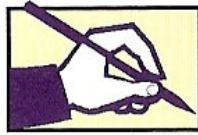


A Paper Ballot. The Worshipful Master and the Treasurer are elected each year by paper ballot, and every subscribing member of the Lodge who is present at the meeting is presented with two pieces of paper. He writes, one on each, the name of the Brother of his choice for each of the offices, folds the paper and gives it to one of the Deacons. One or two scrutineers are appointed by the Worshipful Master (often visitors) who count the votes and announce the results. If there is only one nomination for an office the Worshipful Master can declare him duly elected without the need for a paper vote.



A show of hands. Approval to a duly proposed and seconded proposition is given in most Lodges by simply raising the right hand, palm downwards, to a position slightly above the elbow - not as shown here.

Such votes are in respect of:

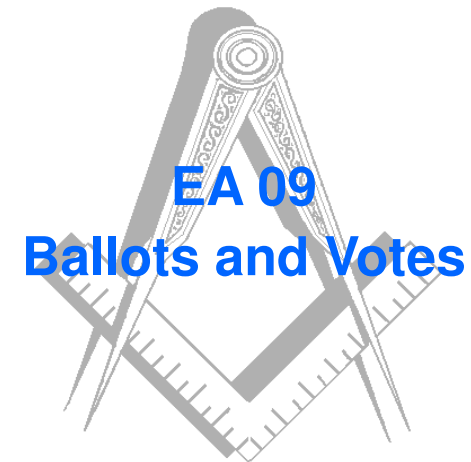
- Electing the Tyler
- Proposals to spend Lodge money (e.g. the Secretary's expenses);
- proposals to spend charity money (e.g. to make a donation to a Charity);
- Proposals to spend benevolent funds (e.g. to buy flowers for the funeral of a deceased Brother);
- Proposals to increase subscriptions, alter the By-laws and all matters of business of this nature.

In all such cases you will either agree or not agree and there will be an opportunity for you to speak on the subject or to ask a question prior to the vote. Almost invariably, where a ballot or vote is called for, there is a requirement for the item to be put on the summons for the meeting so that every member has prior notice. You have the right to participate. Exercise that right with responsibility and advantage to the Lodge.



District of Cyprus Mentoring Programme

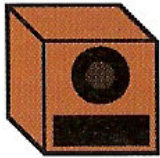
A series of Fact Sheets for an Entered Apprentice



Making a daily advancement in Masonic knowledge

Masonic Ballots and Votes

As soon as a man is initiated into Freemasonry he is entitled, as a subscribing member of the Lodge, to take part in the affairs of the Lodge. For this reason all business of every Lodge must be conducted in the First Degree. It is not long, therefore, before the newly initiated Mason is confronted by a vote or a ballot. In this fact sheet we show three methods of voting in a Masonic Lodge and explain the reasons behind them.



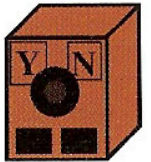
The Secret Ballot. One of the expressions which has become part of the English language - “to be blackballed” - comes from the peculiar style of balloting for or against membership adopted by Masonic Lodges. The secret ballot must be used in all Lodges when considering the proposed admission of members. Applications for membership will be made by:

- a person seeking to be initiated;
- a Brother from another Lodge seeking to join;
- a Brother who was previously a member of the Lodge seeking to rejoin; and
- a Brother, whether a member of the Lodge or not, to whom it is proposed to offer Honorary membership.

In all such cases it is usually the Deacons who prepare the ballot. They will pass around the Lodge, starting with the Worshipful Master, to provide every subscribing member with a black ball and a white ball. Honorary members have no voting rights so will not participate in any ballots in the Lodge. The ballot box will have a hole large enough for your hand with a single drawer. The Worshipful Master will often announce that the white ball is to elect and the black ball is to reject. He will be presented with the ballot box, usually by the Senior Deacon, demonstrate to all present that the drawer is empty, and then proceed to ballot. He will do this by concealing one of the balls in his hand and, when his hand is within the opening of the box, dropping the ball into the drawer beneath.

The Senior Deacon, holding the ballot box, will then offer it to each Brother in turn. The ballot box is then returned to the Worshipful Master who will examine the contents of the drawer and announce the results. Most Lodges prescribe in its By-laws that two black balls are required to reject. The Worshipful Master will then instruct the Senior Deacon to destroy the ballot by collecting the unused balls.

Some Lodges have a different style of ballot box which has two drawers marked ‘Y’ and ‘N’ or ‘yea’ or ‘nay’. In this case the Brethren are only given one ball and drop it into the drawer of their choice.



Remember, finding a black ball in a ballot is a rare occurrence. It is very often avoided by Brethren making it known to the Worshipful Master or Secretary that he is not happy with the proposed member as soon as he becomes aware of his application. In this way the proposal is often withdrawn before it comes to a ballot.

So why do Masons ballot in such a way? You may recall that, following your investiture with the Entered Apprentice apron, the Worshipful Master addressed you: “... *you are never to put on that badge should you be about to visit a Lodge in which there is a Brother with whom you are at variance, or against whom you entertain animosity, ..*” and that, if your differences could not be easily adjusted, it would be better if one or both of you retire than that the harmony of the Lodge be disturbed by your presence. The whole essence of a Lodge is the love and harmony between the Brethren who form it. A new member with whom maybe two, three or even more of the existing members are at variance could seriously disturb the harmony of the Lodge and, indeed, his membership could lead to its destruction.

Note that the rejection of a proposed member by a Lodge does not mean that he cannot successfully join another Lodge.