



## KENSINGTON PALACE

On 17 March 2020, jointly with the United Grand Lodge of England, the Supreme Council of the Ancient & Accepted Rite and the Grand Lodge of Scotland, the Grand Secretary issued a Notice of General Suspension of all Masonic Activity for a period of four months.

During the last six weeks we have seen an unprecedented response from members of the Mark Degree to requests for assistance from many organisations engaged in the fight against Covid-19 and we have been responding to the needs of the vulnerable within our society. The Mark Benevolent Fund is providing financial support to initiatives which have included: Essex Sunday Lunch Project; Keystone Food Boxes, Leicestershire & Rutland; Somerset Food Banks; and the production of Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) for distribution to Mark Provinces. In addition, there have been many, many more local initiatives funded and operated by Mark Provinces and Districts.

The need to communicate with one another has never been more necessary and it has been heartening to see how Brethren have embraced previously unfamiliar technology to enable them to hold business meetings and keep in touch. Newsletters, social media and video conferencing are just some of the ways you have been communicating over and above simply picking up the telephone to check if a Brother is in good order.

Whilst it is still too early to assess the impact that the pandemic will have on our membership, I am pleased to report that our numbers are holding up well. Ensuring that Brethren feel connected and that Freemasonry is relevant in these difficult times will be key to the way we emerge from the pandemic safe and in good health.

I am deeply grateful to the Pro Grand Master, Deputy Grand Master and Assistant Grand Master for their support and encouragement during these unprecedented times; and the staff at Mark Masons' Hall are much to be praised for the way they seamlessly made the transition to remote working whilst maintaining the administration of the Order.

On a more positive note, it is encouraging to see that at least two of our Districts overseas, Hong Kong and Cyprus, will shortly be able to resume masonic meetings. Let us hope it is not too long before more of our Brethren are able to resume their enjoyment of Mark Masonry.

HRH Prince Michael of Kent GCVO  
Grand Master