



PROVINCIAL GRAND LODGE
OF HAMPSHIRE AND ISLE OF WIGHT

Coronavirus Bulletin 12 - Back to Work

28th August 2020

Dear Bro Secretary,

I trust you are well. I would be grateful if you will note the following points and distribute this bulletin to all your members including honorary members:

1. Purchase of Provincial Masks

I'm pleased to confirm that the issues with the on-line ordering system have been resolved and we now have a Provincial on-line store at:

<https://www.contrado.co.uk/stores/hampshire-isle-of-wight-face-masks>

No user name or password is now required.

2. Risk Assessments and Method Statements

All Lodges should have received a Risk Assessment and Method Statement (guidance for meeting) from their Masonic Centre on which the decision to resume meetings at that Centre can be made. It is ultimately the Worshipful Masters decision, aided by the advice of other members who may be more suitably qualified. Please note that the Lodge GPC has no executive powers to make such a decision or decide to abandon a meeting. If the Masonic Centre proves to be inadequate or the above documentation has not been received, every attempt should be made to find an alternative safe meeting place.

3. Entries on Summons' and in Minutes

- a. **If the Lodge Installation meeting fell within the suspension period:** the WM has no option but to continue in Office for a further year. In this case, nothing is required to be entered in either the summons or the lodge minutes and no proclamation necessary at the meeting as no election will have taken place. The WM will however still need to invest his Officers at the first regular meeting after the suspension and a Treasurer and Tyler (if appropriate) elected at that meeting - following a notice on the summons.

However, for the benefit of historical record, an explanatory note may be added to the Lodge Minutes as to why the WM has continued in office.

- b. **If the election dates of the WM, Treasurer and Tyler fell within the suspension period (but not the Installation date):** These elections should take place at the first regular meeting following suspension. As far as the WM is concerned, there are two possible outcomes:
 - a. **If the WM is to continue in Office:** He may be 'proclaimed' immediately after the election and at the same meeting.
 - b. **If a different brother is elected as WM:** The Installation meeting will take place at the next regular meeting or within 5 weeks; as per rule 106 BoC.

Notice on the summons should be as usual i.e. 'To Elect the Worshipful Master' ...etc.

4. Dress Code

Lodges should observe their usual adopted dress code at Lodge meetings. The Coronavirus pandemic should not be used as an excuse to lower standards of dress. It is recommended that gloves should not be worn as they may interfere with the regular use of hand sanitiser and potentially harbour the virus when a brother touches his face or surroundings. The decision regarding the wearing of gloves is the prerogative of the WM and will apply to all those in attendance.

5. Dining / Festive Boards

The UGLE directive that Festive Boards should not be conducted is still in force, however, you may have noticed the article in last week's '1st Risings' by Donald Taylor, the UGLE lawyer. This stated; *'You may book dining where it is available at a Masonic Hall or restaurant. You may only book for yourself or for a group of Masons from up to two households (or six people if outdoors)'*. This is clearly to ensure that when brethren book to dine at a Masonic Centre, they observe social distancing, dine at separate tables and observe the Government guidelines. Such dining will not be considered a Festive Board and as such no toasts or speeches should be made.

Some Centres have suggested that smaller Lodge 'business meetings' can be held in the dining hall, being much easier to clean. This is perfectly acceptable as long as the dining hall is able to be fully Tyled.

6. Abandoned Meetings

Should your Lodge be forced to abandon a meeting, please advise the Provincial Office immediately by emailing summons@hantsmasons.org

7. Adapted Ceremonies

You will be aware of the adapted ceremonies issued by UGLE for Initiation, Passing and Installation. Our ProvGDC, W Bro Martin Jackson has amended the Emulation ritual in line with these and produced a complete transcript of the adapted versions. These are available from your Area Ceremonial Officer.

8. Advice on Regalia and Lodge Furniture

The following is intended for advice only and is not prescriptive. Common sense should prevail throughout and brethren should meet their personal responsibilities – to observe social distancing and to carry and regularly use hand sanitiser throughout the meeting. As a general principle, only one person should handle any individual item of regalia or furniture during the course of a meeting.

Please see the UGLE Adapted Ceremonies documents for further specific advice.

- a. Regalia:** Brethren should wear their personal regalia as usual. However Lodge regalia, particularly if shared with other Lodges, should not be worn unless brethren are fully confident that it is safe to do so.

Entered Apprentice and Fellowcraft aprons, which are loaned to them by the Lodge, should be kept in dedicated boxes between meetings so that they are handled solely by the specific brother (and not the Tyler, DC etc.). Alternatively, the Lodge may consider

issuing an apron to the brother for the duration of the pandemic or until his ceremony of Passing or Raising.

b. Lodge Furniture

- i. VSL: There must always be a VSL on the WM's pedestal when the Lodge is open. It is recommended that this is either the Lodge VSL (i.e. not a VSL shared with other Lodges), or a 'personal VSL brought in by the WM for that purpose.

Candidates should be encouraged to bring their own small VSL to use in their obligation.

- ii. Working Tools, Columns Tracing Boards and Candles: These should be in place as usual and must be 'sanitised' by a designated brother (e.g. the Lodge DC) before the meeting and minimum contact with these items observed throughout (e.g. the working tools do not need to be handled).
- iii. Square and Compasses: These can be adjusted by the IPM if social distancing allows. If this is not the case, it is acceptable for the WM to open the VSL and adjust them. A second pair should be used during an Initiation in line with the advice given in the Adapted Ceremonies.
- iv. Lodge Banner: Displaying of the Lodge Banner is optional.
- v. Lodge Warrant: This must be displayed during the meeting. However, framed warrants can be in place before the meeting and sanitised. Folded Warrants should be handled only by the WM and may remain in their cases.

If you have any further questions regarding the resumption of meetings, please email the Provincial Office and I will share my response in a future bulletin.

Fraternal Regards
Frank Milner
Provincial Grand Secretary