

B P O C Committee Report for 2010 AGM

This report covers the year ending on 31st October 2009, which was the twenty-third year of holiday ownership at Burnside Park. Your Management Committee is pleased to be able to report a further successful year at Burnside Park, based on feedback from yourselves, as Owners, and also from our exchange visitors and Rental guests.

Your Committee met quarterly over the reported year to discuss the overall management of the Cottages at Burnside Park. At our meetings, we considered correspondence received and all those aspects of the upkeep of the Cottages that you, as Owners, would consider important, to maintain the high standards expected. Cottages and apartments were generally inspected for specific reasons, such as the condition of the bathrooms, but also on standards generally, with a view to planning for future attention. Following Cottage inspections, Committee members discussed their findings and considered how best to proceed with a logical strategy for the years ahead.

As previously, the Committee has been very conscious of the practical difficulty of pleasing everyone in arriving at a decision on particular issues, but it has always attempted to reflect the best interests of the majority of Owners.

The Committee has always maintained a forward plan for major renovations in the Cottages extending a couple of years ahead, but it was decided that a longer term strategic plan and expenditure budget would help the Committee, the Management Company and yourselves as Owners to appreciate the needs over a five-year and potentially seven-year period. They asked Malcolm Ogden to tackle this exercise late in 2009 and he will give a very brief summary later. The Committee proposes to use this information to develop an appropriate strategy and will then report back to you at each AGM.

As mentioned last year, an occasional problem remains with a very small number of owners and guests who leave Cottages in extremely unkempt and unacceptable conditions at the end of their week, requiring additional cleaning work far in excess of normal needs. Offending guests seldom agree with the housekeeper's assessment when they leave Cottages in an unreasonable state, so photographs are now taken in these cases and offenders are sent the photos with the invoice for the extra cleaning work incurred. Owners and guests are now being informed that Cottages are expected to be left in the condition that Owners find them when they begin their holiday week.

Turning now to some of the improvements agreed and completed during the year:

- Internal re-decoration was carried out during the maintenance weeks and where refurbishment of kitchens or bathrooms allowed access to Cottages. Otherwise, it proved much more difficult to schedule internal re-decoration, as there were very few unsold weeks to use for release of cottages requiring attention. This will now present a significant challenge to the team as we move forward with necessary refurbishment projects each year.
- A policy decision was taken not to replace wallpaper in future, replacing it with lining-paper and emulsion. This will allow quick and easy ‘touching up’ of any damaged areas.
- The triennial external re-decoration of Cottages 11 to 17 and 46 to 51 was carried out.
- Bathrooms and en-suites in Cottages 5 to 8 and the bathroom in Cottage 37 were replaced to an exceptionally high standard, incorporating underfloor-heating, together with extraction heat exchangers to minimise condensation whilst retaining heat.
- The carpets in Cottages 31 to 40 were replaced and new sofa beds were installed.
- Cottage 37 was refurbished throughout.
- The sofa-beds in Cottages 41 to 50 were sub-standard and are being replaced as required.
- The dishwasher in Cottage 1 was replaced, together with the Microwave Oven in Cottage 10. Replacement Microwave Ovens are planned for Cottages 1 to 9.
- Slimline electric wall-mounted heaters which are 30% more economical for Owners were installed in Cottages 24 & 25 and will be used in future refurbishments.
- The curtains for the twin bedrooms of Cottages 1 to 10 were re-lined.

- Trees were removed behind Cottages 1 to 4 where roots had damaged pathways. A tree was also removed by arrangement with the owner of the adjoining Burn Howe Hotel, on his side of the boundary to the North of the site, to improve the light available in adjacent Cottages.
- A new patio and garden area was created outside Cottages 38 and 39.
- A refurbished, re-chargeable, battery-operated vehicle with new batteries was purchased for transport for linen, etc. around the site, giving an estimated cumulative saving of 12 hours per changeover on Saturdays, equivalent to 45 minutes per cleaner.
- Following implementation of the Smoking Ban in the Cottages, only a couple of transgressions were noted. Terra Cotta pots were provided for ash and stubs.
- The roof of the Play House in the Children's Play Area was repaired, after which the House was completely re-painted.
- The BPOC Telephone Exchange equipment was removed from the Hotel and re-sited near Cottage 4, providing an upgrade to the services available to Owners and allowing the BPOC network to become a standalone system.
- An A5-size Newsletter was produced again for 2009, sponsored by Hapimag. This was compiled by our Web-site Editor David Morton and Matthew Postlethwaite also assisted with the revised Rental Brochure, with input from Candy Philip, Malcolm Ogden and Jim Maxon.

Summarising the day-to-day arrangements for general maintenance in the Cottages, the policy is to hold spare parts or spare units on site for many pieces of equipment, allowing prompt repair if this is possible. When they are considered to be past their useful life, or when repair is clearly uneconomic, they are replaced. A small stock of items, such as kettles, is kept to replace failures.

Withdrawal of Unoccupied Cottages from Trust

The Committee agreed to allow the withdrawal of Cottages 19, 41, 42 and 44 from Trust, at no cost to BPOC. These Cottages had been used for rentals by Bowness Leisure Ltd, but none of these Cottages had any Member Owners. The effect of this agreement is to remove any liability for Management Fee payments for these Cottages from BPOC.

Management Fees Outstanding

There were 14 Management Fees remaining overdue six months after invoicing. Six of these were very early or late weeks and three more were only slightly better.

Several of these defaulters openly stated that they did not wish to continue to own their weeks despite the knowledge that they would not receive any recompense on re-sale of their weeks. Nevertheless, as required by the Club Constitution, further repeated attempts had to be made to obtain payment from these defaulters. When final registered letters had been sent to the Owners concerned, the Committee had to arrange to sell these 14 fee-owing Holiday Weeks by sealed bid.

This year, only 6 of the 14 defaulters weeks were sold, realising £2078 which was paid into the BPOC Fund. However, the BPOC Fund then had to pay the Fees of the eight units for which no bids were received, totalling £3826, leaving a deficit. However, thankfully, Bowness Leisure agreed to take on the liability for the eight unsold weeks from November 2009.

Despite the considerable administrative work created for Candy and her team in recovering these debts, it is only by pursuing defaulters to ensure that all the Management Fees are paid by the end of the year, that your Committee can keep the Club on a sound financial footing.

Management Fees for 2009/2010

One of your Committee's more important tasks each year is to review the Maintenance Fee and the required contribution to the Owners Club Fund.

When the Committee met in September to discuss the budget for the year ahead, three elements of the charging structure required adjustment to meet cost increases. These were increases of £0.87 for refuse collection; £2 for triennial external redecoration and £1.46 for Rates, all of which were agreed to be necessary, giving a combined Fee increase of 1.1%.

However, a detailed analysis of major immediate works needed in the next three years showed that significant increases in Sinking Fund contributions were needed to cover higher renovation costs. After much debate, it was agreed that the maximum sinking fund increase would be limited to 4.8%, giving a range of overall Fee increases of 4.5 to 5.9% on costs affected by the rise in RPI. Please note that the Owners Club administration fee remains at £5 as per last year.

The Committee, acting on your behalf, considered that the increase in fees was fully justified, in order to meet costs and maintain the cottages in first class condition.

Arrival and Departure Times for Cottage Occupation

The Cottage reception staff continued to experience occasional problems with late departures after 10 a.m. which caused significant delay in preparing the Cottages for new arrivals. Similarly, Owners arriving early and expecting to be able to use Cottages before the earliest arrival time of 5 p.m. caused unnecessary stress for the staff.

Clearly, these times have to be enforced to allow the housekeeping staff to complete their tasks and for the Cottages to be checked thoroughly. If Cottages do become available before 5 p.m., then you will be given the keys at the earliest opportunity, remembering that 5 p.m. is the official time.

The Association of Timeshare Owners Committees (TATOC)

Burnside Park continued its membership of The Association of Timeshare Owners Committees (TATOC) to allow the Committee to discuss common management problems with over one hundred other similar resorts represented by TATOC. Committee member Amanda O'Garrow reported back to the Committee on the TATOC Conference that she had attended in March.

Conclusion

In concluding our report, your Owners Club Committee is pleased to be able to report another successful year and is confident that the Resort remains in top-notch condition throughout and indeed has been awarded the coveted Gold Crown status by RCI for the 12th year running. This is what your Committee aims for and I am sure it is the major interest of all of yourselves as Owners.

The Committee would like to take this opportunity, on both your and our behalf, to express their thanks to our Club Administrator Candy Philip and her assistants, to Malcolm Ogden and the other staff of the Management Company, especially the housekeeping staff and our gardener, for their dedication and hard work throughout the year. Without their constant attention to detail, we would be unable to maintain the standards which make Burnside Park our special resort.

That completes the Report of the Management Committee, Mr Chairman.

G A Stocker

24.2.10 – Revised 26.2.10