

## **Othona at Bradwell-on-Sea - Open Community Meeting 25<sup>th</sup> August 2022**

Richard welcomed everyone and introduced the meeting, there were 25 people present. This is an opportunity to feedback on the experience of the last week and think about future ideas.

### **What's gone well this week?**

- Great food and talks
- Great standard of food and people would be willing to pay more.
- Improvement allowing caravans onsite, giving increased capacity and lower charging for camping improves affordability making Othona more inclusive.
- New people coming here having previously come to Othona as part of a group booking. This has improved over time as people attending group events are encouraged to come back and given programmes.
- It would be good to encourage groups to sign up for our mailing list or visit Othona social media.
- Comments on the current social media (what is used and who does it?) and the importance of those coming to share, like and comment to encourage others.
- Suggestion to update the current information sheets in the Chapel as these are out of date and to include a barcode for people to scan. Also improve the visibility of the current noticeboards

### **Suggestions for improvements:**

- Helpers list for the summer to include chaplains, kitchen helpers etc. We have great cooks for the summer, these and the speakers are offered a free stay. All agreed that these are hard jobs and not really a holiday. If anyone wished to make a donation for their stay they can do.
- Martin offered to do a helpers list based on those coming, however it is better for many roles to plan and invite specific people. Lack of chaplains this summer as some unavailable.
- More clarity during change over time and offer of being Chaplain not captured
- Improve the distinction of the different rates available on the website, making the benefits of paying the benefactor rate clearer.
- What is the bell system at the moment? lack of a five-minute warning bell for food. Some discussion as to whether this was useful or if having too many bells was confusing. The handheld bell should be used more in the evenings when things are noisy.
- The written daily programme is helpful but some would like more announcements if there are any changes such as an earlier breakfast on Thursdays for the communion service.

- Suggestion that if the communion service was later, 10 am rather than 9 am, then more people from Othona might go. This needs to be raised at the PCC as it is a decision for them.
- Install firepit and seating area on 11 acres, this would be great for those with mobility issues.
- Improve access to the beach, requires consultation with Natural England.
- Improve sound for those with reduced hearing, we are looking to install a loop system which would require a microphone. Might find a funding source for this.
- Ensure that we do all we can to improve access for those with mobility, sight and hearing impairments.
- Sitting outside is helpful for some due to the noise and the gazebos have been beneficial

### **Any programme ideas for 2023?**

- Richard mentioned that the Bank holiday weekends are good for group bookings, next May Bank holiday we have an Orthodox Youth festival and next August bank holiday we have a large (>50) church group. This can also be viewed as an opportunity to gain new members and a way to 'showcase' Othona. Some of the groups we have here are part of the mission work of Othona, which members should be proud of.
- Suggestion of an Othona visit to Greenbelt, to be discussed further with Phil or Tim for logistics.
- Groups such as respite carers would benefit from a visit to Othona.
- Walking and cycling weeks suggested
- Local history, the Out and About local to Bradwell week run by Roo and Dave previously was really interesting
- Each summer week should include family activities, possibly run alongside the main theme if this is more aimed at adults. One issue with this is running activities for unsupervised children, need to have enhanced DBS checks
- Possible child friendly activities include music & storytelling, puppet making. Offers of help were made.
- Cryptic crossword solving weekend during winter months
- Make audio recordings of some events.
- Having themed evenings for working weekends during the winter months