

Minutes of Strategy Day 9 Nov 2019

Place - first floor meeting room, St Thomas' Church Bradwell.

Time - 9.30am - 4.30pm.

1. **Present:** Phil Martin, (Trustee,) Angie Smith(trustee/Treasurer) Nicholas Mannoukas, Susanne Kelly, Tim Fox (manager) Richard Sanders, Roo Bull (trustee, Chair & Minutes.)Dave Bull attended re Education Strategy
2. **Apologies:** Simon Thompson, Katie Miller.
3. **Opening prayers** led by Phil. Unwinding - sharing and letting go. Between us we had experienced bereavements, family concerns, work changes and pressures, community member's troubles, happy house move - all embraced by Othona.
4. **Where from, where to? 10 minute updates:**

5.1 Short revisiting of purpose and development of Othona's Bradwell Strategy.

We agreed to continue on the current topics as agreed after Community Consultation meetings. In addition, we agreed Susanne's suggestion that we adopt an additional topic - **Inclusivity**. This will encompass full inclusion of all people, whatever their abilities and difficulties, for example wheelchair use, communication difficulties, social disadvantage: seeking every opportunity to run all aspects of Othona in a specifically inclusive way, giving people any additional input they need.

We need to move our agenda forward beyond a 5-year strategy; and agreed to ask an independent facilitator next November, e.g. Andy Redfearn who led our earlier review.

5.2 Othona as a local resource. (Roo + Tim.)

Relationships with the Village are improving, through our participation, as in volunteering in the Village Shop. We are networking with Chelmsford Clergy. Our measures of success are not so much in numbers coming in, as Othona reaching out, e.g. Programme, quizzes.

5.3 Christian Spirituality (Richard and all.)

Rev Steven Poss and Richard have met: we are a resource for support and events led by the Church, e.g. Alpha Group Awayday. Our Thursday Dedication Service is becoming more prayerful; we are holding on to the message of Christian inclusivity, a Christian Community upholding non-judgemental approach to groups, encouraging Group Visitors to become regulars. Nicholas reminded us that the Chapel is at our heart. This year we have included more of our VAPS, through setting the tone, acting as examples, helping people to appreciate that Chapel offers time to reflect. Phil led discussion on the challenges we face as a Christian Community open to all faiths and none: importance of holding onto core Christian values, acting as an example, upholding our Christian Community ethos as a Committee.

5.4 Education (Dave Bull.)

See paper written by Dave. Michael Palmer is taking on much of the School Group leadership; we seek more volunteers, such as people with teaching experience and local history knowledge. We need outreach, to people with a different ethos/background who could share time together at Othona. Set our sights higher - Colleges and Universities. Dave and others to research free resources and bursaries such as promoted on-line, and bring them to Tim's attention for action. Dave suggested You-Tubes such as Lorenzo's AGM presentation, to let people know about our facilities. Nicholas said we should be bold about outreach through leaflets and flyers to schools and headteachers; Angie suggested advertising on public sector websites. Library location: Othona not really suitable because of closed times, but maybe the Cricketers would be interested, with local/Othona volunteers. We need to keep our eyes open for potential partnerships; Othona is relatively cheap.

5.5 Reconciliation (Tim + all.)

This is very dear to the hearts of Community members. The Palestinian Groups want to return, need an exclusive week for confidentiality. . Tim looking at dates: possibly a Summer Week in 2021, when if Bradwell is closed to Members there could be an "All Othona" week at OWD with special rates - Tim to explore options. Our Christian Gay + Groups are part of Reconciliation. "Open to all faiths and none" is a reconciling statement. Post Brexit, there is likely to be need for reconciliation. The earliest days of Othona were extremely uncomfortable, as Norman posed the challenge of post-war reconciliation in a very unequal society - we now need to get the right balance between being too comfortable, and too uncomfortable.

5.6 Communication (Requesting update from Martin Riemer - and all)

We look forward to an update from Martin. We appreciate the good atmosphere of welcome and communication from the office, with thanks to Debbie. The outside noticeboards need good maintenance or replacement, and to be kept up to date, for a good first impression to passers by. Richard anticipates a proper Wifi infrastructure. A Podcast is being prepared on Communities and Sustainability: we will feature. Nicholas urged better communication between BCC members, with responses to updates, and sharing of news & views.

5.7 Sustainability (Susanne and all.)

Food wastage is decreasing - possibility of walk-in fridge to store perishables for longer. We grow food, which is a good example for others, such as our apple juice: little effort, big reward. **The Permaculture ethos** may be further spread by tours and demonstrations by in-house experts volunteers such as Jonney and Jerry. We should consider partnerships such as with Southend in Transition. Debbie and Richard have visited our Maldon Green Recycling Centre 75% recycled, tracked, monitored. We will now use separate bins for nappies, and use clear waste bags.

The Lower Field Pond: the reed bed is overgrown. Malcolm Hardy has taken samples of water from the settling tanks: until results are available no-one may touch the reed bed system. Susanne and Malcolm to discuss and make proposals for the future of the reed beds. The ongoing beach cleaning is proving successful. We need signage to promote our water bottle Refill Stations.

6. Current strategic resource developments

6.1 The Education Building: review of Project; establishing its use.

The old building has had a major refurbishment in line with the local planning framework. Trevor Darley's voluntary commitment to work on this building over a longer period than anticipated is greatly appreciated, as is Susanne's input to variations to ensure the building is to a high specification. With additional donations by Members, and inclusion of the concept of an Art / Education Room within the building, although The Hut will look pretty similar to the original, the interior is transformed. A local artist may volunteer to be the Artist in Residence and work with school groups and art weeks, including financial assistance with the cost of materials. The Observation Rooms and big classroom can all double up as additional bedrooms as necessary.

The lessons learned from this project include recognising our limitations when taking on in-house projects; being professional in our communications; and the need to spend more time planning, organising and preparing the project right through to the finishing aspects, and formally revising our plans if necessary, for good practice and economies.

6.2 The Electric and Power Project: updates on Project, Project Board, monitoring, financial implications, opportunities to fulfill our long-term purpose.

Work is due to start on Monday 11 Nov. The Othona Energy Project Board is Roo (chair), Tim and Richard, + Angie as Treasurer, with Phil and Dave available for advice. Kevin Knight, Energy Project Manager, and John James, Architect, will be invited as necessary for reporting, monitoring and updating the Board. The upgrading of the kitchen to all-electric is in hand and will lead to a very different cooking style. Planning Permission for a second wind generator may take longer than the main project, in which case we will rely on the large back-up generator and need to budget for fuel.

7. A bit of Othona's Bradwell business: brief updates.

Tim's Sabbatical

Summer 2020: dates, cover, support, programme: After 5 years at Bradwell, Tim will be away June/August 2020. Debbie and Richard will take on the management/warden responsibilities, but will take annual leave and days off, so require support. This will be practical- cooking, cleaning, catering and cooking with the new equipment. Team support, Chaplain and Cooks to be arranged in advance.

Richard and Debbie to communicate with the Community about their role as leaders during the Summer Season 2020. We agreed to have two separated VAPS groups.

GSuite and using Drives.

All the BCC except Susanne (and possibly Katie) now on the system, with access to Gmail with Othona Gmail addresses, and access to the Shared Drive for Othona Essex. Documents may be placed here, via Roo, and modified when in progress. Susanne (and Katie?) to liaise with Gareth James as necessary to get set up.

2020 Programme (Nicholas.)

The half-term Activity Weekend is cancelled for H&S reasons (Site works in progress.) Much of the work is done on the 2020 Programme. The next half-yearly Programme Sheet should be ready shortly. We suggest a colour difference on the front, to distinguish between successive Programmes. The 2021 Programme is coming together. Bishop Steven speaking at the 75th Anniversary AGM. The Programme Planning Group is now Nicholas and Jan - Nicholas will say if he is looking to increase that number.

Nicholas' message to all: Please suggest ideas for future weeks.

Our financial position (Angie.)

We are £8,000 ahead of phased budget for this time of year. Now heading for a very tight period: fireworks purchased but event cancelled due to weather; few bookings in winter; anticipating closure for Power Project, which also means reduced EVS income.

Health and Safety (Simon + Roo.)

Simon's report sent round, tabled and considered.

Reporting lines for H&S: Clare Gough is Trustee Chair; Roo is Trustee H&S Lead with support from Simon Thompson; Simon is Bradwell BCC H&S lead; Tim has overall responsibility for H&S on site; Richard actively supports Tim.

Risk assessments are being completed in advance of Working weekends but recognising that risk monitoring is an ongoing process for each task - the main concern is to ensure all work is done in a way that causes no life-changing incidents.

The asbestos survey has been completed a while ago; Susanne will work with Richard to ensure the practice is documented, with ongoing monitoring.

For the Education Building, Susanne will mark up fire signage. Tim will ensure there are smoke detectors. Tim and Richard confirm they will put into effect Simon's recommendations.

Following the water testing in the settling tanks, there needs to be a risk assessment based on imminent results. There is a quote for £70,000 to replace the system with a proper water treatment unit. Other options are being explored and the BCC will need to review the situation based on test results and costed options.

To avert risks of working at heights a scaffold tower is being purchased.

To avoid moving and handling risks a Plasterboard lifting machine is being brought in.

We thank Simon for his report, which Roo will put on the H&S Drive.

Safeguarding (Bradwell Trustees.)

Liz Johnson is the Othona Trustee with Safeguarding lead. Richard is liaising with David Thorpe, St Thomas' PCC, about access to Diocesan Safeguarding Training for Bradwell staff and volunteers.

Maintenance planning (Richard.)

The Bradwell Maintenance Plan is in hand. Tim and Richard are ensuring this focuses on planning for major works such as septic tanks, roofs, painting exteriors.

Anything else from/to trustees/directors.

The Committee want to ensure that all concerns about the Centre, e.g. H&S, are sent to, and dealt with in the first instance, by Tim. Tim would take concerns to Roo as necessary; and likewise Roo to Clare as the top level of Othona.

8. Looking forward.

Anything from our Strategic Topics that needs more time.

Query/response: the current wind turbine is now repaired and working well; the running cost compares favourably with the Grid.

"Inclusivity" is to become one of our Strategy Topics.

The disability-friendly extension to the Norman Motley Building.

We agreed to progress towards bringing a business plan to Trustees for their June 2020 Meeting.

The initial Architect's costing indicates a sum of around £250,000 + Vat + Etc.

In preparation we will commence certain activities.

Susanne and Roo will develop sketched options for the interior layout, to include disabled person's facilities and ensuites. The precise location of the extension and its relation to the Solar Building will be considered.

Tim and team will consider the implications of these improvements, in potential bookings of people now unable to stay, and inclusive groups we cannot currently accommodate: disabled and older people within groups; universities, schools etc.

Angie will look at the financial aspects, including the VAT position for a Disability Extension, and potential grant givers.

Future topics: pricing for ensuites; future need for more ensuites.

We will later set up a Norman Motley Extension Planning Group.

Future Meeting Dates, 10-12.45 at Bradwell: Sat 7th March, Sat 6th Jun 2020.

Open BCC Sat 15th Aug, 2pm. Strategy Day (or residential) Sat 12th Nov 2020.

