as individuals, and helping them make a positive contribution to society.

*"Freemasonry is so much more than a hobby, it's a way of life. Its core values guide me daily."*

ROWAN
ASHLEY HILL
LODGE

Freemasonry provides a structure for members to come together under these common goals, enabling people to make new friendships, develop themselves and make valuable contributions to charitable causes.

# INTEGRITY:

## Building good people

Rather than working on buildings like the masons of old, today's Freemasons focus on building themselves as people of integrity, and membership provides the structure to help achieve that goal.

*"By being around just and upright people who apply the teachings of Freemasonry to their daily lives, you naturally follow their example, and learn to also apply those teachings to become a man of integrity."*

IAN
ELMS LODGE

*"You try to build yourself into a better human being, into somebody who doesn't necessarily take the easy way out or do easy things, but tries to do the right things."*

DAVID
MIDDLESEX LODGE

At an individual level, being a Freemason gives members a sense of purpose, supporting and guiding them on their journey through life. Collectively, members are bonded through a sense of unity and equitability – principles fundamental to Freemasonry.

## THE HISTORY OF THE HANDSHAKE

Historically, stonemasons travelled from place to place to secure work. At this time, handshakes were commonly used as a means for stonemasons to identify themselves, proving their level of experience and indicating what position they held. Today, in recognition of this practice, handshakes are used ceremonially as a way of identifying the various levels within Freemasonry.

# FRIENDSHIP:
## Building together

One of the oldest social organisations in the world, Freemasonry is not defined by an ideology.

It is open to people from all religions and political persuasions, and provides the common foundation for friendships between members, many of which will last for life.

*"Being a Freemason is a bit like having a second family. The shared experience of having gone through the same ceremonies creates a bond of mutual trust and friendship with all masons whether you know them or not, and many of my closest friends today are people I first met through Freemasonry."*

JAMES
APOLLO UNIVERSITY LODGE

Being a Freemason means something different to each person who joins, but whether looking to make acquaintances or develop their own potential, all members share a sense of togetherness that strengthens their ability to succeed and grow.

*"The bond of friendship is stronger in Freemasonry than anywhere else I've ever experienced. I have a wider, more diverse circle of friends than I ever thought possible."*

SHAUN
LETCHWORTH LODGE

## BUILDING FRIENDSHIPS FOR LIFE

From university schemes, to new masons clubs, to special interest Lodges, Freemasonry gives members many opportunities to make friends for life. Finding bonds with people who share common interests and meeting people from all different backgrounds are only some of the ways Freemasonry can help cultivate lasting friendships.

# RESPECT:
## Building unity

With a membership of more than 200,000 people drawn from communities across the UK, Freemasonry brings people together irrespective of their race, religion or any other perceived differences that can divide us as a society.

*"I love how inclusive Freemasonry is. We respect and welcome men from all walks of life, no matter your background, race, religion or what you do for a living. You are assured a warm welcome."*

ASH
WILLIAM RUFUS LODGE

*"Through its ceremonies, Freemasonry allows me to reflect on myself and the principles I value in my life. My experiences in Freemasonry helps to encourage respect for others and integrity of actions in my day-to-day life."*

JAMES
ÆDES CHRISTI LODGE

Our members are proud to be Freemasons, and they are encouraged to talk openly about what the organisation does and what it means to be part of it.

## FEMALE FREEMASONS

There are two female-only Grand Lodges, the Honourable Fraternity of Ancient Freemasons (HFAF) and the Order of Women Freemasons (OWF). The HFAF and OWF follow exactly the same ritual and wear the same regalia as male Freemasons – and they often work closely with community and charity projects.

Female Freemasons Annie Besant and Charlotte Despard were prominent figures in the push for universal suffrage in the early twentieth century. Besant was a British theosophist and women's rights activist who also established the first UK lodge of the International Order of Co-Freemasonry (Le Droit Humain) in 1902. Despard, an Anglo-Irish suffragist, pacifist and novelist, was a founding member of various reformist organisations whose presence lives on today in the North London pub named in her honour.

# SERVICE:
## Building compassion

Whether participating in events, fundraising for a charitable cause or volunteering for public or community organisations, service is at the very heart of Freemasonry.

Our members make valuable contributions by donating time, resources and skills.

*"Freemasonry encourages me to think about what charity really means to me and why it is important. Giving to charity through my individual lodges and the Masonic Charitable Foundation also gives me confidence that my donations go straight to the charities in full."*

JAMES
ROYAL SOMERSET HOUSE & INVERNESS LODGE

Individuals can make an important contribution at local, national and global level by giving both their time and money. Thanks to their efforts, Freemasonry is one of the largest charitable givers in the country, contributing more than £48m to deserving causes in 2018 alone. Freemasons don't only donate money – over 5 million hours of volunteer work was undertaken by Freemasons in 2018.

*"Contributing at local charitable events makes me feel deeply connected to my community. When I stand back and see how Freemasonry contributes globally, the sense of pride I feel is incredible."*

ELLIOTT
EARLHAM LODGE

## FREEDOM OF THE CITY

In 1894, facing financial crisis, Manchester City Football Club was offered a helping hand by the Freemasons. In acknowledgement of the organisation's act of charity, the club adopted Masonic colours, giving them the light blue shirts that are so recognisable to football fans today.

# Membership

## Becoming a Freemason means you'll be joining more than 200,000 members throughout England and Wales as well as Districts overseas.

Membership is open to any man over the age of 18 irrespective of their race or religion, and women are invited to join one of two female-only Grand Lodges: The Order of Women Freemasons and the Honourable Fraternity of Ancient Freemasons.

In total, we have more than 7,000 Lodges, with students over 18 able to join one of the 81 University Scheme Lodges.

*"I enjoy the seriousness of the ceremony but I also enjoy the after proceedings and the laughs we have."*

STEVE
NORMAN GATE LODGE

Lodge meetings are typically held in two parts. The first involves more administrative procedures, such as proposing and balloting for new members and receiving news about charitable fundraising.

The second part focuses on ceremonies, which might relate to areas such as the admittance of new members or the installation of the Master of the Lodge and his officers – a process made up of three degrees, or stages, each one marked by a special ceremony.

True to the sense of friendship and togetherness among Freemasons, meetings are also social events, providing an occasion for members to dine together.

Outside of the Lodge, activities include community fundraising and volunteering activities as well as a varied programme of events where spouses, partners and families are welcome.

## FINDING THE RIGHT FREEMASONRY FOR YOU

There are many specialist Lodges in Freemasonry; Lux in Tenebris Lodge No. 3856 in London, for example, is one of a vast number found throughout the country. Members of the Lodge are all blind and its name is taken from the Latin for 'Light in Darkness'. Other specialist Lodges include sports, motoring and young member Lodges.

# Discover Freemasons' Hall

Originally built as a peace memorial to honour the thousands of Freemasons who fought during the First World War, Freemasons' Hall is the home of the United Grand Lodge of England.

The stunning Grade II listed Art Deco building sits in the heart of London's West End and welcomes more than 200,000 people from across the world through its doors every year, including members visiting for meetings and guests attending special events.

TRIP ADVISOR QUOTES:

*'Beautiful architecture and very interesting displays'*

*'It's a great place to visit'*

*'An amazing experience'*

*'A stunning building and a very interesting museum'"*

TRIP ADVISOR QUOTES:

*'An absolutely superb guided visit'*

*'Join one of the free tours for an unforgettable visit'*

*'A magnificent building, very friendly, helpful and informative staff and volunteers and an excellent (free) tour. Lots to see and a really interesting insight into the world of Freemasonry'*

Members of the public can visit Freemasons' Hall from Monday to Saturday, with guided tours showcasing the architecture and history of the building, which comprises 22 Lodge Rooms, the Museum of Freemasonry, Letchworth's shop, Board and Committee rooms and administrative offices.

An in-demand venue, Freemasons' Hall has been hired as a location for many major films and television programmes in recent years, including Spectre, Sherlock Holmes, Assassin's Creed and Spooks.

## AN ART DECO MASTERPIECE

Freemasons' Hall is one of the last remaining Art Deco buildings in England still used for its original purpose. Did you know, the mighty bronze doors to the Grand Temple weigh one and a quarter tonnes each and the original cloakroom can hold 1,700 coats, bags and top hats?

The building and Museum of Freemasonry are open to the public Monday-Saturday; be sure to take a guided tour to discover all that Freemasons' Hall has to offer.

www.essexfreemasons.org.uk

UNITED GRAND LODGE
OF ENGLAND

www.ugle.org.uk

MUSEUM OF
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www.museumfreemasonry.org.uk

Masonic
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www.mcf.org.uk

EssexFreemasons

@essexfreemasons

@essexfreemasons

Telephone: +44 1268 571610

To find out more about Freemasonry or for information on
how to become a member, visit us at www.essexfreemasons.org.uk/join