Brother Registrars,

Following a recent meeting with the Rulers of this Province I have been asked to clarify several issues that are affecting the running of this Province.

1. **HONORARY MEMBERSHIP**

Over the last year a number of Preceptories have conferred Honorary membership on several of their knights, often with little, or no, notice being given. In almost all these cases each Preceptory has conducted the procedure to their own interpretation.

When I became Vice-Chancellor I followed the precedent I inherited from my predecessors.

Stage 1 of the procedure of electing Honorary members was that a knight, at the appropriate stage of a Preceptory meeting, stood up and gave a Notice of Motion that at the **next** meeting of the Preceptory he would propose that X be made an Honorary member. Details of the Notice of Motion would be entered into the minutes of the meeting. The next summons of the Preceptory would then carry a Proposal, as a separate item, not just lost under general business. This was to give all members, including those not on e-mail, the chance to consider the Proposal and make their views known through the Registrar, before the meeting.

At Stage 2 a ballot would be taken at the **nex**t meeting.

If successful, the elected member should be notified in writing and a Member Notification Form sent to the Provincial Vice-Chancellor. In most cases neither of these have been done. The Vice-Chancellor needs the MNF to amend the Provincial Database and the MMH Keystone Database. To accept an Honorary membership a member is deemed to have resigned from the Preceptory. If this stage is omitted the member remains on the current members list at MMH and the Preceptory will be liable for further Great Priory Dues levied on next 31 August deadline date.

Having raised issues with many of you for using your own procedures I did some research and found there is no formal procedure listed in the KT Statutes for electing Honorary members. Standard Masonic practice has been that if your Order does not expressly state how a Procedure is to be handled then we defer to the Craft Book of Regulations and Constitutions.

The Deputy Great Vice-Chancellor recently confirmed that there was no KT Statute covering Honorary membership, and also confirmed that in such cases we defer to Craft Rules and Regulations, in this case Rule 167.

Rule 167, items to be observed;-

* after notice placed on the summons
* has been a regular subscriber, including the previous 12 months
* his election shall be voted on by ballot and declared carried, unless 3 or more BLACK BALLS appear against it (– ballot box to be used )
* cannot make or vote upon any proposition
* cannot hold any office.

**It is clear that the voting method is by ballot box**; not by show of hands; or the practice of a knight proposing that the ballot is left in the hands of the Eminent Preceptor, which is starting to creep in.

In a recent meeting with the Provincial Prior and the Provincial Sub-Prior the issue of Honorary members was discussed at length and they have decreed that the tradition method used in this Province, clearly stated above, shall be used for electing all Honorary members, without variation.

1. **PROVISION OF PRECEPTORY MINUTES**

Some years ago it was the common practice in the Province for the Minutes of each Preceptory to be forwarded, in a timely manner, to the Provincial Vice-Chancellor. This practice in general is ignored by many Preceptories; probably as this requirement has not been passed on to successive Registrars. Information contained in the minutes is needed to assist with the running of the Province. During, and since the Covid pandemic, MMH introduced many extra procedures and set up pop-ups on their database, which unless they were answered would not allow further action to be taken.

For example,

1. MMH are keen to see that no unqualified Knight is installed as Eminent Preceptor and so when I complete Installations Returns on the Keystone database at MMH I have to confirm if the Preceptor, First and Second Constables were present and actually Invested as such.
2. When I select the new Eminent Preceptor’s name from the drop-down of members a pop-up demands to know at which meeting he was elected as Eminent Preceptor, or the Installation Return cannot be submitted.
3. Pre-Covid, when the Provincial Vice-Chancellor received a Member Notification Forms giving a resignation, the knight’s name was simply removed from Keystone. In an attempt to reduce resignations, the act of resignation became a two-stage process. When the details of the MNF are now entered on Keystone the member’s file shows that ‘Resignation Received’ in bold type and the date. A member can now only be resigned at stage 2 once the minutes have recorded that the member’s resignation has been brought to the members attention in an open Preceptory. Another pop-up asks for the date of the meeting at which the resignation was reported.

The above are just a few examples of the information I need from you.

To that end, the Rulers have decreed that the routine practice of Minutes being forwarded to the Vice-Chancellor re-commences immediately.

**3) PROVISION OF PRECEPTORY ACCOUNTS**

Provincial By-Law No 8 states that ‘Immediately after the Preceptory Accounts have been approved by the Preceptory one copy shall be sent to the Provincial Prior and one copy each to the Provincial Chancellor and Provincial Vice-Chancellor.’

Brother Registrars, this simply does not happen. Rarely do I receive accounts from you, which results in a flurry of requests from me around August when I am charged with providing the Provincial Prior with a full set of Preceptory accounts for him to produce his financial report for the Grand Master at the Provincial Prior’s Conference.

This state of affairs cannot continue and the Rulers have decreed that By-Law 8 is complied with, within the time specified.

1. **PAPERWORK**
2. Our Provincial Application forms state that the name of the Candidate must be submitted to the Provincial Prior, through the Vice-Chancellor, at least 14 days before issuing the summons and nothing can go on the summons until the Approval from the Provincial Prior has been received.

Many membership applications are being submitted a few days before the meeting and Registrars expect everything to fall into place.

**4. Continued**

The Registrars Information Sheet sets out the procedure for submitting applications for new members. There is no guarantee that the Approval from the Provincial Prior will be instant!

Please factor this timescale into your projections.

1. Quite a few documents submitted to Province are out of date, sometimes copies are of poor quality and forms are incomplete. These forms will be returned.to you.
2. Approvals for new members sent to Registrars contain the paragraph;-

‘Please ensure that Form KTMem V.1.23 and a cheque payable to G.L.M.M.M. (Candidate rate/Joining member rate), **or** confirmation of a BACS registration payment to MMH with details, are sent to me IMMEDIATELY after a favourable ballot has been taken for this Knight. Should the ballot be unfavourable, I must be informed without delay.’

In the past I have been left chasing for both.

Registrations will inevitably be delayed.

V.E.Kt. Keith Tonge P.Gt.Reg.

Provincial Vice-Chancellor

20 February 2024.