



Grand Secretary's Office
Mark Masons' Hall
86 St James's Street, London, SW1A 1PL

Sent via E-mail

16 July 2021

To: Members of all Mark Masons' Hall Orders in England

Dear Sir and Brother

Changing Covid rules with effect from 19 July 2021

Earlier this week, the Prime Minister announced that from next Monday, England would move to Step 4 of the roadmap for exiting lockdown and it is significant that in acknowledging that the government's four tests for easing Covid-19 restrictions have been met, he emphasised the importance of caution and personal responsibility.

This latest easing of restrictions will provide a much-needed boost to those eager to resume face to face meetings which is why we have decided not to impose any restrictions over and above those required by law. However, we would recommend that you continue to follow best practice by making use of hand sanitising equipment, where provided.

The decision to resume attendance at face-to-face meetings is yours to make, having regard to your personal circumstances. No individual should feel pressurised into attending and where Units are unable to meet for the time being, the Virtual Business Meeting scheme will be available so that administrative business can be transacted.

- *Face coverings* – the legal requirement to wear a face covering in most settings reverts to guidance from 19 July. Consequently, it will be a matter of personal choice whether you wear a face covering when attending meetings unless the host venue mandates otherwise.
- *Ceremonial guidance* – the changes to the ceremonies we introduced in August 2020 (including the specific restrictions in the Red Cross of Constantine and Allied Masonic Degrees) should be discontinued as soon as is practicable after 19 July, except where local legal requirements are imposed in relation to matters such as social distancing.

A candidate for any Degree must be made aware that there will be some physical contact during the ceremony he is about to take part in, so that he can make an informed decision about whether to proceed or not.

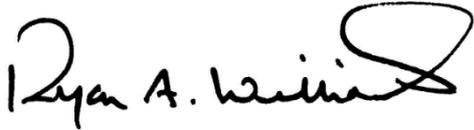
- *Festive Boards* – may resume in the usual format.

- *Singing* – will be permitted at Masonic meetings from 19 July, but it is recommended that the meeting room is suitably ventilated in order to minimise the risk of transmission of the virus.

The Covid-19 Situation in England is constantly changing and may require the government to alter its response periodically. It is essential, therefore, that you comply with all relevant legal requirements that may be in force from time to time.

Whilst welcoming the changes that are taking place next week, we must remember that there will be some who will not view the situation so positively. Every effort must be made to accommodate those who are more cautious by always taking a pragmatic and common-sense approach.

With fraternal regards and best wishes.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ryan A. Williams". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end of the last name.

R.W.Bro. Ryan A Williams, P.G.J.W.
Grand Secretary