

The Scouts and Freemasonry: creating local connections



The Scouts and Freemasonry share many features in common, from the same traditional values to similar future challenges. Over the last few years the two organisations have supported each other in a number of ways. This resource is designed to assist members of both the Scouts and Freemasonry to engage and support each other locally.

Why?

Both the Scouts and Freemasonry share similar values. The principles within the Scout Promise also feature at the heart of Freemasonry's teaching. Both organisations are concerned with helping members to become better people and have remarkably similar moral codes. They are both open to people of all faiths and both encourage good citizenship and self-development. As membership organisations, they also face the same challenges; building better informed public awareness, attracting and retaining new members, focusing resources where they can have the biggest impact and operating in a manner that provides the best support to their membership. As local organisations found in or near to most communities, it makes sense that The Scouts and Freemasonry co-operate and support each other where they can.

What is Scouting and how is it organised?



Scouting was founded in 1907 by Robert Baden-Powell, whose publication 'Scouting for Boys' inspired boys in Edwardian England to group together into patrols and venture into the outdoors. Over a hundred years later nearly half a million young people develop skills for life as members of the UK Scout Association ("The Scouts"). Internationally there are 60 million members, making it the world's largest youth organisation. Importantly, The Scouts is values-based, volunteer-run and self-financing.

No longer for boys' only, around a third of our members are female. In the UK we have over 450,000 members aged between 4 and 25, supported by over 83,000 adult leaders and a similar number of supporters and trustees. Both youth and adult membership is growing but demand is increasing faster than the Scouts can recruit leaders.

At the head of The Scouts nationally are the Chief Scout, Dwayne Fields, and the UK Chief Volunteer, Carl Hankinson DL. They are supported by a professional staff and HQ volunteers.

Locally, Scouting is organised into Counties and Areas, aligned broadly to civic boundaries. They are managed by a County or Area Lead Volunteer who appoints a team of specialists to support him or her. Each County / Area is made up of a number of Districts, led by a District Lead Volunteer with their own team, whose role it is to support and develop Scouting in their area. Scouting itself happens in community based Scout Groups, a number of Groups making up each Scout District. Each Scout Group is led by a Group Lead Volunteer and will comprise youth sections; Squirrel Dreys for 4 to 6 year olds, Beaver Scout Colonies for 6 to 8 year olds, Cub Scout Packs for 8 to 10½ year olds and Scout Troops for 10½ to 14 year olds. Districts also have Explorer Scout Units for 14 to 18 year olds and every County/Area has Scout Networks for 18 to 25 year olds.

Every Scout Group is an unincorporated educational charity within the Scouts federation of charities. They are governed by Group Trustee Boards and must be self-financing, leaving Leaders to concentrate on the youth programme.

The Scouts have appointed Tony Harvey as their HQ Liaison for Freemasonry. Tony is leading several initiatives to develop the relationship between Scouting and Freemasonry and is keen to support local collaborations. He can be contacted at tony.harvey@scouts.org.uk.

What is Freemasonry and how is it organised?

Freemasonry for men in England and Wales is governed by the United Grand Lodge of England (UGLE), formed in 1717. The current membership stands at around 160,000 grouped in 7,000 local Lodges. Scotland has its own Grand Lodge, the Grand Lodge of Scotland, as does Ireland, the Grand Lodge of Ireland. There are two Grand Lodges for women; the Order of Women Freemasons (OWF) and the Honourable Fraternity of Ancient Freemasons (HFAF).

UGLE is led by the Grand Master, HRH The Duke of Kent, who is also joint President of The Scout Association. He is supported by a team of Grand Officers and a staff managed by the Grand Secretary. The country is divided into Masonic Provinces, each led by a Provincial Grand Master who himself will have a team of officers to assist him. There are Lodges in most large towns and many smaller communities. They meet either in Masonic Halls (which tend to accommodate several local Lodges) or in community premises. Each Lodge is led by a Worshipful Master, who is elected for one year, while other officers manage administrative, financial, charitable and other functions. Many Freemasons were once Scouts, or members of other organised youth organisations. In almost every County / Province there is a Lodge made up of Freemasons who have a particular interest in Scouting and these Lodges are all members of the Kindred Lodges Association or KLA.

The Order of Women Freemasons is the oldest and largest Masonic organisation for women in this country and works on the lines of regular male Freemasonry. Women of any race or faith can join the Order and must be 21 years or older, be of good character and believe in a Supreme Being. Being formed in 1908 it has some 4,000 members grouped into over 300 Craft Lodges operating in the UK and overseas. Lodges meet a minimum of four times a year and between meetings they may organise fundraising events for local or national charities, plus informal social events.

The Honourable Fraternity of Ancient Freemasons was founded in 1913. It teaches the same values as male Freemasonry and in particular reaches out to young women who believe in working in the community. HFAF has its own registered charity supporting both national and local charities. Young women are eligible to join from the age of 18. HFAF offers women friendship, inspiration and empowerment.

In the last few years Freemasons have been made very much aware of Scouting as it is today, largely through the UGLE sponsored 2012 Prestonian Lecture, "*Scouting & Freemasonry: two parallel organisations?*". There is a very strong willingness to support Scouting with time, money and facilities. Masonic charities have donated over £1,000,000 to Scouting in recent years, including a £500,000 grant from The Freemasons' Grand Charity and £211,000 from the Royal Masonic Trust for Girls & Boys. There are very many examples of donations being made by Provinces and Lodges to Scouting at a local level.

What are the opportunities for co-operation?

County / Area Lead Volunteers and Provincial Grand Masters have broadly similar roles and operate within similar geographical boundaries. Freemasonry does not have an equivalent to Scout Districts, although in many large Provinces there are local structures that perform a similar function. Scout Groups and Masonic Lodges are the two organisations' community-based units. The opportunities for communication and co-operation lie largely between, first, Scout Counties/Areas and Masonic Provinces and secondly between Scout Groups and Masonic Lodges.



What can the Scouts and Freemasonry offer each other?

Scouting has grown significantly since 2003. This is because of a transformational change process that reviewed and altered the way the organisation operates while retaining its core values and purpose. Freemasonry can learn a lot from Scouting's experience. Indeed, since 2008 senior members of both organisations have met regularly to share lessons and ideas. The opportunity now exists for Masonic Provinces to connect with Scout Counties/Areas to learn how Scouting has developed within the same part of the country.

Freemasonry includes among its members people with hugely diverse skills and talents, including trades skills such as electricians, plumbers, car mechanics and builders, and professional skills, such as accounting, marketing & communications, training and management / administration. Freemasons may be approached to serve as trustees on Group, District and County Trustee Boards or to be specialist Advisers, badge examiners and fund raisers. In addition, Masonic Halls normally seek outside lettings from community and other groups and would be suitable for committee meetings, training sessions, conferences and awards presentations.

Square & Compasses National Support Team is a new initiative within The Scouts. Its members are Freemasons or their partners who have volunteered to support The Scouts by providing services at large events, and as a pool of skilled people who help on an occasional or ad hoc basis.

How do we make contact?

To contact your local UGLE Province, look it up on <http://www.ugle.org.uk/about-us/provinces> and get in touch with the Provincial Grand Secretary. Explain your purpose and whether you are a Scout County/Area wishing to connect with the Province itself or a Scout Group wishing to connect with a Lodge in your area. Scout Districts are advised to coordinate an approach with their Scout County / Area.

To contact one of the Grand Lodges for women, contact their Grand Secretary via their websites (see below) and explain that you would like to get in touch with women's Freemasonry in your area.

To contact local Scouting, enter "Scouts <name of county or town>" into a search engine. Once on the appropriate website, use the "Contact us", "Find a Group" or similar function to find the person you wish to contact. For Provinces wishing to connect with the Scout County or Area, this would be either the County/Area Lead Volunteer or Secretary. For Lodges wishing to connect with a local Scout Group, this would be the Group Lead Volunteer.

Tony Harvey, The Scout Association's HQ Liaison for Freemasonry and UGLE's 2012 Prestonian Lecturer on Scouting & Freemasonry, will always be able to assist and can be contacted on tony.harvey@scouts.org.uk.

Further information

The Scout Association	http://scouts.org.uk
United Grand Lodge of England	http://www.ugle.org.uk
Grand Lodge of Scotland	http://www.grandlodgescotland.com
Grand Lodge of Ireland	http://freemason.ie
Order of Women Freemasons	https://www.owf.org.uk/
Honourable Fraternity of Ancient Freemasons	http://www.hfaf.org/
Kindred Lodges Association	http://www.kla.org.uk/
Join Square & Compasses	https://bit.ly/SquareAndCompasses

Ask a question

If you wish to ask any thing about Freemasonry, please complete our [online form](#), or scan the following QR code.

