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The newsletter for Wiltshire Freemasons

Freemasons are going back to work



July 2020

A return to Masonic activity



I am sure that like me you were pleased to receive the welcome and very positive news from the Grand Secretary, earlier this week, in which he announced there will be no extension to the suspension of Masonic activity due to the Covid-19 crisis. This means the current suspension expires on 17th July 2020.

The Provincial Grand Secretary has circulated guidance from UGLE on the conditions which must be followed by all Masonic Halls and Lodges in order that we can all meet again in a Covid-19 secure environment, and where each and every individuals safety is considered ahead of a general desire to return to Masonic meetings. I know that your

Masonic Hall committee will take into account all the suggestions contained in the 'General Guidance for the Resumption of Masonic Meetings' jointly published with Supreme Grand Chapter.

While UGLE guidance is very welcome and provides a clear basis for Masonic Hall Committees to work to, it does not override Government Covid-19 guidance as set out in the documentation covering the safe use of multi-purpose community facilities. I mention both sets of guidelines simply to indicate the breadth of work that Masonic Hall Committees will be engaged in before a final decision can be made as to if and when Lodges can use the facilities. Brethren, please be patient and allow the Masonic Hall Committee to acquaint themselves with the content of this guidance.

The Provincial Grand Master suggests that before you resume your Lodge meetings, you obtain a written confirmation from those responsible for the management of your building, not only that they are aware of this guidance and have considered it, but that they have also adopted all of the relevant measures it recommends, to ensure that the building is COVID-secure, a safe environment for Masonic meetings and that all legislation has been complied with.

You should also obtain a copy of their relevant Risk Assessments and Method Statements for compliance. If this documentation is not provided in a satisfactory format, then the buildings and facilities should not be used, thus avoiding putting your members at risk.

Please note (from General Guidance) that the following activities are not yet permissible under these restrictions: singing, Ceremony of Raising, and Festive Boards. It is strongly recommended that the practice of wearing white gloves be suspended in favour of regular hand-washing/sanitising instead.

Additional modifications to our ceremonies have been written, and these have been made available to your Lodge secretary, and your Director of Ceremonies. While there is no requirement from the Province that the ceremonies of Initiation and Passing be carried out, it should be clearly understood that if the Lodge wishes to perform either ceremony the adaptations as prescribed by UGLE **must** be adopted. Doubtless these will seem strange at first and, for that reason, it is recommended they be practiced and rehearsed thoroughly if Lodges wish to perform these ceremonies.

The Provincial Grand Master also recognises that some Brethren may be reluctant to return to Masonry at this time. He would remind all Brethren that "Nobody, particularly elderly or vulnerable members, should feel coerced into attending meetings – irrespective of their office" and that we should be understanding

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of an individuals concerns and the situations in which they may find themselves.

A number of Lodges have their Installation meetings scheduled for either September, October, November or December of this year. As you will know the precursor to the Installation meeting is a meeting at which the incoming WM is elected, thus becoming the ME. The Provincial Grand Secretary has sent Guidance Notes to Lodge secretaries which cover the essential actions which must be taken to regularise matters. Brethren, cancelling a meeting might seem a prudent action; but the consequences of taking such a course of action need to be carefully thought through. Advice is always available from the Provincial Grand Secretary.

Currently Masonic meetings are restricted to no more than 30 people, with all social distancing precautions in place. I would remind Brethren that the 2 metre distance rule applies to all meetings held indoors, unless full Covid-19 secure mitigation measures are in place, at which point 1 metre is allowed. As a result of this, the decision has already been communicated to you that it will not be possible to hold Provincial Grand Lodge this year. Brethren will doubtless be delighted to learn that there will be no increase in Provincial Dues and other charges this year, in line with Grand Lodge's decision that their fees will remain static.

As and when information is received from UGLE or when the Government issues further guidance on Covid-19 protocols, members can be assured this will be communicated to them as quickly as possible. In the meantime, I would urge you to refrain from speculating on what may or may not happen with regard to the resumption of Masonic meetings in the Province.

I would like to use this opportunity to congratulate all those Lodges who by using Zoom (the online video conferencing App) have been regularly engaging with their members. I am constantly being told how this vital contact has proved to be a lifeline to many Brethren suffering 'withdrawal symptoms' as a result of not being able to meet with their Masonic friends. I have been particularly pleased to hear how members who are living abroad have 'zoomed' in to meeting online. Many thanks to the organisers of each and every event.



Talking of Zoom. On Sunday 12th July, Methuen Lodge No.8692 hosted the Prestonian Lecture. It was great to see so many Wiltshire Brethren supporting the event, including some for whom the use of Zoom was a new experience. The Master of Methuen Lodge Bro Chris Hudson, and Lodge Secretary Ian Priest were pleased to welcome over fifty participants to hear Bro George Boys-Stones who presented a very interesting and informative lecture. Members of *The Sarsen Club* joined the *Young & New Masons Inter-Club Social* who had organised their own event for the same night, at which their guest speaker was RW Bro David Pratt, Provincial Grand Master for Yorkshire West Riding.

Brethren, as we approach another milestone in the fight against Covid -19, I wish you well.

To donate £5 to the COVID - 19 Relief Chest text Covid19 to 70500

MAKE A DIFFERENCE

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Teddies for Loving Care....

Wiltshire Freemasonry



One of the benefits to being the Provincial Communication Officer is the number of letters and emails I receive in which the good works undertaken by Freemasons is mentioned. And just very recently I was delighted to receive an email from a gentleman who wanted to share a story about his one year old granddaughter, and to thank Wiltshire Freemasons for making a horrible day a little better. I am pleased to reproduce the story by kind permission of Mr Wilf Waller on behalf of his son and daughter, and of course their children Sienna and Isaac.

"On Saturday, the fifth of July Kirsty, my wife, and I went for a walk with our two children, Isaac (2) Sienna (1). We planned a trip to 'Lords Walk' around Amesbury.

After happily jumping in puddles on the path next to the river Avon, my daughter, who has only recently started walking, mistook the river for another puddle and charged toward it.

Unfortunately she tumbled and fell into the river and in doing so cut her head. My wife and I quickly scooped her up and rushed her to A&E where she was thoroughly checked over and patched up.

During the consultation with the Doctor, who was fully clad in PPE, a very intimidating sight for a one year old, my daughter was presented with a Pink Teddy Bear which brought a huge smile to her face and the bear has not left her side since.

This bears label wrote 'Donated by local Freemasons'. On that note I would like to send a huge Thank You All from my wife and I, for making a little girls day a little less frightening."

What a cheering story, and I'm sure we would all wish little Sienna and her family all the very best for the future.

What this story confirms is the importance of the Teddies for Loving Care initiative. Started by John King back in 2006, the Province regularly donates over 5,000 bears every year to the A&E department of the general hospitals in Salisbury and Swindon. We can only do this with **YOUR** continuing support.



TLC
Teddies for
Loving Care
Wiltshire



The core aim of Teddies for Loving Care is to provide cuddly teddy bears to distressed children admitted to the Accident & Emergency department at either of Wiltshire's two general hospitals located in Salisbury and Swindon.

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Twitter accounts....

Brethren are reminded that when using a Lodge, club, or a Twitter account which can clearly be identified as being from a Freemason, it should not be used to demonstrate support or opposition of or for political or religious organisation, or cause, and should only be used to convey truly Masonic matters. This includes re-tweeting or liking a tweet from an account which you might follow. The Province is aware that this may require a reappraisal of which accounts a Lodge or an individual Freemason follows/likes.

UGLE Comms Team booklet....

The UGLE Communication Team headed by Communications Director Michelle Worvell has produced an online booklet *Members' Online Communications Toolkit*. This is a fabulous aid which has been specifically designed to assist our more senior members who may not be as conversant with the basics of modern day online communication, but want to understand more.

“The situation across the globe has significantly changed how we communicate with one another, and has introduced a number of barriers to staying in touch.”

Scary headlines about coronavirus have taken over the world's front pages. Misinformation is spreading at the speed of a click and much about the virus itself remains unknown. It is absolutely vital that you know how to spot fake news during this difficult time. We understand that all of our 200,000+ members have varying levels of experience communicating online and that is why we have produced this toolkit to help everyone get the most out of their situation. This guide covers everything you need to know, including how to set up an email account. If you have a query on anything to do with communication, give us a call.



Provincial Church Service....

The Provincial Communication Officer for the Holy Royal Arch, Mark Fuller has confirmed that this years' annual church service, scheduled for October has become yet another victim of the Covid-19 crisis. The Most Excellent Grand Superintendent, John Reid, and The Provincial Grand Master, Philip Bullock having considered the essential precautionary measures necessary to ensure the safety and well being of Companions, and Brethren and their families, have concluded that it would be impractical to hold a service.



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