

Companions may I thank you all for your attendance here this evening. It's great to see such a good turn out and the room so well filled.

Earlier we heard the nominations from the various Inspection Committees and subsequently the Election of Officers for District Grand Chapter in 2027/28. As is customary, I have four personal appointments to make every two years and they are as follows

- District Grand King's Standard Bearer – E. Comp. David Woodrow PK Union Band RAC No 35
- District Grand Chapter's Sword Bearer – E. Comp. Eric Williamson PK Warrenpoint RAC No 697
- District Grand Steward – E. Comp Nigel Smyth PK Magherally RAC No 203
- District Grand Steward – E. Comp. Charles McNeill PK Seaforde RAC No 1009

I congratulate all those Companions who are going into Office and look forward to investing and installing them in December.

The Installation Convocation will take place in La Mon Hotel and Country Club on Saturday 5th December at 2:00pm. Prior to the Convocation there will be a Luncheon at 12 noon which is open to all Companions and I would encourage as many as possible to attend, especially those going into office and those leaving office. Notification will be sent out to all Chapters in a timely manner. Book early to avoid disappointment.

The installation season will be fast approaching and I would encourage everyone but especially those going into office to attend a class of instruction. We have classes in Banbridge, Belfast (Galwally) and N'Ards and they would appreciate some new members. We all benefit as individuals from attending classes, as do our Chapters. Not only do we learn the correct ritual, we also gain in confidence. When we, the Senior Officers are out visiting various Chapters it quickly becomes evident who has attended a class. I would urge all Companions to support the Classes of Instruction for the benefit of us all. Details of when they meet can be found on the District website or from the Class Registrars.

The District of Down will be hosting Supreme Grand Chapter on Wednesday the 16th September at 2.00 pm in The Mourne Country Hotel, Newry. For those who have never attended Grand Chapter before or for a number of years, it is a great opportunity to come along and enjoy the days proceedings. At the invitation of Supreme Grand Chapter, The Health and Wellbeing Committee, which represents the Provinces and Districts of Antrim and Down, Supreme Grand Chapter, The Grand Council of Knight Masons and The Provincial Priorities of East and South Ulster will be hosting an event prior to the Convocation, also in The Mourne Country, from 11.00 am to 1.00 pm. Again, this is in association with the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust, whose help and assistance is invaluable in running these events. The main participants at this event will be skin mapping, Care NI, health checks, guidance from The Department of Finance, Cancer Awareness, Hearing checks and Mental Health Info. Please come along to both the Health

awareness event and the convocation and if possible, bring a friend or two. The Healthy Eating and Nutrition talks by Catherine Culbert, will take place at Galwally House, Belfast on the 30 September, Lisburn Masonic Hall on the 6 October, Newry Masonic Hall on the 14 October and Ballymena Masonic Hall on the 22 October. Confirmation of these dates can be found on the District website.

The Health and Wellbeing Team, as was mentioned at our last Convocation, will be running a first for Masonry, A Ladies Health and Wellbeing evening on Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> September at 7.30pm in The La Mon Hotel and Country Club. The two speakers on the evening will be Professor Kienan Savage and Professor Stuart McIntosh from Queens University, Belfast. Both are cancer specialists.

This event has now been advertised and again I would appeal to you to encourage as many of your family and friends to attend. We also need to look after those who, without their encouragement and support we would be unable to do the good works that we do. I, of course, refer to our ladies.

Future training and development courses are in the process of being finalised and all those involved will be notified in due course.

I would again remind every Chapter that if you are experiencing difficulties with numbers, administration etc please do not hesitate to contact the Office or your Inspector immediately. We are here to help and assist you to the best of our abilities

Again, I would appeal to you all to make a special effort to attend the upcoming Church Service on the 8<sup>th</sup> October in Holy Trinity Parish Church, Banbridge at 3.30 pm to celebrate Freemasonry in the Banbridge area. For those of you who are free on Sunday the 20<sup>th</sup> September, Broomhedge Council of Knight Masons No 57, will be holding a service in St Matthews Parish Church, Broomhedge at 3.30pm to celebrate their 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. It is of the utmost importance to have a strong representation at all Church Services, not only to support the unit holding it, but also to show the greater public that we are part of the community, not apart from it.

We all have a busy few months ahead of us. So let us all support each other in whatever way we deem necessary or possible. Remember, A house divided against itself cannot stand.

Lastly, Companions, I thank you for your attendance and attention this evening.

As is now customary, I leave you with a quote:

**“The life in front of you is far more important than the life behind you.”**

May the Supreme King of Heaven and Earth Bless each and every one of you.

Have a safe journey home.