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Chairman: Jo Woodward
Vice Chairman: Roy Gray
Secretary: Julie Downton
Treasurer: Trevor Mason

NEWSLETTER No 17

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WHAT HAPPENED AT THE AGM?

For members who were not at the AGM in June we can give you a brief update. All the current Committee members agreed to stand again and were returned unopposed. Not a surprise, perhaps, as people are often reluctant to come forward to sit on committees, but we are always looking for members to join our Committee as almost all of us have been in place since the Association was formed in 2013 and we won't all go on for ever! It is not an onerous job.

Following the Treasurer's report that we had £9845 in our account, of which £3990 was ring-fenced on our Fighting Fund, it was agreed that we would open a separate account for the Fighting Fund. There was a suggestion from the floor that we put £1000 a year from our everyday account into the Fighting Fund so, with the professional assistance from our member, Susan Penn, who works at Barclays, the Fighting Fund account was opened and we have already earned £1.02 in interest !!!! At a recent Committee meeting we agreed to put half the money we receive in subscriptions each year into the Fighting Fund. That means we will be adding £1387 to the Fund this year.

For members who have joined since the Fighting Fund was set up - a brief explanation. In 2017 we were faced with the possibility of a huge increase in the licence fee that beach hut owners pay to the council. If implemented, many owners would have been priced out of owning a hut. In order to pay for legal advice, members very generously dipped into their pockets and almost £8000 was raised. Nearly £4000 of that was used to pay a solicitor to challenge the council and it proved to be money well spent. The outcome was a new pricing structure where most hut owners paid a little more but nowhere near what was proposed, with a 10% increase each year until 2021. We are maintaining the fund just in case another situation arises affecting hut owners or chalet tenants where we need to consult a solicitor so we don't have to ask members for money again.

On a lighter note, in view of the fact that we have provided a defibrillator at The Dip, a representative of the British Heart Foundation came to the AGM and gave a practical demonstration on CPR and how to use a defibrillator. Members took an active part with several trying their hand at mouth to mouth resuscitation on dummies and one member volunteered to be a casualty who needed to be placed in the recovery position on the floor. Well done, Allan, a great sport! We made a donation of £200 to the British Heart Foundation by way of thanks.

UPDATE FROM A MEETING WITH EAST SUFFOLK COUNCIL

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Jo and Julie met with representatives of East Suffolk Council in October.

There are some relevant proposals in the pre-planning stage. The proposed platforms at the Spa will go to Cabinet, after which it is hoped there will be a formal planning application by January next year. Five new spaces are proposed at Manor End, intended for re-locations from the Spa. In the meantime, it has been confirmed that huts at the Spa will remain on the prom. Funds have also been secured for a concrete and steel repair of the existing platform at Pier South and this work should commence in 2020. The Association will continue to monitor these, and any other proposals that come forward.

We understand that work to the steps at Brackenbury has been completed on schedule and within budget. There are still some safety guard railings to go up and hand rails replaced where needed.

A Chalet review is due in 2020/21 and the Association will be consulted as part of the review. Chalet rents will increase by 2.9% next year, in line with the Retail Price Index.

WE HAVE UPGRADED OUR WEBSITE

If you haven't already done so, have a look at our new website – the link is at the top of this newsletter.

We often get requests for information about tradespeople who repair and maintain beach huts. You can find a list of people on the website who offer their services to our members, and you may well need to show your membership card in order to get a reduced price.

There are also details of companies that insure beach huts and many other businesses that offer their services to our members. There is much more on the site too.

THE 'OCCASIONAL CAFÉ' WILL BE OPEN AGAIN THIS WINTER

Joy Reeve and Karen Kenny, of Grandma's Little House at Manor End - which was Beach Hut of the Year 2017 - will be opening their hut again this winter, every Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 7am to 12.30pm, this time raising money for Parkinson's UK. They have raised thousands of pounds over the past few years for various charities and they provide a warm welcome as well as a warm drink and homemade goodies.

HAVE YOU CHANGED YOUR CONTACT DETAILS?

We must comply with the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) and maintain correct records of your personal details. So, if you have changed your address, telephone number(s), email address or perhaps got an email address for the first time, please let us know. We will never share your details with others. We often send out snippets of information by email which we are unable to send out by post. Apologies to members without email, but it would be costly to put a few lines of information in the post regularly. We will continue to put as much information as we can on our newsletters.

FUNDRAISING CONTINUES

The Committee, and several of our members, have spent some time this summer raising money for good causes.

Di and Peter Chilver held their annual MacMillan Coffee Morning at their hut at Brackenbury Cliffs. Lots of fellow members and passers-by called in and made generous donations in return for delicious cakes, snack and drinks. The outcome was an amazing £915.14 raised for the charity. The photo shows just how busy it was.



Some of our Committee members opened their huts on Suffolk Day and provided drinks, cakes and other tasty morsels in exchange for donations to the Felixstowe Air Cadets. We had some Association coasters made and some striking pictures from photographs taken by Julie's husband which were also sold for the same cause. The outcome was an incredible £1300 being presented to the Cadets one evening at Julie's hut. Our photo shows Jo presenting the cheque.



QUIZ NIGHT

We held the annual Quiz Night earlier this month which was attended by 90 people in 17 teams. Members attending were invited to contribute £1 when they arrived (several gave more!) and there was a raffle for which the prizes were all donated. A delicious buffet was arranged by Julie, Carol, Barbara and Pam.

The outcome of the evening was that £262 will be donated to Felixstowe Volunteer Coastal Patrol and Rescue Service.

EVEN MORE REASONS FOR BEING A MEMBER

We often get vandalism and weather damage to huts reported to us. We are then able to quickly get a message to the owner – provided they are a member.

This year we even had an email to say that someone had left their keys in the door of their hut. We were able to alert the owner, who is a member, and they were able to collect them.

Please tell any of your neighbours who are not members and encourage them to join.