

MENTORING POLICY

Provincial Grand Lodge of Worcestershire

“Mentoring is vital if we are to ensure the future success of Freemasonry in the Province of Worcestershire. I enthusiastically endorse our Mentoring Policy and commend it to you all.”

Robert Christopher Vaughan, Provincial Grand Master

21st June 2014

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Foreword

PROVINCIAL GRAND MENTOR

This document defines the Provincial Grand Lodge of Worcestershire's mentoring strategy, and describes the roles and responsibilities of those responsible for its implementation. Whilst not every brother can be the Mentor of his Lodge, it is the responsibility of us all to guide and support our brethren at whatever stage they may be on their Masonic journey. In doing so, we will develop new friendships, enhance our enjoyment of the Craft and contribute towards the future success of Freemasonry.

We will all remember the day when we waited outside the door of our Lodge, poor and penniless, and awaiting admission. It is, for many, a time of uncertainty, but also of opportunity: to discover something we did not previously know about ourselves. As I reflect on my own initiation, I remember the overwhelming feeling of belonging I experienced: a warm, genuine and sustained welcome; the knowledge that I had joined an organisation with a significant past and bright future; and thoughts about how I might be able to contribute. The truly exceptional levels of support and encouragement I received since taking that first step continue to this day, and I would like to ensure that is true of every brother in our wonderful Province.

Mark Lodge
Provincial Grand Mentor

Introduction

WHY MASONIC MENTORING?

Although Masonic mentoring is now firmly established in Lodges across England and Wales, it is important to consider why this is the case, and why the office of Mentor has been formally recognised at the Lodge and Provincial Grand Lodge levels. Indeed, a newly initiated brother may wonder why Freemasonry has a formal mentoring programme at all, when other organisations of which he may also be a member do not.

There is no doubt that mentoring has taken place for many years, but it is only recently that concerns about our membership, and in particular the large number of brothers who resign shortly after their initiation, have caused it to be placed on a more formal footing. This development is a clear indication of the United Grand Lodge of England's concern and subsequent commitment to ensuring all our initiates receive a fitting welcome into Freemasonry, and go on to become active and enthusiastic Freemasons.

Although the etiquette and traditions of Freemasonry quickly become familiar, they may at first appear to be unusual and difficult to understand. It is for this reason that every newly-made brother must be guided and supported by the brethren of his Lodge during his formative years. Today, as many men become Freemasons without previously having known a brother, it is particularly important they are made to feel welcome and offered every assistance to ensure they feel confident in the organisation they have joined.

MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

Many Lodges are finding it difficult to attract new members. These difficulties are almost certainly the consequence of external pressures and changing values in society and are, in part, being addressed by our more open nature and increased use of the internet and social media. As recruitment continues to present a challenge to us all, the retention of our members becomes all the more important.

Whilst recruitment is largely in the hands of those who may wish to join us, retention is completely under *our* control. It is accepted that Freemasonry will not suit every man, but a significant number of initiates *should* go on to become active and enthusiastic Freemasons. Losing a member soon after he has joined a Lodge *may* suggest a failure in the way we support our newly-made brothers; the purpose of Masonic mentoring is to address this concern and in doing so prevent further reductions in our membership.

INTRODUCTION

MENTORING POLICY

The Provincial Grand Lodge of Worcestershire has published a formal mentoring policy to provide clarity of purpose for all those involved in safeguarding the future of Freemasonry in this Province.

Under the leadership of the Provincial Grand Master, who has firmly endorsed this policy, the Provincial Grand Lodge of Worcestershire will support every Lodge with respect to the mentoring of its brethren, and provide a framework under which this can be achieved.

To allow this policy to succeed, it is vitally important that every Lodge appoints a Mentor at its annual installation meeting.

MENTORING POLICY OBJECTIVES

To promote the growth of Freemasonry in this Province, the objectives of our Mentoring Policy are as follows:

- to address the need for retention, and to support recruitment and retrieval;
- to create a sense of belonging and understanding, and to encourage the active participation of every Freemason;
- to ensure the Province of Worcestershire is an enjoyable and fulfilling place in which to be a Freemason;
- to help all our brothers to become 'Ambassadors for Freemasonry', communicating with non-Freemasons in a confident and enthusiastic manner.

As Freemasons, we should all strive to ensure these objectives are met; however, it is the particular duty of the Provincial Grand Mentor, supported by Lodge and Personal Mentors, to ensure this is the case.

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MENTORING PROCESS

Whilst the Masonic mentoring initiative is national in nature, its implementation at the Provincial level is managed by the Provincial Grand Mentor, who is assisted by Lodge and Personal Mentors operating throughout the Province.

Mentoring is to be deployed with a level of consistency. It is to be implemented by capable brothers who receive adequate training and support to help them fulfil their duties.

As a minimum, every mentor should understand the three stages of the Masonic mentoring process, together with the duties expected of him.

The three stages of the Masonic mentoring process are **belonging**, **understanding**, and **participating**. Whilst generally progressing in this order, these three stages overlap and will often run concurrently as a mentee grows in confidence and establishes himself within his Lodge.



Figure 1: The three stages of Masonic mentoring.

Belonging is the first stage of the mentoring process and should be felt by every newly-made brother immediately after joining his Lodge. Whilst creating a sense of belonging is relatively straight forward, it will require the sustained effort of every Lodge member for a period of approximately two years. After this time, a newly-made brother is likely to be firmly established, have made a circle of friends and feel comfortable attending our meetings.

Belonging is concerned with the creation of a welcoming and friendly atmosphere that a brother is unlikely to have found in any other club or society. It can be achieved if every member takes the time to get to know his newly-made brother, extending the hand of friendship from the moment he first enters the Lodge. Constant encouragement is a must, with words of praise offered when appropriate. In order to maintain momentum, care must be taken to keep in touch with our newer members during those months when our Lodges do not meet. In addition, a warm

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welcome must also be extended to his family and friends, in particular when attending Masonic social functions organised and hosted by his Lodge.

Belonging reaches beyond a Lodge and it is important that a newly-made brother realises he is part of a wider community of Freemasons. He should understand that his Lodge is situated in a Province that contains many other Lodges, all of which he is able to visit. Also, that this Province is but one of a number in England and Wales, and that he is able to connect with brethren from all over England, Wales and beyond.

Understanding is the second stage of the mentoring process and will begin shortly after the first stage of belonging is underway. After a period of novelty, a newly-made brother will begin to look for meaning in his membership and the organisation he has joined. He will seek to understand the purpose of our ceremonies, etiquette and traditions. By gaining an understanding of Freemasonry, a curious brother will come to fully appreciate his membership. He will be aware of what happens at a Lodge meeting and therefore feel confident to attend and participate; he will also feel able to visit other Lodges and involve himself in social activities.

The stage of understanding will undoubtedly last a life-time, although during the first two years of membership it will be largely concerned with Masonic etiquette and traditions. It is therefore vital that a brother's mentor is actively involved at this stage, and that he is able to provide accurate answers to any relevant questions that he is asked. Mentors should be proactive and support their mentees by sitting with them during our meetings and afterwards at the festive board; also, retiring with them as our ceremonies occasionally require.

Participating will follow understanding and be greatly encouraged by a sense of belonging. As applied to understanding, participation should also last a lifetime, and during the early years of his membership a brother will only touch upon the opportunities that will eventually become available to him.

At this stage, a brother will have settled into his Lodge and have been encouraged to involve himself with its affairs, perhaps by performing a short piece of ritual, taking a junior office or helping to organise a social event. Mentors must maintain their provision of encouragement and support, so their mentees feel comfortable and able to participate. They must also ensure their mentees progresses in a suitable way and at an appropriate speed: not every brother will want to become the Master of his Lodge and such a decision *must* be respected. When this situation arises, mentors must be able to provide stimulating alternative development opportunities.

Experience tells us that when a brother becomes actively involved within his Lodge, he increases his understanding of Freemasonry, widens his circle of friends, and finds fulfilment and enjoyment in his membership.

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FOR HOW LONG SHOULD A BROTHER BE MENTORED?

The simple answer to this question is 'as long as is necessary.' In practical terms, our brothers will have different needs and progress at different rates; however, mentoring should be continued until a brother has passed through the **belonging** stage, has a solid **understanding** of Freemasonry and is actively **participating** within his Lodge. Perhaps, therefore, this question is best answered by the Lodge Mentor in consultation with a brother's Personal Mentor, proposer and seconder (if they are known to him), if not by the brother himself.

As a general guide, the following points should be considered.

- Should a brother wish to progress through the various offices within his Lodge, he should continue to be mentored until he has served as its Immediate Past Master. Clearly, the level and nature of the mentoring required will change as he works his way through the progressive offices, and this should be reflected in the guidance and support offered to him.

Particular care should be taken to ensure that a brother does not lose interest in Freemasonry and his Lodge after he has served as its Master. This is a critical time for many Past Masters and a significant number resign two to three years after leaving the Chair. To prevent this, Lodge Mentors should identify and recommend other suitable opportunities within the Lodge, such as non-progressive or administrative offices, together with participation in other Masonic orders. **Having enjoyed a successful year as Master, a new and enthusiastic Past Master is very likely to make an excellent mentor.**

- Should a brother not wish to serve as the Master of his Lodge, either in the longer or shorter terms, his mentor should maintain regular contact with him as he may want to do so at a later date. He may also want to take a non-progressive or administrative office, such as Secretary or Treasurer. In such cases, a brother will need just as much guidance and support as he would if progressing to the Master's chair.

It is important to remember that every Freemason, regardless of his position, will require encouragement, advice and support. In this sense, we will all need a mentor, and in turn we must all be willing to mentor others when the need arises.

MENTORING IN THE WIDER CONTEXT

The approach to mentoring in the Province of Worcestershire follows the model recommended by the United Grand Lodge of England. In this model, mentoring involves the following brothers, whose attributes and duties are explained in the 'Roles and Responsibilities' section below.

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- Provincial Grand Mentor;
- Lodge Mentor;
- Personal Mentor;
- Mentee.

Mentoring is primarily concerned with the development of a newly-made brother or *mentee*, with a secondary focus on the development of Lodge and Personal Mentors.

In practical terms, the Master of a Lodge will appoint and invest a Mentor on the day of his installation. Supported by the Provincial Grand Mentor, it is then the duty of the Lodge Mentor to manage the mentoring programme within his Lodge, and to assign Personal Mentors to mentees as appropriate. Once assigned, a Personal Mentor will start the mentoring process with his mentee, taking advice from the Lodge Mentor as required.

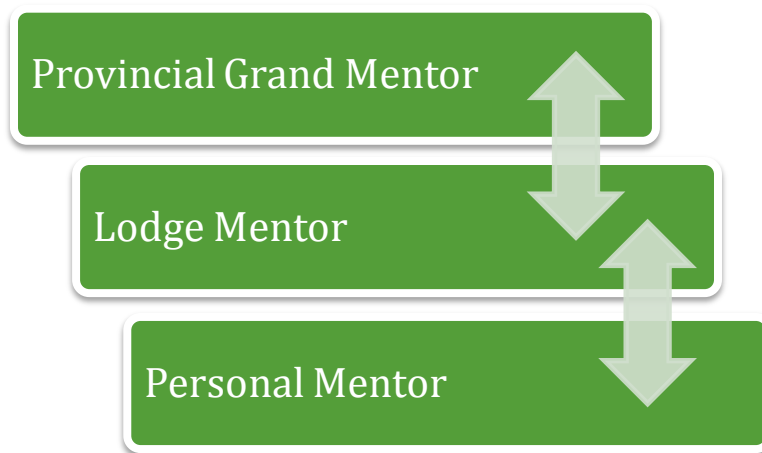


Figure 2: Mentoring in the Province of Worcestershire.

The Provincial Grand Mentor will work closely with Lodge Mentors, who will in turn work closely with their teams of Personal Mentors. Given the large number of mentors operating in the Province at any one time, the Provincial Grand Mentor will generally communicate with Lodge Mentors, who will then disseminate information to Personal Mentors. Feedback is vitally important and it is expected this will flow in the opposite direction, as shown in Figure 2.

Following this simple model, Personal Mentors will be able to provide their mentees with a one-to-one service, thus ensuring the Lodge Mentor is able to take a high-level view of the programme operating within his Lodge, and to participate in communications with the Provincial Grand

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Mentor. Clearly, there will be times when a Lodge Mentor also acts as a Personal Mentor, for example when a Lodge has few newer members. The model is flexible and supports such a situation.

MENTORING IN THE LODGE

The Mentoring Policy here presented is not prescriptive, as it does not require a Lodge to implement any particular mentoring programme. Rather, it provides a simple framework under which mentoring can take place, and a structure that will support the sharing of information between Lodges.

The Provincial Grand Mentor encourages Lodges to innovate and develop mentoring programmes that are right for them, given their unique traditions and membership profiles. He will provide advice and training as required, and publish information that will help them to develop their own mentoring strategies. The Provincial Grand Mentor will, in return, seek input and feedback from Lodge Mentors, which will be shared with others in the Province.

There are many mentoring resources available on the world wide web and all mentors are strongly recommended to consult these during the course of their duties. Several of these are referenced in the 'RESOURCES' section below.

LODGE MENTOR'S REPORT

Lodge Mentors are strongly encouraged to give a report of their activities at their regular Lodge meetings. Such a report will allow relevant information to be shared with those brothers who are not acting as Personal Mentors, and in doing so demonstrate the Lodge's commitment to its newer members. The report need not be given at every meeting, but should be done so at least once a year, or more often as circumstances dictate.

The Lodge Mentor's Report may be given at the third rising, or as otherwise stated on the summons. (It is recommended that the report be included as a separate item of labour, where possible.) If the report is to be particularly detailed, it should be circulated to the brethren in advance, with only the most salient points being highlighted at the meeting.

Whilst it is for each Lodge Mentor to determine the format of his report, the following agenda may act as a guide.

- **Assignment of Personal Mentors to mentees.** The brethren should be informed or reminded of the assignment of Personal Mentors to their respective mentees.

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- **Mentoring activities within the Lodge.** The brethren should be given an overview of the mentoring activities taking place within the Lodge, including personal instruction and visits to other Lodges.
- **Mentoring activities within the Province.** The brethren should be informed of any mentoring initiatives taking place within the Province.
- **Mentoring training and education.** The brethren should be informed of the attendance of the Lodge and Personal Mentors at training and education seminars.
- **Mentoring calendar.** As they may also wish to attend, the brethren should be given the details of activities relevant to Personal Mentors and their mentees, such as the annual meeting of Provincial Grand Lodge and the Cathedral Service.
- **Mentoring news and information.** The brethren should be reminded where information concerning mentoring can be found, which will include the Provincial Grand Lodge of Worcestershire's website.
- **Any other mentoring business.** To include any other items relevant to mentoring.

When delivered at a regular Lodge meeting, the report should be short, interesting and applicable to the assembled audience.

LODGE MENTOR'S ANNUAL RETURN

The Provincial Grand Lodge of Worcestershire requests that every Lodge submit a Lodge Mentor's Annual Return with its Provincial Annual Return (the return forwarded to the Secretary shortly before his Lodge's installation meeting). On the return, a Lodge Mentor is asked to provide information concerning every brother in his Lodge who has been a Freemason for **five years or less**.

The purpose of the Lodge Mentor's Annual Return is to provide the Provincial Grand Mentor with feedback concerning the progress of those Lodge members who are being mentored, together with any other comments that might assist him in his work. The Provincial Grand Mentor will collate this information and provide the Provincial Grand Master with an annual report detailing the state of mentoring in his Province. In collating this information, the Provincial Grand Mentor may identify Lodges that require assistance and support; he is also likely to identify good practice that will be shared for the benefit of others.

The Lodge Mentor's Annual Return is clearly a very important document and will be treated in the strictest confidence.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Roles and Responsibilities

KEY INDIVIDUALS

Whilst the mentee is the primary focus of our Mentoring Policy, his duties are relatively straight forward and easy to define: he will receive expert guidance from those concerned with his development, and having gained a solid understanding of our fraternity will become an active and enthusiastic member of his Lodge. However, the duties of those concerned with his development are perhaps less obvious and require further definition; therefore, the roles and responsibilities of the Provincial Grand Mentor, Lodge Mentor and Personal Mentor are detailed below.

THE PROVINCIAL GRAND MENTOR

Reporting to the Provincial Grand Master, the Provincial Grand Mentor is responsible for the strategic development, deployment and management of the Provincial Mentoring Policy. His duties include the following, which, for convenience, have been documented in two sections: the first concern his duties at the Provincial level; the second defines his involvement with individual Lodges.

The Provincial Grand Mentor will:

- identify and share mentoring best practice with all Lodges in the Province, taking advantage of the Provincial website, email and social media where possible;
- maintain a web blog that will cover a wide range of topics relevant to mentoring, and be used to share his thoughts, observations and recommendations;
- organise and deliver training and education seminars for mentors so new initiatives can be explored and ideas exchanged;
- obtain progress reports and feedback from Lodge Mentors through personal contact and the Lodge Mentor's Annual Return;
- encourage every Lodge to appoint a Mentor at its annual installation meeting;
- encourage Lodges to amend the Ceremony of Initiation so it includes the introduction of the mentee to his Personal Mentor immediately after he has received the Charge to the Initiate;
- promote supported visiting, which allows a newly-made brother to be accompanied during visits to other Lodges, where he can watch an appropriate ceremony in the company of the members of his own Lodge;
- arrange and facilitate meetings and networking events for new Freemasons, including informal meetings with wives and partners in a social environment;

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- report to the Provincial Executive with regular updates on Lodge Mentor numbers, successes, difficulties and training initiatives;
- provide the Provincial Grand Master with the necessary information to allow him to promote Masonic mentoring in his address to the annual meeting of Provincial Grand Lodge;
- enable the Provincial Executive to report on the importance of mentoring and its developments, and to draw attention to the range of services offered by the Provincial Grand Mentor.

With respect to individual Lodges, the Provincial Grand Mentor will:

- offer encouragement, advice and support;
- help mentors plan and deliver their work;
- give mentors informal feedback on the work they have done and help them feel good about what they have achieved;
- help mentors to share good ideas;
- help mentors to maintain their motivation when experiencing difficulties with their mentees;
- give short talks and presentations on mentoring as required;
- be available for an informal and confidential chat, either face-to-face, by telephone or email.

The Provincial Grand Mentor should be seen as a resource that can be called upon for assistance by any mentor in the Province.

THE LODGE MENTOR

The Lodge Mentor is responsible for the management of the mentoring strategy within his Lodge. He must ensure it works both efficiently and effectively, and be recognised as the local expert on all mentoring matters.

His important duty is to ensure that a Personal Mentor is assigned to every brother immediately after his initiation. In order to do this effectively, it would be beneficial if he was involved at the early stages of a candidate's application for membership. This would allow him to identify a possible future match, remembering that the candidate's proposer or seconder may be the most suitable brother to act as his Personal Mentor.

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In most cases, a Lodge Mentor will assign one Personal Mentor to one mentee; however, in smaller Lodges it may be that a Personal Mentor is charged with mentoring more than one mentee. Similarly, the Lodge Mentor may undertake this duty himself. However structured, the principal remains the same and this is shown in Figure 3.

Once a Personal Mentor has been assigned to a mentee, the Personal Mentor is then responsible for his mentoring. The Lodge Mentor will monitor the effectiveness of his team of Personal Mentors and make adjustments as necessary.

It is likely and understandable that a Lodge Mentor may select a Personal Mentor that is not particularly well suited to his mentee. In such cases, it is essential that the situation is remedied as quickly as possible and a new Personal Mentor assigned. It is important to realise that whilst we are all brothers, we are not all the same and will respond in different ways to different people. This is a fact of life and such a situation need not cause any embarrassment to a Personal Mentor or his mentee.

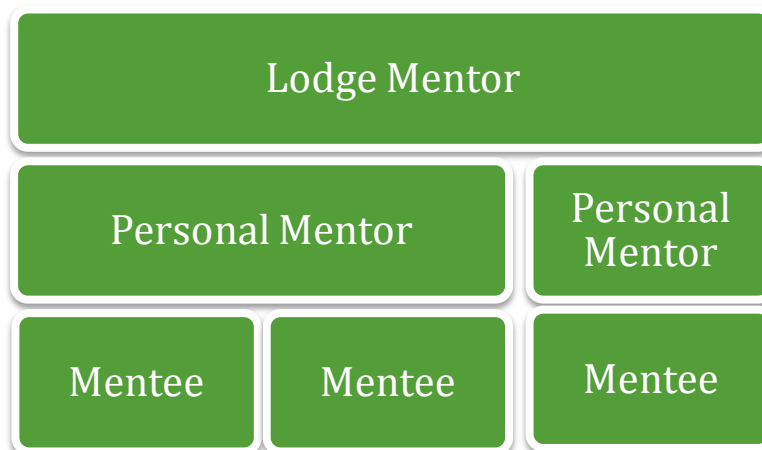


Figure 3: Mentoring structure within a typical Lodge.

The duties of a Lodge Mentor can be summarised as follows.

The Lodge Mentor will:

- take an active interest in mentoring;
- understand and maintain his Lodge's mentoring strategy and its associated processes;
- understand the Provincial Grand Lodge of Worcestershire's Mentoring Policy;
- ensure every member of his Lodge is aware of mentoring and the benefits it will bring;

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- know what he is trying to achieve and what constitutes a successful outcome;
- regularly report progress to his Lodge;
- ensure Personal Mentors fully understand their roles and responsibilities;
- encourage Personal Mentors to support their mentees during visits to other Lodges, attending himself whenever possible;
- monitor progress within his Lodge, and submit an accurate and suitably detailed Lodge Mentor's Annual Return in a timely manner;
- encourage the Master of his Lodge to amend the Ceremony of Initiation so it includes the introduction of the mentee to his Personal Mentor immediately after he has received the Charge to the Initiate;
- ensure both he and his team of Personal Mentors attend training and education seminars organised by the Provincial Grand Mentor;
- maintain a friendly two-way dialogue with the Provincial Grand Mentor and keep up-to-date with the information he provides.

Most importantly, a Lodge Mentor will work with a good heart and sense of enjoyment.

THE PERSONAL MENTOR

The Person Mentor is *the* key person in the whole mentoring process. It is the Personal Mentor who will spend the most time with his mentee and guide him on his Masonic journey. By helping him take the crucial first steps, a Personal Mentor will put his mentee on a path that will change his life, and the lives of those around him, for the better.

The responsibilities of the Personal Mentor are great, and his role is particularly interesting and rewarding. He must establish a relationship with his mentee before exposing him to relevant information and experiences. This should always be done in a controlled manner, with information provided in bite-sized chunks that are easy to digest. Mentoring may involve some elements of counselling, acting as a confidential advisor, or simply being a role model.

A perfect mentor would be:

- of a similar age to his mentee;
- a good communicator;
- a knowledgeable and enthusiastic Freemason;
- someone with an outgoing and friendly personality;
- someone with whom a mentee can relate and establish a natural rapport;

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- someone not currently holding an office within his Lodge, or at least not an onerous one that demands his continuous attention during the meeting or at the festive board;
- someone not likely to be encumbered with a time consuming office for many years to come, as mentoring may be required for a relatively prolonged period;
- someone who regularly attends Lodge meetings and rehearsals, with sufficient spare time outside his normal duties that will allow him to meet with his mentee regularly;
- someone who lives close to his mentee, as a close proximity makes it easier to meet and forge a friendship outside the Lodge;
- someone with a proven track record of being helpful to new and inexperienced brethren.

Whilst it would be helpful for a Personal Mentor to possess all these qualities and personal characteristics, they are included for guidance only as it is highly unlikely that such a brother will be available in every Lodge. Compromises will often be needed, and when they are priority should be given to those personal characteristics that will result in the development of a lasting friendship between a mentor and his mentee.

If the Personal Mentor is of a similar age to his mentee, and is a good communicator with an outgoing and friendly personality, experience tells us that the process is likely to be successful.

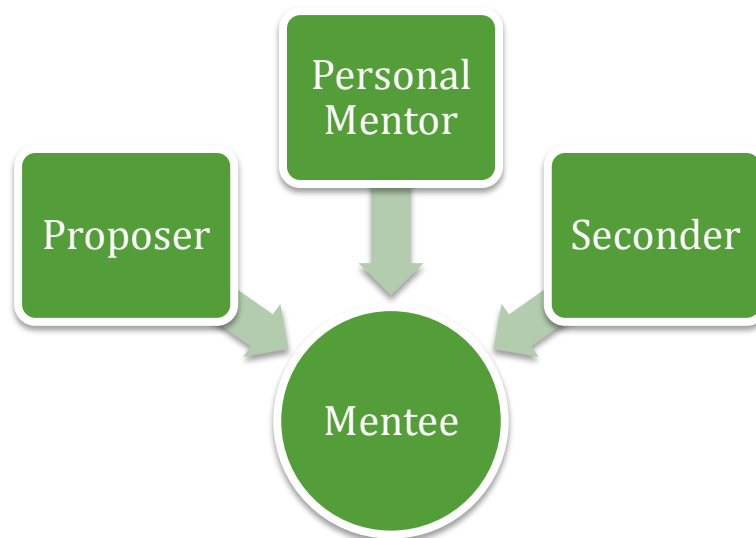


Figure 4: Support provided by a Personal Mentor, Proposer and Secunder.

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Mention must also be made of a mentee's proposer and seconder. When a candidate knows his proposer and seconder well, he may expect that one will serve as his Personal Mentor. However, his proposer and seconder may not have a sufficient understanding of Freemasonry themselves, or the time and ability to share their knowledge effectively. In these circumstances, an independent Personal Mentor should be identified and appointed. When this happens, the proposer and seconder must maintain a close personal relationship with their candidate and both actively contribute towards his development, as shown in figure 4 above.

Whatever the relationship, it is important that the Personal Mentor retains overall control and takes responsibility for his mentee's progress.

Today, not every candidate will know his proposer and seconder well. In such circumstances, a knowledgeable and experienced Personal Mentor is vital, and the brother assigned to this task will be expected to perform the duties traditionally undertaken by the proposer and seconder.

Resources and Acknowledgements

RESOURCES

The following resources are available on the world wide web and are recommended reading for all mentors.

The United Grand Lodge of England's Masonic Mentoring website:

<http://www.masonicmentoring.org.uk/>

A significant amount of information is made available on this website, which will greatly assist all those involved in mentoring. Particular reference is made to the following pages:

- **How to be a Mentor:**
<http://www.masonicmentoring.org.uk/index.php/what-lodge-members-need-to-know/guidelines-for-mentors/how-to-be-a-mentor.html>
- **The Mentoring Relationship:**
<http://www.masonicmentoring.org.uk/index.php/what-lodge-members-need-to-know/guidelines-for-mentors/the-mentoring-relationship.html>
- **Mentoring Aids:**
<http://www.masonicmentoring.org.uk/index.php/mentoring-aids.html>

“The Future of Freemasonry” report should also be regarded as essential reading, as it considers the relevance of Freemasonry in a modern society:

<http://www.ugle.org.uk/news-events/future-of-freemasonry-report>

Those seeking a gentle introduction to Freemasonry are advised to read “Freemasonry - What's It All About?” This document is particularly suited for distribution at open-days and similar events. Printed copies are available from the Provincial Office:

http://www.ugle.org.uk/images/files/UGLE_CORE_LEAFLET.pdf

Similarly, the accompanying video is highly recommended viewing for those wanting to learn more about Freemasonry:

<http://www.ugle.org.uk/what-is-freemasonry/video-library/videos/169-whats-it-all-about>

RESOURCES AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Provincial Grand Lodge of Worcestershire would like to thank the United Grand Lodge of England for making available such a valuable collection of resources on its Masonic Mentoring website. Also, the Provincial Grand Lodge of East Lancashire, which has provided welcome input and made its own mentoring resources freely available on-line.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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All correspondence is most welcome and will be treated in the strictest confidential.

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