

My Hopes for Othona

I would like us to remember that Othona is not an end in itself, it is a means to an end.

Whether we come many times a year every year or visit just once, Othona, is and always was, meant to be only a staging post on our journey. A place for renewal, a catalyst in our lives, somewhere to renew our batteries and prepare us to go back home into our normal lives, taking with us greater vitality and zest for life, greater compassion and love for others and a desire to work for the greater good wherever we may be. It is important that Othona and we who are Othona do not become too inward looking and self-absorbed.

I hope We will always be a community willing to take risks with people and ideas. That we will remain an open and accepting community. Because this has always been one of the most special and important strengths of Othona, but this openness has also been a weakness at times. It does not mean that anything goes. We walk on a knife edge and this is part of the adventure.

So my hopes for Othona are summed up in two prayers

The first is from a very much adapted prayer from the 16th Century so you must forgive if it feels slightly old fashioned.

O God may the doors of Othona be wide enough to receive all who need love and compassion.

But narrow enough to shut out any spirit of selfishness and self-interest.

May our threshold be smooth enough to be no stumbling block for children or straying feet, but strong enough to resist the power of disillusion and resentment.

So we may be a place for healing and restoration

In a confused world may God grant that Othona may be a place to find direction

In a noisy world a place to dream

In a divided world a place to find fellowship and understanding

And in a sinful world a place to find the love of God

May Othona always be a place of hoping where the world is cynical

A place for forgiving where the world holds grudges

A place for healing the wounds we carry inside us

And a place for fun and laughter and joy, and true appreciation and gratitude for each other and our beautiful surroundings

For all that has been Thanks. To all that will be Yes!

Amen