



THE GRAND LODGE OF MARK MASTER MASONS

of England and Wales and its Districts and Lodges Overseas

GRAND SECRETARY'S OFFICE

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18 September 2020

To: All Provincial/Divisional/District Heads of Orders, Regional Grand Prefects and their Secretariat

Cc: All Unit Secretaries, Scribes, Registrars and Recorders

Dear Sir and Brother

Summary of recent Covid-19 related guidance, the Rule of Six and changes to the abandonment process

During the last few months, we have issued several communications relating Covid-19 and changes to our usual administrative procedures. We appreciate that there has been a lot of new information to take on board which is why we have produced the accompanying document summarising the key elements of the guidance in an easy to follow format.

Following the recent announcement by HM Government of changes to the Covid-19 safety rules in England, it has been necessary to limit attendance at all masonic meetings there to six until further notice. This has prompted some of you to ask whether the Tyler (or equivalent) is included in the total number or not.

We have taken the view that to expect an individual to be sufficiently detached from those attending the meeting so that he is considered to be in a separate social bubble, places an unnecessary burden on him particularly as it would not be unreasonable or impracticable for one of the six Unit members to 'double-up' and cover the limited duties that a Tyler would undertake. Consequently, the maximum number attending a meeting of a Unit in any of our Orders **must not exceed six in total**.

In those Orders where the Constitutions & Regulations dictate otherwise to make a meeting quorate, the requirement has been relaxed until further notice – please refer to page three of the accompanying summary document.

We are beginning to see an increase in the number of local lockdowns being implemented by the authorities in the UK and overseas where the Covid-19 infection rate is increasing. Where this happens the local Head of Order is empowered, after discussion with the Grand Secretary, to suspend masonic meetings for the duration of the lockdown.

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Units subject to such a suspension are not required to issue a summons for meetings that would otherwise have taken place, but a copy of the suspension letter must be placed in the Minute Book to ensure that continuous working is not interrupted.

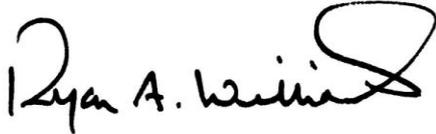
An increasing number of Units in all our Orders have been making use of the Virtual Business Meetings scheme to transact administrative business. Until now, it has been necessary for Secretaries to issue a summons for a regular meeting even if it is likely to be abandoned and then prepare papers for the Virtual Business Meeting as a separate exercise.

We recognise the need to simplify the process and that is why, from today, if a Unit cannot hold a regular meeting because the venue is closed or the members won't attend, a Virtual Business Meeting can be held instead. This means that Unit Secretaries (and equivalents) need only follow the Seven-Step process for a Virtual Business Meeting and are not required to issue a summons for the abandoned regular meeting as well.

Some of the changes referred to above are only applicable in England and need not therefore be implemented elsewhere. Nevertheless, it is important that you are all kept informed about what is happening in different parts of our Constitution which is why this note is being circulated more widely.

I do hope that the accompanying summary of the key guidance we have issued over the last few weeks will be helpful to you in your administrative duties. Likewise, the relaxation in the abandonment process will reduce the burden on Unit Secretaries (and equivalents).

With fraternal regards and best wishes.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ryan A. Williams". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end.

R.W.Bro. Ryan A Williams, P.G.J.W.
Grand Secretary