

Bradwell Development Committee – Report for the Othona Special General Meeting - 26th November 2005.

This report is a summary of the current position held by the Bradwell Development Committee (BDC) after four meetings. The report is to inform people of how we have progressed, as well as to stimulate further discussion. We will be reporting on plans for Othona at Bradwell from 2006 onwards, its mission and role, new management structure, charging policy, improvements to our built environment, and Easter re-opening. Our thinking has been shaped by many factors including the Vision Meetings held in the summer, visits made by members of the committee to other communities, our own experiences of Othona, conversations with members, individual research on specific matters and a great deal of discussion among ourselves.

We have focused on a range of issues. Some of them have been discussed in depth; others have been raised, noted and require substantial further work. Some matters are still waiting in the wings. Where it is possible, at this stage, to make recommendations, we do so.

These recommendations will inform the decisions to be made by Trustees so it is vital that the Community as a whole is moving in the same direction. In speaking to the Community today we have distilled the central themes from our writings and debates. If you would like further information you are welcome to contact Roo Bull, tel. 01621 776565 or email ruth@bull49.freeserve.co.uk.

The committee members are as follows. Each has taken on a particular area of responsibility indicated in brackets after their name, and the name of the community they visited listed after that.

Andrew Pears, (Chair) Netherurd Guide Centre, Blythe Bridge, Scotland.
Roo Bull, (Deputy Chair,) Scargill Christian Community, Kettlewell, Yorkshire.
Robbie Spence, (Communications,) Bhaktivedanta Manor, Hare Krishna, Watford.
David Seckleman, (Youth,) Bruderhof Community.
Barbara Dyer, (Community Contacts) Hengrave and Taize.
Rupert Bragg, (Management,) Quiet Waters Christian Community, Bungay, Suffolk
Trevor Darley, (Built Environment,) Lee Abbey Christian Community, Devon.
Ann Froggatt (Secretary and Co-ordination) Community at Henley on Thames

On two occasions we have been joined by Rev. Brian Woodcock from Iona Community and on one occasion by the Rev Margaret and Rev Laurence Whitford the recently appointed Rectors of Bradwell.

The committee has met on 10th Sept, 8th Oct, 5th and 26th Nov. 2005.

Summary and Conclusions

1. On the Role of Bradwell

- There is no question that Bradwell has an important role to play and a sustainable future as a centre of the Othona Community where individuals, families and groups are included in Christian Community.
- That the following message, displayed at the centre, is as relevant and realistic as a mission statement now as it has ever been.

“Welcome to Othona. Here we meet together to explore the joys and pitfalls of living in community - individuals and families from this country and abroad. Founded in 1946, Othona has a Christian basis but is not exclusive: amongst its active members are people who cannot share a Christian faith. In a simple lifestyle of Work, Worship, Study and Play we try to break down barriers of race, creed, age, gender and disability. You are welcome to visit. We invite you to enjoy and respect the peaceful environment. We have another centre at Burton Bradstock, Dorset.”

2. On the Management of the Centre

1. That the day to day administration of Bradwell should be the responsibility of a full time professional manager reporting directly to the Trustees
2. That the manager should be supported by a full time deputy manager.
3. In addition there should be a group of community co-ordinators with responsibility for key areas of community management. These positions will offer opportunities for longer term involvement in the community.
4. That the role of volunteers is central to the Othona philosophy and we have a duty to ensure that volunteers are:
 - Cared for and supported so that their Othona experience is enriched by volunteering
 - Managed in accordance with all current health and safety legislation
 - Given appropriate training

3. On Bradwell for 2006

1. We propose that Othona Bradwell will reopen at Easter 2006, involving the whole community in the immense task ahead, and optimising all our available resources.
2. For 2006 Othona at Bradwell should have a number of designated Open Community weeks, with a varied programme of speakers and working weeks or weekends.
3. The programme and community structure for these weeks should be handled and planned by the newly elected Bradwell Executive Committee working with the Centre Manager.

4. The Manager will be actively engaged in filling the Centre.
5. There may be scope in these weeks for the planned involvement of Othona volunteers.
6. In 2007 we should aim to increase the number of Open Community weeks.

4. On the Facilities at Bradwell

The immediate priorities:

1. That some upgrading is required to the present buildings and facilities to keep up with current regulations and meet the needs of people who stay at Othona. This will include a “makeover” of bedrooms and public areas, increased office space, and general improvement to the outside appearance and landscaping.
2. That the bank building is not useable as residential accommodation, although the public areas and facilities may be used at present.
3. That mains electricity should be brought in to the site.
4. That at Bradwell we should strive to be environmentally sensitive in all that we do.
5. That our development works will require a major commitment to fund-raising by our whole community.

The longer term proposals:

1. That we plan the demolition of the Bank and replacement of accommodation and facilities now beyond repair.
2. That we repair/replace outbuildings as appropriate.
3. That we complete the cost-benefit analysis of building phases 2 and 3 in consultation with the Community.

5. On the mission of Bradwell

1. We should design major new initiatives to engage with those in need, young people, and the wider community
2. We would like to develop the opportunity for Bradwell to offer training to people in running community which is an Object of the Community as contained in the Trust Deed.
3. We would like to see ongoing development of understanding, exchange of ideas and movement of people between the two centres of the Othona Community.

6. On the Community experience of Bradwell

- Inspired by Norman Motley and his co-founders, we have our roots in post-war ecumenism and reconciliation.
- St Peter’s on the Wall Chapel is our spiritual and physical centre at Bradwell, with the Othona buildings nearby.

- The Othona community is an ever-changing body of people who have visited or stayed at one of the Centres and been moved by the experience.
- Life in the Community appears to happen spontaneously – but is in fact bound by vital principles, practices and structures which require considerable organisation and sensitivity.
- It is essential there is a clear and recognised structure to support, help and nurture this spontaneity, and to recognise and address problems as they arise.
- All who come to Bradwell must recognise the need to embrace the rules of the community as well as abide by the laws of the land.
- The heart of Othona is Christian Community. We wish to welcome people of all faiths or none; and it is in this spirit that everyone is invited to share Work, Worship, Study and Play.

6. On charging

- There should be a simple and clear advance booking system with non refundable deposits for those seeking overnight accommodation.
- We should consider a minimum stay requirement at times when the Centre is likely to be fully booked.
- Charging should be realistic, to pay the bills and support sustainable development of Othona for the next generation. We recognise that visitor rates will have to increase over the next 3-5 years to meet the real cost of sustaining and developing the Othona Community in its purpose at Bradwell.
- We realise that while over 56% of adults staying the summer paid the concessionary rate, Bradwell, as our visits to other communities have shown is exceptionally low in its charging. The feelings and thoughts of what we should charge and how to strike a balance between economics and charity are likely to inspire further community discussion in successive years as Trustees decide how to balance the books.

7. How the Development Committee is working.

We set out targets to work on behalf of the Community to achieve the following objectives for Bradwell:

- a) To develop and propose a strategy for running the Bradwell centre for the next ten years.
- b) To commission all works necessary to implement this strategy, and ensure they are carried out, with the aim of re-opening the centre next Easter.
- c) To put in place a system, with authority and clear reporting lines, to monitor and support the new strategy.

This report from the BDC has set out the areas of development we considered and the recommendations we are making now, on:

- The Mission and role of Bradwell, and the Community experience;
- A new Management structure for the Centre;
- Realistic charging to balance the books;
- New beginnings in 2006 - Othona opening its Bradwell Centre at Easter, with a varied programme including Open Community times and times when Othona will be offered to groups;
- Better facilities at Bradwell to maintain and improve our permanent buildings and develop and sustain our accommodation and environment for future generations.

We have an outline action plan with target time-scales for development; it is an action plan, regularly revised and updated – if anyone wants a copy of the latest version please ask for email or printed copies. Other available papers include the Job Description and Person Specification for the Bradwell Centre Manager; the Management Reporting lines; the fuller Report of the BDC entitled “OTHONA COMMUNITY Bradwell – Firm Foundations for the Next Generation;” “Youth at Othona Bradwell;” Developmental Suggestions for Community Contacts; and notes and reports on BDC members’ visits to other communities.

Outline action plan – the working document of the Bradwell Development Committee - updated November 2005.

| Task – Time-scale | Action | Involvement |
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| <p>November 2005 Outline management structure.</p> <p>Jan. '06.</p> | <p>Finalise Job Description, Person Specification, salary/cost implications and advertisement for Manager. Place advertisement.</p> <p>Outline Job Purposes for other areas of responsibility.</p> | <p>Rupert, Ruth, then Andrew + Trustees for approval and recruitment.</p> |
| <p>From Nov. 2005, promotional literature for recruitment and 2006 bookings, stating Othona's purpose and its work through the Bradwell Centre.</p> | <p>Leaflets required on: <i>Othona background, vision and aims. Welcome to Othona in 2006. Othona for your Retreat, Conference or Group. Othona for young people's groups.....etc.</i></p> | <p>To be delegated to BDC Members to lead in their specialist areas.</p> |
| <p>Nov. 2005 - decision on building works required pre-Easter 2006, and within 2 yrs, 4 yrs, 10yrs.</p> <p>Dec. 2005 complete briefs and specifications and seek estimates.</p> | <p>Pre-Easter 2006 works to be detailed, estimated, contractors selected and works completed, e.g.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> >"Makeover" of New Buildings. > Create additional office. >Install mains electricity with necessary rewiring. >Repair/replace outbuildings as appropriate. >Plan and carry out interim works to Bank. <p>Plan demolition of Bank and replacement of accommodation and facilities now beyond repair.</p> <p>Complete cost-benefit analysis of phases 2 and 3.</p> | <p>Andrew, Trevor, Roo and technical advisors e.g. Suzanne Kelly, Dougal McGregor.</p> <p>Later phases require consultation with the Community.</p> <p>Fund raising, promotion and marketing are integral to this aspect of development.</p> |
| <p>Nov/Dec. 2005 set budget for 2006, set out operating budget for 3 years and outline for capital budget for 5 years with priorities, costs and estimates for each item.</p> <p>Set realistic rates for staying.</p> | <p>Set realistic Trading budget with reference to previous budgets and to the 2005 summer. Plan in cost of Warden, Deputy and Community Co-ordinators.</p> <p>Set realistic charges for different phases of the annual Programme. Develop Capital budget for the next 5 years based on programme of growth</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> >Rupert, Ruth and all with reference to Community Visits and Sandra's research into costs of similar venues. >Trustees to set priorities budgets and visitor rates. >Link to fund-raising, centrally and through fund-raising activities. |

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| Nov/Dec 2005 set out any necessary new Policies. | Youth Policy and Action Plan from David's report. Group Policy and Action Plan from Roo, Barbara and Ann's report. Any other policies we need to make changes work e.g. IT-Bookings, Payments and Data Collection. | David Seckleman with working group. Roo Barbara Ann with working group. Richard A, Roger P, Christine C, Peter F-R, Gray, David H-B etc. |
| Nov '05 /Jan '06 Roles of Trustees and Exec. | Action Plan for developing constructive relationship between Trustees, Executive and Bradwell Management. | Andrew, Trustees and Working Group. |
| Nov/Dec 2005 Plan 2006 Programme. Look at whole year, with Open Programme times. Link with Volunteer Plan and Manager's plans in due course. | Organise speakers for planned Open Programme times; prepare programme to go out in January 2006. Base wider Programme on the outline proposed in the paper from Barbara Ann and Roo. | Volunteers from BDC with Paul Seckleman, current Programme Co-ordinator. |
| Dec. 2005 onwards - active promotion and marketing. | Re-contact groups who have come to Bradwell recently or expressed an interest. Cast nets widely for potential groups e.g. from Pleshey, Hengrave, Quakers, other church and educational contacts as per Trust Deed. Place adverts. | Volunteers from local networks e.g. people in our local churches; contacts established through Kevin Bruce, Sandra, Tim. (Needs leader pending Manager.) |
| End Jan. '06 | Interview and offer post to Centre Manager. May also appoint Deputy and/or Chaplain from this recruitment round. | Trustees with representative designated recruitment panel possibly with specialist recruitment agency. |
| Early 2006 with new Manager – start links with key groups, and fill some gaps in wider Programme. | Link with organisers of people who may need Othona at Bradwell – e.g. Red Cross for Victim Support; Social Services for People with Learning Disabilities; Army Chaplaincy Service/Welfare Officers for support of ex-military or those under stress; Children in need, Multi-Faith groups. | Manager with Co-ordinators; and Bradwell Executive to work together to plan and develop a realistic programme of Othona's work through the Bradwell Centre. Build into the Annual Programme. (? Barbara, Roo, David initially.) |
| Centre Staff recruitment by Centre Manager with designated recruitment panel. | Manager with Trustee guidance, to plan and recruit staff to meet current requirements within budget. | Bradwell Manager and Line Manager. |