

## 29th May 2020 - Latest from Grand Lodge



The Grand Lodge of Antient Free and Accepted Masons of Scotland  
William Ramsay McGhee, M.St.J., D.L., Grand Master Mason

29 May 2020

Brethren

Despite the lockdown, the past week has been a busy one behind the scenes. The Information and Communications Committee issued new guidelines for the use of Zoom and similar platforms. Information has been circulated by the Benevolence and Care Committee regarding the Covid-19 Challenge Appeal and on Wednesday I chaired the annual Tripartite Meeting via Zoom.

The Scottish Constitution Freemasonry Supports Facebook page continues to grow. Between the page and the Covid-19 Challenge Appeal, we are beginning to see a picture emerging that shows magnificent support being given to local communities by Scottish Freemasons around the world. My sincere thanks to all for your commitment, consideration and care toward those who are struggling at this time.

Members 1778

Individual Posts 133

Members who have posted 93

Lodges Mentioned in posts 92

Provinces represented 26

Districts/Superintendence's etc. 6

Total Identifiable Monetary £112,527

The success of this group would not have been possible without the efforts of those Brethren who contributed in developing the group and continue to promote and manage its membership and content.

Our thanks are extended to the team which is made up of the following Brethren:

Administrators: Bro. Jim Ellis PGM Linlithgowshire, Bro. Dougie Fergie PGM East Lothian

Moderators: Bro. Alex Craib PM Old Inverness Kilwinning St John's No. 6, Bro. David Campbell Treasurer, the Lodge of Dunbar Castle No. 75, Bro. Kevin Taggart PM Lodge Buchan St. John No. 636 and Findlay Ross PM Lodge Wemyss No.777.

The direct link is- <https://www.facebook.com/groups/Scottish.Constitution.Freemasonry.Supports/>

Over the past number of weeks, I have received many enquiries from home and abroad regarding several issues. I hope that the following will clarify matters for everyone.

**Can we use Zoom to nominate and elect Office-bearers?**

The answer is no. The main reason is that not all members can communicate through technology. The nomination and election of Office-bearers is an important event in the life of any Lodge and will be done, in open Lodge, as and when we can get back. If necessary, I will look favourably on granting dispensation to hold the nomination and election of Office-bearers on the same day as the Installation.

**If our National Government allow meetings can we go ahead, or do we need permission from Grand Lodge?**

At the outset of Covid-19, Grand Lodge suspended all Masonic activity until further notice – we did not use a specific date. If your national Government allows meetings to take place, please start to do so provided you remain within the Government guidelines

**Can we ballot for candidates who have gone through the Enquiry Committee on the night of their Initiation?**

If there are extenuating circumstances, I would consider dispensation, but I'd much prefer if, when we do get back, that all Lodges consider starting with a business meeting rather than the conferring of degrees. This will allow a catch up with all the issues that will have accumulated. Any Ballots can therefore be carried out at such a Regular meeting.

**Will Grand Lodge give all Lodges a year without paying annual fees?**

The answer is no. First, that would require a motion to be placed in front of Grand Lodge and it is becoming less likely that there will be a meeting of Grand lodge this year. We would ask that the Brethren continue to pay their Test Fees as normal. Each Lodge pays an annual Capitation Fee of £33 per member to Grand Lodge. In the majority of Lodges but not all, that amount is included in the annual Test Fee. It is important therefore that Brethren continue to pay their Test Fee in order that the Lodge receives its portion and that Provincial or District Lodges receive their portion. We do acknowledge and appreciate that there may be individual Brethren who, as a result of Covid-19 are experiencing extreme hardship. It is expected that the Lodge, the Province or District and Grand Lodge would all pull together to assist Brethren and their families who experience such hardship but for the vast majority we would ask that they support their Lodge in particular, Freemasonry in general by paying their annual dues.

**Can we interview Candidates using Zoom or similar?**

The answer is no. It is imperative that candidates are able to meet, in person, with the Enquiry Committee. Indeed, almost a year ago the Administration Committee agreed that Enquiry Committees could not use electronic interviews and that decision was endorsed by Grand Lodge at the regular Communication of Grand Lodge on Thursday 31st October 2019.

I hope that will help with your decision making. I will include other questions in future Updates.

Please remember for any urgent issues whether at home or abroad – you can contact Grand Lodge on the following numbers - Dawn Oliff - 07464 683630, Sue Williams 07881 440272 and Andrew Paterson 07787 217772. Emails to Sue at [pa@grandlodgescotland.org](mailto:pa@grandlodgescotland.org) will also be picked up and forwarded to the correct person.

Please take care of yourselves and each other – stay safe.

Kindest regards to you all.

Ramsay McGhee  
Grand Master Mason