



LEVEL 3: UNIT RESOURCES

Engage > Re-engaging Inactive Members > Tracking Attendance

The issue of attendance at meetings, and attempts to manage it, can be an emotive one. There are some Freemasons who take the view that *'meetings must always be a high priority and that members should manage their other commitments around them'*. There are others who accept that *'individuals can vary in their commitment to Freemasonry and that it is preferable to have in membership a good people who cannot attend every meeting than not to have them at all'*. In either case, almost every Freemason will occasionally miss a meeting.

However, we know that resignation is often preceded by periods of absence, relative to the individual's normal pattern of attendance. Therefore, a break in pattern and diminishing attendance is a warning sign of possible issues, whether they relate to reduced interest, dissatisfaction or a change of personal circumstances. It makes sense for Lodges and Chapters to monitor individual attendance, and to make enquiries if absences vary or increase from their normal pattern.

Working with Hermes

With the introduction of the **Hermes** system to some Provinces, Lodge secretaries and Scribe E will be expected to update an attendance register for each meeting. When a member misses two consecutive meetings, an automated notification will be sent to the **Almoner** in the first instance for action to be taken.

Good Practice for non – Hermes Units

Regular contact with non-attending members should occur in any case, no matter how many meetings are missed or whether apologies are registered. Quite often, there are undisclosed reasons for non-attendance.

The following process is helpful and involves these Officers and members working closely together:

1. The Secretary / Scribe E maintains a record of attendance/absence at each meeting using existing systems or Hermes.
2. They send a copy of the record to the Mentor & Almoner shortly after each meeting.
3. The Almoner collates the data and monitors long-term patterns and trends.
4. If a member is unexpectedly absent without submitting an apology, an agreed-upon member of the Membership Team (e.g., Almoner, Mentor, or Personal Mentor) contacts them by phone.
5. The purpose of the telephone contact is to inquire about the member's health and welfare, offer assistance if appropriate, and express how the member was missed by the brethren. It is not to express disappointment in their absence or exert pressure. The members' needs motivate the call and not cause any inconvenience to the Lodge / Chapter.
6. If a member has missed two consecutive meetings, whether with an apology or otherwise, an agreed person contacts them by phone within seven days of the second meeting.
7. The purpose of this contact is to identify any underlying cause for the absence and in particular any emerging disinterest or concerns held by the member. Compassion and support should underpin the discussion.
8. Relevant Officers can then take appropriate action to address any personal needs for support, or any underlying causes, disinterest or concerns, before they escalate beyond any possibility of resolution.



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9. If an impartial third party's involvement would assist (for example if the Unit cannot manage the issue without losing the member to Freemasonry), the relevant Unit Officer refers the matter to the Metropolitan / Provincial / District team responsible for retrieval.
10. The Almoner, Mentor, and Personal Mentor keep an overview of individual cases and overall attendance patterns and trends.
11. They report to the Membership Team and the Committee as appropriate so that corrective and preventative actions can be taken before the Unit's overall attendance levels diminish, always mindful of respecting any confidentiality and privacy issues.

The overall response to retrieval by units is generally the same as the speed limit – they all know it exists, they all say it is a good thing, they all generally adhere to it when observed but very few actually know what it does or why it is there!