

# LOCHAC PEERS GUIDE



A guide to being a Peer in the Kingdom of Lochac

June 2015

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this document is to provide information on the peerage process from “the asking” through to the elevation and the actual “being a Peer” part. This is for the greater education of anyone aspiring to Peerage as well as demystifying some of the issues faced by being a Peer. There is a lot of tradition/assumed knowledge on this topic, but it was decided that it would be beneficial to actually write it down – in our experience having the necessary knowledge can allow people to have a more personalised and enjoyable peerage journey.

There are many suggestions as part of this guide. These suggestions are not definitive but are provided to assist you to think and consider a wider variety of options. As always, if you have questions, please feel free to contact the Clerk of the Order, or any of the members of the various polling and royal peers that you may feel comfortable talking to. They will assist in either providing you more food for thought, or a suggestion on who best to speak to.

Kinggiydai I and Altani I requested a consolidated Lochac Peerage Induction Guide at 12<sup>th</sup> Night 2015. Volunteers from each of the Orders were sought to assist in this process. Many thanks to the following:

- Original Laurels Team from 1999 which gave the majority of the foundation to this document.
- Ysambart Courtin KSCA
- Constanzia Moralez y de Zamora OL, OP, OR
- Liadan ingen Fheradaig OR
- Maud le Lieitere OP
- Muirghein ni Ghrienne OL, OP, Vis
- Bernard Stirling OP

Any updates or queries in relation to subject matter should be sent through to one of the Peer Clerks to resolve.

## 2. THE ASKING/ACCEPTANCE/ELEVATION PROCESS

### Your Asking

When it is clear that a candidate is going to be asked to join an Order, the Crown will often ask Peers close to the candidate or the candidate's partner what they think the candidate's preference would be for "the asking". How you are asked is ultimately at the discretion of the Crown, but if they have access to information on your actual preferences, you are far more likely to be "asked" in a way that suits you.

Consider the preferences that you express carefully as you are likely to only be asked once and your response to the experience may surprise you.

Options could be:

- Asking in private – which is you, possibly your Peer or close friend in the council, Significant Other and the Crown in a private location not seen by anyone else. This could be face to face, or over the phone.
- Asking in private – however with many members of the order present. This could also be face to face, or over the phone.
- Asking in semi-private - group of friends/household in a semi private area. This could be at an event or outside of an event if the timings require it.
- Asking in public – eg Court. This could be during a scheduled Court, or during an impromptu Court in your encampment/the tavern/village green etc.
- Surprise elevation/Drive-by - Getting asked and elevated in the same Court

There are pros and cons to all of these options. In some circumstances asking in public or asked and elevated all at once is great for some people who enjoy surprises or find preparing for such things more stressful than the actual getting it done. For others, a public asking or elevation could be the worst decision, where they have no capacity to say no or not yet in Court. Whether you want a formal vigil will also play a part in the timing between being asked and being elevated, as will the schedule of events, and whether you and the Crown will both be at the same event in the near future.

### Your News

So despite not having much control over how you will be asked, you do have the right to choose how \*your\* news should be told, and you should tell the Crown what your preference is (they may forget to ask). Here are some options on how it can be managed:

- Keep it quiet and tell no one;
- Tell only your loved ones, then keep it secret;
- Tell your loved ones first, and then allow a close friend, member of the order, or Crown to make a public announcement;
- Have the Crown call you up in court and make the announcement.

Be aware that secrets are sometimes hard to keep, even with the best of intentions. It is very difficult when you know of good news to not pass that on as it is human nature. As much as it is important that the individual's right to tell their story is respected, in reality some people don't take that into consideration. Of course before you decide who you are going to tell, and in what order, you should probably decide whether or not Peerage is for you – remember you can say no.

## Should I join?

Becoming a member of the Peerage is not for everyone. Joining the Peerage is not simply being given a higher rank; it is a great responsibility not to be taken lightly. Before you accept this office, carefully consider the following aspects of the job:

- Being on display at ALL times as a good example of kind and courteous behavior;
- Tirelessly fostering your area of expertise in others, be it the Arts and/or Service and/or Marshal;
- Continuing your own good works for the benefit of others – not "resting on your Laurels";
- Being held to a higher standard than non-peers; and
- Attending meetings and providing advice to the Council and the Crown.

When you are asked to join one of the noble Peerage Orders of Lochac, you should not feel pressured to give an answer right away.

If you have any doubts or hesitations, or would like to take some time to think about it, please feel free to do so. It is much better to take some time to think about the issues at hand than to make a hasty decision and come to regret it afterwards. You may request this by stating to the Crown, "Thank you very much for the offer, but I would like to take some time to think on this before I respond, your Majesty".

## Contact the Order Secretary

Once you have been asked to join a peerage Order, you should make contact with the relevant Order Secretary at your earliest convenience if they already haven't contacted you. You will need to keep them abreast of the decisions you make, including whether the news is being kept secret or not. They will also provide you with information on how to join the email list as well as the electronic Peerage Forum once you have been elevated. Contact can be made via:

- For Chivalry: [chivalryclerk@lochac.sca.org](mailto:chivalryclerk@lochac.sca.org)
- For Pelican: [pelicanclerk@lochac.sca.org](mailto:pelicanclerk@lochac.sca.org)
- For Laurel: [laurelclerk@lochac.sca.org](mailto:laurelclerk@lochac.sca.org)
- For Defense: [defenseclerk@lochac.sca.org](mailto:defenseclerk@lochac.sca.org) ??

### 3. PLANNING YOUR PEERAGE CEREMONY

#### Fealty

As part of your elevation ceremony, you will need to consider whether or not you will promise to carry out certain obligations. This is commonly called your "Peerage oath". There is a standard Fealty oath (as per the below) which has a long history within the SCA however it is based on the one written by Tolkein in Lord of the Rings. If you are hoping for a more period oath, some research may be required and you can certainly ask to see if this has been done previously so you do not have to reinvent the wheel.

#### The Fealty Oath used in Lochac:

**Crown:** Will you now give Us your word that you will henceforth comport yourself as befits a Peer of the Realm, as you have most surely done until now, and that you will continue to be of service to the Kingdom and Their Majesties' people?

**Candidate:** I do so swear.

**Crown:** Will you further swear to treat all with Courtesy and uphold the Laws and traditions of the Kingdom of Lochac?

**Candidate:** I do so swear.

*To summarise, you are agreeing to*

- 1. Comport yourself as a Peer,*
- 2. Continue to be of service to the people of the Kingdom,*
- 3. Treat all with courtesy, and*
- 4. Uphold the laws and traditions of the Kingdom.*

*Most Peers in the Kingdom of Lochac swear perpetual fealty, but you are by no means obliged to do so. Only Knights are required to swear fealty o. Swearing fealty means that you are making a commitment to the Crowns of Lochac, and they are making a return commitment to you. The fealty oath (as used in Lochac) reads as follows:*

**Candidate:** Here do I swear, by mouth and hand,  
Fealty and service to the Crown and Kingdom of Lochac;  
To come and to go,  
To do and to let be,  
To strike and to spare,  
To speak and to be silent,  
In all matters that concern the Kingdom,  
On my honour and the lawful command of the Crown;  
In need or in plenty,  
In peace or in war,  
In living or in dying,  
From this hour henceforth,  
Until the King departs from his throne,  
Death takes me, Or the world ends. So say I, (name).

**Crown:** And We for our part do swear fealty to you, (name), to protect and defend you and your household with all our power, until We depart from the Throne, death take Us, or the world ends. So say We, Lochac.

## Perpetual Fealty

If you decide to be in perpetual fealty, you are to renew your fealty to each Crown of Lochac at your earliest convenience. Ideally this would be in person with the Crown or alternatively through your local Baron and Baroness. If these are not suitable, other forms of communication are acceptable. (Eg. Letter, Scroll, Email). If you are renewing your fealty all peers will be invited to attend Their Majesties during court and the Herald will read an abridged fealty oath. The Peers then respond with "I do so swear".

You can find the full ceremony here: <http://herald.lochac.sca.org/files/2013/04/Fealty.pdf>

## The Ceremony

### *Arranging for Regalia for your ceremony*

There is a lot of thought needed to go into which regalia you may choose, and it could be that you may wish to have a fealty chain from another order (if you are choosing permanent fealty). When considering who you want to approach to get regalia from, you may want to consider who represents the pinnacle of the order to you. It could be the person or persons associated with the regalia line. It could be something attached to a household or group lineage that you wish to be a part of.

If you have a preference for regalia, you need to express it. You can ask for the regalia yourself, you could request someone (Your Peer, or close friend) to make all the arrangements for you. (It is a great honour to be asked for your regalia.) Try to start arranging this/check that its being arranged for you as soon as possible, particularly if regalia needs to be sent interstate or internationally. (*more on regalia below*)

It is also common for regalia to be offered. You don't need to take this from them if it's not suitable. If it is, don't feel limited to accepting regalia from just one peer.

### *Arranging Speakers*

It is customary for there to be speakers to express to the populace the reasons you are being elevated to the Peerage. The speakers could be:

- If you are a student of a Peer, your Peer will be asked to release you as part of the ceremony. They may choose to say something at that time in relation to you.
- Member/s of the Order that you are joining only.
- Members of the 4 Polling Orders & the Royal Peerage.
- Baron/ess of your local group to speak on behalf of the populace.

It is up to you. Make sure that they all discuss what they are speaking about so that there are no repeats and give them plenty of time to prepare.

### *Deciding When and Where*

There are a few things to consider:

- Do you have a significant event that you wish to be elevated at?
- What is the event that majority of your loved ones can attend?
- Is your elevation significant to your local group?
- Is it more appropriate for your elevation to be at a Kingdom event or at a regional event? (EG Canterbury Faire, Great Northern War, Rowany Festival).
- Do you wish to be elevated by the current Crown? (Note that the decision may not be upheld by the next Crown)
- Do you know if the Crown is already planning to visit your region?



You need two things for your ceremony. You need to be there, and either the King or Queen needs to be there to perform the ceremony. Whatever you decide, you will need to negotiate it with the Crown to see what is mutually agreeable. The Crown will do their utmost to try and do what is best for you, however time and money are finite things and often the Crown will already have had their calendar worked out.

### *Your Outfit*

Some people will want to use this as an excuse to have a spiffy new outfit, for others it is the last of their concerns. If you would love a new outfit for this very special occasion but lack the skills or the time, there may be people who would love to assist you. Don't be afraid to ask but also don't forget to be grateful for any assistance you might receive.

### *The Ceremony*

Once you have accepted the offer and decided at which event your elevation will occur, you will need to decide how you wish to be elevated. Make the most of this, because it will only happen once.

Often the crown is happy for you to use a herald that you have a personal connection with for your ceremony, even if that herald is not the main court herald for the event, or court you are elevated in. If you want a specific herald to conduct your ceremony, you should ask them as far in advance as possible, and work with them to devise a ceremony or presentation that suits you, the herald and the Crown.

Some people opt for the standard ceremonies (available here:

<http://herald.lochac.sca.org/documents/ceremonies/>), but to a large extent, you can customise the ceremony to fit your persona, skills and tastes. Basically, the sky's the limit! This can include

- Changing the wording of the Ceremony and even translating it into the persona's native tongue.
- Use appropriate or traditional symbols and ceremonies. Such as, it could be appropriate for a Viking persona to swear fealty by handing their unsheathed dagger to the King hilt first (giving the King power of life and death) and the King returning fealty by handing it back hilt first.
- If you are interested in using your persona's native tongue, ask around the council as we may have a spare copy of the oath in your language.

It is important that you communicate with the Crown about what you want, to make sure everyone has time to prepare accordingly. You should have finalised your ceremony (including the names of who your speakers are and who will be providing the regalia) and emailed the Crown with it (in the same format as the standard ceremonies ideally) by no later than the week before the event you will be elevated at to give them time to review it and confirm they are happy with it. Sometimes the Crown will require you to tweak it, which is their prerogative. Make sure you bring a few printed copies of your elevation ceremony to the event, just in case. Touch base with their Majesties and their herald at the event to make sure everyone is on the same page with how the ceremony will run.

When you are called up to Court for your elevation, relax and enjoy it! You have earned the recognition and kind words you will receive.

### **Planning Your Vigil**

In period, a vigil was a night of prayer and contemplation when a squire would reflect and prepare himself for the burdens of the station of knighthood. The SCA version is quite varied depending on the desires of the candidate. It is not necessary to have a vigil but many candidates of all orders opt for one.

Invitation Options:

- In private, just you alone in a tent, with your significant other, and visiting members of the Order (or other Orders, or Populace) to provide private advice.
- In private, just the specific Order and your significant other, the Crown
- In private, all Orders, your significant other, the Crown
- In public – all the people.
- Some combination of the above (eg Just the order for the first hour, then open to the populace)

Style:

- Sombre, led discussion on aspects of Virtues of Being a Peer
- Big celebration or party
- Mixture of both

These can be all-night marathons or a simple get-together over dinner. If there is a very short time (say, one day) between being asked and being elevated, it would be best for a member of the Order to arrange a location, food, drinks, chocolate or whatever for your Vigil. If there is more time, you have the opportunity to research and prepare, so you may consider having a vigil at the location of your choice.

## 4. ONCE YOU ARE A PEER: Practical Elements

### On being a Peer

There are two main parts to being a Peer.

1. You are considered a master of your skillset. Continue developing your skills, as well as developing, refining fostering and encouraging skills in others. This is your prime function.
2. You are also a Peer of the Realm. This is defined by the qualities inherent in all the Peerage Orders. Peers are the pillars that support and hold together the SCA. They are the "good guys" who provide a more enriched experience for all. They fulfil their role by being worthy of respect from those of every rank.

Essentially a Peer is a SERVANT to the masses, forever performing great and inspirational deeds.

### Regalia

Being a member of the Peerage, you are entitled to wear the symbols of those Orders.

- Chivalry:
  - For those in perpetual fealty, a white belt (Knight);
  - For those not in perpetual fealty, it is the white baldric (Master/Mistress at Arms)<sup>1</sup>;
  - spurs; and
  - A fealty chain
- Laurels it is the laurel wreath medallion
- Pelicans,
  - the Pelican in its Piety as a medallion
  - A chapeau or cap of maintenance (Red cap with an ermine lining)
- Defense: The white livery collar

If you swear perpetual fealty<sup>2</sup>, you may wear a fealty chain or collar of medallions emblematic of the Order you belong to. Some Peers hang their medallions from their fealty chains, some dress up their chains to look more like period jewelry; some wear a collar of maintenance made up of order medallions. Again, be as creative as you like with this.

Wearing the regalia is highly encouraged and by showing the flag, you are letting the populace know that you have skills or are available for support. It is not necessary for you to wear regalia at all times. (eg Putting on your regalia just to visit the privy might be taking things a bit too far).

### Cloaks

You may also receive a cloak of the order. This is the robe of your estate. The pelicans and laurels have order cloaks which you may request to borrow and use during your ceremony if admitted to those orders. You may wish to make a cloak of your own to suit your investiture. Robes can be made of any design to suit your persona. There are traditional colours used for the various cloaks.

- Laurels is green and gold,
- Pelicans is blue, red and white
- Chivalry it is Black, red and white.
- Defense - in process

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<sup>1</sup> Note that this has not yet occurred in Lochac. When this option is taken up, it is usually for religious or military service reasons.

<sup>2</sup> Only Knights are required to swear fealty, but traditionally most Peers do

Many parts of Lochac are not known for cold temperatures and cloaks can be hot and cumbersome. Many Peers in Lochac wear their Order symbols in other ways eg: embroidered design, woven in to the cloth of their garb, upon a circlet of rank, etc.

## **Regalia and History**

The various symbols of the orders used in your ceremony are significant to the fabric of history to Lochac. Treat these with the highest regard and take very good care of them. If it is particularly old piece of regalia, such as a Knight's belt with a long lineage, you may wish to wear it once and carefully put away to avoid damaging it. Remember, these are used in your ceremony and are in your safekeeping for those who will join the lineage of that piece of regalia after you. Please avoid changing the regalia, but feel free to add to it. It is a great honour being able to stand and present the lineage of a significant object in court. Do purchase some new regalia for yourself (and enjoy the experience of picking out exactly what you would like).

## **Titles**

The most common used title in the SCA is Master/Mistress or Sir (Knights only) and it's generally used as Sir/Master/Mistress First-name. A more period form is Sir/Master/Mistress Surname if appropriate. There are language/time specific titles that you may want to investigate here:

<http://heraldry.sca.org/titles.html>

## **Peerage Equality & Multiple Peerages**

All Peers are equal. End of story. You do not become "higher ranked" when you receive a second, third or fourth peerage. All voices are equal however some voices have more sway. This is not to do with rank or how long they have been a peer, but rather their area of expertise. Sometimes the freshest voices are the most relevant.

## 5. ONCE YOU ARE A PEER: Common Traps for New Peers

It is common to go through a period of soul-searching and some stress associated with elevation. This section is intended to help you over any of these hurdles, and come to terms with your new role as quickly and as painlessly as possible.

### Perception Change

Some people may react to your elevation in funny ways:

- They may distance themselves;
- Suddenly want to be your best friend;
- Some people will hold you to unrealistically high standards and pick away at any of your weaknesses;
- Others will say you're getting above yourself, you've sold out, or you're now stuck up;
- Some people will expect you to be the font of all wisdom;
- Some will say that now you're a Peer you think you know everything; or
- They may not respond at all and just treat you the same way.

This kind of thing can be very frustrating and hurtful; especially if the people concerned are close friends or people you have known for a long time. It actually says a lot more about the other person and their perception of the order or themselves, rather than about you. Try not to take it personally, but if their behavior is making you uncomfortable, try to discuss it with them in an adult manner.

The people who know you may need time to adjust to your changed position, just as you do. Rely on your true friends, and keep doing what you have always done. Sooner or later things will settle down. Adjusting to a change in status may be difficult for you also, be gentle with yourself, seek support from those you feel comfortable with, and if you stuff up: fess up and move on. You are going to make mistakes. The way to measure a person is how they respond to the mistakes they have made.

### New Peer Guilt

The most common stress point is characterised by the statements,

- "My skills are good enough to be a Peer" or
- "I'm not worthy of being a Peer".

This can be experienced at different levels, from brief hesitation to long-term crippling self-doubt. Almost everyone goes through this stage at some point, and it is perfectly natural. The trick is to not let it overwhelm you. If you are struggling, seek support from members of any of the orders. Remember – the peers within your new Order and the Crown actively decided that you were worthy, and they usually know what they are talking about!

### Too Much Responsibility

Sometimes a new Peer can be daunted by the seemingly overwhelming responsibilities that come with Peerage. Responsibilities to the Order, to the people, to the Kingdom, the bonds of fealty, the obligation to continue teaching, proper conduct in public: all this can look like far too much to cope with.

However, keep in mind the fact that you're considered capable of fulfilling these responsibilities, and probably are already without realising it. Even so, having it all set out in front of you can be intimidating.

You might want to look at what you do already as a starting point, and, if you feel the need, build from there. Break it down, and look at your obligations one step at a time. Give yourself time to adjust and above all have fun in what you are doing. "If it isn't fun, don't do it".

## Instant Expert Syndrome

Once they see your regalia, some people will expect you to be a one-stop reference library from how the SCA works to what period colour green was used for C12th enameled toenail clippers.

There is absolutely no shame in admitting that you don't know something about a particular subject. What you can do is explain your lack of familiarity with the subject and either point the enquirer to someone who is familiar with it or help/tell them how to go about finding the information themselves.

One pitfall you have to watch out for is the temptation to think you do know it all, or to accidentally lead people to the conclusion that you know what you're talking about when you don't.

Some people think that now they are a Peer:

- they must know the answer to every question;
- they must have an opinion on every issue; and
- they must exercise their "authority" whenever the opportunity presents itself.

That nonsense must cease immediately.

In becoming a Peer, you have been recognised as an expert in one or more fields of study. Even so, you don't have to know everything in your field – you can't know everything. It's impossible. In fact, the minute you hold yourself up as the final authority on a subject, you are failing in your job! You should always be willing to learn more, and encourage others to do the same.

Peers are only human, and the temptation to flaunt the knowledge you were recognised for can be strong indeed; but in doing so you can lose others' respect and gain a reputation for being dogmatic and arrogant. Go softly, offer your skills and opinions gently, and always be wary of hubris. Don't demand the spotlight; let the spotlight come to you.

## Resting On Your Laurels

When you become a Peer, you have worked hard and come a long way. It may help to picture an upright yardstick with a line, three-quarters of the way up. The stick shows your journey of learning from the beginning, with the mark being your elevation to Peerage. Of course, there is still the quarter length at the top for your continued learning. However, upon reaching elevation, the stick is now turned upside-down. This describes your new journey into Peerage, learning as you progress.

## Burnout is sneaky business

As a Peer you are going to continue and improve your skills and willingness to do All of the things. Peerage is not a barrier to burnout and over work and it can sneak up on you at any given moment. Please remember that you need to ensure you keep balance. It is ok as a Peer to take some time out; you may just need to plan it a bit more to make sure that your absence doesn't have a negative impact on your surrounding group. Remember to encourage others to do and create more as well as doing yourself.

If you feel you are over committing talk to those close to you and other members as to how they have dealt with this experience. We have all done it.

## You Can Still Be You

Becoming a Peer does not mean you should totally change your personality! Just because you have been made a Peer doesn't mean you can't tell a joke, hang out in the tavern, or that you must give up your barbarian persona and become a renaissance clotheshorse. What is expected is that you:

- Are aware that your actions will have consequences which could hurt others;
- Exercise self-restraint in certain situations;
- Try and be gentle with people, even if you're having a horrible day;
- If you are having a horrible day – be gentle on yourself and give yourself some space to try and reduce the horrible in that day;
- Use discretion. If you need to vent, find the right person and a safe space to do so. Be careful to not be overheard as your words will now carry more weight in many people's minds;
- Be honest and truthful; and
- Defend those who can't defend themselves, and those who are not present.

On occasion you will stuff up. Everyone stuffs up, be they commoner, Peer or Crown. In such cases, the most courteous and mature response is to admit culpability and apologise as sincerely as possible. Once you have done that, learn from it and move on. Don't beat yourself over a mistake that has been corrected.

## You Are Not In This Alone

If any of these problems occur, you may feel lost, frustrated, resentful and "dumped in the deep end" by the Order. The truth is that many Companions of the various noble Orders went through something similar, and they know exactly what you are going through. It seems that most problems do sort themselves out by the end of your first year as a peer.

If you are having a problem, please talk to someone about it, such as other peers in your local group, the Principal of the Order or someone from another group that you do feel you can talk to. Most peers will be willing to share their experiences and how they overcame their problems.

Being a peer can be a difficult and frustrating job, but it can be a rewarding one too. Like most people, you are better than you think and nobler than you know. Give yourself the time and gentleness to discover you own best self, and you will do yourself, you Order and your Kingdom proud.

## Peers and behaviour

Occasionally we all slip however there are times where Peers may continue to display behaviour that tarnishes all members of all orders of Lochac. If you note that someone is possibly not treating others with courtesy or generally acting inappropriately, it is ok to politely approach them and provide feedback. If you are not the right person, find the right person. They may not be aware that they are causing harm or they could be having a really difficult time and need support. We are all here for each other. However, if the problem cannot be resolved by discussing it with the person or having someone else discuss it with them; seek advice from the principal of the Order, or even the Kingdom Seneschal or the Crown. When a peer behaves badly, it can bring the whole order into disrepute and it should not be allowed to continue.

## 6. ONCE YOU ARE A PEER: Confidentiality/Meetings/Lists/Candidates

### Confidentiality – The cardinal rule of peerage meetings

*“Candidate discussions”*: In the case of Candidate Discussions the deliberations MUST be kept **absolutely confidential**.

This is done because, although some candidates do not mind knowing they are being discussed, others become extremely disturbed by the idea and it can have a very detrimental impact on them. As there is no way of knowing how a candidate will react, the names of those on the Order's list of candidature are not made general knowledge outside the Order. This is probably the cardinal rule of a peerage meeting.

Even if you don't say anything, resist the temptation to drop hints or even smile knowingly.

Security leaks can cause an enormous amount of damage to a candidate and to the Order's reputation. Of course, this does not give anyone the right to engage in sniping or character assassination of candidates. Don't do it yourself, and don't let anyone else do it.

### Accidental Leaks

Something to be very mindful of is accidentally or inadvertently leaking information. Typical kind of thoughtless accidents to be on guard for are:

- Leaving minutes in an accessible place, such as an armor bag or on a table at an event.
- Loosing minutes
- Talking to a member of an order about confidential matters in an area that is not private
- Leaving your smart phone, tablet, computer unlocked with the list information open
- Accidentally emailing the wrong order about a candidate
- Accidentally using the wrong name in an email regarding a candidate.
- Marked calendars on the wall with Elevation of <candidate name> marked.
- Regalia or clothing being made for a person with insignia on them

### What happens when there is a breach of confidentiality?

If you do happen to inadvertently cause a leak or spoil a surprise, assess the damage and seek advice on how to resolve through the Principal of the Order.

Should there be a breach of confidentiality, there may be an investigation, and penalties may be imposed by the Crown depending on the intent and severity of the leak. These sanctions could include stripping your title for the duration of their reign or no longer being able to participate or receive minutes from the order. It will depend on how it is managed.



## Meetings

The purpose of a meeting or Council, is twofold:

1. To discuss issues of relevance to the Order and the Kingdom; and (Not Confidential)
2. To discuss candidates for the Order. (Confidential)

Meetings are usually scheduled for Crown Events and large Events, but can be scheduled at other meetings or outside of events. These can be called by members of the order regionally, or by the Crown. It just depends on the needs of the order at the time.

Typically meetings are held at the following events:

- 12<sup>th</sup> Night
- Canterbury Faire
- Rowany Festival
- May Crown
- MidWinter Coronation
- November Crown

Typically, the meeting is attended by the Companions of the Order present, and the current Royalty. The Clerk of the Order or (un)willing volunteer takes minutes and later distributes these minutes within two weeks to all members of the Order on the email list. Generally the Crown will run the meeting, although sometimes they may ask the Clerk to run it for them while they observe.

Because the Companions of the Order are a diverse group of strong-willed people with strong opinions, there are times when either an issue or a candidate will result in discussions of some heat. Some newcomers to the Council may find this intimidating or distressing. In most instances, this is simply a case of strong-willed people expressing passionate opinions and rarely (if ever) contains real personal enmity. In the past, the chairperson of a Peerage Meeting has described it as "trying to herd fifteen cats – going in nineteen different directions".

For the most part, the members of the Order are people who respect each other's skills and opinions. They are dedicated to doing their job: seeing that the Order and the Kingdom grow in the right way, uphold the ideals of the Society and bring the greatest possible benefit to all the people of the Kingdom.

If you are the newest member of the Order present, you will be responsible for bringing something to share with the Order.

- For Laurels it is generally chocolate or sweets of some sort (some members are allergic to chocolate).
- For Pelicans it is generally pastry of some sort.
- For the Knights it is Beer or cider however there has been at least one new knight who has brought coffee and pastries to a morning meeting and although he was ridiculed a little, the treat was well received.
- For Defense it is yet to be decided.

## The Lists

It seems that each order has their own way of managing their lists of candidates, but generally they include a Watch and a Discuss list as outlined below.

### Watch

These are the people we think are showing promise and should be watched. People with the skills and attitude to one day become members of this order and are walking the path towards it. People will often come onto and off this list depending on their current level or circumstance. You would expect to be discussing them with a view to poll the order in approximately one to two years.

### Discuss

The discuss list contains candidates our order is considering for elevation. As an order we discuss these candidates in depth and vote and, when appropriate, recommend to the Crown for elevation. The Crown will then decide whether they wish to offer elevation to that candidate. It is important to note that an offer to join an Order only lasts for the reign of the Crown who made the offer. When the Crown steps down; the offer lapses. It is common practice for the next Crown to honour the invitation, although this should not be taken for granted.

## The Polling Process

The Crown is able to seek advice from the Orders at any time in relation to candidates. They can make a decision based on that advice which they can choose to follow or not follow it. The Crown will usually be very interested in ensure that there is sufficient support from the councils prior to deciding to ask a candidate to join the order. So this usually occurs in meetings and feedback is sought through attendees and proxies on candidates. Where the Crown feels that they have received sufficient feedback in relation to the candidate they will make a decision which could be at the meeting. Where the Crown doesn't feel that they have had enough input from the council they will ask for a poll which allows the council a couple of weeks to provide that advice. This could be via email or through the various peerage forums that have been setup up.

### How do people get onto the lists?

This is could be a number of ways.

- Nomination from a member of the order
- Letter of recommendation to the order
- Nomination from the Crown

Each candidate does get discussion time to see how they are going, where their skills are at, and hopefully a list of things the council will be looking at as potential development areas.

### What are the orders looking for in candidates?

Generally they are looking for people who are having an impact on the Society in their field.

- They should be creating positive energy or force around them for the greater good of the Society, and giving back to the Society;
- They should be developing some excellent skills in their field;
- They should be teaching. (This could be on line, one on one or classes);
- They should have renown – people should know who they are;
- They should have a good knowledge of how the SCA works and be rounded in their perspective on the value of all areas of endeavour; and
- They should have strong Peer Like Qualities (“PLQ’s”). These PLQs are defined differently by different people, but generally are taken to include leadership skills, honesty, integrity, and generosity. If you ask “are they a good role model” and the answer is yes, then they are likely to have PLQ’s.

## When are candidates “Ready”

Sometimes it’s difficult to give a gauge when a candidate is “ready” and that term “ready” is going to be different from each Peer. “Ready” could refer to:

- their skill or body of work
- their leadership skills
- PLQ’s
- their experience in the Society
- whether they are mentally ready for the change or whether they have difficult issues to deal with at the time

It is very difficult to benchmark peerage because it’s going to be different for each person and this can cause a bit of animosity between people who find it difficult to articulate their position. Be patient with yourself and with others. Ask questions, be considerate and remember – this is unique to the person.

One note of caution regarding whether or not a person should be excluding from consideration if they are having a bit of a hard time at the moment. That is not up to the Order to make the decision on behalf of the candidate. The candidate should be offered the respect of being able to make that decision for themselves.

## Providing advice to the council and Crown

One of the responsibilities of being a Peer is to provide advice about the good works and suitability of candidates to the various orders. Great care needs to be taken how this is communicated and what information is provided. It is important to provide the good and the bad; however it is just as important to list what types of things you would be looking for in terms of development for the candidate.

As a new peer you may be asked, who are we missing? Who are the people that you would have expected to be here and are not? This is an important question for the order, as getting a fresh perspective is important. You are the fresh perspective and we need your voice.

When there is information regarding allegedly poor behaviour, we need to be very careful how this is communicated. This is particularly in relationship to where a Peer has had some sort of run in with the candidate and there is no right of reply on behalf of the candidate. Where there has been a grievance, care should be taken to ensure that the candidate and peer be going through the Dispute Resolution Process as outlined in the Lochac Laws. Should the situation occur where the Peer is continually reporting matters that should be managed through a grievance process, it is possible for the Peer to face a sanction such as being removed from the list for a nominated period. When dealing with inappropriate behaviour it is important that the information is factual and not based on malicious gossip, or issues inside the persons mind who is dealing with the candidate. Care must be taken that any sources of information are reliable. It is also important that the candidate gets an opportunity to get some support and feedback to try and alleviate the issues.

## Does the Candidate have an issue or do you?

Sometimes we have known some of these candidates for a very long time and we forget that each person evolves and develops. Particularly this occurs when someone has joined the SCA as a young person and matures into a young adult. The perception of the candidate could be of immaturity where in reality it could be that they are a well-functioning young adult. Sometimes there has been a transgression or ongoing behaviour that makes the candidate unsuitable to the council at one point where the candidate has moved on but the council has not. It is important to challenge your view of a candidate to see whether or not the candidate has a problem, or do you have a problem that you haven’t managed to get past. This sort of reflection can be difficult.

## Help/Counselling Candidates

Occasionally the Order will find it necessary to "counsel" a candidate to resolve issues which have been ongoing for some time which could be creating barriers to the candidate to develop. In this case, the Order will decide what is to be said, how it is to be said, and will delegate a Companion to do it with the Crown's blessing. Should the best Peer for the job be outside of the Order, feedback should be sought from the Crown to pass this information on to their peer. Never, ever take this task upon yourself: you probably don't know the full story and you are likely to do far more harm than good. There are many incidences where Peers have approached a candidate to get "their version" of a situation. The candidates have been faced with retelling the same story multiple times to multiple members of an order. This can be traumatic to the candidate and it wouldn't take much for the candidate to make a link that they're probably on a list.

Please note that this is different to when a person is asking you for feedback as a Peer. If they are seeking feedback, you can only speak from your opinion and not from the Order's perspective. To do so would be a breach of confidentiality.

### Candidates who are students of a Peer

Where there is a candidate being discussed who is a student of a Peer, the council should do their best to seek feedback from that peer prior to asking them. This does not mean that the Peer of the student has any more say in relation to whether or not they get asked. They are being asked as a courtesy.

### What do you do if the Crown and Council makes a decision that you don't agree with?

Sometimes you will not agree with a decision made by the Council or the Crown. It could be that you absolutely believe that the candidate is ready however the council or Crown is not convinced. It could be that you absolutely do not believe that the candidate is ready and the candidate has been asked by the Crown. Once you have provided your input and a decision is made, you just have to let it go. It is important that you provide outward support in public for the decisions that come out of Council as otherwise you risk causing a lot of upset to your fellow peers and potentially the candidate themselves

### When a candidate gets asked

It's very exciting to be part of a decision making process with an outcome of asking a candidate. Often the decision on how the candidate gets asked very quickly at the end of the meeting. Consider whether or not it is appropriate for you to be part of that asking process. As much as you may want to be included as part of the asking, it may not be appropriate. Sometimes the candidate will be faced with 30 odd peers where they only know a small handful of the order. On the other hand, you may have joined the SCA together and have a long relationship, or were your sibling student or part of your household and then absolutely. Hopefully the candidate has made someone aware of how they wish to be asked and you can ascertain from that whether it is appropriate for you be part of that process.

Be aware that sometimes the relevant order is not suitably advised of a Crown's decision to ask a candidate, and the candidate gets asked before some members of the order are aware. Where possible, an email should be sent to the relevant list to ensure that this is communicated. Usually this is up to the Clerk in the form of minutes, but anyone can give a quick update of the meeting to the council where possible.

The other trap of having exciting news is to avoid putting your foot in it. Be careful to not enthusiastically approach a candidate who has not been asked and congratulate them. You may have let the cat out of the bag and ruined their special moment inadvertently. This is the same for partners of candidates. In the past we have had the partner of the candidate congratulated (several times by different members of the order) and the candidate did not even get to tell their news to their own partner. Don't be that guy.

## Students

Student-Peer relationships, in terms of how they come about and what they involve, will vary from person to person. Some people will take on students who they have a pre-existing friendship with or they may have a pre-existing student-teacher relationship. Keep in mind that it is not necessary to formalise these relationships just because you are now a peer, unless you both want to. You may choose to continue encouraging their development informally instead.

If you are interested in taking on a student, it is a good idea to wait until you feel comfortable with your new role. It's also good to have a chat with another Peer in this sort of relationship to find what is expected in this role. Avoid rushing into a student/peer relationship. Discuss what you both want out of the relationship, and how to manage anything if situations arise. Particularly discuss what to do with your student, how to absolve the relationship should it no longer be appropriate. Once you have entered it, it can be hard to break it without causing a lot of upset to both of you so having this in mind at the beginning may reduce any stress or upset. You want to make sure that you and your potential student get along well (and that they get along with your partner/household), have the same broad interests, have communication styles that match, and have similar expectations of the relationship.

Once you have decided to take someone on as a student, you need to determine what the regalia will be. Traditionally student peer relationships in the SCA involve the gifting of a belt. The colours of belts are not restricted in Lochac however it is customary for the following:

- Squires of Knights/Master at Arms to wear red
- Apprentices of Laurels to wear green
- Protégés (or Accomplices) of Pelicans to wear Yellow or Blue
- Defense Peer Students have not yet been determined to have a standard name or belt colour. As an aside – could it be Pupils, as they are learning a school of Defense?

Belts are not the only way to signify the formalization of the relationship. It could be other tokens of affection such as a pendant, or it could even involve a written contract written in period form and torn in half where the student has one half, and the peer has the other.

There are so many SCA traditions or period options to choose from. Ask around and find the one that suits you and your student the best.

Once you have entered into a student relationship, make sure you both keep communicating with each other. Your job is generally to mentor and guide them in their journey, and their job is to commit the time, resources and enthusiasm to pursue that journey. You should not have to drag them to events and cajole them into doing things, and they should not have to beg for some of your time. It should be a balance. If you start having problems, speak up early, either to the student, or to a Peer who can give you advice. And don't forget, make sure you are aware of how the student may wish to be asked, should that ever occur.

## 7. Conclusion

We hope this document has been useful for you. Hopefully the main messages you have taken out of it is that YOU are in charge of your Peerage journey, and it should be a positive, productive experience that you enjoy. While a large part of your job is now helping others and being a role model, you should get out of that a real sense of pride, accomplishment and satisfaction. Remember that if you are ever having problems, you can and should talk to fellow Peers about it, since they have probably been through the exact same thing, maybe more than once! Being a Peer is special, and we do hope you enjoy the journey.