

DURHAM MASONIC GROUP BREAKS

A Guide for Benevolent Representatives/Almoners

The Benevolent Committee usually arrange one or more short breaks of up to 7 days duration each year

These group breaks are organised for Freemasons (singles or with wife/partner) and Masonic Widows from the Province of Durham who would **otherwise not have an annual holiday** and will benefit a holiday in with the company and support of others in similar circumstances

Coach travel is provided from Shiney Row Masonic Hall and it is expected that the Benevolent Committee Representative/Almoner from the supporting Lodge will arrange transport to and from Shiney Row where required. A pick up- drop off point in the south of the Province may be considered.

Accommodation is usually organised in a private hotel with exclusive use for the participants of the group break in en suite rooms on a half board basis. The Benevolent Committee provides a refreshment allowance for the outward and return journey. This will be allocated on board the coach.

Single rooms are very limited in most hotels throughout the country. We try to ensure an appropriate number of single rooms are available but these are always oversubscribed. To ease this it would be appreciated, therefore, if applicants would consider and indicate a willingness to share a twin room, either with a friend or someone selected by the Benefit Committee.

It is hoped that new participants can be found to take advantage of the Group Break, perhaps all Benevolent Representatives can liaise with their Almoners and look to the Lodge brethren, widows and the Local Broken Column Association or applicants.

Each participant is to complete an individual form of application

If requesting consideration for financial support, sections A, C and D are to be completed. Those who are able and willing to pay for the break (charged "at cost"); are to complete sections A, B and D

As a general guide, if an applicant is in receipt of a financially assessed **state benefit**, it is likely the Benevolent Committee will pay for their break. If a supporting Lodge thinks an applicant would benefit from out of pocket expenses these should be discretely provided to the applicant from the Lodge Almoners fund

Whilst we usually arrange for Red Cross volunteers to accompany the break this is for emergencies and all participants must be able to look after themselves and be able to access the coach.

The committee will consider applications for a participants own carer to accompany them on the break

Potential applicants with limited mobility or who wish to take a mobility scooter should contact Provincial Grand Lodge for further advice and to check sufficient storage space is available on the coach

Applicants are allocated in order of receipt after the date of the next break is announced with priority being given to those who have not previously attended

In addition to the annual group breaks the Benevolent Committee will consider applications for individual breaks for the specific purpose of convalescence after illness or injury. Further information on this type of break is available on request from Provincial office.