



# TALAITH SAERYDDOL DE CYMRU MASONIC PROVINCE OF SOUTH WALES

13<sup>th</sup> March 2020

Distribution:

Members of the Masonic Province of South Wales

Provincial Heads of Progressive Orders

Representatives of Masonic Centres within the Province

Dear Brother and Companion,

Consequent to the Coronavirus Update issued by Dr David Staples FRCP, CEO and Grand Secretary of the United Grand Lodge of England (UGLE) earlier today, the Joint Executive met this morning at Cardiff Masonic Hall to discuss the impact on our Province and its Brethren and Companions.

The Joint Executive fully supports and reiterates the advice issued by UGLE. Namely:

- That those over the age of 65 years old, and those with hypertension, heart disease, lung disease or diabetes should not attend Lodge and Chapter meetings for the foreseeable future.
- That meetings of over 100 members should not take place.

The Right Worshipful Provincial Grand Master and Most Excellent Grand Superintendent wish to be clear; they do not want Brethren and Companions in the groups identified by UGLE to attend meetings due to the risk to their health and well-being. They understand that meetings may need to be abandoned as a result of these measures but wish to reiterate that the Book of Constitutions (Rule 137.) states that there is no power to cancel any regular meeting. If Dispensations are required to cover changes during this period, there will be no fee levied by Province. Advice on abandoning meetings has been previously circulated by UGLE and is repeated at the end of this document (pages 4 – 6).

As a result of these measures the Joint Executive will adopt a similar approach. Until you are advised differently, the Executive will not attend Installation meetings. There are two reasons for this. First, several members of the Joint Executive fall into the categories highlighted by UGLE; second, Provincial Teams travelling the length and breadth of the Province may contribute to further spreading and worsening of the outbreak. Lodges and

The Provincial Office, 5 Guildford Street, Cardiff, CF10 2HL

**Telephone:** 029 2043 3688 **Email:** [office@province.org.uk](mailto:office@province.org.uk)

**www.southwalesmason.com**  @SouthWalesMason  SouthWalesMason





## TALAITH SAERYDDOL DE CYMRU MASONIC PROVINCE OF SOUTH WALES

Chapters with forthcoming Installation meetings will be contacted separately regarding this point.

Several Provincial events will be affected as a result of these measures.

- UGLE and Supreme Grand Chapter (SGC) have not cancelled or postponed the Annual Investitures, as far as we are currently aware these will go ahead as planned. However, the Luncheons hosted by the Right Worshipful Provincial Grand Master and Most Excellent Grand Superintendent at the Imperial Hotel will be cancelled. Brethren and Companions who have already paid will be issued with a full refund in due course.
- Several of our Kindred Provinces have today cancelled their annual meetings and I can confirm that our Annual Provincial Celebration, to include the Annual Meetings of Provincial Grand Lodge and Provincial Grand Chapter, will not take place on Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> June 2020. The Joint Executive understands that this will be very disappointing to many Brethren and Companions, but health and well-being must be the priority. Appointment and Promotion letters are currently in the postal system. It is important to note that these new ranks will take effect on 27<sup>th</sup> June 2020, and that the luncheon booking form should not be returned to the Provincial Office. We will find a way of celebrating the achievement of these ranks later in the year.

The Provincial Grand Superintendent of Works will hold a meeting with representatives of the Masonic Centres within the Province in due course in order to ensure that appropriate systems of support are in place. The Provincial Grand Almoner will undertake similar work with his team to ensure that those Brethren and Companions that require additional help will receive it.

Following the example set by Freemasons' Hall in London the Provincial Office will close to visitors, and volunteers will be asked to work from home until further notice. Brethren and Companions wishing to contact the Provincial Secretariat are asked to do so by email via [office@province.org.uk](mailto:office@province.org.uk) providing full details of their inquiry.

This is clearly a time of great uncertainty and change. Many Lodges and Chapters will have to adapt in order to comply with the requirements set out by the Book of Constitutions, but the advice is clear. The health, well-being and safety of our Members is paramount.





## TALAITH SAERYDDOL DE CYMRU MASONIC PROVINCE OF SOUTH WALES

All other factors are of secondary consideration. A relaxed attitude to this outbreak is not appropriate when the age demographic of our Province is considered. The situation is clearly evolving daily, and we will issue further advice where appropriate; possibly in addition to that issued by the Government and UGLE.

Please think of your Brethren, Companions and family at this time, especially those who may be more vulnerable to illness, and perhaps telephone them to see how they are coping.

Fraternal regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Ben', is placed over a light blue rectangular background.

Ben Gait  
Provincial Grand Secretary/Scribe E.



Rule 137, Book of Constitutions provides that there is no power to cancel a regular meeting of a Lodge.

The Rule is made for normal conditions, and at some future date – **which has not yet been reached** – necessity may dictate that external events override it.



Lodges should therefore for the time being be summoned in the usual way. The quorum for a valid meeting of a Lodge is five (**excluding the Tyler and any candidate**), of whom one must be an Installed Master, and two must be members of the Lodge concerned; it is not a requirement that the Installed Master be a member of the Lodge. If on the day of the meeting a quorum cannot be achieved, the meeting **must** be abandoned, and a note entered in the Minute Book. “The regular meeting of the Lodge on .....day .... March, 2020 was duly called in accordance with the attached summons. Owing to the incidence of the coronavirus the required number of Brethren to open the Lodge could not be assembled and the meeting was abandoned” is the wording suggested.





If the meeting abandoned is that for the election of the Master, the final paragraph of Rule 106 will govern the situation. If the meeting is that for the Installation Rule 108 will apply.



Consideration should also be given to moving the date of a meeting by not more than 28 days by dispensation under Rule 139(c). Care should, however, be exercised in such a situation that Rule 172 (which requires a minimum interval of 28 days between initiation and passing, and between passing and raising) is not inadvertently infringed.



Lodges should not be concerned that, if a meeting has to be abandoned in these circumstances, it may affect their entitlement to a Centenary or Bi-Centenary Warrant in the future; there are many precedents for an enforced break in continuity of working being disregarded by the Grand Master when deciding whether to grant such a Warrant.



Similar considerations will apply in relation to Chapters.

