

## The Othona Community, Summer 2024.

Summer sun started late, but just in time for a wonderful Summer Season at the Othona Community. The International Week was a great celebration of different cultures – and delicious cooking. The shooting stars of the Perseids (also known as the Tears of St Lawrence because they are visible on the day of his martyrdom, August 10th) gave us a nighttime spectacle, as by day we were listening to fascinating, if somewhat complex lectures by Roger Noble, Othona member and astronomer at Jodrell Bank Centre for Astrophysics. A very different week followed, with Machteld Teekens getting the Community in creative mood for Art Week. After a Bank Holiday Weekend of Sea, Sunshine and Tranquility, the Summer Season's final offering was "Nature's Chronicles" led by Christina Ravinet; and where better to follow nature than in the increasingly diverse habitats sustained by Othona volunteers, (that could include you.) Our current longer term French volunteers, Quentin and Lou, have been with us for nearly two months and are a great addition to the team, alongside many new and returning summer Team Volunteers.

On 17<sup>th</sup> August Othona held an Open Bradwell, Centre Committee Meeting, an annual opportunity for all to participate in the nuts and bolts of the Centre. Held in person and on line, the current Committee under the Chair of Rev. Steve Barnes reported on a good record of Health and Safety, our ongoing excellent standard of Food Hygiene, and a sound financial performance, with a reminder that we still have a shortfall of several thousand pounds in our Yurt Refurbishment Fund, with thanks to those who have already made generous contributions; and the imminent necessity to fund the replacement of our ancient and failing septic tank system. There are also concerned discussions about the inadequacy of the accommodation for the resident Core and Volunteers – more at a later date.

The Programme is put together – and delivered – by volunteers, and we were asked for suggestions of anyone we knew who might offer a week or weekend on any topic relevant to Othona. The Othona-wide website is in process of being updated – watch that space! "Membership" is also under review, but in everyday terms a member of Othona is anyone who shares time at the place, and in the spirit, of Othona, including many from our local villages. The meeting was attended by Clare Gough, Chair of the Othona Community trustees. Clare is standing down from this role at our October AGM, for health reasons, and was warmly thanked for her guidance and commitment to Othona over the past six years. If you, or anyone you know, are interested in taking over that responsibility, please look at the Othona website for more information.

As our founder Norman Motley wrote in October 1973, and still just as relevant in September 2024: **"There is immense need. We have material potential. We shall need more than ever the dedication and commitment of old and new members of the Community. Where do you stand?"**

Although the Summer Season is ending, Othona never sleeps, either at Bradwell or our sister Community in west Dorset. No rest for the Centre Team, as they will soon be hosting other groups, starting with the Quaker Voluntary Action Working Retreat to be held at the Othona Community in September. If you know of any groups or organisations who would like to spend time at Othona, please enquire, or see the Website for "Othona for Educational Groups."

**See the website, or pick up a leaflet, for the 2024 Programme:** Here are activities for the early autumn – resident and day visitors are welcome to book:

**"Place, Space and Map Making" Workshop from Mon 16 – Fri 20 Sept with Sandie Cottee.**

**Harvest Working weekend Fri 11=Sun 13 Oct**, our most popular Working Weekend.

**Autumn Retreat Fri 18 – Sun 20 Oct**, with Revd. Emma Wylie.

Debbie and Richard Sanders are our Wardens, supported by resident team Phil, Peter, Amanda, George and JP, and volunteers. Website: [www.othonaessex.org.uk](http://www.othonaessex.org.uk), contact [bradwell@othona.org](mailto:bradwell@othona.org), telephone 01621 776564, or visit via the wind-powered electric gate, collect an exit token to leave.