



at Burton Bradstock, Dorset
and Bradwell-on-Sea, Essex

Sheila Maxey
48 St. Thomas' Road
Brentwood
Essex CM14 4DF

01277 212357

sheila.maxey@pop3.poptel.org.uk

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Calling all members of the Othona Community

Over the last weekend of January 2012 twenty two members (the Trustees together with representatives from both Centres and the Community Secretary) met, on behalf of the whole of Othona, to bring to an end the two year discernment process called *Othona 2010 and beyond: taking stock and moving forward*. The creative tension between affirming we are one Othona and devolving more authority to the two centres which had characterised the whole process had now become more creative and less tense! We made a long list of the signs and symbols of our unity – from the rhythm of the day to our coastal situations 'on the edge' - and worked on a revision of the 2007 Mission Statement to reflect the moving forward of the past few years.

We also worked on practical changes to enable Othona to 'move forward.' The most important of these was the decision to replace the present Bradwell and West Dorset Committees with Centre Committees each consisting of four Trustees and an equivalent number of other members. A fuller account of all the decisions will appear in the next issue of *Full Circle* but, in the meantime, this particular change requires urgent action.

Devolution of more authority to new Centre Committees

These Centre Committees will have responsibility for the operational finance of the centre, for development planning, for fund-raising, for marketing, for the spiritual welfare – all in a close working relationship with the Warden and his or her Core. In order for the Othona Trustees, who bear the legal responsibility for the financial, organisational and spiritual life of Othona to be able to devolve that authority, they will appoint, from among their number, four Trustees to each Centre Committee, one of whom will be the chair. These Trustees will be called **Centre-based Trustees**. There will also be four **General Trustees**.

A new way to encourage members to serve Othona

Elections as a method for enabling members with the right gifts to serve the Community in the way best suited to those gifts have not served us well over the past few years. The Bradwell committee has not had a full complement of elected members for at least two years and in both centres co-option year after year, often of the same people, has been practised. Our current practice for finding new Trustees has been limited to those people the current Trustees know of who seem to have the right skills. So we looked to the Society of Friends (the Quakers) for a better model which tries to involve the whole community and have decided to proceed as follows - starting with our need for four or five new Trustees.

Instead of elections for Trusteeship (or membership of the Centre Committees – see the letter from the Bradwell Centre-based Trustees) we have decided to involve the whole membership by inviting proposals for new Trustees. A small nominations group (consisting of three Trustees or former Trustees) will then sift through the proposals to find the people with the right gifts, experience and skills for the particular vacancies and offer those names to the full Trustees Meeting for approval.

About becoming a Trustee- or proposing someone for Trusteeship.

All Trustees bear significant responsibility for the well-being - financial, spiritual and organisational - of the Othona Community. Anyone proposed must have the wisdom and maturity to shoulder that responsibility. However, becoming a Trustee is also a very rewarding personal experience, seeking, with others, to discern the right way forward for the Community we love. At the conclusion of our two year *Othona 2010 and beyond* process we are in

a strong place from which to move forward. However, a number of Trustees are coming to the end of their terms of service and so we urgently need to find new Trustees. Please pray and think about who you know with the gifts and experience to offer. Also feel free to put yourself forward even if just to talk it through with the nomination group.

All Othona Trustees, including the Centre-based Trustees, must be committed to the good of the whole of the Community. For Trustees appointed as General Trustees there will be three meetings per year and for those who become Centre-based Trustees there is an additional commitment to the Centre Committee meetings. Trustees do not have to be current members of the Community but you, as proposer, must be a member. You may wish to ask permission before proposing someone but it is not necessary to do so. You may propose yourself.

The current Trustee vacancies

Under the new arrangements we aim to have 12 Trustees, four General, and four Centre-based on each of the Bradwell and West Dorset Centre Committees

The Trustees have allocated the present Trustees as follows:

- General Trustees: Sheila Maxey (Chair), Jan Marshall, Louise Heatley, John Watters and Alan Hounsham, (appointed March 1st) are General Trustees (but Sheila and Jan both retire in September 2012). One vacancy.
- Centre-based Trustees for Othona West Dorset: Pat Price-Tomes and Bob Whorton. Two vacancies.
- Centre-based Trustees for Othona Bradwell: Rupert Bragg, Fran Jones and Ali Tebbs (Trustee Secretary). One vacancy

We have, therefore, four urgent vacancies.

We always need Trustees with energy, wisdom and spiritual depth. However, at this juncture we also have a particularly need for people with one or more of the following:

- Experience of people and organisational management, current or recent knowledge of employment legislation to advise the Trustees and the Centres.
- Knowledge of financial management including reading balance sheets/accounts, understanding budgets and strategic planning. We aim to have one such Trustee on each Centre Committee.
- Experience with communications, including social media and IT in all its variety to help us to move forward in the effectiveness of our communications.

Please propose only one person per form. If you want to propose more, please print off more forms.

Please return the form to me by 14th April 2012. You will be informed whether or not the person you propose is chosen for the current vacancies. If this process works well we will adopt it for regular use. The names of those proposed but not chosen may be stored for future consideration.

**Sheila Maxey, Chair of Trustees. Sheila.maxey@pop3.poptel.org.uk
48 St Thomas Road, Brentwood, Essex CM14 4DF 01277 212357**

Please take this request seriously.
With love

Sheila Maxey.