

Minutes of virtual Othona BCC meeting held Saturday 8th May

1. Present

Ruth Bull (Trustee/Bradwell Chair), Steve Barnes (Trustee/BCC member), Susanne Kelly, Mary Grimson, Nicholas Mannoukas, Geraldine O'Grady, Tim Fox, Richard Sanders, Debbie Sanders, Clare Stone, Simon Thompson.

2. Meeting was started with an opening prayer from Tim. Ruth welcomed all to the meeting (there were no apologies).

3. . Matters arising, minutes of last meeting, and actions.

- There was a BCC business meeting on 6th March and a strategy meeting had taken place on 28th March.
- **RS and CS to work on a business case for the new wind turbine** – no progress on this yet – to be an action from this meeting.
- There has been a delay with the processing of the planning application due to having been submitted under a different name originally, so Maldon DC has not taken the application forward. Climate Safe Renewables need to be formally instructed to withdraw and it needs to be resubmitted by Kevin Knight in his name. Kevin Knight is unwell and not able to work on this at the moment. A list has been received detailing everything that needs to be done to progress this.
- CS and GO'G have looked into grants and will continue to do so.
- The Essex Community Fund has encouraged Othona to reapply for funding this autumn. It may be best to wait until planning permission has been secured.
- **CS to look into grant that may cover noise and environmental impact assessments.**

● Bradwell B plans.

Angenita has arts council funding for the fundraising swim and an art piece around nuclear power and is keen to do something at Othona on aspects of culture around nuclear power stations. This will probably be for after the summer. There are groups of people around the Mersea area who will be directly impacted are getting involved. We can connect with them to build awareness.

RB asked everyone to please keep up momentum on actions from the strategy meeting. **All – check for actions from the strategy meeting minutes and take forward those they have agreed to.** A trustee will join the next strategy meeting and take things forward from there.

4. Reopening of Bradwell in 2021

- Christmas and New Year opening. TF updated the group – There is some interest but someone will need to be identified to lead this if it is to go ahead, as all the staff will need to be away. Caution must be exercised in terms of having this led by volunteers due to the challenges of using new equipment, and issues that can arise with visitors for this event. A decision is needed soon so that people have time to make other plans if they were hoping to come. At least two people would be needed. All enquiries to go through TF, who knows what is fully involved. Will cancel by the end of June if no-one has come forward, and that

decision must come from the Committee, not be seen to come from the staff. Local volunteers will help with caretaking over the Christmas period. If the centre does not open they can pass any enquiries to Othona West Dorset.

- TF updated the group. Opening up for lunches has been very successful especially over the bank holiday weekend, with a lot of day visitors. Thanks to Debbie and Richard for all the additional work. This was more of a 'statement of intent' than a money making exercise, but nonetheless a small profit has been made. Volunteers have helped with the opening process. Income has been made from people staying in the top and lower field though Airbnb – they have left good reviews, and contacts have been made that may lead to further visits.
- The Education building – the ramp has been installed. Work on the roof is ongoing, due to covid delays. It will host a midweek college group the following week. Volunteers are welcome to come and help get the building in good shape and help prepare for Phase 2 of the relaxing of restrictions. TF anticipates that restrictions will be similar to last summer, and will respond as needed rather than pre-empting things that might change.
- EVS – strong applications were received and young people from the Czech Republic, Italy, France and Spain will soon be offered placements.
- Greenbelt has officially been cancelled - TF meeting with Phil Martin and the director of Greenbelt to work with them on putting something on for August bank holiday, building on the success of last year.
- DS reported that the summer program is in really good shape and already getting bookings. There won't be a paper program this year as things are subject to change but social media is successfully being used to promote it.
- The cancelled Autumn retreat from last year will be rerun this year.
- SK is keen that the music week has a theme to attract younger people.
- TF and DS responded to concerns about drawing attention to the additional camping by confirming this can operate for 58 days without a licence.
- RB reported that formal discussions are underway with the farmer with regards to fencing off the strip of land. Responsibility for this lies with the Trustees.
- There are a very few people who still want to receive things by post. This involves additional cost and time and one option would be to require people to provide stamped addressed envelopes if they want things posted. RB and DS to look at the list of those requesting [postal communication.
- Facebook is being used very successfully to communicate with the membership, and beyond – the current time is a good opportunity to reach new people. Instagram and twitter could be used more. The new EVS volunteers will be tasked with taking this on.

5. Open Christian Spirituality.

There was a discussion prompted by SB's note. There seems to be a widespread misunderstanding of what Christianity is meant to be. There is more going on at Othona than we give ourselves credit for (eg. Answer Back sessions), and this is what makes us a *Christian* Community for all faiths and none. It is good to have room to discuss and reflect on what this means to us - some are better than others at articulating this. Chapel is a habit, but seems to attract fewer and fewer people. SB would like to see more of an involved discussion. In Norman's day chapel was compulsory, but that would not be appropriate these days, and some people choose to sit on the stoep

instead. Chapel at Othona offers an opportunity for everyone who has something to say. If people feel it is not for them, they are invited to share what is important to them in life. We should actively explain the ethos, and through that challenge back – might spark a debate. The warden’s talk could be a good opportunity to explain that. Work, worship, study, play – all are equally important. The walk to and from the chapel, it is all part of the sharing experience. TF says ‘Othona is my church, it embodies everything church should be’. Church says ‘come and be like us’ Othona says ‘come and be with us’, or ‘come and be yourself’. The principles of Christianity are embodied, doesn’t have to be explicit, it is implicit. At a Baptist church people are serious about God, in a way they don’t seem to be in the Anglian tradition. Have to make sure God is at the heart of it. The phrase ‘rooted in the Christian tradition’ was challenged – as it was felt that Christianity is not a tradition, it is a faith. This phrase needs updating as it does not reflect the essence of the trust deed, and is a dilution. The Chaplain role is important and should not be left to chance - it is an important role and difficult to fill properly.

6. Finance and budget update.

TF noted there was not much to report being only 5 weeks into the new budget. Questions have been raised to the outgoing treasurer about the centre not having been credited for gift aid. This would turn a small surplus into a healthy surplus. The income for April 2021 had already exceeded that from April 2019 – it is very positive. Overheads are not fully covered, but the furlough scheme is helping. Pete Baird has come off furlough to take on some important work around the site. We are doing well in the circumstances, and much of this is due to the generosity of members and government support. There is a standard rate and a benefactor rate, used to help support bursaries. We work with a lot of disadvantaged people and bursary payments often go unseen. That surplus is not available this year. Earmarking donations for bursary is helpful as it helps people stay and still counts as income.

7. Safeguarding and H&S

TF has completed enhanced Safeguarding training as part of the new policy. Health and safety: ST reported that the site is in a good situation at the moment, needing only a few tweeks. Dan, the new health and safety trustee, will visit on 21st May. The Bank is currently closed off to all apart from staff as all the non-covid compliant furniture is stored there.

8. Feedback from trustees.

The Chair of Trustees has written a letter about what people are concerned about as trustees.

9. BCC - skills and people we need for Trustee vacancies.

There are two vacancies for new Bradwell-linked trustees, plus a need to identify someone to take over as the chair of the BCC as RB’s term of office finishes in May 2022, (ideally becoming vice-chair soon to help the transition). SB and RB have worked on a list to strengthen the committee. They will send around a note about what the special requirements of a Bradwell Trustee in particular would be. The new recruitment process for the Central trustees has been excellent. SB asked the question of the Bradwell Centre, ‘what do you need supporting on?’ It was agreed it is good to have someone local, and someone with up to date experience to support the centre on safeguarding would be helpful.

10. Open BCC meeting.

This was successful last year, including a large attendance via zoom. NM felt it could have been more productive as a committee meeting. It was agreed this should be billed as an update rather than a committee meeting, with questions to be submitted in advance. The purpose is to give people a chance to engage and give a sense of ownership and involvement. NM will give thought to how best to achieve this. TF and RR will liaise on the date and timing.

TF reported that at the centre each week there is an allotted time for people to give feedback – this works well.

The AGM is on 25th September on zoom, 11am-12.30.

RB will suggest a date for the next meeting.

Actions:

- RS and CS to work on a business case for the new wind turbine
- GO'G and CS to continue to look into grants for the wind turbine, including one that may cover noise and environmental impact assessments.
- All – check for actions from the strategy meeting minutes and take forward those they have agreed to.