

MINUTES

Of the Annual General Meeting held on Sunday, 18th November 2018 at 11.00 am at the Masonic Hall, Cromwell Road, Whitstable

<i>Present:</i>	John Marsh	Chairman
	Keith Jones	Deputy Chairman
	Inga Britt-Simmons	MC Representative
	Brian Forbes-Turner	TE Representative
	Chris Gurney	Security Co-ordinator (from item7)
	David Richards	Treasurer & Membership Secretary
	Marilyn Richards	Association Secretary
	Roger Simpson	LR Representative
	Tony Weavers	Website & Facebook co-ordinator
<i>In Attendance:</i>	Matthew Young	Canterbury City Council's Foreshore Office
	Martin Pammant	Shoreline Huts & Homes

1. Chairman's Introduction and Welcome

Mr. John Marsh, Chairman of the Association, welcomed everyone to this year's Annual General Meeting, which was the fifteenth such meeting since the Association began. There were approximately 45 members in attendance, slightly more than last year.

Mr. Marsh expressed the Committee's condolences to Ms. Gillian Dalton, following the untimely death of her partner and our Committee member, Mr. Michael Dakers, who had been of great help and guidance to us in recent years.

There were apologies for absence received by members – Catherine Ashmore, Carol Boubess, Gillian Dalton, Sandra & Jeremy Haywood, Yvonne & Glenn Philbrick, Hilary & Stuart Reynolds, and Paul Wolff & Guy Buckland.

Mr. Marsh introduced the members of the Committee by name, and gave thanks to the Association Secretary, Mrs. Richards, for her work during the year. Mr. Marsh also welcomed Mr. Matthew Young, from Canterbury City Council's Foreshore Office, to speak about the Council's possible plans for new huts at Tankerton East, and Mr. Martin Pammant, from Shoreline Huts & Homes, the local beach hut repairer and restorer.

2. Minutes of Last Year's AGM, and Matters Arising

Mr. Marsh referred to the Minutes of last year's AGM, which each member had received through the post after that event. He said that we had had "an interesting year", and that comments from our membership since last year included cyclists on the Promenade, dog fouling on the beach, and lately, the Council's possible plan to build new beach huts at Tankerton East. There were no questions at this point of the meeting with regard to the Minutes of the last AGM in November 2017, and so Mr. Marsh asked that members proposed and seconded those Minutes as a true record of events. This was carried out by Ms. Alison Palmer and Mr. Jez Zia. Mr. Marsh therefore signed a copy of those Minutes for the record.

3. *Our first Guest Speaker, Mr. Matthew Young*

Mr. Marsh then introduced Mr. Matthew Young, of the Council's Foreshore Office. Mr. Young said that his Office carried out various duties, including Lifeguard services and bylaw regulations. He said that the Foreshore Office was also refreshing a feasibility study from 2014 regarding the beach hut areas at Marine Crescent, Tankerton East, and Herne Bay. He said that the Council faced further financial challenges this year, although no decisions had yet been made with regard to how these might be met by way of the beach hut provision.

He said that, as part of the feasibility studies, planning policies needed to be reviewed, as well as any impact on public amenities, should any new beach huts go ahead. The process will be subject to a Planning Application.

Mr. Young said that he had been provided, ahead of this meeting, and via the Tankerton Bay Beach Hut Owners' Association, with a list of questions on this subject from member Mr. Ted Bassett-Myers, and he proceeded to work his way through the questions, giving his answers to each.

Q. Will we have to go through the normal Committee process, and will the Council take the concerns of beach hut owners into consideration?

A. Yes, of course. The Foreshore Office will not hide any meetings from beach hut owners.

Q. Will there be huts in any other places, and may other sites be developed?

A. The Council will continue to review options, and would have to give justification in such a case.

Q. Will we still be allowed "quiet enjoyment" of our beach huts?

A. Mr. Young said that he had sought advice on this one. "Quiet enjoyment" refers to the site itself, and also includes trespass and wrongful re-entry – the usual legal definition. The Council cannot prevent access by us (although he conceded that this might not be what Mr. Bassett-Myers had in mind!)

At this point, Mr. Bassett-Myers was asked to speak from the floor, and he stood up to say that the specific reason that he had bought his hut on the back row of Tankerton East was for "the fantastic view". He was concerned, along with 42 other Tankerton East owners, that this view would be badly compromised.

He also asked whether car parking would be taken into consideration by the Council, since parking along Marine Parade was always at a premium, along with other public provisions such as the toilets, standpipes, and showers – would access to these be compromised with many more beach huts built?

Mr. Young said that 20 huts would be the maximum that might be built. Council engineers would have to make inspections of the site to ascertain suitability.

At this point, Mr. Bassett-Myers asked how many Tankerton East owners were present at the meeting – a headcount amounted to around 17 of the 45 members present. He also commented about the space in front of each hut, should a further row or partial row be built – what would be the fire risk in such a situation?

Mr. Young replied that there would not be greater density/gaps than already present, and that new huts would not be "shoehorned" on to the site. However, members present showed their distain at this remark, and some implied that the Council was being "greedy". Mr. Young said that the Council "would not be greedy".

A member remarked that those hut owners in that area of Tankerton East who were already close to others which had already been extended with the larger balconies would be penalised – with those already in place, and with others perhaps to join them, the owners of the regulation 10' x 10' square huts would be unable to extend their own huts themselves, if they wished to.

Another questioner asked whether new huts could be built *behind* the back row instead. However, Mr. Young said that local Planning Laws would not permit this; any new huts could only be built within the area of existing huts.

Another member remarked that the Local Plan is constantly evolving to increase density, and that the Plan is a detriment to the existing area. Chairman Mr. Marsh agreed that current density in the area is already “terrific”. A member said that, if the Council needed to raise more money, why not try enforcing parking infringements instead?

Another member asked whether the Tankerton East area might enjoy similar services to Tankerton West, such as a Lifeguard service, for instance, remarking that it seemed only fair to have parity.

Mr. Young replied that the Lifeguard provision had recently been reviewed, and would not be extended, although the Council would continue to monitor usage. There would be improvements with standpipes and showers at Tankerton East.

However, a member said that there were different offerings in the East and West areas – for instance, the toilets closed earlier at Tankerton East than they did at Tankerton West; not ideal for early evening visits!

Committee member Mr. Roger Simpson asked Mr. Young what the Council’s proposed timeline might be, at which Mr. Young replied that he would focus on this, and hoped that there would be a start to the process from January/March of 2019. However, he said that he could not be held to this.

Treasurer Mr. David Richards said he was most concerned about the fire risk, citing other instances in the recent past of arson and criminal damage attempts, when one hut fire quickly spread to others, either taking them out entirely, or leaving them with extensive smoke damage. He suggested that the Fire Brigade be involved in the planning process.

There was also a question from a member about certain huts which seemed not to be used at all. Mr. Young replied that the Council does not monitor usage of the huts; only their condition. Currently, he said that there are a couple that are in very bad condition, which the Council will attend to, and around three or four others have been demolished and re-built on the same sites.

A member asked about the responsibility of the Foreshore Office, and Mr. Young replied that he is in charge of managing the huts, and he will produce a report after the Feasibility Study, which will then go through Council process.

A member remarked on the vandalism and bad language that Long Rock hut owners had to endure, given their close proximity to the skateboard park. There was agreement to this from other members present. He also said that the new “extensions” that others had had built were “grotesque”, and that the quaintness of the Tankerton beach huts, compared to other well-known beach hut sites, was in danger of being lost.

Mr. Young accepted that there were problems at Long Rock, partly given its more rural aspect. With regard to the extensions, he said that all hut owners had to apply to the Council for an extension. He said that, although site visits should then be carried out, some had not been properly approved. He also said that there were some extensions that had been built that, in hindsight, would not be approved now, and would not be in the future.

He said that the huts that had access ramps that “looked very wide” were almost certainly for disability access, and that this was ascertained via the Blue Badge scheme, which also extended to a “close relative”.

Mr. Marsh referred to a member’s difficulty when a new extension was built by a hut neighbour which was so close to their own hut that the new balcony touched the security pole next door! The member had also known nothing about it ahead of the building of the extension. Mr. Young said that this would no longer