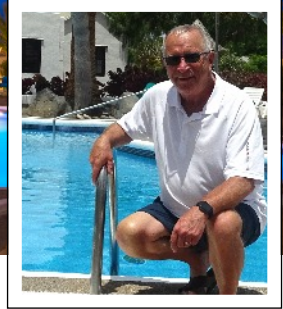




NEWSLETTER

Roger Barrow
Owners' Representative
June 2016
Issue no 3



After a year of change with the OnaGrup acquisition, it is good to see Las Casitas settling down and improvements gradually being put in place.

Increased rental income is really starting to benefit us, and should help us towards a secure financial future. Refurbishment is underway, with all bedrooms now complete and various other improvements completed or planned.

My visit in March and May

I have just returned from my official inspection visit, and I also visited in March. I was able to meet our new receptionist, Suzy, who is covering for Julie during her extended sick absence. I am sure you all join me in sending Julie our best wishes.

I also met Carlos, our new full time security man and had meetings with the lifeguard, the gardeners and the maintenance team. I held a useful and productive meeting with Jose Jimenez, the Resorts Director and travelled to the WimPen office in Tenerife for a meeting with the WimPen and OnaGrup management.

In this issue

With this newsletter, I bring you all the latest news. There is a summary of what happened at the AGM. The new rental policy which was agreed there has caused concerns among some owners, so I have published questions and answers.

Also what's new at the resort, as well as an update on the internet and why the gardens are not up to usual standards. I have also provided some guidance on the use of the new WimPen website.

Thanks for all your support, and I hope to meet some of you at the resort or at this year's AGM.

IN BRIEF

Fibre Optic Internet

This is now being installed and will supply the resort with a fast Internet connection. However, we still have to get the network within the site updated to take full advantage of the faster speeds.

Once it is up and running and fully tested, it is proposed that to cover the cost and to maintain the best speed, a range of charges will be introduced for owners and guests wishing to use more than one device. More info at the AGM.

Long Term Plans

Our finances won't allow everything to be done at once, and there is much to do to upgrade the resort. I have asked WimPen to come up with a 5-year plan. You can see it on my website: www.lascasitas.eu.

What Happened at the AGM?

It seems a long time ago now, but it was a well attended, interesting and a a sometimes heated AGM. It was good to meet so many owners there. I hope you us your proxy votes, if you didn't, then please don't complain about the outcomes!



New Rental System for Owners approved

The subject of much debate and differing of opinions recently, the AGM voted overwhelmingly to continue the rental programme introduced by OnaGrup after seeing the improved income that will take care of a good proportion of our bad debts.

It was a lively debate and in the end the AGM felt that the long term financial viability of the community was more important than the concerns of owners who rent extra weeks. The AGM felt that those owners should be encouraged to buy weeks that are currently on sale at bargain prices and over 182 weeks have been sold , mainly to existing owners, in the last 9 months. Option B on the agenda to return to the old WimPen system was overwhelmingly rejected.

While this will be a disappointment to the owners who regularly rent, the AGM felt it was in the interests of the whole Community. I have set out some Frequently Asked Questions in the centre pages.

Ivan Pengelly re-elected as President



In a closely fought and friendly contest, Ivan Pengelly was re-elected President of the Community, continuing in his dual role as Director of WimPen, and President of our community.

Also at the AGM

There was no appetite to elect a President's Advisory Committee, and this proposal was heavily defeated.

The proposal to look at possibility of transferring shares to a Trustee Company in Isle of Man was withdrawn and the proposal to take test cases of bad debtors to court was heavily defeated.

WimPen's 3 year contract was approved, as was the budget, which would mean no increase in maintenance rates in the coming year.

Other topics included security and it was agreed to recruit a full time security man for Las Casitas. The bar franchise and protection for holding company shares was also discussed.

You can download the minutes from my owners' Website www.lascasitas.eu, or from WimPen's new website <http://lascasitas.wimpen.net> and login to the members area with your password.

AGM IMPORTANT UPDATE

It has not been legally possible to comply with resolution 11 approved at the AGM regarding the protection of Holding Co Shares. An alternative solution is being sought to be discussed at the next AGM.

Trip Advisor: Trip Advisor is vital to our rental program, as most potential clients will look there to read reviews. Bad reviews will be most damaging to us all.



I was most disappointed therefore to see that an anonymous owner, under the nickname 'Badower', clearly annoyed by the higher rental rates for owners, has written a critical review, urging potential renters to go elsewhere.

Frankly, I believe this shows a selfish disregard to other owners and the rest of the community. I understand the disappointment some owners feel about rental rates, but this is rather like a hotel owner writing a bad review about their own hotel. Owners' grievances should come to to me or the AGM, not the whole world! I urge this owner to please consider removing the post.

If you have a complaint, write to me, if you have something nice to say, tell Trip Advisor!

www.lascasitas.wimpen.net

WimPen has launched a new website with a password protected 'Members Area' and many of you have asked me how to use it, so I have set out a guide to the right.

You will need your username and password which was sent to you recently. If you have lost it, contact WimPen on administracion@wimpen.com.

The only way to know if there are any messages for you is to look, as you will not receive a prompts in your usual email, and judging by the few responses I received to a test messages I sent, not many of you have looked at it. This site is managed by WimPen/OnaGrup.

The Resort.
From here you can:

- Book extra weeks at Las Casitas
- You will need your client no to show you are an owner

Members Area: You will need username and password and From here you can:

- Pay your maintenance
- Contact the president
- Contact the Owners rep
- Read your messages
- Download documents
- Book time at Ona resorts at Owners rates

Letting Service: From here you can put your weeks into the letting programme. It is important to read the terms and conditions

Check In. From here you can check in and confirm your expected time of arrival

Las Casitas
Roger Barrow
Owners' Representative
www.lascasitas.eu

Las Casitas Owners - Welcome to my site
Las Casitas, Playa Blanca, Lanzarote

Latest
Welcome! I have created this website to help owners keep in touch with me, each other or any news or updates so to let me know if you have any articles, comments or ideas. You can get my guest book and leave us a comment.
This website is managed by me, and is independent of WimPen and OnaGrup.
Las Casitas belongs to the individuals who are the members of the Community of Owners. The resort has been sold and since the year 1988, and although many things have been sold off or abandoned in that time, it still remains in the hands of the Las Casitas owners to be a beautiful holiday destination.
I will regularly publish news and information, and if you want to contact me, my email address is roger@lascasitas.eu.
To help the people who are planning to buy Las Casitas, I will be happy to help you with any questions you have. You will see that some areas are also on my [owners' rep page](#).
You can also purchase the website you are reading to help promote it and make available in the media program, or to continue your search to other search to sell or with priority. Contact me for more information.
Thank you
Roger Barrow

www.lascasitas.eu

This site is completely independent of WimPen and is managed by your Owners' Representative.

It contains a host of useful and independent information and advice for owners with information about escrituras, the holding company, advice on buying and selling as well as news and updates.

There are also links to useful resources, including WimPen's contact details.

It also links with my owners' Facebook page, where you can meet and exchange views with other owners.

Owners Rentals and Letting - Your Questions Answered

This has been the hottest topic for some years. Owners voted in favour of OnaGrup's new rental marketing program at the AGM, and some owners who regularly rent have been surprised and upset at the substantial increase in rental charges.

There have also been changes in arrangements for letting owners' weeks, which has caused consternation for some owners.

Here I attempt to answer some of the questions that have arisen and show how our resort is benefitting from improved income.

Q: Why do we need to change our rental arrangements?

A: We have many unsold weeks and blocked villas that will bring no income, unless they are sold or rented.

We now have a total bad debt provision of 300,000EUR. Efforts are made to follow up debtors, but a good number of them have subsequently died or are untraceable. Efforts to reclaim money through the Spanish Courts has proved very difficult and expensive. We do use debt collectors however.

Failure to obtain rental income is going to have a very serious effect on the Community's finances in the future and will almost certainly lead to very substantial increases in maintenance charges, and even that will probably not keep pace with the gradual decline in owners. The situation is worsening rapidly.

Q: Why are the new rental rates so high? We can rent cheaper elsewhere and we are pricing ourselves out of the market?

A: Las Casitas is a premier resort, and experience has already demonstrated that we can command high rental charges, higher than most other local resorts. Rents are calculated by OnaGrup through a system that measures demand and the market. Any decline in demand would automatically lead to a lowering of prices. This system ensures we can get the best price possible for rentals.

Q: What was wrong with the original WimPen rental system for owners ?

A: Quite simply, WimPen has no expertise in rentals and their rental programme was not successful, as many owners who tried to rent out can testify. The rents they were charging were low and uneconomic, in spite of which, very many weeks remained unrented. For some years, many owners complained that it was cheaper to rent than to own!

Q: Why cant loyal owners have a bigger discount than the 20% currently offered?

A: In short, because any discount given to owners is a charge on the Community's finances, ie it is paid by other owners. There are many more owners who never rent than those that do, and it would be unfair to expect them to foot the bill for owners who want a subsidy on their rental rates. This was the view taken by the AGM.

Maintenance charges have not been increased for owners however, which depending on the Euro exchange rate, may actually be a reduction. This is only made possible by improved rental income and now there is a real benefit to being an owner of the weeks you want.

Q: I cant afford these new rents, but I want to continue coming to Las Casitas for extra weeks, what are my options?

A: Buy extra weeks. They are very cheap, in many cases, purchase price plus maintenance is cheaper than renting. Weeks in the Holding company can be handed back when you no longer want them. Many owners have already done this, and weeks can be purchased from as little as £400.

Alternatively, see if you can make contact with another owner to arrange a private rental. You can use our owners' Facebook page to contact other owners.

Q: Has our rental income improved?

Yes, Here is the rental income report for the last 2 years and the projected income for this year, based on actual receipts so far and advance bookings up to September

Year ending August 2016
(includes advance bookings) 227,587€
Year Ending August 2015 (actual) 190,914€
Year Ending August 2014 (actual) 148,198€

Las Casitas in Numbers

Total number of ownerships	841
Total number of owned weeks	1715
Total number of blocked weeks available for rent only	414
Total number of relinquished Holding Co weeks for sale or rent	205
Total number of privately owned weeks for sale	119
Number of weeks sold since August	182
Number of owners on my mailing list	331

Letting your weeks

Ona WimPen Rental program

If you can't use your weeks, you can offer them to rent in the letting program. If you use the letting program, then it is important you understand the terms and conditions.

Under the online booking system that is now used to market your weeks, Ona WimPen are unable to inform you if your weeks have been let until after the client has checked out and has paid. You will then receive a letter informing you how much rent has been credited to your account. A number of owners have queried why they cannot be informed

- Clients are able to book without a deposit, so there is a risk of no-show
- Villas are allocated at the last minute, once all reservations are in and fitted in to available space, this ensures the best possible use of available time and maximum income for the community.
- Until payment is actually received on checkout, then it is not possible to confirm rentals
- Owners are of course able to call WimPen near the time to check if their space will be used, and they will do their best to advise. Owners can always remove their weeks from the rental program.

Remember you must still pay your maintenance by the due date.

The let is not guaranteed although you stand a much better chance of letting than you did under the old WimPen system. Remember however that if your weeks are let to an owner who claims discount, your income will be 20% less.

I fully understand that some owners are unhappy about not being informed and I have debated this at length with OnaGrup. However, if we want to benefit from a more successful marketing system, and higher rents, there is no other option apart from removing your weeks from the system.

Letting Privately

You can also try and let privately, and I have made my Owners Facebook page available for owners who wish to try this. But please remember, you cannot use the WimPen letting system if you are trying to let privately.

You must still pay your maintenance, negotiate the rent with your renter. Effectively, renters are treated as your guest and will have to pay water and electricity just as you would have done.

What's new?

Following my visit last year, there were a number of improvements made during Winter maintenance period.

Disabled Access

Ronnie had mentioned to me that with the advancing years of a number of owners, those with disabilities or using buggies and wheel chairs found it difficult to get to the bar and pool toilets without taking a long winded route around the resort. Mums with push chairs also faced the same difficulty.

I therefore arranged for a ramp to be built to provide easier access to the bar area,



Laundry

I had received many comments about the washing machine facilities. Just one machine meant owners sometimes had to book well in advance. Two further machines have now been installed in the luggage room, but if you want to use them, remember to bring some washing powder with you.



Children's Playground

Following request from owners at the AGM, a baby swing has been installed for a younger child. Also, the green felt covering has been partially replaced, the rest will be replaced this year, so no more tripping hazards.

Patio Furniture

We have been trialling new patio furniture to get reaction from owners. The dark furniture proposed last year was not popular and that idea has been abandoned.

You will see them in use in one of the two bed villas, currently No 25 near the pool, so have a look and let me know what you think. They are much more expensive than the cheap plastic furniture we currently have, so will be included as a proposal for the budget. There are also some new trial sun beds for the patios.



Maintenance

Following discussions with Denice and the Resorts Director, a program of villa inspections has been introduced to help keep up with the ever increasing need for repairs and maintenance. The villas are now more than 30 years old, so this is going to be an ongoing challenge.

However, I believe that as owners, we also have a responsibility, as we would with our own homes, and that no one is better equipped to inspect a villa than an owner actually living in it!

Nevertheless, it never ceases to surprise me to find very obvious maintenance needs that have not been reported, or to receive an email after an owner's holiday giving me a list of faults, which could so easily have been reported and fixed at the time.

My own experience is that when a maintenance issue is reported it is dealt with swiftly by the team, so please inspect your villa and report any problems.



Reception

Meet Suzy, who has moved over from Las Brisas to help in reception during Julie's absence. Please give her a warm welcome. I know she is looking forward to meeting you.

The Gardens



This has been a more difficult year for the gardens, and a number of you have contacted me with your observations.

As I reported last year, many of the older plants were damaged by storms, or were diseased and had to be replaced with new plants.

This winter however, has been one of the driest on record, as many of you who visited in January will testify. As a result, many of the new plantings have struggled to survive.

Many plants in the villa gardens have also been damaged by owners putting sun beds on top of them, so if you do that, please take care.

I have therefore agreed with WimPen that there will be a further program of planting this year, but please be patient, the glorious colours we have been used to will take a little time to develop.

Do you still have an Escritura?

There are some good reasons why you should consider transferring your weeks to the holding company and exchanging your escritura for a contract.

I have recently been approached by a few owners who, due to advancing years, have sadly lost their partners and in each case good intentions to transfer ownership to the holding company were put off. They now find themselves in a difficult position. The timeshare cannot be sold while the deceased owner's name is on the escritura, and it can't be relinquished.

It should be noted that in any case where an escritura owner has not paid his fees, action will be taken against them to recover the debt. Where joint owners are concerned proceedings will be taken against the survivor as the debt is joint and severable.



This kind of situation is avoided where the escritura is surrendered and exchanged for a contract of ownership with the Holding Company. This does not affect your rights of ownership but it does mean that the timeshare can be sold or transferred at a low administration charge or can be relinquished without penalty. There is a cost, but it does bring peace of mind.

If you are still holding an escritura, please consider doing this before it is too late. Contact Ian Crane, Administration Director or WimPen for more information: adminsitracion@wimpen.com.

The Annual General Meeting

The Annual General Meeting will be held this year 10.00 am on Sunday 4th December at the Village Leisure Hotel, Dolomite Business Park, Coventry.

Keeping in touch

I believe good communication with owners is vital. To keep in touch, and receive regular news and updates, please join my email mailing list.

I am not permitted under Spanish data protection law to access to WimPen's database of owners. I now have well nearly 350 owners on my own private list of owners, which I undertake not to share, and since I started I have sent out 12 email bulletins with the latest news. To sign up, please visit www.lascasitas.eu and complete the form, or just send me an email and I will add you to the list.

You can also keep in touch through my Owners' website, or Facebook page. Both of these websites are managed by me and are independent of WimPen and OnaGrup.

I visit Las Casitas in weeks 10,11,12, 13 and weeks 45,46,47 in addition to a week sometime in June. If you are there please come for a chat.

I am always pleased to hear from owners, whether you want me to pass on a compliment to the team at the resort, or have a grumble! But please don't grumble on Trip Advisor, it's a complaint to the wrong person!

Roger Barrow
Las Casitas Owners' Representative

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If you want to attend and book a room, it is better to book early. There is no special rate this year and there are other hotels in the area you could consider.

Any nominations or other proposals should be submitted to WimPen together with proposer and seconder by 10th September 2016. Write to administracion@wimpen.com.

The AGM is your opportunity to have your say and vote. If you are unable to attend, you may direct your chosen proxy to vote for, against or abstain each resolution or you can also leave voting to your proxy's discretion. If you don't have a particular person to choose as your proxy, you can always choose me, or your President as your proxy.

Although there was a good turnout last year, around 40% of you did not use your proxy vote so were effectively disenfranchised.

Full details of the AGM will be sent out in due course.



Views expressed in the newsletter are those of your Owners' Representative and are not necessarily shared by WimPen and OnaGrup.