

The Othona Community – December 2023.

Time was when the Othona Community met for six weeks together over the summer holidays, then closed for the winter with sad farewells between those who had served the Community as summer staff, or stayed and helped out for much of the holiday period. Gradually, opportunities were grasped, to expand the life and work of Othona as the twentieth century rolled on. A permanent presence was established at Burton Bradstock, West Dorset, in a beautiful setting beside the Chesil Beach.

At Bradwell The Bank was rebuilt in the mid-1970s, a temporary former Nat West Bank (Shepherd's Bush branch) that gave a boost to opportunities to stay for longer periods – but it was still pretty chilly in winter! By the turn of the millennium Othona Bradwell was well established in the L-shaped Norman Motley building you see today, and further buildings and staff accommodation have made it more comfortable to live here. Since the mid-90s Warden/Managers and a resident team have given life to the Community all-year-round – and are now working extremely hard to share the life and love of Othona at all times. Covering all the financial and practical tasks, the planning and response to the unexpected, above all you find a Christian welcome and generosity of spirit that generates from the body of people who live, serve and volunteer with Othona. You are always welcome to share time, or volunteer.

Othona Bradwell had a successful Half Term week for families, with over 50 people staying and half of them under 18 - lots of activities including pumpkin carving, games, crafts, baking and more. We attended the installation of the new Bishop of Bradwell Adam Atkinson at Chelmsford Cathedral and look forward to welcoming him to visit us here. Recent retreat programmes have been well attended including Greening our Souls, by Rev'd Imogen Nay; The Word became Flesh, led by Sister Hilda Mary; and Art and Soul, led by Genevieve Collier. Each of these retreats have been a blessing to all who attended and created a lovely sense of openness and community together.

We continue to welcome many different groups to the community too, including YMCA, Church groups, Environmental Groups and many others too. If you know of a group who would fit our ethos, or wish to hold a family gathering, do make enquiries.

Advent, Christmas and New Year 2023 are busy and will be a lovely time of community, Christian celebration and hope together. If you, or anyone local you know, need a bit of company and would like to share a meal at Othona, including Christmas Day, please contact us by email or phone to book in advance. For those keen to hear about the 2024 Programme, we are updating our website with the new programme for next year –do keep checking it out.

Debbie and Richard Sanders are our Wardens, supported by resident team Phil Peter, Amanda and volunteers. Website: www.othonaessex.org.uk, contact bradwell@othona.org, telephone 01621 776564, or visit via the wind-powered electric gate, collect an exit token to leave.