

Minutes of Othona Bradwell Centre Committee Strategy Day 10th Nov. 2018.

- 1. 9.30am arrival**, refreshments. **Present:** Tim Fox, Angie Smith, Nicholas Mannoukas, Susanne Kelly, Roo Bull (Chair/minutes,) plus sub-group representatives Richard Sanders, Jonney Aldridge, Dave Bull.
- 2. 9.45-10am welcome**, introductions, opening prayers (Nicholas.) Apologies for absence received from Katie Miller (BCC) Simon Thompson, (BCC) Steven Poss and Trevor Darley. Angela Mutum gave apologies, but has resigned as Bradwell centre Committee trustee to become Othona Centre Trustee/Company Secretary. We appreciate all her time with Bradwell.
- 3. 10-minute Updates** and questions on the Strategy topics:
Communication.

Martin Riemer sent a paper – meeting venue not accessible to Skype. His work on communications is appreciated and we were pleased to see that various problems identified have been resolved.

The meeting considered the wider aspects of Communication. Communication is global, amongst ourselves and the wider community, up & down, and for outreach to disperse information, sharing a positive view of Othona.

We need a Communications Policy and formal Plan.

People need to identify that their personal experience of Othona is not in isolation, there are many roads to Othona and we hope to raise awareness of the different viewpoints and perspectives.

Open Meetings are good, when people are able to change the tone of Othona by their contributions, becoming a part of Othona rather than just a consumer. It was suggested people could have a monthly London “pub night reunion” to share thoughts on Othona face-to-face, not just on the Virtual Stoep.

Communications about meetings, including the AGM, are set to improve.

Education

Dave Bull sent a paper and led our discussion on the points set out.

It was suggested we have a noticeboard by the Pigsty to promote education opportunities available at Othona.

The space we have available could be used for meetings during the winter. Community payback is used as labour – we are encouraged to include them as part of our Community – to educate the Community and these newcomers. Education is not just about primary schools, but wider education/inclusion.

Othona as a Local Resource

This network has no particular leader; Tim led the discussion. He spoke of us getting involved with people in the Village, for example the Mothers and Toddlers group will hold their monthly meetings here, using play equipment we store for them. Local people share celebrations, using our facilities and resources. Outreach is developing: we have an increasing number of people seeing Othona as part of Bradwell life, joining events such as Fireworks.

Christian Spirituality

Steven and Richard have each taken a lead on different aspects of Christian spirituality. Steven's message to us is "to see how Othona as a place of Christian hospitality and place of peace and rest in God, can be further developed in our local communities with people of ages and wider afield." We see Othona as a resource for Steven's churches locally.

Richard spoke of his love for Othona as "inclusive of all faiths and none" as an open Christian Community. Norman displayed less strategy, more faith, we must not lose track of faith, and of the importance of prayer. Richard encourages us to raise our level of prayer for direction, and for God's blessing. He is developing the Dedication service to be more prayerful, less about list-reading. "Love God, love your neighbour, tell people about it" – we say "come to Othona and be loved."

It was noted that in some Othona weeks, it is hard to get people to say Grace, impossible to find people willing to take Chapel services. A suggestion: we could contact people who have booked, and ask them to prepare a service to deliver during their stay, so that we all share more of the unique contributions people bring, that they feel strongly about. We need to make Chapel services more inclusive, drawing people in. Everyone has something to say, and that should command the respect of, and attendance by those in Community. We need to encourage our young people to attend or at least, not to discourage others from attending. Chapel is central, not marginal to Othona. Spirituality extends beyond the Chapel, all we do is seen as Spiritual.

Reconciliation

This is a network of interested people, currently without a leader but with a number of people actively involved - this was a key topic in our earlier Open Meetings. We think of global conflict requiring reconciliation, but reconciliation is at the heart of what we do, for family members speaking among themselves while staying at Othona, and learning to accept their differences, as was

shared at a recent Open Meeting. There is conflict locally, and the Othona team play their role in mediation.

We see our ongoing opportunities to contribute to reconciliation, including work with Israeli and Palestinian people: they facilitate, we service. Brexit may split our country and Europe, but Othona is continuing our work with European Volunteers. There is gang culture in London, as seen with the YMCA people we support, who have links to that culture. Othona could do more, and we are concerned that there is decreasing government funding to enable us to do this. If these things are important, how do we at Othona resource them?

Sustainability

Susanne sent round a paper, Jonney commented in an email.

We heard there is better use of local vegetables, less waste, fruit from trees in the lower field. Serving home-produce is an education in growing produce.

Permaculture: Richard is going on training. We could offer vegetable-growing as an Outside Course.

We had a productive discussion on Waste Disposal, with ideas such as people being encouraged to take recyclable waste for home bins, not buying non-recyclable plastic containers, joining a beach-clean with Bradwell Parish Council and putting a photo on the public noticeboard.

A Rubbish Strategy – Susanne, Jonney, Tim and Dave would share this, plus community members concerned about our disposal of waste.

Energy – part of our sustainability strategy, we looked in more depth at its Resource implications.

4. Resource implications of the Strategy – people, equipment, publicity, grounds and buildings power/electricity.

Energy

In September 2017 trustees agreed the BCC's proposal "to solicit quotes from suitably qualified external advisors for a review of the energy needs and Bradwell Centre and what the options are to meet those needs in the short (say 1 year) and medium (say 2-5 years) terms."

Progress toward this has moved slowly. It needs to speed up as "energy" includes the gas boiler now at the end of its life, it will be decommissioned March 2019, out of use by Sept 2019. We have a quote for Mains Electricity and have seen a Consultant as suggested by a Trustee - mixed views about

engaging him. Dave has suggested several other companies, Jonney is in contact with one interested company.

Action – Jonney will pursue this company asap, keeping Tim in the loop. Dave will suggest more companies if we have no success with the first ones.

We seek, and Trustees are prepared to pay for, a complete audit of the current and future energy needs, bearing in mind potential new buildings and services; and costed options for meeting these needs, bearing in mind the range of options for heating sources and electrical production, which will influence our decision on replacing the gas boiler.

Buildings

Susanne summarised the report from the resources sub-group (Susanne, Tim, Jonney, Trevor and Roo.) Trustees have approved pursuit of a grant to help fund improvements to the **Old Field Hut**, and will receive a full report on the proposal this month. The BCC and attendees were fully in agreement to go ahead with renovation of this building to provide educational facilities and offer some additional seasonal accommodation. We noted the need for some improvement to the vehicular access.

The Bank - we considered the non-structural maintenance work required to sustain the main lounge; to create an art & craft area in the adjoining open-plan space; to renovate the toilets and showers; and ongoing work to clear the back rooms for efficient storage space. The majority of this could be done at by Members as a Summer Project, and at Working Weekends.

Disabled People's accommodation – there was full support for the need to cost and plan the extension to the Motley Building.

The Straw Shed – this is an H&S hazard and is cordoned off. A preferred option is to prop it up with a timber frame to support the heavy roof, through acceptable design and construction techniques as part of our ongoing maintenance programme. The building could be used for wood and straw storage.

The morning meeting closed at 1pm with a shared lunch.