

Most Illustrious Grand Master and Companions welcome to our first VBM in fact our first meeting since 2019 and may I say how well you are all looking.

Firstly, let me echo the sentiments of our Grand Master and congratulate those appointed and promoted at Grand Council in April R Ill Companion James Newman Grand Chancellor and Ill Comp Robert (Bob) Patrick Grand Manciple.

Promotions for Ill Companions Stephen Priestley to Past Grand Captain of the Guard and Neil Webster to Past Grand Conductor of the Council and I crave the indulgence of Fraser McPherson, Paul Cowley, a member of our Middlesburg Council to Past Grand Conductor of the Council.

I would also like thank all my District officers that I have appointed and re-appointed and thank them continuing in Office for another year.

Companions the District is in good health, and I thank you all for your continued support of the District and the Councils.

Financially we are sound and this year I will not be asking the Councils for District dues or my District Officers for fees of honour.

On the subject of Charity, I would like to thank the companions for allowing me to support members of the Pharmacy unit at Scarborough Hospital who are taking part in the Yorkshire Three Peaks Challenge to raise money for a new Fatal and Neo Natal Unit and in conjunction with the Mark PGM Companion Bob Clancey We have paid their registration fee of £400.00 to help them on their way.

I would also like to thank all at MMH for the help, assistance and guidance through this Pandemic which thankfully is coming to an end and we will soon be able to resume our meetings in the traditional manner and I and my officers can't wait to join you especially as we have eight(8) candidates waiting in the wings all of whom have been kept in touch with during the Pandemic To that end the suspension of Council Meetings will end on the 21<sup>st</sup> June subject to Government Guidelines and I look forward to being able to meet in the traditional manner once again.

My thanks to Ill Comp Graham Fenwick for hosting the meeting and my Recorder Tom Spinks for all their hard work behind the scenes and keeping me straight and up to date.

On a personal note, I was invited by Ill Comp David Roach the Intendant General of the Red Cross to give a 10min talk to the members on the history of Cryptic Masonry which I was on to happy to accept and earlier this year I received a similar request from the editor of the Cleveland Flyer a Mark publication to write an article on the history and background of our Order.

As you know my deputy Stephen stood down today Stephen has been in office since our Constitution in 2014 when I appointed him my PCW since then he has worked tirelessly for and on behalf of our District being active in the preparation and consecration of our two new councils and I thank him most sincerely for all his hard work and support, he says he needs a rest, but he holds office in five of our Councils so good luck with that one. Stephen, you have been a great ally and I thank you.

It only remains for me to thank you all for being here, take care and God Bless you all.