

## **Minutes of Othona Bradwell Centre Committee Strategy Meeting 28 March 2021.**

1. **Welcome** to Clare Stone, (Zoom lead) Geraldine O'Grady, Steve Barnes, Ruth Bull (Chair/Minutes,) Nicholas Mannoukas, Tim Fox, Susanne Kelly, Mary Grimson, Debbie and Richard Sanders; **apologies** from Simon Thompson.

**Opening prayer:** Steve.

### **2. Any essential updates from last meeting (10 mins max.)**

- Education Building being completed in time for May re-opening, with tin roof and ramp to Susanne's specification, and low-energy heating.
- Roadmap to re-opening: picnics from 12th April bookings coming in. Limited residential opening in May - Tim to put out a message about Covid restrictions. Bookings now coming in for full opening June/July.
- Nicholas to work with Tim now, to finalise and publicise the Programme. Susanne is liaising with Debbie and Martin Riemer for a 7.30pm (BST) Easter Saturday Zoom Party.
- Debbie reported good contact with Groups and some bookings.
- Update on Bradwell Trustee recruitment: a BCC member and an Othona member are considering applying to serve as Trustees. Steve and Roo to draw up a list of attributes we seek, including people who understand Othona; younger people for mentoring; core skills such as a reasonable understanding of finance; specific skills we need for the BCC - and particularly the time and effort required.
- BCC members would like updates on new Central trustees - Roo to action.
- Richard updated on finances - Bradwell made a small operating surplus 20/21, or a small deficit taking into account write-offs and depreciation; but a large deficit if considering the payments due to Central Funds for Othona's capital improvements at Bradwell. This is good news considering our concerns a year ago, thanks to all.
- **Our sincere thanks go to all those who have given time and made financial donations** in this difficult year, contributing over £23,000 + gift aid to operational funds, plus further donations for specific Projects.

### **3. Strategy Review: what have we achieved from our 2015/2020 Strategy**

#### **A Local Resource**

In the past 5 years our role in the local community has improved. People visit us, and we contribute to Village life: local Church, Chapel Committee, Community Shop, where Debbie noted that some people are still rather suspicious of Othona.

**Action** - we need people to come and see us, e.g. fireworks and concerts - and to seek opportunities in the local villages eg. Care Homes. Consider holding Lunch Clubs continuing after Lockdown. Develop the plan for a Saturday Cafe from the Old Field Hut. Advertise locally.

### **Christian Spirituality**

We strongly uphold Othona Bradwell as a Christian Community that welcomes people of all faiths and none.

In the past 5 years we have included more Church Groups and Church Schools, and Alpha Groups.

We shared how much the daily Chapel Services were welcomed in the first lockdown, and that the Lent Course is much appreciated.

#### **Action -**

We reflected on the special value of Othona's being inclusive, welcoming Chapel contributions from people of all ages and backgrounds, seeing the opportunity to worship and reflect together as being integral to our identity and values, exploring what Christian witness looks like. Those on the BCC heard contributions on the marvel of Othona's diversity and equality to those whose upbringing had been in more doctrinal faith. We are truly a forum where people can be open and honest, which is transformative. We uphold this as our way forward - or we cease to be true to our founding values.

### **Reconciliation**

During the first 3 years of the Strategy we held camps with women, muslims, Israeli Jews: people whose lives had been devastated by horrors and grief, seeking to channel their energy into reconciliation. Othona creates space and an open door.

#### **Action-**

We plan to work with such groups even if their need for exclusive use requires us to close for a few days of our Summer Season. There may be other opportunities out there that fit with our strategy.

Geraldine: Refugees - we are a place where people could work together before moving on; Othona could facilitate work with families; we could provide space for refugees as individual volunteers, or groups; and target groups working with refugees.

Richard: Women in slavery, as discussed in the Lent course - including support for support groups.

Mary: involved with "Circles for Peace and Reconciliation" with techniques for communication, tools for creating peace in our lives. Othona could host similar events.

## **Education**

We have leaflets and have continued to bring in school groups until Covid.

### **Action**

Geraldine and Debbie will review and revise our leaflets to focus more specifically on what Othona could offer for education.

We have the Education Centre, resources and facilities, and new Green Energy, and can now offer courses, e.g. global healing. There are packages on the internet and/or we could design our own packages to include residential and local schools, day visits, schools pilgrimage etc.

Geraldine agreed to progress this, with our usual support from others as necessary.

Richard: we are developing a link with Asheldham Youth Church who have started to use the Old Field Hut.

Susanne: sees an opportunity for Geography GCSE students to visit for an example of sustainable energy. Susanne to work with Geraldine to seek opportunities.

Steve: our Trust Deed refers to the education of Clergy, referring to his recent encounter with a clergyman who found Othona's ethos transformative. Our strategy could include mentoring, linking to local Churches and dioceses.

Tim: we continue to develop links with the Chelmsford diocese, as partners. This cross-references with our Christian Spirituality topic, , and with "Churches without Walls,." - Othona's message is "Come and be you" (not "come and be us" - a particular Church.) Othona would welcome trainee clergy.

Richard: there are interesting churches in Southend, e.g Homeless Drop-in. This is all about forgetting the trappings and living your life. Othona has members in Southend who may help us develop links.

## **Communication**

We are not really strategic in communication, but our response in reaction to Covid has proved effective. Martin Riemer is responsive in electronic communication. Debbie's emails to the Community are seen as a lifeline, including people who need Othona but cannot get there. Tony Jaques' weekly Blogs from OWD are also appreciated.

### **Action.**

Steve and Mary suggested a review and update in our written communication, particularly for those booking a visit. Debbie will take this on, with Mary.

## **Sustainability**

The Energy Project has really taken forward this strategic aim, but without the wind turbine it fails to deliver.

**Action.**

Susanne: make the wind turbine an immediate strategy; and establish our stance in respect of Bradwell B - for Othona's sustainability and the sustainability of the country.

Clare: there are lots of Christian environmental groups and networks to show our green credentials - to launch ourselves as an opportunity to this big list.

Clare may be able to take this forward.

Tim: we need targeted outreach.

Geraldine: A Lent Course she joined brought people together, and she can contact them by email. Debbie said there were Church Groups to explore.

**Resources to deliver the strategy**

Our need exceeds our financial resources.

**Action.**

Strategically we need to reverse this over the 5 years.

Tim: our people are our most important resource, including our staff who need better accommodation.

Succession planning will sustain Bradwell.

**4. Strategy - reality check.****What emerging strategic objectives have we taken on in 2020?**

We considered financial priorities at our last BCC. Energy projections are difficult to balance because we have no 2nd wind turbine and low occupancy due to Covid.

**Action.**

We need to raise funds to install the wind turbine asap, and bring in more people within Covid regulations.

**The financial constraints**

We focussed today on the wind turbine.

**Action**

The Government may announce new funding streams for green energy at a climate conference in 2021, June or November.

Clare and Geraldine agreed to work together to explore what is available now.

**Next steps - "what?" - our vision, strategic plans, business plans.**

Clare: there is a current mood to be drawn upon: less consumerism, simple values. People are evaluating their priorities.

Regenerative: letting go of what is not needed. More young people are taking this view - regeneration of people, with opportunities for Othona to nourish people, rebranding as necessary for an inclusive vision post-covid,

One Othona - Othona is a unique and wonderful organisation with openness to welcome and adapt. We say we welcome exploration; both OWD and

Bradwell have undergone huge change recently. We value opportunities to share the vision of One Othona.

Empowering: the next generation to make decisions about where we are going, as we long-standing members were guided by our founding generation. Empowerment is a link between all our strategic objectives. We will think strategically about how we deal with the demographics of the Community, and appreciate that there are new Central trustees with overarching responsibilities.

**Next Steps - “When?” - full facilitated strategy day or weekend when we can meet face to face, BUT importance of working strategically not just reactively.**

We discussed many ideas, but there is a risk we try to do a lot of things we stretch our team too thinly. Otherwise we select a few things we can do really well and make them our core strategy.

**Our emerging priorities look like:**

the environment; sustainability for the younger generation; core values and allowing people, particularly young people, to contribute to the best of their ability. The “Work” element of our 4 pillars (Work Worship Study Play) is in danger of being taken away as we professionally improve and make safe our environment. Sharing work with those of other generations, training with appropriate supervision, enabling a real sense of participating as a valued member of the Community are all strategically as vital to our next generation as they have been to ourselves.

## **5. Strategy - the way forward.**

### **Summary of strategic decisions**

See **Actions** under each heading above. Some of these actions are to be included in the long term strategic plan for action, with the emerging priorities.

**Some Actions have names against them, to be started as soon as reasonable - hoping for an update at the next BCC meeting.**

### **Report to Trustees for adoption.**

We are not yet ready to report a next phase strategy to trustees but all are welcome to read these minutes on the Bradwell website to see how we are moving forward.

### **How to capture them - written, publicity.**

Once these minutes are on the Web, they may be mentioned in the next Bradwell Othona mailing via Debbie.

Around June/July, when we have a better picture of the Roadmap out of Covid, we will organise one or two public forums to share and invite contributions from our membership.

**Face-to-Face review: plans to meet with facilitator once Covid permits.**

We plan to hold a full day or weekend BCC at Bradwell to firm up on our strategy for approval by Trustees and sharing in appropriate media. This is likely to be in November: Roo to explore the possibility of finding an experienced convenor from within our new Central trustee body.

**6. Dates and broad topics for BCC meetings 2021.**

**Saturday 8th May, 10am to 12noon. Clare Stone to set up Zoom.**

Main agenda - Matters arising from Minutes 29 March, with any updates on actions; update on effects of Covid Roadmap rollout. Summer plans, bookings and Programme. Finance/budget update. Feedback from trustees; priorities. Setting a date for an Open BCC in the summer.

**During Summer Season - open BCC at Bradwell and/or Zoom.**

**Do we need a business meeting in the Autumn?**

**Strategy, November, provisionally Saturday 13th (Sun 14th.)**