



## BELTON WOODS LODGES

### Summer Update from the Committee

Spring saw another successful AGM at which members raised a number of questions, most of which were picked up at the meeting. For those unable to attend, and those who did, the draft minutes are displayed on the BWOC website. Thank you to all who took the time to participate - the Committee recognise, with so many financial challenges members face, the 'virtual' meeting saves not only costs but also peoples travel time.

#### **Update on the Budget**

I hope that the Committee (supported by the Management Company) have now gone further in assisting members in a dire financial climate. Having considered the BWOC budget, it was recommended by the Management Committee and fully endorsed by the Committee to freeze the maintenance fees for the 2023/24 year. The Committee believe this will be warmly welcomed by members when costs all around seem to be rising. That means for the current year, annual maintenance fees for the larger lodges will be £765.73 and £638.59 for the smaller. From our Committee mailbag, annual costs were second only to electricity costs as concerns of members. That's the first good news story from us!

#### **Lodge Programme of Works**

We are very conscious some aspects of lodges require expenditure to ensure they still are of the high quality members expect and we are assured there is still funding within our budgets to address the on-going work programme.

#### **Electricity Costs**

The subject of electricity costs, was by far away the greatest subject matter in our mailbox. Unfortunately, all the lodges at Belton are powered by electricity and members will appreciate that there were no subsidies for the hospitality sector. The Committee, together with the Management Company and Seasons (as Founder Member owners) endeavored to use a number of means to warn those visiting their lodges, of the need to be mindful of electricity costs. Text messages, information in the Welcome Pack and notices around the lodges were all means tried to inform.

I am pleased to let members know a second 'good news' story in that a long-term deal has now been sourced to reduce electricity costs. The rate up until 1 June was a daily standing charge of £2 and a unit rate of 95p per kW. The deal sourced is now 30p per kW with a £2 daily standing charge. Those figures should bring the weekly electricity bills down



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considerably and back to only slightly more than the energy crisis. A significant factor with the electricity deal is that a two-year contract has been agreed which protects owners over the next two winters.

Despite negotiation of what appears to be a good long term deal, the Committee are still reviewing the potential of solar and renewable energy on the Belton site.

**We hope the freezing of maintenance fees and the new electricity contract demonstrate that the Committee is doing all it can to ensure members interests are being well looked after.**

### **Belton Woods Hotel**

Moving to the hotel. As in previous reports, I must stress that BWOC is a separate entity and we have little control or influence over standards or services at the hotel. That said, John Frosdick, one of our Committee members has worked tirelessly to encourage the hotel to work with us to benefit lodge owners. John has managed to negotiate good deals with the hotel management that I would encourage members to take advantage of.

The Lodge reception will help with the full detail of discounts but offers include 25% discount in the Claret Jug on food and drink (certain days and times) and 25% off evening dinner in the restaurant (Monday to Wednesday, provided a table is booked 24 hours in advance). We will only keep these deals (and be able to negotiate more) if members take advantage of them. Whilst standards and quality have been variable in the past, anecdotal feedback suggests the hotel management are striving to sustain improvement. Please give them a try during your stay and rest assured John will stay 'on their case!'

### **Dog Policy**

An issue raised at the AGM was a request to review the 'dog policy'. At present no dogs are allowed in the lodges, with significant penalty for default. The Committee discussed this at the last meeting. We considered the possibility of just one or two lodges becoming 'dog friendly', however even that could bring significant logistical issues. We believe the best way to move this forward is to survey members directly and for us to review the results of the survey. In the next few weeks you will find a survey dropping into your mailbox so please do respond. Please don't mail us through our Committee mailbox about the issue and save any comments for the survey. Apologies in advance but we will not respond to comments or questions on the subject through the mailbox. We are all volunteers and it can be time consuming to get involved in protracted mail chains as can happen.



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To allay concerns some may have, we appreciate it may be an emotive issue. If it ever did happen it would only be one or two lodges which will disappoint those who favour a total ban being maintained just as much as those who may favour total relaxation. There were mixed views on the Committee so I am sure it will be a similar situation with the wider membership as there are many relevant factors to consider. I cannot promise we will be bound by the results but it will help us understand the best way to bring it back to next year's AGM should we need to.

### **Thank you to the Team**

Finally, can I just say a few words about the staff on site, led by Kelly. The surveys and feedback from members are of the highest standard. The comments reflect the work done by Kelly and her team. Kelly has to deal with the grumbles and moans from members (fortunately few in number) but usually can be resolved immediately. Kelly and her team do value the positive comments about the services provided by the staff (fortunately in the majority) but is always happy to have more. The passion of Kelly and her team is clear and the thanks of the Committee go to her and the team.

I also just want to record the thanks of the Committee to Ross Grieve and Steve McGinnis of the Management Company. A lot of work goes on behind the scenes to enable BWOC to work effectively. As Chair of the Committee for the present year, I really value the work both do and thank them for that. Ross and I keep in regular contact over issues relating to the site in between our Committee meetings.

For those about to visit Belton over the summer can I wish you an enjoyable time with plenty of sunshine.

**Philip Bond**

**Chair of BWOC**