

## **PROVINCIAL GRAND REGISTRAR'S REPORT**

I should first like to take the opportunity to thank those who continue to volunteer their expertise and their own time to the extremely important tasks at the Provincial Registry. To the Deputy Provincial Grand Registrar W. Bro. Kelvin Jones, the Assistant Provincial Grand Registrar W. Bro. Les Pickford and W. Bro. Mel Jones I offer my personal and grateful thanks. An especial thanks too to the additional volunteers who in embracing the new technology now available to us via the Adelpi 2 system, have helped to improve our data, streamline our systems and through their valuable feedback have helped to ensure the system is user friendly and efficient. User numbers have increased as more and more functions become available and this is anticipated to increase in the future.

A particular thank you to all our very hard working Lodge Secretaries who have also played their part in managing the transition in the way that Provincial Annual Returns are produced and reconciled.

The Province began 2016 with 163 Lodges and ended the year with 164 Lodges.

In analysing our data, the number of initiations has grown further to 257 in 2016 from 239 in 2014, and 255 in 2015 and continues the growth of new members seen in four successive years.

Sadly, there has been a rather significant increase in the number of brethren who have passed to the Grand Lodge above with 103 reported in this year. This has a tendency to impact heavily on our memberships figure. Despite this our total memberships figure is down 83 from 6941 for 2015 to 6864 in 2016. This suggests the popularity of the newly consecrated Lodges, such as Music Lodge. We started the year with 5698 Members and ended with 5604. Whilst this is a decrease in our Member count, it reflects an improving rate of growth (or reduction in decline) somewhat ahead of the average rate of Provinces as a whole. This trend has been steadily improving since 2012 and is encouraging.

The rate of Resignation appears constant this year at 293 in comparison with 296 in 2014 and 282 in 2015. Exclusions and Cessations are up this year from 53 in 2015 to 76 in 2016.

The average age of an initiate in 2016 is 41 compared to 44 in 2015; 45 in 2014 and 46 in 2013. This is an extremely encouraging trend.

The average age of a Worshipful Master in 2016 remains at 57 as it did remarkably in 2014 and 2015.

The average number of Members per Lodge in 2016 is 42.37 compared with 42.60 in 2015 and 43.43 in 2014.

The percentage of members who are aged 51 or older in 2016 is 77.78% compared with 74.43% in 2015 and 76.3% in 2014. 2.37% of our members are aged between 18 – 30; 6.32% of our members are aged between 31 – 40 and 13.37% between 41 – 50.

The excellent and continued support of our Lodge Secretaries is a significant asset to us. The vast majority have embraced our systems and continue to be most helpful in ensuring that data is as accurate as possible and that we work to respectable and appropriate timescales.

We intend to make use of this asset in the most positive way during the ensuing year by offering forums to Lodge Secretaries and their Assistants. Since such forums were last offered, there has been a significant turnover in personnel and we hope that as well as having the opportunity to share the potential scope of our data system; those most experienced Lodge Secretaries will be able to share their procedures and practises with those who are less experienced. Further information will be communicated by our new Assistant Provincial Grand Secretary in the near future.

Several volunteers continue to help us in ensuring that those who feel that they need to suspend their Membership always know that they are welcome back and in a number of cases, this has helped to cultivate a change of heart. We are also keen to know of those who often, due to work relocation, are looking to pursue their Freemasonry in another Province. Please do let us know at the earliest opportunity so that the appropriate arrangements can be made to retain and even retrieve such Brethren.

Once again my sincere thanks to all those and particularly Lodge Secretaries who continue to make our role at Provincial Office that bit easier – we look forward to continuing to work with you and to facilitating forums in which we can all share our skills and expertise.