



August 2026

## VISITING DEACON OF THE YEAR

Brethren

A perpetual comment amongst PGSRs at our conference is the operation of the Conclave Visiting Deacon, as per the Constitutions, and as per the instruction given by the newly Installed Supreme Ruler at the Installation ceremony.

The effective operation of our Visiting Deacons is the key selling point of our Order, and, of course, we all act as Visiting Deacons within that effective operation.

Unfortunately, the operation of an appointed Visiting Deacon can be patchy, so I wanted to arrive at an incentive to increase effectiveness and visibility.

The correct operation of the role is well known to us all, and, if any doubt exists, please contact myself, my Deputy, our Provincial Grand Guide, our Provincial Recorder, or any Provincial Grand Visitor.

My Deputy, Andy Tong, is in the process of compiling training for any new Visiting Deacon who would like practical help and advice.

My key question was how to arrive at recognising the Conclave Visiting Deacons who are operating the best, and the obvious answer was to ask the members.

**Members are asked to vote for their Visiting Deacon of the Year, by using the following link:**

**<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/YK3WFBT>**

You will be asked to provide your name, your Conclave, and the name of your nominated Visiting Deacon.

The closing date for nominations for the current year will be 30 April 2027.

Although the VD voted for does not necessarily need to be a member of your own Conclave, it will be a VD who has been in contact with you on a regular basis, has had a meaningful conversation, and has reported the state of your well-being back to the Supreme Ruler in open Conclave. (Unless, of course, you have asked him not to.)

The winner of Visiting Deacon of the Year will be invited as a VIP guest to our Annual Meeting at Christleton, and for this year will be presented with a perpetual trophy - The Tony Blyth Award.



Next year, in 2028, the reigning Visiting Deacon of the Year will again be invited to the Annual Meeting as a VIP guest and will present the trophy to his successor, unless, of course, he wins it again.

The trophy will remain the property of the Province, but the Visiting Deacon can proudly display it at each Conclave he attends, and can, of course, encourage other Visiting Deacons to strive for the award.

In the event of any tie or need for adjudication, a VAR-type of Adjudication Panel will be formed by the Deputy Provincial Grand Supreme Ruler, the Provincial Grand Counsellor, Provincial Grand Guide, and the four Provincial Grand Visitors, who will agree to select the winner.

The winner will be contacted in advance of the Annual Meeting (16 June 2027) to ensure availability and attendance.

For those who don't know, Very Worthy Brother Tony Blyth was a member of Verney Clayton Conclave No. 45, and was an exemplar as to the operation of a Visiting Deacon. Whenever he was appointed a Visiting Deacon in Verney Clayton Conclave, he ensured he regularly contacted every member under his care, and he presented a report on the health and well-being of the Brethren he contacted, whether they were in attendance or not, celebrating key achievements within their lives. Sadly, Tony was admitted to the Grand Conclave Above in 2025, but I'm sure he continues his reports to the Grand Supreme Ruler of All.

Whilst he was the District Grand Recorder of South Africa Northern, Tony wrote a talk based on his experiences in South Africa about the role of Visiting Deacon, which is available on request from me.

Brethren, I trust you will engage with and support this initiative.

Fraternal regards

Tony Stringer  
Provincial Grand Supreme Ruler  
Cheshire & North Wales