



PROVINCIAL GRAND LODGE
OF HAMPSHIRE AND ISLE OF WIGHT

Coronavirus Bulletin 13 – Rule of 6

18th September 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. A Message from the Deputy Provincial Grand Master i/c

Dear Brethren,

We continue to find ourselves challenged by the changing circumstances and I do hope that you and your families are keeping safe and well.

With the Grand Lodge announcement regarding meetings of six, I share many of your concerns and have read your numerous comments on social media. I have had conversations with many Brethren this week.

We all miss our Freemasonry in the way that we know it. None of us know when a full return will be possible. Grand Lodge outlined the process by which we can meet, if, we wish to. Some lodges have already held brief business meetings. Others have not been able to meet and should feel no pressure to do so.

I thank the Committees of all the Masonic Centres for continuing to support the Lodges based there.

Brethren, it is essential that we continue to maintain regular contact with our members and our potential candidates.

Thank you for your support.

My very best wishes

Jon

2. Lodge Meetings

All Lodge meetings should proceed on the date indicated in the lodge by-laws notwithstanding the current restriction to 6 attendees. There is no provision in the Book of Constitutions to cancel or abandon a meeting in advance (see Rule 137 BoC).

3. Rule of 6 - clarification of the Tyler's position

Following the announcement from Grand Lodge that Lodge meetings should be restricted to a maximum of 6 attendees; the Tyler is not included in this number providing he does not enter the Lodge room and maintains social distancing throughout.

4. Dining after a lodge meeting

The 6 brethren who attend the lodge meeting may dine together. However, care must be taken if other members of the lodge also wish to attend for dining. Government guidelines indicate that groups of 6 must not be combined to make a larger group.

5. Installation Meetings – Wardens

Installation meetings may still go ahead albeit restricted to a maximum of 6 attendees. Special consideration should be given to the Wardens who must have completed a full year in office in order to qualify for the Chair. It may therefore be appropriate to ensure that a Warden who has not already served a full year in office and is due to take the Chair at the following Installation meeting is present and invested. Alternatively Rule 109 must later be invoked and the Warden elected by dispensation.

6. Closed Centres

Some Masonic Centres have decided to close for the foreseeable future. This does not itself cause the meetings of Lodges within that Centre to be abandoned. Such Lodges should make every effort to find an alternative venue and only if this has not been possible should the Lodge meeting be abandoned at the date and time of the scheduled regular meeting (and not before).

The £12 dispensation fee will be waived for all Covid-related dispensation applications.

7. Quorum

For clarification; a 'quorum' consists of five (excluding the Tyler and candidate for the degree in question); two must be members of the lodge and one an Installed Master (n.b. not necessarily an Installed Master of the lodge). Rule 119 gives further information on this subject, however specific information on the 'quorum' can be found in the booklet 'Information for the Guidance of Members of the Craft' (page 53 of the 2019 edition) – it is not in the BoC.

8. Provincial AGM

The Annual General Meeting of Provincial Grand Lodge will be held at Botley Masonic Centre on 24th September. However, due to the current restrictions, this will be a business meeting and the number of attendees will be restricted to six.

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. All previous bulletins are posted on the Provincial website.

Fraternal Regards
Frank Milner
Provincial Grand Secretary