



# Felixstowe Beach Hut & Chalet Association

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## NEWSLETTER No 22

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It has been a long time since we published our last newsletter. Since then our Chair, Jo Woodward, decided to stand down and we thank Jo for the tremendous work she did to make our Association as successful as it has been since we formed in 2013. It is appropriate that we start this newsletter with a message from our new Chairman, Craig Tournay-Godfrey.

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Dear Members,

As Chair of the Felixstowe Beach Hut and Chalet Association, I would like to take this opportunity to wish you, and your families, a lovely Christmas and a peaceful New Year.

I became the Chair at the AGM in June this year. My motivation was to ensure that we had a full committee to support our members during one of the most difficult and shocking times in the association's history. Some of our members were ordered to remove their huts from their position in front of the Spa Pavilion, effectively, they were being evicted. Some of these families have had a beach hut at the Spa for over 50 years and some of the huts were in this position as Heritage huts since 1890. Our members were subjected to conditions that were shocking, unreasonable and unfair.

Senior councillors, and officers, of East Suffolk Council from the previous administration did not seem to care about their constituents. Eventually, our members were subjected to a lottery where 44 hut owners were forced into a draw, and only 30 would be offered new places, leaving 14 being told to remove their huts. This was a particular low point, and in my view, divisive and callous. With a small amount of effort all owners could have been found a place.

I was delighted to attend a planning application meeting on Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> December at East Suffolk Council offices in Melton with Julie, our Secretary, Trevor, our Treasurer and Gill, one of our committee members, to give support to the 14 hut owners in their endeavours to be allowed to return their huts to the beach near the Spa Pavilion. Representatives of the 14 owners gave a fantastic presentation. A debate was then followed by a unanimous vote from councillors of the new administration to approve the planning application and return our members back to the Spa Pavilion area. Congratulations to the 14 who had put in an enormous amount of effort to secure the approval. It was also good to see an empathetic, understanding and professional attitude from the new administration.

I would also like to mention the dedication, effort and professionalism of Julie, our Secretary. Julie has worked tirelessly behind the scenes to support our members from the beginning of this sorry episode. Using her vast experience, and tenacious work ethic, Julie was able to support members through meetings and consultations with officers of East Suffolk Council. Her dedication to support our members in the early stages was exemplary. Much of the work she did will be unknown. I would like to state that without Julie's intervention I believe the 44 hut owners would have been evicted and forced to remove their huts with no opportunity of appeal. I would like to thank Julie for her work, and I am sure members of the association will join me in our appreciation.

We are a strong association with the strength being in you, the members. We are over 600 families strong, and I have an aim to make this 900 strong. If you can help to achieve this target please encourage anyone who is not a member to join.

You are a fantastic community with family, and charitable traditions that bring out the best in all of us. I would like to thank your committee for their work including Carol, Chris, Barbara, Gill, Joy, Julie, Trevor and Roy, who work in your best interests to ensure that our beach hut life in Felixstowe is enjoyed now and for generations to come.

**Craig Tournay-Godfrey**

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Part of the campaign to save the huts at the Spa Pavilion was to take part in the Felixstowe Heritage Weekend, when hut owners dressed up in period costume and treated passers-by to a lesson on the history of beach huts in Felixstowe.



It would not have been possible to save the Spa huts had it not been for the generosity of our members who contributed to our Fighting Fund. The money was first used to take East Suffolk Council to the High Court which, unfortunately, didn't go in our favour. However, it was agreed to spend some of the money left in the fund to support the planning application to return the huts to the Spa on wooden platforms, which was successful. Thanks to everyone for their support of the Spa hut owners.

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**LICENCE FEES**

Members of the Committee have met with officers from East Suffolk Council to discuss the new three-year licence for beach huts starting on the 1<sup>st</sup> of April 2024. The Council have agreed to scrap the oversize supplement charge on beach huts over the standard size in

the new licence. This affects 546 huts in Felixstowe. However, we were unable to persuade them not to increase the licence fee. There will be 5% increase each year, from the 1<sup>st</sup> of April 2024 until 31<sup>st</sup> of March 2027.

Chalets tenants have an annual agreement with the Council and their rental will rise by 5% on 1<sup>st</sup> of April 2024.

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## **A VERY HIGH TIDE**

On Friday 24<sup>th</sup> November there was an exceptionally high tide and, as has happened before, several beach huts were moved from their positions, either from their permanent position or from their temporary position on the prom. These photos show just a few of the huts that were moved at Manor End, West End, Pier South and Clifflands. (We did tell the Council that the huts that were displaced from the Spa site and moved to Clifflands were at a serious risk).



East Suffolk Council will move the huts back to their correct positions, but not until the spring – and at a cost to the hut owners. How much they intend to charge is not known as yet, but we will do our best to persuade them to keep it as low as possible.

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Some of our Committee members were given a tour of the new Seashore Village by East Suffolk Council soon after it was officially opened. At the time, only two of the 27 beach huts had been sold and we are somewhat sceptical that they will sell them all. They are offered on a lease of 15 years, with an option of a further 5 years, and we understand the cost to purchase is from £25,000 in the back row to £35,000 in the front row.



