

**BIRMINGHAM
BUDDHIST CENTRE**

**TRUSTEES' ANNUAL REPORT
AND ACCOUNTS**

2021/2022



Birmingham Buddhist Centre

Annual Report 2021/22

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A: Introduction

The Trustees present their report and independently examined financial statements for the year ended 31st May 2022. 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

Charity Name: Birmingham Buddhist Centre

Registered Charity Number: 516568

Address: Birmingham Buddhist Centre

11 Park Road, Moseley, Birmingham B13 8AB

Trustees of the Charity:

Maitrisara (Philippa Bobbett), Chair

Shuddhakirti (Neal Greenwood), Treasurer

Pasannamati (Pasannamati Frances Neal), Secretary

Singhamati (Singhamati Hannah)

Dharmashalin (William Sullivan)

Dharmashura (Alan Sabatini)

Prajnabandhu (Clive Simpson)

Bankers:

The Charity has a current account with:

CAF Bank Limited

25 Kings Hill Avenue, Kings Hill, West Malling, Kent ME19 4JQ

The Charity also has savings accounts with:

Scottish Widows

PO Box 12757, 67 Morrison Street, Edinburgh, EH3 8YJ

Skipton Building Society

The Bailey, Skipton, North Yorkshire, BD23 1DN

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 AND ACTIVITIES

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.'

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

This year we have emerged from the pandemic phase and kept the building open and classes running for most of the time.

Some of the innovations from the lockdown phases remain, including some online activities, hybrid (in-person and online) events and booking systems which we found streamline our administration in helpful ways. On the whole people are keen to attend in-person classes and online attendance has dwindled.

Some new innovations happened this year:

A Thursday lunchtime Dharma class led by Shuddhakirti called “Wake Up!”

An Online Meditation Hall every morning between 8am and 9am (until 10am for part of the year)

To increase opportunities for in-person contact we trialled a day retreat for complete newcomers called “Learn to Meditate in a Day” and also monthly Men’s Mornings led by Dharmashalin and monthly Women’s Mornings led by Singhamati which have been very well attended.

There have been some changes in the Centre Team this year too. We were sorry to see Maitrimati leave in February and wish to thank her for her excellent work in her time with the Buddhist Centre. In March we welcomed Alice who has many talents, especially in the area of publicity and design.

This report elaborates further on our activities and achievements, including why they are of public benefit, and summarises how the Buddhist Centre has emerged from the most intense impact of the pandemic towards more active in-person engagement.

1. An Update on our Vision and Strategic Development

a) Building and Being a Vibrant Sangha

After all the isolation and dislocation of the pandemic, people have gradually become more confident about coming back to the Buddhist Centre in person. Though the online connection sustained relationships and people met up as best they could, there was a palpable shift in the sense of connection when people were able to come together in person again.

One of the key moments was the well-attended July 2021 Mitra Ceremony of Debbie, Alice, Tom and Graham which took place in the garden. We transformed it into a magical realm for the evening, with a full PA system.

Another important connecting event was the residential retreat at Adhithana in October 2021 around the theme of the Karaniya Metta Sutta.

We have also kept our weekly Sangha Night going for most of the year. In 2021 the theme was the Noble Eightfold Path and in 2022 Avalokitesvara. This has been offered as a hybrid event as sangha members have varied in the extent to which they were willing to attend in-person events.

The implications of the pandemic were still with us though and people helped each other practically and emotionally with the effects of it. For some the uncertainties of the post-lockdown phase were more challenging than the lockdowns themselves. Support around these challenges strengthened the sense of sangha.

In September and March our President, Paramartha, visited the Buddhist Centre to lead events, give talks and meet with individuals and groups. His support is very much appreciated.

Racial Diversity

We have continued our work on racial diversity and in September Parveen Poonia met with the Trustees to discuss some of the issues that the Buddhist Centre could consider in terms of racial diversity of the sangha.

Jayabodhi and Parveen continued online half-day retreats for People of Colour which ran until December 2021. These were then revisioned for a launch as in-person events from 2022.

In November and December a Sangha Night series of five evenings called Beloved Community looked at different ways in which social divisions in society can be met with love and wisdom. The themes were disability, class, race, gender diversity and age. We were again able to use the technology of Zoom to invite Kamalanandi from Sheffield and Shraddhasiddhi from London who led the evening on gender diversity. We feel it is important to look at the whole range of diversity issues collectively, race, disability etc , especially as many of the issues and strategies overlap.

Maitrisara has been involved, on behalf of the European Chairs Assembly (ECA), in appointing and supporting (through the project steering group) a Racial Diversity Coordinator for the ECA: Aryarakshita. Part of Aryarakshita's remit is to support Tiratna Centres with their diversity work and Birmingham is one of her priorities.

b) Developing High Quality Teaching

During the year, we were able to run eight in-person introductory courses and two online courses, each lasting six weeks. One of the introductory courses was trialled with a new format. These courses initially had to have their numbers capped for reasons of social distancing. When we took the cap off in February, the bookings went up to an average of 66 per course, which is a higher number than pre-COVID classes of this kind.

After investing in teacher training for Mitras who are training for ordination in previous years, this team really came into its own, co-leading courses through this year. The quality of their contribution was really impressive. Toby, Roz and Mike, together with Satyabodhini (who was ordained during the year), enhanced our Order teaching team and gave these Mitras valuable experience, confidence and inspiration. We ran two training days for the Mitras during the year.

The large introductory group sizes and the need to socially distance the participants led us to increase the size of the support team so that we could divide into groups during the sessions. This has been a great success, not only for the engagement and confidence of the support team but because it seems to have had an influence on the experience of the attendees, resulting in them making a greater commitment to the course. This has reduced the mid-course drop out rate.

c) Maintaining an Altruistic Perspective

It is important for us to respond to the local community and share our skills and make available our resources in ways that benefit Birmingham residents who are not connected to us through a shared faith.

While we have ceased to offer our own yoga programme, we have maintained our two other community-focused projects, the Wellbeing for Carers project and our Birmingham Mindfulness project.

2. Inspiring Buddhist Practice at the Centre

In addition to the ten Introductory Courses already mentioned, the Centre offered the following classes:

Study evenings of small groups meeting weekly, for men and for women, covering the Four-Year Dharma Training Programme. These took place online and in-person.

Eight six-week Going Deeper Courses online with the following themes:

- Mind and Emotion in Early Buddhism, led by Shantiprabha and Nagadevi
- Wake Up to a New Life, led by Shuddhakirti and Sangharuchi
- Turning Towards Awakening: Significance and purpose of Buddhist ritual, led by Sagarasri
- The Breathing Body as a Path of Relaxation: Insight and the ever-opening heart, led by Hridayagita
- Free Time! From clock-watching to free-flowing! led by Dharmashalin and Sagarasri.
- Images of the Transcendental, led by Sthanashraddha and Sangharuchi
- The Core Doctrines of Buddhism, led by Vidyaruchi and Dharmashalin
- Living in a World of (not only) Pain, led by Dhammaloka and Mike Thompson

Weekly Tuesday evening Introductory Drop-in meditation classes online (until April 2022), led by Shuddhakirti.

Weekly Wednesday lunchtime introductory meditation online, led by Shuddhakirti

Silent Saturday morning meditation for experienced meditators, led by Prajnabandhu throughout the year.

Hybrid Sangha Nights on Thursdays with several speakers from outside Birmingham during the year including two book launches. Shantigarbha spoke about his book *The Burning House: A Buddhist Response to the Climate and Ecological Emergency* in September and in April, Devamitra discussed his book *Entertaining Cancer*. From

outside Birmingham, we also hosted Shrewsbury-based meditation teacher Vajradevi and Triratna's Young Person's Co-ordinator, Kshantikara. One of the speakers, Munisha, spoke from Sweden via Zoom and we could project her onto a large screen visible in the shrine room. Most of the rest of the Sangha Night events were offered by our wonderful local Order members.

Women's Dharma Study

Maitrimati led a Foundation Year study group which was supported by Vicky Beckett. Maitrisara led a Year 2 group and Suddhimani a third group in the final stages of Year 2.

Maitrimati took up her role in April 2021 as Women's Mitra Convenor and we were sad to see her go in February 2022, wishing her well for her next phase returning to social work.

While with us Maitrimati organised a number of events for women:

In June and July, two events for women Mitras were offered on the Doors to Liberation.

For women who have asked for ordination, there was a morning meeting online with Prajnagita in September and then two other events in October 2021 and March 2022.

In January Singhamati launched a monthly Saturday morning gathering for women which has been very well attended.

Men's Dharma Study

In August Dharmashalin started a monthly Saturday morning session for men. The aim was to create space for men to connect with each other. This was supported by Mahasiddhi, Jayabodhi and Sthirabandhu. This has been well attended with a good mix of newer friends and Mitras.

A new Foundation Year study group started in May and three other Mitra study groups continued with Shuddhakirti, Subhamati and Shantiprabha, plus a post-study group.

There were also two days for men training to join the Order. These were based on the Eight Guidelines.

Festivals

In July we celebrated Dharma Day, focusing on Vajrasattva. This was led by Karunavajra and Maitrisara.

In September, Padmasambhava Day was led by Sthanashraddha and Dharmashalin. This included the ritual consecration of the Padmasambhava rupa we have at the Buddhist Centre. This event was designed by Sthanashaddha, an extraordinarily creative ritualist and we are lucky to be able to call on his talents in this way.

Sangha Day in November featured a talk by Dharmashalin, which for particular reasons he only had an hour's notice to prepare. It is a delight to see Dharmashalin's skill in crafting a beautifully constructed, articulate and inspiring talk almost off the cuff. The Buddhist Centre is fortunate to have his talents to call on.

Parinirvana Day in February was titled Marking the Death of the Buddha and was led by Sangharuchi and Jayabodhi.

Finally, the full moon of May heralded Buddha Day which focused on the Bodhi Gaya Experience and was led by Dharmashalin and Singhamati.

Retreats

After a year where residential retreats were really not possible, we were very glad to be able to hold the Birmingham Sangha Retreat in October 2021 at Adhisthana near Malvern. Unfortunately, there were a few cases of COVID which meant that the co-leader and another member of the Centre Team weren't able to go. But other Order members valiantly rallied round and it was a great success.

We were also able to hold the Midland Women's Weekend Retreat called "More Precious than the Rarest Gem" in December 2021 at Adhithana, which was also affected by COVID as the co-lead for that couldn't go either, but it went well and was much appreciated.

We also held four non-residential retreats:

In August we held a weekend retreat led by Dharmashalin and Maitrimati called "Meeting the Buddhas".

In December Dhammaloka and Mike Thompson led a day called "Exploring the Practice of Meditation".

At the turn of the New Year Dharmashalin led a non-residential retreat on the theme of "Stories from the Zen Tradition".

In March Paramartha led a day retreat for Mitras and Order members called "Recollecting the Buddha".

Many people continued to participate in the wide range of online retreats that have become available elsewhere in Triratna's community. These are accessible and affordable and supplement the more locally- based in-person retreats very well.

New Initiatives and Other Events

This report has already mentioned the new online Dharma Class on Thursday lunchtimes called "Wake Up", the Online Meditation Hall and the day event aimed at complete newcomers called "Learn to Meditate in a Day".

Another innovation was to feature the topic of dana (generosity) in September with a view to raising the awareness within the sangha about how the Buddhist Centre works in terms of its financial resources. Maitrisara and other Order members spoke to different groupings of the sangha, for example, during women's and men's evenings. Many people responded generously with offers of volunteer help and additional standing orders.

In April we held a “Love Your Centre Day” which was led by Maitrisara, Vijayasri and Julia. Thanks to the brilliant planning done in advance by Julia, we managed to get to some of the jobs that can’t be done in the normal rota of cleaning. And people got a somewhat surprising amount of enjoyment and satisfaction out of cleaning!

Mentoring Project

After the very successful mentoring project we ran in early 2021 when the lockdown was in full effect, we ran the project a second time. The aim of the project was to support mentees to take their meditation practice deeper in dialogue with a more experienced practitioner. This time 32 people took part with 20 people mentored by 12 Order members.

Young Buddhists Group

The Young Buddhists Group (under 30) have been meeting monthly, in person, for the past 12 months. This has been a space for young people to explore meditation, dharma and cultivate spiritual friendship.

The monthly sessions have included evenings led by Order members, such as a meditation workshop with Pasannamati, an exploration of Green Tara with the European Young Persons Coordinator, Kshantikara, and an evening on “How to be a friend” with Shuddhakirti.

A particular highlight was an evening led by team member Alice Evans on the power of art and the magic of mindful making. Members of our Young Buddhists Group members also attended two retreats in the wider Triratna network organised by Adhithana and Sheffield Buddhist Centre.

The group is co-ordinated by a team of three Mitras, Alice Evans, Matty Evans and Lucy Whittaker.

One of the team, Cara Armstrong, has now moved to London. Cara gifted the team with care, support and passion, helping to grow the roots of a flowering young person's sangha in Birmingham.

Dharma Arts

In the art exhibition space, we hosted an exhibition by Judith Fleetwood-Walker.

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

As a Buddhist Centre we are committed to living ethically, without causing 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, with named Safeguarding Officers.

In 2021 Maitrisara stepped down as Safeguarding Trustee and we appointed Pasannamati to take up that role.

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

3. Residential Communities Update

Our Maintenance Manager, Vicky, has been co-ordinating various projects around the different residential properties.

At 12 Park Road major work has been happening, including an exterior works project, with hundreds of individual components, such as major repairs to windows, leadwork on the roof, chimneys and capping. Inside a new stair carpet has been installed, the tile floor has been restored and improvements made to fire safety.

At the flats in 36 Park Hill the stairs and hallway were redecorated and a replacement bathroom fitted in one of the flats, including a level-access wet room, with new toilet and sink funded by Birmingham City Council and supervised by the Buddhist Centre.

Vicky's careful and thorough work is very much appreciated by the Trustees.

We have a number of tenants who help support maintenance in their homes. There are too many to list, but notably Heiko, Shantavira, Sinhavacin and Steve Freer have made invaluable contributions.

The Salisbury Road community has generously replaced the kitchen at its own expense. The Park Hill community is creating a utility room out of the ground-floor toilet, to free up the first-floor bathroom, and is planning to modernise the ground-floor bathroom – again at its own expense. We would like to thank them for this generosity.

4. Reaching Out to the Local Community

The Birmingham Buddhist Centre is committed to engaging with, reaching out to and being of public benefit to the wider community. We do this in many ways, not limited to but including: school visits, outreach classes and chaplaincy work at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital.

In September we were one of the gardens chosen by Moseley in Bloom for the Open Gardens event and provided tea and cake for hundreds of visitors who came to the Buddhist Centre on the day.

School Visits

We began to see a recovery of school visits in the year 2021-22, after the embargo created by COVID restrictions in the previous year. We hosted 15 school visits during the period. Because of a shortage of hosts, we were not able to fulfil every request from schools. We've trained another two hosts, including Alice who is a Centre Team member, and hope to be able to increase the number of visits in the 2022-23 academic year. Many thanks to the volunteers hosting school visits during the year, namely Sinhavacin, Mike Thompson, Roz Goddard, Matty Evans, Anthony Tuckwell and Andrew Miles.

Outreach Classes

Warwick

The Warwick Group continues to develop, led by a team of Mitras together with Karunavajra. They write:

“We are very grateful for the contributions of all Order members, both local and from further afield, in supporting weekly meetings and day retreats. Warwick team members attended the ECA’s “Groups and Pioneers” gathering via Zoom and in person on retreat at Adhithana. This has been very helpful in maintaining momentum through the pandemic and also providing support and ideas for growth.

In July 2021, just as lockdown ended, we held our first Warwick-based Mitra Ceremony, welcoming Rush and Natalie into the Triratna Buddhist Community. We have also run several Introductory Courses during the year and welcomed new visitors to the sangha.

Many members of the Warwick Group have joined the Birmingham sangha at the Buddhist Centre and on retreat, and we were also delighted to join the Worcester and Ledbury groups for our own retreat at Adhithana.

Our first local study group formed, led by Sangharuchi and following the online Dharma course. Social events have included local walks, meals out and film nights.”

University of Birmingham

For a number of years the Meditation Society at the University of Birmingham has invited us to support their activities. This has been facilitated for another year by Matty and Dharmashalin. The academic year beginning 2021 has been one of the most popular to date (in one of the sessions we ran out of chairs!). Alongside the weekly 90-minute sessions, two day retreats at the Birmingham Buddhist Centre were very well attended.

Offering a Substantial Contribution to the Wellbeing of the Wider Community

Hospital Chaplaincy

Mahasiddhi, chaplain at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, together with his Buddhist colleague from the Community of Interbeing, John Roberts, continues to work within a setting where COVID still dominates the landscape.

Mahasiddhi writes:

“There are fewer cases than last year but there are fewer staff, the various waves of COVID having taken their toll on the staff and dissuaded them from going back. A number left and went elsewhere, often saying that they can’t unsee or unhear what they have witnessed and lived through.

Hence we have been able to see less staff for mindfulness or other support because they are just too busy. Social distancing, too, has meant that we have only been able to see staff in small groups anyway. Over the year in question there was still no collective practice permitted. Nonetheless we still managed to log some 1,234 staff encounters. And for the QE sangha on our occasional Saturdays we were blessed by the Birmingham Buddhist Centre making space available to us.

This demonstrates the need of staff for support and some valuable ‘me time’ with the option to unload in a small intimate context, then doing some meditation, and this has been very much appreciated.

Being alongside patients has been extremely significant, welcomed and meaningful, especially as such connection tends to be with patients who are termed ‘end of life’, with a fair number being seen for anxiety or panic attacks.”

Wellbeing for Carers Project

The Wellbeing for Carers Project, now in its 18th year, was badly affected by COVID, but we were able to re-establish many of our services for carers this year.

We held three overnight breaks and one weekend break for carers at Holland House and Charney Manor;

Re-established weekly tai chi classes;

Re-established weekly yoga classes; and

Re-established monthly carers days (with yoga, tai chi and meditation).

We also continued the online meditation session on Tuesdays. Many thanks to Jo Elson for overseeing this project.

We successfully bid for funding from Awards for All, the National Lottery Communities Fund, for £9,700 to run a peer mentoring project in late 2022.

Many thanks to Julia for her support with the administrative side of this project.

Many thanks to Maitrimati and Alice for co-ordinating the whole Wellbeing for Carers Project.

We continue to appreciate the support of Simon and Dionne from the Forward Carers Consortium which funds the project, itself commissioned by Birmingham City Council.

Birmingham Mindfulness

In December 2018 we launched Birmingham Mindfulness to offer mindfulness courses aimed specifically at improving the health and wellbeing of those living with chronic illness, stress and anxiety.

During this financial year we ran one Breathworks Intensive, covering the eight-week course in four day retreats. Seven people attended. This was led by Singhamati and generously supported by Tracy Clifford and Claire Page. Since the pandemic we have found that it has become more difficult to attract participants for these courses and we had to cancel at least one course. Despite lowering the cost of the course, this hasn't had an effect on bookings.

Room Hire

The impact of COVID on room hire continued into the first half of the reporting period, but the latter half of the year 2021-22 has seen a recovery as COVID restrictions have eased. From January onwards monthly income from room hire has been at levels comparable to before the pandemic.

There has been a change in the mix of hire types, with a growing trend for sound baths in the larger rooms and a decrease in the number of therapists making regular use of the therapy room.

We've undertaken a new form of room hire with Birmingham Centre for Arts Therapies. They have equipped the Garden Meeting Room as an art and music therapy room, and have exclusive use of it during weekdays. This arrangement has been successful in providing a steady and predictable income for times which would otherwise be low demand. We very much appreciate the efforts of Visarada, the Centre Manager, to bring the room hire activities back to some degree of normality and stability.

5. An Adapting and Flourishing Buddhist Centre and Community

It's a significant moment in the life of the Buddhist Centre when people make the commitment involved in becoming a Mmitras, asking for Ordination and getting ordained.

Two women, Debbie and Alice, and two men, Graham and Tom, became Mmitras in Birmingham during the year from Birmingham and two women, Natalie and Rush, from Warwick.

Tom and Rafael asked for ordination. Also Anthony moved to Birmingham and asked for ordination just as he arrived.

During the year, two women were ordained.

Firstly Doreen Wilson became Candradarshana and was ordained in February. Candradarshana was going to be ordained later in 2022 but it became apparent in February that the deterioration in her health meant that she was unlikely to live long enough to attend that retreat. So the ordination was brought forward and she was ordained in her home with her Sangha friends and family around her. Sadly she died two weeks later. We celebrated her life at a day-long vigil, funeral, vigil and wake in March led by Singhamati.

Veronica had been invited to her ordination retreat in 2020 but because her private preceptor is in Australia and , they have been unable to travel to the same country.

We were delighted when Veronica became Satyabodhini at her ordination in March at Vijayaloka Retreat Centre near Sydney, Australia.

As the Buddhist Centre's volunteers and sangha members were able to come back to the Buddhist Centre, we were able to re-open some of the resources, such as the Library, where Deborah Ashley has done a great job reorganising things and Paul Bunday has been updating the catalogue.

We did some significant work in the garden, replanting several of the beds, with help from Jess (regular garden volunteer) and Suddhimani (occasional helper). One bed we had to recreate after the splendid job Heiko did to save (rebuild) the old garden wall.

The thriving of the Buddhist Centre is due to the generosity and engagement of the local Order members, Mitras and friends. Order members continue to engage well at the Buddhist Centre, helping to run activities, and there are around seventy active Mitras who are taking greater responsibility as time goes by.

In particular, we would like to mention:

The Centre Team who were working with a myriad of different factors to bring the Buddhist Centre back to life during this period.

Nagadevi, who stepped down from the Trustees during this time and who has put years of dedicated effort into the Buddhist Centre across a whole range of activities.

The Trustees, who helped the Centre Team navigate the journey out of lockdown through the oversight of policy, finances and the Buddhist Centre's capacity to fulfil its vision as well as the duty of care to all sangha members.

Sagarasri, Sthanashraddha and Balajit, who have held monthly pujas at the full moon at Sangha Night.

Singhamati, who took on to organise monthly events for women.

Vijayanandi, for her help with the Secondhand Bookshop.

Deborah Ashley, who helps organise the Library.

The amazing Glean Team, keeping the cleaning going in the Buddhist Centre. Co-ordinated by the wonderful Julia and with the help of Satish, Tash, Frankie and Vijayashri.

Dharmashura who, with the help of Jess and Suddhimani, worked to care for our beautiful garden which was so enjoyed for meetings and events during the year when people felt safer there from infection risk.

Visarada, for all his work on restoring the room hire activity.

Matty, Nick, Graham and Merry, who operated the technology which enabled the hybrid events to take place.

Help in the office from Lucy, Sarvapala and Nick Dufrane who helps us with the website.

Maintenance volunteers Giles and Francesco.

And many, many more.

6. Financial Review

Buddhist Centre

Compared with the previous year, which was so affected by COVID closure, income increased by 9%.

We were particularly pleased by the fact that our income from hiring out rooms not in use for our own activities recovered from £9,748 in 2021 to £32,359 for the year ending May 2022. It was also a good year in the Bookshop, bouncing back after lockdown to make a contribution of over £3,000.

We weren't able to run quite as many retreats as in a pre-pandemic year affecting our income from that side.

We are very grateful to more than 100 people who support us through regular giving in the form of standing orders. These have remained reasonably stable over the period with a boost in Autumn 2021 following our standing order appeal.

The “Money Club” continues to meet to look at income streams. Having multiple income streams has served us well over the past few years as the unexpected impact of COVID has been mitigated by other streams less affected by it.

Expenditure for the Buddhist Centre was up 10% as our activity levels increased. Much of our spending goes to support six people on the Centre Team, as well as covering the costs of our activities, the building, energy bills, and insurances. With better access to the Buddhist Centre this year, we were able to get more maintenance work done compared with the previous year, including the rebuilding of an old garden wall which had become unstable - and is now again an attractive feature in our landscape.

Residential Properties

Income and expenditure on our residential properties (flats and Buddhist Communities) are pretty much on track, with the residential account showing a modest annual surplus of £13,000 for the Property Refurbishment and Loan Reserve. There are still substantial works to be done, but enough remains in the Reserve to cover them, and occupancy levels in the communities and flats are good.

In the Wellbeing for Carers Project we saw funding for overnight breaks come to an end. However, we were successful this year in raising a grant for £9,700 from the National Lottery, and Forward Carers continues to support us for events for carers at the Buddhist Centre.

Our finances are well managed thanks to the hard work of Dharmashura, Visarada and 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.

7. 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 its operations.

The Council has agreed that the Charity should maintain a cash reserve of at least £60,000 to cover mortgage liabilities. The Charity also has some 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. In case of emergency these reserves together also provide a resource to cover our operating costs for six months, if required. So that we may keep meeting this benchmark, we continue to give attention to increasing income and restraining current expenditure.

On behalf of the Trustees

Maitrisara

Dharmashura

7 October 2022

BIRMINGHAM BUDDHIST CENTRE

**FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MAY 2022**

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES 2021/22

		Unrestricted Funds				
	Notes	General Fund	Designated Funds	Restricted	2021/22 Total	2020/21 Total
		£	£	£	£	£
INCOMING RESOURCES						
Donations and Legacies	2	67,910	0	350	68,260	105,362
Activities to Further Charity Objectives	2	68,301	117,408	50,437	236,146	172,898
Investment Income	2	0	348	2	349	298
TOTAL INCOMING RESOURCES		136,211	117,756	50,788	304,755	278,558
RESOURCES EXPENDED						
Direct Charitable Expenditure						
Buddhist Centre Administration	3	105,253	16,885	25,537	147,674	126,322
Property Running Expenses	3	13,729	37,522	2,748	53,999	37,200
Financial and Other Costs	3	14,812	60,259	3,175	78,246	82,700
TOTAL RESOURCES EXPENDED		133,794	114,666	31,460	279,920	246,222
NET INCOME/EXPENDITURE		2,418	3,090	19,328	24,835	32,335
TRANSFERS						
Transfers to General Fund	4	18,511	-1,000	-17,511	0	0
NET MOVEMENT IN FUNDS		20,929	2,090	1,816	24,835	32,335
Balance brought forward		1,241,173	91,176	12,736	1,345,084	1,312,748
Prior Year Adjustments		0	0	0	0	1
Balance carried forward		1,262,102	93,266	14,552	1,369,919	1,345,084

BALANCE SHEET AT 31 MAY 2022

	Notes	31/05/22	31/05/21
		£	£
FIXED ASSETS			
Freehold Property	7	1,782,226	1,828,135
Vehicle	7	0	600
Equipment	7	3,613	7,021
		<u>1,785,839</u>	<u>1,835,757</u>
CURRENT ASSETS			
Bookshop Stock		5,475	6,397
Accrued Revenue		14,660	1,426
Prepaid Expenses		2,284	2,404
Other Debtors	8	2,088	10,993
Bank Savings Accounts		122,432	122,083
Bank Current Accounts		128,090	112,652
Cash in Hand		155	230
		<u>275,183</u>	<u>256,184</u>
CREDITORS (falling due within 1 year)			
Loans	9	49,113	47,574
Trade Creditors		2,069	15,906
Tenant and Key Deposits		2,416	2,146
Accrued Expenses		387	1,677
Prepaid Revenue		8,342	1,664
		<u>62,326</u>	<u>68,966</u>
CREDITORS (falling due after 1 year)			
Loans	9	628,777	677,890
		<u>628,777</u>	<u>677,890</u>
NET ASSETS			
		<u>1,369,920</u>	<u>1,345,084</u>
FINANCED BY			
General Fund		1,262,102	1,241,173
Designated Funds	10	93,266	91,176
Restricted Funds	11	14,552	12,736
		<u>1,369,920</u>	<u>1,345,084</u>

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

	2021/22 £	2020/21 £
Donations and Legacies		
Donations	67,587	81,093
Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme	673	24,268
	<u>68,260</u>	<u>105,362</u>
Activities to Further the Charity's Objectives		
Classes and Retreats	24,795	12,180
Bookshop	8,401	3,649
Rental Income (Buddhist Communities)	114,294	114,992
Yoga Classes	0	5,282
Room Hire	32,359	9,748
Carers Project	50,167	6,955
Mindfulness	900	3,585
Miscellaneous Centre Activities	4,134	1,770
Other Income	1,097	14,737
	<u>236,146</u>	<u>172,898</u>
Investment Income		
Interest on Savings Accounts	349	298
	<u>349</u>	<u>298</u>
Total Income	<u>304,755</u>	<u>278,558</u>

Note: Prior year re-presented with adjustment of £1,027 moved from Rental Income to Miscellaneous Centre Activities.

3. ANALYSIS OF RESOURCES EXPENDED

	2021/22 £	2020/21 £
Buddhist Centre Administration		
Bookshop Purchases	5,272	3,585
Centre Team Costs	85,912	86,754
Office Running Costs	1,865	2,049
Insurance	8,182	7,804
Publicity	448	574
Centre Activities	14,267	19,316
Carers Project	25,141	1,480
Centre Administration Costs	6,589	4,762
	<u>147,674</u>	<u>126,322</u>
Property Running Expenses		
Council Tax	8,415	8,124
Property Maintenance	22,713	18,440
Major Works and Improvements	14,277	2,879
Utilities	8,594	7,758
	<u>53,999</u>	<u>37,200</u>
Financial and Other Costs		
Mortgage Costs	22,759	24,250
Depreciation of Freehold Property	47,500	47,500
Donations	6,466	9,084
Legal and Professional Costs	0	0
Independent Examination	250	250
Governance: Attendance Expenses	0	0
Fundraising Costs	318	1,572
Sundry Expenses	953	44
	<u>78,246</u>	<u>82,700</u>
Total Expenses	<u><u>279,920</u></u>	<u><u>246,222</u></u>

4. TRANSFERS

Transfers represent contributions to staff costs and overheads from the Carers Project and the Warwick Group.

5. INFORMATION REGARDING STAFF

The Buddhist Centre was run by 5.88 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 is also assisted by many unpaid volunteer workers.

	£
Aggregate Support	78,754
Aggregate Employer's NI	0
Aggregate Employer's Pension Contributions	3,736

6. TRUSTEES

The trustees do not receive any emolument for their services as trustees, but 3 trustees received support payments for other services provided to the charity (included in note 5). 4 trustees were also reimbursed for receipted goods and services purchased on behalf of the charity.

	£
Support	37,261
Out of Pocket Expenses	13,475

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

7. TANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS

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

Depreciation was charged as follows:	£
Cumulative charge at 31 May 2021	561,436
Charged during the year	47,500
Cumulative charge at 31 May 2022	608,936

Depreciation of other assets:	£
Cumulative charge at 31 May 2021	41,967
Charged during the year	10,327
Cumulative charge at 31 May 2022	52,294

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

The charity's depreciation policy was last reviewed (but not changed) in August 2022.

8. DEBTORS

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

9. CREDITORS

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

10. 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).

11. 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 2022 **Charity no** 516568

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity for the year ended 31 May 2022.

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: 17/09/2022

Name: Annemie Philips (Satyapara)

Relevant professional qualification(s) or body: Association of Certified Chartered Accountants.

Address: 3 Oak Tree Avenue, Cambridge CB4 1AZ