

Updates by Tim:

This meeting is for informing members on site and for listening to them.

For Tim and the Staff the summer season is different to other times at Othona Bradwell:

While members take on more responsibilities, which is an advantage, Tim feels some sort of “loss of control” – it is good to know about that. There are only 3 Staff members and some volunteers to help outside main community times. Like in the main season they enjoy helping all groups and members to experience “work, worship, study and play”.

We get funding from Erasmus and EVS (again for 2020, from February onwards – in spite of Brexit).

All those and other volunteers contribute a lot to Othona.

Financially we are enjoying a “healthy surplus” for the year just passed – in spite of over £5,000 used to support those, who cannot afford to pay full rates.

The restoration of the hut in the lower field will cost about £40,000. Apart from a £10,000 donation from the Bradwell wind farm and more sources, we were pleased to hear that quite a few donations have come in since our last Answer Back Meeting.

Othona pays about £2,000 per month for gas in the winter. With the help of advisors we might change to using a bio-mass-boiler, possibly saving 80-90% of the costs.

We are planning the next stage of further developments on the Motley building and the Bank.

Questions and statements by all present:

1. When we plan “on suite rooms” for our developments, will we gain more old and disabled members? If we need to put up rates for those rooms, will we lose members with less income, who are too shy to ask for a bursary?
Tim hopes that we will maintain the rates for community times.
2. What do we do with our Othona gardens? Jonney & volunteers are helping a lot. Tim admitted that gardening is not his favourite pastime, but he really enjoys the fruit & veg we harvest.
3. Gardening can be viewed as caring for nature.
4. Our meal-times at Bradwell seem to have shrunk as many people clean and clear stuff away too soon. Most thought chairs should not go up while people are eating and there should be 10-20 minutes for talking after the meal has been finished.
5. We should also try to sit with different members every mealtime.
6. Maldon District Council stopped taking separate waste some year ago, as it is cheaper to send out one dust car at the time and sort it afterwards to a degree that they don't need land fills. We try to separate compost and card board to reduce our amount of waste. We also take grass cut at St.Cedd Caravan Site to improve our compost.
7. Many prefer Othona not to have noisy animals (e.g. cockerels) – the pigeons are already loud enough.
8. How can we stop expensive tools getting lost – e.g. a kitchen knife for £60, which got “lost” in the normal cutlery? Locking it away, only cooks putting it away?
9. How can we support “Fridays for Future” (started by Greta Thunberg)? Can we reduce our plastic waste? Can we set examples for the world? Will we be more attractive for younger people, if we try harder?

Tim tries to buy bulk stuff loose in bags or sacks. This is more difficult with smaller quantities, which get delivered by e.g. TESCO, who also serve other customers in and around Bradwell and are more economic using one van only.

10. Our 25l battery water containers already get recycled.
11. Many agreed we should follow our green image, also for attracting and supporting more people, who try to live environmentally friendly.
12. Othona is open to discussions and wants to help everyone to live environmentally friendly.
13. This week we e.g. had fewer cars in our car park in spite of quite a few members staying.
14. It might perhaps be nice to define "work times" and "leisure times" more clearly to make members feel "less guilty" when they relax on the Stoep?
15. This Friday we should be helpful and assist the expensive film team, while they are using many of us and some of our scenery as part of a movie about the Garden of Eden.

And might be nice to remember what was said at the end of our last meeting:

Othona is bigger than our own personal experience. It's a great experience, no matter whether you stayed for 5 days, 2 years or a life time (words said by 3 members at the end)