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Frinton Beach Hut Association

Minutes of the AMM at McGrigor Hall, Frinton on May 14, 2022

Present: chairman Peter Dias, membership secretary and treasurer Robert Hughes, minutes secretary Sue Totham, Chris Halstead, Hayley Hills, Steve Cole, Daphne West, TDC corporate director, projects delivery, Lee Heley, and around 100 members.

Apologies for absence: Committee members Jane Watts, Julie Searles, and Philip Thornton. Fifty FBHA members sent their apologies

Welcome and introduction from Peter Dias, minutes from 2019 and matters arising

Election of new chair Hayley Hills, vice-chair Julie Searles, and the committee, including four new members. None opposed proposals and seconds took place en masse - all in agreement. Peter was thanked for his ten years as chair.

Approval of Minutes of AMM 2019, signed by Peter.

Rentals and extensions: Lee Heley introduced himself, and said he was here to listen to views about two contentious issues: banning rentals and enforcing rules on beach hut extensions. Peter said of 25 emails from members re rentals: four were happy with current situation, seven thought huts should not be rented because of nuisance, overcrowding and unfairness to others, and 14 believed it would be better to allow licensed rentals, with enforcement of regulations. He said rules were different around the country, with some rentals restricted to a certain number of days, some banned completely, some offering a commercial licence for sub-letting, and others unregulated.

Peter then explained problems of unauthorised extensions, such as verandah, which changed the look of Frinton, and could be detrimental to neighbours, affecting privacy and views. He suggested a TDC-wide beach hut group be set up, and asked for people to contact him if they thought they could help liaise about any change of rules with the council.

Fifteen minutes was set aside for views on each subject.

Jo Lowery (343) was keen to see rentals regulated, and said it offered a service of 'try before you buy', enabled families without huts to enjoy a few weeks by the sea, and would like to work with the council to help with regulations such as numbers,

and safety issues. Michael Chaplin, (100 the Leas), said he had no objection to rentals, but did not want one person owning lots of huts which they would then rent out. Jane Whitnell, (H55) said the rent went towards the costs of the hut, and it was good to allow others the chance to enjoy the huts. Stephen Locks(395) thought businesses should not be allowed, but the income for individuals helped towards keeping the hut well maintained. Julia Gaston (159) said the huts had been rented out for years, and originally she was asked by the council to rent out her hut, and could see no problem with continuing to do so. Ann Davis (516) agreed, saying maintenance costs are high, and when not using the hut themselves, they rented out the hut - many families come year after year, bringing a trade bonus for local shops. She said renters would welcome guidelines. Caroline Sawyer (644) said the council was targeting hut renters because it was easy money, when other issues such as parking were ignored. Hayley Hills, chair, pointed out that parking is free because the land was gifted with the condition there would never be a charge. Stephen Castell (601) suggested the motivation behind the rental ban suggestion was merely financially motivated, and TDC would never be able to enforce it, as other issues were not enforced either. He asked for confirmation whether rentals had always been illegal – for about 50 years- and if owners could continue to rent the huts this year, while the rule is under scrutiny, because otherwise it would throw into doubt a lot of bookings. Joy Sanders (669) said Suffolk council had a good policy of allowing rentals, and suggested we use their terms and conditions. Jo Lowery added that rather than one person owning many huts, most of them were rented out by managers on behalf of owners. And finally she said it was good to promote the area by renting out huts to those who couldn't own. Jacey Dias, (334) pointed out that the rentals sometimes welcomed large parties, with dangerous and anti-social attitudes- especially about bbqs. “Regulations are a very important part of this review”.

Then the discussion went on to **beach hut extensions**.

Mary Barralet (h257) was concerned that steps were encroaching on paths and made access very difficult. Chris Brindle (22 Leas), said the original footprint and designs dated back to the 1950s, and there was room to refresh design restrictions. He said though some did not comply, the variety was attractive. He wanted to know which bits were unacceptable – the cupboards underneath the huts? Platforms? Balconies? Pitch of the roof? Would TDC force you to pull it down before granting a licence if you sell? Ann Davis (516) said her hut had been modified many years ago to make the steps safer and felt she had not encroached or affected anyone else's enjoyment. Peter Dias (334) said one owner had been devastated by extensions either side of his hut, and felt it obscured his view and affected his privacy. Stephen Castell (601) said that extensions were banned in the licence, so why would anyone do that.

Lee Heley(TDC) said he would take all views back to the council.

Membership report Robert Hughes said in 2019 we had 790 members, which had now increased to 819, which was a very healthy representation. He asked for anyone receiving postal copies to consider allowing us an email address if possible, to save postage. Membership stickers are available from Robert.

Treasurer's report In 2019 our bank balance was £23,000, in 2021 it was £24,000, and this year, because of not launching the rafts, we have £30,000. Robert reported that, as usual, security and rafts are our biggest expenditures.

Peter Dias commented that the association could afford to make some improvements for hut owners with some of these funds and would welcome suggestions to be discussed by the committee. Accounts proposed by Jane Hughes, (113 the Leas) and seconded by Maureen Halliday (110)

Damage Report: Patrol co-ordinator Philip Thornton sent his apologies, but his report was included in the invitation pack. Vandalism seemed to reduce over lockdown, but a few cases had been noted more recently. Patrollers are always welcome, and volunteers should contact Philip at pandgthornton@btinternet.com.

Any other business:

Richard Noel (103 The Walings) called for people to **park considerately**, and for the parking rules to be enforced to prevent accidents. Elizabeth Guyton urged people to refrain from parking on the prom, it caused obstruction for wheelchairs and prams. Tracey Hannah (69 the Walings) asked for TDC to review the structures beneath the huts on stilts, which were rotten. Karen Waltham (25 the Leas) said more visible **cycling restriction signs** were needed on High and Low Walls, as many cyclists travelled irresponsibly along the narrow promenade. Derek Pinner (151 the Leas) was concerned the beams beneath his hut were sinking, and urged TDC to complete the programme to **renovate these structures**. Alison Deal (545) asked for paths to be maintained and not be left with just gravel. Hayley Hills (257) said red tar used to repair the promenade melted in the heat and made access for wheelchairs and buggies impossible. Joanna Penny (103 the Leas) asked if a poll could be taken about rentals, but the chairman said the committee had considered this and decided it would not help because it was not a 'yes or no' vote. Jacey Dias (334) asked for more bins and more collections during the summer, especially near main access points.

Meeting brought to a close at 4.30pm

Thank you to all who attended, and to all those who read this report.

Thanks to the committee for their efforts, and to Jane and Jacey for the refreshments: donations were for the RNLI.

Enjoy your beach huts.

Sue Totham, minutes secretary, suetotham@sky.com