

# Discover Freemasonry in Bedfordshire

INTEGRITY  
FRIENDSHIP  
RESPECT  
CHARITY



BEDFORDSHIRE  
FREEMASONS

# What are your guiding principles?

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

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.



*"Freemasonry does not teach religion or politics. It teaches social responsibility, decency, and honesty. Most importantly, it teaches you to realise, and to know, yourself. Freemasonry assists with charity and fulfils a civilised way of life."*

RICHARD  
BEDFORDSHIRE CENTENARY  
FISHING 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 unique, centuries old but upholding values as relevant today as they have ever been. It forges lifetime friendships and engenders a real sense of belonging."*

DEAN  
THE RUSSELL  
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.



*"We all try to be good men, mindful of the effect that we can have on those closest to us and in our communities. Multiply that across our Lodges, Provinces and Worldwide and the result is awesome. Plus, we have great fellowship and enormous fun at the same time."*

ROB  
OLD CEDARIANS'  
LODGE





*"The best organisation that I have joined. Very friendly, helpful, non-judgmental, encouraging you to meet your full potential, both within freemasonry and within wider society."*

BRIAN  
OLD DUNSTABIANS'  
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.



*"Freemasonry provides a great forum to meet people from all walks of life, people who you would be very unlikely to meet elsewhere. My circle of genuine friends has increased dramatically since becoming a Freemason."*

CHRIS  
BEDFORDSHIRE CASTLE  
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.



*"Real friendships are hard to find, but the more people you meet, the more likely you are to find them. Freemasonry gives you the opportunity to meet hundreds of new potential friends, and share experiences that forge bonds for life."*

MEL  
LEIGHTON CROSS 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.

*"In my Lodge there is a 60-year age gap between the youngest and oldest member, and we are drawn from all sorts of different backgrounds and cultures. Freemasonry focuses on what unites us, not what makes us different."*

ANDY  
SIR WILLIAM  
HARPUR LODGE







*"The ceremonies in Freemasonry are designed to make you reflect on your life, the principles you hold, and ultimately, how you want to be remembered. Life can be frantic, but Freemasonry gives you space to think how you might be a better person."*

JASON  
SANDYE 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.

# CHARITY:

## Building compassion

Kindness and charitable giving are deeply ingrained within the principles of Freemasonry. The organisation provides a support structure that helps members make positive contributions to communities and worthwhile causes through fundraising events or volunteer work.



*"Charity is central to everything that we do, not just financially, but in how we spend our time and the way that we treat others. It is inspiring to be part of an organisation that does so much for those in need."*

IAN

THISTLE & ROSE LODGE OF  
BEDFORDSHIRE

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.



*"We support both national and local charities with sums both large and small. It is fantastic to be able to see the difference we make – many charities rely on us to enable them to keep going."*

LAURIE  
VERITAS 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 also able to join one of the 81 University Scheme Lodges.

*"The combination of tradition, friendship and fun is hard to beat. I have enjoyed every aspect of becoming a Freemason and learned a lot about myself along the way. There is nothing else like it – I only wish I had joined earlier."*

STEVE  
BEDFORDSHIRE  
LODGE OF ST JOHN  
THE BAPTIST





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 Lodges throughout the Province of Bedfordshire, including specialist Lodges for those interested in the Scouts, Rugby and Fishing, as well as two Lodges linked to the University Scheme. With over 50 Lodges across Province, there is sure to be one that is right for you.

# 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'*



### *The Keep at Kempston*

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.

## BEDFORDSHIRE MASONIC CENTRES

There are six Masonic Centres in Bedfordshire, at Ampthill, Biggleswade, Dunstable, Kempston, Leighton Buzzard and Luton. With over 50 Lodges in the province, there is plenty of choice of where and when to meet.

Pictured is the Keep at Kempston, completed in 1876, it was originally the barracks for the 16th (Bedfordshire) Regiment of Foot. It is now home to several businesses as well as the masonic centre and provincial office. Much of the building has seen recent improvements to make it a great place to meet. All the Bedfordshire centres have interesting histories and artifacts, and open days are held where the public are welcomed.



## BEDFORDSHIRE FREEMASONS

To find out more about Freemasonry or for information on how to become a member, please email [membership@pglbeds.org](mailto:membership@pglbeds.org)

[www.bedfordshirefreemasons.org](http://www.bedfordshirefreemasons.org)

 [@bedfordshiremasons](https://www.facebook.com/bedfordshiremasons)

 [@pglbedfordshire](https://twitter.com/pglbedfordshire)

 [@pglbedfordshire](https://www.instagram.com/pglbedfordshire)

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## UNITED GRAND LODGE OF ENGLAND

[www.ugle.org.uk](http://www.ugle.org.uk)



[www.mcf.org.uk](http://www.mcf.org.uk)