

The Othona Community in January 2023

All at Othona hope you had a Christmas filled with love and hope, and we share with everyone our best wishes for 2024.

2023 has been an exceptionally busy one - for all the right reasons. Hardly a day has gone by without the wardens and core team welcoming new and returning faces, during Open Community times, for groups and private family bookings, for individuals seeking a place and gentle company in times of personal stress – and for plenty of people who love Othona, or are curiously peeping in for the first time, for that ever-offered cuppa. The resident group, even with regular volunteers, is small for the amount of thinking and praying, planning and organizing, nurturing and sustaining that underpins this unique Community. Even so, Warden Debbie still has time to write a regular Newsletter, emailed round to Members, and those who opt to be on the mailing list (your name can easily be added, if you just let Debbie know your contact details.) here below is extracted from the latest Newsletter:

We have now got a new part-time person to help with the office administration. Kristie started at the beginning of December and is doing a great job of speeding up response times in the office. Hopefully you will have a chance to meet her in 2024. Sadly Floriane (Flo), our French volunteer, is leaving us in January to go to NZ. It has been lovely to have her here for what will be 6 months, she has done some fine French cooking and been a pleasure to have here. Our second French volunteer, Paul, is with us until March next year and is also a great benefit to the team. We are hoping to apply for two more French volunteers next year if possible. We are also fortunate to have George Harp, who many of you will know, with us until the summer. We very much appreciate the hard work of our younger volunteers, along with all the fantastic band of volunteers that come regularly to give their precious time here.

The first two weeks of December were relatively quiet here but that allowed for some valuable maintenance time both inside and outside. We had the pleasure of hosting the first group from St Ethelburga's Centre for Peace and Reconciliation ([St Ethelburga's Centre for Reconciliation and Peace \(stethelburgas.org\)](http://StEthelburgas.org)) as part of their lifelines project. This project connects community and faith groups with farmers to help plant a network of hedgerows and wildlife corridors across the country. The first hedging plants were put into the 11 acres at the boundary with the cultivated field in the top section. The group this time were staff and their families from the centre and we are looking forward to forging more links with them in the future. The next planting will be in February where we have a Buddhist group and a Bahá'í group coming to work together. Eventually we hope to have a hedge that runs all the way down to the lower end of the 11 acres and links with existing hedges.

We are currently recruiting for a new link Trustee for Bradwell, if you or someone you know might be interested in finding out more then please take a look at the advert for the role- [Bradwell Link Trustee Vacancy](#) Our link trustees play a vital role in representing the Bradwell Centre on the wider Trustee board and along with all our Trustees we are extremely grateful of the time and effort they put into to keep the centres running successfully.

Our new programme is in the final stages of completion and many events are already on our website-[Events Listing | Othona Essex](#). We have got some exciting new events as well as the return of our regular, popular ones. Highlights include:

- Two half terms in February due to the differing term times in various counties- [February Half Term Week-1 | Othona Essex](#) and [February Half Term Week - 2 | Othona Essex](#). Both will have the usual mix of family activities.
- A Woodland Management weekend led by Becky Wilkinson- [An Introduction to Woodland Management | Othona Essex](#)
- Spoken Voice Workshop led by Morag Stark - [Spoken Voice Workshop | Othona Essex](#), this is an opportunity to develop your vocal confidence and stamina
- Water Colour Workshop led by Stephen Jordan- [Watercolour Painting Workshop | Othona Essex](#)
- The 3rd Essex Green Weekend- [Essex Green Weekend | Othona Essex](#), with the usual mix of speakers, music and workshops
- And many more, see the website!

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

Every blessing

The Othona Bradwell Team

Debbie and Richard Sanders are our Warden/Managers, Othona is accessed through East Hall Farm, East End Rd, Bradwell on Sea (electric entry gate, collect free exit token from the office.)

If you would like to visit, contribute your time, or make a financial donation or legacy, please contact Othona - www.othonaessex.org.uk, bradwell@othona.org, tel: 01621 776564.