

Coronavirus Update 2

Dear all

I hope you all remain in good health and safe. I haven't heard of any of our members catching the virus thus far so hope it remains that way. If you are aware of any Lodge members who have not been so lucky please let us know.

I hope Lodge Secretaries/Scribes have now received the updated information from Grand Lodge regarding meetings. I have copied it below in case not.

I think we all understand the importance of staying in touch with our members and the important roles our Lodge Almoners will play during this shutdown period. This is also true at a Provincial Level. To this end our Provincial Almoner Roy Kaye has recruited two volunteers, Mike Levene and Geoff Newman and between the three of them have split the Province up and will make regular contact with the lodge almoners in their group. This will ensure we are all kept up to date with any developments and to ensure we identify at the earliest opportunity anyone suffering or needing our help.

I have also asked the Deputy and Assistant Provincial Grand Masters to make regular contact with the Lodge Secretaries in their groups as well, again to ensure we identify any areas we as a Province can provide help and or support.

To help Lodges stay in contact with its members can I suggest you consider setting up Whatsapp groups for your Lodges as this is an easy way to communicate with each other. Obviously some members will be more proficient at doing this than others so please share you expertise around to help others.

You may also want to consider holding videoconferences with each other not just to hear how each is getting on but to enhance the social contact, eg run a lodge quiz, that type of thing. Zoom is an ideal tool for this and can be found easily via the internet.

This shutdown period is also difficult for our masonic centres and caterers, so please start thinking ahead and deciding if you need to put into place additional or emergency meetings. If you feel you need to do this then start talking to your centres to pencil in potential dates. This will not only help lodges but the centres and caterers to start planning.

Lastly I am looking at ways to provide Sunday lunches to those who cant get out but will come back to you as soon as I have any news

Keep well and stay safe

Terry

To:

Provincial & District Grand Secretaries, Inspectorate Secretaries and Secretaries of Unattached Units

Cc:

Provincial/District Heads of Orders and Grand Inspectors

Dear Sir and Brother

Further guidance on dealing with Masonic administration during this period of suspension

Last Tuesday, I wrote to the members of the Orders administered from Mark Masons' Hall to confirm a General Suspension of all Masonic Activity for a period of four months in response to the spread of COVID-19.

This suspension has, of course, created a variety of issues relating to the administration of our Orders and I am grateful to those of you who have already been in touch seeking guidance on what to do. This note supersedes all previous guidance on the abandonment and postponement of meetings.

Unless otherwise stated, the terms used in this note apply to all Orders administered from Mark Masons' Hall.

Individual Masonic Units (Lodges, Preceptories, Conclaves etc.)

Any Unit due to meet during the period of the suspension does not need to issue a summons for the meeting(s) but should place a copy of the General Suspension letter in the Minute Book where the minutes of the missed meeting(s) would be.

When the suspension ends, a further letter will be circulated informing Brethren that meetings can resume. A copy of this letter should be entered in the Minute Book and the Unit will resume meetings in accordance with its By Laws. There will be no need to reschedule any meeting(s) which would have occurred during the period of the suspension.

If the Unit feels there is enough of a backlog of work to require additional meeting(s) this can be dealt with in an Emergency Meeting(s) for which no Dispensation is required.

Unit Election and Installation meetings

Any Unit that should have met during the suspension period to elect or install its Master will now do this at the next regular meeting after the suspension ends or at an Emergency Meeting called specifically for that purpose.

Units will be permitted to elect and install a new Master at the same meeting subject to Dispensation from Grand Lodge, which will be free of charge. This will not be automatic - Lodges will be required to submit the necessary Dispensation Request Form via their Provincial Grand Secretary in the usual way.

It should be noted that the move of a scheduled installation meeting shall not have a detrimental impact on those who need to serve time in an office before being installed themselves. The qualifying period of one year is from one installation meeting to the next, not a twelve-month period.

Provincial & District Grand Lodges or equivalent

The general approach to be adopted during the suspension, wherever possible, is 'business as usual' which means that your existing administrative procedures should follow their normal pattern.

Provincial meetings scheduled to take place during the Suspension period

i i. *Summons already issued* - if the Annual Meeting of your Province is scheduled to take place during the suspension period and a Summons has already been issued, a note must be made in the Minute Book stating that *'the Annual Meeting of the Province on [insert date] was duly called but abandoned due to the incidence of coronavirus'*.

i ii. *Summons not yet issued* - if a Summons has not yet been issued, a copy of the General Suspension Letter should be inserted in the Minute Book with a note stating that *'the Annual Meeting of the Province on [insert date] was not held owing to the General Suspension of All Masonic Activity issued by [insert Grand Lodge or name of other Governing Body] on 17 March 2020.'* _

i iii. *Appointments and Promotions* - Brethren selected for appointment to and promotion in Provincial Grand Rank should be sent Letters of Appointment in the

usual way. Such letters should state that they will assume their ranks on the date the Provincial meeting would have taken place.

i iv. *Requirement to hold a Provincial business meeting* - it will be necessary for Provinces to hold a truncated Annual meeting later in the year in order to address various administrative matters including the election of the Provincial Grand Treasurer and auditors. No investiture will be necessary at this meeting.

Appointment of Provincial & District Executive Officers

A Brother to be appointed to Executive Office e.g. Deputy/Assistant Provincial Grand Master at the Annual Meeting of the Province will assume their new office by virtue of the Provincial Grand Master's Patent of Appointment, effective from the date that the Provincial meeting would have taken place.

Grand Investiture Meetings

Even though the Grand Investiture meetings scheduled for the next four months will not now take place, we will continue to seek recommendations for Grand Rank and issue Letters of Appointment in the usual way.

Brethren receiving Grand Honours will be notified of their appointment by email and will assume their new ranks with effect from the date the Investiture meeting should have taken place.

All bookings for dining at Annual Investiture meetings already received are in the process of being refunded.

I hope this further guidance clarifies what needs to be done following the start of the General Suspension. If you have any additional questions or encounter situations not covered by the above guidance, please get in touch.

With fraternal regards and best wishes.

R.W.Bro. Ryan A Williams, P.G.J.W.

Grand Secretary