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## Frinton Beach Hut Association

Annual Members' Meeting, May 4, 2024, McGrigor Hall

**Present:** chairman Hayley Hill, membership secretary and treasurer Robert Hughes, minutes secretary Sue Totham, patrols officer Jane Watts, Steve Cole, Sue Webb, Jo Lowery, Peter Dias. TDC's Jennie Wilkinson and Nina Underwood. and around 60 members.

**Apologies for absence:** Committee members Graham Waltham, Chris Halstead, Daphne West, Joy Sanders and Philip Thornton. Fifty FBHA members sent their apologies

**Welcome and introduction** from Hayley, and minutes from 2023 agreed, by Elaine Rowland, 279, and Michael Holman, 284H.

**Election** of committee. Peter Dias and Chris Halstead are standing down, the rest of the committee re-elected en masse. Proposed by John Barter, hut 647, seconded by Paul Diggins, 181. Chris and Peter thanked for their service, and an appeal for more committee members was made.

### **Matters arising:**

- Jennie Wilkinson stepped in to answer questions about the proposed changes from licence to lease. She said details of the leases would be circulated to representative associations before they are sent to owners. She said delays were out of her hands, but if owners had applied for a commercial lease they could go ahead and rent their huts for more than ten days a year while the leases are organised. So far, 70 commercial leases had been applied for – out of 3,080 huts. The new leases should be in by next year. Linda Ellis 647, wondered why it needed to change at all, but it was made clear Jennie and her team were only implementing changes made by TDC, and had no choice but to go ahead. Non-commercial leases will be phased in across the district over five years. The administration fee will be £75 on top of the annual charge, and ID will be needed to buy the lease. This charge will apply on renewal every five years. Rights to renewal will be included as long as criteria is met. Andy Starr, hut 87, asked why rises (with CPI) were calculated annually, and Jennie said because the licence had been annual. Hayley said the association had tried to challenge the

- proposal, and had built up a good relationship with the officers, but it was a done deal.
- Seven rafts will be launched in May. The number has gradually increased over the past ten years, and the newest one, marking the coronation of King Charles, will be secured between Oxford Road and Queens Road. Sally Penny, 107, asked if another could be anchored at the Walings. Problems of access and safety will be looked at again.

**Damage report and patrollers:** Jane Watts, standing in for Philip Thornton, said most damage reported was through wear and tear, with seven possible cases of vandalism. She said rear walls of some huts seemed to have been kicked, causing damage inside. She thanked patrollers and co-ordinators, and said more are always welcome. The rota is organised that everyone patrols one week every three months. Volunteers should contact Jane on 07770 587686. The association also pays for daily security patrols.

**Membership:** Robert Hughes reported that the association now has 818 members, still short of his target of 820. Around 300 owners are not members of the association, so spread the word! He asked for everyone to make sure we have an updated email address. Membership stickers are available from Robert. Hayley thanked Robert, who has helped Frinton Beach Hut Association to get the highest percentage of owners compared to other areas.

**Treasurer's report:** The subs are in and the bills for security and rafts are due out, so our balance is at a healthy £31,816. The bulk of this is from fees the association received from TDC several decades ago for opening and closing the gates to the promenade. The money is reserved as a fighting fund should we ever need it. A new bill this year was £1,200 for legal advice to challenge the lease proposals. The accounts were proposed and seconded by John Barter 547 and Richard Fletcher 353.

**TDC:** there has been a complete change in the **beach hut team** this year. Nina Underwood is beach hut manager, Claire Alleston team admin, Jennie Wilkinson property and projects manager, Andy White assistant director for building and public realm, and councillor Mick Barry portfolio holder for leisure and public realm. Please email them on [beachhuts@tendringdc.gov.uk](mailto:beachhuts@tendringdc.gov.uk) with queries or requests. Jennie reported that **staging at the Leas** is likely to be replaced over the next three to five years, having been delayed by other urgent protection issues. TDC also intends to phase in replacement **staging at the Walings**. The work is planned for out of season if possible, and owners will be given about eight weeks' notice. Unfit for purpose **paths and steps** are earmarked for repairs where money is available. John Barter hoped the **zigzag path gardens** would be revitalised in time for the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Britain in Bloom, and it was suggested the Open Space team should be contacted to work with Frinton in Bloom. Updated **hut specifications** are planned, as many huts no longer meet the current specs: it will open it up for environmentally-friendly changes. No upvc will be allowed. Solar panels might be considered. Unlawful extensions could mean extra charges or

removal orders. Some owners have already been told to remove unlawful access or constructions beyond their footprint. Julia Gasgoigne, 159, asked about **criteria for renting** her hut. Jo Lowery, the association's rentals adviser, to send a risk assessment template. Jo is happy to be contacted on [jo.neil@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:jo.neil@yahoo.co.uk)

**Any other business:**

- Hayley Hill said the struggle with TDC re new leases had left the committee feeling slightly disillusioned. She said the association now planned to focus its energies on rafts, safety of beach huts and patrols, and signposting queries to TDC, reducing the workload for the committee as far as possible. But if you'd like to volunteer, please don't be put off!
- Robert thanked representatives of James Hallam, insurance broker, for coming to the meeting. Last year it donated £170 to FBHA from new policies.
- Sue T said the committee had shown it was keen to spend money to improve facilities for beach hut owners, including showers, changing areas, a new shelter at the zigzag path, but could not afford to maintain these projects. Budget restrictions on TDC or FWTC meant the projects were therefore unfeasible, but we would continue challenging for the best for Frinton.
- It is hoped to refresh the association's website this year, which is updated regularly by Steve Osborne. Sue Webb updates our Facebook page.
- Next year's AMM will be held same place same time, possibly same committee, on May 17. Hope to see you there!

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

**Smile, be safe and enjoy your beach hut**

Sue Totham, minutes secretary, [suehtotham@gmail.com](mailto:suehtotham@gmail.com)