



Information Technology - Code of Practice

"Freemasonry is the world's oldest secular fraternal society, with members spread over all the Earth's surface. It is fitting that such an Institution should have International representation, and the World Wide Web allows us as Freemasons to be represented internationally and can be a major tool in the process of better informing the public about Freemasonry."

David F Macey – Provincial Grand Master

Lack of control over access to and the placing of information on the Internet may cause problems. The Province of Warwickshire has produced a code of practice in line and to be read with that issued by the United Grand Lodge of England.

There is no objection to individual Lodges setting up web sites; in fact they are actively encouraged to do so. To ensure accuracy and consistency on policy matters, however, the material to be used should be forwarded to the Provincial Webmaster, [W Bro Phillip Benson](#) for approval in advance of its use, who has the authority of the Provincial Information Officer to give Provincial approval and seek UGLE approval on behalf of the Lodge concerned. Approved material will then have the right to carry a `Charter Mark' or a simple statement of approval on the site. Prospective Lodge web sites should not be made available for public viewing on the Internet until full approval has been given.

Web sites of a Masonic nature or which include Masonic material which are established by or in connection with Lodges or individual brethren, and which contain material which is considered by The Provincial Information Officer to be injudicious or contrary to Grand Lodge policy, will be required to amend or remove this material. Refusal or dilatory response would be likely to render the Lodge or Brethren involved to Masonic disciplinary action.



Code of Practice for Masonic Web sites – Version 3.5 – June 2010

1. Lodges and individuals within the Masonic Province of Warwickshire who wish to establish Masonic web sites should submit their proposed content to the Provincial Webmaster, [Phillip Benson](#) for approval.

2a. Sites which are already in existence are invited to apply for approval.



2b. In the case of UGLE approval:

A Web site which has been officially approved will be expected, at a minimum, to carry on the 'welcome' or 'home' page a Charter Mark which is a small representation of the Arms of Grand Lodge together with the statement '**Approved by the United Grand Lodge of England**'

The Charter Mark is issued by the UGLE Webmaster on behalf of the Grand Secretary. It is a colour jpeg graphic file, size 12Kb. Its dimensions are 75 pixels by 106 pixels. The Charter Mark must have attached a hyperlink to the United Grand Lodge of England website (<http://www.ugle.org.uk/>). It should also carry a span title (alt text) with the text '**Link to the UGLE site**'.

The Charter Mark also carries an approval number which identifies the Web site in a register of approvals held by the UGLE Webmaster. The image must not be modified in any way.



2c. In the case of approval from The Provincial Grand Lodge of Warwickshire through the Provincial Information Officer of Warwickshire:

- i) the statement '**This website has been approved by the Provincial Grand Lodge of Warwickshire**', or
- ii) a small representation of the seal of the Provincial Grand Lodge of Warwickshire with the statement '**Approved by Works PGL**'

The Warwickshire Provincial Approval Mark is issued by the Provincial Webmaster on behalf of the Provincial Information Officer. It is a colour jpeg graphic file. It is supplied in two sizes: 75 pixels by 82 pixels and 97 pixels by 106 pixels. The lodge webmaster should select and use the one that best suits his site layout.

The Approval Mark must have attached a hyperlink to the Warwickshire Provincial Grand Lodge website (<http://www.warwickshirepgl.org.uk/>). It should also carry a span title (alt text) with the text '**Link to the Warwickshire PGL website**'. The image must not be modified in any way. It may be displayed on more than one page if the webmaster of the lodge website desires.

2d. Any approval thus granted applies to the specific website only. The Warwickshire PGL approval mark was changed to clarify matters in April 2008.

2e. All sites, whether pre-existing or built since that date, should carry the new mark.

2f. Use of UGLE Lodge Website Charter Mark and Warwickshire PGL Lodge Website Approval Mark:

- i) They must be displayed at the quality and sizes supplied and not stretched, reduced in size, or distorted in any way. This ensures that they are clearly readable at all times.
- ii) No page name should normally be appended when linking to the home (landing) page. This will ensure that links to the website home page will still work after any updates are made.

3a. Any material changes to websites e.g. additional pages, items or graphic changes, require resubmission for consideration of approval in line with normal procedure. Routine changes such as news items do not fall under this heading and these can be effected without seeking further approval.

3b. It should be remembered that web sites are available to any member of the public *world wide* and care should be taken that views put forward reflect policies of the Provincial Grand Lodge of Warwickshire and that of the UGLE. Any web site produced by a unit under these jurisdictions will be seen as a reflection of the views of the respective body or bodies regardless of who has set it up.

3c. Sites will be monitored from time to time and any item appearing that is considered detrimental to Freemasonry will be notified to the respective Lodge Secretary and / or Webmaster for immediate action.



4a. Neither The Masonic Province of Warwickshire nor UGLE endorse the writings of individuals, pages giving the texts of talks, addresses, orations etc., by individuals nor extracts from books, pamphlets, journals, newspapers etc. Pages containing such items will not be entitled to carry any form of approval.

4b. Masonic websites are not allowed to carry commercial advertising or links to pages that contain commercial information or are themselves of a commercial nature.

4c. Links to websites operated by Freemasons or members of their families for personal gain are forbidden.

4d. Links to websites providing or promoting services that are genuinely free, but offer additional services that must be paid for which are not an essential part of the service, are acceptable. Care must be taken to avoid any indication that the site is approved by the lodge or is in any way connected with a lodge member.

4e. Freemasons must never use Freemasonry to advance their own interests be they personal, business, professional or whatever. If there is a conflict of interest, or even if it could be thought there might be a conflict of interest, a Freemason is required to say so. Freemasons must not expect, anticipate or seek any preferment or financial benefit as a consequence of being a member of the order.

5a. Names, addresses and personal details of living individuals, or photographs of them, must not be entered on the web site without their written permission.

5b. There is no objection to the taking and displaying of group photographs in a Lodge Room in connection with a special meeting but the taking of photographs during meetings including processions before or after a meeting is prohibited. This prohibition extends to any purported reconstruction of a Lodge meeting or any part of its proceedings.

6. A web site for a Lodge may not be set up by an individual without the agreement of the Lodge concerned.

7a. Lodge summonses, which contain personal details, may not be posted on the open pages of the web site, though there would be no objection on a `news' page to commenting on what in general is to happen at the next meeting e.g. elections, a talk or which ceremony is to be worked (without giving the candidates details).

7b. Lodge minutes may not be posted on open pages.

8. Care should be taken to ensure that the web site is kept up to date. Out of date information gives the impression that the website owner (the Lodge) is uncaring.

9. Care should be taken over the inclusion of copyright material. Copyright subsists not only in the printed word (not just books but also newspapers, magazines and pamphlets) but also in `images' (photography and art works). If such material is to be used, the copyright holder's permission **must** be sought. Failure to do so can lead to prosecution.

10. If a web site includes a `visitor's book' or `comments page' these should be carefully monitored and any items including profanity, religious, political or anti-Masonic comments should be removed as soon as possible.

11a. Inclusion of restricted areas requiring the use of a password and or restriction to the general public is not permitted.

11b. If a web site is to provide links to other Masonic web sites the bona fides of these web sites should be checked with the Provincial Webmaster, [W Bro Phillip Benson](#).

11c. Links to webring should be especially investigated to ensure the webring does not lead to commercial, anti-Masonic, or any other site which would conflict with article 4b.

11d. All pages containing links should also carry the following disclaimer:

Disclaimer

Please note: We cannot guarantee that any link from this page has been approved by the United Grand Lodge of England or the Provincial Grand Lodge of Warwickshire. Neither can we guarantee that any subsequent link from their pages are recognised by, or have the approval of the United Grand Lodge of England or the Provincial Grand Lodge of Warwickshire.



Code of Practice for Masonic emailing

1. The emailing of summons is not permitted without the written consent of the recipient.
2. It is important that **no** attempt should be made by English Constitution brethren to correspond with Foreign Grand Lodges recognised by The United Grand Lodge of England by e-mail until on their territory, for to do so would be a contravention of Masonic Protocol.

Email Etiquette

The following points present some simple guidelines for electronic mail etiquette. It does not mandate any particular style or rules. Rather it is an attempt to highlight important issues affecting the electronic mail we send.

- Never send anything you would not want to see in tomorrow's newspaper. There are no security guarantees with electronic mail. Avoid sending **any** confidential or sensitive information via email. Remember, it's very easy for someone else to forward messages you thought were confidential.
- When you are upset or angry, review the message after you have had time to calm down.
- Do not send abusive, harassing or threatening messages.
- Be cautious when using sarcasm and humour. Without facial expressions and tone of voice, they do not translate easily through email.
- Keep messages and replies brief.
- Use email in a professional manner. Remember, you cannot control where your message might be sent.
- Do not send chain letters through email. This includes any message that contains a request to forward the information to lots of other people.
- Don't leave your email account open when you leave your computer. Anyone could sit down at your keyboard and send out any libellous/ offensive/embarrassing message under your name.
- Don't send replies to "all recipients" unless there is a very specific need for everyone to receive the message. It wastes disk space, clutters up inboxes and can be annoying.
- When replying, keep messages brief and to the point. Leave just enough of the original message in your reply to indicate what the reply is about; do not reproduce a message in its entirety. Be selective with what you reproduce and only do it as needed.
- Remember that all laws governing copyright, defamation, discrimination and other forms of written communication also apply to email.
- Use "receipt requested" sparingly. Some people view it as a sign of distrust. It is okay to use it if you have reason to question whether the person will log on to receive your message.
- Check your mail regularly and, whenever possible respond to people who write to you.
- Briefly describe who you are if the recipient doesn't already know.
- Be aware that e-mail can be archived and, under certain circumstances, may not be secure. Internet service providers generally protect the confidentiality of their subscribers' e-mail, but some companies consider employee e-mail sent over the office network to be company property and subject to scrutiny. All archived email can be subpoenaed and made public via a court order.
- Don't "cry wolf." Avoid "Urgent" or "Priority" unless it really is. Employ capital letters sparingly. Using them for an entire message is perceived by many as SHOUTING, and is harder to read.

Version V3.5 updated June 2010 – supersedes all previous versions