

## **Othona Bradwell Strategy – Resources Group Meeting 30 June 2018.**

**Time of Meeting – 10.45am to 12.45pm.**

**Place –** Othona Bradwell, Tim's office.

**Present -** Jonney Aldridge, Trevor Darley, Susanne Kelly, Tim Fox, Roo\_Bull (Chair, minutes.) Andy Redfearn not included on this occasion as we needed to meet on site and develop ideas – he may later lead us in the Project Group.

1. Welcome, opening prayer.
  
2. **Purpose of Meeting was agreed:**
  - To act as a small group taking forward the Bradwell Centre Committee's work on Othona's resources development options at Bradwell.
  - To consider the current state of our buildings, services and environment.
  - To look at the future needs of the Community, particularly bearing in mind the strategic areas we have been working on over the past year.
  - To report back to the BCC; who report to the trustees.
  - To work towards raising discussion points and involving the wider Community at the open BCC on Sat 28<sup>th</sup> July 2-4pm.
  
3. **Brief outline from each member, on what we have to offer and what we hope to achieve.**

**Trevor** – Has worked in the buildings trade since aged 20, and run his own business. Has been involved with Othona many years. Wants to achieve more bedrooms, giving more income, and so more ability to spend on what matters to Othona: environment etc.

**Jonney** – Interested in what we do for the biosphere. This takes up most of his time and energy. What we need to do is change attitudes, bringing more diversity of people here.

**Tim** – Needs to listen to all views about strategic things. Hopes to bring a picture of the huge diversity of groups and people that come in, identifying what we need to have in place, in order to do this. How do we pull the diversity of groups into the Summer Season and have more people sharing the Summer Othona experience?

**Susanne** – has been involved with Othona for almost 20 years; as an architect she has been involved with Committees and Planning. Susanne

would like to drill down into precisely where we are short (of buildings) and how we can achieve this within the constraints of the Planning system – sensible, achievable, within a realistic timeframe. Visible aspects of the Community such as the wind generator, gardening etc. draw in more people. Development and Sustainability are not incompatible.

**Roo** – has been involved since the 1960s, and later with committees including the building group for the Norman Motley building. Wants the Community to be very inclusive as it has so much to offer to people of all ages, backgrounds, abilities, disabilities. As a retired Occupational Therapist, identifies the need more room spaces to reflect the need for singles and disability en-suites.

#### **4. Papers already circulated.**

- John James building Plans
- H&S Walk around
- Quote for mains electricity
- Electricity – minutes
- Resources Strategy review – Andy Redfearn
- Notes of resources meeting with Andy.
- Planning Search results.

#### **Action points from these papers.**

##### **a) Electricity.**

We have a quote for going on the Grid, which is a reference point. Most important is to identify what we want, including buildings, the charging of electric cars etc. There are many choices in what we provide. Battery expansion is future-proof within the bigger requirement for electricity installation and infrastructure. We are at capacity with the current electricity supply, and all agree that in the long-term we will need significantly more.

**We agreed that Tim, with Roo,** would call in at least one other specialist (green) Energy Company to complete a whole-systems Energy Audit including our future needs, with options to meet these needs. This includes the energy currently supplied by gas, where the system will need an upgrade in a year's time. The aim is for completion of the Review within two months.

**We agreed that Tim needs a Working Group** to consider the outcome, particularly around whether the gas boiler should be replaced, as it will not pass its emissions tests next year. **Group to be set up by September 2018** and report back to the BCC in time for a decision about the boiler in spring 2019, for action by June 2019.

**Action – all to suggest names for this group to Tim.**

## **b.) Building Plans and Planning.**

Susanne and Trevor explained the current position regarding Planning Permissions, and we considered the options this offers to Othona.

- We still have Planning Permission (PP) to build the extension on the Solar Building.
- We still have PP to build the Motley Building bedroom extension.
- This is because, once significant works have been completed on Plans, the remainder of those plans may always be built.
- It is not clear whether the Local authority's Building Control would insist on accommodation being raised due to potential flood-risk. We understand it may be possible to build at ground level if PP has already been granted (Motley extension) or if we can demonstrate that there has been no flooding in this location; or that we need access for disabled people. Each case is viewed individually.
- If we build the Motley extension the internal layout could be redesigned to meet current needs; and it may be possible to vary the height to link it to the Solar Building.
- When Planning Permission has been granted for a type of building (e.g. bedrooms) this is helpful as a "Trade-Off" for PP for building for a similar purpose in a different location on site.
- We have an "established use" for a three-bedroomed building (often used by Martin Riemer) in the Old Field. This could be "traded" or refurbished. If not over 80% of the building is new, this falls within accepted PP – we need not seek PP to refurbish the Old Field Hut into several bedrooms on the existing building footprint, and to add facilities, solar panels, electrical ducts etc.
- We should consider the best use of rooms and facilities: for example, fold-down fixed beds could avoid frequent moving of beds between rooms – but sound-proofing is an issue in wall fixings in existing buildings.

- We have given up our option to use the Bank for accommodation, when building the Solar Building – but this can be refurbished under the “80% rule” for non-residential use, example as use for an education facility.
- “The Hut” is the old Men’s Hut, relocated – and as this had “established use” as accommodation, no PP is required for its continued use for bedrooms.
- If a building (or camping facility/yurt) can be proven to have been used for over 10 years for a certain purpose for over 10 years, a Letter of Lawful Use” may be requested from the Local Authority.

### **c.) The Straw Bale building.**

We discussed the purpose, construction and future of the shed that was built from left-over straw bales, tyres and wood, intended as a work-shop. It can only be used as a shed; or replaced by a shed, on the site of the old Lamp Shed. We have another work shop area now.

The advantages – it is visually pleasant, and useful for an apple press shed. It may be possible to complete the building in a more rigid way, with a narrower doorway, with advice from straw-build experts.

The problems – the seaward wall has lost its integrity, partly due to the construction offering a wide door and inadequate rigidity for the heavy wooden roof. The shed is overweight on its base. It is cordoned off as an H&S hazard. The open straw attracts rats. Due to ingress of water the straw is decomposing. The outside covered area is held up by unattractive scaffold.

**d) The Solar Building** – no current problems.

### **e.) The Norman Motley Building.**

- The state of the roof covering is acceptable – keep under review, long-term.
- The four triangular south-facing windows have no frames, so are leaking into the wall, causing visible damp; the windows and damp need attention.
- There is some corrosion to the stanchions on the stoep due to water-flow from the plant-waterers, which needs attention.

- Some window and door frames are rotting and need attention.
- We need expert advice on capital costs for maintenance of the Motley Building, now 24 years old.

## 5. **Strategic topics – building and environmental implications.**

We have key strategic areas for development. The BCC holds annual Strategy Review weekends, and shares and develops plans together with the whole Community. The Community agreed the following areas for a five-year plan: Christian Spirituality, Reconciliation, Education, Communication, Othona as a Local Resource, and Sustainability. Ideas are shared through the Web, at Community Meetings etc.

We looked at each topic, to see if areas for building works have been suggested.

**Education** is the main area for building development. The Othona Coastal Park gives some improved facilities but to attract and sustain school groups and the study time for the whole Community, we need an education facility with equipment for study of the environment – microscopes, IT equipment etc.

**Social inclusion**, although not a specific topic, is one of Othona’s key principles. Tim has evidence that there are insufficient rooms to meet the needs for bookings – particularly the request/need for single rooms. Roo has identified the requirement for rooms with en-suite toilets to meet the needs of an ageing population and those with hidden mental, medical or social health needs. If we are to include people with a range of physical and/or sensory or learning disabilities we need rooms with en-suite specially designed toilets and showers, and with adjacent carers’ rooms.

## 6. **Feedback for the BCC.**

- The need for single rooms, including en-suite toilets.
- The need for disabled people’s rooms with complete specialist en-suite toilets and showers, and easy access to carers’ rooms.
- The need for an educational block, possibly converting The Bank.
- The need for additional rooms, possibly using the Old Field Hut.
- The need to keep the Straw Bale building under review.

- The need to maintain the Norman Motley Building.
- The need for a complete audit of our energy needs, bearing in mind the necessity to replace the gas boiler before June 2019.
- The need to keep the Staff accommodation under review.
- As we move forward we will need to begin to identify costs. All the work of the resources strategy group will need to be owned and worked up by the BCC, with proposals to the trustees of the Othona Community trust “The Charity” who own the assets.

## **7. Discussion points for the Open BCC 28<sup>th</sup> July.**

**The Community have been actively involved** in agreeing the areas for strategic development at Othona Bradwell. We wish this to continue. The discussion points raised at this meeting are important to share with the Community.

**Sustainability**, attitudes and care for all aspects of the biosphere underpin anything we may do for the future.

**Community members and volunteers are vital** to the agreement and achievement of our ongoing work to meet the needs of Othona in the future. The simpler projects, such as refurbishment of the old Field Hut, would be possible with a dedicated and supervised team of Othona volunteers.

**The larger projects**, such as the provision of ensuite and disabled facilities added to the main site, will include people who are not currently able to stay – but the money and energy required to achieve this goal challenges existing members to help with this future for Othona Bradwell.

## **8. Future meetings.**

We agreed the need for future meetings of this group – the next being after the Open BCC, at Othona Bradwell.

A date in the week commencing 13<sup>th</sup> August is proposed.

**Please confirm availability– I suggest Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> August, 10am -12.30pm.**