



## *The Chairman's Letter*

On behalf of all Board members, I would like to start by thanking everyone who made the effort to join us at the AGM in March. After the conclusion of the formal business, we had a useful discussion about a variety of topics. Once again, we explained that payment by direct debit posed too many difficulties for our Management Company and that our preferred method of payment was by bank transfer.

There was a lively discussion about helping Owners who wish to sell their timeshare. The re-sale market is not particularly buoyant at present and we know that it can be hard to sell ownership weeks. As an Owners' company, we are not equipped to be involved with the process of selling units and that has to remain an individual responsibility. However, Kayleigh Reid, from the Management Company, did say that, if an Owner wished to sell, she would display outline details on the Owners' notice board in Leisure Reception.

Given that this newsletter accompanies the annual invoice and charges have increased in line with the annual change in the RPI and the recent increase in VAT to 20%, so not good news, it is worth covering here the discussion we had about Owners who do not pay their fees. Fortunately, we do not have many Owners who default on payment, less than 2 per cent. However, those that do not pay represent a burden to those of us who happily settle our accounts. The Management Company charges a gross fee that is then aggregated among all Owners, as explained in the Articles of Association. This company has to pay that gross fee, no matter how many Owners pay their contribution. So, individual unpaid fees are paid from our funds which, of course, means that we have less money available to

keep Barnsdale at the high level we all want. This is clearly unfair to Owners who take their responsibility seriously. Therefore, we take positive action, using whatever means the law provides, to secure the money owed to us. Here, as at the AGM, I should point out that it is a misconception that units can simply be returned to this company; they cannot. In buying at Barnsdale, we each own a part of a lease on the property and that lease requires that we pay set annual charges. We are responsible for those charges until either we transfer the unit to another party or the lease expires. In short, we are not members who can resign, we are owners.

Staying with the AGM, several Owners pointed out how lucky we were to own at such a good resort and that, I think, is a point worth emphasising. Barnsdale is set in beautiful grounds that always look very attractive, thanks to the hard work of the gardening staff. The units are comfortable, well maintained and many have fantastic views across the nearby Rutland Water. The Resort is quiet but it has excellent leisure facilities including a heated, indoor swimming pool. The bar is spacious and welcoming and the restaurant offers excellent meals. Before the AGM, the directors had lunch in the restaurant (we paid!) and everyone, including guests, said that it was one of the best restaurant meals they had ever had – compliments to the chef.

Keeping Barnsdale at this high level is the principal occupation of the Owners' company and Dusty Miller, Chairman of the Lodge and Leisure Committee, explains later what we have achieved and what we plan. However, it is worth noting that this achievement is the result of an effective partnership with our Management Company and our Freeholder, Mr. Derek Penman. Without their active support, we would struggle to live within our restricted budget. As an example, it has become evident that the swimming pool changing rooms are simply not good enough. Patching and repairing is not an option and so we are faced with a full refurbishment at a cost in excess of £100,000. Knowing the importance of this work and the financial problem it poses to us, Mr. Penman has offered the services of staff from other parts of his property business to help in any way they can and has agreed that we should pay for the work over a period of 2 years with a reduction in the uplift that the Management Company has to charge. This means that we can continue with our Lodge improvement programmes whilst undertaking a major refurbishment elsewhere.



The Leisure Centre is one of our main assets and it is important that we keep it at a high standard. Not surprisingly, the Centre is extremely popular and its use has increased considerably in recent times. A downside of this increased activity is increased wear and tear. Recently, we took a look at how the facilities were being used and were surprised with some of our findings. It seems that some Owners are being creative with the guests they bring to the Resort. We have heard of someone who has accepted money from people to use the facilities and another who works in a care home and brings along residents as guests. Another Owner escorted their guest into the Centre and then exited by the lower door, leaving his guest behind in the swimming pool. We want to see Owners enjoying the facilities but we are a little concerned by the few that, effectively, abuse the spirit of ownership and the concessionary benefits that are for the enjoyment of Owners and their

family not the wider public. The Leisure Team has been asked to make sure, as far as is possible, that Owners stay with their guests and we are looking at ways of controlling the variety of guests that are permitted to enter the Centre free of charge. We would welcome any comments and suggestions that you might have!

Also welcome would be some new Board members – a constant plea for help. I thought we had struck gold at the AGM, when a lady approached me and said that she was interested in joining us. Unfortunately, that is the last I heard from her and so the current directors soldier on. None of us has any plans to give in just yet, but extra hands and minds are always needed. In particular, we need someone who has the skills to manage our website. Enjoy the rest of the summer and, a note for your diaries, we plan to hold the next AGM on Saturday 3 March 2012.

*Peter Reid*

### Editor's note:

While I have had the honour to be your editor, some 5 years now, we have published BOA News 3 times per year. We have to write to each owner twice a year, with the AGM details and the annual maintenance fee invoice, so we published an issue of the News to coincide with those. Since the AGM moved to March, these two occasions are about six months apart and the Board has decided that the third edition (at the end of the summer) is not essential. A significant part of the cost of the newsletter is the postage, so only sending it when there is other material to post makes a significant saving.

We intend to use this saving, at least in the first instance, to improve the website. Increasingly people are turning to the website as a first source of information and, of course, we can update it much more quickly and cheaply than by writing to you individually.

We never forget that not all of you can access the website, or that those of you who can, may not wish to check it on a daily basis on the off chance that something has changed. Consequently we will still be publishing BOA News twice a year with all the essential information.

The newsletter is intended to inform, educate and entertain (if I may borrow from the BBC), and I hope that we achieve this. I find that that exchange reports tick all three boxes, and am always keen to include these. Each one I have published so far has been written by a member of the board, or their spouse. I would really like to include some more, from other owners – why not give it a try? I am always here to polish your contribution, should you think it necessary.

If there is anything else you would like to see in the newsletter or on the website, please let me know. You can contact me via any member of the board, through the membership services office at Barnsdale, or email me: [editor@boanews.co.uk](mailto:editor@boanews.co.uk)

### Unit Rentals

Don't forget that Barnsdale has an active unit rental scheme. If you know that you will not be using your unit, why not place it with the rental team? Although there is no guarantee that it will be rented, or what you will receive, you lose nothing by offering it. The income you will receive depends on Barnsdale being able to let it out, and what they can achieve for it. This, in turn, depends on the usual things, unit size, time of year, and how early they can let it. Barnsdale will also take a proportion to cover their costs. However, if the unit can be let instead of standing empty you will receive an amount to help pay your management fee, and the resort will benefit from appearing busier, and from any money the residents spend on site. What better way for a potential owner to appreciate the benefits of Barnsdale?

Email Kayleigh in the first instance, she will pass your details on to the relevant people:  
[Kayleigh.reid@barnsdale\\_hotel.co.uk](mailto:Kayleigh.reid@barnsdale_hotel.co.uk)





## *La Ermita – Mijas Pueblo*

For those who have not been there, Mijas Pueblo is a delightful village that sits against the tree-clad, rocky Sierra Mijas with views across to the nearby Mediterranean Sea. Nearly all of the village properties are painted white, adding to the generally peaceful atmosphere. In the centre of Mijas, you can find the famous “Burro Taxis”, a line of donkeys in brightly coloured tack that offer rides around the village. Narrow lanes and open squares offer shops, restaurants and bars. All is a stunning improvement on the concrete jungle of nearby Fuengirola and Benalmadena.

Just below the burro taxi rank, down a fairly steeply descending road, lies La Ermita Resort. From the road, just the top of the resort can be seen, as its six or so storeys are built against another hill. This is a quiet resort with comfortable apartments but few additional facilities. There are two open air, unheated, swimming pools surrounded by sun loungers. Alongside the pool area, which is on two levels, there is a snack bar and beside that is a fitness centre with a sauna. The pools were clean and well-maintained and the fitness centre was more than adequate for holiday levels of activity. We did not use the bar, although we did try on the night we arrived. Told that it would be open until 8.30pm, we called in for a cool drink at ten past eight only to be told that it was closed – no drinks. Over the week we stayed at La Ermita, the bar appeared to be a wasted asset. Not a particularly welcoming atmosphere but with huge potential, most guests seemed to give it little more than a glancing blow. Not a major problem, all of the apartments have balconies with magnificent views to the sea; an ideal place for a quiet evening (or mid-day) drink. If the balcony does not appeal, it is only a short walk to the

many little bars that are hidden around the squares and lanes of Mijas.

Our 2 bedroom apartment was comfortable and quite well equipped. The double bed looked small, so we slept in the twin-bedded room. There were 2 bathrooms, a full, galley kitchen and a comfortable sitting come dining area. Plenty of space for 2 people, not bad for 4, cramped for a sleep 6 arrangement. The balcony was large enough for a table and chairs and a couple of sun-loungers, although the table would need to be moved if you wanted to use the loungers. The view from the balcony was truly beautiful and we happily ate most of our meals out there, when not visiting some of the excellent restaurants in Mijas. If you do visit this resort and are thinking of cooking in your apartment, bring a sharp knife with you. The knives in the chef’s block were as close to useless as possible. The apartment had a Wi-Fi connection at a charge of €5 per hour. In a world where free Wi-Fi is the norm and on-line check-in is routine, this sort of charge always seems rather petty.

To get to Mijas, you will need a car. La Ermita has free parking in a basement area under the top level of the resort. That’s the good news. The bad news is that the parking slots are hidden around supporting pillars that threaten the bodywork of anything other than a relatively small car: we had a Mercedes A180 and managed with only a few 5 point turns. A larger MPV would help you qualify as an advanced motorist. The lovely lady in reception did warn us that parking was a challenge.

Overall, this is a comfortable and quiet resort that is close to one of the best holiday villages in the Malaga region. The final word has to be that we would happily return to La Ermita and to Mijas Pueblo. =

### *Barnsdale would like to email you*

Every week Barnsdale write to owners to check whether they intend to use their unit. This obviously incurs costs in terms of stationery and postage, as well the environmental impact. If you are happy to receive this letter by email, and possibly the occasional note about special offers or urgent news about the facilities, please let Kayleigh know.

Please email her at [Kayleigh.reid@barnsdalehotel.co.uk](mailto:Kayleigh.reid@barnsdalehotel.co.uk) with the subject “email address”, making sure that you include your unit and week number, so that she can relate the address to your details. If you do not want to receive all the types of information, include details of what you do, and do not, want to hear from Barnsdale about.

## Don't be too eager!

Owners are reminded that check-in time is 4pm. This is to allow cleaning and checking of the units after the departure of the previous guests. Use of the site facilities is normally available before this time, but please don't expect to be able to get into your accommodation before 4. As they say: "a refusal may offend", so it is preferable not to put the reception staff in the difficult position of having to turn down your request.

## Half board offer

Barnsdale are now offering a half board deal to anyone staying in the self catering accommodation. This is very reasonably priced, and can be taken on a day-by-day basis – you don't have to sign up for the full week as is the case for some resorts. So you can try some of the local hosteleries and use the offer for the other nights. You never need to cook at Barnsdale again!



## Paying your management fee

Your management fee is due on the 1st September. As time goes on, the way we pay our bills changes and now seems like a good time to repeat a reminder we published last year of the various ways in which you can pay.

Cheques and cash are still welcome. Make cheques payable to 'BIRGOM Co Ltd', and please note that post-dated cheques are not acceptable. Cash can only be accepted when the membership office is open, and preferably by appointment.

For those with access to online banking, this is probably the easiest way to pay, and the easiest for Barnsdale to handle. It is important to include your account ID (on the invoice) as a reference, or else they won't know that you have paid. The other details you need are:

Bank: Royal Bank of Scotland  
(London, Piccadilly branch)

Sort code: 16-01-23

Account: 11312721

Reference: Account ID from the invoice

*Some of you may also need:*

IBAN: GB18RBOS16012311312721

Bic / Swift: RBOSGB2L

If you don't know what those last two are, you don't need them.

You can also pay by plastic card. Debits cards would normally incur a £5 fixed admin fee, but it has been agreed to suspend this for this year, as an experiment. Credit cards (except American Express and Diners) can also be used: these have a 3% admin charge. These charges reflect the additional cost to Barnsdale of accepting money this way.

Whichever way you choose to pay, remember that the money is due at Barnsdale by Thursday 1st September.

## Lodge & Leisure Report

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

I write this having been forced inside from my round of golf – the crazy kind – because of rain and I don't mind at all!

Barnsdale will, by the time you read this, be in full swing with summer holiday owners and visitors taking advantage of both Barnsdale's and Rutland's leisure activities. All good news but (there is always a 'but') it does create some problems re- the refurbishment programme. It is not possible to do all that is required in the maintenance period so we have planned for 2 bathrooms and 6 unit's bedrooms to be refurbished on an 'as and when' basis. This means the money is allocated, the units identified and the management company will fit round occupancy to ensure the work is done as soon as possible.

It has also been apparent for some time that the swimming pool changing rooms need attention in order to bring them up to the standard expected of a Gold Crown resort. After a detailed inspection by the committee it was decided that a quick cheap fix was

not an option and to put a proposal to the Board that a full refurbishment be carried out. The Board agreed that the work should go ahead and we are currently looking at a complete overhaul of the facilities with new tiling, lockers etc. We have been offered the opportunity of spreading the cost of this major project over two financial years which will help considerably and allow the Lodge refurbishment programme to continue. Of course there will be some disruption and possibly short term closure but every effort will be made to keep this to a minimum. We are currently at the stage of getting provisional plans and specifications drawn up but if we can get things moving it is hoped that the whole project would be completed in the period from September to just before the Christmas holidays in December.

In the meantime there is, hopefully, a lot of summer sun and fun to be had by all – enjoy!

*Dusty Miller*  
Chairman Lodge & Leisure Committee

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