

**BIRMINGHAM  
BUDDHIST CENTRE  
ANNUAL REPORT  
AND ACCOUNTS  
2018/19**



The Trustees present their report and independently examined financial statements for the year ended 31 May 2019. These have been prepared in the light of the Statement of Recommended Practice - Accounting and Reporting by Charities, and the Charities Acts.

## **REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS**

All information given was correct at 31 May 2019 and has been approved by the Trustees.

**Charity Name:** Birmingham Buddhist Centre

**Registered Charity Number:** 516568

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

### **Trustees of the Charity:**

Singhamati (Singhamati Hannah), Chair

Shuddhakirti (Neal Greenwood), Treasurer

Pasannamati (Pasannamati Frances Neal), Secretary

Dharmashura (Alan Sabatini)

Prajnabandhu (Clive Simpson)

Maitrisara (Philippa Bobbett)

Dharmashalin (William Sullivan)

Nagadevi (Rose Griffin)

### **Bankers:**

The Charity has a current account with:

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

The Charity also has a savings account with:

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

**Independent Examiner:** Satyapara (Annemie Philips), ACCA.

## **STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT**

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

A Council of Trustees is responsible for overseeing the affairs of the Charity and setting the direction of its development. The Council meets approximately four to six times per year.

The Trustees delegate the day-to-day running of the Charity to the members of the Centre Team. The Trustees are elected each year at the Annual General Meeting by the members of the Charity. Other Trustees may be co-opted by the Council during the year. The Trustees are aware of the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit.

## **OBJECTIVES, ACTIVITIES AND ACHIEVEMENTS**

### **Principal purpose of the Charity**

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

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

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

It has been another successful year for the Charity with our activities continuing to thrive. A highlight was the generous and quick response from our Community when we needed to ask for extra financial support via standing orders, reflecting their confidence in us and a desire to support the Charity's work. Effective work has continued in the three key areas of vision and strategic development for the Centre: building and being a vibrant sangha (community); developing high quality teaching at all levels and maintaining an altruistic perspective.

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

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

### **An Update on our Vision and Strategic Development**

#### ***Building and Being a Vibrant Sangha***

In March 2019 Singhamati launched a standing order appeal asking for the sangha's financial support to help the Centre continue to live its vision. That is to change lives, alleviate suffering and awaken freedom by giving the gift of the Dharma. The appeal was needed as in 2018 there had been a deficit of £12,000 in the Centre's operational finances, the first time that had happened in many years. We aimed to increase our standing order income from £2,000 to £4,000 a month in order to turn around this deficit and give us the capacity to focus on developing and deepening our core Dharma work. The appeal was a great success and by July 2019 we had increased our monthly standing order income from £2,000 to £3,400. This is the generous impact of 32 new donors and 44 people increasing their

standing orders. We are delighted and deeply appreciative that 110 people now give every month, helping us to live out our vision together. The success of the appeal was a real confidence booster, reflecting the strength and health of our sangha and their willingness and desire to support our activities.

Creating opportunities to bring the sangha together continues to be a focus for us through Sangha Night, our week-long Sangha Retreat, Sangha Works days, as well as our other activities. We are really pleased that Sangha Night, now in its third year, has continued to go well with 25-50 people attending each week. The evening is hosted by Singhamati with the help of a large team of Order Members and Mitras who help to create a warm and welcoming heart. In 2019 we have been exploring the core Buddhists teaching: “Cease to do evil, learn to do good, purify the heart”, as part of which so far we’ve had series on ethics and the Mandala of the Five Buddhas. It has been great to see our local Order Members and Mitras contributing so well to Sangha Night, both through leading events and turning up to support the evening. Sangha Night also gives us a platform for visiting Order Members, allowing us to benefit from their inspirations and often many years of practice. This year we have been delighted to welcome: Padmavajra, Nagapriya, Amaladhi, Kalyanaprabha, Paramartha and Amitajyoti.

The Sangha Night team brought their energies together to host both a winter and a summer Sangha Gathering, both of which were really enjoyable, attracting around 50 people to eat food, share poetry and celebrate our community together. A final highlight from Sangha Night this year was two celebrations of people becoming Mitras, friends of the Triratna Buddhist Order.

Another key event was our third week-long Sangha Retreat, run by our Centre Team in April 2019. It was held at a YHA Hostel near Ironbridge with 30 people attending, including roughly equal numbers of: Order Members, Mitras, Friends and newcomers. Dharmashalin and Maitrisara very ably led us in an exploration of “The Bodhisattva’s Way of Life”, based on Shantideva’s *Bodhicaryavatara*, whilst Khemadana oversaw practical needs and Singhamati cooked up a treat in the kitchen. It was another very enjoyable week of practising together and building friendships. Such a great time was had that we’ve booked the YHA Hostel for 3-10 April 2020 for next year’s retreat and we hope they will continue to be an annual highlight in our events calendar.

Vicky Beckett has continued to host “Sangha Works” days every few months. They aim to bring the sangha together for meditation and Dharma practice combined with maintenance and improvements at the Centre. These days enabled us to paint the Vajra Room and the bookshop and do some much needed deep-cleaning.

In order to help build and support a vibrant sangha we have an ongoing commitment to accessibility. In November 2018 we installed a second wheelchair lift to allow safe and independent access to the back of the building. We were very grateful for the donations we received to cover the cost of the project which came both from the sangha and those that attend the Centre for Breathworks activities.

### *Developing High Quality Teaching*

One of our major aims in this area is to develop our introductory course teaching and create a more effective pathway for the people who wish to deepen their involvement in the Centre. We haven't been able to focus on this as much as we would have liked, due to the demands of other projects such as fundraising and changes in the Wellbeing for Carers project, but in spite of this we have continued to make some progress. We began with those leading introductory courses trialling the Radical Dharma Course material, developed by the Sheffield Buddhist Centre and recommended by the Sikkha Project, and reflecting on how the course worked for us. Then over the last six months we have been developing that material into our own Introduction to Meditation and Buddhism course, which includes suggested teaching material, handouts, emails and meditations for home use. This still requires further work and in the coming year we hope to be able to focus our energy on developing this area further. The project is being led by Maitrisara, Dharmashalin and Singhamati, who remain very grateful for the input and support from those who teach introductory courses: Nagadevi, Karunamani, Dharmada, Vipulakirti, Balajit and Shantiprabha.

Over the last year Maitrisara has been working with other women's Mitra Convenors in the region to set up new opportunities locally for women training for ordination. This is called the "Mid-west Jewel Quest" project and it was launched in June 2019 on a weekend retreat with around 28 women at Taraloka Retreat Centre. The retreat was a real success and we hope the project will thrive, offering day and weekend retreat opportunities for going deeper.

### *Maintaining an Altruistic Perspective*

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

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

### *Women's Dharma Study*

In April/May 2019 we suspended all the women's study groups to run a study course on "Stories from the Pali Canon" 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. This year 12 women started the year-long foundation course, in two groups, led by Suddhimani and Maitrisara. Four other women's study groups ran throughout the year, led by Singhamati and Veronica Toescu, Sagarasri and Danajoti, Bodhinita, and Nagadevi. During a few months this year Maitrisara was very involved in our Wellbeing for Carers project and this meant that there were slightly fewer events for women during that period.

### *Men's Dharma Study*

This year 6 men started the year-long foundation course led by Khemadana. Three men's Mitra study groups ran throughout the year led by Dharmashalin and Shantighosha, Shantiprabha and Amayacitta, and Shuddhakirti. These provide an essential opportunity to spend more time with other men, develop friendships and deepen understanding of the Dharma. Other activities have included Men's Mandala Evenings, themed day retreats and meal and study sessions for Mitras in the ordination process.

The 'Men's Order Kula' continues to meet once a month to discuss the general well-being of the men's sangha. This year it has focused on exploring the principles and practice of spiritual friendship. In April 2018 we launched the 'Dharma Life Review' (DLR) project, which was intended to help men get a clearer sense of how and what they are working on through having a 'buddy' or mentor who they meet up with regularly. This has continued through the year, having seeded connections and friendships.

In November 2018 Dharmashalin ran a six-week Mindfulness for Men course, which was timed to run alongside other UK-wide men's mental health awareness-raising projects. It was a secular mindfulness course which attracted 15 men to the Centre, some of whom might not have come otherwise, offering them the support and tools to work creatively with their minds.

### *Day Retreats*

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

- A Women's Day Retreat on the Anapanasati Sutta led by Singhashri who kindly visited us from London.
- Men's Day Retreats: two days exploring the symbols of the lotus and the vajra and another exploring the *Dhammapada* called "Transforming the Heart".
- A Mixed Day Retreat entitled "Seeing More Clearly" was led by Viryanaya offering an opportunity to learn how to use critical thinking in Dharma practice.
- Meditation Sesshin Days: these were a new initiative this year and were well received, offering another opportunity for collective meditation practice.

### *Festivals*

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 Triratna Day and Sangharakshita's Birthday 108-Year Puja. These were predominantly very

well attended, creating opportunities for the community to practise collectively together, building friendships and celebrating our shared vision and values. A number of the festivals were in part family-friendly, inviting people to bring their children and partners to join in with the activities, allowing them to share this experience of practice and community.

### *Retreats*

Again we ran two non-residential weekend retreats during which we follow a standard residential retreat programme but at the Centre with participants sleeping at home. These allow people to get on retreat without the need to go away, which can be helpful for those with caring responsibilities at home or for those that find it hard to travel. They are also a fantastic opportunity to intensify our practice together at the Centre. The new year retreat explored the theme “The Art of Self Compassion” and the summer retreat, for Mitras and Order Members, explored the theme “Views: Becoming more aware of how our thinking drives our lives”. Both events were a success and we are keen to continue them as a part of our annual programme.

Going away on a weekend retreat enables the deepening of friendships, meditation and Dharma practice away from the demands of everyday life. So we are committed to running a number of retreats every year. This year we ran five weekend retreats and one week-long retreat. Thanks to the efforts of many Order Members we were delighted to offer the following weekend retreats: the White Tara retreat, a silent meditation retreat, Midland Women’s retreat: “Meeting the Bodhisattvas”, a Men’s retreat: “A Dragons Eye View” and a Sangha retreat: “Love every Leaf – deepening metta through nature”.

### *New Initiatives and Other Events*

In October 2018 a new LGBTQ+ Group was launched, very enthusiastically hosted and organised by Sophie Clifton with friends. The group is open to LGBTQ/non-LGBTQ, Buddhist/non-Buddhist, newcomers/seasoned attendees. The group meets on the last Friday of every month for meditation followed by a social type event such as arts and crafts, baking, picnics, pizzas, etc.

Vicky Beckett, Merry Ashworth and Rafa Morales hosted this years “Not-Xmas Lunch” an important and helpful space for some people to come together on Christmas Day. Likewise, Dharmashalin hosted our annual New Year’s Eve celebration. We are also pleased that the Buddhist Centre Open Choir, continued to meet every second Friday, led by the highly skilled Vipulakirti and Maitrisara.

In September 2019 Khemadana led two day retreats enabling us to participate in the International Practice Retreat: an event which is held at centres around Triratna world-wide, enabling people to connect to our international community as well as deepen their practice in the setting of their everyday lives.

The opportunity to go deeper through reflection practice also continued through until early 2019 and we’d like to acknowledge all the efforts of Amayacitta, Dhammaloka, Khemadana, Saraha, Vipulakirti and others, for leading and holding those spaces over many years at the Centre.

### *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. Roz Goddard, former poet laureate of Birmingham, continued to offer excellent poetry writing mornings. The Centre continues to create space for sangha members to exhibit their art work and we welcomed excellent collections from: Ruth Koffer (drawings), Yashodeva (watercolours), Sabbi Kaur (paintings and pastels) and Veronica Toescu (needlework).

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

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

Buddhist Action Month (BAM) has now become an annual event every June which is celebrated in Triratna Centres throughout the UK, Europe, and further afield, as well as by other Buddhist groups. This year our theme was “Transforming Self, Transforming World”, which we explored with a series of talks and workshops at Sangha Night.

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

### Reaching Out to the Local Community

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

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 offered an Open Day and free taster sessions of yoga and Breathworks during the Moseley festival in July.

School visits remain a very effective part of our outreach programme. In this period we hosted 32 separate institutions, a total of 48 visits in all. For three of these we went out to a school to present to a class or the whole school, the rest were onsite at the Centre. As in previous years we catered for a range of groups and institutions, including local primary schools and secondary schools, groups of home-educated children, PGCE students, an LGBT group, and trainee clergy from a theological college. Many sangha members contributed to hosting these visits in the year; including Karunamani, Nagadevi, Khemadana, Vicky Beckett, Sangharuchi, Xen Lu, Roz Goddard and Sinhavacin.

Outreach classes continued in both Warwick and Olton. They are run by a team of Order Members and Mitras including Karunavajra, Shantisthana and Andy Codling in Olton and



Shantighosha, Jo Dobson and Kip (Dave) Holland in Warwick. These provide greater opportunities for people to learn about Buddhism in their local area. Dharmashalin continued to run outreach classes at the University of Birmingham where the Meditation Society invites us to support their activities. The group continues to provide a context for young people to learn meditation and Buddhism and the participants really benefit from these tools, most notably in helping them manage their stress and anxiety. In addition to these regular classes we were pleased to run a six week Introduction to Meditation and Buddhism course in Redditch, organised by Nikki Stearman and led by Jayabodhi.

We have also offered a few new outreach meditation workshops this year to help support the wellbeing of our local community. These included: a regular meditation at Right Start Moseley, a drug and alcohol rehabilitation centre, led by Shuddhakirti; occasional sessions at Anawim, a local women's support centre, led by Nagadevi; as well as a series of classes at the Birmingham LGBT Centre, led by Prajnabandhu and Pasannamati.

Things continue to grow, flourish and evolve at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. The regular weekly meditation sessions for staff plus bi-monthly days remain very popular and well attended. Between April 2018 and March 2019 John Roberts and Mahasiddhi saw 1830 members of staff. Already April to June this year they have seen 632. An exciting development is the growing number of patients they support with long-term illnesses, pain, anxiety and those at the end of their life. The feedback for this has been very positive and encouraging, not to say rewarding. The recent addition of Vipulakirti to the team of Buddhist chaplains has been a boon not only because of all his experience but also because he provides another day of Buddhist presence.

### Offering a Substantial Contribution to the Wellbeing of the Wider Community

#### *Wellbeing for Carers Project*

We are pleased that the Wellbeing for Carers Project, now in its fifteenth year, continues to thrive and be of substantial benefit in supporting the carer community. This continues to offer weekly Tai Chi, faithfully supported by Hannah Pursey. The Carers Days once a month continue to be well attended, organised by Suddhimani and reliably supported by a wonderful team including Shantiprabha, Dave Livesey, Joy Cheek, Steve Freer and Deborah Ashley. We also held seven residential breaks, taking 151 carers away for the weekend or overnight offering a precious opportunity for rest and recuperation, which were very ably led by Suddhimani and Shantiprabha.

In July 2018 we were delighted to receive a grant of £10,000 from the Big Lottery (Awards for All) to undertake a peer evaluation of our Carers Project, in collaboration with a consultancy called Merida. Merida have now conducted this evaluation, which we hope will help us get more funding to continue our work with carers, which is of such benefit to the carers, the sangha and the Centre.

In May 2018 the Carers Project expanded for a year offering a new service delivering in-depth, one-to-one, statutory Carers Assessments. Over the year we completed 67 assessments ably co-ordinated and completed by Veronica Toescu and Maitrisara, with help from Roz Goddard, Nagadevi and Hannah Pursey.

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, especially her initiative and hard work responding creatively to developments and successfully securing ongoing funding for the project. The project benefits from a wonderful and committed group of around 20 volunteers and we would like to express our thanks both to those volunteers, as well as those leading and organising the activities.

### *Birmingham Mindfulness*

In December 2018 we launched Birmingham Mindfulness, the new project name for our mindfulness courses which aim specifically to help those living with chronic illness, stress and anxiety to improve their health and wellbeing. Birmingham Mindfulness offers Breathworks Mindfulness for Health courses, taught by Singhamati, and Mindfulness-based Stress Reduction courses, taught by Mitra Parveen Poonia who has an MSc in Teaching Mindfulness from Bangor University. Thanks to the help of Nick Dufrane the project now has its own website to promote its activities, as well as posters and flyers.

This year we offered two Breathworks courses and one Mindfulness-based Stress Reduction course teaching 40 people life-changing mindfulness tools and techniques. We were really pleased with how well these courses ran and would particularly like to thank Parveen for her generous contribution to the project. For people who have completed a Breathworks course we offered a number of afternoon follow-up sessions as well as an 8-week Kindness Behaviour Training course, which was based on material kindly shared by Paramabandhu from the London Buddhist Centre.

### *Birmingham Yoga Studio*

The Birmingham Yoga Studio at the Centre continues under the guidance of Prabhakara, our Senior Intermediate Level Iyengar teacher. Prabhakara, now living in Malvern, returns to Birmingham two days a week to offer Iyengar yoga classes, for beginners and experienced practitioners, as well as a programme of weekend and holiday workshops. The Birmingham Yoga Studio has developed good working relationships with Carol Haynes and Julie Baker, also experienced Iyengar Yoga teachers, who in response to Prabhakara moving away have taken on more classes, allowing the Studio to continue to offer an attractive programme. We are also pleased that James Critchlow, an Asthanga Yoga Teacher, continues his regular use of the studio. These classes help maintain the health of those attending, as well as being another way in which we open our doors and support the wellbeing of the local community.

### *Room Hire*

The Centre is pleased to continue to hire rooms and make space available when it is not needed for our core activities. In this way we provide rooms to support a wide range of other projects that benefit the local community including: counselling, body work, tai chi and yoga.

## An Engaged, Changing and Growing Centre and Buddhist Community

The Birmingham Buddhist Centre is part of a worldwide community called the Triratna Buddhist Community, which was founded by Sangharakshita in April 1967. On 30 October 2018 Sangharakshita died of natural causes aged 93. The Centre, as well as our wider Community, entered into a period of activities to mark his death and remember him with great appreciation for his teachings and the Community that he leaves us. Many of us travelled to Adhisthana, in Hereford, to attend his funeral on the 10 November 2018 that was attended by over a thousand people, with many more following proceedings online.

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

Our Buddhist Community continued to grow and deepen this year with new Mitras, ordination requests and ordinations. We were pleased that eight women and two men became Mitras, celebrated at Sangha Night. We are also glad that two women and three men asked for ordination, expressing their wish to further explore and deepen their commitment to the Three Jewels. We were delighted to 'send off' two of our community to be ordained into the Triratna Buddhist Order and then welcome them back:

- Danajoti was ordained on 14 September 2018 during a two-week retreat at Akashavana in Spain.
- Vijayanandi was re-ordained on the 12 May 2019 during a two-week retreat at Adhisthana in Herefordshire.

On 26 September 2018 Ashokashuri, the previous women's Mitra Convenor and friend of many in our sangha, passed away. We hosted a meditation vigil evening and a funeral for Ashokshuri at the Centre, giving the opportunity for her family and friends to gather together to celebrate her life and remember and rejoice in her many wonderful qualities.

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

We would like to say a special thank you to new volunteer teams this year which include: Vijayanandi, Shubhra, Doreen Wilson and Deborah Ashley. Vijayanandi and Shubhra have come together to form a new shrine team at the Centre, between them creating beautiful and carefully tended shrines around the building. Vijayanandi has also taken over running the secondhand bookshop bringing refreshed energy and increasing the donations it raises for the Centre. Doreen Wilson and Deborah Ashley have taken on the Buddhist Centre library and have been working hard to update the library catalogue as well as managing book returns.

This year we again received a runner-up prize for the 'Most Floral Faith Group' in the Moseley in Bloom awards thanks to the continued work of Dharmashura, with Karunamani, Mick Fenton and other committed volunteers. This year they have been pleased not only to maintain the beautiful garden but also to develop it, reorganising the composting area and creating a new border in the Fire Garden.

#### *Residential Communities Update*

We own four residential properties, which have historically included three men's communities and a block of 5 flats. In April 2019 we were pleased to see one of our residential properties taking on a new initiative and becoming a mixed community, creating an opportunity for women to live in one of our dedicated spaces, which exist to support people to deepen their Buddhist practice in the context of community living.

We continued with our major exterior maintenance and redecoration project, which began in 2017 with work to 36 Park Hill and continued with 80 Park Hill in September 2018 and 135 Salisbury Road in May/June 2019. We would like to express our thanks to Vicky Beckett, our Maintenance Manager and Dharmashura, Charity Director, for their careful and hard work that enables these projects to happen.

#### **FINANCIAL REVIEW**

Overall our income has been healthier this year which was good news after a fall in income last year. Our donations from regular classes increased on last year, although they still remain below what we received in the three previous years. These donations fluctuate due to a number of factors, including class numbers and the effectiveness of the appeals for donations at them. Another factor is that we ask regulars coming to the Centre to set up a regular gift to the Centre, rather than donating when they come for a class. Encouraging regular giving via standing orders has been a focus for us, as discussed above, and we are beginning to see the positive effect of the appeal, which began towards the end of the financial year in March 2019, with an increase in our standing order income to £27,341 from £25,420. Assuming these regular donations continue we should see a further increase in our income from regular giving in the following year.

Our income from yoga classes saw a further reduction this year but this was mostly due to our yoga teacher, Prabhakara, reducing the days he works at the Centre in January 2019 and thus our yoga costs reduced as well. Yoga class numbers sadly remain low which we are putting down to increasing competition now that yoga classes are more widely available.

The Wellbeing for Carers project continued to offer a significant contribution to our income and we are really pleased that we still receive funding for the project from the Birmingham City Council, especially as this has been very uncertain at times. In the end, this year has seen an increase in income from the Carers project which was due to a year-long project doing statutory carers assessments and running a few more carers breaks than previously. We were pleased also to see an increase in income from the Birmingham Mindfulness project which was in line with an increase in activities. Room hire continues to make a significant contribution to our income, as well as the bookshop and school visits.

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

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

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

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

## **ACCOUNTING AND REPORTING BY CHARITIES**

### **Trustees’ Responsibilities**

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

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

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

### **Risk Management**

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

## Policy on Financial Reserves

Most of the Charity's fixed assets are in the form of five properties. All of these properties are used by the Charity in the furtherance of its aims. While the Charity's fixed assets more than cover its long-term liabilities, the Trustees recognise that the Charity incurs current liabilities in the running of the Buddhist Centre. Therefore the Council has agreed that the Charity should maintain a cash reserve of at least £60,000 and review this sum annually. So that we may continue to meet this requirement, we will give priority to increasing income and restraining current expenditure. The Charity also has some free cash reserves invested in 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

.....

Date.....

On behalf of the Trustees

.....

Date.....

**BIRMINGHAM BUDDHIST CENTRE**

**FINANCIAL STATEMENTS  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MAY 2019**

## STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES 2018/19

	Notes	Unrestricted Funds			2018/19 Total	2017/18 Total
		General Fund	Designated Funds	Restricted		
		£	£	£	£	£
<b>INCOMING RESOURCES</b>						
Donations and Legacies	2	44,813	0	4,841	49,654	44,372
Activities to Further Charity Objectives	2	208,715	2,548	69,662	280,925	248,826
Investment Income	2	0	76	0	76	36
<b>TOTAL INCOMING RESOURCES</b>		<b>253,528</b>	<b>2,624</b>	<b>74,503</b>	<b>330,655</b>	<b>293,234</b>
<b>RESOURCES EXPENDED</b>						
<b>Direct Charitable Expenditure</b>						
Buddhist Centre Administration	3	147,241	2,745	41,455	191,441	173,716
Property Running Expenses	3	32,764	14,767	3,320	50,851	49,856
Financial and Other Costs	3	79,190	0	0	79,190	81,943
<b>TOTAL RESOURCES EXPENDED</b>		<b>259,195</b>	<b>17,512</b>	<b>44,775</b>	<b>321,482</b>	<b>305,515</b>
<b>NET INCOME/EXPENDITURE</b>	4	<b>-5,667</b>	<b>-14,888</b>	<b>29,728</b>	<b>9,173</b>	<b>-12,281</b>
<b>TRANSFERS</b>						
Transfer to Restricted Funds	5	-2,124	0	2,124	0	0
Transfer to Designated Funds	5	-6,888	6,888	0	0	0
Transfers to General Fund	5	22,746	0	-22,746	0	0
<b>NET MOVEMENT IN FUNDS</b>		<b>8,067</b>	<b>-8,000</b>	<b>9,106</b>	<b>9,173</b>	<b>-12,281</b>
Balance brought forward		<b>1,201,706</b>	<b>80,998</b>	<b>15,925</b>	<b>1,298,629</b>	<b>1,310,860</b>
Prior Year Adjustments		-13	0	0	-13	50
Balance carried forward		<b>1,209,760</b>	<b>72,998</b>	<b>25,031</b>	<b>1,307,789</b>	<b>1,298,629</b>

Note: Figures for 2017/18 represented with £13 reduction in income (shown as prior year adjustment)



## BALANCE SHEET AT 31 MAY 2019

	Notes	31/05/19	31/05/18
		£	£
<b>FIXED ASSETS</b>			
Freehold Property	8	1,919,561	1,967,910
Vehicle	8	3,000	4,200
Equipment	8	11,284	12,779
		<u>1,933,845</u>	<u>1,984,889</u>
<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>			
Bookshop Stock		11,811	11,052
Prepaid Expenses		5,523	6,116
Gift Aid Tax Claim	9	9,878	0
Other Debtors	9	11,604	4,059
Bank Savings Accounts		76,376	76,300
Bank Current Accounts		85,323	94,841
Cash in Hand		615	295
		<u>201,130</u>	<u>192,663</u>
<b>CREDITORS (falling due within 1 year)</b>			
Loans	10	44,640	43,241
Trade Creditors		9,288	15,307
Tenant and Key Deposits		1,711	1,244
Prepayments		0	2,957
		<u>55,639</u>	<u>62,749</u>
<b>CREDITORS (falling due after 1 year)</b>			
Loans	11	<u>771,547</u>	<u>816,187</u>
		<u>771,547</u>	<u>816,187</u>
<b>NET ASSETS</b>		<u>1,307,789</u>	<u>1,298,616</u>
<b>FINANCED BY</b>			
General Fund		1,209,760	1,201,693
Designated Funds	12	72,998	80,998
Restricted Funds	13	25,031	15,925
		<u>1,307,789</u>	<u>1,298,616</u>

Note: Figures for 2017/18 re-presented - some designated funds switched to restricted funds and Other Debtors reduced by £13.

## 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

	2018/19 £	2017/18 £
<b>Donations and Legacies</b>		
Donations	49,654	44,372
	<u>49,654</u>	<u>44,372</u>
<b>Activities to Further the Charity's Objectives</b>		
Classes and Retreats	31,674	30,537
Bookshop	9,794	10,076
Rental Income (Buddhist Communities)	107,316	110,293
Yoga Classes	15,913	20,839
Room Hire	34,111	32,813
Carers Project	68,272	34,045
Mindfulness	8,229	6,243
Miscellaneous Centre Activities	3,408	3,214
Other Income	2,208	753
	<u>280,925</u>	<u>248,813</u>
<b>Investment Income</b>		
Interest on Savings Accounts	76	36
	<u>76</u>	<u>36</u>
<b>Total Income</b>	<u><b>330,655</b></u>	<u><b>293,221</b></u>

Note: Figures for 2017/18 re-presented and Room Hire reduced by £13

### 3. ANALYSIS OF RESOURCES EXPENDED

	2018/19 £	2017/18 £
<b>Buddhist Centre Administration</b>		
Bookshop Purchases	7,058	6,899
Centre Team Costs	107,451	107,364
Office Running Costs	1,431	1,471
Insurance	6,355	6,530
Publicity	529	282
Centre Activities	18,845	20,638
Carers Project	40,926	22,687
Centre Administration Costs	8,846	7,845
	<u>191,441</u>	<u>173,716</u>
<b>Property Running Expenses</b>		
Council Tax	7,364	6,947
Property Maintenance	16,674	13,521
Major Works and Improvements	17,646	18,256
Utilities	9,167	11,132
	<u>50,851</u>	<u>49,856</u>
<b>Financial and Other Costs</b>		
Mortgage Costs	27,093	28,447
Depreciation of Freehold Property	47,500	47,500
Donations	4,215	3,054
Legal and Professional	0	2,694
Independent Examination	200	0
Governance: Attendance Expenses	0	0
Sundry Expenses	182	248
	<u>79,190</u>	<u>81,943</u>
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<u><b>321,482</b></u>	<u><b>305,515</b></u>

#### 4. NET RESOURCES FOR THE YEAR

This is stated after charging

	£
Depreciation	47,500
Independent Examination	200

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

#### 5. TRANSFERS

Transfers represent a contribution to staff costs and overheads from the Carers Project, a contribution from income from residential property to the Residential Property Fund, expenditure from the Lift Fund, and additions to the Deposits Fund.

#### 6. INFORMATION REGARDING STAFF

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

The charity was also assisted by many unpaid volunteer workers.

	£
Aggregate Support	91,843
Aggregate Employer's NI	1,697
Aggregate Employer's Pension Contributions	4,075

#### 7. TRUSTEES

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

	£
Support	53,671
Out of Pocket Expenses	17,763

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

## 8. TANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS

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

<b>Depreciation was charged as follows:</b>	<b>£</b>
Cumulative charge at 31 May 2018	418,936
Charged during the year	47,500
Cumulative charge at 31 May 2019	466,436

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

## 9. DEBTORS

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

## 10. CREDITORS (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 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).

## 13. 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.



# Independent Examiner's Report

Report to the trustees of

BIRMINGHAM BUDDHIST CENTRE

Accounts for year ended

31 May 2019

Charity no

516568

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity for the year ended 31 May 2019.

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:



Date:

14/10/2019

Name:

Annemie Philips (Satyapara)

Relevant professional qualification(s) or body:

Association of Certified Chartered Accountants.

Address:

3 Oak Tree Avenue, Cambridge CB4 1AZ