

Chairs Notes
Trustee Residential Weekend
Othona Bradwell
17-19th November 2023

Trustees met at Othona Bradwell

Present: Steve Barnes (Chair LMC-OE), Warren Douglas, Dan Dutfield, Clare Gough (Chair of Trustee Board) Michael Hunt (Treasurer), Tony Jaques (Warden OWD), Chris Jones (Chair LMC-OE) Mark MacDonald, Richard Sanders, Debbie Sanders, (Wardens OE), John Smith, Rachel Tocknell, Janet Webster, Chris Wilson, (Chair LMC-OWD)
Apologies; Sasha East

Trustees arrived on the Friday evening, enjoyed supper and gathered in Chapel, worship was led by the Bradwell core team, the theme was do not worry, see how your father looks after the lilies of the field. We remembered Norman's phrase "cells of good living". Saturday morning the OWD team led our Chapel gathering with one of Tony's songs, a Mary Oliver poem The Trees and prayer. All of Saturday was given over to a full programme of reports and discussions.

Richard and Debbie Sanders, the centre managers at Bradwell, gave a very full report. The year has gone well, income is above what they had predicted, they are pleased to be working with groups like ARocha, YMCA, Trust Links, Sisters of the Cross and St Ethelburga's. The Green Weekend was a highlight of the programme. They look forward to hedge planting with St Ethelburga's. They have had a good number of excellent volunteers. The accessible bathroom looks very good. Unfortunately a recent fire safety assessment has given rise to some more safety recommendations. They were pleased to have received £40K towards the total of about £80K for the new septic tank which is an urgent issue.

Tony Jaques, the centre manager at OWD gave a report, the main issue that he wishes to appraise Trustees was the need for another unit of staff accommodation. An options appraisal paper was presented by Rachel Tochnell. The local management committee will explore options further. Following a recent fire safety risk assessment more work is required on the site. The centre continues with a mix of staff and "super volunteers".

Michael Hunt gave the finance report. Both centres are performing in line with their budgets. Investments have gone down in line with movements in the markets.

Phil Martin joined the meeting to share the data from the Membership survey. Highlights were that the centres are attracting new visitors, that many people did not know about Membership, that guests appreciate the ethos of The Othona Community. A small sub-group will meet to look at the data in more detail and make recommendations to the Board. Phil Martin wishes to stand down as Membership Secretary in September at the AGM and feels that someone who is active on one of the local management committees should ideally be the new Membership Secretary.

Richard Sanders led a tour of the site, Plum Cottage - previously the men's hut had an additional toilet and shower fitted, thank you Pete. The two bedrooms have had additional insulation fitted and been painted. They are much improved.

The other hut used by volunteers is due to be similarly upgraded as funds allow.

Safeguarding and safety issues were considered. Bradwell has recently appointed a Consultant in food and general safety. This is working well.

John Smith gave a report from the built asset development committees that have been meeting for each of the centres. There was a list of immediate works, works to be considered as funds allow and some speculative plans of how the site at OWD could be developed.

Warren Douglas has been leading the website rebuild team. The basic structure is there, work will progress over the winter. The new websites will be in place by the end of 2024.

Jane Pearse led a simple service in the Chapel based on some Iona prayers and liturgy.

Sunday morning Steve Barnes led a simple communion service, afterwards Trustees met to draw up their work plan until February. We need to recruit 2 more link Trustees one for each local management committee. Budgets will be prepared for the next financial year. Work on the websites will continue. The fire safety action plans will be overseen.

This was the last Trustee meeting for Janet Webster. Janet has been an OWD link trustee for just under 5 years. She was a key member of the working group that oversaw the building of the Four Seasons Studio, she has been developing good HR processes at OWD with Liz Howlett overseeing the recruitment and review of core staff and volunteers. Janet has a good eye for detail and has been of invaluable support to both Chris Wilson the chair of OWD local management committee and the Trustee Chair.

We enjoyed a good lunch and then started our journeys home, some had traveled from as far as Plymouth. We are very grateful for all the voluntary effort that goes into overseeing The Othona Community.

[Clare Gough \(Trustee chair\)](#)

27.11.2023