

BIRMINGHAM BUDDHIST CENTRE TRUSTEES' ANNUAL REPORT 2016/2017

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The Trustees present their report and independently examined financial statements for the year ended 31st May 2017. 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 31st May 2017 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

Kalyanaprabha (Judith Nussbaum), Secretary (Resigned 13th May 2017)

Shuddhakirti (Neal Greenwood), Treasurer

Dharmashura (Alan Sabatini)

Prajnabandhu (Clive Simpson)

Maitrisara (Philippa Bobbett)

Dharmashalin (William Sullivan co-opted 31st July 2016)

Pasannamati (Frances Neal co-opted 31st July 2016)

Nagadevi (Rose Griffin co-opted 13th May 2017)

Bankers:

The Charity has a current account with the CAF Bank:

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

The Charity also has a PayPal account and a savings account with Scottish Widows:

Scottish Widows Bank, PO Box 12757, 67 Morrison Street, Edinburgh, EH3 8YJ

Independent Examiner: Shantiprabha (Adrian Macro)

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. The objects include 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 they are never 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

With Singhamati in her first year as Chair this year has been about clarifying key areas for development and starting to live these out, especially a new emphasis on being and building a vibrant Sangha. The Centre also continued to develop and diversify its programme of activities which aim to: offer inspiring Buddhist practice at the Centre; maintain a socially engaged and environmentally-aware perspective; continue to reach out to the local community and other faith groups; and offer a substantial contribution to the wellbeing of the people of Birmingham. Along with other Centres in the network we have been both celebrating 50 years of the Triratna Buddhist Community and re-evaluating aspects of our past.

This report elaborates further on our of 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.

Clarifying Three Key Areas for the Development of the Birmingham Buddhist Centre

Singhamati, having been inaugurated as the new Chair of the Trustees and Spiritual Lead for the Centre in April 2016, joined the Centre Team in June, being welcomed at a special lunch with our volunteers. In her first few months Singhamati invited the local sangha, and especially the local Order Members, to meet with her to help her get a sense of how the Centre was doing and potential areas for growth and development. She also spent time with the Mitra Convenors, the Centre Team, and the Trustees. Out of these conversations Singhamati, with the help of the Maitrisara and Dharmashalin, distilled a vision and strategy for the development of three key areas over the next five years. In September and October 2016, she presented these to the Trustees and then the local Order Members to ask for their feedback and support on this. In summary, the following was proposed and agreed:

Vision: areas of development	Strategy: key actions to undertake
1. Building and being a vibrant sangha at the heart of the Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sangha Night - a weekly time for us to gather • Regular retreats including a week long sangha retreat • Communicate the importance of participation and create a variety of opportunities to do this
2. Developing high quality teaching at all levels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review what we teach, especially at introductory and going deeper level and improve clarity and quality of what we offer. • Develop local Ordination Training events • Maintain depth in the Sangha Night programme to attract interest of Mitras and Order Members • Teacher training / reflection for Order Members
3. Maintaining an altruistic perspective.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop Mindfulness activities that help those living with mental and physical health issues to live well. • Maintain our Wellbeing for Carers Project, which offers events for those with Caring responsibilities helping them to live well. • Continue a broad range of outreach, as able. • As able develop further projects.

Singhamati finally presented this vision to the whole sangha at Sangha day in November 2016, where she particularly emphasised the importance of building and being a vibrant sangha, as this was felt to be the strongest priority. This talk was recorded, and made widely available, communicating this new direction and inviting the wider support and participation.

Work then began on realising this vision and in January 2017 Singhamati initiated a new Sangha Night on Thursdays. She did this with the help of a large team of Order Members and Mitras who help to create a warm and welcoming heart at Sangha Nights. Sangha Night has started well with between 25 and 50 people attending each week. It has created the opportunity for a number of local Order Members and Mitras to share their practice and areas of specialist interest. We also invited visiting speakers from outside Birmingham, including visits and excellent talks from our President, Paramartha, which have been particularly well attended. The Sangha Night Team also brought their energies together to plan and host a Sangha Summer Solstice Picnic in our beautiful garden, where around 50 of the sangha gathered to eat food, share poetry and celebrate midsummer together.

Another key event for being and building sangha this year was our first-ever week-long Sangha Retreat, the Big Birmingham Retreat, which was hosted and run by our Centre Team at Adhithana in April 2017. 34 people attended, including roughly equal numbers of: Order Members, Mitras, Friends and newcomers. We had an inspiring and harmonious time together, exploring the Four Means of Unification of the Sangha, meditating, doing puja and building friendships. Such a great time was had that shortly after the retreat the Centre Team booked exclusive use of a YHA Hostel near Ironbridge for 23-30 March 2018 for our second week-long sangha retreat!

The Birmingham Buddhist Centre as part of the Triratna Buddhist Community

In April 2017 the Birmingham Buddhist Centre joined in worldwide events celebrating 50 years of the Triratna Buddhist Community. We hosted a regional day event which was co- led by the Chairs of Birmingham, Nottingham and Shrewsbury and invited people from around the region to join us. Included in the day was a book launch from Kalyanaprabha for the *Complete Works of Sangharakshita* which is drawing together and publishing the extensive collection of profound writings the founder of our Community and Order, whose presentation of the Dharma forms the basis for our teachings and practices. (We have committed to buying a copy of the *Complete Works* for the Centre library). We also welcomed Ratnaguna, a senior member of the Order, to share his memories and experiences of our Community.

In reflecting on the last 50 years, the Triratna Buddhist Community has been in a particular phase of reviewing our past, both what has gone well and also acknowledging more fully behaviour that has been harmful. This has particularly focused around our founder Sangharakshita, now in his 93rd year, who wrote a public apology on 31st December 2016, expressing his deep regret for all the occasions on which he has hurt, harmed or upset fellow Buddhists, and asked for their forgiveness. This has provoked fresh conversations in the Community both with those who were hurt by events in the past, as well as those who are now involved in processing their responses to the past. (This process has largely been facilitated by a central Triratna body called the Adhithana Kula, based in Herefordshire.) At the Birmingham Buddhist Centre we have responded to this period of reflecting on Triratna's history by setting up four meetings for Order Members and three meetings for Mitras. These meetings provided opportunities for people to talk face-to-face, update themselves with new information and to share and discuss their thoughts and / or concerns. We also circulated to Mitras and Friends any information from the Adhithana Kula. In May 2017 the Trustees agreed that the Centre would take a more proactive approach to ensuring that we signpost newcomers and those joining men's and women's study groups, to information regarding our history, which is now outlined on our website with helpful links for more information for those interested.

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, which were agreed in May 2015. In order to protect vulnerable adults that come to the Centre we have had a Safeguarding Adults Policy for a number of years now. This year, we reviewed our safeguarding policies and practices ensuring they were up to date with current legal guidelines. These were then circulated to all Centre volunteers for their information and for them to sign to acknowledge that they have read and will follow them. We also appointed three official Safeguarding Officers for the Centre, who are responsible for keeping us up to date and for dealing with any reports should they arise (Khemadana, Dharmashalin and Maitrisara). They, along with Dharmashura and Singhamati, attended a day's training from CCPAS (Churches Child Protection Advisory Service) who are a national multi-faith safeguarding expert body.

Inspiring Buddhist practice at the Centre

The Centre continued to run an inspiring range of classes to introduce and deepen the practice of Buddhism and meditation. 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 for those who have completed an introductory course but are yet to join a study group.
- New Sangha Night on Thursdays
- For experienced meditators, the opportunity to practise together with others every Tuesday evening or Saturday morning.
- Monthly Young Buddhists' ('YoBs') meeting.

14th October 2016 marked the 60th anniversary of Dr Ambedkar's historic conversion to Buddhism, along with nearly 400,000 followers from the ex-untouchable communities in India. We celebrated with a 6 week course exploring the significance of this and the impact it has on us today. This included a talk from visiting speaker, Nagabodhi, who gave a talk entitled "Sangharakshita's role in a peaceful revolution".

Women's Dharma Study

In September/October 2016 we suspended all the women's study groups to run a study course on "Symbols of Buddhism" which was open to all women. This provided an excellent opportunity for women to develop friendships and for newer women to get more involved. The course was facilitated very creatively by different members of the women's Order sangha. The "climb-in" Five Buddha Mandala shrines were memorable, as was the live dakini who appeared while our eyes were shut. In October 2016 nine women started a foundation course with Kalyanaprabha and Suddhimani. Four other women's study groups ran throughout the year, led by Sagarasri, Pasannamati and Bodhaniya, Nagadevi and Maitrisara. A self-organising post-mitra study group also met on a Wednesday. The All Together Women's Evenings continued quarterly. A highlight this year was a visit from Gunasiddhi who gave an excellent talk called "Is intensity necessary?"

Men's Dharma Study

During 2016/7 we continued running the core men's activities that have been established over the previous years. A new study group started in January, giving us four groups in total led by Shuddhakirti and Dharmada, Dharmashalin and Shantighosha, Shantiprabha and Amayacitta, and Prajnabandhu and Balajit. These provide an essential opportunity to spend more time with other men, develop friendships and deepen their understanding of the Dharma. We also ran Men's Mandala Evenings and an evening for men who have asked for ordination and men Order Members, in which we shared a meal and took part in a conversation café. Both went well and created opportunities for practice and a chance for connections to form.

Weekend Activities

We had a full programme of day events at the weekends, which provided the opportunity to deepen friendships and practice around a certain theme. With the fantastic input of over 15 Order Members this year's highlights included:

- Women's Days: "Living with a Light Heart"; "Integration and a Path of Wholeness"; "Deepening Metta; Spiritual Death and the Heart Sutra" (for Mitras); and "The Wind in My Sails - Inspiration in the Dharma Life" (for Order Members and GFR Mitras)

- Men's Days: "Breaking through to Buddhahood" and "Study of the Sallekha Sutta" (for Mitras)
- Days for Men and Women: "Becoming a Mitra or Training for Ordination, What's the Point?"; "Understanding, Exploring and Appreciating Sangharakshita"; and two days on "Philosophy and Buddhist Ethics" led by visiting Order Member, Silavadin.

We continued to celebrate a number of Buddhist Festivals: Buddha Day, Dharma Day, Sangha Day, Padmasambhava Day, Parinirvana Day; as well as other celebrations, such as Sangharakshita's Birthday 108-Year Puja. These were all opportunities for different groups within our community to mingle and enjoy coming together to celebrate our common values. This year "Little Sangha" children's activities formed part of some of our celebrations.

This year we ran a non-residential retreat over the New Year period, in which we followed a standard residential retreat programme but at the Centre with participants sleeping at home. The retreat was well attended with 25 people coming together to meditate and study the Four Mind Turning Reflections. The retreat incorporated what has been traditional at the Centre, a New Year's Eve Festival Feast and Puja, and a further 30-40 people came just on New Years Eve to join in. This event was open to anyone and we welcomed a number of new people to the Centre that evening.

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 continued to run three silent meditation weekends and we welcomed back our former Chairman Vajragupta to lead our September Sangha Retreat called "Wild Awake". The White Tara Weekend is an increasingly popular retreat. Over favourites include the annual Men's and Women's Weekends. All these retreats went well and were well attended thanks to the energy, inspiration and efforts of over 15 Order Members who ran them. We also encouraged men and women to attend longer retreats at Retreat Centres connected to the Triratna Buddhist Community.

Reflection

Over the past year, as in previous years, Amayacitta, Dhammaloka, Jnanaketu, Khemadana and Vipulakirti have been meeting on a monthly basis to reflect using the focussing techniques developed by Eugene Gendlin and others. The group is open to anyone wishing to deepen their understanding of the Dharma using this particular type of reflection. They introduced the method to the sangha at a Sangha Night and it was well received.

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 and place in Dharma practice. Monthly life drawing classes continued, thanks to the efforts of one of our Mitras, Kieran Parnell, and these were successful at attracting new people from the broader local community to the Centre. Khemadana, along with a Mitra, Jayne Smith, ran two classical music appreciation groups exploring the four movements of the orchestral version of "Le Tombeau de Couperin" by Ravel, before attending together the concert performed at Symphony Hall. Lastly another gifted Mitra, Roz Goddard, former poet laureate of

Birmingham, offered a series of poetry writing mornings which were well attended and a great addition to our Dharma Arts programme. The Centre also continues to create space for sangha members to exhibit their art work and we welcomed excellent collections from Dawn Summers and Sthirabandhu.

Maintaining a socially engaged and environmentally aware perspective

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 our theme was “A 21st Century Bodhisattva”.

We continue to be a 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 and faith groups

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, chaplaincy work at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital and connections with Birmingham interfaith forums.

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. We maintain our annual presence at the Moseley Street Fair and this year we also won the ‘Most Floral Faith Group’ prize in the Moseley in Bloom awards, thanks to the continued work of Dharmashura, with Karunamani and other committed volunteers, for their excellent upkeep and development of the Centre’s garden.

School visits remain a very effective part of our outreach programme. They allow several hundred school and university students, aged from 5 to 20 years old, the opportunity to gain a greater understanding of Buddhism as part of a broad multi-faith curriculum. We have hosted visits from Muslim, Christian and Catholic Schools, as well as non-denominational groups and children with special needs (those with severe mental or physical handicaps). This year around 870 pupils from 29 schools visited the Buddhist Centre. These were mostly from the Birmingham area, but some came from as far as Redditch and Cheltenham, and even a group from the University of Exeter. We have an excellent team of volunteers who run these visits including: Dave Livesey, Karunamani, Khemadana, Nagadevi, Roz Goddard, Sinhavacin and Vicky Beckett.

Outreach classes are continuing in both Warwick and Olton. They are run by a team of Order Members and Mitras including Karunavajra, Shantisthana, Shantighosha, Gareth Retallick, Anne Willie, Jo Dobson, Mark Lloyd and Andy Codling. These provide greater opportunities for people to learn about Buddhism in their local area and on average the numbers attending in Warwick were twelve and in Olton eight. They also ran day retreats, weekend retreats and, for maybe the first time, a Buddha Day festival day in Warwick. The highlight of the year was the Mitra ceremony of Mark Lloyd that was held in the spring at the Birmingham Buddhist Centre.

Our outreach classes also continued at the University of Birmingham where the Buddhist Meditation Society invite us to support their activities. Again a highlight of the year was the president of the society, Jack Foulkes, becoming at Mitra in the spring at the Centre. Another Mitra, Nicki Stearman organised a 5-week introductory course in Redditch which was led by Vajragupta. It went very well with around 10-15 people attending.

Mahasiddhi continues to provide Buddhist chaplaincy care to both patients and staff at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, Birmingham. He runs regular quarterly meditation days, as well as organising four festival celebration days per year. These celebrations were attended by representatives of 6 different faiths and are significant in fostering a deeper appreciation of Buddhism amongst non-Buddhist professionals in the hospital environment. This year both mindfulness and Dharma activities expanded across various groups in the hospital, including staff and patients, on a one-to-one and a group basis.

For several years Sinhavachin has been a member of the Moseley Interfaith Forum which meets to organise public events such as the Moseley Festival and Interfaith Week. He participates annually in the Birmingham Conversation, initiated by the Anglican Bishop of Birmingham to foster dialogue between different faiths and communities, exploring topics such as 'How do we flourish in the public space?' and 'How do we live at peace in a world of conflict?'

A few years ago Sinhavachin and Samacitta were part of the steering group that set up the Faith in Birmingham Gallery in the Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery, which went on in September 2016 to win the 'Working Together Award' at the West Midlands Volunteer Award Ceremony. Sinhavachin continues to be one of the organisers of the inter-denominational Buddha Day celebrations in the Faith Gallery at the Museum, which Vipulakirti's Choir also takes part in.

In July 2016 Sinhavachin took the vacant Buddhist seat on Birmingham SACRE (Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education), a statutory body which advises the local authority on teaching Religious Education. The Birmingham Agreed Syllabus that SACRE created in 2007 was ground-breaking in its inclusive, interfaith perspective; it is said to be one of the best in the country, and is used by many schools that are not under Birmingham City Council control. It is subject to periodic review, and Sinhavachin is now also a member of the Agreed Syllabus Conference, which will draw up a revised syllabus over the next year or two.

Offering a substantial contribution to the wellbeing of the wider community.

We are pleased that the Wellbeing for Carers Project, now in its 13th year, continues to thrive and be of substantial benefit in supporting the Carer Community. This continues to offer weekly Tai Chi, which Bodhinita has faithfully been helping with, as well as the Carers Days once a month. We held three overnight relaxation breaks for carers and two weekend breaks at Holland House and Charney Manor. 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 for this work. We would like to express huge appreciation to Maitrisara who manages the project, as well as her team of 20 volunteers who help (including five Order Members and eight Mitras), with a special thank you to Jean Broadfield for help with some of the administration behind the scenes.

When Singhamati joined the Centre Team she also brought her previous experience and training as a Breathworks mindfulness teacher and physiotherapist, as well as her vocation and commitment to helping people living with chronic physical and mental health problems to live well. This year, she ran two eight-week Breathworks Mindfulness for Health courses, teaching 25 people life-changing mindfulness tools and techniques. She also ran a number of monthly follow-up practice sessions for those who had attended the course. These were a huge success and she was appreciative of the help from those who supported the courses or assisted with administrative tasks.

An engaged, changing and growing Centre and Buddhist Community

The Centre remains a thriving place, with classes well attended. The local Order Members continue to engage well at the Centre, helping to run activities, and there are also 65-70 active Mitras.

Our Buddhist Community continued to grow and deepen this year with new Mitras, ordination requests and ordinations. We were pleased that seven women and four men became Mitras, celebrating during a puja on a festival day or at Sangha Night. We are also glad that one woman and one man asked for ordination expressing their wish to further explore and deepen their commitment to the Three Jewels. We were delighted to 'send off' three of our community to be ordained into the Triratna Buddhist Order and then welcome them back:

- Sangharuchi was ordained on the 2nd October 2016 during a one-month retreat at Guyhaloka in Spain.
- Karunamani was ordained on the 1st May 2017 during a four-month retreat at Guyhaloka in Spain.
- Bodhinita was ordained on the 2nd July 2017 during a two-week retreat at Adhithana in Herefordshire.

In December 2016 we were delighted to appoint Vicky Beckett, a Mitra in our sangha who is training for a life in the Order, as Maintenance Manager for the Centre and our four residential communities. She has been a great addition to the Centre Team, making a very effective start at reviewing the properties and organising and overseeing many projects for their upkeep and improvement. In April 2017, Khemadana and Vicky also oversaw a very timely redecoration of the Centre office, which is now a very cheery yellow and set up for the larger team to work together in a shared space.

In February 2017 we were saddened by the death of Sara Coward, who had become a Mitra in our sangha in 2010. Her funeral was beautifully led by Mahasiddhi and attended by a number of the sangha, who chanted the Heart Sutra as that was especially meaningful to Sara.

In March 2017 we said goodbye to Kulajalini who was moving to Bristol having been a very active member of our sangha as a Mitra and then as an Order Member. We held a special evening to rejoice in her merits and appreciate all that she has contributed to the Centre over many years. We hope to welcome her back to run an occasional day event at the Centre every year.

Kalyanaprabha, an appreciated and experienced member of our sangha and valued trustee, having previously moved from Birmingham to Malvern, decided it was time for her to hand over her responsibilities as a trustee. At our May 2017 meeting we thanked Kalyanaprabha for all her efforts, rejoiced in her merits and gave her a gift as a token of our appreciation. She continues to run the occasional, much appreciated, day retreat for our women's sangha. Following this we invited Nagadevi to join the trustees and were delighted when she accepted. Nagadevi is a great addition to the trustees, being very tuned-in and an excellent exemplar, as she participates and gives to many aspects of Centre life: from lunchtime meditations, women's Dharma study, school visits, introductory and going deeper classes to attending Sangha Night, festivals, Order and chapter meetings and befriending people.

The Birmingham Yoga Studio at the Centre continued to thrive under the guidance of Prabhakara, our Senior Level 1 Iyengar teacher. Prabhakara, having moved from Birmingham to Malvern in January 2016, reduced his work at the Centre in January 2017. However, he continued to offer regular weekly Iyengar yoga classes, for beginners and experienced practitioners, as well as a programme of weekend workshops. 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.

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 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. In addition dozens of volunteers also 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 two volunteers Colin Geens and Nick Dufrane. Nick created a new website for the Centre, giving it a fresh look and allowing it to be mobile friendly and Colin upgraded and improved the lighting in our main shrine room and Centre forecourt, as well as replacing many of the Centres light fittings with LED units to reduce our electricity consumption.

FINANCIAL REVIEW

Overall our income remains steady due to our commitment to maintaining a variety of income streams for the Centre. However, there have been some increases and decreases within each income stream which are summarised in the following. We are pleased that our income from general donations from our sangha remained steady at around £24,000 over the year, demonstrating the continued support from our core members. We also saw an increase in retreat income (and expenditure) owing to the success of the week-long Big Birmingham Retreat. New income streams, such as Breathworks, have made a good

contribution in addition to our established streams of income, most notably the Carers Project and room hire, but also from the bookshop, school visits and other one-off sources.

Sadly there has been a drop in income from the donations we receive at our Dharma classes from £19,300 to £13,600, down 25% on Tuesday and 42% on a Thursday. This is partly due to stopping the introductory and going deeper courses on a Thursday (to make room for Sangha Night and an introductory drop in), but also there has been an overall drop in attendance at the Centre. We have also seen a decrease of 20% in the income from our yoga classes, from £33,374 to £26,688, this is partly due to the changing classes with Prabhakara going part time, but mostly because of a drop in participants, which we are putting down to increasing competition now that yoga classes are more widely available. In response we are reviewing the way our yoga studio works and modernising our yoga website.

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 were also pleased this year to negotiate a lower interest rate on the principal mortgage and fix it for 10 years.

The recruitment of a new maintenance manager, after a gap of over 18 months, has increased our staffing costs as well as improving our ability to spend the maintenance budget and this reflected in the accounts. We feel this is an essential expenditure in order to maintain and look after the Charity's assets.

The "Money Club" continued to meet regularly at the Centre to monitor carefully our income streams, actively encourage regular giving and maintain donor care. In August 2016, there was a successful fundraising campaign among the Sangha to support Sangharuchi to attend his ordination retreat. In March 2017 the Money Club initiated a new fundraising campaign, which has been championed by Vicky, to raise £12,000 to fund a new boiler and a hearing assistance system for the Centre. This campaign has made a great start with some very generous donations and is continuing in to the next financial year.

Our finances are well managed thanks to the hard work of the Finance Committee and overall the Charity is in a very reasonable financial shape, remaining in good control of its expenditure and maintaining 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 priority 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 Triratna Preceptors' College Trust and Triodos Bank.

On behalf of the Trustees

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Date.....

On behalf of the Trustees

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Date.....

BIRMINGHAM BUDDHIST CENTRE

**FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MAY 2017**

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES 2016/17

	Notes	Unrestricted Funds		Restricted	2016/17 Total	2015/16 Total
		General Fund	Designated Funds	Carers		
		£	£	£	£	£
INCOMING RESOURCES						
Donations and Legacies	2	47,121	0	0	47,121	50,086
Activities to Further Charity Objectives	2	216,214	3,294	43,717	263,225	243,657
Investment Income	2	0	199	0	199	304
TOTAL INCOMING RESOURCES		263,335	3,493	43,717	310,545	294,047
RESOURCES EXPENDED						
Direct Charitable Expenditure						
Buddhist Centre Administration	3	136,604	2,726	27,770	167,100	141,166
Property Running Expenses	3	27,794	833	0	28,627	23,722
Financial and Other Costs	3	89,744	0	0	89,744	93,961
TOTAL RESOURCES EXPENDED		254,142	3,559	27,770	285,471	258,849
NET INCOME/EXPENDITURE	4	9,193	-66	15,947	25,074	35,198
TRANSFERS						
Transfer to Designated Fund	5	-15,135	15,135	0	0	0
Transfer to General Fund	5	16,746	0	-16,746	0	0
Transfer to General Fund	5	424	-424	0	0	0
NET MOVEMENT IN FUNDS		11,228	14,645	-799	25,074	35,198
Balance brought forward		1,209,129	73,016	2,698	1,284,843	1,249,762
Prior Year Adjustments		-321	1,264	0	943	-117
Balance carried forward		1,220,036	88,925	1,899	1,310,860	1,284,843

BALANCE SHEET AT 31 MAY 2017

	Notes	31/05/17	31/05/16
		£	£
FIXED ASSETS			
Freehold Property	8	2,012,365	2,056,384
Vehicle	8	0	250
Equipment	8	200	440
		<u>2,012,565</u>	<u>2,057,074</u>
CURRENT ASSETS			
Bookshop Stock		10,142	8,679
Prepaid Expenses		4,525	6,249
Gift Aid Tax Claim	9	10,381	0
Other Debtors	9	8,744	8,180
Bank Savings Accounts		76,264	76,064
Bank Current Accounts		99,991	75,739
Cash in Hand		64	82
		<u>210,111</u>	<u>174,993</u>
CREDITORS (falling due within 1 year)			
Loans	10	41,886	39,702
Trade Creditors		6,411	3,372
Provision for Gas Bill		0	1,300
Tenant and Key Deposits		1,189	1,056
Prepayments		2,901	0
		<u>52,387</u>	<u>45,430</u>
CREDITORS (falling due after 1 year)			
Loans	11	859,428	901,794
		<u>859,428</u>	<u>901,794</u>
NET ASSETS			
		<u>1,310,861</u>	<u>1,284,843</u>
FINANCED BY			
General Fund		1,220,037	1,209,128
Designated Funds	12	88,925	73,017
Restricted Fund (Carers Project)		1,899	2,698
		<u>1,310,861</u>	<u>1,284,843</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:
- | | |
|-------------------------|----------|
| Furniture and Equipment | 4 years |
| Motor Vehicles | 4 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

	2016/17 £	2015/16 £
Donations and Legacies		
Donations	47,121	50,086
	<u>47,121</u>	<u>50,086</u>
Activities to Further the Charity's Objectives		
Classes and Retreats	33,605	26,511
Bookshop	10,888	11,823
Rental Income (Buddhist Communities)	109,121	109,878
Yoga Classes	26,688	33,374
Room Hire	31,799	28,754
Carers Project	43,717	28,111
Miscellaneous Centre Activities	6,591	4,914
Other Income	816	292
	<u>263,225</u>	<u>243,657</u>
Investment Income		
Interest on Bank and Savings Accounts	199	304
	<u>199</u>	<u>304</u>
Total Income	<u><u>310,545</u></u>	<u><u>294,047</u></u>

3. ANALYSIS OF RESOURCES EXPENDED

	2016/17 £	2015/16 £
Buddhist Centre Administration		
Bookshop Purchases	8,709	9,071
Centre Team Costs	97,290	93,693
Office Running Costs	1,855	1,713
Insurance	6,112	6,092
Publicity	28	48
Centre Activities	18,350	9,689
Carers Project	27,770	13,902
Centre Administration Costs	6,986	6,958
	<u>167,100</u>	<u>141,166</u>
Property Running Expenses		
Council Tax	6,699	6,356
Property Maintenance	13,215	8,146
Utilities	8,713	9,220
	<u>28,627</u>	<u>23,722</u>
Financial and Other Costs		
Mortgage Costs	30,796	33,237
Depreciation	47,990	48,240
Donations	8,004	9,881
Legal and Professional	2,496	2,496
Governance: Attendance Expenses	301	0
Sundry Expenses	157	107
	<u>89,744</u>	<u>93,961</u>
Total Expenses	<u><u>285,471</u></u>	<u><u>258,849</u></u>

4. NET RESOURCES FOR THE YEAR

This is stated after charging

	£
Depreciation	47,990
Accountancy	2,496

The charity's depreciation policy was last reviewed in June 2008.

5. TRANSFERS

Transfers represent contribution to staff costs and overheads from the Carers Project, contribution to property fund and contribution to costs and overheads from Warwick fund.

6. INFORMATION REGARDING STAFF

The Buddhist Centre was run by 6.3 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	86,106
Aggregate Employer's NI	1,467
Aggregate Employer's Pension Contributions	1,597

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). 6 trustees were also reimbursed for receipted goods and services purchased on behalf of the charity.

	£
Support	51,746
Out of Pocket Expenses	16,320

Two trustees paid rent at the going rate to the charity as tenants in our community houses.

8. TANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS

The valuation of freehold property was last reviewed in June 2010. Two new central heating boilers were installed in one residential property during 2016/17.

Depreciation was charged as follows:	£
Cumulative charge at 31 May 2016	327,045
Charged during the year	47,459
Cumulative charge at 31 May 2017	374,504

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 almost all, perhaps all, of this sum is recoverable.

10. CREDITORS (falling due within 1 year)

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

11. CREDITORS (falling due after 1 year or more)

Capital repayments due on the mortgages for 12 Park Road, 36 Park Hill and 80 Park Hill.

12. DESIGNATED FUNDS

This represents:

- (a) Residue of Abhayaratna's Legacy which has been used to fund the refurbishment of the main shrine room (to be used in 2016/17).
- (b) 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).
- (c) Money set aside to help repay mortgages on residential properties (to be used when required).
- (d) Funds collected to enable local Buddhists to go on retreat (to be used when required).
- (e) Funds generated by and for the Warwick Group

Independent Examiner's report to the trustees of the Birmingham Buddhist Centre

I report on the accounts of the charity (number 516568) for the year ended 31 May 2017.

Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner

The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144 of the Charities Act 2011 (the 2011 Act) and that an independent examination is needed. It is my responsibility:

- to examine the accounts under section 145 of the 2011 Act;
- to follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act; and
- to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of independent examiner's report

My examination was carried out in accordance with the general directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from you as trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair view' and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

Independent examiner's statement

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

(1) which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements:

- to keep accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the 2011 Act; and
- to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the 2011 Act

have not been met; or

(2) to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Signed: Adrian Macro

Adrian Macro, BSc (Dh Shantiprabha)
145 Highbury Road, Birmingham B14 7QP
16 November 2017