



SUSPENSION PLANNING GROUP BULLETIN NO. 1

Week ending 20th March 2020

A MESSAGE FROM OUR PROVINCIAL GRAND MASTERS AND THE GRAND SUPERINTENDENT

“OUR LODGES AND CHAPTERS MAY NOT BE MEETING BUT FREEMASONRY CONTINUES!

Well here we are Brethren and Companions – Unprecedented times indeed meaning that there is no road map to the destination or book of solutions for any issues as we have “Never Done This Before!”

As Freemasons we tend to be gregarious, enjoying each other’s company and that’s the real challenge. Administrative solutions will be sorted so we can put that to one side. It is the potential damage caused to our Members in terms of both financial stability and loneliness that is of the greatest immediate concern.

ALWAYS REMEMBER! WE ARE A FRATERNAL ORGANISATION ☺

Brotherly Love and Relief must abound even more so during this difficult period of History.

We urge every Brother to keep in touch with one another and to watch out for the more vulnerable in our Communities. Making full use of electronic communication. Forming a “Chain of Fraternal Union” by Brethren and Companions calling the next member on the list. Making a “Daily Advancement in Masonic Knowledge” by study and using the excellent “Solomon” Learning System. Head in the Book to perfect the delivery of our ceremonial. These are just some of the ways to maintain the Fraternity and its Members.

**WE WILL GET THROUGH THIS – TOGETHER WE WILL FORM
A COLUMN OF MUTUAL DEFENCE AND SUPPORT!”**

KEY ISSUES

1 COMMUNICATIONS:

These bulletins are to be issued initially at the start of each week during the current Masonic suspension and aim to summarise key information which members need to be aware of.

Secretaries should see that this bulletin is circulated to all Members as soon as possible ensuring that those without email receive a hard copy by post.

Other material and information will be available through our websites and on Facebook and please do submit to them positive stories of what you are doing to help those in your Lodge or Chapter or the local community. Good ideas are always worth sharing!

We also plan to produce a list of Frequently Asked Questions over the next couple of weeks. This will we hope give answers to common questions and be kept regularly updated. If you have queries please direct these to either of the Provincial Grand Secretaries or the Provincial Scribe E advice@wrprovince.co.uk or ProvGSec@westyorksmark.org.uk

Unfortunately for reasons related to distribution associated with the suspension of Lodges and Chapters and closure of many Masonic Halls YWRMA Ltd has announced that the Spring edition of White Rose News is being cancelled. Brethren are encouraged to continue to submit items for consideration to Editor Peter Doherty for a future issue and meanwhile consideration will be given to producing a monthly electronic version of news items over the coming weeks.

2 MESSAGE FROM THE MW GRAND MASTER/MARK MASTER MASONS HALL:

This was issued to all members of the Craft, Royal Arch and Mark Degrees on Monday, 16th March and has been published on Provincial websites. The message advised the suspension of all Lodge and Chapter meetings for an initial period of 4 months. The message from Mark Master Masons Hall extended this suspension to Masonic social activities. The statement by the MW Grand Master did not do so but it is the view of the Provincial Grand Masters and Grand Superintendent that all members of the fraternity should comply with HM Government guidance which strongly advises against social gatherings. It could be seriously damaging to the reputation of Freemasonry if members of our organisation were seen to be breaching this guidance on social gatherings which we therefore strongly discourage.

3 NOTING SUSPENSION IN LODGE AND CHAPTER MINUTE BOOKS:

A number of members have expressed the worry that in years to come the absence of meetings may not be recognised as being due to the coronavirus situation and could impact on continuity of function in respect of centenaries etc.

Lodge Secretaries and Scribes E are advised to affix a printed copy of the MW Grand Master's or Mark Master Masons Hall statements (whichever is appropriate) in their minute books to explain to future generations why meetings during this period did not take place.

4 MAINTAINING ACCESS TO KEY LODGE AND CHAPTER ITEMS:

Over the period of this current suspension it is essential that Lodges and Chapters take steps to ensure continuity of access to items such as cheque books, membership records and keys for equipment. It is also essential that there are identified stand-ins for key officers and that they have access to necessary information.

We will issue further advice on this in the near future but for now Lodges and Chapters should be thinking about how they can remain resilient during the suspension period.

5 LOOKING AFTER ONE ANOTHER:

Over the coming months it is essential that we all look to help and support those in our communities who are vulnerable and/or at risk.

We are working through our Almoner networks to ensure that we are prepared to offer whatever help can be given at Lodge and Chapter level but also from our Masonic charities. UGLE and The Masonic Charitable Foundation issued a joint statement on 19th March (www.wrprovince.org.uk) that they will work together to provide as much help as possible to members and will provide more information in due course. The Mark Benevolent Fund has also issued a letter which is being posted on the Provincial Mark website (<https://new.westyorksmark.co.uk>)

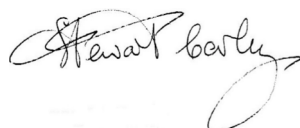
Further information will be circulated in the next 10 days explaining how our charities might help those experiencing hardship but for the time being please look after one another and ensure that anyone who needs help is reported to your Lodge Chapter Almoner or via the Confidential Helplines 03449 020220 (Craft and Chapter) or 07855477417 (Mark).

6 STATEMENT BY THE MW PRO GRAND MASTER:

The MW Pro Grand Master issued a message to all members of the Craft on 19th March (www.wrprovince.org.uk). If you haven't already read it please do so. It gives a positive view of how we can work together to work through this difficult time.



David S Pratt
Provincial Grand Master



Stewart G Carley
Grand Superintendent



James Steggles
Provincial Grand Master

The Freemasons of Yorkshire West Riding working together for the good of all.