



PROVINCIAL GRAND LODGE  
OF HAMPSHIRE AND ISLE OF WIGHT

## Coronavirus Bulletin 19

29th January 2021

Dear Bro Secretary,

I would be grateful if you will please note the following and circulate to your members including Honorary Members.

### 1. Candidates Awaiting Initiation

I am aware that there may be a number of Candidates awaiting Initiation who were balloted for in the first quarter of 2020 and whose opportunity to be Initiated is about to expire under Rule 159 (i.e. *'if a candidate is not initiated within one year of his election, the election shall be void'*).

If you do have such a candidate(s) please contact me directly as there may be a way of avoiding the need to postpone the Initiation date(s).

### 2. Notifications

Will you please ensure that all notifications are up to date to enable Province to accurately monitor resignations and exclusions during these difficult times. Please ensure that both are advised as soon as you are aware – including exclusions rolled over into 2021 for ballot.

### 3. Inappropriate Postings on Social Media

I regret to say that we have recently had several incidences of inappropriate postings being made on social media sites, particularly within Lodge WhatsApp groups.

It is the responsibility of every Freemason, at all times, to uphold the dignity and high standing of the Craft and any failure to maintain high personal standards may reflect adversely upon Freemasonry's standing in the eyes of the public at large. It is inappropriate therefore to post material which may be offensive to others, on any social media site, including those platforms which facilitate 'closed' groups.

I draw your attention to the UGLE Social Media Policy (2016) which I have arranged to be available in the Secretary's Admin Section of the Provincial Website. The Policy is also referred to on page 38 of the booklet 'Information for the Guidance for Members of the Craft' (2019 edition), which includes the following statements:

*Acting as an ambassador for Freemasonry online is part of a Freemason's duty and is within the scope of Rule 179 of the Book of Constitutions which states that a Freemason "...has a duty not to engage in activity which may bring Freemasonry into disrepute". Rules (civil and Masonic) and expectations that apply to one's daily conduct apply equally within the digital sphere, as comments may be taken out of context and used as representative of the views of the United Grand Lodge of England.*

*Below is a list of behaviours and topics to avoid when posting on social media. These apply to personal accounts, as well as to accounts that individual Freemasons may manage on behalf of a Lodge, Province, District, or other Masonic entity. They apply to any Freemason who is identifiable as a Freemason online, whether he is posting in Masonic or non-Masonic channels. This list is not comprehensive but is intended to act as an introductory guide to topics or behaviours that are inappropriate for posting to any audience on social media.*

*When posting on social media platforms, a Freemason must not:*

- a. produce, link to, or refer to any content that is illegal, defamatory, or likely to offend others.*
- b. cause or contribute to any hostile or unproductive arguments, or carry on any private piques or quarrels (that is to say, good-natured debate is fine, but one should be prepared to abandon the exchange if it ceases to be friendly)*
- c. discuss or allude to any of the Masonic Signs, Tokens, or Words*
- d. claim to speak for any Masonic body (e.g. a Lodge, a Province or District, a charity or committee, or UGLE) on whose behalf he is not expressly authorised to speak (for instance, membership of a Lodge in London does not give one the authority to speak on behalf of Metropolitan Grand Lodge)*
- e. identify anyone else as a Freemason without his express consent*
- f. refer to any personal information about any Freemason without his express consent (such as address, telephone number, or anything else covered by the Data Protection Act 1998; see: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1998/29/> contents)*
- g. attempt to use Masonic channels as a vehicle for personal profit, or for any other form of self-promotion*
- h. attack the United Grand Lodge of England or any other legitimate Masonic authority.*

**I therefore request your support in removing any existing offending materials and I particularly appeal to site administrators who may find themselves personally responsible should they fail to control content under their direct control.**

Fraternal Regards  
Frank Milner  
Provincial Grand Secretary