

Provincial Circular No.207

5 October 2020

To: Lodge Secretaries & Chapter Scribes E

Cc: Cabinet [Craft & Royal Arch], Grand & District Officers

Dear Brother Secretary / Companion Scribe E,

You will have received the recent guidance issued by UGLE; you may find the following a useful summary specific to our Province. It applies equally to The Holy Royal Arch and consolidates the current guidance in a simpler way:

1. Irrespective of what guidance is issued by UGLE, or Province, primacy will always remain with what we are told by National and Local Government. If the prevailing rules/laws prevent households from mixing, **we do not meet**. That is unequivocal. The PGM/MEGS has already directed this in a previous Provincial Circular (No.206, copy available at the foot of this message).
2. The 'rule of 6' in the absence of any additional local measures/restrictions will eventually allow us to meet in the limited regime previously advised.
3. If and when we can meet as a group of 6, you are now able to call off the tyled meeting to allow other members to join it remotely (such as using 'Zoom') to take part in any permitted administrative business notified on the summons. It must be appreciated that this should also be seen as a vital way of keeping members in touch with their friends and their freemasonry.
4. If any business needs agreement by a vote/show of hands, it can be included in the called- off session. If it requires any type of ballot, it cannot be done during that part of the meeting. It does not prevent ballots being taken by the 6 members during the regular/tyled part of the meeting.
5. It would be useful to show, on your summons, that part of the business which will be conducted whilst it is called off.
6. Any member, 72 hours before a meeting, can demand that an audio/video conference facility is provided to allow them the opportunity to take part in any votes/administrative business. It is expected that in a well-ordered Lodge, no member should have to 'demand' such a facility. It is therefore simple – just ask if those who can't attend would like to be able to join it and take part remotely.
7. When we can meet as a group of 6, the summons needs to be issued 5 clear days before the meeting.
8. If your hall/venue has not reopened when we are able to meet, you may by dispensation from the Province meet in another appropriate hall or venue.

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9. We cannot ‘cancel’ a meeting. However, a Lodge/Chapter now has the facility to suspend meetings for three months; the following summarises how it should be approached:

1. The Master should seek the views of his Lodge as to whether they wish to suspend meeting for a period of three months.
2. The easiest way to do this is for him to email all of the subscribing members or write to those not on email. A failure to reply should be deemed that the member has voted against the suspension.
3. If two-thirds agree, the Secretary should email the Province using: [secretariat@eastlancsmasons.org.uk](mailto:secretariat@eastlancsmasons.org.uk) and place in the header “Suspension of Meeting” followed by your Lodge number.
4. The email needs to include the form of words provided by UGLE in their last communication (*see 6(c)ii of their guidance [copy below]*)
5. The Province will confirm this by email and maintain a record.
6. If the Lodge wishes to lift the suspension before its expiry, they follow the same process.
7. Similarly, if the Lodge wishes to suspend meetings for a further three months, the same process again applies.
8. During the suspension, summonses are not issued.

*NB: The above is merely an overview. All of the detail has been provided within the latest guidance issued by UGLE. Please refer to it for additional detail/explanation.*

Keep well, keep safe and keep in touch,

Martin P Roche  
Provincial Grand Secretary