

The Chairman's Letter

In this somewhat gloomy economic climate, I thought I would start with some good news. Those of you who were able to attend this year's AGM might remember that I mentioned something of a first for the Board of BIROA – one of our number, Lisa Neale, was expecting a baby. I am delighted to report that Lisa gave birth to Joseph George in August. Baby Joseph is doing well and Lisa is slowly recovering from a difficult birth. I am sure that you will all join with me in offering Joseph George a warm welcome to our world and sending our very best wishes to Lisa.

More good news, we have retained our Gold Crown. This is a just reward for all of the effort put in over the past year by the Barnsdale Management Team and our Lodge and Leisure Committee. There have been a few bumps along the way, what with the harsh winter and problems with the swimming pool, but everybody pulled together to achieve an excellent result. Getting that result is, in our view, not made any easier because of the method used by RCI to determine our award status.

Some resorts retain their Gold Crown status on the basis of having only one exchange guest per month. Barnsdale has more than one thousand RCI exchange guests each year, but not all of them are asked to comment upon their stay and not everyone who is asked replies. Among those who do reply, some comments are clearly misdirected or misinformed. As an example, sometimes guests give a low score for check-in because they cannot access their unit before 4.00pm despite this being made clear well before the day of arrival. Also, we are occasionally given a reduced score for "Resort hospitality" because we do not offer a nightly entertainment programme, even though this is clear from the description of the resort. Assessing the large number of resorts in the RCI programme is not an easy task. However, we feel that the process is not sufficiently sensitive to the individual nature of places such as Barnsdale and we are trying to persuade RCI to review its system.

On the subject of reviews, we have been in discussion with the Management Company about how to buy large capital items, such as washer dryers, in the most cost efficient way. Here, a balance has to be struck between an unforeseen requirement that needs immediate attention and one that is forecast. Where the requirement is immediate, it might not always be possible to



Christmas at Barnsdale

Whether you are celebrating with family, loved ones or friends or arranging the office party we have just the event for you! From our Christmas Party Nights to our 3 day residential package or our 'Ice Ball' New Year's Eve Dinner, we have something to offer everyone. Booking early is essential to avoid disappointment. To request a brochure or to make a booking, our Events team will be happy to help and advise you on **01572 725157**.

buy from the cheapest source because the need to satisfy a guest has to take priority. In that circumstance, an item might have to be purchased from a local supplier with same day delivery rather than one that can offer a lower price but with delivery in a few days. However, when the Management Company knows that an item will need replacing, we are agreed that the net should be cast as wide as necessary to get the best combination of price and service. Every item purchased, no matter how large or small, is listed in an invoice to BIROA and that invoice is subject to scrutiny first from the Lodge and Leisure Committee and second by the Board at its regular meeting. The Chairman of the Management Company, Derek Penman, has taken a personal interest in this and we will continue to work together to ensure that we achieve best value for money.

Money is never far from the horizon and I am pleased to say that we managed a full programme of repairs and replacements over the past year, without dipping into the contingency reserve. We have now brought forward by a few months the repayment of advances given by the Management Company and are planning the next round of refurbishment to take place ahead of the recently announced VAT increase. This flexibility is largely possible because of the increased number of Owners who have settled their annual invoice on time – many thanks.

As I write this, the sun is shining and there is an early autumn warmth in the air. Next week, I am off to Crete to catch some late sunshine. Therefore, it is hard to focus on Christmas but, because of editorial lead times, when this Newsletter lands on your doorstep, we will be into winter and the countdown to Christmas will have well and truly begun. Everyone at Barnsdale hopes that the winter is kind to you and that you have a truly wonderful Christmas followed by a successful and happy New Year. We look forward to hearing your suggestions and comments and hope to see you at the AGM next March.

Best wishes



Editor's note:

For this issue, I have gone just a little further afield. The photographs are from around Barnsdale, not from the site itself. I hope you enjoy them.

If there is anything you would like more of, or less of, in this newsletter, please let me know. Your own contributions are also very welcome. Please hand to Membership Services, a committee member, or email to editor@boanews.co.uk

Committee Jottings

I see that the last Board meeting I reported on was from October of last year, so here are highlights from the minutes of the meetings since. The full minutes of meetings, once approved, are available on our website, www.barnsdaleowners.co.uk.

8th December 2009

Chairman's Report: The Chairman reported that he had been in touch with Mr. J. Simms, a former long standing member of the Board, and had passed on the Board's best wishes to him and his wife. He also confirmed that he had received formal written confirmation from RCI of the Resort's Gold Crown status for the coming year.

Company Secretary's Report: The Secretary reported that there were 107 non-payers as at 7th December, which compared with a similar number at the same time last year. The Secretary confirmed that he would be sending appropriate letters to all remaining non-payers at the end of December.

Lodge & Leisure Report: Five invoices were passed for payment.

- The Board was pleased to note that Mr. Penman had offered to pay half of the cost of the new electricity meters. It was agreed that the Chairman should write to Mr. Penman expressing gratitude for this thoughtful offer.
- The Board agreed with a recommendation that, having carefully considered the matter, no change should be made in the existing arrangements for the Aqua Aerobics classes.
- The Board agreed that the Lodge & Leisure Committee should conduct a review of the swimming pool changing rooms to consider the feasibility of achieving wet and dry areas as required for all new developments.

There was a detailed discussion about the style of usage of the Leisure Centre gym and squash courts. In the case of the former, it was noted that there had been a marked increase in the number of young people making use of the weight training and body building equipment. In the case of the latter, it was questioned whether use by outside agencies was being encouraged through tournaments and leagues. The Committee was asked to monitor use of both facilities and report back to the Board in due course.

Directors: The Board noted that Mr. J. Wedgwood had not attended a Board meeting for many months and no longer contributed to the working of the Lodge & Leisure Committee. It was agreed, with regret, that Mr. Wedgwood should be called upon to resign from the Board. The Chairman undertook to advise Mr. Wedgwood of that decision and to thank him for his valuable contribution in earlier times.

Mr. Candler offered his services to the L&LC, although he would be unable to attend workday meetings. It was agreed that PC should join the Committee with a view to assisting with weekend audits of the Lodges.

18th January 2010

Chairman's Report: The Chairman confirmed that Mr J. Wedgwood had resigned from the Board and that he had been thanked for his services. He also confirmed that he had thanked Mr. Penman for contributing half of the cost of the new electricity meters in the Lodges. Finally, he reported that, for personal reasons, Mr. P.N. Smith had tendered his resignation as Company Secretary.

Appointment of Company Secretary: Following the resignation of Mr. Smith, it was necessary to appoint a new Company Secretary. Mrs. L. Neale kindly volunteered to take up this appointment as part of her duties as a director. It was decided to accept Mrs. Neale's offer and that she should meet with the Chairman at future date to discuss the terms and conditions of the appointment.

Lodge & Leisure Report: DM advised that bad weather had prevented the L&LC from meeting.

The Board noted payment of invoice SF 470 for the sum of £469.25 and approved payment of invoice SF 469 for the sum of £28,847.42

being settlement for agreed refurbishment of kitchens, bathrooms, carpets, curtains and furniture.

Communications Report: LW presented a draft of the next newsletter in colour format. The Board considered it be a significant improvement on the previous format and thanked LW for his initiative.

Management Report: The Management Report for January 2010 was accepted.

The Board noted that the resort was maintaining progress towards retention of an RCI Gold Crown, although 2 scores in December were below the required level. The comments related to these scores were discussed and it was felt that the numerical assessment did not correlate accurately with the written comments, many of which were complimentary. RW advised that he and PM had discussed this with RCI and had been informed that the system was sufficiently flexible to take account of such discrepancies.

The Board was concerned to hear that a treadmill monitor had had to be replaced, at a cost of £250,

having apparently been vandalised. It was agreed that the Leisure Staff should be alerted to this problem and make more frequent visits to the gym.

The Board was impressed with the way the staff had worked so hard to minimise the difficulties posed by the recent long spell of freezing conditions and asked that RW pass on thanks to all concerned.

1 March 2010

AGM Preparations: The Board noted that all papers for the AGM had been circulated in good time and that no questions had been received from Owners by the closing date of 26th February.

RW advised that it had been confirmed that the AGM would be attended by representatives from the Trustees, Hutchison & Co, and the 3 exchange companies.

Company Secretary's Report: LN advised that she had successfully completed the take-over from the previous Company Secretary and that Companies House had been informed of the change. She also advised that she had updated all records of directors held by Companies House so that they conformed with the legislation. Finally, she informed the meeting that 99 default letters had been sent out on 29th January and that a further letter to 77 remaining defaulters had been sent out on 27th February.

Treasurer's Report: The Treasurer's report for the period to 1st March 2010, showing a balance of £67,206.22, was accepted. It was agreed that no additional expenditure, other than on essential items, would be approved until towards the end of June. The Board noted that the current level of spending was in-line with the approved plan.

Lodge & Leisure Report: The report by the Lodge & Leisure Committee was accepted. DM advised that the swimming pool changing rooms continued to cause concern and it was agreed that the L&LC should prepare a full report on those facilities so that the Board could take an informed view.

The Board noted payment of invoice SF 472 for the sum of £191.82 and approved payment of invoice SF 471 for the sum of £33,507.01 being settlement for agreed refurbishment of bathrooms and replacement of curtains.

Management Report: The Management Report for February 2010 was accepted. The Board noted that the resort continued to achieve Gold Crown scores, although the bad weather had affected some scores with guests complaining about being impeded by the snow, despite the praiseworthy efforts of the staff to keep the roads and pathways as clear as possible. The Board also noted that there had been one or two



adverse comments about the condition of some bathrooms. In view of those comments, it was agreed that the L&LC should confirm its priorities for the bathroom refurbishment programme.

RW advised the meeting that the new boiler for the changing room showers had been installed on 28th February. The need for this had arisen at short notice when it became clear that the single boiler feeding those showers was insufficient for the task. The expenditure of approximately £6,000 was approved between meetings by the Executive Committee and concurred by the Board

TATOC: After some discussion, the Board agreed that, in order to minimise expenditure, it would not send a representative to this year's TATOC conference.

8 March 2010

Election of Officers

Chairman: Mr. P. Moore was unanimously elected as Chairman for the coming year.

Treasurer: Mr. L. Willows was unanimously elected as Treasurer for the coming year.

It was unanimously agreed that for the forthcoming year the Executive Committee should comprise Mr. Candler, Mr. Miller, Mr. Moore and Mr. Willows.

AGM 2011: It was unanimously agreed that the 22nd AGM should be held at Barnsdale on Saturday 5th March 2011 commencing at 14.30.

AGM 2010 Follow-Up: The Chairman undertook to publicise in the next Newsletter answers to informal questions raised at the AGM. In addition, following a suggestion from an Owner, it was agreed that he and RW should meet with the Management Company to review the possibility of annual fees being paid in advance.

Company Secretary's Report: The Company Secretary submitted a draft of the minutes of the 21st AGM. Her colleagues thanked her for her very prompt work.

19 April 2010

Lodge & Leisure Report: The Lodge and Leisure minutes from 10th March and 14th April were accepted. L&LC to look into updating gym in approx 18 months. To look at lease option for equipment rather than outright purchase and refocusing gym to a leisure facility.

Spa 1 motor requires replacing approx cost £625, the Board agreed to this spend.

Three invoices were approved for payment.

Following a previous incident involving the family of an Owner, the Board expressed its complete agreement that any unacceptable behaviour would result in the Management Company withdrawing access for a period of time as seen fit.

24 May 2010

Management Fee 2010: It was noted that, in accordance with the Articles of Association, the Management Fee had to rise by 4.4% being the change in the RPI to 31st March 2010. Since last year, VAT had increased from 15% to 17.5% and last year's invoices were discounted by a rebate. As a result, the fee for this year would appear to have increased considerably. In addition, there was a possibility that the new Government would further raise VAT before the next invoices were distributed. The Board had no discretion over the impact of RPI and VAT increases. However, it could vary the contribution to the Sinking Fund. While this would limit the scope for replacements and refurbishments, it was considered that it would be possible to manage on a reduced income for the next year without jeopardising the Gold Crown status. Therefore, in order to lessen the impact of enforced rises, it was decided to set this year's contribution to the Sinking Fund at 18% instead of the previously agreed 20%. RW undertook to advise the Management Company of that decision.

Lodge & Leisure Committee Report: The Board accepted as a report the minutes of the Lodge & Leisure Committee held on 19th May. Four invoices were approved for payment.

Scams

Unfortunately it seems necessary to mention scams in every Newsletter. As you no doubt realise, there are some people out there who only want to separate you from your money. The TATOC website has a list of 42 companies who are known to have been cold calling in August. The guidance is simple:

- They have not got your number from Barnsdale or RCI, whatever they say. Neither will pass your details on.
- If they ask for money upfront, they are almost certainly up to no good.
- If they claim to be ringing from Barnsdale or an exchange organisation, and if you are interested in what they say, take a name, and ring them back on a number you have found for yourself. That way you will know if they are who they say they are.
- (My personal advice) If they say "I'm ringing about your timeshare", interrupt them, say "No, thank you" and put the phone down. There's a small chance you might miss a good deal, but you avoid a much larger risk of ending up out of pocket.

There is little that can be done to control these pests, as they are not part of any reputable organisation, and are often ringing from outside the UK. It is up to you to be on your guard.

If you want to sell your unit, Barnsdale can assist, or the following advice is from www.timeshare-consumer-advice.org (a sister site of TATOC):

A reliable way to sell your Timeshare is through a resale company – make sure that they belong to industry trade bodies and adhere to the relevant codes of ethics and official legislation.

You should contact your resort to find out if they provide a resale service. A reputable company will adhere to the following rules set out by the Resort Development Association (www.rdo.org):

- The company is not permitted to take any upfront payment from the seller.
- The buyer must be offered a cooling-off period of 14 days.

- The company must not make cold calls to potential buyers.
- They must not make false claims that they have a buyer interested in your Timeshare.
- The resale company will explain all aspects of the sales procedure and will answer any questions.

However, be cautious of companies that don't provide the above protection as offered by resorts that are members of official trade bodies. You should be wary if:

- A company "cold calls" you saying that they obtained your phone number from your resort or an exchange company, or by other seemingly legitimate means. Your details are protected by law and will not have been released to a third party.
- The company claims they have a buyer for your Timeshare who is willing to pay an exceptionally high price.
- You are asked to pay an upfront fee to cover administrative or legal costs.
- The resale company tries to sign you up to a Holiday Club or offers you discount travel membership in exchange for your Timeshare. Be particularly wary here – it is unlikely that the company has actually taken ownership of your Timeshare, meaning you are still liable for the maintenance fees.
- A firm of solicitors contacts you and requests an upfront fee, claiming that they can secure you a refund on payments you made to a resale company that has let you down.



Christmas/New Year

Over the Christmas and New Year period, the usual timetable at Barnsdale becomes disrupted, because of the festivities, maintenance week, and because weeks 52 and 1 have a fixed start date, rather than a particular day of the week. If you plan to be at Barnsdale over the period, have a look at the timetable below to see what facilities will be open when.

Date	Lodges	Restaurant	Bar	Leisure	Spa
Sat 18th Dec	Check out Saturday Lodges	Open as usual	Open as usual	Open as usual	Open as usual
Sun 19th Dec	Check out Sunday Lodges Maintenance Day for Saturday Lodges	Open as usual	Open as usual	Open as usual	CLOSED
Mon 20th Dec	Maintenance Day	Open as usual	Open as usual	Pool Area closed. All other facilities open	Open
Tues 21st Dec	Maintenance Day	Open as usual	Open as usual	Pool Area closed. All other facilities open	Open
Wed 22nd Dec	Maintenance Day	Open as usual	Open as usual	Pool Area closed. All other facilities open	Open
Thur 23rd Dec	Check in for Christmas week	Open as usual	Open as usual	Open as usual	Open
Fri 24th Dec	Occupied	Open as usual	Open as usual	7am-6pm	10am-3pm
Sat 25th Dec	Occupied	Bookings only	No Food	7am- 12 noon	CLOSED
Sun 26th Dec	Occupied	Bookings only	Open as usual	10am-4pm	CLOSED
Mon 27th Dec	Occupied	Open as usual	Open as usual	Open as usual	CLOSED
Tues 28th Dec	Occupied	Open as usual	Open as usual	Open as usual	CLOSED
Wed 29th Dec	Occupied	Open as usual	Open as usual	Open as usual	Open as usual
Thur 30th Dec	Check out at 10.00am for Xmas Week Check in at 4.00pm for New Year Week	Open as usual	Open as usual	Open as usual	Open as usual
Fri 31st Dec	Occupied	CLOSED	No Food (evening)	7am-6pm	10am-4pm
Sat 1st Jan 2011	Occupied	Open as usual	Open as usual	10am-4pm	CLOSED
Sun 2nd Jan	Occupied	Open as usual	Open as usual	Open as usual	CLOSED
Mon 3rd Jan	Occupied	Open as usual	Open as usual	Open as usual	CLOSED
Tues 4th Jan	Occupied	Open as usual	Open as usual	Open as usual	Open as usual
Wed 5th Jan	Occupied	Open as usual	Open as usual	Open as usual	Open as usual
Thur 6th Jan	Check out for New Year Week	Open as usual	Open as usual	Open as usual	Open as usual
Fri 7th Jan	Maintenance Day	Open as usual	Open as usual	Open as usual	Open as usual
Sat 8th Jan	Maintenance Day for Sunday Lodges Check in as usual 4.00pm for Saturday Lodges	Open as usual	Open as usual	Open as usual	Open as usual
Sun 9th Jan	Check in as usual 4.00pm for Sunday Lodges	Open as usual	Open as usual	Open as usual	Closed

Lodge & Leisure Report

Committee: Dusty Miller (Chairman)
Sheila Bunten, Patrick Candler, Lisa Neale

As the 'Season of mists and mellow-fruitfulness' descends upon Rutland Water and Barnsdale, we move into a new financial year and, for us, a continuation of the Lodge refurbishment programme. Initially, as Phase 1, we have identified one kitchen and four bathrooms which are in need of urgent attention and these will be completed as soon as possible, before the increase in VAT comes into effect. We are also looking at a rolling programme for updating bedroom furniture and re-carpeting as necessary, as explained at the AGM. Units will be identified and the work completed on a needs basis. Once all the maintenance fees have been paid and we know the total available to us from the Sinking Fund, Phase 2 proposals will be made.

As a committee we are used to the moans and groans of owners, some justified but others, from both owners and guests, just do not accept that some things are totally beyond our control; problems such as the recent

pool problem, for example, do happen. We try to rectify these as soon as we can but it is not always possible to get suppliers and specialist companies to agree that we should be at the top of their priority list! I say this as it is also gratifying to receive a balanced letter, acknowledging our successes, but also pointing out, with constructive criticism, areas in which we could work to improve. For example we received a letter from an owner who has given very informative feedback, noting not only the refurbishment improvements made to the Lodge, but also the excellent work done by the Management Company in improving the immediate environment around the Lodge. The letter also contained some comments about minor irritants which will be looked into and dealt with as soon as possible. We were also very pleased to note that the writer had an excellent holiday and we thank you for taking the time to write to us.

Dusty Miller