

Provincial Grand Lodge of Antrim Board of General Purposes

18th March 2009

W. Bro B. Hood

W. Bro R. Wilson

W. Bro S. Hood

Expelled

Suspended

Suspended at  
G.M. Pleasure

Reprimand

Doc 1

PAGE 1

Brethren,

**STRICTLY PRIVATE and CONFIDENTIAL**

Further to our meeting this evening, I thought it might be useful for the "Cabinet" to have the considerations of Will, Raymond and me recorded in a typewritten form which can be easily reproduced for the benefit of all the Brethren at the meeting tomorrow.

I trust that this is not presumptuous on my part and, if there is any matter which I have misunderstood or recorded inaccurately, please let me know or make the appropriate amendment.

I preface my comments with the observation that I cannot discover, nor has it been drawn to my attention or the attention of Will and Raymond, whether or not the MW Grand Master and the RW Provincial Grand Master have power and authority to override the Laws and Constitutions and/or the by-laws of Provincial Grand Lodge.

Indeed, it occurs to me that such a situation where the higher officers of the Order can disregard its regulations, seemingly at will, would be – in my opinion – un-Masonic and an entirely unsatisfactory arrangement for the Order in general. This would run contrary to the principle of fraternal equality which is always to be found within the Order.

Furthermore, given the particular circumstances of this case, it cannot be considered appropriate that any of the rules of the Order are subverted by the exercise of the prerogative of one or two of its officers.

1. The MW Grand Master directed on 28<sup>th</sup> February 2009 that:

"...I have now decided that I will exercise my authority and publicly direct the RW Provincial Grand Master to promptly arrange an emergency meeting of the Provincial Grand Lodge Board of General Purposes. Its purpose would be to consider the present unfavourable situation and make recommendations to Provincial Grand Lodge. Only official lodge representatives will be admitted to the PGLBGP and proxies will be excluded on this occasion.

"In the meantime, no discussion of the above arrangements will be permitted at this communication today until the will of the Provincial Grand Lodge is known at a subsequent communication of PGL.

"Recommendations from PGL will then be submitted to the Grand Lodge Board of General Purposes and subsequently to Grand Lodge. The Grand Lodge ruling will then prevail and Provincial Grand Lodge [will be] advised."

2. Pursuant to these directions, the Provincial Grand Lodge convened an emergency meeting of the Board of General Purposes on 18<sup>th</sup> March 2009.

Doc 2

PAGE 2

3. The notice convening the BGP meeting stated that the officers of PGL would be excluded from the meeting.
4. By-law 34 (a) of the by-laws of PGL states, however, that the officers of PGL are ex-officio members of BGP.

It would therefore appear that the exclusion of the PGL officers was contrary to by-law 34 (a). If PGL officers could not – or chose not – to attend could have sent apologies for their absence.

I can see no by-law dealing with the improper convention of a BGP meeting and one can only assume that the situation has never arisen before and is unlikely to again.

In any event, the corollary of the exclusion of specified members of BGP who are by right entitled to attend its meetings is that the meeting is void *ab initio* and must be regarded as a nullity.

5. Further, by-law 34 (c) of the by-laws permits lodge representatives to BGP to appoint a proxy if they are unable to attend. This permission was revoked for the purposes of the BGP meeting on 18<sup>th</sup> March 2009. Again, I can find no provision authorising such dispensation.

I would reiterate my comments at paragraph 4, above, regarding the questionable status of the BGP meeting.

6. At the BGP meeting, a vote (by show of hands) was passed to the effect that three Brethren in the Province should be censured.

For censure to be passed, it must be assumed that the three Brethren were guilty of un-Masonic conduct. I have not been advised that any formal finding of un-Masonic conduct has been made in respect of any of the Brethren.

Law 35 of the Laws and Regulations deals with charges of un-Masonic conduct against Brethren.

It provides that:

- \* ~~a. a charge must be referred *in writing*;~~
- b. the charge must be referred directly to PGLBGP;
- c. the charge must then be sent to the VW Provincial Grand Secretary and the RW Grand Secretary;
- d. PGLBGP must then decide whether or not there is a *prima facie* against the Brother so charged;
- e. if PGLBGP decides that a *prima facie* case does exist, a summons must then be sent to the Brother so charged which must specify:
  - i. where and when the charge is to be heard;
  - ii. include a copy of the charge; and
  - iii. be served personally or by registered post; and

DOC 2  
PAGE 3



- iv. give at least 7 days notice of the hearing of the charge;
- f. at hearing, PGLBGP must decide:
  - i. whether or not the charge has been proved;
  - ii. the appropriate penalty; and
  - iii. whether or not there are any other relevant factors;
- g. PGLBGP must then provide its report to GLBGP and the same will be submitted to Grand Lodge who shall punish, reprimand or acquit the Brother charged;
- h. the MW Grand Master, his Deputy or Assistant may prohibit any Brother charged from attending Masonic meetings; and
- i. the Brother charged has a right of appeal.



With regard to sub-paragraph (a), no charge has been laid against any of the three Brethren in writing and the vote taken at PGLBGP must also be regarded as void.

Sub-paragraphs (b) to (g) have not been followed because of the lack of formal charge and sub-paragraphs (h) and (i) are not yet relevant in the particular circumstances of this case.

The failure to strictly follow Law 35 would, on appeal to Grand Lodge, almost without doubt result in the decision of PGLBGP to censure the three Brethren being overturned.

7. A further secret ballot was then taken to determine the penalties which the three Brethren were to suffer. Four options were available, namely (i) expulsion, (ii) suspension, (iii) suspension at the MW Grand Master's pleasure, and (iv) reprimand. Most votes were cast for suspension at the MW Grand Master's pleasure.

I will not deal with the effect of the penalty of "suspension at the MW Grand Master's pleasure." The Provincial Grand Registrar has highlighted the propriety or otherwise of this penalty.

In any event, by-law 36 states that, "All questions shall be decided by a majority of votes." The number of votes cast against the three Brethren for their suspension at the MW Grand Master's pleasure was 45, 42 and 43 respectively. 136 Brethren were present at the meeting.

A simple majority (50%) of the votes cast does not exist in respect of the method of censure proposed. It therefore fails to adhere to PGL's by-laws and must be disregarded.

Please note that the Laws and Regulations and by-laws quoted above have been, in some cases, paraphrased by me and that the Laws and Regulations and by-laws should be consulted directly to ensure their accuracy and their proper application and interpretation.

Doc 2

Page 4

At present, in order to try to avoid any further unnecessary animosity arising in this case, Will, Raymond and I are of the opinion that the PGLBGP meeting of 18<sup>th</sup> March 2009 and the decisions made at it should be disregarded in their entirety.

We consider that the MW Grand Master should be informed of the present position in this dispute as soon as possible. I am happy for the foregoing report to be provided to him in order that he can appreciate the reasons for the recommendations we have made. Of course, if the MW Grand Master has power and authority to override the Laws and Constitutions of Grand Lodge and/or the by-laws of Provincial Grand Lodge, many of my comments become entirely academic.

I also wish to make it clear that no criticism is made of any of the officers involved in trying to implement what was ultimately a sensible and genuine endeavour to restore Peace, Love and Harmony to the Provincial Grand Lodge of Antrim but which unfortunately – so far as I can assess on the basis of the information before me at present – is outside the powers conferred on them the Laws and Constitutions of Grand Lodge and/or the by-laws of Provincial Grand Lodge.

I will be happy to discuss this matter with any of the Brethren involved in this process.

Yours fraternally,

James

PGLA COMPLAINT COMMITTEE  
APPOINTED 29/9/2008

3 MEMBERS:

JIM WILSON ML 775 SOLICITOR

WILL GUACT ML 178 RETIRED BANK MAN.

RAYMOND MARK ML 502 RETIRED  
LABOUR RELATIONS

DOE 2

PAGE 5

Ancient, Free and Accepted Masons of Ireland

## PROVINCIAL GRAND LODGE OF ANTRIM

PROVINCIAL MASONIC HALL  
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Constituted 1868

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Tel: (028) 9032 4252

8<sup>th</sup> April 2009

W. Brother N. Harrison  
Secretary,  
Temple Masonic Lodge,  
[REDACTED]

Dear W. Brother Harrison,

Re W. Brother R. Wilson, 'Ronali', [REDACTED]

\* I have to advise you that following a charge of unmasonic conduct having been laid against the above, Grand Lodge Law No 35 has been invoked and W. Brother R. Wilson has been temporarily suspended from attendance from his own Lodge or any other Lodge under the Irish Constitution.

Please note accordingly.

Until the charge of unmasonic conduct has been investigated and a final decision made in this matter no demit should be issued by the Lodge to W. Brother Wilson nor should any resignation be accepted.

Yours sincerely and fraternally

Ivan Gillespie  
Provincial Assistant Grand Secretary

Doc 3

PAGE 6



Ancient, Free and Accepted Masons of Ireland

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29<sup>th</sup> April 2009.

W. Brother N. Harrison  
Secretary  
Temple Masonic Lodge No 51



Dear W. Brother Harrison

I refer to my correspondence dated 8<sup>th</sup> April 2009 in which I informed you that Grand Lodge had advised Provincial Grand Lodge that W. Brother Wilson had been 'suspended from attendance' under Grand Lodge Law No 35.



I have now been advised by Grand Lodge that they incorrectly used the term 'suspended' and that Under Grand Law 35 the Brother has been 'prohibited' from attending his own or any other Lodge under the Irish Constitution.

The Grand Secretary has asked me to offer his apologies for any misunderstanding this may have caused.

Yours sincerely and franteranlly

Ivan Gillespie  
Provincial Assistant Grand Secretary

Doc 4

Page 7

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# Grand Lodge of A. F. & A. Masons of Ireland

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*Grand Secretary's Office*

*Freemasons' Hall,*

*17, Melrose Street,*

*Dublin 2.*

7<sup>th</sup> October, 2009



Mr. Ivan Gillespie,  
15, Rosemary Street,  
Belfast,  
BT1 1QA

Dear V.W. Bro. Gillespie,

Re: CHARGES OF UNMASONIC CONDUCT AGAINST W. BRO B. HOOD, W.BRO S. HOOD AND W.BRO R. WILSON.

I refer to the above matter and to your letter of 1<sup>st</sup> October 2009.

In my letter to you of 7<sup>th</sup> September 2009 I requested further and better particulars in relation to the charges that your Province have laid in respect of the above named persons and also with reference to the enclosed "list of grievances." in respect of each Brother.

To date I have not received the information requested from you and would ask that you provide the information requested or in the alternative, an explanation as to why you are not providing the information requested.

I would draw your attention to the third paragraph of Rule 35 of the Laws and Constitutions:-

"If, on consideration of the matters alleged in such charge, the Board.... shall find that a prima facie case has been made, then they shall cause to be served on the Brother so charged a summons to attend....."

The Board requires evidence to support the charges made against each party. In the "list of grievances" there would appear to be references to various letters and other communications. The Board has to consider the context of these communications and letters before it can decide if a prima facie case has been established in relation to each charge made.

Until the Board has established that there is a prima facie case in relation to any charge it cannot recommend that summonses be issued against any party.

As you are aware charges have been laid against various officers of the P.G.L. of Antrim.

Doc 5

PAGE 8



As you are aware charges have been laid against various officers of the P.G.L. of Antrim. I can inform you that the persons bringing those charges have also been requested to provide further and better particulars of the allegations that they make.

In other words the Board requires documentary evidence to support any allegation or charge being made.

\* When the Board is in receipt of the information that it requires, it will then consider the evidence and decide if a prima facie case has been made.

Only then, in accordance with rule 35 will the Board advise that summonses be served.

The dates of 7<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> November 2009 were only proposed dates for hearing, if hearings were required following a finding that a prima facie case had been made and summonses issued in time, in accordance with Rule 35.

At the moment the Board has been unable to decide if there is a prima facie case to answer on these complaints as it has yet to receive the full evidence that it requires.

Thus I request a reply to the contents of my letter to you of 7<sup>th</sup> September 2009.

In relation to the rest of your letter of 1<sup>st</sup> inst I can answer as follows:-

If hearings were required then the Board would propose to commence at 11.00 a.m. and sit until lunchtime at about 1.00 p.m. Then rise to about 2.00 p.m. and then recommence the hearing. The afternoon hearing would conclude between 4.30 p.m. and 5.00 p.m. depending on the state of the evidence or witnesses giving evidence with a break in the afternoon of about 15 minutes at a suitable juncture or natural break in the proceedings. The time of such break would be in the hands of the Chairman.

- As regards evidence.
  - (a) Electronic recordings - no, unless all parties are in possession of same and are in agreement that same should be admitted. It is not normal practice to admit such evidence.
  - (b) Consortium of concerned Brethren documentation - no, as the authorship is currently unknown
  - (c) Previous mediation activities - unless relevant to the present proceedings such evidence would not be admissible.
- Will the panel impose time limits on oral submissions?

Parties to the hearing will assume that the Board has considered all written documentation provided to it. Whilst it would not be the Board's intent to limit the presentation of a case the Chairman at his discretion can decide to stop oral submissions, or ask that same be wound up if same become repetitious, or if no further point requires to be made, in the view of the Board.

Doc 5

PAGE 9

2

- What evidence will the panel consider?

The evidence before the board prior to the hearing and to which both parties have had full access to beforehand.

- Can a legal advisor be present?

No. The sub-committee dealing with these matters has decided that no party can be legally represented in accord with our rules, regulations and customs. A party to proceedings has the right to be in attendance himself and is entitled to be accompanied by a subscribing Masonic Brother of his choice in support, or if unable to attend personally he may be represented at the hearing by a subscribing Masonic Brother of his choice.

- Will there be total document discovery before the hearing commences?

Yes. That is the purpose of the process of further and better particulars. If a prima facie has been established on consideration of all the written evidence then a summons would issue and the summons would be accompanied by the evidence in support of the charge which would be served on the accused, so that he would have the opportunity to fully consider the case being made against him and supply the Board with any documentary evidence to refute the same.

- Can new evidence be introduced at the date of the hearing?

No. The Board can only consider the evidence before it in relation to the charge or charges made.

- Have each side to elect a case presenter or will individual submissions be accepted on the day?

No, it is up to each side to decide how to present their case.

- If the panel cannot agree will the verdict be that of the majority?

The Board will attempt to come to a unanimous verdict. If that is not possible within a time period then a majority verdict will be allowed.

- Will there be a report on the outcome?

Please read the full contents of Rule 35 of the Laws and constitutions. This answer is also relevant to the next question in your list.

- Will there be a confidentiality clause imposed with resultant penalty for abuse?

Doc 5

PAGE 10

No, the Board does not have the formal power to enforce a confidentiality clause but the Chairman, on behalf of the Board has the discretion to advise that all Brethren concerned should not reveal the contents of the hearing or the findings of the Board. This is a hearing involving Freemasons and as men of honour and with regard to their previous degrees within the Order, the members present should have no difficulty in abiding with such advice.

I can advise that there are no formal "Terms of reference" for the hearing.

At this stage the Board does not have sufficient material in its view to consider if a prima facie case has in fact been made in respect of any charge. Thus there are no formal arrangements in place for a hearing.

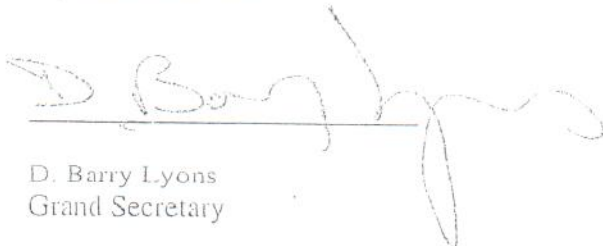
The dates given are provisional, if and only if a hearing is required.

The information provided above should suffice in the event of a hearing being required.

I trust the above is of assistance to you.

I look forward to a response to the contents of my letter of 7<sup>th</sup> September 2009 at your earliest convenience.

Yours sincerely and fraternally,



D. Barry Lyons  
Grand Secretary

DoS  
PAGE 11  
LH



# Grand Lodge of A.F. & A. Masons of Ireland

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*Dublin 2.*

## SUMMONS TO ACCUSED BROTHER

To: W. Bro. Ronnie Wilson,  
Ronali,



27<sup>th</sup> October 2009

\*

You are hereby required to appear before a Grand Lodge of Ireland Board of General Purposes Sub-Committee at Freemason's Hall, 17 Molesworth Street, Dublin 2 on Saturday, 7<sup>th</sup> November 2009 at 11.00 a.m. to answer the following charge of unmasonic conduct brought against you by several Officers of the Provincial Grand Lodge of Antrim:-

That you, Worshipful Brother Ronnie Wilson, have in written documentation made offensive, discourteous and disparaging remarks and circularised correspondence in contravention of Grand Lodge of Ireland Laws and Provincial Grand Lodge Bylaws.

Your attention is drawn to the following:-

- (a) You are entitled to be accompanied by a subscribing Masonic Brother of your choice.
- (b) If you are unable to attend personally you may be represented by a subscribing Masonic Brother of your choice.
- (c) You or your Representative should have available;
  - (i) any other person who can give evidence in support of your case
  - (ii) any relevant papers or documents substantiating your case.

If you fail to attend or be represented at the place and time aforesaid, the sub-committee of the Board shall proceed to hear and investigate the Charge, and report thereon pursuant to Grand Lodge Law 35, your absence notwithstanding.

D. Barry Lyons

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D. Barry Lyons', written over a horizontal line.

Grand Secretary

DOC 6  
PAGE 12

NOTE. NO REFERENCE TO CHARGE TO INCLUDE  
EXCLUSION OR SUSPENSION.

# Grand Lodge of A.F. & A. Masons of Ireland

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Dublin 2.*

15<sup>th</sup> January, 2010

W. Bro. Norman Ramsay,  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

Dear W. Bro Ramsay,

Further to your letter to the Deputy Grand Master of 8<sup>th</sup> May 2009, I write to inform you that a sub-committee of the Grand Lodge Board of General Purposes sat in November 2009 on various dates and deliberated concerning complaints of unmasonic conduct in the Province of Antrim.

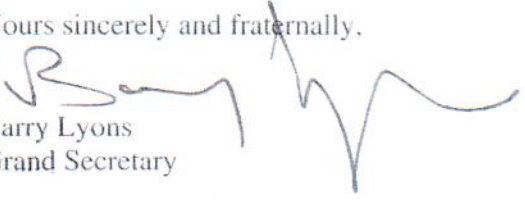
The issue of the meeting of the Provincial Grand Lodge of Antrim Board of General Purposes on 18<sup>th</sup> March 2009 was one of the issues dealt with by the sub-committee.

I can advise you that following the report of the sub-committee the Grand Lodge at its meeting on 28<sup>th</sup> December 2009 found that charges of unmasonic conduct against three Antrim provincial officers was proved and these three officers, Brothers Jack Dunlop, John Dickson and John S. Dunlop were reprimanded by Grand Lodge.

It was held that these Brethren as Officers of the Provincial Grand Lodge of Antrim organised and held a meeting of the Provincial Grand Lodge of Antrim Board of General Purposes on 18<sup>th</sup> March 2009 that was inappropriate and contrary to Masonic Laws and Constitutions. It is to be noted that the same Provincial Officers declared the said meeting null and void before the end of the month of March 2009 and accepted that the entire proceedings of the meeting as conducted was inappropriate and should not have taken place.

Grand Lodge is now satisfied that this investigation has been concluded and that there will be no repetition of such conduct in the future.

Yours sincerely and fraternally,

  
Barry Lyons  
Grand Secretary

DOC 7

PAGE 13

15

Summons to Accused Brother

To: *W. Bro Ronnie Wilson*

Date: *26th April 2013*

You are hereby required to appear before a Grand Lodge Board of General Purposes (Sub-Committee) at *Gr. Hallway 11.30*, on *Tue* the *7* day of *May* 2013 at *11.30* a.m./p.m. to answer a charge of Un-Masonic Conduct. (if the case is an appeal by way of re-hearing then the wording should be amended to reflect this).

\*

*for the purposes of a re-hearing of allegations of Un-masonic conduct.*

Your attention is drawn to the following: -

- (a) You are entitled to be accompanied by a subscribing Masonic Brother of your choice.
- (b) If you are unable to attend personally, you may be represented by a subscribing Masonic Brother of your choice.
- (c) You or your Representative should have available;
  - (i) any other person who can give evidence in support of your case.
  - (ii) any relevant papers or documents substantiating your case.
- (d) The proceedings will be considered along the guidelines enclosed herewith.

If you fail to attend or be represented at the place and time aforesaid, the Board shall proceed to hear and investigate the Charge and report thereon pursuant to Grand Lodge Law 35. However, as we are desirous of resolving this matter, we would be appreciative if you would notify the Grand Secretary of your availability on the aforesaid date.

The Board members will be: -

*W. Bro Derek A Brennan (Chairman)*  
*W. Bro Jim Hanley*  
*Bro Jack Johansson*

Signed  
Grand Secretary

*D. Boyley, 20/4/13*



Doc 8

PAGE 14



We, the Master, Wardens and Secretary of TEMPLE

Lodge No. 51 holden under the Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons of Ireland, do hereby Certify that Brother RONALD WILSON

(whose signature is annexed in the margin) was a member of this Lodge

from 2ND NOVEMBER 1983 to 29th DECEMBER 2009 He has paid all Fees \*

and Dues up to this date.

Dated at ..... this 28th day of DECEMBER 2009.



<u>[Signature]</u>	W. Master,
<u>[Signature]</u>	S. Warden,
<u>[Signature]</u>	J. Warden,
<u>[Signature]</u>	Secretary.

No. ....  
of Lodge

Ne Varietur

\* GL REHEARING SUMMONS  
26 APRIL 2013

Dec 9  
Page 15

**Email received - Sunday, 4 October, 2015 9:44 AM**

Dear Ronnie,

I am dismayed at the way your Masonic career was so abruptly concluded and the manner in which you were treated.

As the serving Provincial Grand Lodge of Antrim Secretary attending the foundation stone laying at Portrush Hall on the 17th November 2006, I state the following.

After the celebratory dinner following the laying of the foundation stone a meeting took place and some of those involved were the GM at the time, Eric Waller, the newly appointed GM to be, George Dunlop, the PGM of Antrim, J S Dunlop, the PAGM, J L Frazer and myself.

The discussion revolved around yourself and Brian and Stuart Hood with the conclusion from J S Dunlop that basically the three of you were of nuisance to the Order and that the matter should be dealt with. I can recall that at that informal meeting, (in which no minutes were recorded), that the only agenda from J S Dunlop was to pursue (or in other terms conduct a witch hunt against) yourself and Brian and Stuart Hood. The GM and the GM elect stated that they would back the PGM of Antrim in his actions.

In subsequent meetings concerning actions against you that I attended, it was blatantly obvious that J S Dunlop's agenda was to bring charges of unmasonic conduct against the three of you no matter how it was achieved.

Later I was prevented (contrary to our laws and by-laws) in my capacity, as PGS, from attending all the meetings regarding the pursuance of these unmasonic charges as I stated to J S Dunlop on numerous occasions that he was acting outside the Laws and Constitutions of Grand Lodge and the By-Laws of PGL Antrim.

An example being that at a meeting between J S Dunlop, J Dickson (PGL Registrar at the time ) and myself, concerning the Retention Team, that he (J S Dunlop) was in breach of our by-laws, he actually had the audacity to state that he was the PGM and could do what he wanted, I advised him that this could not take place and he further went on to state that he had a "PGM's prerogative". J Dickson actually rang me at home that evening and stated that I was correct and that the PGM was indeed in breach of our by-laws with his planned actions and indeed he did not have a "PGM's prerogative".

J S Dunlop was also not bringing items concerning these unmasonic charges to the PGL BGP for discussion and/or approval. All discussions took place at Cabinet meetings, senior officers homes or hotels, and not all of the cabinet members were aware of the meetings or their agendas.

Although aware of the discussion on you no formal action was sanctioned at any Cabinet meeting nor was I ever asked to enquire as to how a charge of unmasonic conduct could be levied against you. The PGM and his senior officers were meeting with you on a frequent basis on numerous subjects and had ample opportunity to caution or warn you of their alleged concerns, as I had none.

I am aware, through international media reports, that a PSNI fraud investigation into the financial accounts of the PGL of Antrim, expanding to the years of which I Provincial Secretary, is ongoing of which I am willing to facilitate but no contact has been made to me. My concern is that my absence may facilitate some within the Order to hinder open and transparency on issues.

My 50% shareholding to the Whiteabbey Masonic Hall remains unchanged. I never could understand how a substantial asset of PGLA held partly in my name was not and never has been to my knowledge disclosed on the Annual accounts or balance sheets.

Kind regards,

Yours s&f Alan Askin.

Doc 10  
PAGE 16