

## September 2025 Quarterly Communication Presiding Officer's Remarks





Brethren, having acknowledged the Heads of our Companion Orders, and following a recent meeting with senior members of the Mark Grand Lodge, I have been asked to reiterate the comments by the Grand Master in his address to Grand Lodge April 2007. In this address he formally acknowledged a number of Orders in Freemasonry. In line with the *Strategy for Freemasonry 2022 and Beyond* and recognising the valuable role these Companion Orders play in English Freemasonry, I wish to acknowledge formally the existence and regularity of the: Mark, Ancient and Accepted Rite, Royal Ark Mariner, Knights Templar, Red Cross of Constantine, Royal and Select Masters, Allied Masonic Degrees, Order of the Secret Monitor, Scarlet Cord, Knights Beneficent of the Holy City, Knight Templar Priests and the Royal Order of Scotland.

The Orders I have just mentioned are simply the best known and largest of those practised in London, the Provinces and Districts overseas. I am aware that there are in addition others that have a valid place in Freemasonry and with whom we enjoy a good relationship. What is very important is that Brethren who join these other Orders should retain their membership of a Craft Lodge and Royal Arch Chapter and I am pleased to know that the Orders themselves will be encouraging their members to do this.

Brethren, it is very good to see you all here in the Grand Temple today and I hope you have had a pleasant summer, that you are refreshed, and ready for the Autumn and the Masonic season to come.





Today is an important day for Grand Lodge, with the Installation of a new Assistant Grand Master and the appointment of a new Grand Director of Ceremonies. I would like to take this opportunity to thank RW Bro Hopkinson-Woolley for his service over the past six years and wish him and his successor VW Bro Goodchild every success in their new roles.

I am sure this morning's presentation by Bro Thompson resonated with both of them, as former Cavalry Officers, as I very much hope it will have done with you all, Brethren. The presentation reminded us of Freemasonry's deep and longstanding connection with, and commitment to, the Armed Forces. Indeed, it is an association I value highly and I am very pleased to see Freemasonry taking such an active part in supporting our service personnel, particularly at a time when their role is becoming increasingly important.

Since I signed The Armed Forces Covenant on behalf of this Grand Lodge four years ago, the Covenant has been a visible foundation of our institutional commitment, one on which we continue to build. Indeed, our ongoing efforts in support of the Covenant have been such that we have held the Defence Employer Recognition Scheme Silver Award for the past 3 years.

I am delighted to announce that in July, Grand Lodge was awarded the prestigious Gold Award under the Scheme. This is the highest recognition for organisations that support the armed forces community. I have no doubt that receipt of this Award will encourage our newly formed Armed Forces Committee to build on this achievement, and I wish all those involved continued success.

Our support of the Armed Forces is one highly visible example of where our cooperation with the Women's Orders has been critical to our success. Since its formation last year, the Council for Freemasonry in England & Wales has





brought together the United Grand Lodge of England and the two Women's Orders in an unprecedented manner.

I am pleased to announce that, as a result of this early success, the Grand Lodge of Scotland has agreed to join the Council. The Council will now become the Council for Freemasonry in Great Britain. This development will allow us to further enhance our cooperation with our close partners in Scotland as we seek to ensure that all of our respective Grand Lodges continue to thrive.

Brethren, the individual successes of these initiatives are very much part of our wider Strategy, and I am encouraged that we are beginning to see these bearing fruit. However, as I said at the Annual Investiture of Supreme Grand Chapter in May, none of us must forget that there is much still to do and there is no room for complacency.

Each Lodge where initiations take place, should be initiating at least three new members each and every year. At the same time, it is the responsibility of all our members to engage and support our new Brethren: in this way, we hope to limit our losses to no more than one per Lodge each year. The effect, if achieved, will be every Lodge will grow and have a future in which it and its members can thrive.

Brethren, I am encouraged by the progress we have made and look forward to the further successes which I am sure will come over the ensuing 12 months.

Thank you, Brethren

