

BAY VIEW CARAVAN OWNERS' ASSOCIATION
email: bayviewcaravanownersassociation@yahoo.co.uk

MINUTES OF GENERAL MEETING 10 OCTOBER 2015

PRESENT:

Richard Swan	Chairman
Marjorie Edwards	Secretary/Membership
Rosemary Burbidge	Liaison Officer
Lisa Murray	Treasurer
John Hawkins	
Frank Carter	
Mike Hardiman	

Approx 62 Association members (Signed in) 38 caravans represented
Apologies received from owners of 11 caravans

The Chairman opened the meeting, welcomed all the members.

APOLOGIES.

Apologies were received from committee member Val Moore, Val and Roy Gill, Rhoda and Damian Goodwin. Several other apologies representing 11 caravans had been received by the Secretary and Chairman by email and have been recorded.

MINUTES OF LAST GENERAL MEETING ON 28 MARCH 2015

These are available on the owners website for all to see.
Any matters arising will be covered through the rest of this meeting.

There were no other changes to the Minutes so they were agreed and signed and are on the website for everyone to see.

TREASURERS REPORT

Lisa reported that there was a balance of approx £2000 in the account. There has been minimum spending during the last 6 months, mostly on paper, postage, printing, telephone calls etc. Subscriptions are still coming in slowly and it would be a big help to all concerned if everyone paid by direct debit but we appreciate that not everyone is geared up to do that. But we have a healthy bank balance, which is a good thing.

SECRETARY'S REPORT

Membership is creeping up as representatives of each park area recruit new owners. We are now just climbing over the 60% mark and we are sure that Darwin has no idea how big the Association is!

It is important that current owners inform us of changes to their details – new email addresses, moving to new pitches etc. We are gradually getting the database as up to date as possible and we continue to keep members informed of any news and issues by email newsletter (and post for those not on email).

A full membership report is on the website.

LIAISON OFFICER'S REPORT

Rosemary thanked Richard for being an extremely efficient chairman. She also thanked Marjorie and Lisa for their work on secretarial and finance matters too.

Since the last meeting, she has spoken to Purbeck District Council concerning rates, NACO regarding safety issues and Ann, (Park Manager) re work on site over the Easter holidays in moving the manager's lodge. It was felt that the last issue was very definitely a health and safety concern and when things like this happen, we must complain about them as individual owners or Darwin may continue to flout any safety rules. (Since this issue arose communication between the park and owners regarding works has improved. Some owners have received letters giving advance notice about works and notices have been placed next to the signing in book in reception).

We understand that Dorset Trading Standards is monitoring Darwin closely over several issues and Richard Herringshaw has asked to be kept involved about any trading issues that are of concern to members. Likewise Purbeck District Council is monitoring issues concerned with planning regulations. Please contact either of these organisations if you have any concerns about issues arising on the park that have not been addressed by the management. (Contact details at end of Notes).

If you do inform DTS or PDC of anything, please copy the Association in on your correspondence so we know what's going on.

Rosemary finished by confirming that we still continue to try and get Darwin to recognise us as an Association.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Richard thanked the park reps for recruiting new members and suggested a change in subscriptions to save hours of work. He suggested that there be a 3 year subscription of £10 which would be transferable to new owners of the van if selling. This was unanimously agreed.

Dan Ellacott (NACO), who has recently met with Darwin, has suggested to them that it was in their interests to work with the Association but Darwin refused because ...

- a) In the future it might be run by people they did not like
- b) If they agreed to an Association at SBV, other parks would want one

Dan continues to be frustrated, as we are, about Darwin's stance

In the absence of any formal relationship with the park, there are four key organisations/people to address any issues/complaints to – numbers at the end of notes.

SITE ISSUES

Sales

This item continues to be the biggest problem for members. Jackie from Oliver Miles was at the meeting and if anyone has a private sales enquiry, please talk to her. We understand that Adam has left the site and been replaced by Alwyn who seems approachable. A meeting was held between Oliver Miles, Darwin staff members and Richard Herringshaw to discuss commissions and other problems that have arisen with private sales. We understand that the meeting made limited progress. Notes were taken and agreed by all parties. Oliver Miles said they would report back to owners through the Owners Association but Darwin would not allow that. The basic commission rate seems to be 15% if you sell your van through the park, 10% if you sell to someone who is on their database and a one off fee of £500 if you sell privately. Issues connected with commission calculations and the Darwin database remain for members. Please note that the Committee cannot do any legal work for you but we can provide information as to who may be able to help you.

Rate Rebates

The Committee discovered (via a call to Purbeck District Council) that Darwins' rateable value was re-calculated in May 2015, backdated to 2010. All owners should by now have received a letter regarding their rebate. So therefore, there is a credit of approximately £66 due to all who have been owners since 2010. We understand that this has been credited to our accounts. Owners who have joined the park between 2010 and 2015 will receive smaller amounts.

Entry Barrier System

What can we say! The staff no longer ask for your caravan number on entry but just lift the barrier so there is no security value to them at all. Darwin are looking to install a number plate recognition system which would be unsuitable for visitors, deliveries, emergency services etc. It was felt that this has been a total waste of money for the park ... for a second time (last time they cost £16,000 to install).

Insurance

Darwin tried to assume that they could sell us their own insurance but have now rescinded that. They also withdrew their claim that a £20 fee to inspect insurance documents saying it was a mistake! There is no pre-requisite to use Darwin's insurance brokers ... you can insure with who ever you choose. For those with the 2013 licence there is no fee if you take your own insurance.

Landscaping

Many owners complained about the lack of grass and hedge cutting this year. It has been far worse than in previous years. If you need hedges/grass cut, please go and ask at the office and obtain a job sheet with a reference number to follow up. We are paying for this facility in our site fees!

Sycamore Trees

Leslie Burgess was the committee member assigned to this project. (Not here today) But we will follow up any progress with him.

Decking

There is a move by the park to try and get everyone to have plastic decking. Dorset Trading Standards have confirmed that this is not a legal requirement. Purbeck District Council continue to give planning permission for wooden decking. Darwin has also said that if you upgrade to a new caravan, you must renew your decking too. This requirement is not mentioned in our 2013 licence. Please contact PDC and DTS if you have concerns. We also understand that the park will only allow certain contractors to install decking, this could be an example of a restricted practice. Please contact Richard Herringshaw at Dorset Trading Standards if you need further information.

Three Caravans replacing the Lodge

The Manager's lodge was moved earlier this year and 3 new caravans have been sited there. Some have decking installed yet surrounding vans were not contacted and no planning permission notices were seen. Purbeck District Council are looking into whether planning permission was obtained for all these works

Recycling and Refuse

The Owners Association had nothing to do with the siting of the new refuse area on the road up from reception. It was a 'fait accompli' by Darwin and has caused understandable anger from van owners in the area. Would owners driving to use these bins please try to avoid early morning and late night drops.

Entertainment

Ann Foulkes asked why few owners use the entertainment complex and we answered that Darwin had upset so many owners that they don't want to use it. We suggested that she work with us to see what owners want. This offer has not been taken up to date.

Gym

Darwin has re-opened the gym with new equipment and there are plans for a spa. Some of the new equipment has already broken and has been removed

Electric Bills

Bills have been sent out. If you are not happy with the information, please ask for an itemised breakdown.

Owner's Survey

We know that there are very many unhappy owners on the park. Darwin say that it's only a handful! We suggested that the Association conduct a 'Satisfaction Survey' over the winter to ascertain the true feelings of members and write a report to present to Darwin and others. This was unanimously agreed. If owners continue to have concerns about the terms of their licence not being upheld, they may have to take the legal route to get it resolved. The Association may consider instructing a local Swanage lawyer (or one recommended by NACO) for any owner to use (once he/she has an insight of the history of issues connected with the way the park has been run).

Letting through Darwin

Some owners, who have let through the Darwin scheme, have experienced several problems such as the cleaner leaving the heating on, dirty linen left in the caravan (when the owner had not been told the van had been let), items missing from fridges and so on. It seems that Darwin may be prone to letting out caravans without telling the owners in advance, so be aware of these incidences. There are other companies that owners can use to manage their lettings. The Association can give you contact details

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Lighting health and safety issues were reported where street lighting has been removed and not replaced. Please report to the manager if this has happened near you.

There have been incidences of rats. If you see rats, please report this to the park manager and if their presence continues then to the Environmental Health Officer at Purbeck District Council

We have heard that Darwin has approached Swanage Town Council with a view to buying the land but STC will not agree to this.

We are happy to plan a Christmas Social if anyone would like one. Approx 20 people raised hands so we will book the church café for Saturday 5th December (same day as Swanage Christmas Fair) from 4 to 6pm. For those reading these notes who were not at the meeting, please advise Marjorie if you wish to attend.

There was no other business so the meeting closed and refreshments were served.

DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS FOR YOUR DIARY

General Meeting – Saturday 19th March 2016, 5pm

AGM – Saturday 24th September 2016, 5pm

2017 General meeting – Saturday – 18 March - 5pm (provisional)

USEFUL CONTACT DETAILS

For issues pertaining to the running of the park

Anne Foulkes, Park Manager

Anne.foulkes@swanagebayview.co.uk

For issues pertaining to planning

Steve Boyt, Purbeck District Council

steveboyt@purbeck-dc.gov.uk

For issues pertaining to trading

Richard Herringshaw, Dorset Trading Standards

r.d.herringshaw@dorsetcc.gcsx.gov.uk

For issues pertaining to park finance, insurance etc.

Claire Dyer

01745 858001

For issues pertaining to Health and Safety

Stephanie Shimmons, Health and Safety, Purbeck District Council

01929 557393