

Freemasonry FAQs

What is Freemasonry?

Freemasonry means different things to each of those who join. For some, it's about making new friends and acquaintances. For others it's about being able to help deserving causes – making a contribution to family and for society. But for most, it is an enjoyable hobby.

Freemasonry is one of the World's oldest and largest non-religious, non-political, fraternal and charitable organisation. It teaches self-knowledge through participation in a progression of ceremonies. Members are expected to be of high moral standing and are encouraged to speak openly about Freemasonry.

Why become a Freemason?

Each Freemason gets something different out of their membership and often it is not what they expected to get. Freemasonry helps men to develop themselves in a supportive atmosphere whilst encouraging them to enjoy the experience. However, at no point should Freemasonry be used for your own personal or professional financial gain.

How do I become a Freemason?

All you need to do is ask. Our Lodge Secretary will arrange a meeting with you to discuss all aspects of joining the Lodge and the next steps.

Do I have to be invited?

No, we prefer that you ask to join. We are looking for members that are truly interested rather than those that feel in any way pressured to join.

What does it cost?

There will be annual fees as well as dining fees and charitable donations which are set by you.

When do you meet?

Lodge meetings take place at Kimbolton Castle in the evening on 3rd Friday of March, May, September, October and December with start time of 6 o'clock. There is one meeting a year in London on a Saturday Morning in February at 11am.

What happens at a lodge meeting?

The meeting, which like those of other groups, are open only to members, is normally in two parts.

First, there are normal administrative procedures such as:

- Minutes of the previous meeting
- Welcoming Guests
- Proposing and balloting for new members
- Discussing and voting on the annual accounts
- Masonic news and correspondence
- News about charitable work

In addition there are the ceremonies for:

- Admitting new members
- The annual installation of the Master of the Lodge and his officers

The Second part of the meeting is the pleasure component, which is drinks in the bar followed by a three course meal with wine and some short speeches. Meetings are attended by Lodge members and Masons from other Lodges adding to the atmosphere of the event. There is a raffle for charity fundraising effort at the meal.

Two Social events in February and June are held to which wives, partners and non-Masonic guests are invited.

Finally, there are Committee and other meetings to plan the forthcoming formal meetings and generally run the Lodge. The more involved in the Lodge you get, the more you will understand and develop as a person. At the end of the day, you will be encouraged to do as much as you can but you are always in control.

Why do Freemasons take oaths?

New members make solemn promises concerning their behaviour both in the Lodge and in society. Members also promise to keep confidential the way they recognise each other when visiting another Lodge. Freemasons also promise to support others in time of need but only so far as it does not conflict with their family and public obligations.

Are Freemasons expected to give preference to fellow members?

Certainly not. This would be unacceptable and may lead to action being taken against those involved. On joining, each new member states that he expects no material gain from membership.

What is Freemasonry's relationship to religion?

All Freemasons are expected to have a religious belief, but Freemasonry does not seek to replace a Mason's religion or provide a substitute for it. It deals in a man's relationship with his fellow man not in a man's relationship with his God. The discussion of religion at Masonic meetings has always been prohibited.

Why do some churches not like Freemasonry?

There are elements within some churches who misunderstand Freemasonry and its objectives. They confuse secular rituals with religious liturgy. There are many Masons in different churches all around the world. Masonry has always actively encouraged its members to be active in their own religion.

Does Freemasonry accept Roman Catholics?

Yes. Four Grand Masters of English Freemasonry have been Roman Catholics. Today there are many Roman Catholic Freemasons.

What is Freemasonry's relationship to politics?

Freemasonry, as a body, will never express a view on politics or state policy. The discussion of politics at Masonic meetings has always been prohibited.

Can I join if I am gay or transgender?

Freemasonry brings together people from different walks of life, faith or outlook on life. We are encouraged to be tolerant to our differences and this applies equally to sexual orientation. We have many gay members within the organisation. This is not a recent occurrence; Oscar Wilde was a Freemason.

What do you expect from me?

We expect you to be a good person without a criminal past. We ask that you participate in your Lodge as you would any other hobby, with passion and dedication. However, we recognise that balance is important in all things and that the correct order of priority is Family, Work, Freemasonry.

How many Freemasons are there?

Under the United Grand Lodge of England, there are over a quarter of a million Freemasons.

There are Grand Lodges in Ireland, which covers both Northern Ireland and Eire, and Scotland which have a combined total of approximately 150,000 members.

Worldwide, there are approximately six million Freemasons.

Is Freemasonry an International order?

Freemasonry exists throughout the world. However, each Grand Lodge is sovereign and independent. There is no international governing body for Freemasonry.

Are there women Freemasons?

Yes. Whilst the United Grand Lodge of England (UGLE) is, and has always been, restricted to men, women Freemasons have two separate Grand Lodges, which are restricted to women.

Women who wish to become Freemasons can do so by joining a lodge affiliated to one of two separate and distinct Grand Lodges. The Order of Women Freemasons and The Honourable Fraternity of Ancient Freemasons both admit women only.

Both organisations have been in existence for over 100 years.

Much like some sports, Freemasonry is practiced in gender-specific organisations.

Why do you wear regalia?

Wearing regalia is historic and symbolic. Like a uniform, the regalia indicates the rank of the wearer in the organisation.

How many degrees are there in Freemasonry?

Basic Freemasonry consists of three degrees:

- Entered Apprentice
- Fellow Craft
- Master Mason

Who do the Masonic charities donate to?

The Masonic Charitable Foundation donates money to Masonic and non-Masonic organisations. In 2018 it donated over £20 million and in total in 2018 Freemasons in England and Wales gave over £48 million to charity.

Members are invited to give to Masonic charities but this should always be within their means and it is entirely up to the individual how much they wish to contribute.

For more information contact Old Kimboltonians' Lodge Secretary:

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