

# The Buddy Scheme

improving information flow to the  
Almoner

Probus Reading East Almoner Subcommittee



# Life is not all Rock 'n' Roll



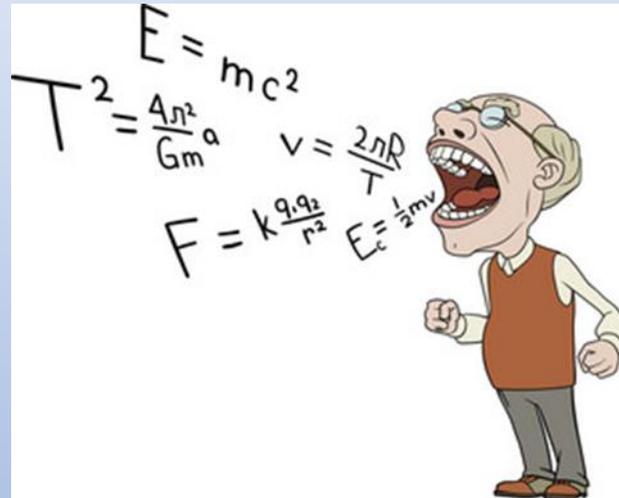
Probus CANNOT turn the clock back

Sometimes Life contains periods of isolation and loneliness



Probus CAN provide friendship and fellowship

The Committee wish to introduce a new Buddy scheme.  
Improving communications about a member who is absent.



**It isn't about communicating sensitive information or complicated stuff**  
but we do need members to tell us when a Buddy is absent or in difficulty.

The Scheme works best when all members are involved



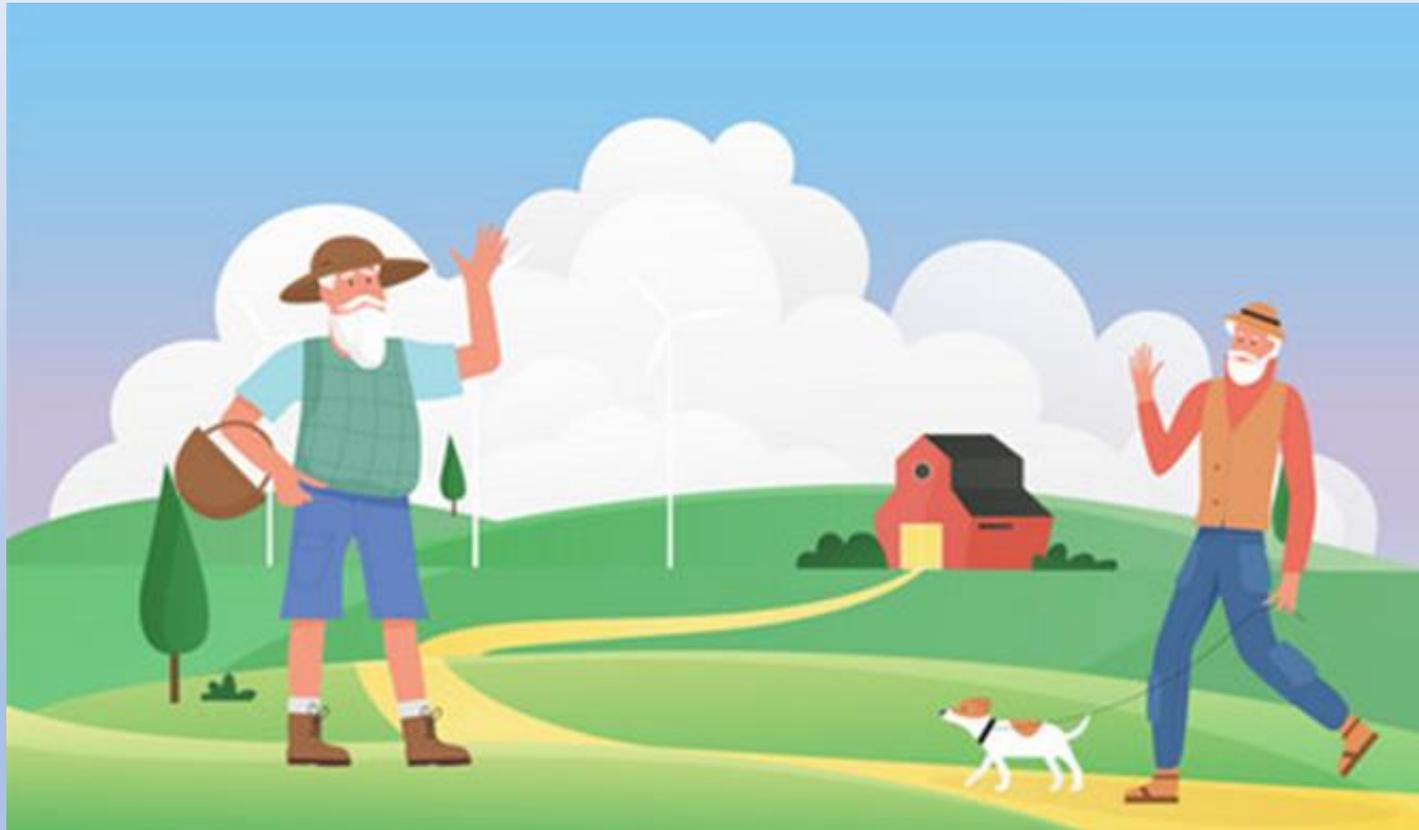
But the scheme is NOT compulsory and members can opt out

We don't want anyone to be left unnoticed when absent



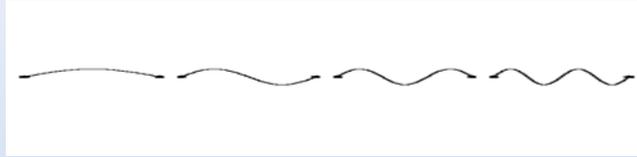
So the committee want all members to 'partner-up' in local geographic groupings

The Buddy Scheme pairs members to 'look out' for each other



Buddies- it's about keeping 'in touch'- it doesn't have to be anything more

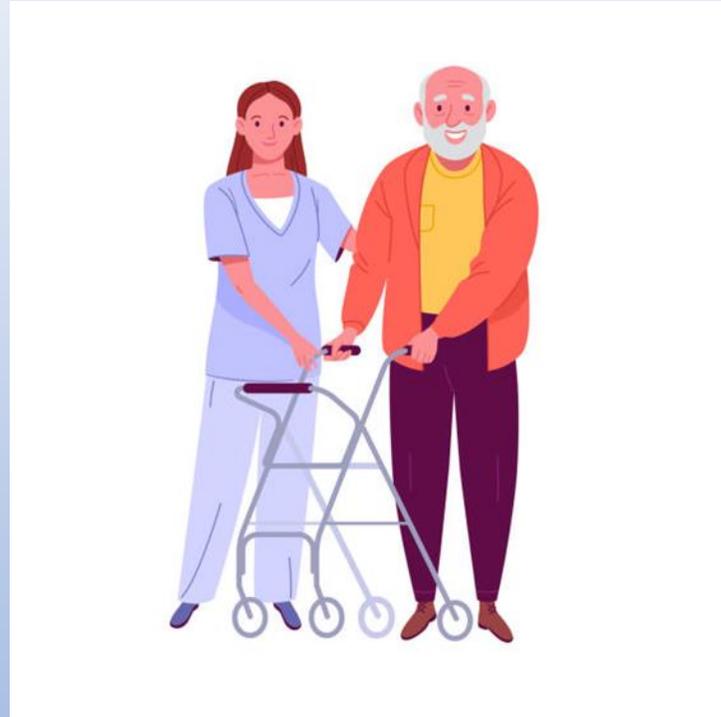
# No More crossed wires or Chinese whispers?



We want a Buddy partner to notify the committee member in their geographic Group

The Almoner will then get in touch with the absent member if appropriate

The Almoner with the help of others will welcome you back when you are ready to return



A member is more likely to return to the Club earlier if contact remains during their absence

# Definitions- a little more detail

- **What is a Buddy?**
  - a member on the active list that is paired with another member on the active list who would 'look-out' for each other at meetings and other activities of the Club.
- **What is the Buddy scheme?**
  - a way by which a Buddy notifies a committee member of a member who has been **Absent (for an extended period- ~2 months or more)**
- **What is the relationship between the Buddy and the Almoner?**
  - the Buddy provides basic information to the Committee about an absent member so that the Almoner can make further enquiries and maintain Club fellowship with an absent member.

# What is the Purpose of the Buddy Scheme

- **To keep members ‘experiencing extended-absence’ - *in touch* with the Club**
- **To improve the reporting of information concerning the well-being of an ‘Absent’ member to the Committee**
- **To be the ‘light touch, first approach’ contact with an Absent member**
- **To be proactive in the contacting ‘the Absent’ member by his ‘Buddy’ through this Buddy Scheme (not leaving it too long before a club contact is made)**
- **For the Buddy to help and improve the upward passage of this information (if appropriate) to the Committee and the Almoner**
- **To allow the Almoner to maintain club fellowship with the member and his family through a period of extended absence.**

# Has the role of the Almoner changed?

- **No-the Almoner's role is unchanged but is enhanced** by the opportunity of getting proactive information on a member who is in a period of extended absence.
- **The Almoner's work begins when he receives information** from the Absent member, a relative, a 'Buddy' or other member, that the Absent member is having difficulty attending club activities.
- **However, the Buddy scheme will be a more reliable pathway of communication** than the current informal arrangements of reporting.
- The Almoner seeks to maintain fellowship with the Absent member by telephone contact, correspondence and personal visits to keep the member 'in touch', but this can only begin when notified of an extended absence. **Buddies would be the eyes and ears of the Almoner.**

# What was wrong with the old way of reporting?



- Information about a **member's or partner's** well-being, illness, bereavement, has often come through to the committee **through a contact of a contact, fragmented and delayed, rather than from the member themselves or their partner.**
- When a member finds themselves in a difficult problem, **club activities may take a lower priority and time-sensitive decisions like diary commitments can be forgotten** or 'put aside for the moment'.
- **Family members do not always have the contact information necessary, or the permission, to get in touch with the club.**
- **Club members haven't previously had a formal role enabling them to contact absent members, so this is a new arrangement.**
- **The old way of reporting has led to poor communication with the committee and the Almoner, with a lost opportunity to keep the member 'in touch' with the Club.**

# What improvements are expected from the Buddy Scheme?

- **This proactive approach** will enable the Almoner to contact and maintain fellowship with members (experiencing a prolonged absence from Club activities) much earlier in their time away from the Club.
- **Earlier contact in their absent period is likely to encourage an earlier return**
- **The Almoner may be able to arrange continued fellowship** between the absent member and other members well known to the absent member.
- **If appropriate the absent member's situation can be referred at an earlier time** to the committee for a recommendation of temporary or permanent 'associated' membership if the absence is prolonged.

# What are we proposing? How does this work?

- **Members would be paired off as Buddies, unless they opt out** of the scheme. The committee would like all members to participate in the scheme.
- **Buddies will be paired based on their close geographic location** into 10 groups- each group would have a committee member or leading member.
- **Pairing within a group can be from existing friendships as ‘self pairing’ or a random pairing** by their committee member or leading member in the group.
- **Buddies would ‘look out’ for each other** at meetings and club activities or by contacting each other at other times, if no recent contact has been made.
- **A Buddy would simply enquire** –‘if they (the absent member) was ‘well’, as they hadn’t been seen at club activities, and if they (the absent buddy) was intending to be back at club activities in the near future’. Simple Buddy stuff.

# What are we proposing? How does this work?

- **We do not require the Buddy to ‘be intrusive’ or relay sensitive information. No recording of information is required**
- **If the absent member was intending to attend club activities shortly –No further reporting will be required.**
- **If the absent member needs some assistance** e.g. difficulty with getting to meetings due to mobility issues or other issues – these may be solved between them or other members of the geographic group. The Group leader may be able to resolve local issues within the Group.
- **If the absent member cannot attend in the near future** the Buddy should contact their group committee member or leading member to cascade the basic information about the absent member to the committee and the Almoner.

# Are we relying solely on the Buddies for improved communications?

- **No-** Committee members will tell the Almoner when members have not been seen recently
  - about Persistent apologies at lunches and absence from other club activities that the absent member has previously attended
  - or the direct reporting from absent members themselves, their partners, other active and associate members to the committee or the Almoner.
- **Buddies will be encouraged to make contact with their Buddy** but we recognize that sometimes this is difficult. Buddies are not accountable.
- **Some members may opt out of the Buddy scheme** but are expected to continue to pass on information to the Almoner directly or through a committee member as currently.

# If approved by the membership, When will this Buddy scheme commence?

- **The committee wish to adopt and pilot the scheme over the next few months if it is approved by a vote of the membership. The scheme will be reviewed after one year.**
- The job description and policy documents for the Almoner and the Buddy Scheme have been written to clarify the new recommendations.
- **If approved, the membership will be asked to provide new contact details of an additional best point contact ( e.g. partner or friend) with their consent, so that the Club can improve contact with an absent member.**
- Membership groupings into geographic groups have been made by the Sub committee and Buddy pairing would commence as the next first step in the Buddy Scheme. **It is likely that the Scheme would take at least 2-3 months to get working effectively.**

# If the Buddy Scheme is not approved-how will we proceed?

- **If the Buddy Scheme is not approved by the membership we will continue with the existing informal arrangements.**
- **As the membership ages, absences are more likely and more prolonged. Keeping members 'in touch' with the Club will be more challenging in the years to come. We would need an alternative scheme to achieve this.**

# Almoner Sub committee members

## **Members producing the Almoners and Buddy Documents**

- David Carrington (Vice-Chairman and Almoner- Subcommittee Chairman)
- Mike Luff (Probus Reading East Club Chairman)
- Peter Gough (Communications Officer)
- David Lawrenson (Co-Opted Expert Almoner)

## **Sub Committee support**

- Chris Ward
- Richard Greenaway

Proposal put to the  
membership: 22 May 2023

‘The Club agrees to introduce  
the Buddy Scheme on a  
one year trial basis’.

For the purposes of improving information flow to the Almoner