

## **Report from the trustees meeting on 21 April 2008**

**People:** The trustees, with great sadness, accepted the resignation of Sally Clark as a trustee due to her increasing weakness. A card of love and good wishes was signed by all present. Bob Whorton was welcomed back on to the board of trustees. The trustees welcomed the news that Ruth and Paul Gilman were to be the new editors of *Full Circle* which would now have 3 issues per year in July, October and March. Following the annual appraisal of Christine Cox, the membership secretary, it was agreed that her job description should be put on the Othona web-site.

**Finance:** The budget for 2008/9 was recommended by the Trustees Budget Working Group (Dave Ball, Dave Evans, Tim Fox ), although they and the treasurer indicated serious concerns about yet another deficit budget. Careful monitoring, particularly at Bradwell, of ways and means to increase the visitor income or, if necessary, cut down the expenditure was approved.

**Management of Othona's assets.** The trustees have, for some time, been aware that the rental from the farm provided a poor return compared to other kinds of investment (even if the rent doubled in the present good climate for arable land) and they had also been made aware that they had a responsibility to the Community to maximise the return in order to better serve the purposes of Othona (which do not include owning a farm but do include maintaining and improving the amenities at the two Centres). Steve Aldridge, a member and an expert in asset management has been advising us and acting for us with Tim Fox as the authorising trustee between meetings. Following a meeting between Steve, Tim and our land agent at Stanford's and then between the three of them and Strutt and Parker, who lease the farm, we agreed to ask Stanford's and Savill's jointly to put the farm on the market. We registered our concern for a buffer zone round the Centre, and for assured access to the Centre and the chapel. We agreed, separately, that the cottage (no 2 East Hall Cottages – the semi nearest the Centre) should be sold as soon as possible in order to release capital, since the present tenant had given notice. We also agreed to take advice on a total figure (for farm and cottage) below which we would not sell. We were advised that it could take up to a year to sell the farm.

**Community policies and status:** the trustees approved a Communications Policy which had been drafted by Tony Jaques in consultation with our web-masters, and MSN manager, and with input on the Disability Discrimination Act. It will appear shortly on the Othona web-site. We received expert advice on Othona and Data Protection from Robbie Spence but deferred discussion to the June meeting. We received a full annual report from Tony Sinden on our various insurance policies, with requests that he be kept informed of any building and repair work which might need insurance cover. We agreed that the Othona Mission Statement should appear on all our web-sites, programmes, and leaflets. We appointed three trustees (Pat Price-Tomes, Sheila Maxey and Margaret Lydamore) to meet with a representative of Interchange Legal Advisory Service for a free consultation on whether the Othona Community should change its legal status and become incorporated (while remaining a charity).

**The replacement of *Littleness* at Burton Bradstock.** The trustees, having, in January, approved the members of the Buildings Sub-Committee for the work at BB, now agreed that ground-work up to a limit of £45,000 could be commissioned before the June meeting, provided the expected planning permission had been granted.

**Reports from the centres.** These were received with thanks and appreciation; information on Centre activities can be found on their respective web-sites.

*Sheila Maxey, chair of trustees.*