



Othona

WEST DORSET

Programme of Events **May 2019 to Jan 2020**

- **Retreats**
- **Workshops**
- **Family holidays**
- **A welcoming community**
- **A spirituality open to all faiths and none**



“Othona is such a precious and crucial part of our family life. I’ve had the joy of watching my children flourish and grow here.”

“A balance of solitude, companionship and beauty – grounded once more!”



“It’s different from anywhere else... the vibe, the feeling in the air, the sense of peace emanating from the walls.”

Mission Statement: Othona is an open and inclusive Community rooted in the Christian tradition and drawing on a wealth of other inspirations. We welcome people of all ages, abilities, backgrounds and beliefs to our two centres on the quiet coasts of Essex and Dorset. Through sharing in a daily rhythm of work, learning, worship and play, we seek personal renewal and glimpses of the sacred. In community we explore the relationship between faith and life and encourage one another in caring for the world and its people. Founded in 1946, Othona is registered charity number 1154204.

Rooted in the Christian heritage... open to the widening future

this centre is one of two operated by the Othona Community

A PLACE

West Dorset is rich in history, wildlife and culture – a joy to visit, but not ruined by tourism. We occupy 7 acres of gloriously untamed grounds on an unspoilt stretch of coast.

In Community House you’ll find simple but comfortable accommodation, with wide sea views and a homely log fire. The beach is 15 minutes walk away through National Trust meadows.

A PLACE TO BE

Othona is a great place just to be. Leave the stress of your daily life behind. Let go of a few responsibilities. Relax in surroundings that lift your spirit.

Wake each morning to birdsong from the woods that surround us. Fall asleep to the rhythm of waves on the beach below.

A PLACE TO BE REAL

In this beautiful setting many people find a surprising quality of acceptance. When image and status don’t matter, we’re free to be who we are, without judgment or expectations. Free to look within and recognise, perhaps, parts of ourselves that have lain dormant.

A PLACE TO BE REAL TOGETHER

So you relax. The real you finds breathing space. And maybe you will also discover a rare depth of connection with other people.

Othona’s a place with lots of unforced laughter, easy sharing of each other’s life stories, and not a few unembarrassed tears. This is a taste of community – something so often missing in today’s world. (All spiritual traditions recognise this. One Christian name for it is the fellowship of the Holy Spirit.)

Our hope is that this experience carries over as a practical blessing in your everyday life.

For some **Frequently Asked Questions** see page 9

Prices and Reductions

Since 2018 we have been charging a Single Supplement (based on £10 a night) if you need the guarantee of a room on your own and can't consider sharing. We do this to keep Othona viable as the demand for single rooms grows.

You'll find a number of events charged at special bargain prices, with varied reductions for families with children. For any event (except Roll Up Your Sleeves) you can opt for the bursary-assisted price – usually 25% below our standard charges. You are welcome to apply for it, whether or not you have asked for a single room. If you need further financial assistance please contact us in confidence to discuss. To help us afford bursaries we welcome donations on top of what we invoice you for!

If you arrive late or leave early we usually charge for the full event – unless explicitly agreed otherwise in advance.

Honouring Our Sacred Self

27 Apr (Sat 10.00-5.00)

A holistic retreat day to revive body, heart and soul with yoga teacher **Sian Alcock**. Welcome to a day where we can step away from our busy lives as we gently and mindfully open ourselves to a day of nurturing, rejuvenation and healing. Gentle yoga is a part of it, and you don't need previous experience - total beginners are welcome. (See also 23 November)

www.sacredshores.net £58, LUNCH INCLUDED, OR £63 IF BOOKING IN FINAL 2 WEEKS.
ALL ENQUIRIES / BOOKINGS THROUGH SIAN ON 07527 052273 OR SIAN.SACREDSHORES@GMAIL.COM

Annual Quiet Day: Seeing the work of God in the world around us

2 May (Thurs 10.00-4.00)

The Quiet Day (organised with the Othona Meditation Group) is led this year by **Br Clark Berge SSF**. It offers a day of quiet interspersed with short reflections on the theme and ending with a simple eucharist. PLEASE BRING A PACKED LUNCH – SOUP, TEA AND COFFEE ARE PROVIDED. £8 PAYABLE ON ARRIVAL – NO BOOKINGS

Discover the Enneagram

3-6 May (Fri-Bank Hol Mon pm)

The Enneagram is a dynamic, ancient, spiritual and psychological model of humanity. It describes the nine basic human personality types, in both their spiritual and psychological aspects. Giving extraordinarily accurate insight into our day-to-day behaviour, preoccupations, strengths and weaknesses and those of our friends, colleagues and lovers, it also indicates each person's most fruitful approach to personal and spiritual growth. **Karen Webb** is a superb facilitator and teacher, and author of *Principles of the Enneagram*.

www.theenneagram.co.uk £249 (SINGLE SUPPLEMENT £279)

"Amazing place, excellent event, groovy folks, way cool!"

Yoga Retreat: a chance to delve more deeply 10-12 May (Fri-Sun pm)

A yoga retreat with **Debs Albon** - not for the total beginner but good for anyone with experience of regular yoga practice. It offers a combination of postures, breathing, and meditation, as well as time to rest and explore a beautiful part of the world. Debs is an experienced Hatha yoga teacher and also a pregnancy yoga teacher. Her previous weekends at Othona had such positive responses that we are delighted she can return now. (See also 27-29 Sept) £152 (SINGLE SUPPLEMENT £172)

The Good Life?

15-19 May (Wed-Sun pm)

The perfect practical experience of glorious May in West Dorset. Spot our wild orchids, learn how to gather plants that make delicious healthy teas, experience the dawn chorus and 'meet the moths' in the company of a nationally-known expert. You can lend a hand in the garden, polytunnel or veg beds, visit a local permaculture project, treat your tastebuds at a local food festival. With Othona groundsman/beekeeper **Mark James** and wildlife author/broadcaster **Dominic Couzens** (for the dawn chorus morning only – see below).

This new event is launched at the bargain rate of 4 nights for the price of 3 (with £12 extra for the dawn chorus option payable on the day) £165 (SINGLE SUPPLEMENT £195)

Dawn Chorus, Mothwatch and Full English!

17 May (Fri 5.00 am – 9.00 am)

As first light strengthens, the woods and hedgerows around Othona come alive with birdsong. First timer or regular birdwatcher, you'll find **Dominic Couzens** a superb guide to this everyday miracle of the Spring. He is a renowned wildlife author and broadcaster, with encyclopaedic knowledge and a very engaging style. He'll also introduce us to whatever mammals and moths visited overnight (all weather permitting). And then we share a slap-up cooked breakfast, finishing by 9.30 am. More about Dominic: www.birdwords.co.uk

£18 PAYABLE IN ADVANCE OR ON ARRIVAL (BOOKING ESSENTIAL)

Bags of Creativity: mindful recycling through sewing

24-26 May (Fri-Sun pm)

Swim against the tide of our throwaway society! Learn how to turn used curtain material into gorgeous bags for shopping or storage. This kind of 'creative making' in good company is bags of fun too! Guiding the activity will be Othona's housekeeper **Kate Ross** and ace seamstress **Jane Parker**. Although sewing can be a contemplative activity in itself, this weekend you'll also have the option of simple mindfulness meditation sessions (you don't need any previous experience) led by much-loved local teacher Sue Howse (see also 31 Oct – 3 Nov). N.B. we invite you to bring a sewing machine you are familiar with, but it is not vital. Whatever your previous experience, this weekend guarantees you a bag made from recycled material to take home. Whilst the basic tuition and all materials are provided we welcome creativity that will no doubt come from you.

£115 (SINGLE SUPPLEMENT £135)

Camera, Lights, Action: Over the Moon! 29 May – 2 June (Wed-Sun am)

FAMILY BARGAIN BREAK – all children 0-18 free of charge

A fun family-friendly half term break in community. With a special project for anyone (young or old) who wants to get involved. We'll make one or more short films (3 minutes maximum) to enter in a local competition marking 50 years from the first moon landing. The subject has to be "The Moon" but how we approach it is totally up for grabs!

Coordinating the task will be experienced film-maker **Andy Howlett**. You can see some of his early and light-hearted Othona films on our website. So what will you contribute: ideas, words, acting, props, costumes, music, filming, editing? The competition will be judged by audience members at a film-and-concert evening in nearby Bridport on Sat 20 July – we might even win, but at least we'll have taken part. That's community!
£240 (SINGLE SUPPLEMENT £280)

Thomas Hardy Confidential: loves of his life? 12-16 June (Wed-Sun pm)

Thomas Hardy is known mostly for his powerful novels set here in Dorset. But what do you know of his literary first love, his poetry? And what about the 'secret' love affair of his youth that haunted and helped shape his writing for decades to come? We'll learn about these lesser-known aspects of Hardy from two experts, **Graham Fawcett** and **Nicholas Hillyard**. With walks and visits to the key places he lived, we can look forward to a fascinating fresh appreciation of a great writer and the people and places he immortalised.
£240 (SINGLE SUPPLEMENT £280)

Listening to the Green Heartbeat – a nature-based retreat

20-23 June (Thurs-Sun pm)

The natural world has a profound capacity to resonate with our human feeling states both energetically or through the symbolism that may be found e.g. in the changing seasons or the passage of night and day. Tuning-in to this can help us tune-in to ourselves. This retreat is facilitated by ecologist and psychotherapist **Dr Julie Walker**. It gives us the chance to explore how an enriched relationship with the natural world can benefit our sense of well-being, at a spiritual, emotional as well as physical level.

Most sessions will be outside in the grounds and surrounding area (weather permitting). The retreat is group based but offers space and time for each to explore individually what it means to encounter Nature in an intentional, contemplative way. In chapel there will be time to reflect on readings that express and explore our relationship to Nature and to ourselves, drawn from writings of John O'Donohue, nature writing, ecopsychology and spirituality.

More about Julie: www.pathwayspsychotherapy.co.uk

£215 (SINGLE SUPPLEMENT £245)

"Surely the greatest service station on life's motorway. I leave refreshed, refuelled and ready for my journey to tomorrow. I shall hold for a long time the love and care of a very special group."

Open Space with Tai Chi and Reading Aloud

25 June – 1 July (Tues-Mon am)

Open Space means a classic Othona relaxation week – spend time in community but with a minimal programme so you can pursue your own priorities (walking, reading, just chilling?) This time there will also be daily sessions of tai chi and qigong exercises with **David Talbot**. You don't need any previous experience to benefit from these graceful and mindful movement practices. David's teaching emphasises the health and relaxation benefits of Tai Chi rather than the martial arts aspects. Also once a day **Tony Jaques**, former Radio 4 broadcaster and now Othona warden, lets you sit back and be read to. Humour, poetry, inspiration, drama... are you sitting comfortably?
£260 (SINGLE SUPPLEMENT £310)

See, Love, Be: Mindfulness and the Spiritual Life 3-7 July (Wed-Sun pm)

A retreat with **Tim Stead** exploring how mindfulness practices can help us to cultivate a spiritual life, whatever our faith background. This retreat will be based on Tim's book, *See, Love, Be – mindfulness and the spiritual life* (SPCK 2018) which seeks to orient basic mindfulness practices towards the development of a spiritual life. Tim Stead (www.timsteadmindfulness.org) is an accredited mindfulness teacher and associate of the Oxford Mindfulness Centre (www.oxfordmindfulness.org). He offers this retreat designed for people of all faith traditions (and those who don't identify with any tradition).
£300 (NO SINGLE SUPPLEMENTS APPLY)

Families Week 1

27 July – 2 Aug (Sat-Fri am)

These weeks at Othona give families the space to create together their own ideas of fun and shared activities, without any pre-determined theme. Lifelong friendships often begin on a week like this. All within the inclusive and caring atmosphere of the Othona Community. Fuller details of this week to be confirmed.

£300 (ss £360) 11-18: £195 3-10: £132 BUT ELDEST OF 2 OR MORE CHILDREN (3-18) FREE

Families Week 2

3-9 Aug (Sat-Fri am)

Details and prices as for Families Week 1.

Peaceful Warriors

10-16 Aug (Sat-Fri am)

A family week with a difference. Sun Tzu said *"The wise warrior avoids the battle."* And Dan Millman: *"Unless someone truly has the power to say No they never truly have the power to say Yes."* In this ever more complex world, how do we teach our children to stay safe peacefully? This week for families will help us all become 'peaceful warriors', alongside all the usual fun, relaxation and friendship of Othona. Join **Iain Russell**, **Julie Leoni** and **Clare Cohen** to explore physical and psychological ways of navigating different scenarios through games and reflection, so that we can all go into the world as peaceful warriors. Between them, your facilitators for the week have many years of experience in self-defence, martial arts, psychology and facilitation. And they and their own children love Othona!
£300 (ss £360) 11-18: £195 3-10: £132 BUT ELDEST OF 2 OR MORE CHILDREN (3-18) FREE

Circle Dance Delights

19-23 Aug (Mon-Fri am)

Gorgeous music and spirited group dances from all round the world, some slow and meditative, others more energetic. **Kathryn Penny** is a brilliant dance teacher for beginner or aficionado alike. Non-dancing room-sharers also welcome.

£245 (SINGLE SUPPLEMENT £285)

Astronomy Week: Are We Alone?

24-30 Aug (Sat-Fri am)

A great week for anyone intrigued by the universe and human efforts to uncover its secrets. With professional astronomer **Roger Noble** who gives brilliantly illustrated talks and brings a powerful telescope for us all to try some practical astronomy.

This year's talks, as well as giving a general understanding of the cosmos, will ask "Are We Alone? If there is intelligent life elsewhere in the universe, how will we know?" At night we should get decent views of Saturn and Jupiter.

£300 (ss £360) 11-18: £195 3-10: £132 BUT ELDEST OF 2 OR MORE CHILDREN (3-18) FREE

Quiet Week

14-19 Sept (Sat-Thurs am)

Our Quiet Weeks give you plenty of unprogrammed space to use as you wish. But within the welcoming context of community meals, shared times in chapel and interesting company. They are not silent retreats, but certain times and places are kept talk-free. Our guide this time is **Tess Ward**, author of *The Celtic Wheel of the Year*, who says "We will be thinking about emptiness. When we feel empty it can be frightening and sad or it can be the ground of everything and the place of freedom. We will explore this in short morning and evening gatherings and as we share silence and quiet together in the beautiful space of Othona."

Single rooms are guaranteed this week (unless you specifically want to share). Home-cooked food with some meals in silence. A cosy library. A peaceful chapel. A long empty beach and good walking country. An accepting, creative community.

£340 (NO SINGLE SUPPLEMENTS APPLY)

Yoga Retreat: a chance to delve more deeply

27-29 Sept (Fri-Sun pm)

A retreat with **Debs Albon**. All details as for 10-12 May.

£152 (SINGLE SUPPLEMENT £172)

Silence by the Sea – Exploring the Wisdom Tradition

30 Sept – 3 Oct (Mon-Thurs pm)

A mainly silent retreat to help you draw on the revitalised spirituality that is now emerging afresh from the mystical heart of the faith traditions. You should have an existing meditation practice of some kind and a desire to go deeper. This retreat, whilst largely silent, will include inputs and mutual sharing as we explore the Wisdom traditions, along with daily periods of meditation and chants, mindful work, and time to appreciate the beautiful setting. Retreat leaders are **Janet Lake** and **Richard Sloan**, both inspired by the Wisdom Schools of Dr. Cynthia Bourgeault. N.B. this event starts with arrivals before lunch at 1.00. Before booking please contact our office for full details (or read them on our website).

£240 (NO SINGLE SUPPLEMENTS APPLY)

All bookings are non-transferable. We suggest you consider taking out insurance against loss due to cancellation.

BURSARY

I'm requesting a bursary. I will await your invoice before making a payment (please tick).

MAKING YOUR PAYMENT

Please fill in about payment below (unless you ticked above for a bursary), then sign over-page and return this form to us.

Either I am paying my deposit (non-transferable & non-refundable) of

Or I am paying the full charge (with or without single supplement) of

I enclose a donation (to help fund bursaries) of

I am making my payment by (tick whichever applies):

Bank Transfer (BACS) to The Othona Community, Account No. 20680303, Sort code 20-26-62

Please give the start date of the event as Reference Code (to link your payment to your booking)

Paypal. Please email bookings@othona-bb.org.uk with the amount you wish to pay and we will send you a Paypal money request by email (payable by card or Paypal account)

Cheque made out to The Othona Community

Other (please give details).....

£	
£	
£	
£	TOTAL:

NOW post this to: Bookings, Othona West Dorset, Coast Road, Burton Bradstock, Bridport DT6 4RN

OR scan and email to bookings@othona-bb.org.uk

You can print more copies of this form at www.othonawestdorset.org.uk/downloads

Othona reserves the right to change or cancel events as necessary.

Othona is registered charity number 1154204

BOOKING FORM

Please use a separate booking form for each person, unless you are applying as a couple or a family and paying together.



Othona
WEST DORSET

Event Title:

Arrival date:

Departure date:

Please tick if booking a **non-residential** place:

Your name(s):

Your date of birth:
(required for all please)

Gender:

- | | | |
|---------|---------|---------|
| 1. | 1. | M / F / |
| 2. | 2. | M / F / |
| 3. | 3. | M / F / |
| 4. | 4. | M / F / |
| 5. | 5. | M / F / |

Postal address:

Postcode:

Email:

Landline:

Mobile:

Emergency contact – who do we phone *in an emergency*? Landline *and* mobile if possible please.

Name:

Landline:

Mobile:

Are you willing to share?

 Yes Only if necessary No, I will pay the single supplement

For two booking together: Tick if you prefer A double bed (if available) Twin beds

We offer a limited number of single rooms for certain events. Early booking is always advisable if you're unable to share.

Do you have any special needs?

(physical, dietary, health-related, need/prefer ground floor room)

Please say if you eat no meat, no red meat, no fish etc. We cater at all times for vegetarians. Let us know about any allergy or other serious dietary restrictions. Community grows from the joy of shared meals prepared with love.

Is this your first time at Othona West Dorset? No Yes **If Yes**, how did you hear of us?

 Personal recommendation via Retreats.org site Retreat Guide or other publication via Othona publicity/caffet Google etc search Other:

We send occasional emails with news to those on our database. Please tick if you prefer **not** to receive any

DECLARATION

I am over 18 and agree to Othona's Terms and Conditions (cancellation details plus health and safety considerations) as in the brochure and at www.othonawestdorset.org.uk/booking/terms-and-conditions. I have filled in payment details overleaf.

Sign:

Date:

By ticking this box you agree to the booking conditions.

OUR CHARGES

Othona is a not-for-profit charity and is known as very affordable. Our standard adult rates reflect the real cost of your stay. They include accommodation, usually three home cooked meals a day and other refreshments, use of all our facilities, and all the input from speakers and facilitators. We think that's brilliant value. But if our prices are beyond you, please feel free to ask for help from our bursary funds.

As an inclusive Christian charity we welcome people who can't afford our usual charges. A bursary will reduce the cost to you – whether you need a single room or are prepared to share – typically by 25%. We handle all bursary requests confidentially. And (unlike many organisations) you don't need to prove anything to us. You don't have to be receiving state benefits, for instance. See page 2 for more about price rises, price drops and single supplements.

HOW TO PAY

To find the full cost of any event, look on the website or in our printed brochure. The charge rates for each event are listed below the event description. **For each event booked, we require a standard non-refundable deposit of £30 per person (excluding eldest child and 0-2 years old – who come free of charge).**

Are you booking more than 1 month ahead?

You need only send the non-refundable deposit. When we confirm your booking, we will tell you the amount still owing and when to pay it by. Alternatively, we welcome payment in full at the time of booking – it cuts down the paperwork all round.

Are you booking less than 1 month ahead?

Please send full payment now with your booking.

If you have to cancel we will refund a varying proportion of your payment:

More than 1 month ahead of the event start date:	all but the deposit
Less than 1 month, more than 1 week ahead:	50%
Less than 1 week ahead:	10%
On or after the start date:	nil

Roll Up Your Sleeves

15-20 Oct (Tues-Sun pm)

If you've never tried one of these weeks you may not realise how special they are. Ideal for practical people who like to lend a hand and do something worthwhile. Sharing jobs round the house and grounds we all get a real sense of achievement and camaraderie – working hard (up to 6 hours a day) but enjoying ourselves too with plenty of laughs and diversions. We aim to vary the jobs to suit all abilities. Unless our apple harvest fails, a major activity will be picking and juicing apples from our orchard.

For part of the week we *may* be welcoming visitors from Brittany (to be confirmed), here to take part in a mini-festival of food, music and dance in nearby West Bay. The celebrations take their cue from the 'Onion Johnnies' who used to sell Breton onions from their bicycles all round the UK. £80 (NO CONCS.)

Families Autumn Break

23-27 Oct (Wed-Sun am)

Our much-loved short break for families (and others) always offers fun and creative opportunities: walks, games, music-making etc. So there's no shortage of activities. But you'll find chances to rest too – quality time with your own family and relaxing with a mixed bunch of new friends. Othona gives a glorious break from the usual pressures of life, from digital distractions and from deadlines. And the eldest child in each family of two or more children comes free of charge! What's not to like? £210 (ss £250) 11-18: £133 3-10: £88 BUT ELDEST OF 2 OR MORE CHILDREN (3-18) FREE

Approaching Change and Impermanence with Compassion – a mindfulness and creativity retreat

31 Oct – 3 Nov (Thurs-Sun pm)

Inspired by the natural environment, this retreat gives time and space to explore compassionate ways in we can respond to the inevitability of change and impermanence. We will combine mindfulness, self-compassion and a range of creative activities, including ephemeral and land art to explore how we can find joy, possibility and peace in the knowledge that everything changes.

Sue Howse is accredited by the UK teachers mindfulness Network as an accredited mindfulness teacher. She is an accredited BACP psychotherapist and runs courses in Mindfulness and Compassion. **Ali Tebbs** trained as an art teacher but pursued a career elsewhere. Now retired, she is enjoying sharing her art and craft skills and resources with others. Artist and teacher **Sue Lansbury** finds endless inspiration for her work in the continually changing natural environment. www.susanhowse.co.uk facebook: *Ali Tebbs – Papercraft* www.suelansbury.co.uk £225 (SINGLE SUPPLEMENT £255)

“A very special time, special moments with people in love with life and generous in their sharing.”

Elegant Simplicity – with Satish Kumar

8-10 Nov (Fri-Sun pm)

Satish Kumar, editor of *Resurgence & Ecologist* magazine and founder of Schumacher College, activist for peace and the environment, will share the remarkable experience and thinking behind his latest book, *Elegant Simplicity*. It provides a coherent philosophy of life that weaves together simplicity of material life, thought, and spirit. Our weekend will not be just a talking shop. We will also explore practicalities of the simple life – from the ‘white ladies’ whose community preceded Othona on our site to initiatives for today and tomorrow.
More about Satish: www.resurgence.org £130 (SINGLE SUPPLEMENT £150)

Honouring Our Sacred Self

23 Nov (Sat 10.00-5.00)

A day of gentle yoga, nurturing and healing. For details, prices and how to book see 27 April entry.

Advent Labyrinth

29 Nov – 2 Dec (Fri-Mon am)

The magical time of Advent gives us an alternative approach to Christmas. In shared reflection, in stories and songs, in food prepared with love, in walking a beautiful labyrinth that mirrors the journeys of our lives. And just relaxing in community with others.

Nickie Fidgin and **Nigel Thomas** bring us their hand-painted labyrinth to cover the chapel floor. We’ll have the chance to walk it with differing intentions during the weekend, sometimes by candlelight. And we can enter deeply into the questions posed for each of us by this special season. Nickie is a skilled facilitator of labyrinth experiences who has brought them to contexts as varied as a primary school and Salisbury Cathedral. Her husband Nigel, an Anglican priest and skilled storyteller, has lived in community, been chaplain to immigration detainees and a support worker at a ‘care farm’.
£178 (SINGLE SUPPLEMENT £208)

Christmas in Community

23-27 Dec (Mon-Fri am)

Christmas at Othona is always rather special, with less of the things you want less of (television, bingeing, bickering, maybe loneliness?) and more of a spirit of peace and goodwill within a temporary ‘family’ that isn’t your own but where you have a real contribution to make. Feasting, presents, prayers – all are in the mix, but not to excess. On Christmas Eve we visit a local organic farm for carol singing among the straw bales. On Boxing Day you can watch hardy souls take a chilly dip in a local harbour for charity (or even join them). Equally suited to families, couples or individuals.
£230 (SINGLE SUPPLEMENT £270) 11-18: £144 3-10: £99

New Year Celebrations

29 Dec – 2 Jan 2020 (Sun-Thurs am)

Othona always greets the New Year in a warm-hearted community fashion, with both relaxation and stimulation. Weather permitting we like to share a country walk on New Year’s Day. Equally suited to families, couples or individuals.
£230 (SINGLE SUPPLEMENT £270) 11-18: £144 3-10: £99

“A wonderful opportunity to experience wisdom, spirituality and friendship.”

FAQs

How many people can you accommodate?

We have 14 visitor bedrooms. In our busiest family weeks we can fit in up to 35. At other times anything between 12 and 24 is normal. The 7 members of the core community live in separate accommodation on site.

Do you have single rooms?

Yes - and twins, doubles and family rooms (but no en-suites). Just tell us your preference on the booking form. From 2018 we are charging a **modest single supplement** if you require a room on your own and can’t consider sharing (if necessary). For certain types of retreat, a single room is the norm and in these cases there is no extra charge quoted. There is nothing wrong in requesting a single room and asking for a bursary to offset the expense! (See ‘**How do I qualify for a bursary**’ below.)

Is everything provided in the bedrooms?

Duvet, pillows and blankets are provided. You can bring your own duvet cover, bottom sheet, pillowcases and towels if you wish to save money. Or you can hire them from us at a one-off cost of £6 per person.

What time of day do events begin and end?

Residential events usually begin with supper at 6.30p.m. It helps us if you arrive after 4.00p.m. Departure times are mid-morning unless otherwise indicated (e.g. Sunday p.m.).

Can I arrive a day early or stay over an extra night?

This kind of extension is sometimes possible, particularly to bridge from one event to the next. Please ask us about the specific dates you have in mind.

Can I reach you by public transport?

Yes. There is more information, with maps and transport links, on the website.

Can I take part in an event as a non-resident?

This is sometimes possible. Please contact us to ask with reference to specific events.

How do I qualify for a bursary?

You don’t have to. Our bursaries are there for anyone who feels they need one. We handle all requests confidentially. And (unlike many organisations) you don’t need to prove anything to us. You don’t have to be receiving state benefits, for instance. So if you need financial support to visit us please don’t be embarrassed about asking – Othona is a charity! Just indicate (online or when you phone/write to our Bookings team) that you’d like bursary assistance. Typically this will mean a reduction of 25%. If your situation means you need more help than that, please tell us. *We no longer quote ‘concession’ prices. But bursaries are there for whoever needs them.*

Do you offer discounts for children?

From 2018 we offer a special deal for **all** family-friendly events. If your family has two or more 3-18 year olds, the eldest one stays **free of charge**. Infants from 0-2 have always stayed free too.

Can I book online?

Yes – please visit www.othonawestdorset.org.uk and when we invoice you there are also options to pay online, by bank transfer or Paypal (even without a Paypal account). The first time you book online you’ll have to ‘create an account’ with your own password, but after that the process for subsequent bookings is even easier.

How can I tell if you have room for me?

If you have access to our website, each event page there has the level of availability (**Space Available, Almost Full, Full**) under the event dates. This is a good guide but for various reasons cannot be 100% accurate, especially when we are nearing fully booked. That’s why we look at every Booking Form and respond to you personally. We also start a **Waiting List** for full events. If you can’t visit the website please call us on **01308 897130** to check about availability.

Can I pay online?

Yes! Online payment is our preferred payment method (by bank transfer or Paypal). See Can I book online? above. If you have questions about payment, do please contact us.

Do you offer individually guided retreats?

This is a service we don't offer. You can find places which do through www.retreats.org.uk

Do you offer private retreats, within or outside advertised events?

This is sometimes possible; please email (bookings@othona-bb.org.uk) or phone (01308 897130) to enquire about specific dates. Many people looking for an informal retreat experience find our Quiet Weeks and Open Spaces, with a balance of chill out and community, meet their needs.

Can I stay for a longer period?

Our 'Sabbatical Stays' can be anything from a fortnight to a month. Please contact us if you wish to explore possibilities. Use of our library and/or the art room could be just the thing for your sabbatical or career break. The library is particularly rich in spirituality of many faiths and radical Christian theology. The art room has a range of materials you are welcome to use – or bring your own. We cannot offer prolonged stays where your main needs are therapeutic. Othona only has living space for those who work as part of the core community.

Do you hire out the centre for group use?

Yes, occasionally. We have a few openings each year for 'outside group' bookings not advertised in our own Programme. We find this works where you are not looking for 'just another venue' but want the special ethos of a community. Please contact the warden (tony@othona-bb.org.uk or 01308 897130) to discuss possibilities.

How do you cater for people with disabilities?

All our communal rooms and two downstairs bedrooms are wheelchair-accessible. There is a hearing loop in the chapel. Assistance dogs are an exception to Othona's general no dogs rule.

What's your food like? Will my special diet be a problem?

We always try to provide home-cooked, healthy, scrumptious meals. We grow some of our own food and use a lot of produce which is local (West Dorset is a bit of a foodie heaven), organic or fairly traded. We cater at all times for vegetarians as well as meat-eaters.

To share the same food is a potent symbol of our shared humanity. But if you have a serious medical intolerance to any foodstuffs please notify us when booking – then we will clarify whether we can exclude them from the menu.

With our small kitchen we cannot provide special meals for those on other dietary regimes. Please do bring any supplementary food you are likely to need; ask for fridge space if you need it; but realise that you won't usually be able to cook it at Othona. We always stock soya milk, gluten-free bread and rice cakes and our local town, Bridport, has various specialist food shops.

Will I have to do the washing up?

Yes! Community life means we share a few simple tasks such as washing up and preparing vegetables, usually one each per day. Approached in a spirit of care and co-operation they can be more like gifts than chores.

Will I have access to media?

All mobile networks now have coverage at Othona, if sometimes a bit patchy. Urgent messages can be left for you if necessary on our office phone 01308 897130. Wifi is available but we urge you not to use this more than you really need and as far as possible in private. After all, most people visit places like Othona for a rest from the chatter of media; of course there are exceptions where e.g. we use online resources in a discussion session. If you listen to radio or music in your room we trust you'll keep it quiet and not disturb others. (Please bring earphones.)

Will my children like it?

Who can ever predict? But seriously, we usually design events during school holidays to be family-friendly. Most children adjust quickly to community life and love its freedoms. Visit our public Facebook group and our photo galleries. These will literally give you a picture of how other children and young people experience Othona West Dorset. Except when needed for the event in question we suggest that tablets, phones etc are left at home or restricted to certain times and places, so as to leave room for interaction and creative play. We have an established child protection policy.

How inclusive are you?

Othona values diversity and aims to break down barriers of age, sex, race, ability and background. We were pioneers among Christian centres in actively welcoming people regardless of sexual orientation. Learn more about Othona's beginnings and our values and beliefs.

What if I'm not Christian, or not even religious?

You don't have to be Christian to enjoy Othona or to be welcome here. Many Othona people are Christian, but some are of other faiths. And many others are reluctant to be identified with any one religion, seeing themselves on a spiritual search. Only if you were indifferent or hostile to any such search would we suggest you think again about visiting Othona.

How 'holy' is the atmosphere in your community?

Spiritual health is about being fully human - which may or may not include being religious. Othona supports anybody who takes spiritual health seriously - by which we don't mean solemnly! ('Wholey' rather than 'Holy'?)! You won't encounter a lot of pious talk, nor pressure to share other people's beliefs.

We hope you'll find 'soul nourishment' in our chapel – as well as on the beach, in the art room, round the dinner table. We have two pianos and an extensive collection of recorded music created for us by Fiona Heyes. Our library is a treasure house of books to stir the heart and feed the mind, particularly strong in progressive theology and multi-faith spirituality.

So in what sense is Othona Christian?

In a profoundly open sense – open-hearted and open-minded – which we believe Christianity at its best is. Here at Othona West Dorset we speak of being “rooted in the Christian heritage... open to the widening future”. We honour the revolutionary heart of Jesus' teaching, when Othona embraces and learns from people of all faiths and none. Could a Christianity evolving in the 21st century settle for less? How crucial it is that the world's great faiths should relax their defensiveness and explore common ground. Othona is one tiny step in that direction.

What's next for Othona?

The key project for 2018 is to replace our old art and craft building with a **Four Seasons Studio**. The new building will provide more space, better facilities and be adaptable to uses ranging from a variety of arts and crafts to bodywork, from seminars to recreation. We have planning permission and aim to start building in Spring 2018. This means part of our grounds will be a building site for much of the year. We are still raising funds – all **donations** welcome! :-)

What does the name Othona mean?

We're not sure, but it quite possibly means “home”. It was the Romans' name for a fort they built on the Essex coast. The garrison there may well have been conscripted from Sarmatia (modern Hungary) and “otthon” in the Magyar language later came to mean home, as ‘Othona’ does in modern Hungarian. Out of the ruins of that fort rose a Christian church in AD654. Close by that church is the other (and first) Othona centre at Bradwell-on-Sea in Essex. Today the Othona Community is a far-flung network of people with a love for one or both centres. Newcomers and non-members are just as welcome as long-established Othona members.

Terms and Conditions

Please read this page carefully. It relates to your financial security and personal safety. Without your agreement to these terms (by signing the booking form) we cannot accept your booking.

Cancellation Costs

If I have to cancel I accept that Othona returns a varying proportion of my payment:

More than 1 month ahead of the event start date:	all but the deposit
Less than 1 month, more than 1 week ahead:	50%
Less than 1 week ahead:	10%
On or after start date:	nil

I am aware I could take out insurance against loss due to cancellation.

I accept that Othona reserves the right to change or cancel events as necessary.

Recreation at Othona

One of the delights of Othona is its relatively 'wild' outdoor environment. We want to keep this open to all and safe for all. Please read this carefully as it constitutes part of your terms and conditions for booking.

By booking to stay at Othona West Dorset I am agreeing to all of the following:

Any or all of the members of my family or party listed on the booking form may want to play and engage in other recreational activities in the grounds of the Othona Community, including use of the equipment known as the Treehouse.

I understand that:

- The grounds include varied terrain on which care is needed to avoid accidental injury. They are largely 'undomesticated' for the sake of wildlife and bio-diversity. There may be plants growing wild which are poisonous if eaten.
- As in any wild environment, common sense is needed to enjoy the surroundings and avoid danger.
- The possibility of injury to myself and others will always exist.

I confirm that:

- I am aware and accept that there are potential risks to myself and others and I will not deliberately endanger myself or others.
- I acknowledge and accept the responsibility for the supervision of any child of mine who plays in the grounds, including use of the Treehouse.
- I will comply – and ensure any child of mine complies – with the Othona Community guidelines as to use of the Treehouse or any other play equipment.
- I will only allow my child(ren) to use the Treehouse when I have satisfied myself that it is safe for them to do so.

I hereby release, remise and forever discharge from any claims and liabilities whatsoever without limitation the Othona Community, its employees and volunteer helpers and any other person playing in the grounds who might injure me or my child(ren) howsoever arising, and I make this release on behalf of myself, my heirs, executors and administrators.

If you need extra booking forms and cannot photocopy, call us on 01308 897130 or visit the booking section of our website.

In this chapel our guiding light is the example of Jesus. He offered a welcome to all regardless of status or preference of sex, race or religion. We seek to honour all faiths as responses to the divine as paths to liberation. We look for the Christian tradition to evolve with new understandings and to join hands with all who hunger for justice and peace.



We call our morning and evening gatherings in chapel Seedtime and Harvest. The formats are flexible, with room for the sharing of experience, thoughts and feelings, for music, chants and songs, prayers, poems, and plenty of companionable silence.



Othona is about a mile east of Burton Bradstock village on the coastal side of the B3157. You can reach us by train (or coach) and bus. We send further travel details in the month before your visit.

Othona Community
Coast Road
Burton Bradstock
Bridport
Dorset DT6 4RN

Office: **01308 897130**

Email: **mail@othona-bb.org.uk**

Website: **www.othonawestdorset.org.uk**

Find out much more about Othona on our website: **www.othonawestdorset.org.uk**

Community House is in the care of a small resident group, the Core Community. Day to day management rests with the warden, Tony Jaques, backed by a Committee and Trustees drawn from the Othona Community at large.



“All my friends commented that my sparkle had returned after a very long absence. I’m still glowing a week on.”