

Membership and Subscription Management

Proposal Document

The Geomancy Group

Autumn Equinox, 2002

Subscription Renewals

Up to now we have adopted quite a lax attitude to subscriptions. All those present at the first Dorset weekend (December '01) agreed to contribute £10 each to the coffers to cover sundry running expenses. It was anticipated that this would be topped up on an ad-hoc basis. Since then a number of others have added their contribution but there remains a significant group that hasn't contributed in this way. Undoubtedly this is partly due to the unstructured approach to subscription management and these members may possibly not even be conscious of the fact that everyone else has paid.

It seems appropriate that we start a new subscription period from Samhain and we intend sending Renewal Notices out to all members/subscribers. This will allow everyone to choose the level of subscription that they wish to pay. If any Founder Members do not renew their subscription by Winter Solstice, their subscription will go into 'sleeper' mode and they will receive no further newsletters, mailings etc. However they retain the right to re-activate their subscriptions at any time over the course of the year by paying the subscription fee. Please note that the renewal period is on an annual Samhain cycle. In other words, even if you renew your subscription in July, it will be due again at Samhain. Founder Members who do not renew at all over the course of the year will receive an annual digest of group activities, together with a current Subscriber Contact List.

We need hardly add that **this Contact List is for personal use only and contact details must not be passed outside the group, for commercial or other purposes, without the express permission of the member concerned.**

Subscription fees

The next question to consider is the level of subscription charge we should levy. Some members are more active than others; is it fair that those who only want to receive the newsletter, who may or may not use the forum and who may have little or no interest in using the website or proposed brochures should pay over the odds to support those who **are** interested in such things?

It was felt that we should consider introducing different levels of subscription to reflect this. The estimates that we came up with when we met were rather high due to the CZ consideration. Now that this has effectively been removed again, we have re-evaluated the charges. Basic costs that need to be covered are newsletter production and sundry pack mailings, e.g. event details etc. Other costs arise from Barry hosting the website, and hence the private forum, on our behalf as well as domain registration costs. Taking just these costs into account, we propose a general subscription charge of £20. Those who wish to avail of the use of the public website would need to look at a full subscription of some £35. We suggest keeping a basic subscription charge of £10 for those who simply receive the newsletter.

Outline Proposal for Membership categories

The question of how to handle outside applications to join the Group has also been given some consideration, as enlargement has already been embraced and indeed begun, with Barry and Ros both becoming involved. The proposal that we came up with divides the membership onto five **administrative** categories, divided broadly into two sections – a) those who were Founder Members of the Circle, and b) New Members.

Firstly, the Foundation of the group comprises everyone who did the course in Glastonbury (see Birch below). That will never change. As mentioned above, even if people choose to pay nothing towards a subscription, they will always be part of the Group energy, and should receive, at minimum, a yearly digest of some sort and current contact list. However, non-paying members of this category would have no voting rights at AGMs.

The second category (see Ash below) would be people who are not interested in practising professionally, in which case they should not have to pay for the 'publicity' functions like the website or brochures etc; but who still want to keep in touch via the private forum, receive the newsletter and attend some meetings. This level would carry a general subscription fee, and members would have voting rights.

The third category (see Willow below) would cover newcomers to the group. This would be a 'Friends of The Geomancy Group' grouping and would probably include contacts who might be interested in what we're doing but are not practising geomancers and may never choose to follow that path. Their basic level subscription would cover the newsletter and moderated access to the forum. They would probably be welcome to come to selected weekends but would have no voting rights. Unlike Founder Members of the Group, they would not have the option to become 'sleeping members'. Non-payment of the current subscription would terminate membership.

A fourth category (see Yew below) would be for outsiders, most of whom would already be practising practioners of geomancy or related areas, that want to join the group. They would pay the same subscription as the second category, have moderated access to the forum, receive newsletters and be able to attend meetings. They would not have voting rights however. The mechanism for approval of such New Members remains to be clarified but would probably entail a limited vote, as well as the successful completion of an initiatory task at the end of a probationary period, not less than one year and a day in duration. Although not all of our meetings would necessarily be open to them, they would be expected to attend a minimum of two scheduled Group meetings.

The fifth category (see Rowan below) would be for those interested in practising professionally. Members falling into this category could be either Founder Members or fully initiated New Members. This section and would be levied with the highest subscription rate to cover things like the public website including personal pages on that, forum, brochures and so on. Members of this category would have voting rights and would be welcome to attend all group events.

Sally proposed that we do not assign any hierarchical name structure to the categories, allowing people to choose which level they want to subscribe at without feeling there was any implication of one or other category being "better" than others. Since we wish at all costs to clarify that this is simply an administrative grouping to facilitate subscription management, we spent some time searching for a suitable naming structure. Grahame suggested perhaps tree names, such as ash, rowan, willow and birch, hence the references above and below. This has the added benefit of offering lots of other categories further down the line, should they be required, e.g. if we take on students/apprentices etc sometime in the future.

So, to summarise, the proposed options are as follows:

Membership Category	Subscription Status	Benefits etc
Birch - Founder Members only	- Lapsed Subscription	- receive yearly digest and contact list - no voting rights - may choose to become active at any time
Ash - Founder Members - General Members	- General Subscription	- receive all newsletters - receive contact list updates - receive questionnaires, events packs etc - use of the private forum - voting rights - welcome to attend all meetings
Willow - New Members (‘Friends of The GG’)	- Basic Subscription	- receive all newsletters - moderated use of the forum - no voting rights - may be invited to selected Group events - membership terminated if not current subscriber
Yew - Probationary New Members (mainly Practioner level)	- General Subscription	- receive all newsletters - moderated access to the private Forum - no voting rights - welcome to attend most events - required to attend minimum of 2 weekends within the probationary period - probationary period of at least a Year and a Day - approval mechanism still to be determined; possibly by limited vote and successful completion of initiatory task

Rowan - Founder Members Fully initiated New Members (Practitioners)	- Full Subscription	- receive all newsletters - receive contact list updates - receive questionnaires, events packs etc - use of the private forum - voting rights - use of the website - personal page on the website if desired - possible referrals through website - access to Group promotional material - welcome to attend all meetings
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We wish to reiterate that this classification is for **purely administrative reasons**. For existing (i.e. Founder) members, the only consideration should be what level of subscription fee we are comfortable paying and what level of service we require. We continue to regard ourselves as a Circle with no hierarchy.

Administrative reflection of our duality of purpose

Maria has felt for some time that we should consider having two arms to the Group, to reflect the duality and two-fold nature of our purpose. Thus on one hand, we would have the '*forum for the study, practice, discussion and promotion of geomancy and geomantic awareness*', which would be a non-profit-making association and could have the potential to become a respected professional body with the capacity to negotiate at government level etc when the time is right. Meanwhile, on the other hand we would have the commercial arm, effectively Geomancy.com, offering professional services to the public, in both a secular and sacred context. We fully recognise that there are not currently that many group members who have any intention of being a practising geomancer at this time. This is one of the reasons that it might be appropriate to have 'the business unit', under a different umbrella, perhaps even with a distinct website. As we have registered the .com domain as well, this is technically feasible and would allow .org to be retained by the not-for-profit group. Decisions necessary for the business would not then impact the more altruistic arm and vice versa. It would also allow us to have clarity in our own hearts and minds when considering options/proposals/jobs etc. However even if this were to be the way that we choose to clarify the situation, both in public perception and in our own, this step might well be some way off yet.