

The Chairman's Letter

Policemen are definitely getting younger and now it seems that time is flying faster. No sooner is the ink dry on the last newsletter wishing you all a Happy Christmas and here we are writing again with the New Year behind us. As ever, everyone on the Board joins me in hoping that the festive season brought happiness and that the New Year brings continued good fortune as well as an end to the freezing weather we are having as I write this note.

You will see from the accompanying papers that the AGM is nigh! I know that for many of you, the journey to Barnsdale is not easy. Nevertheless, it would be good to see a large number of you at the AGM on 5th March. It is the one time in the year when we can sit together and discuss any issues or ideas that you the Owner has. We do try to keep you informed through this Newsletter and the website but there is nothing better than face-to-face communication. So, please, if at all possible, make the effort to come along, view the grounds in early Spring, and let us know your thoughts on how we are doing at Barnsdale. To make things a little easier for you, Russell Waters has arranged a special package at the hotel for those of you who would like to stay overnight and enjoy the excellent food in the restaurant. Full details of this offer can be found later in this newsletter.

We are now at the half-way point between invoices. My thanks to all of you who have paid so promptly. An encouraging number of Owners have recognised the simplicity of paying by electronic transfer and, as a result, we had a notable decrease in the number of late payments and penalties. One surprising feature of the last payment round was that 30 Owners opted to pay by

cash. While payment by any (legal) means is always welcome, large cash sums cause a series of problems. All payments go first to the Management Company and are then forwarded to us. The main difficulty with a cash payment is determining a safe and secure means of accepting payment and holding the money before banking it. Hotel reception is an obvious point for payment but it is not operated by the Management Company and so our money has to be separated from hotel money and held until such time as it can be passed on to us. The sums involved in paying our fees place something of an unfair responsibility on reception staff who, generally, only handle small amounts of cash. To avoid any misunderstandings, the hotel has said that it can no longer accept cash payments on behalf of timeshare owners. Therefore, in future, if anyone wishes to pay by cash, they should contact Avril Hicks on 01572 725160 and arrange a convenient time to make the payment during normal office hours. Of course, on-line transfer is the simplest way to make sure that a payment is made on time!

For those Owners who, for whatever reason, do not pay their fees on time, there is an established procedure that is published in our Articles of Association. What everyone should realise, and I am sure that most do, is that we each own the time that we have bought at Barnsdale. With that ownership comes certain benefits and the liability to pay for those benefits through the annual charges. If we decide that we no longer wish to take advantage of our ownership, then we are individually responsible for arranging the transfer of our week's ownership to another party. Until that transfer takes place, we retain full responsibility for payment of the maintenance fee and sinking fund contribution. What we cannot do, and never have been able to do, is hand back our week(s) to Barnsdale. In the past, the Freeholder, Mr Derek Penman, has taken responsibility for a number of units from people who have defaulted on their annual payment and has paid the outstanding fees to the Association. However, he has no obligation to do this and, quite reasonably, he has reminded me of that fact.

To encourage you to remain as owners at Barnsdale, we try hard to keep all of the facilities at the high standard you would expect. We are constantly looking at all areas of the resort to decide where next to make an improvement. Many of the lodges have been refurbished with new kitchens, bathrooms, carpets and bedroom furniture and we will keep this programme going until everyone has benefited from the



improvements. The swimming pool has been something of a drain on our capital, but it is also one of the most popular facilities; we are currently examining with the Management Company how we can improve the wetside changing rooms. The gym is also a popular facility and we are considering the best options for replacing some of the equipment over the next year or so. Please feel free to let us have your ideas on what improvements you would like to see in any part of the resort. In the meantime, it is good to note that we continue to achieve RCI Gold Crown and Interval International Premier Resort standards. To help us keep up those standards and to offer a better service to Owners and exchange guests, I am pleased to welcome Kayleigh Reid to the Resort's staff. As you will see in a later note from Russell Waters, Kayleigh brings with her a lot of timeshare experience and has plenty of innovative ideas. We look forward to working with her.

Once again, I do hope that you can join us at the AGM. In the meantime, I would like to thank my colleagues on the Board and everyone on Team Barnsdale for their hard work and excellent achievements in 2010. As a final note, if you would like to join the Board and share in managing Owners' interests, please get in touch with me through Barnsdale Hall. New blood and fresh minds are always welcome!



El Capistrano Village, Nerja

Using Dial-an-Exchange, we exchanged into El Capistrano, a resort village created on a hillside just outside of Nerja and near to Burriana Beach. For us, a glass half full or half empty place. A jumble of mixed villas and maisonettes fairly close together but in well kept grounds, other than the roads that have more than a few potholes. We exchanged into a 2 bedroom villa that was OK but was slightly tired. The living room was comfortable enough, but the bedrooms were poorly furnished, lacked reasonable storage and the double bed was small. All of the curtains were thin and offered no resistance to external light. With just two of us, it was adequate; four would be crowded; six, as advertised, would be third world. On the plus side, the small back garden was private and offered a good sunbathing area. The resort itself had an average restaurant, a good pool area that charged for sun loungers and a cave bar that had a good two for the price of one offer but was otherwise a little smoky and fetid.

There was nowhere within reasonable walking distance that offered any real attraction. However, within a short drive, Burriana Beach has many excellent bars and restaurants. Our favourite was Sabor de Amor, an Indonesian/Thai restaurant owned by a delightful Dutch couple. We also had a really good takeaway paella from Jose Cruz and there are lots of good coffee bars with free wi-fi should you want to keep in touch with the outside world.

New Appointment

I am delighted to announce the appointment of Kayleigh Reid as the new Membership Liaison Manager in timeshare. Kayleigh joins us having worked for a number of years with RCI at their Kettering HQ.

She brings a wealth of experience in the timeshare and travel industry having spent the last two years as account co-ordinator for RCI UK and Malta resorts.

With a strong skill base in I.T., communication, personal management, and creativity we are delighted to have someone who is passionate about the travel industry, and having worked closely with Barnsdale Country Club over the last two years equally excited at having the opportunity to join the team.

With a keen interest in cooking and travel she is able to combine the two by experimenting with new flavours by trying foods from other cultures. She enjoys socialising with friends; and spending time with family.

With her innovating ideas, ownership and timeshare exchange experience, we are delighted to have Kayleigh on-board, to assist our members in getting the very best out of their investment.

Why not try something different?

Do you fancy a change from a resort holiday? Are you looking for something with a bit more space or privacy or want to visit an area where there are no timeshare resorts? One of our Directors stayed in a property in Ireland recently, through Dial an Exchange. Here's what she told them:

"Having returned recently from Ireland where for the first time we exchanged into a property rather than a resort, I am writing to recommend this to other members. We stayed in Kinsale, Ireland, in a two bedroomed townhouse which the owner usually rents out himself and had recently deposited with Dial an Exchange.

"It was amazing. Everything was superb, the furnishings were top class, and everything we needed was there, a spa bath and even a computer and mobile phone for our use. The icing on the cake – there was even a bottle of wine and a box of chocolates to welcome us!

"We had never before considered this type of exchange but I would definitely look again particularly in places where there are very few timeshare resorts"

Committee Jottings

Here is a summary of the board meetings since the last newsletter. Don't forget that the latest two sets of minutes are on the BOA notice board (on your left as you enter the leisure building from the car park, near the entrance to the spa).

Also the minutes are published on the website

5th July 2010

Chairman's Report: The Chairman advised the Board of an incident in which an Owner verbally abused and placed in fear a member of the Leisure Centre staff. Subsequently, the Owner was given an opportunity to explain his behaviour but failed to do so. As a result, his Country Club membership had been suspended for two months from 01 July 2010. The Board concurred with that action.

RW advised the Board of an Owner who had heatedly refused to pay a deposit or give a credit card imprint before occupying a unit. It was agreed that the Chairman should write to that Owner reminding him of the requirement.

RW further advised of an Owner who refused to pay a utilities bill of £20.79 at the end of her week of occupancy. RW undertook to keep the Board informed of any progress with that dispute.

Lodge & Leisure: It was decided that the L&LC should complete an analysis of the usage of the Leisure Centre, detailing any abuses and recommending a future policy that could include a charge for some guests.

Treasurer: It was noted that the finances were in generally good order. In view of the planned increase in VAT next year, it was agreed that the L&LC should produce a schedule of items that could be ordered before the change came into effect. It was decided that this schedule should be circulated to the Board in time for consideration at its meeting on 18th October.

Management: The Board was pleased to note that the Resort remained on track to retain its Gold Crown status. However, concern was again expressed at the methodology used by RCI to determine scores when the majority of guests did not submit comment cards. In addition, inspection of RCI comment cards indicated that some guests had given a reduced score for "Resort Hospitality", because of not being able to check-in before 16.00, and had also have given a reduced score for "Checking-in/Checking-out". The Chairman and RW undertook to discuss this with RCI at their next meeting.

6th September 2010

Chairman's Report: The swimming pool had had to be closed in order that a number of tiles could be replaced. The repair had now been completed and the pool re-opened. The work was carried out as speedily as possible and an apology had been posted in reception. The cost of the repair fell to maintenance and, therefore, should not impact upon the Sinking Fund.

A letter had been received from an Owner, expressing satisfaction with a recent stay but offering some helpful criticism and suggestions. The letter was passed to DM for follow-up action. The Chairman had replied to the owner.

An owner had written to the Management Company explaining that he faced a short term financial problem and requesting that he could pay 25% of his fees now with the balance being settled by the end of the year. The Board instructed the Management Company to signify its acceptance of that offer with a note that while interest would be waived, the £50 penalty would still apply, use of the facilities should be withdrawn until full payment had been received and the exchange companies should be advised of the situation.

Lodge & Leisure: Invoice SF0483 was discussed. This was for a washer dryer purchased from Knights of Oakham at a retail price of £509 to which had been added 25% uplift. The Board expressed its concern that the item could have been purchased

elsewhere for around £400 with prompt delivery. RW advised that Knights were used because the Management Company did not have access to a credit or debit card but had an account with Knights.

The Board felt that it was not appropriate that BIROA should be compelled to trade through an expensive outlet simply because the Management Company was unwilling to arrange a bank card facility in line with current business practice. It was considered that if the Management Company could not adopt a best price policy it should waive the 25% uplift. The Board strongly felt that Owners should not suffer a financial penalty as a result of the Management Company's approach to business. In view of that, the Board directed that the Chairman write to the Management Company to outline in full the concerns that were felt.

Lodge Refurbishment Programme: The Board approved the refurbishment plan proposed by the L&LC in the minutes of its meeting and asked that RW expedite the refurbishment of the kitchen in Unit 11.

Leisure Centre Usage: The Board asked the L&LC to review the membership conditions and rules for the Leisure Centre with a view to identifying any abuses that were leading to use of the facilities by non-entitled people.

Treasurer: It was noted that the year end finances were in very good order and that the contingency reserve had remained intact. In view of the healthy finances, it was agreed to bring forward payment of all outstanding instalments owed to the Management Company under invoices SF0460 and 0468.

Management: The Board was pleased to note that the Resort had retained its Gold Crown status, although written confirmation had not yet been received from RCI. Continued concern was expressed about the methodology used by RCI to determine scores when not all guests were sent comment cards and the majority of guests who did receive cards did not return them with comments. The Chairman and RW undertook to discuss this again with RCI at their next meeting.

18th October 2010

Chairman's Report: The owner who had written previously explaining that he faced a short term financial problem has confirmed the balance will be settled by the end of the year. This owner will be unable to use facilities until that time.

The chairman had written to Penwise regarding the purchasing policy. The management company do not wish to use a credit card but are to look for alternative suppliers, minimum three, so that options are available.

Withdrawal of access letters have been sent out to owners who have not paid their maintenance fees.

Discussions had been held regarding the payment of management fees in advance instalments. This would be very complex and is being looked into further.

The management company are in discussions with the solicitors regarding the payment policy. At present we are very lenient with owners and it may not be the case this year that Penwise are in the position to buy back any units. Management company to give advice at board meeting on 6th December.

We have received some cash payments for management fees and reception are not geared up to receive cash. It was proposed that all cash payments be made only to Sue Moore in the membership office and by appointment. Owners to be informed.

Annual General Meeting weekend accommodation rate special

Friday 4th or Saturday 5th March – £95 per room
In shared twin or double room with three-course dinner and full English breakfast.

Stay two nights £150 per room
Enjoy two nights' accommodation, full English breakfast and dinner on one night of your choice.

Barnsdale Hall Hotel 01572 757 901

Offer subject to availability, all booking must have reference of ownership week and unit number, sorry no sole occupancy with this offer.

RCI Surgery before AGM

RCI will be hosting a surgery before the AGM this year, the session will include a question and answer session. The surgery will commence at 12:30 in the Egleton Room and last for 90 minutes, giving you time to get a cup of coffee before the AGM starts. The Egleton Room is just on the left (near the BOA noticeboard) as you approach leisure reception from the main car park, by the tennis courts.

Owners' Discounts

Don't forget – for those of us who live too far away to take advantage of the leisure facilities, there are still additional benefits to owning at Barnsdale. All owners can take advantage of special rates for accommodation or conferences.

For accommodation, owners can claim 25% of the published rates throughout the year, except for Christmas and New Year, and other promotional rates.

For conferences, for a minimum of 12 people, and with the owner part of the group, the special delegate day rate is £50, and only £150 for the 24 hour rate.

So you are not limited to visiting Barnsdale during your week – come and see how this beautiful estate changes through the seasons. Your editor is to be found here often at Christmas, when snow seems almost obligatory, and has enjoyed weekends at various times of the year. Not to be missed.

Lodge & Leisure Report

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

How quickly time flies; a new year is upon us and an AGM not far away. With this in mind I thought I would, instead of pre-empting the AGM report, give a little information on how the committee works and uses your money.

I sometimes meet owners who are under the impression that all the money they pay as an 'Annual Maintenance Fee' is available to the Lodge and Leisure Committee to spend on the refurbishment of units and leisure facilities. This is not the case as only a percentage of this cost, around 20% described as the Sink Fund on your annual invoice, is designated for this purpose. So how do we go about our business?

A proportion of the money we have to spend, some £35,000, is kept as an 'Emergency Reserve' for any significant problems we may encounter towards the end of the financial year. We also calculate what the average monthly spend is likely to be on the replacement of capital items which may break down during the year and into this category come things such as washing machines; microwaves etc. which, as at home, tend to fail at the most inconvenient times.

The committee meets every 4 – 6 weeks with Russell Waters, the General Manager of the Management Company (or more often if necessary plus Lodge inspections) to take note of his report as to the progress

of work we have in hand and any problems which may have arisen. The plans we make are, as you would expect, the sort that any business has to make to ensure progress is made whilst living within the income/expenditure balance. We have an overall Long Term Plan of 3-5 years for both the lodge and leisure areas which can, if necessary, be modified according to need. This is then broken down into what we would like to achieve within a given year with these plans being monitored on a quarterly basis against budget. For those who took note of what was reported at the AGM last year the current emphasis is on bedrooms and soft furnishings whilst also maintaining some kitchen and bathroom replacements.

Of course nothing runs as smoothly as the plans say they should! The increase in VAT will, for example, make us revisit plans and investigate different suppliers most likely resulting in both visits to their showrooms and the start of ongoing price negotiations

We also bear in mind that no matter how hard we try we will not please everybody all of the time but hope that we get it right for everybody some of the time.

A Happy New Year to you all.

Dusty Miller
Chairman Lodge & Leisure Committee

Visit www.barnsdaleowners.co.uk to keep up to date