SUSPENSION PLANNING GROUP BULLETIN NO. 2

Week ending 27th March 2020

A MESSAGE FROM OUR PROVINCIAL GRAND MASTERS AND
THE GRAND SUPERINTENDENT

As this is being written and as we look out of our windows, we see that Spring has finally arrived. The sun is shining brightly, the birds are singing and the trees are showing that life is returning to its full splendour. Mother nature is a truly wonderful thing. Everything looks positive and good with the world. Keep this memory in your mind over the coming months.

We face a struggle of the most grievous kind in our great country. We are fighting against an invisible killer.

Our Lodges and Chapters are not meeting and the world seems to have shut down.

Freemasonry has not shut down; it has merely taken a different path for the time being.

Remember we are all Almoners. It is up to all of us to ensure all our Brethren and Companions, both young and old, are looked after and cared for.

Please remember that Masonic Charities are always there to help.

Freemasonry is that beacon of light for us all – a very bright light in what seems a very dark tunnel.

Until we meet again, don’t know where, don’t know when. Keep yourself and your loved ones safe and stay at home as much as possible.

E Comp Stewart G Carley,
Most Excellent Grand Superintendent

KEY ISSUES

1 COMMUNICATIONS:

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

CRAFT LODGE SECRETARIES ONLY 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. Scribes E and Mark & RAM Lodge Secretaries should take no further action.

Other material and information is available through our websites and on Facebook. Please do submit any 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!
2  LOOKING AFTER ONE ANOTHER – and our communities!

It is vitally important during this challenging time that we embrace our core Masonic principles of Brotherly Love and Charity. There is a lot that we can do to help!

West Riding Masonic Charities Limited

Assistance from the CHOICES scheme.

West Riding Masonic Charities Limited is committed to providing assistance and support whenever a West Riding Freemason, his family or dependants are:

- In financial distress
- Have an urgent need
- Have other immediate and pressing requirements

How to seek help

The first point of contact is your Lodge Almoner who will initiate the CHOICES request. However, if confidentiality is a concern ring the free Confidential Helpline which is 03449 020220. The Mark also has a Confidential Helpline which is 07855477417.

WRMCL needs your help to identify NEEDS before they become NECESSITIES

CHOICES is quick, it is simple and it is extremely effective.

The Provincial Grand Masters Fund – helping our communities NOW

With immediate effect, and for the foreseeable future, the emphasis of the PGM’s Fund will change to focus on the impact of the Coronavirus. There are likely to be charitable organisations and charities providing essential services to the needy in our community but struggling to survive due to loss of income caused by Coronavirus. We need to either encourage them to approach us or seek them out with a view to applying for a grant to allow them to continue their good work.

If your Lodge/ Chapter is aware of such organisations speak to your Lodge/Chapter Charity Steward or, if that is not possible a grant can be applied for using the normal PGM’s Fund application form available from the Provincial website where further guidance is also available.

The applications for Major and Minor grants currently held for consideration will be processed at a later date.

Keeping in touch during the suspension

Many Lodges and Chapters have already set-up internal means of communicating with members whilst they are unable to meet. The Royal Arch Communications Lead, Stuart Burrows has produced a series of short guides on how to create a ‘Skype’ group, ‘Whatsapp’ group or ‘Facebook’ group. These guides are available on the website www.wrprovince.org.uk

3  QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ABOUT OUR MASONIC SUSPENSION:

Even during this first 2 weeks of Masonic suspension a number of queries have been raised with us. We are publishing a Questions and Answers document on the Craft website www.wrprovince.org.uk with links to the Mark and Royal Arch websites. We will keep this updated as more information becomes available. If you have questions that have not been included please contact:

advice@wrprovince.co.uk or ProvGSec@westyorksmark.org.uk
4 KEEPING OUR LODGES AND CHAPTERS RESILIENT OVER THE COMING MONTHS:

These are uncertain and unprecedented times. The current Masonic suspension is initially due to last for 4 months but may have to continue beyond that.

During this shutdown it is essential that Lodges and Chapters take the necessary steps to ensure that they are protected from the effects that this virus could have on key members and the roles they perform.

We have written directly to Worshipful Masters and 1st Principals offering advice on how to secure continuity of key posts so that you can emerge from this period ready to go back into full functioning. Whilst WMs and 1st Principals will be responsible for ensuring that these actions are carried out they will need the support of the Lodge/Chapter if this is to be successful.

5 JUBILEE CERTIFICATES:

During the coming months there will be members whose length of service would normally be celebrated by the presentation of a Jubilee Certificate. In the current situation this is no longer possible but The PGMs and Grand Superintendent have now agreed to a new procedure whereby such certificates will be posted to recipients when their anniversary falls due together with a letter of congratulation. All members receiving their certificates through this system will be able to opt to receive a formal presentation in their Lodge or Chapter when the current period of suspension comes to an end.

6 HANDLING MEMBERSHIP ENQUIRIES THROUGH THE SUSPENSION PERIOD:

We are aware that there will continue to be enquiries from potential new members during the coming months and that there will also be men who were in the pipeline to Initiation when the suspension began. The Craft Membership Team will be producing Best Practice guidance on how to manage these enquiries and/or keep prospective members interested until meetings start again.

7 PROVINCIAL HONOURS 2020

Provincial Honours for both Craft and Mark have been awarded for 2020 and those who have accepted will assume their new rank on the date of the respective planned but now cancelled Provincial Grand Lodge meetings and all will be receiving a further letter over the next couple of weeks. The process for assessing candidates for Royal Arch Honours is starting now and letters of award will go out as usual in the early autumn.

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

We are delighted to announce that a number of other Orders meeting as part of our Masonic family in this Province have now signed-up to support this communication initiative by not duplicating information sent to their members.

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