

Honouring the Past, Building an Inclusive Future

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A Shared Legacy: 250 Years of Essex Freemasonry

On Saturday 9th May, history, heritage and community came together as the Foundations of Fellowship Exhibition officially opened its doors, marking a remarkable milestone in the story of Essex Freemasons and celebrating 250 years of Freemasonry across the county.

Organised jointly by the Provincial Community Engagement and Museum portfolios, the exhibition was far more than a historical display; it celebrated tradition, charity, public service, and the inclusive future of Freemasonry within Essex.

The exhibition was formally co-opened by Provincial Grand Master Paul Tarrant and Deputy Mayor of Havering Barry Mugglestone, alongside members of the Provincial Executive and guests from across the wider Masonic family.



Provincial Grand Master Paul Tarrant with Deputy Mayor of Havering Barry Mugglestone at the official opening

The event was also attended by Museum Directors, volunteers and friends of Havering Museum, reflecting the strong partnership between Havering Museum and Essex Freemasons.

In a wonderful display of unity across Freemasonry, the event was attended by members of both the Honourable Fraternity of Ancient Freemasons and the Order of Women Freemasons.



Members of Essex Freemasons Provincial Executive with representatives of HFAF, OWF, local dignitaries and museum trustees

Among the honoured guests were Most Worshipful Carol Cole, Grand Master of the Honourable Fraternity of Ancient Freemasons; Right Worshipful Irene Stewart, Past Deputy Grand Master of the Honourable Fraternity of Ancient Freemasons; and Very Worshipful Elaine Malone, Grand Inspector of Essex for the Order of Women Freemasons.

Speaking during the opening, **Provincial Grand Master Paul Tarrant said:**

"This exhibition is not only a celebration of 250 years of proud history within Essex Freemasonry, but also a reflection of who we are today: a modern, community-focused organisation built upon friendship, integrity, charity and inclusion.

"It is wonderful to see members from across Freemasonry united in celebrating our shared values and traditions, whilst also showcasing the incredible charitable and community work that continues across Essex today.

"Whilst we honour our past, we must continue building a future rooted in openness, unity and service to our communities."

Visitors were given a fascinating insight into the rich history of Freemasonry within Essex. Among the standout displays was the remarkable collection dedicated to Major David Nelson VC, including his Victoria Cross and associated artefacts, offering a powerful reminder of courage, sacrifice and service.

Also drawing considerable interest were the historic globes and documents from Angel Lodge No. 51, together with the Sir Alf Ramsey apron display from Chingford Masonic Centre, celebrating one of Essex Freemasonry's most recognised members.



Angel Lodge celestial and terrestrial globes on display at the Foundations of Fellowship Exhibition

Alongside the historical exhibits, a specially produced video presentation highlighted the extensive charitable work carried out by Essex Freemasons today, showcasing the Province's continued commitment to benevolence, volunteering, youth support and public engagement across Essex.

The exhibition's community focus was further demonstrated through the presentation of a £2,500 donation to Havering Museum.

Speaking about the donation, **Assistant Provincial Grand Master and Executive Community Engagement Lead Elliott Chevin said:**

"Havering Museum plays an important role within the local community, preserving the history of the borough whilst creating opportunities for education, learning and engagement for people of all ages.

"Through our Community Engagement Programme, Essex Freemasons are proud to support organisations making a genuine difference locally, particularly organisations driven by volunteers and dedicated to supporting local people.

"We hope this donation will help the museum continue its outstanding work for many years to come."

The donation, made on behalf of the Essex Freemasons Community Engagement Programme, will support the museum's ongoing work delivering free educational events and opportunities for local schools and community groups. Operated entirely by volunteers, the museum reflects many of the same values held within Freemasonry: service, education and community support.

The exhibition will continue at Havering Museum until 24 July, giving visitors the opportunity to explore a unique collection celebrating 250 years of friendship, charity, tradition and community service within Essex Freemasonry. The exhibition is open Wednesday to Friday, 11am to 4.30pm, with Saturdays reserved for planned events.



Members of the Provincial Community Engagement and Museum portfolios who organised the exhibition

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