



**DISTRICT GRAND LODGE  
OF  
BARBADOS & THE EASTERN CARIBBEAN**

UNDER THE UNITED GRAND LODGE OF ANCIENT, FREE AND ACCEPTED MASONS OF ENGLAND  
[www.districtgrandlodge.org](http://www.districtgrandlodge.org)

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December 2009

**QUESTIONS & ANSWERS ON GRAND LODGE FORMATION**

**SET ONE**

The following Questions and Answers are intended to provide information as it relates to the investigation of the formation of a Grand Lodge.

**1. Why do we need to form a Grand Lodge?**

*The answer to this question lies in who are we, as a Caribbean people? It is more philosophical and the answer lies in the natural development of a people and society. Many masons are of the view that there is no reason why we cannot manage the affairs of a Grand Lodge, especially given the fact that we have been administering the affairs of our own districts for several years. The move towards a Grand Lodge is against the backdrop of natural development (compare this with that of human development through the stages of childhood, adolescence and adulthood). It should be noted that many former colonies within the British Commonwealth have their own Grand Lodges and maintain historical and cultural links with Britain. For many former colonies, being independent did not mean abandoning Britain as the vast majority remained members of the Commonwealth of which the reigning British monarch is head.*

*In this geographical area, masonry is growing and we have had over the past decade ,a sustained period of growth and many masons are of the view that having our own Grand Lodge is the next logical step.*

**2. Where are we at present?**

*Both districts (English and Scottish) have established various sub-committees to advise on various aspects of this venture. These sub-committees have recommended certain approaches which will be put/have been put to the general membership for feedback and consideration. The Scottish District is in the process of reviewing the latest draft of the constitution which incorporates many of the changes requested by some sub-committees as well as brethren at large. We are awaiting comment from the Scottish District.*

**3. Which constitution will be used?**

- a. The two district grand lodges - English and Scottish are governed and regulated by different constitutions and it was either a case of adopting one of these two or creating a new constitution. There was a general consensus that it would be best to*

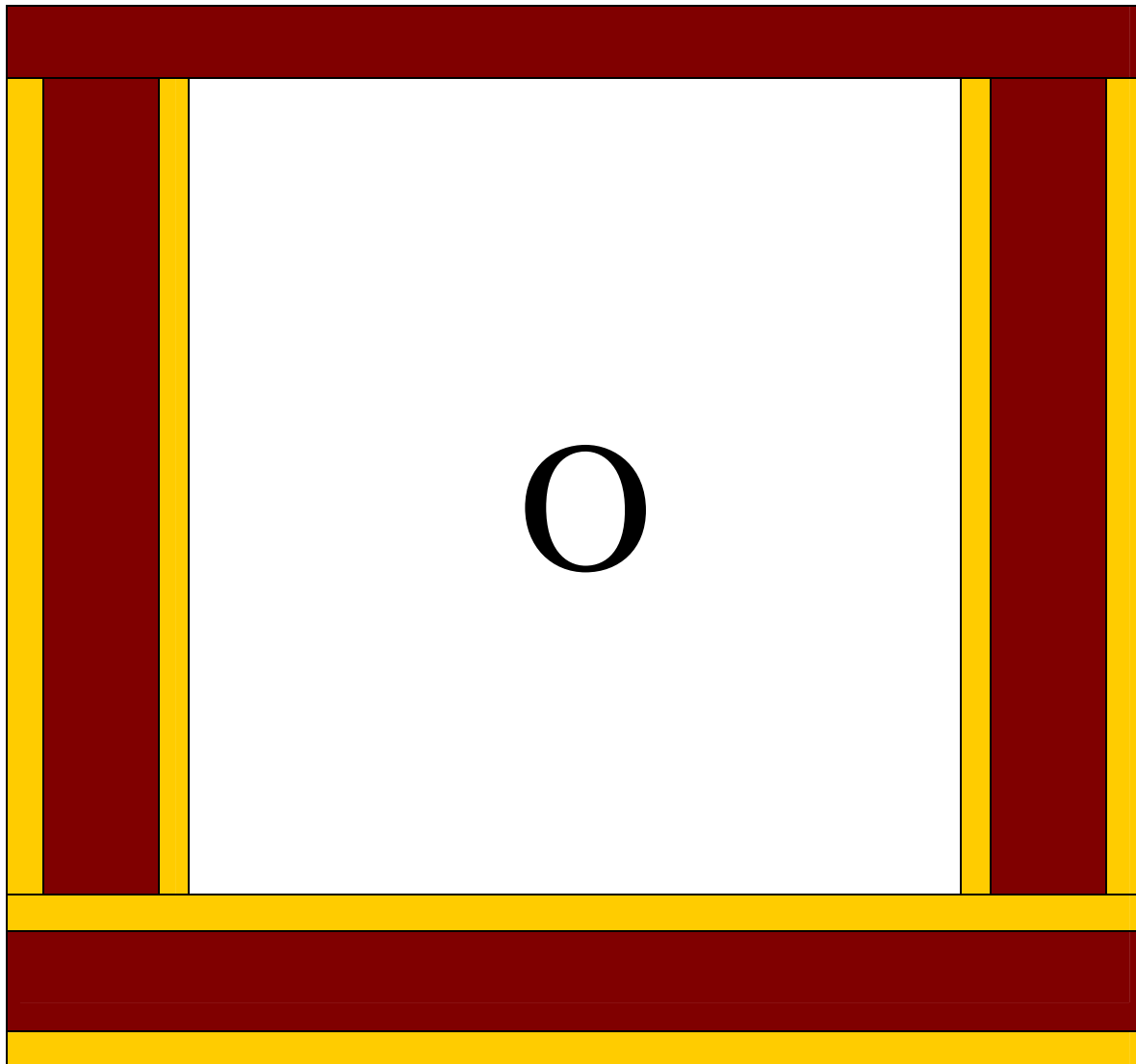
*construct a new constitution. Several drafts have been produced by prominent legal luminaries who are also Masons, and the current status is that the English District is awaiting feedback (comment) from the Scottish District. The latest draft has encompassed all of the ideas discussed and agreed by the Ad Hoc Committee of both Districts, which have themselves had the benefit of advice and feedback from various sub-committees and the brethren at large.*

- b. The new constitution varies from the English in the following principal ways:
  - i. Incorporation of the Royal Arch Degree*
  - ii. Incorporation of the Mark Degree*
  - iii. The process for selection of a Grand Master, whose term in office shall be time restricted**

**4. What might be contentious issues?**

- a. What regalia will I wear/will I need to acquire?*

*As you are aware the Scottish and English regalia is different. As a compromise it is recommended that all lodges would continue with the existing regalia with new regalia to be phased in over a period of time. Many suggestions have been received for the new proposed regalia but the one which seems to have gained popularity is depicted below.*



**b. What will be included?**

*The Royal Arch forms part of the English arrangement and the Mark forms part of the Scottish arrangement. It was therefore suggested that both of these be included in the new arrangement to simplify matters, and reflect the very nature of a West Indian mason.*

**c. Name of possible Grand Lodge?**

*Many names have been suggested. The one which has received most favourable responses has been Grand Lodge of The West Indies. This name reflects the all encompassing geographical area of the region and does not exclude any Anglophone territories which at this time have not expressed an interest in not participating in a venture of this nature.*

**d. Surrender of warrant?**

*Those lodges joining the new Grand Lodge will have to surrender their warrants. If you are old lodge you may wish to reproduce your warranty as part of your own archives. As it relates to some mechanism for indicating the origins and age of your lodge, the following has been proposed:*

*St. First Lodge No.1  
Grand Lodge of The West Indies  
(formerly St. First Lodge 190 ER under United Grand Lodge of England)  
Consecrated in 1740*

**e. Location of Grand Lodge?**

*Of the existing number of 24 lodges across the two districts, 12 meet in Barbados (6 English and 6 Scottish), coupled with the fact that in Barbados there exists suitable facilities to establish a Grand Lodge as well as the convenience of travel and connections to and from that location. At the moment the proposal is for the headquarters of the Grand Lodge to be in Barbados.*

**5. Financial Implications?**

*Analysis of the financial impact of establishing a Grand Lodge indicates on the basis of the last draft of the constitution and on the basis of close to 1,700 memberships across 24 lodges (18 English and 6 Scottish) that there will be no significant increase in the costs to the membership.*

*At the moment the Districts do not own any office equipment and as such some capital items would need to be acquired to establish a small secretariat which would be necessary to administer the Grand Lodge. Attention has been paid to market trends as it relates to attracting the type of staff who would undertake the tasks of administering our affairs. Notwithstanding, like in every other enterprise, revenues will dictate structure, size and affordability.*

**6. Prince Hall**

*In most territories, there are Prince Hall Loges operating which historically we have not engaged for a variety of reasons. Importantly, within the past decade, both England and Scotland Grand Lodges have granted recognition to various Prince Hall Grand Lodges. This recognition is on a case by case basis, and in Barbados, for example, The Prince Hall Grand Lodge for Barbados & Jurisdiction has been granted recognition.*

*In this sense, any recognition of any unrecognised GLs would have to follow the established procedure for recognition. Within our geographical region, some Prince Hall Lodges are not recognised by their counterpart Grand Lodges which have recognition with UGLE and as such there can be no interaction until the situation has been regularized. This is the situation in St. Thomas, for example, between Prince Hall of Florida and GL of Florida.*

## **7. Change**

*Many masons have sought an explanation as why should there be any change given the regional experiences in integration and collaboration. Change can be and is usually difficult to accept, even for the most progressive of us! If we reflect on the significant and fundamental way that changes have been made within the last two decades of the last millennium, across all spheres of human endeavour, if we do not effect change our fraternity will dwindle. The movement or agitation to form a Grand Lodge of the region has been long discussed in various ways over at least 30 or 40 years. The fact that the fraternity is growing in the region and there is more openness, and many brethren are desirous of managing their own affairs and are competent in their own private and public avocations has been the catalyst for this change and movement. Contrary to what has been rumoured, it is not about facilitating easier access to Grand rank.*

*If we reflect on our environment, it will be easily recognised that the strength of the region is in its diversity. Some countries are independent, some are overseas dependent territories, and some have a special relationship which allows some level of domestic self administration.*

***Many younger masons seem very concerned about older masons wanting to hang onto GL rank at the expense of the bigger good of regional freemasonry. Is it a case of personalities getting in the way?***

*As with other things in life, people are creatures of habit. Most senior masons have served Freemasonry with many years of brotherly love, relief and truth, and it is important that those efforts be recognised. Some way would have to be found to afford these brethren similar recognition within the new Grand Lodge. However, that recognition should not stand in the way of progress!*

## **8. Individual Lodges**

*The membership of each private lodge will have the opportunity to determine if they wish to be part of the new Grand Lodge from inception or at a later date. As many of you are already aware, there are several lodges (unattached) within our geographical area from both constitutions. The merits/demerits of being unattached rest with each lodge entirely.*

*Other Districts (of both constitutions – English & Scottish) within the region are very much aware of what is taking place as it relates to the formation of a Grand Lodge. They have expressed varying levels of interest, and it would be correct to indicate that those nearest have signalled more interest than those farther away. Notwithstanding, the idea is to be inclusive.*

*Once a Grand Lodge is formed, should there be private lodges which have opted not to join the new Grand Lodge, these lodges will become unattached as thereafter it is not foreseen that either England or Scotland will warrant any new lodges in this area.*

*On the matter of property owned by individual lodges, this would remain with those individual lodges.*

## **9. The Next Step?**

- a. All information will be disseminated to the lodges within the district and these lodges will decide if they wish to be part of the new arrangement. The matter has been under discussion for sometime and it would be best to bring some element of closure to this investigation and in practical terms a timeline of 24 months is not unrealistic to have a determination.*
- b. Should the majority of members in your lodge decide not to join the new Grand Lodge, at this time, it would become an unattached lodge. However, it should be noted that once a GL is recognised for an area, neither England nor Scotland would issue any new warrants in that area.*

*The notion of a move to form a Grand Lodge has long been discussed informally for several years. The current process seeks to place all the facts before the brethren so that an informed decision can be made. Notwithstanding, it must be recognised that every detail cannot be fixed in stone prior to taking this step, but more importantly that there is a process in place to address the unforeseen. It must be reiterated that several Freemasons in the region hold high office in governing and administering nations, managing large commercial and non-commercial organisations, which by their very nature indicate the capability and capacity of these fine men to administer their own Masonic affairs.*

*The purpose of this first round of Q & A is to provide answers to some of the questions many have raised.*