

**1. Opening prayer.**

This was led by Simon.

**2. Welcome/introductions/apologies.**

In attendance: Ruth Bull (chair), Simon Thompson (minutes), Tim Fox. Attendance via Skype: Susanne Kelly, Colin Butcher, Angela Mutum. Apologies received from Nicholas Mannoukas and Katie Miller. Angela was introduced to the meeting by Roo as the new Bradwell Trustee, subject to the formality of approval by Trustees later in September, and explained that as a Bradwell Trustee she was automatically invited to join the BCC.

**3. Minutes of last meeting (14/06/17) and matters arising.**

- Phil Martin has decided that regretfully he has to leave the BCC due to personal and work commitments. He has however agreed to be Tim's mentor. The BCC recorded thanks to him for all that he has done for Othona over the last two years.
- The issue of fees for single occupancy is still being considered. The issue of need versus want was raised. There have been rumours of the bank being developed into single occupancy rooms. The future of the Bank is still under consideration as part of the resources strategy and nothing has yet been decided. The Strategy Group on Resources, led by Andy Redfearn and including Tim and Colin, will continue to discuss this issue and will report back to the BCC with any proposals.
- Tim will chase up whether the new Data Protection information has been sent to Dave HB.
- There are now two new trustees – Angela for Bradwell and one other for Central. Both will be confirmed at the trustees meeting.
- The walk-around at the gate has now been completed.

**4. Trustees.**

The next trustees meeting would be before the AGM on Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> September. Other trustee issues have already been discussed.

## **5. Warden's report.**

All four volunteers have now settled in well. Anouke has been of great assistance in taking some of the pressure from Sandra HB. Othona Bradwell is now back into the routine after the summer season and the VAPS have helped tremendously.

There were some matters arising from the summer season but these would be dealt with later in the meeting.

There is a need to recruit now that Dave and Sandra will be leaving by the end of April. Tim is pursuing enquiries at the moment and care needed to be taken to ensure that whoever came in would be able to live and work in community and with Tim, especially in the quieter months.

## **VAPS update.**

Current VAPS should be at Othona Bradwell until April 2018. Applications have begun for the EVS programme for 2018 and Tim suggested that we should be looking to the end of the academic year for recruitment as this gave access to the greatest possible pool of volunteers. This would mean a shortfall of staff in May and June depending on the start time of Sandra and Dave's replacements. There is no guarantee that the grant would be refreshed but Tim is hopeful that there should be no problems with this.

## **6. Safeguarding.**

Nothing in particular to report. Tim had attended an external safeguarding investigation relating to professional issues concerning a group that had previously used Othona, but as this had no bearing on anything that had happened whilst on Othona premises the matter did not need further action.

## **7. Health and Safety.**

Nothing further to report at this time as the one main outstanding element, that of the steps on the solar building, had now been fully addressed with the non-slip matting. Simon and Susanne agreed to have a walk-around assessment during the Harvest working weekend.

## **8. Summer 2017.**

Bookings were reported as being down over the summer, although this did not include a large number of VAPS and younger volunteers. The helpers teams were quite erratic, some weeks being excellent and others not quite so. Tim reported that he finds these weeks particularly difficult and stressful as he has to take a step back as the community takes over, but then feels he needs to step in when things are not going so well. Susanne gave feedback for the two weeks she was in Bradwell. In particular she felt that the kitchen was not properly staffed and as there was no one in overall control there seemed to be a lot of waste. Orders for food seemed to be going in daily due to lack of planning and the issue of permanent staffing was discussed. Tim reported that this was not the case on the week when Nicholas Mannoukas was in charge of the kitchen as he had fully planned the meals. However he agreed that other weeks, particularly the VAPS week, were quite difficult. The issues that arise are often complicated by the fact that it is a community time and people want to do what they have done in the past. The main positive now is that people can get involved in the kitchen. It was agreed that this issue, together with the organisation and running of each week, must be addressed fully prior to next summer to ensure that it does not reoccur. Simon then read his report on the music week. The main concern from this was a general lack of co-ordination (as above) and lack of communication. The BCC agreed the report and all stated that the three main concerns, Community, Communication and Leadership, needed to be improved to ensure that people wanted to come back and be a part of the summer. Having said that it was agreed that all weeks, in particular the Tree Hugger, Qu'ran and Music Week went very well indeed, and Tim reported that the village were already looking forward to next year's music week.

Roo suggested that we produce a 'Leader's leaflet' for those leading a week in the summer so that there would be some consistency and leaders would know what they would be expected to do.

- To be included as an agenda item for the first meeting in 2018.
- Simon and Tim to work out a Warden's Talk bullet point sheet, as well as a roles/responsibilities sheet for all temporary roles.
- All leaders of the summer weeks in future to have a proper one to one meeting prior to their weeks in order to ensure that everyone knows what is expected and required.
- This whole topic to be revisited in September 2018 to see whether things have improved.

## 9. Budget and finances.

Tim started by saying the outstanding debt of £5,365 has now been paid. Colin continued by saying that bookings have been down over the year by about 5% which is a problem as Othona Bradwell operates on tight margins. Overall we are looking at a shortfall for the year of about £7,000 although a lot of this should be able to be recovered through grants and event facilitation charges. Although Roger has now stood down it may take several months before we are able finally to see the centrally managed figures and have a true understanding of where our finances really sit. Therefore Colin has to be careful in authorising expenditure for projects at this time. Alwyns will be drawing cheques, dealing with payments/queries and managing cash flow/investments for the central accounts, in effect everything that Roger did. This should remove the key person dependency and, in a few months, allow for a much more open accounting system.

Tim reported that donations are down this year but there are likely to be around £4000 in donations before the end of the financial year, although obviously these cannot be relied upon.

Simon offered thanks from the committee for all the work that Colin does to ensure that Othona Bradwell's finances are in such a good order. This was echoed by the rest of the committee.

Tim was asked by Susanne about the state of the Lithium battery bank. He reported that we have reached the capacity of what we can produce and store and we are often going over that level; not all the time but in bursts depending on the numbers in the group and the usage. During the summer there were several times when the fuses tripped and the cause was never discovered, possibly it was the increased use of electronic gadgets. We have a second inverter that is compatible with solar panels and a second bank of batteries will allow for far greater storage and future proofing. This is liable to cost around £7,000. As this is a resources issue the finances should come out of central and as Colin cannot see what is there he is reticent to authorise this expenditure at the moment. The existing bank of batteries should have at least 6 years left before needing replacement. Roo reported that Dave B and Jonny have concerns that this might not be the best way forward. Simon suggested that an electrical consultant with expertise in renewables should be contacted to quote for all options and assess what we currently have. Colin proposed requesting that the Trustees authorise the appointment of a suitably qualified individual to assess energy needs at BW and advise accordingly.

- Colin drafted the following statement:  
Othona Bradwell has identified that the current energy infrastructure (solar & wind turbine to batteries, centre is off grid) is consistently operating at capacity in terms of its ability to meet peak demand. Othona Bradwell requests that the Othona Community (the Charity) authorise BW Centre to solicit quotes from suitably qualified external advisors for a review of the energy needs at BW centre and what the options are to meet those needs in the short (say 1 year) and medium (say 2 - 5 years) terms.

Roo reported that we are applying for a Community grant to address disabled parking and access.

The intention is to have three full size bays with lighting, one or two at the solar building and the pathways improved. Michael Kelleher has been approached. The grant is a maximum of £10,000 so care needs to be taken to assess whether everything can be done. In the event that there are insufficient funds items will be prioritised having regard to H&S principles. Any quotations should be itemised on this basis to facilitate subsequent decisions.

## **10. Programme planning**

Nicholas has reported that the skeleton of the programme is almost finalised. It will be fleshed out soon and on the website by the October half term with a print date of the end of November. There have been a lot of teething problems but it should mean that next year is easier! Nicholas has agreed to continue leading the PPG next year, for which we are all grateful.

## **11. Strategy**

Reports on the various groups had been circulated prior to the meeting. General discussion and concern that some of the groups were leaderless and it was agreed that the right place to further this discussion was at the strategy meeting in November.

## **12. AOB**

Tim reported that he hopes that this Christmas will see a family of 30 spending time at Othona. He had been concerned that the demographic for the Christmas period was getting older and this was putting some people off spending Christmas at Othona. He would still like the wider community to get involved more and was looking at other ideas, such as bursaries to assist groups/people in need.

The meeting ended at 10:05pm.

**Future Meetings.**

The next BCC meeting is the Strategy Weekend Friday 24<sup>th</sup> to Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> November 2017. There will be a short meeting on Friday evening after supper. The main meetings will be on Saturday at St Thomas' Church, led by Andy Redfearn. If we need a meeting on Sunday this will be agreed on Saturday.

**Note:** since these minutes were written Andy Redfearn has realised he will be unable to lead the Strategy Weekend, but the Weekend will go ahead as planned.

Please book your meals and stays.

Meetings for 2018 to be arranged.