

# Guidelines for Masonic Websites

*Prepared by SGRAC Information and Communications Committee*

## Introduction:

There has been a dramatic increase in the use of electronic communication which is fast becoming the preferred method of general and targeted communication. Likewise more and more Chapters, Provincial and District Grand Chapters are creating an internet presence by designing and publishing their own Websites.

The Supreme Grand Chapter of Scotland welcomes and encourages the use of this technology, but considers that it is now opportune to set out policies and guidelines on electronic communication and Website content standards in order to encourage consistency, accuracy, and a united direction of purpose.

The creation of Websites dedicated to Scottish Royal Arch Freemasonry is a significant means of demonstrating the unique nature of Scottish Freemasonry thereby implementing the Internet's full potential to communicate and enhance the image of the Scottish Royal Arch Degrees, while at the same time preserving ancient usages, established customs and Landmarks.

Freemasonry is the world's oldest secular fraternal society, with members spread throughout the world. It is therefore entirely fitting that such an Institution should have international representation. The worldwide Web allows Freemasons to be represented internationally and, with proper use, can be a major and effective tool in the process of better informing the public about Freemasonry.

The lack of control over access to and placing of information on the Internet may cause problems. It is with this in mind that this Internet Code of Practice is published. It is emphasized however that individual Chapters, Provincial and District Grand Chapters who have already constructed and published Websites should strive to retain their unique nature while adhering to the following Guidelines:

## Code of Practice for Masonic Websites

### *Creation of Websites*

Websites may only be created by decision of the Chapter, Provincial or District Grand Chapter concerned and such decision must be recorded in the relevant Minutes. The Website must only focus on the relevant Chapter, Provincial or District Grand Chapter, and should be centered on its own events.

In order to create a worldwide acceptable standard, Supreme Chapter Information and Communications Committee structured a set of guidelines for creating and maintaining websites under the jurisdiction of Supreme Grand Chapter. Chapters, Provincial and District Grand Chapters are expected to adhere to these guidelines at all times. If there is any uncertainty about any relevant points your query should be forwarded to [webmaster@supgrac.com](mailto:webmaster@supgrac.com) and will then be reviewed by the Information and Communications Committee.

## General Guidelines for Creating and Maintaining Websites:

1. Guest-books: Guest-books and Comments pages are *generally not recommended*, as there is little or no control over possible inflammatory comments. In some reported cases hackers used the guestbook to hack a website. Remember that guestbook's are generally created by others and do not necessarily contain all the safety features and regular updates needed for blocking malicious software.
2. Site rings: The general use of site rings is *not recommended* as there is no control over websites (and links) that belong to a site ring. A recommended site ring that can be freely used will be found on SGRAC Website. This webring promotes the Royal Arch, Royal Ark Mariner and Cryptic Degrees in particular.
3. Advertising: NO private or commercial advertising will be allowed on any Royal Arch website whatsoever.
4. Photos: NO photos of any individual or group may be posted on a website without written permission of such a person or persons. Photos should generally not be larger (In pixels) than **50 kb** in size as this could slow down the loading of your webpage dramatically, and could create irritation for visitors. There are various programs available eg. PHOTOSHOP, to reduce the size (pixels) of photos.
5. Telephone Numbers and Addresses: Telephone numbers and addresses of Office Beares/individuals may not be posted on any website without their written permission to do so.
6. Minutes: No Minutes, Ballots or attendance register may be posted on any website.
7. Fundraising: Only Masonic fundraising activities will be allowed on websites.
8. Private Websites: NO links to *any private websites* are allowed. Other external links to Provinces/Districts and other Constitutions etc. should be forwarded to the Information and Communication Committee, via the webmaster link on SGRAC website, for consideration.
9. Link SGRAC: All websites are expected to post a link to Supreme Grand Royal Arch Chapter on the *MAIN* page.
10. Links: Links should consist of two colors only. *Blue* for *link* color, and *purple* for *links just visited*. This will assist visitors when browsing your website. Avoid links to pages stating "under construction" as this could be irritable to visitors.
11. Colors: Only the official SGRAC Colors should be used on all websites, and not a variety of assorted colors.
12. Free Hosting: Endeavour to refrain from so-called free web hosting services as you don't have any control over the *type of advertising* from your host. This advertising is normally in the form of pop-ups on your page.
13. Mailing Lists: Selling of mailing lists is prohibited and marketing to members of the Masonic Fraternity are not allowed.

14. Opinions: No opinion of a political or religious nature may be posted whatsoever.
15. Canvassing: No canvassing for Grand Chapter, Provincial / District Grand Chapter or Chapter Office Bearers may be posted to any website.
16. Support: No endeavors to obtain support for Grand Chapter, Provincial / District Grand Chapter propositions may be posted to any website.
17. Awards: Recipients of long service awards and participants in noteworthy events (Promoting Freemasonry) may be posted on a website. Permission must be obtained from such persons referring to photos, names etc.
18. Offensive Material: Webmasters must ensure that, when linking to another website, that the website doesn't contain any offensive material or links to offensive material. The emphasis should always be on Brotherly Love, Relief and Truth. There should be no links to activities such as clubs, poker clubs, sport clubs, magic etc.
19. Publications: Nothing conducted within a tiled Chapter may be posted to the web.
20. Candidates: Names of Candidates and Petitioners may not be posted to the web.
21. Updating: Websites should be kept updated and all old content must be removed regularly.
22. Authors: Credit must always be given to the authors of publications and graphics acknowledging the source of the original material such as photos, poems, promotional and other printed material. This would avoid any possible copyright or infringement claims.
23. Internet Committee: It is recommended that a Province/District and Chapters should appoint an *Internet Committee* to supervise their websites; however *maintenance* and construction may be contracted to private non Masonic entity (If needed). The above two functions must be kept separate at all times!
24. Sitemap: Provide a sitemap if possible, or adequate buttons to surf your website.
25. Meetings: State your meeting place, meeting dates and meeting times on your site.
26. Webmaster: Your website MUST include a link to your *webmaster* for reporting concerns or questions regarding your website.
27. Copyright: Your website MUST include a copyright notice.
28. Disclaimer: Your website MUST include a disclaimer notice.

## Supreme Grand Chapter Information:

- Content of the SGRAC Website may NOT be reproduced on any website. Chapters, Provincial/District Grand Chapters may post a link to SGRAC website for any relevant information.
- **The use of the SGRAC and Grand Lodge Logo's is strictly forbidden.** It may not be reproduced on any website, either as a graphic or as a page background. It may not be used as a link to surf to SGRAC or Grand Lodge.
- Only links to *Provincial and District Grand Chapters* will upon request, be posted on SGRAC website. (Request posted to The Webmaster on the SGRAC website)
- Links of *Chapters must be posted on their own Provincial/District Grand Chapter websites*, and such a Provincial/District Grand Chapter will assume responsibility for the same.
- Districts and Chapters should obtain their own logos (identity) and ensure that the logo quality is of an acceptable standard. Remember what you post on your website is what the public will see!
- Any other special requests must be forwarded to the webmaster on the SGRAC website who will forward such requests to the Information and Communication Committee.
- Header Tags: The following Header tag is suggested to make your site more visible to search engines:

<HEAD>

<Title>**Your site title**</title>

<meta http-equiv="Content-Type" **content**="text/html; charset=iso-8859-1">

<meta content="<meta name="**keywords**" content="Your keywords ">

<meta content="**Your site description**" name="description">

<meta content="all" name="robots">

<HEAD>

Be careful not to duplicate any keywords as it blocks your site to crawling spiders.

## Informing SGRAC Committee about a new Website: (Compulsory)

### Provinces/Districts and Individual Chapters.

E-Mail the following to the SGRAC Webmaster at: [webmaster@supgrac.com](mailto:webmaster@supgrac.com)

1. Your Name and Surname
2. Your E-Mail address
3. Your Tell and Cell numbers
4. Province/District and Chapter name
5. Your website URL
6. Your hosting Company
7. Name, telephone and E-Mail of webmaster
8. Name, telephone nr, and E-Mail of your Internet Committee Chairman

The above information will be used for recording and evaluation purposes by the SGRAC Internet Committee.

Note: Sites not adhering to the website and internet guidelines may be closed down.

### *Suggested Statement of the Website Copyright Terms and Conditions*

This and the following pages contain information about Chapter/Province/District xxxxxx (hereinafter referred to as the 'Chapter/Province/District') copyright and links to external Websites. They also contain an important liability disclaimer.

### **Copyright**

The information contained on this Website is the copyright © property of the Chapter/Province/District (unless stated otherwise) and is protected by international copyright laws.

The Chapter/Province/District Website is provided for personal, private and non-commercial use only. No user or recipient has any right to modify, copy, distribute, transmit, display, perform, reproduce, publish, license, create derivative works from, transfer, exchange or sell any information, material, software, images, graphics or source code obtained from the Chapter/Province/District Website.

No part of the Chapter/Province/District Website may be reproduced in any form whether electronically or otherwise (other than temporarily in the course of using the Website) without the express prior written consent of the Chapter/Province/District.

## **Links to External Web Sites**

The Chapter/Province/District has included, or may include, links to third party Internet Websites controlled and maintained by others. When accessing these links the user leaves the Chapter/Province/District Website. These links are included solely for the convenience of users and their presence does not constitute any endorsement by the Chapter/Province/District of the Websites linked or referred to nor does the Chapter/Province/District have any control over, or responsibility for, the content of any such Websites.

## **Liability Disclaimer**

The Chapter/Province/District Website is produced and made available in absolute good faith. For the avoidance of any doubt, neither the Chapter/Province/District nor any of its Trustees, Office-bearers or members give or make any representations or warranties of any kind, whether express, actual or implied, in relation to all or any part of the Chapter/Province/District Website or any contents thereof or any Website or Websites to which the Chapter/Province/District Website is linked. All warranties and representations of every kind and howsoever arising are hereby absolutely and expressly excluded to the fullest extent permitted by law.

## ***Privacy Policy***

### **Privacy**

Chapter/Province/District xxxxx No. xxxx (herein after referred to as the ' Chapter/Province/District ') recognizes the importance of protecting the privacy of the visitors to the Chapter/Province/District Website. Any personal data collected through the Chapter/Province/District Website will be regarded and treated as confidential and in accordance with the principles of the Data Protection Act 1998. However, the collection of such data is unintentional as the Chapter/Province/District has not designed or consciously put in place any system designed to collect personal information.

### **Disclaimer**

The Chapter/Province/District intends that the information published on the Chapter/Province/District Website is up to date and accurate. However, the information on the Website does not constitute legal or professional advice, guidance or recommendation and the Chapter/Province/District, its Office-bearers, Trustees and members, and each of them, will not accept any liability for actions arising from its use nor will they be held responsible for the contents of any Website or other source referenced by any external link.

## **Questions or Suggestions**

If ANYONE has any questions or suggestions regarding this policy or considers the Chapter/Province/District is not properly adhering to it then the SGRAC invites information and contents to be sent to SGRAC Internet Committee through the under noted contact at [webmaster@supgrac.com](mailto:webmaster@supgrac.com) (Webmaster)