



The Members' Pathway: *Level 3*

PLAN > Lodge Planning > *Understanding your Lodge*

The first stage in any plan is a review of the current situation, to identify issues that need attention, and which should be built into a plan. This applies to Lodges as much as anything else.

“Understanding your Lodge” describes how a Lodge can “take stock” and review its current situation, consider whether it is attractive to likely members and lay the foundation for a plan for its future. We recommend that every Lodge return to this process at regular intervals, whether it is a successful Lodge or a Lodge that is struggling.

Other materials in the Members' Pathway describe how to build Lodge outlines and plans, promote the Lodge, and attract interest from possible future members.

GUIDANCE FOR LODGE MEMBERS

- Many Lodges carry on doing the same thing, meeting after meeting. Few spend much time collectively taking stock of their practices and considering their future. It doesn't take long for a strong Lodge to become stale, complacent and go into decline.
- Periodically, hold a series of meetings of your Lodge members, to review your current circumstances and to discuss and plan the future of the Lodge.
- A good time to do this is during a break between regular Lodge meetings, when brethren may have more time and can direct their attention to making the best of the coming year.
- Invite all members of the Lodge to attend and encourage everyone to contribute, especially newer members. They will bring a fresh perspective and an insight into the expectations and experiences of likely candidates and joining members.
- The first time a Lodge embarks on this may require several meetings to complete the process.
- If any such meeting is held during a regular Lodge meeting, it would be better that no visitors are present so members can speak freely.
- Arrange for a suitably skilled and experienced member to chair these meetings; one who cares about the future of the Lodge and is prepared to let all others have their say, even if their suggestions appear radical to others. Select this member on the basis of their skills rather seniority.
- The chairman may ask the [Lodge Membership Officer](#) (LMO) to assist in planning the agenda for the meeting or meetings, together with the rest of the [Lodge Membership Team](#) (if you have established one).
- Start by reviewing all aspects of the Lodge, its practices and procedures, to consider whether they are still appropriate and whether they will be relevant and attractive to future members.
- In your review, consider all aspects of the Lodge and ask what is working well (ie, what is satisfying to all the members), what is not working very well (ie, what is not satisfying a number of members) and what could be improved (ie, how can the Lodge be made more satisfying to current and likely future members).
- The “[Example questions for reviewing your Lodge](#)” provide you with a framework to cover all aspects of the Lodge.
- A good way to start the review is to create an anonymous questionnaire for all members to complete.



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- If you create the questionnaire as an online form, you can easily gather responses into one place, for analysis and presentation.
- You can then discuss the findings from the questionnaire at a further meeting, to reach some conclusions about the Lodge as it is now, whether it is likely to attract and retain new members and how it wishes to develop in the future.
- Record the conclusions in a Lodge outline, which will then form the basis of your Lodge plan.
- See "[What are we?](#)" and "[Creating a Lodge development plan](#)" for guidance on developing these.

SUMMARY

- A regular Lodge review considers all aspects of the Lodge and its activities, to determine whether it is still satisfying to members and likely to attract new ones.
- All members should feel able to contribute, ideally using a questionnaire followed by discussions to reach conclusions.
- The review, its findings and conclusions lead naturally into the next Threads, "[What are we?](#)" and "[Succession planning](#)."