

# Background Information - Housekeeper at Othona West Dorset 2023

This paper is not the job description but is a bit of background for your information, specific to this moment in Othona's evolution and to the individuals who make up our core community right now. Please read it alongside the "Three Keys" document.

## Who We Are

The resident core group at present are:

**Tony Jaques** - an Othona member since the 1970s and warden here from 1995, Tony is the one with whom most bucks stop. He leads on developing the events programme, and on the general running of Othona. He has been heavily involved in our two recent building projects. Among his enthusiasms are singing and lyric-writing, dance and occasional cycle-camping in France.

**Robin Shaw** - married to Tony, she has lived here since 2011 and volunteers as a community member. She and Tony delight in their cat Otto and the latest addition to their family - nephew Emerson, four years old, who lives with his parents in Bridport.

**Liz Howlett** - office coordinator since April 2019, Liz had been a regular visitor to Othona since the early 1990s! Her chief responsibilities include bookings and recruitment. Among other things she enjoys reading, being outdoors and singing with Rock Choir. The pandemic allowed her time for extensive research into the first community on this site and this is turning into a book! She assists on the ministry team of the Bride Valley (our local parishes).

**Ellie and Tom Farley** - along with their 2 year old son, Teddy, Ellie and Tom have lived at Othona now for a year. They share the Catering role between them, as well as the child care. Ellie was on the Core as Housekeeper about 5 years ago and both of them have been coming to Othona as visitors from when they were children themselves and actually met here when they were ten! Tom enjoys gaming and Ellie can turn her hand to many creative activities.

**Andy Davey** - book-keeper of many years' standing, Andy doesn't live here but comes in regularly to keep our finances and related matters in order. He is also a saxophonist, potter, choral singer and has worked as a counsellor. Until recently he was chair of trustees of another local community.

## Renewal

Othona has recently come through a period of long-anticipated physical renewal. We've made key alterations to some of our core community accommodation. In 2020 we completely rebuilt most of our visitors' toilet and shower facilities.

Between August 2019 and February 2021 the Four Seasons Studio rose from the ashes (figuratively speaking) of the old art and craft room. With the completion of this new studio we've also re-greened areas that were a building site, improved some of our access and created a circular gladed seating area in the woods.

We see these material changes as necessary but by no means sufficient. Othona's sense of purpose and the way it operates also need to move with the times, we know. What worked well in 2000 may be hopelessly beside-the-point in 2025. Although this house is a much-loved home for many people, we aren't here just to do the same old thing year after year so as to keep it all familiar!

Like many organisations we have been improving our approach to recycling, waste management, reducing plastics etc. We currently cook and heat the house using LPG ('calor gas') but we've set a target of getting the whole place carbon neutral by 2030. We have begun the process by having an Air Source Heat Pump fitted at the end of 2022 to heat the Chapel and Library. Already we generate a good deal of our own electricity and employ various other green technologies. We're very blessed in the Othona grounds, which we manage consciously for bio-diversity and which are a rich habitat for all kinds of flora and fauna.

Othona West Dorset March 2023