



The Grand Lodge of Antient Free and Accepted Masons of Scotland

William Ramsay McGhee, OStJ, D.L., Grand Master Mason

Brethren,

I am indebted to Brother Dr Douglas Nicol, PGM of Aberdeenshire East for the following information regarding the Coronavirus vaccine.

“Vaccines have been developed and are now being released in the UK, and the hope is that most of us may be vaccinated by early Summer. This will assist us revert to a degree of normality and I encourage you and your families to take advantage of them.

There are two vaccines which are being released in the UK which work in different ways.

- 1) The Oxford vaccine manufactured by Astra Zeneca uses well-established technology.
- 2) The Pfizer and Moderna vaccines use a new technique developed over the last year which has been thoroughly tested in spite of the short time frame.

Although enough vaccine will eventually be available to protect us, I am becoming **very** concerned about "fake news" regarding the vaccine and its safety currently circulating on social media. This includes masonic media, where the alleged dangers of vaccination are proffered. These include -

- 1) “It hasn't been tested enough and we are going to suffer side effects later”.
- 2) “The vaccine will take over the cells of our bodies and cause serious conditions in future”
- 3) “The vaccine contains microchips which will allow governments to control us”.
- 4) “The vaccine is made from animal or aborted human foetus material”
- 5) “Comments also include allegations that Governments are not being honest with us”.

Scientifically there is no evidence for any of these or other similar statements.

I am really anxious that many Brethren, on hearing these reports will refuse the vaccine. I feel strongly that we need a high rate of vaccination to protect Brethren and their families and allow lodges to restart. In my professional opinion, vaccination will ensure greater safety of our members, many of whom are of mature years or suffer chronic ill health. It is said that a figure of 70% is required to achieve appropriate "Herd Immunity" to move towards allowing this. I also feel that it is our duty to be vaccinated not only for our



own safety but for the safety of Lodge members and our families, as not doing so will put ourselves, friends, and family at risk and also prolong this pandemic.

I do appreciate that this new technology can appear to be frightening, but I trust the scientists and can assure you that they are doing their best for us and would not release a vaccine recklessly. Having had experience of seeing what the virus can do to my own patients and having received reports from consultant colleagues who worked in ITUs managing Covid cases, my conclusion is that **I would rather take a risk on a vaccine than seriously risk my life should I develop Covid.**

Please Brethren, when you get the opportunity, **take the vaccine as it may save your life**".

Dr Douglas Nicol, Provincial Grand Master Aberdeenshire East

SCFS

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/Scottish.Constitution.Freemasonry.Supports/>

An additional 33 new members joined the group which now has a membership of 4139 Brethren from not only the Scottish Constitution but from many of our Sister Constitutions throughout the world.

This week saw the total examples of charitable giving recorded within the group rise to 526, submitted by 219 of its members. These updated contributions can now be attributed as to being made on behalf of 276 Lodges, from within 31 Provincial Grand Lodges, 20 District Grand Lodges, Superintendencies and Lodges under the direct supervision of Grand Lodge.

The total identifiable monetary value of the contributions now recorded has risen to £399,368. This represents an average of £12,480 per week to date.

There have been 72,690 individual comments, likes, and other reactions to the group since its inception.

SCFS Overseas Report

- Our Overseas Membership is steadily climbing and is now standing at **1236** Members. New members were welcomed from Lodges in Belgium, East Africa, Sierra Leone and The Gambia, Western Australia Goldfields District.
- **21 International Constitution Members** joined from the Grand Lodge of *New South Wales and A.C.T.*, Grand Lodge of *Norway*, Grand Lodge of *Bulgaria*, *UGLE*, Grand Lodge of *Canada in the Province of Ontario*, Grand Lodge of *Japan*.
- A notable statistic is that 10 Past Masters also joined the group from **Lodge Leonardo Da Vinci, No. 152**, under the *Symbolic Grand Lodge of Paraguay*.
- Extremely interesting posts were received showing the great support being given by Lodge Northcliffe, No. 1086, and Lodge Newfoundland Kilwinning, No. 1754 (Newfoundland and Labrador), Lodge St. Andrew, No. 1140 (Republic of Panama), Lodge Scotia, No. 1323, and Lodge Salisbury Kilwinning, No. 1097 (Zimbabwe), District Grand Lodge of Newfoundland and Labrador, District Grand Lodge and its 10 Lodges (Western Australia)

Both the Strategy Working Group and Grand Committee met this week – two good meetings. The results of the survey were discussed at the Strategy meeting and will greatly assist in preparing both the short term (Covid) Strategy and the long-term strategy – they will also be circulated to District and Provincial Grand Secretaries for local use.

Ramsay McGhee

Grand Master Mason

