

**The Order of the Secret Monitor  
Provincial Grand Conclave of Surrey**

**NOTES FOR VISITING DEACONS**

**General**

These notes are for the guidance of brethren appointed as Visiting Deacons of private Conclaves. Copies should be kept by Conclave Secretaries and issued to the Visiting Deacons on appointment. The notes also include points that should be borne in mind by Conclave Secretaries.

The office of Visiting Deacon is of fundamental importance to the Order as the duties thereof embrace the basic principles of friendship and caring on which the Order is founded.

The address to the Visiting Deacons, given by the newly installed Supreme Ruler, is not to be regarded as simply a piece of ritual delivered at the installation meeting. It contains important directions that should be re-read from time to time by each brother appointed to that important office.

**Assignment of Members to the Visiting Deacons**

Typically, each Conclave assigns one quarter of its membership, which should include both subscribing and honorary members, to each of its four Visiting Deacons. The best procedure for achieving this is left to the discretion of each Conclave.

**Duties of Visiting Deacons between Conclave Meetings**

The primary responsibility of a Visiting Deacon is to maintain regular contact, between meetings of his Conclave, with the members who have been assigned to him.

It is the recommendation of Grand Conclave that a written communication is sent to each member one month before each regular meeting of the Conclave, to allow adequate time for a response. This communication may be done by post or, if practical, by email. Additional communications, as appropriate to a brother's circumstances, may be made by telephone. But one telephone call a day or two before each meeting is not a satisfactory means of maintaining proper contact, particularly for those members who do not attend regularly – because if they do not respond directly, there may be too little time to find out why.

Conversely, it is the duty of each member to respond, in a timely way, to enable his Visiting Deacon to prepare his report to the Conclave.

**Duties of Visiting Deacons at Conclave Meetings**

Based on the results of his communications with his charges, a Visiting Deacon should prepare a written report to deliver in open Conclave when the Muster Roll is called. This is not an onerous task - a line or two on each absent brother is all that is required.

In the event that he is unable to attend a particular meeting of his Conclave, a Visiting Deacon must send his report to the Conclave Scroll Bearer. At the meeting; the Scroll Bearer will read this report to the brethren.

If felt necessary, it is perfectly reasonable for the Secretary, or any other brother present, to supplement a Deacon's report if more recent information on a particular brother is available.

### **Visits by Visiting Deacons**

As the title implies, Visiting Deacons may make direct contact with their charges by actually visiting them. It is appreciated that many brethren have too many other commitments to make this a regular practice but in the case of a brother who is perhaps housebound, an occasional visit would no doubt be greatly appreciated.

### **Duties of all Members**

While communications regarding the welfare of the membership is primarily the responsibility of the Visiting Deacons, it is incumbent on all members to act as 'virtual visiting deacons' by maintaining contact with and encouraging brethren who do not attend regularly, especially those who are proposer and seconder of such brethren.