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## Coronavirus update

We have received notification from Wiltshire that two of our members have tested positive for the Coronavirus.

Two Masters of Lodges in Wiltshire returned from Northern Italy recently and have been self-isolating - they have now tested positive.

One of them attended his local Masonic Centre on 22nd January (Crane Street, Salisbury) and we have been informed by the Province that it appears that neither have carried out any ceremonial work recently.

Here is some specific guidance on the effect of Coronavirus on Lodge Meetings:

1. Rule 137, Book of Constitutions provides that there is no power to cancel a regular meeting of a Lodge. The Rule is made for normal conditions, and at some future date – which has not yet been reached – necessity may dictate that external events override it.
2. Lodges should therefore for the time being be summoned in the usual way. The quorum for a valid meeting of a Lodge is five (excluding the Tyler and any candidate), of whom one must be an Installed Master, and two must be members of the Lodge concerned; it is not a requirement that the Installed Master be a member of the Lodge. If on the day of the meeting a quorum cannot be achieved, the meeting must be abandoned, and a note entered in the Minute Book. “The regular meeting of the Lodge on .....day .... March, 2020 was duly called in accordance with the attached summons. Owing to the incidence of the coronavirus the required number of Brethren to open the Lodge could not be assembled and the meeting was abandoned” is the wording suggested.
3. If the meeting abandoned is that for the election of the Master, the final paragraph of Rule 106 will govern the situation. If the meeting is that for the Installation Rule 108 will apply.
4. Consideration should also be given to moving the date of a meeting by not more than 28 days by dispensation under Rule 139(c). Care should, however, be exercised in such a situation that Rule 172 (which requires a minimum interval of 28 days between initiation and passing, and between passing and raising) is not inadvertently infringed.

5. Lodges should not be concerned that, if a meeting has to be abandoned in these circumstances, it may affect their entitlement to a Centenary or Bi-Centenary Warrant in the future; there are many precedents for an enforced break in continuity of working being disregarded by the Grand Master when deciding whether to grant such a Warrant.
6. Similar considerations will apply in relation to Chapters.
7. More detailed guidance on this matter and others that may arise can be found in the Deputy Grand Secretary's book *Masonic Etiquette Today*.
8. Further guidance is likely to be issued in due course.



# CORONAVIRUS UPDATE

TO ALL MEMBERS OF THE UNITED GRAND LODGE OF ENGLAND



The Masonic Halls' Group - Guidance on Coronavirus

The Masonic Halls' Group continues to recognise the importance of keeping the 'Guide to Best Practice' up to date with changes in legislation or as a result of experience and when appropriate to issue specific guidance when circumstances dictate.

We are all aware of the current concerns regarding the Coronavirus Emergency. Information has already been circulated by the Grand Secretary via BUGLE and which is the principal source of guidance.

It is recommended that Masonic Halls and Centre Managers ensure that Freemasons and members of the general public using and visiting their buildings are made aware of the latest guidance and advice by displaying [this note](#) in prominent locations at the entrance to and within their buildings.

**Further recommended actions should include:**

- Provision of sufficient hand sanitiser stations.
- Provision of disposable tissues and suitable receptacles.
- Mandatory notice requiring all who enter the building to immediately wash hands with hot water and soap.
- Reminder notices to encourage frequent washing of hands with hot water and soap.
- Increasing frequency of cleaning processes and additional focus upon surfaces likely to harbour the virus.
- Update Health and Safety plans to include potential issues with the usage of hand sanitiser and associated products.
- Frequent review of the guidelines issued by Public Health England

As the situation develops, further information will be circulated.

Regards,

*R. W. Bro. John Pagella, Grand Superintendent of Works*

(This has been a direct copy of the recent Bugle Communication)

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**Documents for display within entrances of  
Masonic Centre / Properties**

## **CORONAVIRUS – MEMBER UPDATE FROM UGLE, MMH and SC**

A joint statement from the Grand Secretary / Grand Scribe E  
Grand Secretary at Mark Masons' Hall  
Grand Secretary General of the Ancient and Accepted Rite

As the Coronavirus continues to escalate, we are issuing the following urgent guidance above and beyond that issued by Public Health England. This is due to the main age demographic of our membership being in a significantly higher risk group. This advice equally applies to members of the Orders administered from Mark Masons' Hall and members of the Ancient and Accepted Rite.

COVID-19 is a new strain of coronavirus first identified in Wuhan City, China in December 2019. The World Health Organization (WHO) believes COVID-19 **more severely affects older people and those with pre-existing medical conditions (such as high blood pressure, heart disease or diabetes).**

Based on the WHO's declaration that this is a public health emergency of international concern, the UK Chief Medical Officers have raised the risk to the UK from low to moderate. On 10 February, the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, Matt Hancock, announced strengthened legal powers to protect public health, and on the 2 March outlined the UK's national response to the virus.

Whilst each unit may decide for itself what precautions it may wish to take, UGLE strongly suggests you follow this advice:

- **If you or a family member are showing signs of illness, please do not attend your Lodge or Chapter meetings and follow the guidance below.**
- **We recommend that members consider refraining from any physical contact within the ceremonies, before or after meetings. Given the tactile nature of many ceremonies, if you or candidates are concerned about how they can take place with little or no physical contact, while maintaining their meaning and impact, you may even wish to consider postponing the ceremony until the situation has improved.**
- **Minimise mass shared transport (i.e. coaches) to meetings.**
- **Wash hands thoroughly before and after meetings for 20 seconds with hot water.**
- **This advice stands whether you do or do not wear gloves during your ceremonies.**

Any member who feels unwell should follow the advice from Public Health England. If a member is known to have been infected with COVID-19, then it is standard policy for Public Health to contact all those with whom he has been in contact. Full co-operation is expected to ensure the risk to other unit members – and members of the public – is minimised. We recommend the Secretary maintains physical possession of the attendance book to assist in this process.

If you are worried about a fellow member please keep in contact with them via the phone and text to keep an eye on their wellbeing.

Keeping yourself and your family safe:

# Reduce your risk of coronavirus infection



Regularly and thoroughly clean your hands with an alcohol-based hand rub or wash them with soap and water

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Cover nose and mouth with tissues or inside of elbow when coughing or sneezing

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If you have a fever, cough or difficulty breathing, seek medical attention and call in advance

**Your questions answered:**

**Q: How long does the Coronavirus survive on surfaces?**

**A:** It is not certain how long the virus that causes COVID-19 survives on surfaces but it seems to behave like other coronaviruses. It may persist on surfaces for a few hours or up to several days. So please ensure you wash your hands with soap and hot water for 20 seconds (singing Happy Birthday twice) – especially after using public transport.

**Q: I am showing symptoms of the virus, what should I do?**

**A: Do not go to a GP surgery, pharmacy or hospital.** If you are worried you are showing symptoms of the Coronavirus please use the [111 online coronavirus service](#) to find out what to do next. In Wales call 111 (if available in your area) or 0845 46 47.

**Q. I have been asked to self-isolate, what steps should I follow?**

**A:** Please follow the link below if you have been asked to self-isolate for further advice and guidance

<https://publichealthmatters.blog.gov.uk/2020/02/20/what-is-self-isolation-and-why-is-it-important/>

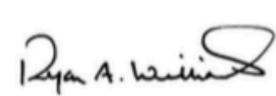
**Q: How long is the incubation period for COVID-19?**

**A:** The incubation period means the time between catching the virus and showing symptoms of the disease. Most estimates of the incubation period for COVID-19 range from 1-14 days; most commonly around five days.

As always, the welfare of our members is paramount. We encourage all members to follow this guidance and keep up-to-date with developments from Public Health England as they are issued.



Dr David Staples FRCP,  
**CEO and Grand Secretary, United Grand Lodge of England**



Ryan Williams,  
**Grand Secretary, Mark Masons' Hall**



Dr G R E Shilson,  
**Grand Secretary General, Ancient and Accepted Rite**