

Committee Matters

Though the Othona AGM is still 6 months away, nomination forms for members of centre committees will be circulated with the Spring Full Circle and details of nominees published in the summer edition. Under the new election rules, Sheila Leys and I will have served our 1½ year term and are due to stand down. Kate Mulkern will also be standing down as she is due to start studying for a Masters Degree in September.

Warden & Core

Gail and Matthew Dell were warmly welcomed by the committee and Rosie Sinden-Evans spoke for us all when she expressed her gratitude that they have agreed to take over the running of the centre from David. The trustees have decided to reinstate the title of Warden in order to re-establish a focus on the community-building role rather than the commercial. Gail and Matthew are comfortable with this as they very much want to be part of the community and fully involved in activities at the centre. They also plan to establish a core team with three additional people to help with the running of the centre. One would be a long term appointment able to stand in as Warden, the second would be a permanent post and the third a temporary post during the main season from May/June to September. Posts will be advertised in Full Circle and on the website. One consequence of these changes is that the perceived division between "community time" and "commercial bookings" no longer applies in the same way and the committee will need to take a stronger role in promoting the community to achieve an increase in bookings throughout the year.

Trustees

Rupert Bragg, the new link trustee for Bradwell, outlined the financial position explaining that the position of Warden had been defined in order to harmonise the organisational structure at both centres. This change does mean that the running costs for the centre are significantly reduced, but the budget set for the year still shows a trading loss of £5K based on current expected levels of bookings. However, with some effort to improve usage of the centre, break-even now seems to be an achievable target, though cyclical costs will need to be included in the future.

Worship

Claire Guillot presented a revised version of the terms of reference for the group, placing the emphasis on the central place of worship in the life of the community and noting the importance of passing on the much-loved traditions of Othona worship to the next generation of Othona members as well as exploring the riches of worship from other Christian traditions and faiths.

Programme Planning

Gail informed the committee that she would be happy to open the centre a week earlier than planned to give a summer season of seven weeks instead of six. This will give more scope for a better mixture of speaker and activity based weeks during the summer and will help visitors from the continent, many of whom have school summer holidays earlier than the UK holidays. Further details will be advertised via Full Circle and the website. Since the school holiday dates to August 2010 are already available, it was agreed to begin planning the 2010 programme now up to the end of the summer season. It was agreed that this will also be based on a seven week summer season and it is proposed to produce a preview flyer ready for distribution in the first weekend in July at the Bradwell Pilgrimage.

Volunteering

It was proposed that, in order to prevent confusion, the summer weekly wardens will henceforth be referred to as the Volunteer Team Leader. Gail or whoever is acting warden for the week will also give the Wardens talk in future. The team support role will be used to allow potential team leaders to learn the ropes as well as fill the gaps in the team.

Maintenance

Good progress was made during the weekend on many fronts, especially clearing the pond of parrot weed and removing the carpet of nettle roots from the reed beds. VAP projects are likely to be based on ground works this year, hopefully in preparation for the new building if the EEDA funding bid is successful.

Fund Raising

The committee welcomed action taken to date to keep the membership informed with regard to the change of plans regarding grid connections. Substantial donors have been written to explaining the proposed plans. The FRC have identified a need for some work to be done to develop and improve the marketing of the centre.