



New bathrooms at Elterwater Hall and on the main Estate prove popular with owners...



Heated mirrors, flooring and dual fuel heated towel rails, air baths, modern steam showers, and the increased use of tiling are some of the popular features of the new bathrooms installed at Elterwater Hall, Barn and Cottage. There have been the inevitable teething problems, but overall the feedback from owners has been very positive about the style and very

appreciative of the upgrade. Trial bathrooms have also been installed in Grasmere Lodges 8 and 52, along with one bathroom in Ullswater Lodge 11. This is a critical part of the process, as there are serious issues with upgrading the present bathrooms that need to be overcome before they can be replaced across all the properties on the Estate. Not only may the water tanks not be large enough to hold the water that would enable power showers to be installed in all bathrooms (and in some cases larger tanks cannot be installed due to lack of space) but also the actual supply of water from the mains to the Estate may also be insufficient to allow their universal use. However,

possible solutions are being found by the use of boost showers (not as strong as power showers, but better than the existing gravity feed facilities). Also, there are potential savings of water by the use of smaller 6 litre flush facilities for toilets and/or the use of 'dual flush' systems.

Careful consideration of these issues must be taken into account, with feedback provided from owners, before substantial amounts of funds can be properly invested to improve these facilities.

It really can be easier by email!

A few years ago, we asked owners if they would prefer to receive information and correspondence by email rather than post, and about 12% said they would. Since then, more and more owners are requesting that this facility be available. It really is easier, recordable, faster and very cost effective. While we always welcome telephone calls and letters from our owners, an email once sent avoids having to make more than one phone call if you cannot immediately reach the person you wish to speak to, and you know that your request has been made. It is far faster to send a reply or a document for signing by email and, of course, all this is at a fraction of the cost, saving not only time, but paper and postage too.

Email and our website also allow us to keep owners more up-to-date with news, rather than having to wait for the next edition of the bi-annual Views. Modern technology continues to move on but we appreciate that not all owners wish to use it, so paper and post remain available. If you do wish to take advantage of our email service, simply send a message to sales@langdale.co.uk.



General Manager, David Stanning, presents retired Committee Member John Roughton a gift of thanks for his valuable work and contribution to the Langdale Owners Committee.

Management Fees for 2006/07

The Committee has tried to keep the level of increases to a minimum, with an average increase of 2.8%. Some types of properties have been increased by different amounts, due to adjustments to the Reserve Fund [more below] to take account of the necessary funding for the bathroom refurbishment project.

	Mgt Fee	Reserve Fund	Vat	Total	Previous year
Main site					
Grasmere	229.76	78.72	20.80	329.28	327.18
Coniston	306.19	116.37	28.87	451.43	439.32
Windermere	336.21	140.00	32.08	508.29	492.43
Ullswater	381.35	171.85	36.70	589.90	573.51
Brackens	342.09	87.23	31.30	460.62	432.16
Lodge 81	305.30	119.85	28.78	453.93	439.53
Lodge 82	375.93	167.52	35.77	579.22	573.35
Beckside West	336.41	82.24	30.60	449.25	416.88
Beckside East	408.88	108.94	38.76	556.58	522.57
Chapel Stile					
1 Bedroom	217.37	68.97	19.86	306.20	290.40
2 Bedroom 1 bathroom	262.39	79.42	23.41	365.22	361.02
2 Bedroom 2 bathroom	276.06	107.34	25.80	409.20	395.17
Apartment 5	262.69	75.94	23.12	361.75	342.48
3 Bedroom	321.95	118.49	30.53	470.97	455.52
Elterwater					
Hall	312.30	154.14	31.03	497.47	494.62
Barn	315.86	156.42	31.59	503.87	494.85
Cottage	239.77	86.04	23.36	349.17	333.29

Costs

As you will be aware, the cost of utilities has risen by anything from 25% to 40% in the last 18 months. Whilst owners pay for the gas and electricity used during their week, the Management Fee also includes a proportion of the costs incurred by the whole Estate; therefore, there have been considerable cost pressures upon the Fees.

The Committee is concerned to ensure that there is maximum transparency within the costs included in the Management Fees. The table below illustrates that if we treat the raising of the Reserve Fund as obligatory, then there is only 38.6% of costs over which it has an influence.

Within controllable costs there are such items as laundry and Housekeeping payroll. Although these can of course be controlled, it is not in the Committee's power to forgo these costs.

The Committee has continued to develop the model for the apportionment of costs between different types of properties, and estimates that 76.6% of costs are allocated on an actual basis; with over half the rest being a simple percentage, such as VAT.

The Committee has negotiated with the Management Company a budgeted surplus of 7% for the current financial year. It has also started, in conjunction with the

Management Company, a review of the contribution made to the shared costs of the Estate; for example, the Grounds, Reception, Maintenance and Administration departments. A review of the Management Agreement has also been instigated. This is the contract between the Owners' Club and the Management Company for the provision of services to the timeshare properties. It sets out what is required and also the level of remuneration. It is hoped that within the next twelve months, considerable progress will be made on a new services and remuneration agreement.

Type	£	%
Controllable	871,852	38.6%
Uncontrollable	790,494	35.0%
Reserve Fund	596,553	26.4%

Reserve Fund

As you will be aware, the Committee has started the preliminary work on the refurbishment of the bathrooms. It is also in the process of preparing the rationale for other refurbishment projects. As previously reported, the Committee has created four categories of collection for the Reserve Fund ... Operational, Maintenance, Projects and Administration. For clarity, the Reserve Fund contribution is the part of

the Management Fee that is collected for the Owners' Club and not retained by the Management Company. The level of contribution to it is set by the Committee, not the Management Company, and the decisions about what it is spent on, such as, when to replace furniture or crockery, are made by the Committee.

To ensure that expenditure matches funding, the Committee is developing a

system whereby the collection of funds for projects such as the bathrooms is ring-fenced and that these project-by-project collections are started well in advance of the commencement of the work. This long-term planning for the refurbishment of properties will ensure that maximum value is obtained and, perhaps most important of all, that owners can be kept informed about the progress of the

refurbishment projects.

The guiding principle for the collection of funding for projects is that each type of property should pay for the actual cost of the project for that type of property.



Do you have ideas, thoughts or opinions about Langdale ... and some time to spare?

With the creation of a new Finance Sub-Committee, we're looking for volunteers to generate ideas and help us focus on strategies for projects that have a significant financial dimension. Projects could include large-scale planning of finance for refurbishment, or other objectives, investments, consideration of fee structures, review of current and future

operations and costs, and developing ideas and concepts for major activities. We are always looking for fresh ideas, and would very much welcome wider participation of owners in these important issues.

If you would like to help and for further information, please contact David Stanning at Langdale, prior to 17 July, giving a brief note

of the skills and experience you would bring to the sub-committee. David's direct dial telephone is 015394-38000 and his e-mail address is david.stanning@langdale.co.uk.

With regard to election to the Langdale Owners' Club Committee, in accordance with the Constitution, clause 10 (xii) page 4, Members' nominations for election should be sent in writing, together with the names of the proposer and seconder, plus a statement that the nominee is willing to stand, to David Stanning at Langdale by 1st July 2006.

Stunning scenery and red squirrels are on the agenda for this year's AGM at Center Parcs, Whinfell Forest Village, near Penrith

This year's AGM will take place at the Center Parcs, Whinfell Forest Village, near Penrith. Many of you may have attended the AGM at the Center Parcs at Longleat in Wiltshire some years ago and will recall they offer a very different kind of experience from the usual city-centre location. With so many attractions and things to do on site, you will not need to travel any further. As is usual at Center Parcs, you can take a three night package which will give you and your family some time to enjoy all that this outstanding resort has to offer.

The AGMs take place on Sunday 5th November, with accommodation available for a three night package on Friday, Saturday and Sunday at £315 for a studio apartment for two persons, £455 for an executive one-bedroom apartment, £525 for an executive two-bedroom lakeside lodge or £545 for an executive three-bedroom lodge. All of these are within easy walking distance of the venues for the AGM but there are other lodges available, including some that will take dogs. We have arranged for a full breakfast to be served in Luciano's Restaurant on

Sunday for both residents and day delegates at a price of £7.95, and Sunday carvery lunch at £15. The Saturday evening dinner party will be a special Chinese Banquet Buffet, price £30, in a private part of the very attractive Yangs Restaurant. The

buffet will include some non-Chinese and vegetarian options, to cater for all tastes. As the accommodation will fill up very quickly, please contact Lynette Berry at Langdale as soon as possible with all your booking requirements - Tel: 015394-38002.



Watch out, we're leaping about again ... check your arrival dates!

Timeshare calendar dates are always set at the inception of the resort's development for every year that covers the entire length of ownership. If arrival dates were not periodically adjusted, the week you purchased in

early March would eventually end up some 28 years later in April and, over 80 years, months away from what you originally intended as your ideal holiday week. They also start with the year of the first occupation of a

resort, so different resorts will have different week numbers, and week numbers do not always correlate with your diary!

Please check carefully to avoid disappointment. You can do this on the Langdale

website (for any year until 2062) at <http://www.langdale.co.uk/availability/timeshare.htm> or if you would like a copy of the full calendar of arrival dates, please contact the Sales Office on 015394-38012.

TIME OWNERSHIP CALENDAR 2006

WEEK No.	WEEK COMMENCES		
	FRI	SAT	SUN
1	Check Holiday Certificates		
2	13/1	14/1	15/1
3	20/1	21/1	22/1
4	27/1	28/1	29/1
5	3/2	4/2	5/2
6	10/2	11/2	12/2
7	17/2	18/2	19/2
8	24/2	25/2	26/2
9	3/3	4/3	5/3
10	10/3	11/3	12/3
11	17/3	18/3	19/3
12	24/3	25/3	26/3
13	31/3	1/4	2/4
14	7/4	8/4	9/4
15	14/4	15/4	16/4
16	21/4	22/4	23/4
17	28/4	29/4	30/4

WEEK No.	WEEK COMMENCES		
	FRI	SAT	SUN
18	5/5	6/5	7/5
19	12/5	13/5	14/5
20	19/5	20/5	21/5
21	26/5	27/5	28/5
22	2/6	3/6	4/6
23	9/6	10/6	11/6
24	16/6	17/6	18/6
25	23/6	24/6	25/6
26	30/6	1/7	2/7
27	7/7	8/7	9/7
28	14/7	15/7	16/7
29	21/7	22/7	23/7
30	28/7	29/7	30/7
31	4/8	5/8	6/8
32	11/8	12/8	13/8
33	18/8	19/8	20/8
34	25/8	26/8	27/8

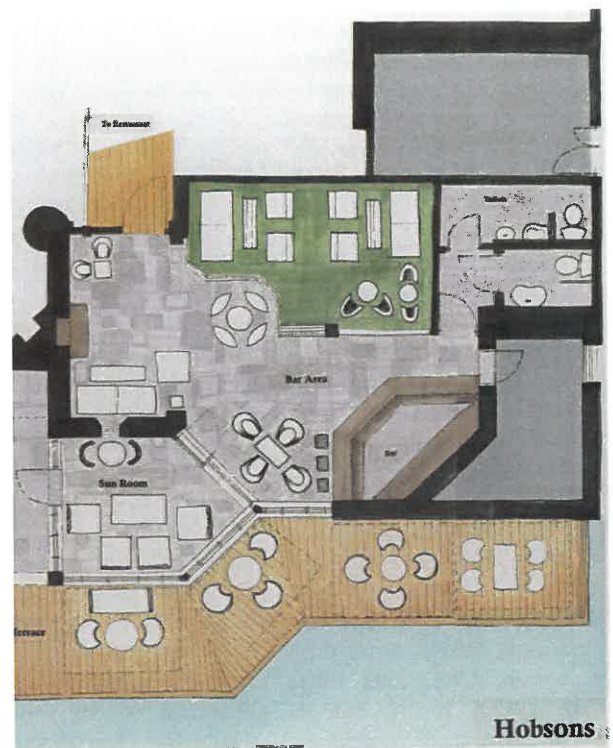
WEEK No.	WEEK COMMENCES		
	FRI	SAT	SUN
35	1/9	2/9	3/9
36	8/9	9/9	10/9
37	15/9	16/9	17/9
38	22/9	23/9	24/9
39	29/9	30/9	1/10
40	6/10	7/10	8/10
41	13/10	14/10	15/10
42	20/10	21/10	22/10
43	27/10	28/10	29/10
44	3/11	4/11	5/11
45	10/11	11/11	12/11
46	17/11	18/11	19/11
47	24/11	25/11	26/11
48	1/12	2/12	3/12
49	8/12	9/12	10/12
50	15/12	16/12	7/1/07
51 & 52	Check Holiday Certificates		

An artistic plan for re-instating Hobson's Bar ...

Many owners over the years have expressed their wish that Hobson's Bar be returned to what is now referred to as the Waterwheel Room. Plans are now underway to achieve just this, but with a different, more modern perspective added.

Local artists Russell Mills and Ian Walton have been consulted with a view to the production of several outstanding objects of art for Hobson's. These will be created in keeping and sympathy with the work of 20th Century Master, Kurt Schwitters, who not only worked and created his

greatest piece of art in a barn located in the little woodland across the road from the main Estate, but who it has now been discovered was also a regular guest of friends living here in the latter part of the 1940s. This is a unique opportunity to provide an outstanding facility for owners and guests in keeping with the amazing and important history of Langdale.



Dining in good company with entertainment and a chance to help too!

The Dinner Party for Lodge Residents has been re-introduced in a new format. They are now held regularly on Monday nights and have proved very popular with up to 40 guests.

Dinner is a three-course affair, which should be booked before noon on Monday, costing £15.00, with guests seated at large tables of ten so that they have an opportunity to catch up with and meet other owners and lodge residents.

This is followed by an evening talk in the Hotel, with speakers and representatives from our local Mountain Rescue, where guests also have the opportunity to make a donation. So far, almost £180 has been raised for this important charity. We have also invited a number of other organisations to join us for these events, such as the Armit Trust in Ambleside and the Tourism & Conservation Partnership, which Langdale owners have supported for very many years.

If there is a group or organisation that you are particularly interested in hearing speak, do let us know and we shall try to accommodate them.



PARKING - Please help each other ... help the Estate ... and help all of us.

Many years ago when most of the Langdale owners purchased their weeks of timeshare, parking was rarely an issue. Most families only used one car when on holiday and sufficient space was then available. But as the years have passed, families have extended along with an increase in car ownership and use. Consequently, there is a demand for more and more parking spaces.

The last line of the Owners' Club Regulations states that: 'Cars must be parked only in designated parking areas for the appropriate Lodge or other building.'

As a result, over the years, where problems have occurred, some parking places have been clearly identified as available for particular lodges. However, this is costly and in some cases can even cause additional problems, especially as the majority of owners and guests have worked out arrangements between themselves.

Over the years, the number of parking places for lodge owners has been increased as far as we feel is practicable without endangering the natural beauty of the Estate. We would, therefore, ask

owners to work together and to be considerate of each other's requirements, particularly when loading and unloading vehicles.

There is also a far bigger consideration ... that of global warming, and we would ask that all owners and guests 'do their bit'. Carbon dioxide from cars is a leading culprit, and whenever and wherever possible, please leave vehicles at home and help the environment by sharing your cars; as you share your time.

Another kind of exchange ...

'Very smooth and helpful service, obtained the weeks we wanted and the perfect resort, had a great holiday, many thanks.'

Not our words but those of a happy Dial an Exchange customer. At Langdale, we have always taken pride in providing our owners with the widest number of options and services, providing we believe them to be of good quality. We believe that Dial an Exchange is such and that it offers something very different from the other exchange companies.

The most important difference is that any week in, gets any available week out. It is up to you as the customer to choose where, when and what. They do not attempt to offer like for like, but as a result, there are a great number of opportunities for their customers. It is not only other timeshare owners who

use this exchange service, as private holiday rental properties can also exchange, providing they meet minimum quality standards with reliable local property managers to look after you during your stay.

They also offer real value for money, with no joining fees, no guest fees and no upgrade fees. You only pay for the exchange you take - £74 for European destinations and £89 for longer-haul locations. It is a service all about choice. You decide whether you deposit your week first, or search until you find what you want and then deposit. Once deposited, you can take up to three years to use your exchange 'credit', and so you can use your weeks for longer holidays in future.

They have an outstanding website where members can search out what is available at <http://www.dialanexchange.com/> and/or



you can telephone them on 01756-749966. Their offices are open from 9am to 7pm Monday to Friday and 9am to 5pm on Saturday. Their customers also have a lot to say about how friendly and helpful they find the Dial an Exchange staff - one typical comment made: 'The phone is always answered within a few rings, and whoever answers the call always seems to be genuinely interested in helping.'

They offer bonus weeks - extra weeks that you can rent at prices from as low as £99 and up to £199 per week. These are weeks that have not been exchanged by six weeks prior to arrival dates.

Your friends and family can use the service too,

Another kind of exchange ... continued

providing you are willing to be responsible for them.

There are a few premium services that Dial an Exchange offer, such as their Gold Membership (£30 per year), which is a priority request service, where you will be advised of any of your requested exchanges, on a first come first served basis, in advance of the listings being made available to non-Gold members. As a

Gold Member, you also get a discount of £10 on the rental of bonus weeks and a £15 discount on any exchange fee to long-haul destinations. Their customers have nice things to say about this service too: 'Thanks for getting me a school holiday week. It sounds ideal for the family. I've certainly had my money's worth out of being a Gold member. You have offered me three good weeks now. I'm well impressed.'

Another service is a Cancellation Protection scheme valid up until the day of check-in, that would not only refund your fee if you were unable to take your holiday, but also give you another exchange that could be taken in the following three years.

According to manager and owner of the European operation, Philip Green, 'Dial an Exchange is an

independent exchange company. We work for the individual timeshare and holiday property owner. By offering personal service and excellent value for money, Dial an Exchange has become a leader in the holiday home exchange business.'

If you would like to talk to Langdale staff about it, give them a call at Langdale on 015394-38012.

We need your co-operation – please!

How can you help? The Committee has been told that there is a problem with a small number of owners not vacating their lodge on changeover days by the 10.00 am deadline. It is important that the lodges are accessible to the cleaners by this time so that the work-plans and rosters for the day do not have to be revised 'on-the-hoof'. Anything that delays the cleaners getting on with their job puts the whole system under pressure and in some cases means that they cannot give the time required to achieve the level of service we seek to provide to owners.

Your assistance and understanding would go a long way to making staff feel they are valued and that you understand the difficulties they are facing. The Constitution, to which we have all agreed, is quite clear in Section 8(iii) that "Each weekly period shall be calculated on the basis that it will start at 4 p.m. on the day shown on the face of the Holiday Certificate and will end on the same day in the following week at 10 a.m.". If you do wish to arrive early, or even stay longer, having cleared the lodge, the

Country Club will continue to make you welcome for coffee, a swim, or even just relaxing in the Lounge and enjoying the view.

Some background on 'behind-the-scenes staffing'

We want to get it right! Since the very beginning, Langdale has taken great pride in trying to maintain the highest quality standards in Housekeeping and Maintenance, as well as providing the best possible service to our owners and guests. That continues to be the aim.

However, attracting staff of the quality we would like gets increasingly difficult. This is not a problem for Langdale alone, but for Cumbria as a whole. High property prices, lack of prospects for longer-term job progression and low rates of unemployment are all contributing to the problem of filling hospitality staff vacancies at all levels. In past years, high quality Housekeeping staff (many from local educational institutions) were a readily-available resource and at times there has even been a waiting list for enthusiastic

students wanting particularly to work at Langdale. Some of these outstanding employees still work at Langdale and have progressed to positions that have allowed them to live in the place they love. Willing workers were also found in surrounding towns and brought to Langdale by bus; particularly to cover change-over days. Skilled electricians, plumbers, joiners, wallers and so on, used to be readily available as they lived and worked in the Lake District.

Times have changed. Students for the most part now concentrate on plans to attend university, with a view to relocation after graduation to areas where jobs are more available, pay more, have far greater long-term prospects, and where homes are affordable. Costs of transportation and levels of pay can no longer be sustained to utilise staff travelling from any great distance, and sufficient numbers of local staff cannot be attracted to make this option viable any longer. With a continuously ageing population and increasing costs of living, Cumbria now has a serious shortage of qualified people capable of carrying out the diverse tasks required to

maintain the Estate. Those who remain in these important positions have been exceptionally loyal and are under increasing pressure to achieve standards to the level they desire and that owners expect.

These are difficult times for those trying not only to maintain standards, but also to improve them. A lot has been done and continues to be done to overcome this situation. As in the industry throughout the country, members of staff from outside the UK, mainly from Eastern Europe and South Africa in Langdale's case, are being hired to replace the willing workers of the past. Training and housing the staff remain a challenge, but a great deal of work is being done to overcome these problem and a review of procedures and systems is on-going.

To help the management team with this metamorphosis, we simply seek your help in vacating your lodges on time - and earlier if possible.

Loyal to Langdale ...

Over and over again, Langdale owners talk about their love of the Estate and the Langdale Valleys. This is also true of many members of staff who feel a great passion for the 'place' and demonstrate this commitment with long-term service; some returning to work here after having left for a period of time. The following are just a few:

Langdale Administrator, Lynette Berry, tells her story: 'I first came to Langdale as a temporary secretary to David Fairs in February 1992, having been made redundant from my former job the previous November, and I was very pleased when my position was made permanent after four months. There are many things that make Langdale a very special place to work: The staff is a very happy team, and several of the owners and guests have

become friends - it's lovely when they call in to the office to say hello. Everyone has to work, but not many are lucky enough to have such wonderful surroundings, which make even the most mundane tasks a joy. I hope to be here for many more years!'

Andy Dawson, Grounds Manager, reminisces: 'I started at the Pillar Hotel in 1983, aged 16, when 70% of the lodges were still to be built. The Chapel Stile apartments building was the Langdales Hotel, complete with petrol pumps on the carpark; Elterwater Hall was staff accommodation, and The Barn was used for storing the bedroom furniture, which arrived every fortnight from Germany, and bathroom fittings for the lodges. The reason I am still here after 23 years? - the people and the characters (both guests

and staff), plus every day is different - just like the weather!'

Annette Sloan started at Langdale as a part-time cleaner on 21st December 1989. She tells the story: 'I needed a job in a hurry as I had been made redundant from a live-in position 10 days before Christmas! I never actually worked part-time, however, as I lived locally and was a readily available resource. As I had a driving licence and experience driving a van, I was transferred to Lodge Housekeeping as delivery driver. Over the next few years my job changed regularly, as I was given more responsibility and allowed to contribute to the Department's development. In April 1996, I became Lodge Housekeeper responsible to the Head Housekeeper, a role that I took on upon the Head

Housekeeper's departure. During this period I completed a Company-sponsored GNVQ III in Management with the help of my mentor, Fred Johns. I was given responsibility for the whole Housekeeping department in 1999; Hotel & Lodge Housekeeping and Estate Laundry. I found this an enjoyable and demanding position - and a considerable logistical challenge. In 2002, I left Langdale to take up a place at Lancaster University to read Linguistics and English Language, which was a complete change of pace and focus but very satisfying. When I completed my degree, I was offered the chance to take up a position as a Sales Executive for the Company ... a complete departure from my previous role. Round two at Langdale is a completely new direction, but very enjoyable.'

Langdale Owners' Club Summary of Committee Meeting Minutes

27th November 2005

This was the first meeting attended by Andrew Collier following his election at the AGM held earlier in the month. The main topics covered by the Committee were:

Management Fees for 2006/07 - a discussion took place regarding the draft fees as presented by the Management Company and a few minor adjustments were agreed.

Refurbishment - the initial feedback from the new bathroom installed in Lodge 52 was considered and plans discussed for more pilot work to be carried out during the winter period.

The designs for the Elterwater Hall, Barn and Cottage bathrooms were agreed and preparation for the relocation of owners made.

The Committee also discussed the Reserve Fund and the realisation of the final investment. The Management Company reported that the DVD players were to be installed within the next week and that progress was being made in reorganising the Housekeeping department.

5th February 2006

The Management Company reported that the advice it had received concerning the Club's last investment was that it would be advisable to realise it and transfer the cash to the

deposit account.

The Management Company asked the Committee for authorisation to prepare a strategy for Housekeeping which would consider new ways to improve the quality of the service.

Management Fees for 2006/07 - the revised fees were reviewed and overall agreed. There was a lengthy discussion in relation to the level of surplus of the Management Company. This was agreed at 7%. It was also agreed that a review of the Management Agreement would be undertaken to improve the transparency of the working relationship.

Home entertainment - an initial report into the updating of the home entertainment systems was discussed, which included TVs, DVDs, channels, internet and HiFi's. Further progress would be reported at future meetings.

Refurbishment - the work being carried out in Lodges 8 and 11 was reviewed and a post-implementation review was requested of the Management Company.

The final plans for Elterwater were reviewed and agreed. The Committee also agreed the quote for replacement sofas at Chapel stile.

Langdale Owners' Club Summary of Committee Meeting Minutes - continued

The Chapel Stile leisure facility was discussed and the Committee decided to inspect the area in due course.

Other matters discussed were the content of the next edition of Views and the minutes of the AGM.

26th March 2006

The Management Company reported that the last investment had been realised and the cash transferred to the deposit account. The paper presented on future strategies for the Housekeeping department was discussed and broadly agreed. The Management Company was asked to develop and trial the new ideas and report back in due course.

Management Agreement - the initial review of the agreement had been carried out and an outline of the draft conclusions discussed. Further work was requested.

Home entertainment - a further update was discussed and additional investigations highlighted.

Refurbishment - the Committee considered the responses received to date following the installation of new bathrooms at Elterwater and Lodges 52, 8 and 11. Further post-installation work was requested so that the Committee could consider the success of the work in relation to future installations.

The sofas for Chapel Stile had been ordered and delivery was awaited. The Committee agreed to carry out a consultation with owners at Chapel Stile regarding the leisure facility.

The Management Company was requested to carry out a survey of sofas on the main site for consideration at the next meeting. It was also asked to present at the next meeting an outline of the next stage in the piloting of new bathrooms, together with an outline proposal for the replacement of boilers on the main site.

The Committee also discussed the possibility of creating two new sub-committees to cover procurement and finance.

Not so simple or even easy ... the challenge of going digital with home entertainment

The Government's timetable for the change in TV and radio signal broadcasting technology from analogue to digital is a key factor being considered in our planned replacement of the entertainment systems at Langdale. The TV broadcast region serving Langdale will be the first to switch-over in mid 2008.

On the surface, it should be simple - we go digital as we replace televisions and radios. Oh that it were that easy! It will, in fact, be a complex operation, requiring replacement of both the Langdale Estate's receiver infrastructure and the local TV and Radio transmitters - the change will be a complete switch-over from analogue to digital, not gradual as it may be in other parts of the country. Details of the date and process are yet to be confirmed. As a result, we need to find a solution that will deliver a

high-quality digital signal using a single receiver, rather than the potential installation of 100 aerials or satellite dishes. The change in signal format will result in a change of TVs, and at the same time we are considering replacement of the Hi-Fi systems, although this change is not so critical, as the digital TV signal will also include radio services.

There is also the potential move to High Definition TV (HDTV) broadcasts to be considered. As a result, it will be important to ensure that our systems are HDTV compatible. The good news is that prices for this technology continue to drop and are expected to stabilise, together with specification, in mid 2007. We are also considering the potential of wireless surround-sound systems that will eliminate the need for yet more wires. A

key benefit of the convergence of technology into single systems is that the number of remote controls required will reduce - simplification of control is a key feature that we are considering. As part of a wider evaluation, we are looking at options for the provision of digital radio or TVs in bedrooms, given space constraints.

As the switchover to digital is scheduled for our area in 2008, we have an 18-month period to plan, design and deploy an integrated solution. Evaluation and assessment work on the current infrastructure has already been undertaken and this is now feeding into a more detailed evaluation of potential solutions. With the switch-over timetable outside of our control and innovations in technology rapidly changing, the benefits of waiting a little longer are apparent, and we

would ask for your understanding in the run up to switch-over.

More information on the digital switch-over is available from the following websites: timescale information regarding Langdale - www.digitaluk.co.uk/site/border.html; UK consumer site 'going digital' - www.digitaluk.co.uk/site/index.html and the UK Government site - www.digitaltelevision.gov.uk/index.html.

If you would like to contribute to this process, or make comment, please contact Future Entertainment Systems,