

FURTHER UPDATE FROM SURREY PROVINCE REGARDING CORONAVIRUS 19 - COVID 19

18th March 2020

To all Brethren and Companions in the Province of Surrey – Craft and Royal Arch.

Re Coronavirus 19 – Covid 19

Brethren and Companions

Following the MW Grand Master's announcement of the suspension of all Masonic activity for four months, here are a few things to think about.

First and foremost, keep yourself and your fellow Brethren safe. Follow all the Government advice about what to do if you have symptoms, if others in your family have symptoms, and increase your social distancing. The telephone, or perhaps online calls, to other Brethren will enable you to keep in touch with the most vulnerable in our community. Your Lodge or Chapter Almoner should co-ordinate contact with older or isolated members. Guidance on Masonic Welfare can be found below.

Next, ALL Masonic meetings are suspended, including regular Lodge Meetings, Chapter Convocations and Lodge or Chapters of Instruction (including virtual) meetings. That means that you do not have to issue summonses, send them to us or record minutes. There is no need to attempt a quorum for election meetings or Installations. Abandonments are no longer required as meetings are suspended. After resumption a simple note in the minutes to explain the interval will suffice; indeed, a copy of the suspension letter followed by the resumption letter pasted into the minutes will remind future generations of what happened. For your information, you do not need to contact Centres to cancel meetings up to the 18th July 2020 - they are aware!

It is really important that we can continue to be able to communicate with Brethren and Companions, so any updates to their contact details should be communicated to us as soon as you are aware of them using the Change of Status form which can be [downloaded here](#).

I know, like me, you will be concerned about the position of our Centres and more importantly the staff. I have asked for an assessment of each Centre's standing given the challenges they now face. I will look at any assistance that we can provide. I encourage all Lodges and Chapters to continue to pay your room hire or per capita charges as normal. This money has been collected in dues and we are therefore in a position to continue to support our Centres. I know many of them will continue to bill for these services in an attempt to manage their cash flow. I am heartened to hear the measures put in place by the Chancellor of the Exchequer to support small businesses.

The Provincial Annual Convocation and Annual Meeting are postponed until a later date. We shall not be meeting as previously notified at Grand Lodge or dining at the Connaught Rooms. Refunds of any bookings that have been made will be processed as soon as we can. You may continue to prepare for the Investitures by acquiring your new regalia as suggested in the notification you received. It is my intention to replace both meetings with separate Investitures later in the year. For the moment it is too early to plan these.

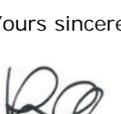
So that there is no confusion, those that are receiving first appointments or promotions to Acting or Past Provincial rank will take effect from the 27th May for Royal Arch and 24th June for Craft. As soon as meetings are restarted you are entitled to wear your new regalia and rank.

All other Provincial events are also postponed.

Annual Returns and dues to Grand Lodge, Grand Chapter and the Provinces will still be billed and need to be paid on time. Any forms for Initiation or Exaltation or Joining members which have already taken place should be submitted without delay to the Provincial Office as normal, with payment as appropriate. There will be no new ceremonies during the period of suspension, including Installations. After the period of suspension, we shall issue guidance on how to produce summonses and 'catch-up' with missing Installation meetings. You will not need to send in Installation Returns until then.

The Provincial Office will be closed for the duration, but the Provincial Grand Secretary, his Deputies and the Office Manager, Su, will be available by email to answer your questions. Their contact details are below. We shall continue to support you as best we can, but please bear with us if we do not immediately have all the answers; we too are in uncharted waters.

Yours sincerely and fraternally



Ian Michael Chandler

ProvGM/GSupt

Provincial Grand Secretary - Mike Robinson,
ProvGSec@surreymason.org.uk Mobile 07860 318556

Provincial Deputy Grand Secretary – Ian Turner
ian.turner@surreymason.org.uk Mobile 07811 946630

Provincial Assistant Grand Scribe E – Bob Whiting
bob.whiting@surreymason.org.uk Mobile 07745 157537

Provincial Deputy Grand Secretary (Designate) – Ted Knight
ted.knight@surreymason.org.uk Mobile 07932 037312

Office Manager – Su Champion officemanager@surreymason.org.uk



PROVINCE OF SURREY

CORONAVIRUS (COVID19) – WELFARE GUIDANCE

This note provides basic guidance on the welfare support which may be provided to the elderly members of our Units, those who live alone or those who self-isolate having either experienced the symptoms of Coronavirus or as a method of preventing infection from the virus.

- Through the office of Lodge Almoner, check regularly on the more elderly and vulnerable members of your Units, especially those that live alone, remembering that a phone call is probably safest for them rather than visiting in person. Isolation is a real issue for members and our widows, we do not have the opportunity to make a real difference for those who do not have the support network we probably enjoy. If you are aware of any member or widow who is isolated and requires assistance, but your Lodge or Chapter cannot assist, please let the Provincial Grand Almoner know and we will attempt to find someone nearby who can help.
- If it is absolutely essential for a visit to be made; only do so with the express permission of the individual being visited and/or their relatives and follow the recommended hygiene guidelines for the protection of both yourself and the person being visited.
- Be aware that if a visit involves the delivery of shopping, although considered unlikely by the medical authorities, you may be taking the virus into their home.
- If they are capable, suggest they wipe down non-porous containers, if not offer to do it yourself. Fruit and vegetables should be washed before consumption. It is highly unlikely a cardboard container will harbour the virus for more than a couple of days so they are best left on the shelf for that length of time or the hands washed immediately after handling.
- If a financial need is identified, long-term support may be obtained from the Masonic Charitable Foundation (MCF) and an application submitted in the normal manner. However, it is likely that the government will shortly advise individuals over the age of 70 to stay at home to shield them from coronavirus. In view of the developing situation, the MCF has taken the decision to temporarily suspend all visits to complete applications and reviews will not arrange any MCF related visits. Any planned MCF related visits taking place over the next 72 hours will be cancelled. More information in the coming days will be issued by the MCF regarding application arrangements for the forthcoming weeks.
- Consider providing short-term and limited financial support from Chapters/Lodges charitable funds. The by-laws of most Chapters/Lodges do allow such assistance to be provided via the Almoner, usually up to a certain limit and without recourse to a notice of motion etc. Monies from a Relief Chest may also be used for the same purpose.
- Alternatively, or in addition, apply to the Provincial Petitions Committee via your Group Almoner or the PGA. This is a very simple process and only involves the submission of a short application form containing basic details of the applicant's financial situation and the purpose for which any grant is being requested.
- Every application will be treated on its merits and a decision as to whether a grant can be provided or not would be made within a few hours of receipt of an application. Please bear in mind that the resources of the PPC are limited and therefore any substantial or long-term financial assistance would not be practicable.
- The official Public Health England and NHS guidance is that any individual who is unwell, particularly if they have a fever, cough or shortness of breath, should self-isolate for fourteen days or until they are fully recovered. This is standard procedure for infection control.
- This is the 'Delay' phase in managing the response to the coronavirus.
- While continuing to reiterate the critical importance of regular hand-washing and good hygiene practices, they are suggesting those who may be most at risk – the elderly and those with underlying health conditions – should consider staying away from public spaces with high volumes of people.
- Please do not go to a GP surgery, pharmacy or hospital. You do not need to contact 111 to tell them you're staying at home.

If you require medical advice please do not contact your Almoner or any of the Provincial Welfare Team but either, follow the guidance issued by the Public Health England and NHS or speak to your GP.

I hope this helps to summarise the present position, in these unprecedented times, and assure you that this issue is being taken very seriously. Advice and policy from UGLE and Government are continuing to evolve on a daily basis, and, as this changes, this shall be passed on to you.

16th March, 2020

Surrey Comms Portal

We want to hear from you!

Eagle-eyed Brethren, please keep your eyes peeled on the local press and let us know if you spot any items about Surrey Masonry. Use the email SurreyCommsPortal@surreymason.org.uk to let us know.

Do you have a story to tell us? Have you had an important event or is there one coming up? If you need pre and / or post event news coverage we can help. Use the Surrey Comms Portal Form via [this link](#) and send it to SurreyCommsPortal@surreymason.org.uk the Information & Communications Team contact point for your news.

This email is being sent to all members of the Provincial Grand Lodge of Surrey on behalf of the Provincial Information & Communications Team - please do not unsubscribe from this list, otherwise you will receive no further Provincial communications.

