

Reviewing the Bradwell Business Plan, 2006 – 2011 from the perspective of February 2008.

On 11 September 2006 the trustees gave “their enthusiastic support to the Bradwell Business Plan as outlined by Ruth Bull.” The Business Plan, including 14 topic leaflets which set out targets in particular areas for 2006 – 2007, was sent to every member in early 2007. Some targets have been met, others not. Things have moved on and members need to know where the Community stands in relation to the Business Plan. We are not bound by it – it is a plan which the trustees supported at that time. The vision for Bradwell which is set out so well on the first page stands, but the working out of that vision which follows needs to be re-assessed.

Taking the targets in the topic leaflets in turn will help to paint a picture of where Bradwell is in 2008 – where targets were met, where they no longer seem appropriate, and what actions are to be taken in 2008-9.

1. A sound financial future.

Open Community bed-nights in 2007 were up on 2006, but not by 5%. Outside bookings were up by more than 20%. The operating deficit was slightly reduced in 2007. Much more Community support for Open Community times and for working weekends needs to be developed, together with more outside bookings.

2 Raising funds for our future.

Fund-raising from grant-making bodies, although pursued energetically by Roo Bull, only raised £10,000. An early 2007 estimate for grid electricity installation came out at the lower figure of £60 – 65,000. To date fund-raising, largely from members and including the £10,000, has raised a little over half that sum. The trustees in September 2007 stated their determination to make grid electricity for Bradwell one of their priorities during 2008. Plans to replace the Bank in the near future were put on hold by the trustees.

3. Our outreach and marketing plan.

A new Othona leaflet was produced for use in both centres, and Bradwell produced a schools leaflet. Many new groups have used Bradwell,, including some working with people under stress.

4. Our building and renewal plan

Not enough money has yet been raised for grid electricity, but a good fund-raising group is working on it. Although phase 1 (the replacement of the Bank) is on hold (while the Bank common room continues to be widely used), informal discussions about phase 2 (extending the accommodation block) have begun.

5. And the Christian churches

Quakers and Salvation Army, as well as Anglican groups, are using the centre, and contact with key people is being made by the Centre Manager who is on the ecumenical Pilgrimage Committee. No special churches leaflet seems necessary.

6. In our Multi-Faith Society

Bradwell continues, as before, to welcome people of all faiths and none, and the 2008 summer programme has a week with a speaker/leader living and working in multi-faith Luton. However, deliberate targeting of other faith groups does not seem appropriate at this point.

7.As an international centre

Apart from our pre-existing international membership, Bradwell is in 2008 extending the number of weeks when it hosts an international group of workers through Volunteer Action for Peace.

A particular effort will be made in 2008 to make contact with East London church groups working with asylum seekers and refugees to see what Bradwell could offer. No special leaflet is needed at this point.

8. An inclusive community

Bradwell continues, as before, to be inclusive of those with disabilities. The path to the car park has been improved for wheelchair use. Any future building plans will, of course, bear those with physical disabilities in mind.

9. For solitude, peace and renewal

Bradwell is not a retreat centre – in particular it has, at present, hardly any single rooms. However, individuals are coming for a few days of peace, ‘doing their own thing’ alongside day groups, or even residential groups. A leaflet is planned making clear that this is on offer.

10. As an intentional community

David, Gail and Matthew have now gelled as a little community at the heart of Bradwell and no other paid staff are currently envisaged. The numbers of committed volunteers for working weekends, and as wardens and cooks during Open Community times, is slowly growing but needs to grow still more. The large number standing for election to the committee this year is a positive sign.

11. For special events and celebrations

From outside, 2008 saw one large 50th birthday party and will see several weddings. From within the Community, David and Martin celebrated their civil partnership and Gail and Matthew will celebrate their wedding. Birthdays regularly warrant a cake during Open Community weeks – but that is nothing new.

12. and its concern for the environment

In addition to care for land, trees and water, and operating, as far as possible, a green purchasing policy, Bradwell is applying to the East of England Development Agency for a grant to help it to continue to operate in as green a way as possible, and to build a phase 2 accommodation block which has excellent green credentials.

13. ...and its Open Community weeks.

An evaluation form is now always available for those who stay and the small number of returns have been used in planning for the following season. Weekly open meetings during the summer have played their part in future planning. New speakers/theme leaders have been invited and new approaches to catering for children have been explored. No extra ‘Open Weekends’, but individuals and families (not often members) are beginning to use the Centre, between bookings, sometimes on a self-catering basis, just to ‘get away from it all’.

14. ...for children and young people

Outreach to church youth groups, scouts, and schools is developing and new families are coming to Community Weeks. Plans for a youth common room are on hold while mains electricity and more sleeping accommodation take priority. The youth member of the old committee began to network young members. The new committee will seek ways of carrying that good work on.

Review carried out by Sheila Maxey on behalf of the trustees.
February 2008 with 13. and 14. added in March.

