



PROVINCIAL GRAND LODGE
OF HAMPSHIRE AND ISLE OF WIGHT

Coronavirus Bulletin 9

Resumption of Masonic Activities

10 July 2020

Dear Bro Secretary,

Following the announcement from UGLE regarding the end of the suspension from 17th July, please find the following guidance notes. I would be grateful if you will advise your members of any points that you feel are appropriate to them:

1. Adapted Ceremonies

As a brief reminder, you have already been sent details, via UGLE 'First Risings', of the Grand Lodge adaptations for Initiation, Passing and Installation ceremonies. The 3rd Degree ceremony of Raising must not be carried out until further notice. There must be no singing at meetings and no Festive Board afterwards.

It is extremely important that all Lodges follow the issued guidelines.

The Province recommends that if possible, Lodges should ensure that the first meeting after suspension is as simple and encouraging as possible – perhaps a 'business meeting' to allow those attending to do so with full confidence.

Lodge meetings must be limited to 30 attendees (or less for smaller Centres). In the interests of communication and support, the Visiting Officer should be invited to the meeting.

Centres will be responsible for cleaning and sanitising before each Lodge meeting, however the Lodge DC should arrange for the sanitisation of Lodge furniture and equipment, particularly those items shared with other Lodges. It is of course in each member's own interest to maintain social distancing and personal safeguards including masks (optional) and regular hand sanitising.

2. Masonic Centres

Whilst the suspension ceases on 17th July, it is clear that most, if not all Masonic Centres will remain closed until they have declared themselves Covid-compliant and have confirmed that they are safe and ready to accommodate masonic activities. The Provincial Grand Superintendent of Works and his team of Area Superintendents of Works are currently communicating with the management teams of all 37 Centres in the Province to achieve this, following Government Guidelines for 'Village Halls and Community Centres' in which category we fall.

Once this exercise has been completed, probably by the beginning of September, we will issue details of which Centres are operating and the maximum number of brethren each can accommodate (this will depend on the size and layout of each Centre).

Of course, this is a moving feast and things may change for better or worse over time.

3. Installation Meetings

There are 70 Lodges whose Installation Meetings fell within the suspension period and a further 85 Installation Meetings scheduled for September and October, many of which have not elected a new Master.

The Book of Constitutions makes no provision to postpone an Installation Meeting outside a 5 week window following the date of Installation stipulated in the Lodge by-laws (Rule 108a).

Requests for Dispensations to hold Installation meetings outside this window will therefore be declined - this will apply to all 70 Lodges indicated above. In these cases, the WM must remain in Office for a further year; no Installation Ceremony or Proclamation is necessary. The WM may however still appoint and Invest Lodge Officers if he so wishes. The WM cannot resign from Office without resigning from the Lodge.

If for any reason this places the current WM in a difficult position, Rule 119 can be invoked. This allows for another member of the Lodge to take the Chair for the rest of the year (please read the Rule as the order of seniority is stipulated).

For those Lodges who's Installation falls after 17th July but have not had the opportunity to elect a new Master (and Treasurer), Rule 106 applies. The Lodge should proceed to elect a new Master (and Treasurer) on what would have been the date of Installation and carry out the Installation within 5 weeks – either at the next regular meeting or at an emergency meeting (by dispensation) called for that purpose.

Alternatively, the WM may of course continue for a second year, which is the preferred option.

4. Provincial and UGLE Dues

In line with the UGLE announcement, there will be no increase in Provincial or UGLE dues for the ensuing year.

If you wish to discuss any of the above points, please call me.

Keep safe!

Fraternal Regards
Frank Milner
Provincial Grand Secretary