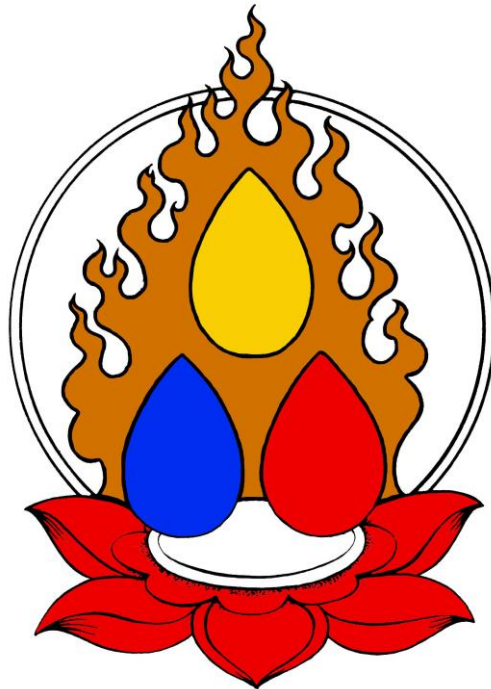


**BIRMINGHAM
BUDDHIST CENTRE
ANNUAL REPORT
AND ACCOUNTS
2019/20**



The Trustees present their report and independently examined financial statements for the year ended 31 May 2020. These have been prepared in the light of the Statement of Recommended Practice - Accounting and Reporting by Charities, and the Charities Acts.

REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

All information given was correct at 31 May 2020 and has been approved by the Trustees.

Charity Name: Birmingham Buddhist Centre

Registered Charity Number: 516568

Address: Birmingham Buddhist Centre, 11 Park Road, Moseley, Birmingham B13 8AB

Trustees of the Charity:

Singhamati (Singhamati Hannah), Chair

Shuddhakirti (Neal Greenwood), Treasurer

Pasannamati (Pasannamati Frances Neal), Secretary

Dharmashura (Alan Sabatini)

Prajnabandhu (Clive Simpson)

Maitrisara (Philippa Bobbett)

Dharmashalin (William Sullivan)

Nagadevi (Rose Griffin)

Bankers:

The Charity has a current account with:

CAF Bank Ltd, 25 Kings Hill Avenue, Kings Hill, West Malling, Kent ME19 4JQ

The Charity also has savings accounts with:

Scottish Widows Bank, PO Box 883, Leeds LS1 9TY and

Skipton Building Society, The Bailey, Skipton, North Yorkshire BD23 1D

Independent Examiner: Satyapara (Annemie Philips, ACCA)

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

The Charity is run as an unincorporated association and its constitution sets out its aims and objects, as well as the rules governing the way it is run.

A Council of Trustees is responsible for overseeing the affairs of the Charity and setting the direction of its development. The Council meets approximately four to six times per year. The Trustees delegate the day-to-day running of the Charity to the members of the Centre Team. The Trustees are elected each year at the Annual General Meeting by the members of the Charity. Other Trustees may be co-opted by the Council during the year. The Trustees are aware of the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit.

OBJECTIVES, ACTIVITIES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

Principal purpose of the Charity

The principal object of the Charity continues to be the advancement of the Buddhist religion, according to its constitution. This includes encouraging people to live in accordance with the Buddha's teachings, supporting ordained Buddhists (at the Council's discretion), and maintaining close links with the Triratna Buddhist Order.

The Charity functions as part of a network of independent Buddhist charities, known collectively as the Triratna Buddhist Community, which are run by members of the Triratna Buddhist Order. The Charity works to promote Buddhism in the West Midlands by providing a full programme of classes, courses, festivals, ceremonies and retreats. The teachings of the Buddha are offered freely to anyone who is interested. Donations are encouraged at events but not insisted upon, the principle being: 'Give what you can, take what you need.'

Main activities, undertaken to further the purpose and for public benefit, and our achievements

Overall it has been another successful year for the Charity with our activities continuing to thrive. In March 2020 the Coronavirus pandemic spread throughout the world, causing the UK to go into lockdown and the Buddhist Centre building to close in line with restrictions imposed by the Government. Our Centre Team and volunteers responded creatively to this situation, finding new ways for our work to continue during this time. Our activities continued to be shaped by three key areas of vision and strategic development: building and being a vibrant sangha (community); developing high quality teaching at all levels and maintaining an altruistic perspective.

The Centre also continued to develop and diversify its programme of activities which aim to: offer inspiring Buddhist practice; maintain an ethical, caring, socially-engaged and environmentally-aware perspective; continue to reach out to the local community; and offer a substantial contribution to the wellbeing of the people of Birmingham.

This report elaborates further on our activities and achievements, including why they are of public benefit, and then goes on to summarise other information about our engaged, changing and growing Centre and Buddhist Community.

An Update on our Vision and Strategic Development

Building and Being a Vibrant Sangha

In March 2019 Singhamati launched a standing order appeal asking for the sangha's financial support to help the Centre to live out its vision. We aimed to increase our standing order income from £2,000 to £4,000 a month in order to turn around a deficit and give us the capacity to focus on developing and deepening our core Dharma work. The appeal was a great success and its impact continued throughout the year and in February 2020 our monthly standing order income peaked at £3,764.67 thanks to the generosity of 105 donors.

The success of the appeal was a real confidence booster, reflecting the strength and health of our sangha and their willingness and desire to support our activities.

Creating opportunities to bring the sangha together continues to be a focus for us through Sangha Night and Sangha Works days, as well as our other activities. We are really pleased that Sangha Night, now in its fourth year, has continued to go well, with 25-50 people attending each week. The evening is hosted by Singhamati with the help of a large team of Order members and Mitras who help to create a warm and welcoming heart. It has been great to see our local Order members and Mitras contributing so well to Sangha Night, both through leading events and turning up to support the evening. Sangha Night gives us a platform for visiting Order members, allowing us to benefit from their inspirations and often many years of practice. This year we have been delighted to welcome: Saddhanandi, Saraha, Amalavajra, Padmasuri, Mahamati, Akuppa and Prajnaketu. Another highlight from Sangha Night was a celebration of people becoming Mitras, friends of the Triratna Buddhist Order.

Vicky Beckett continues to host Sangha Works days, which aim to bring the sangha together for meditation and Dharma practice, combined with maintenance and improvements at the Centre. These days enabled us to paint the yoga studio corridor and do some much needed deep-cleaning.

Developing High Quality Teaching

One of our major aims in this area is to develop our introductory course teaching and create a more effective pathway for the people who wish to deepen their involvement in the Centre. We made good progress developing two distinct Introduction to Meditation and Buddhism courses which include suggested teaching material, handouts, emails and meditations for home use. We hope that this material will both resource local Order members teaching these courses, as well as offering a two-course pathway for new people coming to the Centre.

In February 2020 we launched a new Introductory Course project, which intended to train a team of active Mitras training for ordination to help run introductory courses alongside local Order members. A team of eight Mitras signed up to join this project, committing to attending a number of training days scheduled for the spring and summer. Unfortunately we needed to pause this project during lockdown but it is now back underway and the first in-person training morning was very successful with more dates scheduled.

Maintaining an Altruistic Perspective

We are committed to maintaining a strong altruistic dimension to our activities in order to be of benefit to the wider community and the world. Altruistic activity is a key aspect of Buddhist practice, sometimes known as the Bodhisattva Ideal, where we aspire to be of benefit to all beings. For a Buddhist Centre teaching meditation and the Dharma is of course one of the main focuses of our altruistic activity, both at the Centre and through our outreach activities. In addition we have three projects that are particularly designed to meet this commitment: the Wellbeing for Carers project; our Birmingham Mindfulness project and the Birmingham Yoga Studio, and these are discussed in more detail below.

The Impact of the Coronavirus Pandemic

In March 2020 the Coronavirus pandemic prevented us from running our usual programme of Buddhist activities and meant we suspended room hire, school visits, yoga, carers support and other activities.

Thanks to the hard work of Maitrisara, Dharmashalin and others, within 10 days of closing the Buddhist Centre's doors we opened our Birmingham Buddhist Centre Online activities, running Sangha Night, a drop-in meditation class and study groups online via Zoom. Our online activities focused on supporting our sangha through this challenging time and were an essential refuge for many, supporting people to practise meditation and Buddhism and stay grounded, creative and resourced. Over the months of lockdown, as well as offering these weekly classes, we ran a number of day retreats online, as well as keeping our community up-to-date with online events happening in the wider Triratna Buddhist Community.

Due to the Government restrictions and the limits of our resources sadly we had to cancel a number of events, most significantly our introductory courses and our annual week-long sangha retreat. Both of these are core aspects of our programme: the introductory courses introducing people to meditation, Buddhism and the Centre, whilst the sangha retreat is our annual opportunity to deepen our connections by going away to practise together for a whole week.

With the Buddhist Centre closed from 17 March – 1 August 2020 and not being able to offer our full programme of Dharma activities or share our space for room hire, school visits and with Birmingham carers, we estimated a £30,000 loss of income. We recouped around £20,000 through some drastic cost-saving measures, such as furloughing half of the Centre Team, as well as the reduced running costs of the Buddhist Centre being closed. In June 2020 Singhamati launched the Birmingham Buddhist Centre Coronavirus Emergency Appeal: Keeping our Sangha Heart Beating which raised £12,000 through the generosity and support of our local sangha, keeping us financially stable and allowing us to continue to give the gift of the Dharma.

In July 2020 the Centre Team began the hard work of risk-assessing the Buddhist Centre and our activities and then doing what was required to allow us to reopen as COVID-secure premises with increased sanitisation and distancing. In August we were able to welcome back our sangha and Sangha Night became a hybrid class, allowing people to attend in-person and via Zoom. Since then we have also seen the return of introductory courses, yoga (also as a hybrid class) and some room hire.

Inspiring Buddhist Practice at the Centre

The Centre continued to run an inspiring range of weekly classes to introduce and deepen the practice of Buddhism and meditation. Until March 2020 these included:

- Study evenings for men and women to undertake a four-year Dharma Training Programme (small groups meeting weekly).
- Introductory classes every Tuesday and Thursday evening and Wednesday lunchtime.

- Going Deeper classes on a Tuesday for those who have completed an introductory course but are yet to join a study group.
- Sangha Night on Thursdays.
- For experienced meditators, the opportunity to practise together with others every Tuesday evening or Saturday morning.

From March 2020 onwards our classes included the following on Zoom:

- Study evenings for men and women to undertake a four-year Dharma Training Programme (small groups meeting weekly).
- Introductory classes every Tuesday evening.
- Going Deeper classes on a Tuesday for those who have completed an introductory course but are yet to join a study group.
- Sangha Night on Thursdays.

Women's Dharma Study

This year Maitrisara started a foundation pre-Mitra group in January 2020. Four other women's study groups ran throughout the year, led by Sagarasri and Danajoti; Bodhinita; Suddhimani and Dayakarini; and Nagadevi.

In June 2019 we ran our first Mid-West Jewel Quest weekend event for women in the region (North Wales and Midlands) who are training for Ordination. This was held at Taraloka with Singhamati and Maitrisara on the team. This was followed by another Jewel Quest day retreat led by Padmasuri at the Centre on Sangharakshita's poem *Four Gifts* in October.

The women enjoyed a day retreat with Viryanaya in January 2020 on the topic of The Dakini. And once we switched to online events, Suddhimani and Maitrisara led a women's day retreat online in April 2020.

Men's Dharma Study

This year 6 men started the year-long foundation course led by Sangharuchi. Three men's Mitra study groups ran throughout the year led by Dharmashalin and Shantighosha; Shantiprabha and Jayabodhi; and Khemadana and Subhamati. These provide an essential opportunity to spend more time with other men, develop friendships and deepen understanding of the Dharma. We also had weekend retreats, day events and sessions with local men in the Ordination Process.

The Men's Order Kula continued to meet once a month to discuss the general well-being of the men's sangha. In January 2020 we launched the Dharma Life Review (DLR2.0) project, a refinement of the first iteration, this time focused on deepening horizontal connections and helping people set clear and achievable precepts for themselves. The project started well until the disruption of the Coronavirus pandemic; it's certainly something we will return to when we can.

Day Retreats

We maintained a programme of day events at the weekends, which provided the opportunity to deepen friendships and practise around a certain theme. This year's highlights included:

- Quarterly Meditation Sesshin Days which continued to be well received, offering another opportunity for collective meditation practice.
- Online day retreat on The Worldly Winds, with Vajragupta.
- Online day retreat on Living with Awareness, with Paramartha.

Festivals

We continued to celebrate our usual series of Buddhist Festivals. This year Dharma Day, Sangha Day and Parinirvana Day were able to happen in-person and were predominantly very well attended, creating opportunities for the community to practise collectively together, building friendships and celebrating our shared vision and values. Sangha Day was in part family-friendly, people being invited to bring their children and partners to join in with the activities, allowing them to share this experience of practice and community. For Buddha Day we participated in a worldwide celebration online hosted by the wider Triratna Buddhist Community. Triratna Day was marked online at Sangha Night and we held a special evening on Zoom for Sangharakshita's 108 Birthday Puja.

Retreats

Again we ran two non-residential weekend retreats during which we follow a standard residential retreat programme but at the Centre with participants sleeping at home. These allow people to get on retreat without the need to go away, which can be helpful for those with caring responsibilities at home or for those that find it hard to travel. They are also a fantastic opportunity to intensify our practice together at the Centre. The New Year retreat explored the theme "The Three Myths: Self-development, self-discovery and self-surrender". The summer retreat was for Mitras and Order members and included a visit from our president, Paramartha. It explored the theme "The Four Tantric Rites of Kalyanamitrata". Both events were a success and we are keen to continue them as a part of our annual programme.

Going away on a weekend retreat enables the deepening of friendships, meditation and Dharma practice away from the demands of everyday life. So we are committed to running a number of retreats every year. This year we were able to offer 3 weekend retreats including: a Midland women's retreat, a men's retreat and a sangha retreat. We also encouraged a number of our community to attend the Triratna International Gathering, which brought together around 250 people to practise together for a long weekend at Adhisthana in Herefordshire. Due to the Coronavirus pandemic we have had to cancel our annual week-long retreat and two other weekend retreats so far.

New Initiatives and Other Events

The LGBTQ+ Group continued to be enthusiastically hosted and organised by Sophie Clifton with friends until spring 2020. The group was open to LGBTQ/non-LGBTQ, Buddhist/non-Buddhist, newcomers/seasoned attendees. The group met on the last Friday of every month for meditation followed by a social type event such as arts and crafts, baking, picnics, etc.

In June 2020 Matty Evans and friends launched a new Sub-30s monthly meet-up group, aimed at younger members of our community and new young people. They have been meeting online for meditation and discussion.

Vicky Beckett hosted this year's Not-Christmas Lunch, an important and helpful space for some people to come together on Christmas Day. Likewise Dharmashalin hosted our annual New Year's Eve celebration. We are also pleased that the Buddhist Centre Open Choir, continued to meet every second Friday until March 2020, led by the highly-skilled Vipulakirti and Maitrisara.

Dharma Arts

One of the distinctive emphases of Triratna is Arts as Dharma Practice, so we encourage the exploration of different art forms and their contribution to and place in Dharma practice. The Centre continues to create space for sangha members to exhibit their art work and we welcomed excellent collections from: Veronica Toescu, Ratnavandana, David Craddock, Judith Fleetwood-Walker, Sheila Fowler and Sandra Pass.

Maintaining an Ethical, Caring, Socially-Engaged and Environmentally Aware Perspective

As a Centre we are committed to living ethically, without causing undue harm to people or the planet, practising the Buddhist precepts and following our own set of Ethical Guidelines. In addition we help to care for others by having policies on Safeguarding Adults and Children, named Safeguarding Officers and offering annual training to our team and volunteers.

Buddhist Action Month (BAM) has now become an annual event every June which is celebrated in Triratna Centres throughout the UK, Europe, and further afield, as well as by other Buddhist groups. This year we marked BAM through a special series at our Going Deeper class.

We continue to be part of the Triratna Sustainable Centre Scheme, which includes using a green energy supplier, being a Fairtrade place of worship, and keeping our vegan shopping policy, in order to maintain and exemplify our commitment to climate and environmental awareness.

Reaching Out to the Local Community

The Birmingham Buddhist Centre is committed to engaging in, reaching out to and being of public benefit to the wider community. We do this in many ways, not limited to but including: events in Moseley, school visits, outreach classes and chaplaincy work at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. We also have a small shop which stocks a wide range of Buddhist books and CDs, meditation and yoga equipment, incense, Buddha figures, cards, etc., which serves the local community as well as people coming into the Centre.

The Centre has become a well-known fixture in Moseley and continues to be appreciated by locals as well as those from other parts of Birmingham and further afield.

School visits remain a very effective part of our outreach programme. In this period we hosted 24 separate institutions, a total of 40 visits in all. This is despite visits from 12 March onwards being cancelled due to the lockdown. For two of these visits we went out to a school to present to a class or the whole school, the rest were onsite at the Centre. As in

previous years we catered for a range of groups and institutions, including local primary schools and secondary schools, schools associated with different faiths, early years children, children with profound learning disabilities, trainee clergy and a cub scout group. Many sangha members contributed to hosting these visits in the year; including Roz Goddard, Nagadevi, Karunamani, Doreen Wilson, Mike Thompson, Xen Lu, Matty Evans and Aidan Mountford.

Outreach classes provide greater opportunities for people to learn about Buddhism in their local area. In Warwick Triratna activities continued to run by a team of Order Members and Mitras including Karunavajra, Shantighosha, Jo Dobson and Kip (Dave) Holland. In April this changed and a team of committed local sangha members formed to take on the continued organisation and running of activities. The team includes Jo Dobson, Kip (Dave) Holland, Ruth Loeb, Natalie James and Mark Lloyd, with continued support, when his shift work allows, from Karunavajra. This team liaises with Dharmashalin for support and mentoring as needed and encourages Order members from Birmingham and beyond to contribute to their activities where they are able to. Since lockdown, the team have offered a meeting place for the local group on the Zoom platform and have regularly welcomed 6-12 members for meditation and discussion. Dharmashalin continued to run outreach classes at the University of Birmingham where the Meditation Society invites us to support their activities. The group continues to provide a context for young people to learn meditation and Buddhism and the participants really benefit from these tools, most notably in helping them manage their stress and anxiety.

We have also offered a few new outreach meditation workshops this year to help support the wellbeing of our local community, this included a regular meditation led by Shuddhakirti at Right Start Moseley, a drug and alcohol rehabilitation centre.

Things continue to grow, flourish and evolve at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital due to the dedication of Mahasiddhi with his colleague John Roberts. This year's activities have of course been affected by the coronavirus pandemic. Since lockdown they are no longer able to practise collective worship of any description and this has meant suspending Monday and Tuesday lunchtime sessions and the bi-monthly meditation days. But that is more than amply off-set by the demand to cater for various staff formations and some patient interventions. During this year the chaplains had had nearly 3,000 staff encounters. There were also some significant patient encounters, particularly with end-of-life patients. It has long been the case that what the chaplains offer has been appreciated – they won a Silver Award in November for services to staff – and they are now even more appreciated and sought after. There is an all-round recognition that mindfulness really can help people to cope with even the most difficult of situations and challenges.

Offering a Substantial Contribution to the Wellbeing of the Wider Community

Wellbeing for Carers Project

The Wellbeing for Carers Project, now in its 16th year, continues to thrive and be of substantial benefit in supporting the adult carer community. Until March 2020 we ran a weekly carers tai chi class, a monthly event (with yoga, tai chi, meditation and lunch) and

one residential break in this period. In October 2019 we started an additional yoga class for carers with Carol Haynes on a Thursday.

When lockdown began in March 2020 we were unable to run any of our face-to-face activities for carers but we switched to supporting carers by phone carrying out 116 Safe and Well checks in April and May and helping to secure emergency funding for some carers who were struggling to pay their bills.

Birmingham City Council put their carers work in the city out to tender and the contract was won again by Forward Carers. However, the financial arrangements changed in a such a way that in August 2019 we were told that funding for our overnight and weekend breaks would be lost after year 1 of the new contract, though there would still be money for carers events at the Centre for the full three years of the new contract. Because we have had to cancel all of 2020's carers residential breaks, we now have breaks planned for 2021, after which there will be no more City Council funding for breaks. We are making plans to replace this funding if at all possible.

A grant of £10,000 from the Big Lottery (Awards for All) paid for independent consultants, Merida, to carry out an evaluation of our Carers Project, which involved carers directly in designing and carrying out the evaluation. This work culminated in a report and some audio and video support material. The carers team spent a day reviewing the recommendations from the report and further developments are planned in the light of those recommendations. This gives us good evidence on which to base future fundraising.

We would like to express huge appreciation to Maitrisara who manages the project and to Suddhimani who organises the breaks so successfully. The project benefits from a wonderful and committed group of volunteers without whom the project would be impossible to run. They are: Urmila Desai, Hannah Pursey, Joy Cheek, Dave Livesey, Roz Goddard, Steve Freer, Julia Hawes, Shantiprabha, Deborah Ashley, Nagadevi, Punyavajri, Amanda Liffen and Shantisthana. We would like to express our thanks to those leading and organising the activities, especially Steve Taylor and Carol Haynes.

Birmingham Mindfulness

Our Birmingham Mindfulness project continues to offer mindfulness courses to help those living with chronic illness, stress and anxiety to improve their health and wellbeing. Birmingham Mindfulness offers Breathworks Mindfulness for Health courses, taught by Singhamati, and Mindfulness-based Stress Reduction courses, taught by Mitra Parveen Poonia who has an MSc in Teaching Mindfulness from Bangor University.

This year we offered one Breathworks course and two Mindfulness-based Stress Reduction courses, one in-person and one online due to the lockdown, teaching 30 people life-changing mindfulness tools and techniques. We were really pleased with how well these courses ran and would particularly like to thank Parveen for her generous contribution to the project. We had hoped to run a second Breathworks course. However, this was cancelled due to lack of bookings. For people who have completed a Breathworks course we offered monthly follow-up sessions and a day retreat, all of which were well attended.

Birmingham Yoga Studio

The Birmingham Yoga Studio at the Centre continues under the guidance of Prabhakara, our Senior Intermediate Level Iyengar teacher. Prabhakara, now living in Malvern, returns to Birmingham two days a week to offer Iyengar yoga classes, for beginners and experienced practitioners, as well as a programme of weekend and holiday workshops. During the lockdown Prabhakara was able to continue to offer classes online on a donation basis. The Birmingham Yoga Studio has developed good working relationships with teachers Carol Haynes, Julie Baker and James Critchlow, and others, allowing the Studio to continue to offer an attractive programme. These classes help maintain the health of those attending, as well as being another way in which we open our doors and support the wellbeing of the local community.

Room Hire

The Centre is pleased to continue to make space available when it is not needed for our core activities. In this way we provide rooms to support a wide range of other projects that benefit the local community including: counselling, body work, tai chi and yoga. Room hire ceased during the lockdown. However, since September 2020 we have been able to start welcoming customers again.

An Engaged, Changing and Growing Centre and Buddhist Community

The Centre remains a lively place, which is appreciated by those who come here as a place of calm and refuge amidst their busy lives. The local Order members continue to engage well at the Centre, helping to run activities, and there are also around 65 active Mitras.

Our Buddhist Community continued to grow and deepen this year with new Mitras, and ordination requests. We were pleased that one woman and four men became Mitras, celebrated at Sangha Night. During the year there were other requests from both men and women to become a Mitra, however due to lockdown we have been unable to perform a further Mitra ceremony. We are also glad that three women and two men asked for ordination, expressing their wish to further explore and deepen their commitment to the Three Jewels. We were delighted that one of our community, Veronica Toescu, was invited to be ordained into the Triratna Buddhist Order. Her ordination was due to take place at Akashavana in Spain in June 2020, but this retreat had to be cancelled due to the Coronavirus pandemic and has been rescheduled for 2021.

In the Centre Team we said goodbye to Khemadana as Centre Manager in July 2019, thanking him for his many years of dedicated service looking after the Centre, allowing it to run smoothly and effectively. We were pleased to welcome Visarada as the new Centre Manager, who has settled in well to both the team and the role.

On 12 April 2020 Helen Rabone, a Mitra who was training for ordination, passed away. At the time we were unable to meet in-person so we gathered on Zoom on a number of occasions to bear Helen in mind and practise puja together during her last few weeks and soon after her death. On 2 May Sagarasri hosted a poignant memorial event on Zoom, which was very well attended, giving the opportunity for her family and friends to celebrate her life and remember and rejoice in her many wonderful qualities.

The thriving of the Centre is due to the generosity and engagement of the local Order members, Mitras and Friends. The Centre Team continued to serve the Centre effectively, helping to oversee the running of the Centre and the Charity at all levels. The Trustees also remained a significant body, helping to uphold the spiritual vision of the Centre, as well as with its official duties and responsibilities. We are also very grateful to the ongoing support of our community with their efforts to help run and support the extensive range of activities. Dozens of volunteers helped with cleaning, gardening, maintenance, shrines, library management, laundry, reception, working in the office, and many other contributions that enabled us to maintain a beautiful and smooth-running Centre.

We would like to say a special thank you to some of our key volunteer teams which include:

- Shrine team: Vijayanandi and Shubhra continued to create beautiful and carefully tended shrines.
- Second-hand bookshop: Continued with refreshed energy thanks to Vijayanandi.
- Library: Doreen Wilson and Deborah Ashley continued their hard work in the Buddhist Centre library, updating the library catalogue as well as managing many accessions and chasing book returns.
- Gardening: The Buddhist Centre garden continued to flourish due to the dedication of Dharmashura, with Karunamani, Mick Fenton, Eamonn and other committed volunteers. With the extra help in the past couple of years we have been able to create two new flower beds and refurbish another.
- Maintenance: Karunamani retired at the end of the year from helping with maintenance at the Centre after many years of dedicated volunteering. Eamonn joined us, becoming a regular and invaluable presence prior to lockdown.
- Cleaning: Julia Hawes took up the reins of organising and leading cleaning at the Centre. We also thanked Helen Portefaix for her help with weekly cleaning which she had done for the previous couple of years.
- Administration: Nick Dufrane for his ongoing support as webmaster and Sarvapala for his invaluable help with payroll and Gift Aid claims.

Residential Communities Update

We own four residential properties, which include two men's communities, one mixed community and a block of 5 flats. These communities exist to support people to deepen their Buddhist practice in the context of communal living.

We continued with our major exterior maintenance and redecoration project, which has included work to 36 Park Hill in 2017, to 80 Park Hill in September 2018 and continued with 135 Salisbury Road in May/June 2019. In July 2019 work was started at flats 1 and 2 of 36 Park Hill to rectify water leak damage, including one new kitchen and bathroom, paid for by our insurers. Due to the Coronavirus pandemic a number of major projects which had been planned were postponed, including remedial work to the staircase at the Buddhist Centre and major works on heating systems at 12 Park Road and 80 Park Hill. We would like to express our thanks to Vicky Beckett, our Maintenance Manager and Dharmashura, Charity Director, for their careful and hard work that enables these projects to happen.

FINANCIAL REVIEW

Overall our income has been healthy this year despite the Centre being closed for the last 2½ months of the financial year. This is partly as a result of the increase in regular giving via standing orders, which was a focus for us following the March 2019 appeal (mentioned above). The positive effect of the appeal continued throughout this year and remained steady through the Coronavirus pandemic, increasing our standing order income to £42,068 from £27,341. We were also fortunate to be eligible for the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme when the Buddhist Centre had to close, which covered a significant amount of the shortfall in income during that time.

Our donations from regular classes remained similar to the previous year. This is to be celebrated given that the Centre was closed for the last 2½ months of the financial year and although we received some donations from our online events this was not a hugely significant sum. Our income from yoga classes saw a further reduction this year but this was mostly due to our yoga teacher, Prabhakara, reducing the days he works at the Centre again and thus our yoga costs reduced as well. Yoga class numbers sadly remain low, which we are putting down to increasing competition now that yoga classes are more widely available.

The Wellbeing for Carers project continued to offer a significant contribution to our income, this year of £12,119. In the coming years the contribution is likely to be rather less due to a reduction in the funding we receive to run Carers Breaks. Our income from the Birmingham Mindfulness project was reduced this year in line with a decrease in activities, due to the cancellation of one course owing to lack of bookings. Room hire, the bookshop and school visits continue to make a significant contribution to our income, although the contribution was slightly lower than the previous year due to closure of the Buddhist Centre.

We are pleased to report that our residential income has continued to be steady, with good occupancy in the communities, which is hopefully a positive indication of the spiritual health of our sangha.

We have continued a strong commitment to maintaining a number of income streams for the Centre in order to manage the fluctuations of individual projects or streams. The “Money Club” also continued to meet regularly at the Centre to monitor carefully our income streams, actively encourage regular giving and maintain donor care.

Overall our expenditure is well managed. Much of our spending goes to support seven people on the Centre Team as well as covering the cost of utilities, office and event running. In addition to the general expenditure, we were able to invest further in our residential properties this year, as mentioned above.

Our finances are in good hands, thanks to the hard work of the Finance Committee, and overall the Charity is in reasonable financial shape, remaining in good control of its expenditure and making significant efforts to maintain a steady income.

ACCOUNTING AND REPORTING BY CHARITIES

Trustees' Responsibilities

Charity law requires the Trustees to prepare financial statements for the year that give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the Charity, the incoming resources for the year and the application of resources for that period. In preparing those financial statements the trustees are required to:

- * select suitable accounting policies and apply them consistently;
- * make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- * state whether applicable accounting standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements.
- * prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the Charity will continue on that basis.

The Trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the Charity and enable it to ensure that the financial statements comply with applicable standards and the Charities Acts. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the Charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities, as well as exercising proper financial control.

Risk Management

The Trustees are aware of the need to consider the major risks to which the Charity is exposed. The Trustees continue to consider risks, their likely impact, an estimation of the likelihood of each risk, measures that have been taken to avoid exposure to the risk, and those responsible for doing this. These risks are reviewed on a regular basis.

Policy on Financial Reserves

Most of the Charity's fixed assets are in the form of five properties. All of these properties are used by the Charity in the furtherance of its aims. While the Charity's fixed assets more than cover its long-term liabilities, the Trustees recognise that the Charity incurs current liabilities in the running of the Buddhist Centre. Therefore the Council has agreed that the Charity should maintain a cash reserve of at least £60,000 and review this sum annually. So that we may continue to meet this requirement, we will give attention to increasing income and restraining current expenditure. The Charity also has some free cash reserves invested short-term in savings accounts, most of which has been earmarked for further refurbishments to the Birmingham Buddhist Centre and our residential properties and the repayment of the loans to the Tiratna Preceptors' College Trust and Triodos Bank.

On behalf of the Trustees

Singhamati

Dharmashura

30 October 2020

BIRMINGHAM BUDDHIST CENTRE

**FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MAY 2020**

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES 2019/20

		Unrestricted Funds				
	Notes	General Fund	Designated Funds	Restricted	2019/20 Total	2018/19 Total
		£	£	£	£	£
INCOMING RESOURCES						
Donations and Legacies	2	58,053	3,808	4,566	66,427	49,654
Activities to Further Charity Objectives	2	87,931	118,564	18,074	224,569	280,925
Investment Income	2	0	396	2	398	76
TOTAL INCOMING RESOURCES		145,984	122,769	22,642	291,394	330,655
RESOURCES EXPENDED						
Direct Charitable Expenditure						
Buddhist Centre Administration	3	134,395	2,351	15,518	152,264	191,441
Property Running Expenses	3	-69,507	118,607	2,879	51,979	50,851
Financial and Other Costs	3	78,002		4,138	82,140	79,190
TOTAL RESOURCES EXPENDED		142,889	120,958	22,535	286,382	321,482
NET INCOME/EXPENDITURE		3,094	1,811	107	5,012	9,173
TRANSFERS						
Transfers to General Fund	5	12,153		-12,153	0	0
NET MOVEMENT IN FUNDS		15,247	1,811	-12,046	5,012	9,173
Balance brought forward		1,209,760	72,998	25,031	1,307,789	1,298,629
Prior Year Adjustments		-50	0	0	-53	-13
Balance carried forward		1,224,957	74,809	12,985	1,312,748	1,307,789

BALANCE SHEET AT 31 MAY 2020

	Notes	31/05/20	31/05/19
		£	£
FIXED ASSETS			
Freehold Property	8	1,869,372	1,919,561
Vehicle	8	1,800	3,000
Equipment	8	11,282	11,284
		<u>1,882,454</u>	<u>1,933,845</u>
CURRENT ASSETS			
Bookshop Stock		7,445	11,811
Accrued Revenue		23,826	9,878
Prepaid Expenses		2,335	5,523
Other Debtors	9	2,015	11,601
Short-term Staff Loan		1,321	0
Bank Savings Accounts		121,785	76,376
Bank Current Accounts		49,118	85,323
Cash in Hand		230	615
		<u>208,075</u>	<u>201,127</u>
CREDITORS (falling due within 1 year)			
Loans	10	46,084	44,640
Trade Creditors		1,781	9,338
Tenant and Key Deposits		1,677	1,711
Accrued Expenses		345	0
Prepaid Revenue		2,430	0
		<u>52,317</u>	<u>55,689</u>
CREDITORS (falling due after 1 year)			
Loans	10	725,464	771,547
		<u>725,464</u>	<u>771,547</u>
NET ASSETS			
		<u>1,312,748</u>	<u>1,307,736</u>
FINANCED BY			
General Fund		1,224,954	1,209,707
Designated Funds	11	74,809	72,998
Restricted Funds	12	12,985	25,031
		<u>1,312,748</u>	<u>1,307,736</u>

Note: Previous year figures re-presented to show £50 increase in trade creditors and £3 reduction in Other Debtors.

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

1. PRINCIPAL ACCOUNTING POLICIES

- a)** Basis of accounting: The financial statements have been prepared in the light of applicable charity law and accounting standards and the Statement of Recommended Practice: Accounting and Reporting by Charities (SORP).
- b)** Voluntary income is received by way of donations and gifts and is included in full in the Statement of Financial Activities when received. All income is included on a receivable basis.
- c)** All liabilities are recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities at the point at which the charity is deemed to have become contractually liable for payment. The trustees do not consider that the charity had any contingent liabilities at the Balance Sheet date.
- d)** Unrestricted funds are donations and other income received or generated for charitable purposes.
- e)** Restricted funds are used for specific purposes laid down by the donor. Expenditure that meets these criteria is charged to that fund.
- f)** Designated funds are unrestricted funds designated by the trustees for particular purposes.
- g)** All tangible assets (including freehold property) over £1,000 are depreciated at rates calculated to write off the cost of each asset evenly over its estimated useful life. The estimated useful lives are as follows:
- | | |
|-----------------------------------|----------|
| Computers, Equipment and Fittings | 4 years |
| Motor Vehicles | 4 years |
| Fixtures and Installations | 10 years |
| Freehold Property | 50 years |
- h)** Management and administration costs of the charity relate to the central costs of the management including the costs of statutory compliance.
- i)** Debtors are measured at their recoverable amounts.
- j)** Creditors and provision for liabilities are measured at their settlement value or best estimate.
- k)** Stocks of books, publications and other bookshop products are valued at the lower of cost and net realisable value.
- l)** The charity has taken advantage of the option in the SORP not to prepare a Cash Flow Statement on the grounds that it is not a large charity.

2. ANALYSIS OF INCOMING RESOURCES

	2019/20 £	2018/19 £
Donations and Legacies		
Donations	66,427	49,654
	<u>66,427</u>	<u>49,654</u>
Activities to Further the Charity's Objectives		
Classes and Retreats	23,206	31,212
Bookshop	8,250	9,794
Rental Income (Buddhist Communities)	118,564	107,316
Yoga Classes	9,518	15,913
Room Hire	30,594	34,111
Carers Project	17,514	68,272
Mindfulness	5,575	8,229
Miscellaneous Centre Activities	3,736	3,870
Other Income	7,611	2,208
	<u>224,569</u>	<u>280,925</u>
Investment Income		
Interest on Savings Accounts	398	76
	<u>398</u>	<u>76</u>
Total Income	<u>291,394</u>	<u>330,655</u>

Note: Previous year figures re-presented to show £462 moved from Classes and Retreats to Miscellaneous Centre Activities.

3. ANALYSIS OF RESOURCES EXPENDED

	2019/20 £	2018/19 £
Buddhist Centre Administration		
Bookshop Purchases	10,750	7,058
Centre Team Costs	98,759	107,451
Office Running Costs	1,153	1,431
Insurance	7,477	6,355
Publicity	468	529
Centre Activities	13,871	18,845
Carers Project	12,795	40,926
Centre Administration Costs	6,992	8,846
	<u>152,264</u>	<u>191,441</u>
Property Running Expenses		
Council Tax	7,655	7,364
Property Maintenance	17,270	16,674
Major Works and Improvements	17,725	17,646
Utilities	9,328	9,167
	<u>51,979</u>	<u>50,851</u>
Financial and Other Costs		
Mortgage Costs	25,694	27,093
Depreciation of Freehold Property	47,500	47,500
Donations	8,436	4,215
Legal and Professional	0	0
Independent Examination	250	250
Governance: Attendance Expenses	0	0
Sundry Expenses	259	182
	<u>82,140</u>	<u>79,240</u>
Total Expenses	<u>286,382</u>	<u>321,532</u>

Note: Previous year figures re-presented to show £50 increase in cost of independent exam

4. NET RESOURCES FOR THE YEAR

This is stated after charging

	£
Depreciation	47,500
Independent Examination	250

The charity's depreciation policy was last reviewed in August 2019.

5. TRANSFERS

Transfers mostly represent a contribution to staff costs and overheads from the Carers Project.

6. INFORMATION REGARDING STAFF

The Buddhist Centre was run by 6 $\frac{2}{3}$ full-time-equivalent staff during the year who were in receipt of remuneration referred to as 'support'. To calculate their support requirements staff are asked to assess what they need. No employee was paid more than £60,000.

The charity was also assisted by many unpaid volunteer workers.

	£
Aggregate Support	92,045
Aggregate Employer's NI	918
Aggregate Employer's Pension Contributions	3,602

7. TRUSTEES

The trustees do not receive any emolument for their services as trustees, but 4 trustees received support payments for other services provided to the charity (included in note 6). 5 trustees were also reimbursed for receipted goods and services purchased on behalf of the charity.

	£
Support	50,161
Out of Pocket Expenses	11,337

Two trustees paid rent at the going rate as a tenant in one of our community houses.

8. TANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS

The valuation of freehold property was last reviewed in June 2010.

Depreciation was charged as follows:	£
Cumulative charge at 31 May 2018	466,436
Charged during the year	47,500
Cumulative charge at 31 May 2019	513,936

No fixed assets were written down or written off during the year.

9. DEBTORS

Debtors represents invoices unpaid at the end of the year. There is a reasonable expectation that all of this sum is recoverable.

10. CREDITORS

Loans represents the capital repayments due on the mortgages for 12 Park Road, 36 Park Hill and 80 Park Hill.

11. DESIGNATED FUNDS

This represents:

- (a) Residue of Ian Llewellyn's legacy which has been allocated, along with other funds raised specifically for the purpose, to the refurbishment of the Buddhist Centre (to be used in the next five years).
- (b) Money set aside for improvements to our residential properties and to help repay the mortgages (to be used when required).
- (c) Funds generated by and for the Warwick Group (to be used as needed).

12. RESTRICTED FUNDS

This represents:

- (a) Funds collected to pay for the replacement of the Buddhist Centre's main boiler.
- (b) Funds relating to the Carers Wellbeing Project.
- (c) Deposits held for tenants and keyholders.
- (d) Funds collected to pay for a hearing assistance system.
- (e) Funds held for the Jewel Quest series of retreats.
- (f) Funds collected to pay for the installation of a wheelchair lift.
- (g) Funds collected to pay for local Buddhists to go on retreat.
- (h) Funds collected to help team member with mobility issues.

Independent Examiner's Report

Report to the trustees of

BIRMINGHAM BUDDHIST CENTRE

Accounts for year ended

31 May 2020

Charity no

516568

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity for the year ended 31 May 2020.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the charity's trustees, you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ("the Act").

I report in respect of my examination of the Charity's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination, I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

Independent examiner's statement

The charity's gross income exceeded £250,000 and I am qualified to undertake the examination by being a member of the Association of Certified Chartered Accountants.

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- the accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act; or
- the accounts did not accord with the accounting records; or
- the accounts did not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair' view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination.

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Signed: Annemie Philips

Date: 26/10/2019

Name: Annemie Philips (Satyapara)

Relevant professional qualification(s) or body:

Association of Certified Chartered Accountants.

Address: 3 Oak Tree Avenue, Cambridge CB4 1AZ