

Provincial Grand Lodge of Mark Master Masons of Essex
Keystone Province
150th Anniversary Keystone Province
Grand Patron – Mark Benevolent Fund



R.W.Bro Terence. D. Sheern
Provincial Grand Master

Coronavirus Update 7

Dear All,

I hope you are all keeping safe and well and staying in touch with each other, especially those living on their own.

You should by now have received either a hard or electronic copy of the Provincial Annual General Meeting Booklet and my Address. If not please contact your Lodge Secretary. If you are on email it may mean your details need to be updated on Keystone and if not on email, arrange for a hard copy to be sent to you. The agenda in the booklet will be used when a meeting can be arranged.

Please read through the Appointments and Promotions and send your congratulations where you can. This is especially important this year as we were unable to give our usual congratulations at the meeting at Felsted.

Several things have been taking shape in the background since my last update so I wanted to make sure you were aware of what is coming on stream.

Grand Lodge have made the following announcements.

1. There has been a trial taking place in some Provinces where Keystone on Line has been opened up to all Lodge Secretaries, allowing them to make changes to individual member records. It has been decided this facility will now be rolled out to all Provinces in the very near future. A training video is being produced to help. Once this goes live the need to ask the Provincial Secretary to update records will cease. There will of course be a contingency for those who do not have Internet access or are not confident enough. More information will follow.

2. You should have received the exit strategy letter outlining the steps towards resumption of Masonic Meetings. Lodges should now start discussions around this exit strategy and formulate their own plans on how these steps may be implemented.
3. You should have also received a document, which sets out guidance and the rules to hold electronic Lodge Business Meetings via zoom or other such programmes. Please ensure you understand what is being allowed and how the meetings can be conducted. In essence if your Lodge should have held a meeting between the 17th March to the 8th June it may if necessary hold a business meeting on a suitable date and by way of a Dispensation request, via the Provincial Office, to hold a meeting without the Warrant being present together with a letter of an exemption from the General Suspension Notice. There is a list of business items that may be conducted, how the meeting should be conducted and recorded and some do's and don'ts. If your Lodge is due to meet after the 8th June and before the suspension is lifted you can again apply via the Provincial Office for a Dispensation to hold a meeting without the warrant being available. And a letter of exemption from the Suspension provided the meeting takes place within 14 days of the normal Lodge Meeting date. The same rules on how to hold a meeting etc will apply. This business facility will help Lodges conduct outstanding Lodge business (elections etc) keep records straight and be in readiness for resumption of normal meetings. You will see that a Member of the Executive must be invited to the meeting so the papers must be sent in the normal manner to the usual mailing list as for summons and the Executive Member who has the cluster responsibility for a given Lodge will need to be included in the Zoom invite.
4. The June investiture for new Grand Officers is obviously cancelled and they expect to cancel the September Grand Lodge meeting as well. It is unclear at this time if the RAM Assembly will take place in December

On other matters, the Sunday Lunch meal on wheels continues and once again I thank the volunteers who give up their time to make the deliveries each week. I know from feedback received your support is and has been warmly welcomed and recipients are very grateful to you. If you haven't seen the picture gallery of these deliveries taking place please go to www.essexmark.co.uk and then click on the 'meals on wheels gallery' button on the home page.

Whilst on the website take a look at the Tea@3 picture gallery as well, you will find some very amusing photos!

It is my intention to hold a zoom business meeting for 1044 soon and information will be circulated to all the members.

Grand Lodge are currently working on protocols to allow Provinces to hold a Zoom business meeting so the necessary elections etc can take place before our year end in August. Again details will be circulated nearer the time.

Please continue to try and support our welfare fund by making purchases via the web shop; we still have bonus balls, shopping trolley key rings and regalia for sale.

For those who are members, our Facebook group is a great medium to stay in touch and receive news from around the Province. If you are not a member please go onto Facebook and apply at Essex Mark and RAM Masons.

Lastly Brethren I am acutely aware that this years new Provincial Officers will probably not get an opportunity to visit Lodges with me and for the Wardens to carry out their Official Visits. I have therefore decided to ask this year's Active Officers to remain in their respective Offices next year. This will allow them to have the same experience as those from previous years, (Should they wish). The usual invitation letters will be sent later in the year.

Brethren, thank you for your attention once again, please stay safe and keep well

Thank you

Terry