



April 2020



It is difficult not to recognise that the one issue dominating not only freemasonry today, but all of news is the coronavirus, COVID-19.

Since the beginning of this year, the world has changed and unlike recent viruses that have impacted our lives, such as MERS, SARS and the Swine Flu, none had the far-reaching impacts on our lives as this dreadful virus will have for many years to come. Our health, the way we live, our daily routines, the economic impact on the country and importantly the financial impact for many of us will be felt for many months of not years. We are living the nightmare that we have only previously experienced in futuristic movies, limited only by the imagination of authors, script writers and film directors.

Every day, new history is being written; the number of confirmed cases, those that are in intensive care, and those around the world that have sadly lost their lives. However, we must also celebrate those that have been saved and that have recovered from this dreadful infection.

The way we interact and live our normal lives has been severely scarred and like any deep wound, it will take some time to heal and recover, sadly for some the scars will last a lifetime.

I pray that all our members, our families, friends and acquaintances all get through this unscathed. I pray that when the meetings of our Lodges resume, we will all be present and I know that when we greet each other for the first time, there will be an even stronger sense of true brotherhood amongst us.

1. Remember, to be kind and considerate to others. Give each other a call and if you're under 70, offer to get provisions for others. Shopping can take hours and so this can be a stressful experience – especially for those that will have difficulty

waiting in what are often long and seemingly endless queues.

2. Do not be complacent and think that it will be OK to call on a friend, a neighbour or family member outside your 'bubble' – it's not. Give them a call though to see how they're doing. Stay in touch.
3. Please wash your hands regularly – especially you've just done the shopping. Don't forget that everything you touch when you get home has to be cleaned with soap, detergent or a sanitiser including door knobs, handles and light switches.



Quarterly Communications 27th December, 2019

On the 27th December the Quarterly Communications of Grand Lodge took place at Freemasons Hall. In the absence of the Grand Master and Deputy Grand Master, the RW Assistant Grand Master, RW Bro. Leslie Nixon was on the Throne.

Assistant Grand Master



R.W.Bro. Leslie J. Nixon

Report from Grand Council

A number of reports from the Grand Masters Council were received including a Warrant to establish a new Lodge in Sierra Leone, as well as the following new Grand Lodges were recognised: Montenegro, Congo, State of Espiritu Santo, Minas Gerais, Maryland, State of Rio Janeiro, Orient of Santa Catarina, Parana, State of Bahia, Republic of Liberia, and Ukraine. All were confirmed.



Installation of Grand Officers for 2020

The Grand Master, M.W. Bro Douglas T. Grey was proclaimed and saluted along with the other officers of Grand Lodge.

Vision 2020 – The Grand Master’s Festival

The following excerpts have been taken from the report submitted by W. Bro Ian Kilpatrick:

To date (27 Dec, 2019) €86,000 had been lodged to the accounts which included early lodgements from lodges and provinces overseas. A further update will be given later in this publication.

Grand Lodge also continues to be active in preparations of headline events to be held during 2020.



The Grand Master’s Council

The last Grand Master’s Council was held on 18th February 2020. Below are points from the Minutes from that meeting.

Media Policy

A draft Media Policy will be considered by the Grand Masters Cabinet and presented to the next Grand Masters Council meeting for consideration.

By-Law Amendments

The following By-Law amendments were approved:

- Lodge No. 187, Manorhamilton
- **Lodge No. 348, Auckland, New Zealand**
- Lodge No. 593, Randalstown
- Lodge No. 756, Galwally House
- Lodge No. 993, Newtownabbey



Vision 2020

Grand Masters Festival

W. Bro. Ian Kirkpatrick presented his report to the Grand Masters Council as follows:

- At this time, we have lodged approximately €120,000. The estimated total is expected to be in the region of €500,000.
- Whilst €500,000 is a substantial sum it falls short of the original aspiration of around €1,000,000.

Actions to be taken

- Reports at each Provincial Grand Lodge meeting.
- Use the website in particular the events information.
- Increase the ‘productivity’ of each team PRO to maximise exposure through publications.

Distribution of funds

- A preliminary distribution of funds raised during September to utilise publicity not only through our own channels but those of each charity.

Website

- Although the website is not being used to best effect, it is noted that the most recent postings were provided by W. Bro. Kirkpatrick

Grand Lodge will be arranging a number of fundraising events including:

- Dundalk Musical Society Concert
- Flower Festival and Craft Fair



CRM (Salesforce - Client Relationship Management System)

David Robinson, Administration and Support Manager presented an overview on the progress of the population of Salesforce.

The report identified the areas where Lodge Secretaries have not engaged, and the Provincial Grand Masters were strongly encouraged to follow up with all outstanding Lodges immediately.

It was agreed that “Leave to Install” will not be issued if the Officers elect records are not up to date.

Provincial Grand Masters were requested to ensure that a Brother being appointed to any committee that his details were up to date on Salesforce including his date of birth and email address and telephone numbers.

It was agreed that no appointment would be considered at Provincial of Grand Lodge level if this basic information is not available.

About Grand Lodge

The Grand Lodge of Ireland is the institution which governs the Masonic Fraternity within the Island of Ireland and in a number of Provinces overseas. Irish Freemasonry boasts approximately 27,000 members around the globe.



Website, Web Hosting & Social Media

Grand Lodge Website

David Robinson, Administration and Support Manager presented an overview of the Communities Area, which will shortly be launched to the Membership. Over 300 Members have applied for and been given access.

Guidance for the use of Social Media

Social media platforms have become an increasingly popular channel for communication in the 21st century. They provide ways to share content with a wide audience, and as such are tools for sharing information about Freemasonry and Masonic activities. However, as with any powerful tool, social media needs to be used with caution, as incorrect use can have a damaging impact on Freemasonry's public image, and therefore on Freemasonry itself.

The guidance applies to posts made by Freemasons on all social media platforms. The term 'post' refers to any action taken on social media, whether sharing original content, making a comment on content someone else has shared (including 'liking' Facebook posts and Tweets), or re-sharing content to one's own connections.

Education Committee

The Education Committee is now meeting regularly along with the various sub-groups in preparing a programme including documentation covering from the time an individual expresses an interest in joining Freemasonry up until he receives his Master Masons Degree. It is expected to have draft documentation available for the Cabinets consideration during the last quarter of 2020.



The Irish Freemasons
Young Musician of the Year



The Irish Freemasons Young Musician of the Year Competition

The Irish Freemasons Young Musician of the Year Competition will take place on Thursday, 8th and Saturday, 10th October 2020.

Cancellations of Grand Lodge

The next meeting of the Grand Master's Council scheduled for Thursday, 30th April 2020 is cancelled and it is hoped that the following meeting scheduled for 1st September 2020 will go ahead.

Grand Master's Conference

Grand Master's Conference scheduled for 5th June is also postponed until further notice

Grand Lodge Communications 4th June

The Grand Lodge meeting scheduled for 4th June 2020 is cancelled with the next meeting of Grand Lodge is scheduled to take place on Saturday, 3rd October 2020 at The Hilton Hotel, Carrickfergus.

As of 25th March, the office was closed, however all staff are working from home and have access to their emails. We anticipate that most of the administrative activities will continue as heretofore, however there may be some delays and Grand Lodge asked for our patience.

News from around the Province



Further guidance on dealing with Masonic administration during this period of Suspension.

On the 13th March, I wrote to you to confirm a General Suspension of all Masonic Activity in response to the spread of COVID-19.

This suspension will of course, create a variety of issues relating to the administration of our Lodges. This note supersedes all previous guidance on the abandonment and postponement of meetings.

Lodges meetings and the conferring of Degrees

Any Irish Order due to meet during the period of the suspension does not need to issue a summons for the meeting(s) but should place a copy of the General Suspension letter in the Minute Book where the minutes of the missed meeting(s) would be.

When the suspension ends, a further letter will be circulated informing Brethren that meetings can resume. A copy of this letter should be entered in the Minute Book and the Lodge will resume meetings in accordance with its By Laws. There will be no need to reschedule any meeting(s) which would have occurred during the period of the suspension.

If the Lodge feels there is enough of a backlog of work to require additional meeting(s) this can be dealt with as an Emergency Meeting(s) for which no Dispensation will be required.

Election of Officers and Installation meetings

Following a recent meeting of the Grand Masters Cabinet by video conference, it was agreed that all Brethren elected or appointed to office to serve for the year 2019/2020 will continue in office until the end of 2020/2021.

This will eliminate the requirement for the election of Officers for 2020/2021.

Details of how to conduct the Installation of Officers for 2021 will be issued in due course. Needless to say this directive will override any other GL Law.

This directive includes:

- Provincial Grand Lodge Officers
- Subordinate Lodge Officers
- Committees
- Boards of General Purposes



Provincial Grand Lodge Communication meetings

With regards to our Half-Yearly Communications meeting, the Provincial Grand Secretary will insert a copy of the General Suspension Letter in the Minute Book with a note stating that 'the Half Yearly Meeting of the Province on 28 March 2020 was not held owing to the General Suspension of All Masonic Activity issued by the Provincial Grand Master on 13 March 2020'.



Conferral of Honorary Rank

It is normal practice that at our Half Yearly Communications meeting, deserving Brethren of the Province, who have been considered by Grand Lodge to merit receiving Honorary Past Grand Rank, have been notified of their appointment by email and will assume their new ranks with effect from the date the Investiture meeting should have taken place.

Investiture of their Grand rank collarette will take place at the next Communication meeting of the Province. I am sure that you will join us all in congratulating the following:

- VW Bro. Stu Warrington Lodge St Patrick No. 468
Hon. Past Grand Almoner
- VW Bro. Craig Barnett, Ara Lodge No. 348, Hon.
Past Grand Steward
- VW Bro. Jon Southwick, Ara Lodge No. 348, Hon.
Past Grand Sword Bearer

Meeting of the Board of General Purposes

As our scheduled meeting of the Board of General Purposes was unable to take place as planned, and if future meetings are also unable to take place, it will be necessary for the Board to hold a truncated meeting later in the year in order to address various

administrative matters including the approval of Lodge Officers and the election of the Provincial Grand Officers.

If anybody wishes to bring a matter before the Board, this should still be directed to the Provincial Grand Secretary.

I hope this further guidance clarifies what needs to be done following the start of the General Suspension. If you have any additional questions or encounter situations that are not covered by the above guidance, please get in touch with the Provincial Grand Secretary.

LODGE OF LIGHT No. 454

1870 - 2020



150th Anniversary

To coincide without ½ Yearly Communications, we were also planning to celebrate the 150th celebrations of the Lodge of Light.

A great deal of work had gone into this very special occasion by the Master and brethren of the Lodge. Including a sumptuous dinner. This event was to be well supported by brethren and partners for all four Constitutions with numbers only being capped at 110 for health and safety reasons.

It is with deep sadness that this event has had to be postponed, but I am sure you will all join with me on the 27th April to raise a glass and congratulate the Lodge on its sesquicentennial anniversary. An event which we hope we will all be observing later in the year.



Teddies for Loving Care



Full Steam Ahead

Almost exactly two years ago, we gave away our first trial batch of teddies in Gisborne and, shortly thereafter, officially launched in Rotorua. And, last Christmas, we placed teddies in Children's Wards throughout the North Island.

At the start of 2019, we talked with Richard Taylor, District Grand Master for the South Island, to explore ways we could work with his District and it is great to be able to report we now have a consistent programme right across New Zealand and a South Island representative on the Board of Trustees.

We organised a Teddy Tiki Tour round the South Island to make sure teddies were available in every hospital and rural emergency unit from Nelson to Invercargill.

Our teddies are now used in nearly every city and regional centre and as at 31st October 2019, we have used over

22,000

That is over 22,000 children who are sick and injured, in pain or in distress who have received a teddy bear to comfort them. We will soon need to order more teddies to keep the programme running through 2020 and beyond.



"Just a quick note to say how appreciative my son and I were for the teddy (now named Teddy Ted) he received on the weekend. What a fantastic charity. It provided him with the extra bit of reassurance and comfort when he needed it. Thanks Andrea"

"Our nurses find it really helpful to have the teddy bears available – it can just make so much difference"

Please be kind and thoughtful to others during this period of difficulty. I hope and pray that you and your nearest and dearest stay safe and in good health during this challenging time and I also look forward to us enjoying each other's company again soon.

Yours sincerely and fraternally,

RW Bro. AG McGregor
Provincial Grand Master.