

## The Othona Community

*Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held at 3 pm on Saturday 19 February 2005  
in the Michael Room of the Parish Hall, St Michael and All Angels, Turnham Green, London W4*

Present: Andrew Pears in the Chair, Margaret Lydamore acting as Secretary, and about 55 other members.

1. Tony Jaques opened the meeting with **prayer**.

2. In his **chairman's welcome**, Andrew Pears referred back to his appeal two years ago for suggested names, which was rewarded by a number of new and capable people being appointed Trustees, several of whom have taken on particular areas of responsibility. We are still in need of a new Trustee with fund-raising skills.

Andrew asked members to read the Trustees' Report carefully, and to recognize the fact that 'the Community has both changed radically and remained radically unchanged'. The ethos of the Community has not changed, but the world has changed a great deal and there are constant challenges to face. It is important for members to understand those that face the Community, and support the Trustees and other officers who have the responsibility of facing them. As an example of what we have to comply with, he cited the report of our insurers, which lists three pages of requirements that we have to meet at our Centres. We all need to work together, and there should be no divisions. He asked all members to consider what they could contribute to the Community.

3. **Apologies** had been received from Richard Armstrong, Carole Atkins, Jo Clarke, Tim Fox, Mary Gallahan, Ruth and Paul Gilman, Flavia Miller, Julie Walker, Jenny Wells, Gilo Wolveridge.

4. The **Minutes** of the last AGM on 21 February April 2004, which had been circulated before the meeting, were accepted and signed, proposed by Jennie Knight and seconded by Elizabeth Sayers.

5. Roger Pygram, Community Treasurer, took the meeting carefully through the **Financial Report and End of Year Accounts** for the year ended 31 October 2004. Roger pointed out that we do rely heavily on our investment income for the day-to-day running of the Community and its two Centres. The Statement of Financial Activities shows total income up by £4000 and expenditure down by £7000, leaving a net surplus for the year of £11,000, but only after the contribution of £23,000 of investment income to our operations. At the Burton Bradstock Centre, after allowing for depreciation, a surplus of £3000 had been achieved, and at Bradwell, there was a deficit of £11,000. Although visitor income at Bradwell was down on 2003, he reminded us that that had been an exceptional year, and income was very much up on 2002. Central costs had unavoidably increased, mainly because of expenditure on the cottage and on advertising for a new warden. Donation income had decreased somewhat, and the total tax relief received on Gift Aided donations was in the region of £4000.

From the floor, Robert Ricks asked what the development funds at both Centres are to be used for, and was told that these are for major improvements rather than routine maintenance, which should be met from the Centre budgets. Richard Mulkern asked that the number of bednights spent at both Centres should be made available, and Andrew said that the aim was to include these in the Trustees' Report next year. Richard also stated that in his opinion, the Community should not be afraid of using investment income for the benefit of the Centres. In answer to a question about legacies, Roger replied that income from these had not been substantial.

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 Andrew Pears.

7. Richard Armstrong was unanimously elected **Community Secretary**, proposed Janet Marshall and seconded by Margaret Lydamore. The Secretary was asked to write to him to thank him for his work.

8. The meeting was not able to appoint an **Auditor**, since Gerald Anderson of Ansons was about to retire. Roger pointed out that we have benefited from the very low fee charged by him, and now may well have to pay more. He was strongly in favour of continuing to have the Community's accounts properly audited. The Trustees would have to resolve the problem of finding a new auditor, but suggestions would be very welcome.

9. The date of the **next AGM** was confirmed as Saturday 18 February 2006, at 3.00 pm, at St Michael and All Angels, Turnham Green, London W4.

10. During the **open forum session**

- Michael Giddings spoke of his recent visit to India, and of the close links that the Burton Bradstock Centre has with Indian communities. Michael is intending to lead a small group visit to India early in 2006. He had set up a display of pictures for people to look at.
- Tony Jaques gave an update on the chapel heating project at Burton – not quite finished but now in operation – and advance notice of an Othona lecture to be held in central London on 5 May on Dan Brown's book *The Da Vinci Code*.
- Jerry Macklow advised members of a possible wind farm which may be built about a kilometre south of the Bradwell Centre. He said that the issue was not clear-cut, there were arguments for and against, and it would be difficult for the Community to take one side. Firm proposals from Enpower should be going to Maldon Council in July.
- A number of people spoke up in favour of flexible pricing policies at Bradwell to accommodate those who cannot afford to pay much. The chair commented that members need to realize that everyone who stays at Bradwell is subsidized, many quite heavily. The point was made that the Warden does have discretionary powers. Suggestions included the introduction of a sliding scale, and the creation of a bursary fund.
- The issue was raised of whether child rates should apply at Bradwell up to the age of 18, since that is the age up to which children need to be accompanied. This is a matter for the Centre to resolve.

After a service of worship led by David Lomax, the afternoon ended with tea and socializing.

(Signed) ..... (Date) .....