

The Othona Community

*Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held at 12.30 pm on Saturday 21 February 2004
in the Michael Room of the Parish Hall, St Michael and All Angels, Turnham Green, London W4*

Present: Andrew Pears in the chair and about 50 members

1. Richard Syms opened the meeting with **prayer**.

2. In his **Chairman's welcome**, Andrew Pears began by thanking those who have risen to the challenges of running Othona by taking on responsibility for it, and recommended members to study the Report contained in the Annual Report and Accounts. He recognized the particular contributions of those who run our two Centres – the wardens and core – and thanked those who had responded to his request last year to nominate possible new Trustees. He announced that David Jenkins, who had given good service to the Community as a Trustee and as Chair of Trustees, had resigned as from today owing to pressure of other commitments. Sheila Maxey had been appointed Trustee during the year, and Denise Boyton-Jennings and Jennie Knight had been appointed at the Trustee meeting previous to the AGM. He commented on the high calibre of person needed as Trustees because of the pressure on them to cope with current legislation.

Andrew noted that, while the church is now trying to adapt to the spiritual needs of the twenty-first century, Othona has always been good at that and in dealing with practical issues. It now perhaps needs to face the spiritual ones more boldly. As a challenge to the Community, he offered the slogan, adapted from a newspaper headline: 'Othona backs guerilla tactics in the war on secularism'.

3. **Apologies** had been received from Audrey Vinicombe, Clare Marshall Stone, Susanne Kelly, Dave James, David Seckleman, Vera Higginson, Gilo Wolveridge, Beccy Wynne-Thomas, Tony Jaques, Joy Lloyd, Zöe Greening.

4. The **Minutes** of the last AGM on 26 April 2003, which had been circulated before the meeting, were accepted and signed.

5. Eliabeth Sayers and Tim Fox were appointed **tellers for the Executive elections**.

5. Roger Pygram took the meeting through the **Financial Report and End of Year Accounts**

He commented that the 20% increase in income was extremely encouraging, much of it due to increased activity at Bradwell, but that expenditure had increased even more, leaving only a £194 surplus for the year. The largest increase in central costs had been in insurance premiums, but we have no control over these except for getting competitive quotations, which we have done. At Burton, income both from visitor payments (including interns) and other means was up, but a large expenditure on maintenance required for Health and Safety, the cost of which should have been spread over previous years, together with depreciation, had resulted in a deficit instead of the small profit there would have been otherwise. At Bradwell, there had been a huge increase in visitor payments, but expenditure on food had doubled. Core wages had gone up (but not in line with visitor payments), and a large amount had been spent on repairs to meet Health and Safety regulations – more expenditure would be needed in the coming year. He pointed out the need to maintain growth while keeping expenses under control.

In response to a request for a separate figure to show tax recovered on Gift Aid donations, he said that around £6,500 had been recovered on general donations and donations to the Burton Chapel Fund. This amount could be shown in a note in future accounts. He assured members that increased staff costs had been allowed for in the budgets for the current year submitted by both Centres and approved by the Trustees; and although we have not been in a position in the past to build up reserves, we are moving towards doing so. Roger agreed that it would be advisable for accounts to be available, preferably on the web, for members to study before the AGM, but circumstances beyond his control had prevented it this year. He was not in favour of circulating draft accounts, ie before they had been approved by the auditors, because this could easily lead to misunderstandings.

Andrew proposed a vote of thanks to Roger and to all those involved in handling finance at both Centres.

6. Roger Pygram was unanimously elected **Community Treasurer**, proposed by Margaret Lydamore and seconded by Robert Ricks.

7. Richard Armstrong was unanimously elected **Community Secretary**, proposed Robert Ricks and seconded by Margaret Lydamore. In response to a request, Richard gave a brief resume of his administrative duties, which include time consuming insurance matters, and was thanked for the work he does in keeping the Community legal.

8. The meeting unanimously authorized the re-appointment of Ansons of Brentwood as **Auditors**.

9. Date of **next AGM** confirmed as Saturday 19 February 2005, at the usual time of 3.00pm, at St Michael and All Angels, Turnham Green, London W4.

10. Results of the elections to the **Executive Committees** were as follows:

Burton Bradstock (uncontested): Carole Atkins, Dave Forgan, Ruth Gilman, Elizabeth Sayers, Julie Walker

Bradwell: Jonney Aldridge, Steve Boyton-Jennings, Steve James, Kate Mulkern, Paul Seckleman

The Chairman offered his thanks to all those who have been involved in running the Centres, and to those who are newly involved. He said that there would be a session on governance at the forthcoming Combined meeting to assist executive members in understanding their responsibilities, and hoped and expected that they would all attend.

11. Among the points raised in the **Open Forum** were:

- The fact there is still no Community vehicle at Bradwell and the need to obtain one as soon as possible. The new Executive must take this on board.
- No immediate appointment of a new warden at Bradwell is likely, although the post is being considered by someone to whom it has been offered. It looks likely that Bradwell will be without a full time residential warden until well into the summer, so the Executive will have to take on the supervision of the Core. Sandra's contract as non-resident warden ends at Easter, and the position should be clearer by then.
- An objection to the imposition of non-refundable deposits at Bradwell. This is to cut down on the number of no-shows, and works well at Burton. Opinion as to its suitability at Bradwell was divided, but the policy has been agreed by the Executive and is now in place.
- Martin thanked Jonney for (again) keeping the power going at Bradwell.

The meeting ended with a vote of thanks to Andrew for chairing the meeting and for his work as Chair of Trustees.

(Signed) (Date)