

## The Othona Community in Summer 2022.

The Othona Community is at its most lively during August, and some of the feedback from visitors is shared here. Open Community meetings, an annual Open Centre Committee Meeting in August, and our AGM coming up this year on 24<sup>th</sup> September as an online event, are just some of the ways that you can share ideas about Othona's future - no matter whether you are a resident visitor or coming in as a local – all views are welcome – and acted on.

Othona at Bradwell on Sea held a Community Open Meeting 4th August. 19 people attended this meeting, bringing together those attending the "Wellbeing Week". Debbie welcomed everyone and hosted the meeting by asking people questions for discussion and noting their responses. People said they enjoyed meeting new faces, sharing the Work & Play balance, with everyone engaged in chores etc. - great food & diet & preparation, with all needs met, giving that special, unfussy Othona rhythm of the day, its gentle pace marked only by the bell as a call to meals. Swimming for all ages in such wonderful holiday weather helped knit group together

When asked if there were any ideas for improvement, there were suggestions for more information in advance, such as an outline programme for the week. Visitors to Othona will discover that the publicised Programme is run, each week, by volunteer speakers who put great effort and energy into planning and delivering daily sessions to ensure visitors have a memorable time. There were also suggestions for future weeks on the programme, such as Foraging + Cooking food etc.... 'Plant a tree week.' Walking Week such as they have at our sister community at Burton Bradstock, Dorset, and more Working Weekends, linked to a mid-week working programme. Prices were generally accepted at a good level.

An important question: What drew you to Othona this time? A lot of people already knew someone here this week, a nice time to be away. The Topic of Well-Being is vital for many people at the moment. Mental Well-Being etc. is a struggle for many. Geographically, Othona Essex is accessible from London, and it was suggested that potentially we could reach more Parishes and Churches in London, including poorer families for Holidays. We could develop more targeted marketing and awareness to include more Schools groups.

Other questions or comments were requested, and a key response was "Making sure the founding Vision of Norman Motley of Peace and Reconciliation is shared, passed on and is still very inspirational." Social Media is very positive and Othona is encouraged to keep it going and building, providing more information - with the Trustee structures and Membership role made clearer. Greater hearing and deaf awareness for speakers at Othona and in Chapel is just one of the ways to support and encourage people of diverse needs and abilities.

As we look back on the vibrancy of August, we now look forward to a quieter time in September – but could not leave the summer behind without huge thanks and appreciation for all the energy, enthusiasm and sensitivity to all-comers that has been offered to Othona by Debbie and Richard Sanders, in their first year as Othona Bradwell Warden/Managers. Any support you may wish to offer them and their small, committed resident team, as regular or occasional volunteers will be much appreciated.

We have an Autumn Retreat coming up on the Weekend of 23/25 September, with our ever-popular Harvest Working Weekend from 30 Sept to 2<sup>nd</sup> Oct – local people welcome to come and share the fun, fellowship and fruit.

To learn more about Othona or to look at the Programme, and make booking or a donation, do take a look at our Website. Find us down the track through East Hall Farm East End Rd – through the wind-powered electric gate; don't forget your exit token to use on the way out. Debbie and Richard Sanders are our Warden/Managers, assisted by Phil, Chris, Peter and volunteers.

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