

Othona West Dorset

Autumn/Winter Season 2020/21

Welcome Back to Community

It's been a long 6 months without visitors at Othona, but at last we'll be able to open our doors and we really look forward to seeing you again.

As we open again it'll be with some major changes. There will be fewer people at any one time. We'll have new precautions and protocols because of the virus. But you'll also find some lovely new facilities, indoors and out. And for us - maybe for you too - a renewed appetite for being in community with others.

Most of the "Welcome Back to Community" events on offer this autumn and winter will follow a similar pattern. You'll have plenty of time to spend as you wish, because mostly these will be events without special themes or facilitators. Instead we'll be concentrating on the simplicities of community life. Offering you relaxation, to be sure, but reconnection too.

Zoom and other digital platforms have been a great resource, haven't they? But at Othona we'll be together actually, not virtually. While observing social distancing, we'll still share healthy home-cooked meals. And gather in the chapel for our spiritual reflections and prayerful quiet. That's community.

We'll ask you to join in some of our simple tasks around the house and grounds. Daily jobs but special ones too: are there apples to pick, or shrubs to prune, or books to tidy? That's community too.

Depending on the weather we may offer a group walk or another outing. Or indoors perhaps a music evening. And each week there'll be an open discussion as we try to discern together how a community like Othona may evolve beyond this Covid 19 experience.

How do those of us who've loved Othona up till now "give it forward" to rising generations in a changing world? As our own vision for this begins to come into clearer focus, we're keen to hear your experience and your views too.

Our core community will be thin on the ground this season. We'll need your enthusiasm, your helpful presence and your patience when things go too slowly or less than smoothly. But with those provisos we're relieved to say "Welcome Back".

Staying Safe

Our priority is that you and we stay healthy. We will have all the hand sanitiser and other materials you'd expect. Our toilets and shower rooms had already been converted in February with soap dispensers and disposable paper towels instead of the old hand towels.

We'll be undertaking more frequent and rigorous cleaning than before. We ask you to play your part by such measures as frequent hand-washing and wearing masks in

some circumstances. Before you arrive we'll write with more detail about how we all stay safe.

We rely on you to advise us if you have any Covid-like symptoms or have been contacted by NHS Track and Trace. We'll be keeping records of everyone who visits Othona so that we can cooperate with Track and Trace as necessary.

Bookings

Please make your booking application online wherever possible. If the website booking form does not work for you, you can email Liz on bookings@othona-bb.org.uk. Or write to the address at the foot of this document.

Maximum numbers for any event will depend on socially-distanced dining spaces as well as bedrooms and washrooms. And because of cleaning regimes we can't have people arriving a day early or leaving a day late; please don't ask.

If you need to phone us on 01308 897130 the best time is usually between 11.00 and 12.30 Wednesday to Saturday.

If at all possible please make payments digitally. **Our office team is still partly furloughed, so please bear with us if we don't reply immediately.**

Cancellations

More than ever, we have to reserve the right to cancel any event or any individual booking. Among other reasons, it only takes one person here or recently left to contract Covid, for us to have to close at the shortest notice. We hope to avoid this. But if it does happen we will let you know as soon as possible. And we will refund everything you have paid us.

We recognise you may also have to cancel. Normally if you cancel at short notice we only refund part of your payment. For the time being we will relax that policy. Any time you cancel we will only retain £30 per person as a non-returnable deposit. We hope this lets you make a booking with confidence.

Adjusting our Charging Policy

Virus precautions mean we can only welcome reduced numbers of visitors at any one time. This puts great pressure on our finances. But, knowing how the pandemic has *widened the inequality gap*, we have decided against any dramatic rise in what we charge.

For each event you'll find we are quoting Basic and Benefactor Rates, as well as having Bursaries for those in need.

You are welcome to choose the **Basic Rate**. But if everybody paid Basic, the reality is that Othona would make a hefty loss this year.

Perhaps you're actually finding yourself better off, maybe spending less in these strange times? If so, please consider paying *at least* the **Benefactor Rate**.

We know plenty of people are much *worse* off due to Covid 19. So we still have bursary funds to offer. If you cannot afford the Basic Rate, please write to

bookings@othona-bb.org.uk or phone 01308 897130 to discuss reduced **Bursary Rates**.

Benefactor, Basic and Bursary Rate payers will all help Othona survive financially this year. The same is true of everyone who has given to our [Help Othona in Hard Times](#) appeal - which is still open for donations.

Rates for children are calculated as a percentage of the adult Basic Rate. Under 3s come free of charge.

We decided not to charge any Single Supplements this year. Only people from the same household or bubble will share rooms, of course.

Charges

	Basic Rate	Benefactor Rate	Child 11-18 Rate	Child 3-10 Rate
Charge Type A	£175	£220	£114	£79
Charge Type B	£210	£260	£137	£95
Charge Type C	£240	£300	£156	£108

Event Calendar 2020/21

Welcome Back to Community events are identified by a month and number. They will generally follow the pattern described above.

The other named events are:

Silence by the Sea

This led silent retreat exploring the Wisdom traditions is facilitated by Janet Lake and Richard Sloan. Participants should have some established meditation practice. As of now the retreat is fully booked.

Half Term

This event will accommodate a limited number of families. Priority will be given to families we expect would have been with us in the summer if we'd been open.

Quiet Weekend

This long weekend will be facilitated by Liz Howlett, currently one of our Core Team, and a regular visitor for many years before that. Liz is an ordained Christian minister who appreciates an approach to spirituality which values the riches of different religious traditions and she will lead simple reflections in the chapel each day.

Advent Weekend

This long weekend signals the approach of Christmas. Tony Jaques, Othona warden, will facilitate a time of symbol and sacred text, poetry and seasonal music (even if we can't sing) woven into the daily life of community.

Christmas

The stories of Jesus' birth involve a country under brutal occupation, a pregnant teenager who becomes a refugee, and visitors from a 'foreign' religious tradition. How we've managed to hide all that under red-nosed reindeer and robins in the snow! Join us for Christmas and recover a wee bit of that flesh-and-blood narrative, as well as enjoying the feasting, Secret Santa and all.

New Year

We've never known a New Year like this. How do you sing Auld Lang Syne when you can't link arms and are forbidden to sing? We'll be finding fun ways to greet 2021 as a smaller community than usual but with a big heart. Priority will be given to families who we did not have room for at October half term.

5-8 Oct	Mon am - Thurs pm	Silence by the Sea	FULLY BOOKED
15-19 Oct	Thurs pm - Mon am	October 1	Charge Type B
22-25 Oct	Thurs pm - Sun pm	October 2	Charge Type A
28 Oct-1 Nov	Weds pm - Sun am	Half Term	Charge Type B
5-9 Nov	Thurs pm - Mon am	November 1	Charge Type B
12-15 Nov	Thurs pm - Sun pm	November 2	Charge Type A
19-23 Nov	Thurs pm - Mon am	Quiet Weekend	Charge Type B
26-30 Nov	Thurs pm - Mon am	Advent Weekend	Charge Type B
3-7 Dec	Thurs pm - Mon am	December 1	Charge Type B
10-13 Dec	Thurs pm - Sun pm	December 2	Charge Type A
23-27 Dec	Weds pm - Sun am	Christmas	Charge Type C
30 Dec-3 Jan	Weds pm - Sun am	New Year	Charge Type C
14-18 Jan	Thurs pm - Mon am	January 1	Charge Type B
21-25 Jan	Thurs pm - Mon am	January 2	Charge Type B
28 Jan-1 Feb	Thurs pm - Mon am	January 3	Charge Type B

We'll review the take-up of October to January events later this autumn and decide on a programme for February and beyond.

Thanks for your understanding as we adjust how Othona operates to suit these difficult circumstances. We send our best wishes and hope to see you in community soon.

Tony (warden) Liz (bookings) Robin (website) Andy (finances) Sean (volunteer)

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