



UNITED GRAND LODGE OF ENGLAND

Dear Brother,

As we are sure you are aware, the next steps in the Government's approach to the Coronavirus outbreak were announced today. This afternoon, the Prime Minister, alongside the Chief Medical Officer and the Chief Scientific Officer, disclosed that the United Kingdom was moving out of the 'Containment' phase and into the 'Delay' phase. The aim of this phase is to push the peak of the outbreak into the summer, so as to give as much time as possible for further research into the virus and to ensure that the NHS is as prepared as it can be.

As set out in recent communications on this issue, UGLE are content to give advice beyond that issued by Public Health England in relation to this virus due to the demographic of our membership and the high risk posed by it to a number of our more elderly members.

After consultation with the Rulers and Senior members of the Board, we have therefore agreed to strengthen our guidance as follows:

- The United Grand Lodge of England strongly advises that those over the age of 65 years old, and those with hypertension, heart disease, lung disease or diabetes no longer attend Lodge and Chapter meetings for the foreseeable future.
- The United Grand Lodge of England strongly advises that meetings of over 100 members should not take place. Advice on abandoning meetings has been previously circulated.
- We draw attention to the fragile state of some Masonic Halls and their financial reliance on income from meetings. We encourage Lodges to consider their Halls' ongoing viability when cancelling meetings and advise, where possible, that arrangements are made to support their halls through the difficult times ahead in exchange for some future agreement to recoup any such support when the situation resolves.

For your information, at Freemasons' Hall in London, in addition to hand washing on entry for all staff and visitors, the following steps will now be implemented:

- All United Grand Lodge of England staff (who are able to) will be working from home until further notice.
- Freemasons' Hall will be closed to external visitors, tourists and tours will cease.
- Non-masonic business meetings will be virtual where possible.

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We will review this advice as the situation worsens. Finally, we would ask that you check on the more elderly and vulnerable members of your Lodges and Chapters, especially those that live alone, remembering that telephoning is probably safest for them rather than visiting in person.

Sincerely and fraternally yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D Staples', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Dr David Staples FRCP
CEO and Grand Secretary