

Othona Bradwell Centre Committee (BCC)

Minutes of Zoom meeting on Wednesday 22nd May 2024 at 7:30pm

Present: Steve (chair) Nicholas, Emma, Debbie, Richard, Chris, Inken, Suzanne Ann, Mark, Clare (note taker)

Apologies:, Sasha, Geraldine, Phil,

Welcome

Steve gave a welcome prayer

Minutes of last meeting (13th February)

These were approved

Matters arising (not included in the agenda)

- Tidying up of the shared files on Google Drive.

Action: Inken and Chris to have an online ‘working party’ to start going through the files and sorting and deleting files

- Spiritual resources (re minister on sabbatical and Chris beginning to think of on-line resources?)

The minister on sabbatical did not develop any resources.

Action: Chris will look in to setting up a place online/repository where Othona people can add resources

Matters arising from Warden’s report

This included an update on the core team, progress on sewerage, yurts, 11 acres, Solar building radiators.

Quentin from France is due to come as a volunteer after Green weekend. Another volunteer is possible but has been put off by the accommodation/shared bathroom. Someone from a theological college in Oxford may join. Current lack of accommodation is a big block to having more volunteers.

Debbie and Richard are asking for small groups to help with areas of concern as diverse as transport (mainly to do with the bus), camping arrangements and ongoing consideration of the second wind turbine.

Transport: The current bus from Southminster will stop running after July, and the next bus may only drop off at the village. A volunteer is needed to keep on top of lobbying the bus company to maintain the current arrangement. Will consider offering a payment to the bus company to keep the service running.

Action: Mark and Emma to take on the task of keeping in touch with the bus company to try to keep the service running and dropping off at the community.

Action: Debbie to send the background and contact details to Mark and Emma.

Action: Suzanne to look into the planning regs around extending the licence for camping.

Website Development

Mark offered to assist Debbie. Help is also needed organising the photo library and text. A media file needs to be set up to store pictures for the website so that content can be uploaded to the website when ready. Mark and Ulli have offered to help with this. A media drive has been set up on the Othona Trust website, which Debbie will upload images too (when she gets a chance!). Some of the current content could do with being updated/reworded. It would be helpful to have someone with a comms background to look at the website. Ulli has comms expertise and has offered to help.

Action: Debbie to liaise with Mark and Ulli on updating the media file/website.

Action: Clare to contact the Media Trust to see if there is anything useful they can offer.

Accommodation. It may be a breach of planning regs to have caravans on the site. One possibility is to convert the three rooms in the core block into two ensuite rooms. People are not keen to share bathrooms with people of different sex who they don't know. In West Dorset they have far better facilities and are applying for further improvements. It seems a little unfair. Debbie and Richard are willing to give up their spare room in emergencies, but it is not a fair long term solution. Installing a kitchenette in the core block would be helpful, and is doable under fire regs (if just a microwave and no appliances that present a fire risk). Original plan was to configure the core block according to who took on the role, but at this stage it is best to take it forward as two separate rooms.

Action: Suzanne to take forward looking into the reconfiguration of the core block

Governance

Anything to report on:

- Safeguarding
- Fire precautions
- Food and hygiene
- Flood

It was minuted that Steve and Chris would help with drafting a fire and flood evacuation policy and that one or two members from this committee would form a safety committee with Richard and Chris with a view to drafting and updating

policies. The team had recently completed fire training, which had left them with concerns, e.g. about people bringing damaged chargers which could cause fires.

We should inform our insurers about an accident which could conceivably result in a claim (a person slipped on the cockle spit beyond the sea wall and broke their arm).

Action: Chris to request information from the land registry about land ownership boundaries

Action: Chris, Richard and Steve to look into a fire and flood evacuation policy

Fundraising

Grant applications: identifying what we could go for and help with the forms.

There is a shortfall on the fundraising for the yurts. The fundraising effort will continue but in the meantime money will have to come from elsewhere in the budget reserves. But the reserves are needed for a lot of other things. We are paying for two of the yurts to be insulated – this is being trialled to hopefully extend their usefulness earlier in spring and later in autumn.

Approaches to Maldon District Council re: rural development (Richard). There is a levelling up fund of £5 million which could be approached. Richard and Debbie will meet with MDC soon to find out more about this. There may be other pots of money that we are not aware of. Some support with applying for grants would be welcomed

Action: Clare to look for grants (with Geraldine?). Debbie to share details of what grants have been applied for. Help with going through help with filling in forms

Action: Ann offered to help with form filling, drawing wording from previous successful applications. To liaise with Debbie and Richard in Art week.

Action: Richard to circulate a proposal to increase the rates for groups, as there is probably scope for that.

The Countryside Stewardship scheme has been looked into, but it has a lot of strings attached.

Action: Richard to look into whether there may be scope for funding the septic tank in terms of improving water courses.

There is a salt marsh scheme, but it is labour intensive for not much reward. Should look into funding for charging points for electric cars, as more are turning up. When the camp car is due to be replaced it would make sense to have an electric vehicle. However, car charging is a colossal drain on the power system and requires great consideration before adopting. Car batteries do, however, provide extra capacity to the system when a surplus is being generated.

Action: Emma, Debbie and Richard to look into setting up a Go Fund Me webpage

Planning permission has been granted for ponds on the 11 acres. There will be a lot of spoil. We need to make a plan for what to do with it. It could be useful as a store to quarry to make a sea wall, or creating a hide for birdwatching. There will also be spoil from the sewage system.

Action: All - Input of ideas on what do with the spoil from digging the ponds.

Programme and Bookings

Flavours of Othona week will include Mediaeval cooking and Claire Guillot doing French and Lebanese cooking, and there will be baking.

Action: Emma to do some camp fire packet cooking, ideally not on the beach

Action: Inken agreed to do a German cooking day.

There was talk of Viking chess as a games activity during the day. A foraging theme was suggested and also a 'back to basics' theme – spam fritters etc

Action: Suzanne volunteered Tom to organise 'olympic games'.

Absence of Music Week (Nicholas was going to talk with those who will miss it most.) There haven't been any complaints, Nicholas has explained the situation to a couple of people. Simon and Sarah have offered to do a music week next year.

Action: Nicholas to check dates and see if he could do an organ recital at St Thomas's in the summer

Chaplains and cooks? (Steve still to compile a chaplains' job description)

Anne is cooking during Art Week, Emma is cooking for a week, there is space for more cooking volunteers over the summer.

Emma volunteered to be Chaplain for Nature Chronicles week.

Chris will look into a story telling week as he has a friend who may be willing and able to do this.

Emma suggested taking oral histories from some of our older members, to capture their memories, in an interview format. Paul and Judy Fox for example.

Action: Debbie to send a list of weeks where Chaplains are still needed

Strategic Planning

A draft Strategic Planning document was circulated with the agenda. We have been asked to consider this further; I suggest we could each pick an area or two that interests us and fill in the gaps. It is not to be a once-and-for-all document set in stone but something to evolve and adapt over time along with changing circumstances. All voices are welcome. There is an opportunity to state your relationship with the community. We will revisit this item from time to time.

Action ALL: Please add contributions into the Strategic planning document

AOB

The Summer open meeting will take place on Saturday 17th August.

Closing Prayers