SUSPENSION PLANNING GROUP BULLETIN NO. 4

Week ending 10\textsuperscript{th} April 2020

A MESSAGE OF SPIRITUAL ENCOURAGEMENT

A Testing Time

The country wide lockdown we are experiencing, is a testing time for everybody and needs a positive response from us all. I pray that we may all look on the situation as a challenge to be met with \textbf{Faith}, \textbf{Fortitude} and \textbf{Friendship}.

\textbf{Faith} that the Great Architect of the Universe will be with us to help us wherever we are, and in whatever situation we may have to face. Always remembering to implore His aid in all our undertakings.

\textbf{Fortitude} to continue on however bleak the situation may seem to be. It is worth keeping in mind the words of Anna L. Waring's Hymn “In Heavenly Love abiding,” \textit{The storm may roar about me. my heart may low be laid; but God is round about me, and can I be dismayed?}

Show \textbf{Friendship} to all, by keeping in constant touch by telephone or any other social media we may be familiar with, not just our Lodge Members, but to our neighbours and other vulnerable and lonely people we may know.

Finally, let each one of us graciously accept any help that we may be offered, with thankfulness and gratitude.

\textit{W. Bro Peter Holt, PJGD}

\textit{Provincial Grand Chaplain (Craft)}

\textbf{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.

\textbf{CRAFT LODGE SECRETARIES ONLY} should see that this bulletin is circulated to all of their Lodge Members as soon as possible ensuring that those members without email receive a hard copy by post. Scribes E’s, Mark Lodge Secretaries and RAM Lodge Scribes should only circulate the bulletin to any members of their respective Chapter/Lodges who are \textbf{NOT members of the Craft in Yorkshire West Riding}.

\textbf{2. DEATH ANNOUNCEMENTS ON SOCIAL MEDIA}

\textbf{Please do not post announcements of the death of Brethren on social media platforms.} Such means of announcement are instantaneous and there is a danger of the deceased’s relatives and close friends, first becoming aware of, what to them is devastating news, by this arbitrary method. We must be respectful to families who may not wish a very personal tragedy to be announced other than by themselves. We appeal to your respect for the deceased and his family, to refrain from using open messaging media. There is an “In Memoriam” page on the Craft website, where announcements and testimonials, approved by the next of kin, are being published. You can express your condolences on it by navigating to www.wrprovince.org.uk/in-memoriam.html
WHAT SHOULD BE IN PLACE BY NOW
Is your Lodge, Chapter or other Masonic unit, now resilient to disruptions that could be caused to its governance by the loss, temporary or permanently, of key governing Officers? Here is a summary of some of the advice that we have issued since our formation 4 weeks ago.

- Secretaries, Scribes E, Treasurers, Almoners and Charity Stewards should have nominated deputies. Their names should be registered with your Provincial Secretariat.
- Access to Minute Books, Accounts, Cheque Books and other essential working documents must be available for nominated deputies.
- There should be several signatories to Bank Accounts to avoid transactions being locked. Provision for access to on-line banking should be made to nominated deputies.
- Ensure that access is provided for any essential records. Make sure those stored on personal computers are not locked by a password not shared with the nominated deputy. Consider sharing backup copies with deputies.

A GIANT IS AWAKENING
We are beginning to receive reports from Lodges of ways in which they are helping the community, the NHS in particular. Initiatives of providing ‘Comfort’ packages for NHS staff on long shifts or stay-overs, comprising of hand creams, chocolates, tea, etc; offers of free parking at nearby Masonic halls; food deliveries. All such initiatives are to be encouraged, not just for the NHS, but for the wider community. We profess to care for our fellow creatures, let’s prove that we do.

DONATIONS FROM LODGE / CHAPTER ACCOUNTS
At this difficult time there will be many community groups, which rely on donations to carry out their good works, who are now finding that they are struggling through insufficient income. Now is a time when we should be giving our support where needed and appropriate to the unparalleled times we are now in. If it is desired to make a donation from Lodge or Chapter accounts but, under the terms of by-laws, a resolution in Lodge / Chapter is required, during this period of suspension that cannot be done. However, if your by-laws allow the Master or 1st Principal to authorise an expenditure in cases of emergency, to be reported at the next Regular meeting, the current situation would surely be accepted by the members as a case of emergency. Navigate to www.wrprovince.org.uk/qas.html for more detail in our Q&As.

WMCL GRANTS
West Riding Masonic Charities Ltd., which includes the CHOICES scheme, are still working hard, supporting Brethren, their families and the wider community, more so in these incredibly challenging circumstances. The most recent list of organisations they have assisted has been circulated to Charity Stewards and is published on all three Provincial websites of the Craft, Royal Arch and Mark. Grants range from £2295 to the Star Bereavement and Support Services, which supports children and young people after a family bereavement, to £5000 to Cavendish Cancer Care, which supports people living with cancer, their families and carers. Have a look at the list, it’s impressive and you will realise how your continued donations are so important.

PRACTICE MEETINGS
Withdrawal symptoms are creeping in and as we are all gradually getting to grips with video conferencing, the question has naturally arisen as to whether we can hold meetings on-line. Regular and Instruction meetings for Craft, Royal Arch and Mark are definitely not allowed as they are defined as formal meetings under their respective Rules and therefore, suspended. However, should Brethren/ Companions of a Lodge, be it Craft Chapter or Mark, wish to meet on-line to practice their ritual and socialise, then provided that proceedings are not minuted or recorded, this would not be regarded as a formal meeting and would be a good way of members keeping in touch. It goes without saying that precautions to avoid disclosure of symbolic secrets and to maintain privacy need to be observed. Navigate to www.wrprovince.org.uk/qas.html for more detail in our Q&As

PROSPECTIVE MEMBERS
You may have prospective candidates for Freemasonry or for your Order, whose progress to initiation, exaltation or other form of reception has had to be postponed. Please ensure that you maintain regular contact with these candidates, by phone or email, to maintain their interest and give them a feeling of progression. Topics for discussion could include items on the websites, charity donations or grants, plans for the future and many other topics. Lodge Membership Officers are receiving advice on maintaining contact with those gentlemen who have not yet got beyond the stage of expressing an interest in Freemasonry.
9. **PROVINCIAL WEBSITES**

Keep looking at your Provincial websites, we don’t have space for everything on these bulletins and other things may be happening.

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<th>Website Details</th>
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<td><strong>Craft</strong> <a href="http://www.wrprovince.org.uk">www.wrprovince.org.uk</a></td>
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**LAST WEEK DID YOU SEE ACROSS OUR VARIOUS WEBSITES**

- A video message from the Provincial Grand Master R.W.Bro. David S. Pratt
- The introduction of the ‘In Memoriam’ page and sadly with some new entries
- The introduction of the Questions and Answers page
- How to create virtual social meetings on Skype.
- A new Quiz Portal and Random Number fund raiser for the West Yorkshire Mark 2023 MBF Festival

**THIS WEEK ACROSS OUR VARIOUS WEBSITES LOOK OUT FOR**

- Suspension Planning Group - who are they and what do they do?
- WRMCL Detail of recent grants.
- Support for the new ‘Nightingale Hospital’ opening in Harrogate.
- News of Centenaries and Jubilee Certificates
- Virtual meeting invitations from the Leeds Light Blues Club. (via Facebook link)
- A message from the M. E. Grand Superintendent, Stewart G. Carley

10 **QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ABOUT OUR MASONIC SUSPENSION:**

The Questions and Answers document on the Craft website, with links from the Mark and Royal Arch websites, is being regularly updated. As more questions are asked and more information is received from Grand Lodge at Great Queen Street and from Mark Masons Hall at St James’, the content may be added to or amended, so navigate to www.wrprovince.org.uk/qas.html to keep looking. If you have unanswered questions to raise or need any assistance with documentation which has been circulated to you, please contact:

advice@wrprovince.co.uk or ProvGSec@westyorksmark.org.uk

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

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.*