

Association of Frinton Beach Hut Owners

Welcome

My name is Peter Dias and I am the Chairman of the association. I would like to thank you all for coming today and before I ask the rest of the committee that are to introduce themselves please let me go through some housekeeping regarding toilets and fire escapes.

I am sorry that this year's meeting is later than normal but it has been difficult to secure a spot on a Saturday morning as the hall is in great demand around this time.

I hope all can see an agenda on which you will note that we do have Mike Carran the Head of Sport and Leisure Operational Services for TDC who will be speaking later and no doubt will take your questions.

Before I start I would like to thank the committee for their commitment in working with me on several issues and the work they do on your behalf. I would also like to thank the daily patrollers that go out in all weathers to make sure your huts are safe and the coordinators that let you know if they need repairing. On that note I would like to publicly thank Headley Missen one of our coordinators. If have not heard from Headley then that is good is good news as he only rings you when there is something wrong with your hut. Headley has carried out the role for 12 years so we do have a small gift for you to say thank you for all you have done.

Last year I made a presentation to the meeting about the vandalism of our huts as it seemed to me that there was a lack of concern by the police and TDC over these crimes. At that meeting it was interesting that Sgt Gerrard told me he was ashamed to say that he was unaware of the number of huts vandalised.

I also made a plea to hut owners to reinforce the bottom door of your hut as this is the most vulnerable part and where most perpetrators get in. I maybe preaching to the converted but we continue to see smashed in doors again and again.

You will see from the Damage report that last year in August we once again had a terrible time with 36 huts vandalised over 2 nights. This was the final straw and we made calls to the police and TDC for action and made contact with the local press. Giles Watling, our MP, got involved with speaking to the local police commander. I had a meeting with PSCO's and as I learnt that Walton had problems we all agreed to meet with Sgt Gerard at Walton Police Station.

At the same time Mike Carran, attended our committee meetings and I am pleased to say took on board our concerns and arranged a Tendring wide meeting of all beach hut Associations, Police, Fire Brigade and representatives from the Council including Mick Skeels. As you know around that time Walton had 4 hut burnt down and the chairman's husband assaulted by a thug. 2 people were arrested for the arson attack but no prosecutions due to lack of evidence but I think it did show the vandals the police and PSCO's were on to them.

This agreed meeting took place on the 7 Dec 2017 and I produced a presentation of what had happened at Frinton and what we as a committee wanted. The main items were; a Tendringwide Beach Hut Forum, an action plan for security and the need to work together to tackle vandalism on all levels.

Also at that meeting it was clear that all associations were having trouble with vandalism as let's face it we are a 'soft target'. Action points from the meeting were for Mike to look into; trialling Mosquito Devices, PIR (Passive Infrared Sensor) floodlighting, infra-red cameras, fire service to liaise with police on key locations of vandalism, education at school level, and continue with joint meetings at least twice a year. It was agreed that Walton should be the testing site given their recent problems.

In the meantime we at Frinton continued with Community Guard patrolling nightly and on some occasions in liaison with the PSCO's we have arranged all night patrols. Community Guard have been proactive and where there has been a gang of youths on the sea front they have kept a presence to make sure nothing untoward happened and I am grateful for that help.

A further meeting was held in March this year where Mike confirmed that 2 mosquito devices had been located at Walton on a timer for unsocial hours, PIR lighting had been purchased and CCTV Cameras producing good quality pictures were to be purchased. These items can be moved to other locations and if there continues to be a problem in another area then the council will look to move them. So we will continue to monitor vandalism and if necessary make arrangements with Mike to make use of these deterrents.

Since March 4 huts vandalised April and May so a better start to the year and may be just maybe we are starting to see a turnaround. I think the deterrents put in place, the continued work of Community Guard and perhaps seeing vandals arrested has sent an alarm to the trouble makers. But I will not be happy until there are no reports of huts damaged by vandals so we can all enjoy coming down to our huts and soaking up the sun.

Ending on another positive note we have a new website under the name www.frintonbeachhutassociation.co.uk. This was set up with the help of Julie one of the committee and Alan McDermott of Hut and Home. Thank you to you for getting this up and running. So please take a look.