



261 NEWS

Information newsletter for
The Lodge of Unanimity and Sincerity Number 261

Issue No 1 February 2015

A New Year and a new Master

Wednesday 21st January 2015 saw the Installation of our new Worshipful Master W. Bro Roger Earthrohl and what an evening it was. We were honoured by the presence of so many senior masons that the quantity of gold braid on show was reminiscent of a reunion of Italian admirals! One Deputy PGM, One Assistant PGM, Two past PGMs and at least one past Deputy PGM led the parade with any number of Grand and Provincial Grand Officers in hot pursuit. It certainly made for a grand occasion and the Installing Master W. Bro Chris Partridge did a wonderful job of installing his successor. The ceremony, Festive Board and ambience made for a very special evening and we wish W. Bro Roger a happy and fruitful year as Master of our lodge. The photograph below left shows the Deputy Provincial Grand Master, V. Worshipful Bro Ray Guthrie, with The Worshipful Master and the Installing Master W. Bro Chris Partridge.



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Also on Wednesday the Lodge was pleased to confer Honorary Membership on W. Bro Ken Sherring [photo above right] who has recently retired after many years as Organist of the Lodge. Honorary Membership is very special and is only bestowed on Brethren who have given exceptional service to the Lodge. W. Bro Ken's contribution to our ceremonies and occasions will be sorely missed. We hope that he will not become a stranger and will find time to visit us often in the future.

The Taunton Masonic Hall Company Ltd AGM

Members who attended the AGM of the Masonic Hall Company were reminded that running the Hall is a business; it costs money to run and even more to ensure it meets required standards and remains a venue we can be proud of. The running costs were said to be in the region of £47,000 per annum and this is being met approximately 50/50 by lodge fees and profits made on the car park, bar sales and functions.

The decoration of the dining room has been completed and digitally enhanced framed photos of the Past Masters are now in place. The final result met with overwhelming approval from those Brethren present.

Whilst the finances of the Hall Company are healthy it is unfortunate that lodge fees to the Masonic Hall Co will have to be increased by approximate £15 per member per annum to meet future commitments. These will include new kitchen equipment, a food heater cabinet to meet with food preparation regulations and other items which together will cost in excess of £11,000. No further increases were promised for three years. The very large property, known as No 20 The Crescent remains a liability rather than an asset since the tenant moved out 15 years ago. It had been hoped last year that we had a buyer for it but this failed to materialise. Any offers or ideas from Brethren will be welcomed.

The officers and directors were re-elected en bloc leaving W Bros Geoff Dolling, Ron Blake and Tony Norman as chairman, secretary and treasurer respectively. Our caterer, Peter Catlow, was present and was congratulated on the fare and service provided. He did remind members he had a business to run and that his service depended on lodges complying with a request for reasonable notice of numbers and adhering to them. (Our JW will also welcome members' cooperation). He said that new regulations make the caterer responsible for addressing 'allergy' problems. It was therefore suggested that the menu for each meeting should be included on the dining slip.

A letter was received from W Bro David Sargison, the secretary of Queen College Lodge who was unable to attend due to ill health. He suggested that with the current wish for Freemasons to assert themselves that Taunton Lodges should combine to promote the organisation in the area collectively in addition to promoting individual lodges. This would be in respect of Open days, combined Gentlemen's Evenings, press releases etc and also to plan for the tercentenary celebration of the formation of UGLE in 2017. This was unanimously agreed and yours truly was appointed as chairman, with an invitation to the Lodge Information/Communication Officers in all nine craft lodges to form the committee.

Proposals were also made for a defibrillator to be provided in the hall and for 'Taunton Masons' to organise a clay pigeon shoot.

Thanks were expressed during the evening to the chairman and directors, those running the bar, Mike Salway and Peter Roworth, and all who had helped in other ways with particular thanks to Chris Partridge, Chris Cluff and Roger Bailey for help with the renovation and Adrian Halliwell and John Owen for running the 200 club.

....and finally

This newsletter is purely experimental but if you enjoy it perhaps you would like to suggest a name for it – '261 News' or something similar perhaps – your ideas and suggestions will be welcome. Any items of news can be passed on to me for distribution at any time.

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