

BAY VIEW CARAVAN OWNERS' ASSOCIATION
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NEWSLETTER No 58, November 2013

Dear Members,

Well what a summer we had this year, makes up for the past 2 years of rainy summers. This is your Associations 58th NL and as usual is full of interesting and important information. As always, we welcome your comments. You can contact us using the tel. numbers at end of NL or email.

We started to write this newsletter in July – it is now November. Possibly the reason for the delay is that your committee needed space to digest all that has happened since 28 July.

Since the Association was formed in 2007, there have been meetings with Swanage Town Council, then Darwin arrived and we felt we were back to 'square one'. Finally, after hours of discussion, deliberation, disagreement and decision-making, our new licence was in place and a small celebration took place with representation from NACO, Darwin and OA committee in July this year.

We do advise you to read your licence and attachments very carefully, especially if you wish to sell your caravan. A note about this is on the website.

Treasurer

Phoebe Tiney, having sold her caravan, has now resigned from the committee and as treasurer. We would like to thank Phoebe for all her hard work over the past 5 years. Her accounting of all Association monies was kept scrupulously. Her position of treasurer will be a hard one to follow. Thank you Phoebe and we wish you good luck for the future.

Lisa Murray has agreed to take on this task and has been approved by the vote of the Committee. Good luck and thank you Lisa.

Sales of caravans

Please refer to the short guide that is shown on the Owners' Association website. The key thing is to involve the Sales Office and be familiar with your licence. Some recent sales have shown that the initial offer made by the Sales Office may not be reflective of the true market value of your holiday home. Some recent sales have also shown that the transfer of sales monies from Darwin to the seller have taken longer than the agreed period as shown in the new licence. One seller made it clear that they would charge interest if the money was not transferred, and it may be worth speaking to the Sales Office about this so that they are clear that you expect them to comply with the licence just as they expect you to do. This demonstrates the importance of us sticking together as an Association.

Section 12 of your Licence governs the return of rates in the event of a sale. Recent rates refunds made by the Sales Office show that if you sell your caravan and leave the site, any rates you have paid for the months after you have left are returned to you. The new buyer takes over the rates from then on.

Celebration of the new Licence Agreement

Our thanks go to all the Committee members who worked hard with NACO to produce this industry leading licence. It was great to meet as the Owners' Association with Darwin at the celebration. We hope to show by our continued reasonable behaviour and the fact that we continue to have the support of over 51% of the caravan owners, that we are worthy of formal recognition by Darwin.

Since Associations are the future, we think it would be a positive and helpful move if Darwin recognises us officially. Trading Standards, NACO, the Government, MPs and OFT all promote Associations on Holiday and Residential Parks. People Power and all that!

There is only one objective criterion for recognition of the Association adopted by Swanage Town Council, Burges Salmon (Darwin's solicitors), Darwin and previous management - it was that we had more than 51% in membership. This was re-inforced in the negative when Darwin then claimed in 2012 that in their opinion, we did not have 51% in membership, and they would not therefore recognise the Association. We actually still had over 80% at the time.

For Darwin to say they do not recognise Associations on any of the parks without any explanation or evidence, flies in the face of the views of MPs, Trading Standards, OFT etc especially if the owners can show they have more than 51% in membership. That is the position for recognition, recognised in common law anyway i.e. the majority represents all.

It is helpful and supportive for owners to feel that there is some organisation (like NACO and the OA) to help them in times of trouble.

Electricity Bill

Some owners have asked to see the Electricity bill which Darwin are sent by the supply company in order to feel confident that the bills to caravan owners are at the same rates. This is in accordance with Ofgem who state that park owners must do this, if asked. Anne Foulkes has assured the owners that Darwin only pass on the charge as billed by their supplier. We hope that those members who have asked to see the bill will be able to do so, so that their doubts can be allayed- This of course would be a great PR move by Darwin. Darwin have said owners may have sight of their bill but it is not policy to give out copies.

Now we have received our electricity bills for the March to September period, perhaps this is a good time to have sight of Darwin's bill for those who wish to do so.

Liaison

You may feel that sometimes we are moving slowly on a number of problems that arise. This is because we are aiming to foster good, friendly and positive working relations with Darwin. So far, it is going well and though we have not been told we are recognised, we seem to think that especially after the celebration, it seems that we are recognised! We do hope that our members will always feel they can ask for our help if they encounter problems that need our advice and input, and that Darwin will respond positively when contacted by the OA as the representative of an owner. In fact, as all members have asked the Association to represent them it is an obligation on the Association, and to Darwin's benefit to respond to that representative (the Association)

Townsend Sycamores

To improve the sea views from the Park, a group of owners met on a Sunday morning in October at the next-door Townsend Nature Reserve to chop down the sycamore saplings that have grown up in the previous 12 months. This was the sixth year running we have done this and it was all with the help and support of the Dorset Wildlife Trust who manage the Reserve. It was a particularly difficult task this year as the old man's beard was especially rampant. Many thanks to the nine owners who contributed their time and effort. It looks like being an unusually interesting winter as far as the sycamores are concerned. Firstly, Darwin, Swanage Town Council and DWT have reached agreement about felling some of the large trees at the bottom of the hill. Darwin, as represented by Andy Romsey, still have to sort out final details but we are hopeful that action will follow. And secondly, DWT have won a large grant to support their management of wildlife at Townsend. This requires them to clear large areas of undergrowth and trees to encourage grassland. It would be great if this were to include the areas where we have had to work for several years. So it will be interesting to see what has changed when we all return in the Spring.

Proposed fees for 2014/15

Members will recall that under the licence, Darwin must propose fees for the following season with 3 months' notice i.e. by 30 November, based on CPI as at the end of October. CPI at that time was 2.2%. We know of no other development, which is for our benefit for which we can be charged.

General Meeting

The next GM is 5 April 2014 at 5pm in the new Baptist Church in Victoria Avenue followed with refreshments. We hope you are all able to attend as we have only two meetings a year now.

Phil Davey	No 212	Chairman	07901 586 189
Richard Edwards	No 66	Vice Chairman	07717 682 323
Marjorie Edwards	No 66	Secretary/Membership	07717 682 323
Lisa Murray	No 274	Treasurer	07584 055868
Rosemary Burbridge	No 311	Liaison Officer	07961 034 473