



PROVINCE OF EAST LANCASHIRE



Circular No. 202

13 July 2020

To: Scribes E
Cc: Chapter DCs
RA Cabinet

Dear Companion Scribe E,

End of the Suspension of Masonic Activities

You will be aware that UGLE/SGC is lifting the suspension of Masonic activities, with effect from 17 July 2020. Direction was issued on 6 July 2020, regarding social distancing and the guidance it is incumbent on us all follow, and which is reiterated herein. Guidance regarding amendments to our Ceremonies can be found by following the links at the foot of this email.

This email is being distributed to all Chapter Scribes E, with a copy being sent to Chapter DCs.

Amendments to Royal Arch Ritual

The principal problems associated with forming a convocation relate to maintaining the required "social distance" (and other Covid-related regulations) whilst maintaining the dignity of the ceremonies in this Order. A number of potential solutions are described below which offer the ability for Chapters to operate, albeit at a restricted level, yet also comply with current social distancing requirements and minimise unnecessary handling (and cleaning) of items within the Chapter. These options also offer an opportunity to reduce the overall time spent in close proximity to others.

These solutions are envisaged as temporary and optional. However, failure to adopt certain changes to the ceremony will prevent most Chapters from being able to open and may unnecessarily increase risks to those present. Further information will be sent to Grand Superintendents to assist with their implementation at a local level.

Companions are reminded that compliance with all relevant Government requirements and local rules issued by their place of meeting are essential, and any deliberate disregard of these requirements should be regarded as activity which may bring Freemasonry into disrepute and therefore, result in disciplinary action.

There is considerable scope for local variation in the management of a convocation, but the following points are strongly recommended and should be capable of being easily integrated into most workings.

Provincial Secretariat, Rossendale Masonic Hall, Ashday Lea, Haslingden Road,
Rawtenstall, Rossendale BB4 6QX

Telephone: 01706 833170 Email: secretariat@eastlancsmasons.org.uk

Visit: www.pglel.co.uk Twitter: @pglel Facebook: pglel



Regalia and Furniture:

There are many more items in use than in the Craft. These are all capable of transmitting infection when handled and may require cleaning before and after the meeting.

To reduce such problems, it is considered acceptable for Companions to wear only their personal regalia; **it is not considered necessary for officers' collars, robes and surplices to be worn, and even sceptres can be dispensed with if desired.** Instead, such items can be placed near to the seat occupied by the individual Principal or Officer. A general recommendation is that only one person should handle any individual item during the course of a convocation.

Depending on the size of the room and the nature of the ceremony being conducted, it may also be desirable to minimise the number of items on or around the floorcloth. Only the following are to be regarded as absolutely essential to open any convocation: the three Great Lights (i.e. VSL and the Square and Compasses) and the Pedestal. If it is desired to use the banners of the twelve tribes, they might be placed behind seats (as in Grand Chapter) or against the north and south walls of the room, thereby maximising the available floor space.

General Business:

The practice of circulating minutes and other paperwork beforehand is advised. Effective consultation with members about matters of business before each meeting will also reduce the time required for the meeting.

Ceremony of Exaltation:

At present an Exaltation is not considered possible without compromising the enormous impact of the ceremony on the candidate. However, in response to constantly changing Government guidelines, certain options are still being considered.

Information regarding the Opening & Closing of the Chapter and Installation Ceremony can be obtained by following the relevant links below this message.

Yours sincerely and fraternally,
Andrew Holland
Provincial Grand Scribe E

The links to Ceremonies will not be placed on the Provincial website, but are available from the Scribe E