



Telford Buddhist Priory

Trustees Annual Report
and Financial Statements

Financial Year
1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024

Registered Charity No: 1088942

TELFORD BUDDHIST PRIORY
Administrative and legal details

Financial year 1st April 2023 to 31st March 2024

Charity Name	Telford Buddhist Priory
Charity Registration Number	1088942
Date of Registration	17 th October 2001
Principal Address	Telford Buddhist Priory 49 The Rock Telford TF3 5BH
Website	www.tbpriority.org.uk
Governing Document	Deed of Trust dated 3 rd June 2001, amended by a supplemental deed dated 23 rd September 2001.
Founder	Rev Master Jiyu-Kennett M.O.B.C.
Trustees	Rev Mugō White Rev C D H Roland Watson John Bamford Christopher Hughes
Bankers	Lloyds TSB 113 The Border Telford TF3 4AE
Independent Examiner	James Gore-Langton FCCA, DChA Garth, Outertown, Stromness. Orkney KW16 3JP

TELFORD BUDDHIST PRIORY

Trustees' Annual Report 2023-2024

The Board of Trustees present their report and independently examined financial statements for the year ended 31st March 2024. These comply with current statutory requirements and with the charity's constitution.

Structure, governance and management

Governing document

The Principal Deed made 3rd June 2001 together with a variation made supplemental to it on 23 September 2001 is the governing document of Telford Buddhist Priory. The objects of the charity shall be to advance the Buddhist faith, in particular the Serene Reflection Meditation school of Buddhism (also known as Sōtō Zen Buddhism).

Organisation and structure

Telford Buddhist Priory was, up to 26 January 2024, a charitable trust, but on that date it was granted the status of a charitable incorporated organization (CIO) by the charity commission. It is governed by its constitution.

Up to 30 June 2023 the trustees were Rev. Saidō Kennaway (who died on 3 March 2023), Rev. Peter Bonati, Mrs Karen Richards and Mr David Richards. On 1 July 2023, the three active trustees elected four new trustees, and then retired.

The trustees now serving are Rev. Mugō White, Rev. C D H Roland Watson, Mr John Bamford and Mr Christopher Hughes. Rev. Mugō White is secretary and chairperson. All trustees are lay or monastic members of the Order of Buddhist Contemplatives (OBC).

Appointment of Trustees

The charity trustees are appointed by the body of trustees.

Risk management

Consistent with the size of the charity, the trustees review any major risks to which the charity might be exposed and establish systems and procedures to mitigate those risks. The charity has a risk management statement, which summarises its response to risks.

Governance risks are mitigated through the charity's organisational structure, the appointment of suitably experienced trustees and a conflict of interest policy.

Operational risks of liability or financial loss are covered through insurance and there is a complaints procedure in place, which describes how people can raise concerns about risks and other matters. There is also a policy on data handling and protection to reduce the risk of data breaches and loss. As the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 came into force in October 2006, the charity has carried out an annual fire risk assessment of its buildings. In addition, there was the annual servicing and testing of the fire extinguishers on June 12 2023. The electrical system had its five-year inspection and certification in December 2019. There is a regularly serviced burglar alarm to protect the property.

Reputational risks are protected through the Order of Buddhist Contemplatives endorsement and licensing procedures. In the past, the Safeguarding Officer has participated in *adults at risk* and *child protection* safeguarding courses run by safeguarding consultants Thirty-one:eight through the Network of Buddhist Organisations. She also attended the online Charity Commission safeguarding presentation for Buddhist charities in January 2022. Mrs Karen Richards, a former trustee, is the Safeguarding Officer. Rev. Mugō White is the trus-

tee with overall responsibility for safeguarding. She is the monk in residence at Telford Buddhist Priory.

Financial risks are addressed by the trustees and suitable safeguards are in place with regard to expenditure. There is an anti-fraud policy. The finances of the organisation are kept under regular review. The charity has sufficient reserves to continue its operations (see Reserves section below).

External risks: The trustees make themselves aware of current Government policies which may impact on the charity's activities in these turbulent economic times. In conjunction with our insurers, we continue to keep up-to-date with the laws and regulations pertinent to the charity.

Objectives and activities

Aims

The object of the charity, according to its constitution, is "to advance the Buddhist faith, in particular the Serene Reflection Meditation School of Buddhism (also known as Sōtō Zen Buddhism)".

Objectives

In order to describe how Telford Buddhist Priory can pursue its religious objectives, it needs to be placed in the context of how it came into existence and its relationship to the Order of Buddhist Contemplatives and its wider Buddhist roots.

Buddhism is a 2500-year-old faith that started in India with the historical figure of the Buddha. As Buddhism spread through Asia, one of the directions it took was down the 'silk road' to China and from there to Japan. In both of these countries one of its major forms was called Sōtō Zen, 'Sōtō' being a word created by combining parts of the names of two of the leading teachers of that tradition, and 'Zen' meaning meditation. One of the ways the practice and teachings of the Sōtō Zen Buddhist Tradition has been transmitted to the West is through the work of an English woman, Rev. Master Jiyu-Kennett, who became a Buddhist monastic in 1962. She was ordained in Malacca by the Head of the Malaysian Buddhist Association and then went on to train for many years in Sōjiji, one of the two main Sōtō Zen training Temples in Japan, with her Teacher who was the Chief Abbot. Returning to the West she founded the Order of Buddhist Contemplatives to act as the international administrative and support organization for the monastic disciples and lay ministers practising within the Sōtō Zen lineage which she brought from East Asia.

In 1972 she founded a monastery and retreat centre in Northumberland, now Throssel Hole Buddhist Abbey, which became a charity in 1977. One of the effects of starting this organisation was that many people from around Britain became interested in integrating Buddhist teaching and practice into their daily lives. This in turn led to the creation of small, local meditation groups which held regular meetings in halls or people's houses. One such meditation group has been in the Telford area since 1983. Out of that period of meeting in individuals' homes came the wish to establish a centre in the West Midlands area that would provide the opportunity for Buddhist practice to be offered to a wider group of people. An appeal for funds was made and a suitable property was located. Telford Buddhist Priory started in February 1997 when the local Telford group was offered the use of a house for Buddhist practice. This proved large enough for a group to meet regularly and for a monastic teacher to live in and be based there. The Priory had operated successfully over this period and managed to accumulate funds. When the owners decided to sell the house in 2000 an appeal was made to the local congregation and a financial package was put together to enable the property to be purchased. The Telford Buddhist Priory eventually became a registered charity in October 2001.

Buddhist Teaching and The Order of Buddhist Contemplatives

Telford Buddhist Priory functions within the Order of Buddhist Contemplatives. Formed in 1978, the Order is self-regulating and ensures that those who remain in good standing do not give misleading teaching and are upholding the Buddhist Precepts. The particular Sōtō Zen lineage it is associated with is referred to as the Serene Reflection Meditation School and its main tenets are:

1. The practice of meditation.
2. Keeping the moral Precepts of Buddhism, both in service to others and to maintain one's personal integrity.
3. The teaching that all beings have the Buddha nature. All are fundamentally pure but out of ignorance we create suffering, thereby obscuring our real nature.
4. Awakening the heart of compassion and expressing it through selfless activity.

One of the main ways in which Buddhism is spread is through individuals making a personal commitment and resolving to follow and practice Buddhist Teaching as well as they are able. Those attending services and receiving the teaching are likely to advance the Buddhist faith through ordinary contact with others in their daily lives and through their example.

To help this happen the charity provides facilities that are open to the public where the practice and teachings of the Buddhist faith and in particular the Serene Reflection Meditation School of Buddhism can be made available.

Some practical examples of the kind of provision the charity makes to achieve these objects are as follows:

1. A centre with premises called Telford Buddhist Priory, open to anyone interested in learning about and putting Buddhist teaching into practice, particularly within their ordinary daily lives.
2. Providing accommodation for a monastic teacher or teachers of the Order of Buddhist Contemplatives.
3. Providing a place for Buddhist contemplative retreat.
4. A wider resource for schools and other organisations to find out more about Buddhism.

1. Telford Buddhist Priory premises

The Priory provides and maintains premises that can be used in a variety of ways. The premises are open to anyone interested in finding out about and practising Buddhist teaching and meditation. The main room is a meditation hall, a quiet place dedicated to practice. The premises are large enough to accommodate a number of people, to hear talks and lectures, hold meetings, and to stay overnight for a retreat. The premises are easily accessible to people living and working in the West Midlands area.

2. Accommodation and support for monastic teachers

In order to advance Buddhism, it helps considerably if there is someone who has learnt about its practice and teachings in some considerable detail, who practises it themselves and is qualified to explain it to others.

The Priory therefore supports teachers of the Order of Buddhist Contemplatives. These are senior qualified priests who have a solid foundation of experience in the spiritual practice of Serene Reflection Meditation and are regulated by a wider Order which has rules of conduct.

One such teacher (the Prior) is based full-time at the Priory and is available to the public to explain and generally advance the religion.

As well as providing teaching and spiritual guidance, it is possible to offer traditional services that include funerals, weddings, and naming ceremonies.

3. Buddhist Contemplative Retreat

The Priory provides the opportunity for regular retreats incorporating Buddhist teaching. This is of considerable value to all, and particularly for those whose lives are necessarily busy with the demands of jobs, families, and relationships in addition to emotional and spiritual questions and concerns. By finding a spiritual practice and having the opportunity for spiritual retreat, greater harmony and peace can be found. This not only helps the individual concerned but can also positively affect the lives of those around them.

4. A wider resource

As well as having the teaching and ceremonial of the Serene Reflection Meditation School available at the Priory's premises, teaching is made available upon invitation through existing meditation groups which follow the Serene Reflection Meditation School in the West Midlands area. Such groups organise public talks and local one-day or weekend retreats in addition to their regular meetings.

The charity acts as a provider of wider support through recorded lectures, and the provision of a library of relevant books which people can borrow as well as leaflets on Buddhist meditation and practice. The Prior and Lay Ministers are able to contribute their experience and training to take up invitations to talk at schools, colleges and universities and to extend whatever help that they are able to those who wish to deepen their spiritual life.

The trustees co-operate with other organisations in making teaching and help available for those interested in following the Buddhist path.

Summary of the main activities undertaken for public benefit, and achievements

During 2023-24, Telford Buddhist Priory sustained a variety of activities that have helped make Buddhist teaching available and also promoted Buddhism through encouraging and facilitating the practices of Serene Reflection Meditation. In carrying out the activities of the charity, the Trustees have complied with the duty in section 4 of the Charities Act 2006 to have due regard to public benefit guidance published by the Commission and in particular its supplementary guidance on the advancement of religion for the public benefit.

The Prior and Lay Ministers have continued to provide the necessary structure of support and inspiration to create an environment conducive to Buddhist practice and teaching.

During the year a regular schedule of meditation meetings on Wednesdays, Fridays and Sundays – both in person and via online video link – have continued, along with monthly festival ceremonies celebrating Bodhisattvas and events in the historical Buddha's life. The trustees appointed a bookkeeper in July 2023; the maintenance of the premises is ongoing with considerable work undertaken by congregation members in the garden, and new utility accounts have been initiated.

There were several well-attended ceremonies to mark the death of Rev. Saidō, late monk-in-residence, which included a cremation and reception; the interment of the cremated remains in the Stupa at the Priory along with the planting of a fruit tree in his memory, and a memorial on the anniversary of his death.

The Priory has become a focus for the Order of Buddhist Contemplatives' sangha (congregation) in the Midlands, the South East and further afield, with an increasing number of monks and lay members staying overnight for retreats. Following the closure of another OBC

temple, Reading Buddhist Priory, several of their sangha members have been attending Friday night video-link sessions which include informal Dharma discussions as well as meditation and ceremonial. The prior, Rev. Mugō, has on several occasions travelled away from the Priory overnight to offer support to vulnerable sangha members who live at some distance from Telford.

The Priory website has proved useful, and the contact form has been used for general enquiries during the year. A number of people have found out about the Priory this way and judging by the web statistics it was viewed by a wider audience. The Priory also has a Facebook page and people have used this to make contact.

Policies

The charity revised and reviewed the following policies and related documents:

- Anti-fraud policy.
- Complaints and Concerns policy.
- Conflict of Interest policy
- Privacy Policy.
- Risk Management statement.

The charity also reviewed its Adult and Child Protection policies and related documents (which were revised in 2022-23), in keeping with recommended practice.

The charity withdrew its Volunteers policy, since it has no volunteers.

Contribution made by lay people and the monastic community

Many lay people and monks donated time to help the Priory. All of this is much appreciated.

Financial review

How expenditure has supported the key objectives of the charity.

Most of the charity's expenditure has been on running Telford Buddhist Priory as a small Buddhist centre in Telford, as described above. Various people generously gave their time on a regular basis, for example to help with the charity administration, bookkeeping and accounts, which kept those costs to a minimum. No salaries were paid by the charity to anyone. The total expenditure for 2023-24 was £37,828.

Principal funding sources

The charity depends on donations to further its objects. This is the traditional method of support for Buddhist activities. A number of the regular congregation have made standing orders and individuals made one-off donations. No fees were charged for attending any of our meetings or events. The total income was £38,879.

Investment policy and objectives

In 2023-24, the charity's money was held in a business current account. In future the intent is to move some of the money into an interest-paying account, subject to the charity's reserves policy.

Reserves policy

The trustees hold sufficient reserves to allow the charity to continue to operate during periods of fluctuating income. The level of reserves is calculated by taking a figure of half the

charity's annual income and adding £6,000 to that amount, to cover replacement of a major asset. The total monies held by the charity at the end of the financial year 2023-24 were £57,967.

Funds in deficit

There are no funds in deficit.

Loan Repayment and Other information

It is felt that the financial position of the charity at the balance sheet date (together with donations that will be received during the coming year) will be sufficient to cover the charity's daily running costs and obligations currently existing.

Trustees' Responsibilities

The trustees are responsible for keeping proper books of account such as are necessary to give a true and fair view of the charity's state of affairs and to explain its financial transactions. The trustees must also establish and maintain a satisfactory system of control of its books of account, its cash holdings and all its receipts and remittances, and hence are responsible for safeguarding the assets and taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

The trustees confirm that the financial statements which have been prepared on the receipts and payments basis comply with current statutory requirements, the requirements of the charity's governing document and the requirements of the Statement of Recommended Practice: *Accounting and Reporting by Charities*.

Approved by the Trustees on 22 January 2025 and signed on their behalf by:

Rev Mugō White, Secretary

Independent Examiner's Report

to the trustees of

Telford Buddhist Priory

I report to the charity's trustees on accounts for the year ended 31st March 2024 as set out on pages 10 to 12.

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 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

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

1. accounting records were not kept in respect of the charity as required by section 130 of the Act; or
2. the accounts do not accord with those records.

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.

James Gore-Langton FCCA DChA
Garth
Outertown
Stromness
KW16 3JP

22 January 2024

Telford Buddhist Priory**Registered Charity No. 1088942****Receipts and Payments Account**

for the year ended 31 March 2024

	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total 2024 £	Total 2023 £
Receipts				
General donations	21,864	-	21,864	11,021
Tax reclaimed	-	-	-	1,926
Grant	16,000	-	16,000	-
Fees and miscellaneous income	-	-	-	9,453
Reimbursed expenses	1,015	-	1,015	1,065
Bank interest	-	-	-	121
Total receipts	38,879	-	38,879	23,586
Payments				
<i>Charitable expenditure</i>				
Food and household	1,759	-	1,759	1,834
Premises	5,368	-	5,368	4,286
Office supplies	518	-	518	861
Telephone and internet	950	-	950	761
Publicity	-	-	-	95
Sacristy	40	-	40	163
Library and teaching	220	-	220	42
Equipment and maintenance	3,485	-	3,485	2,142
Car and travel	1,328	-	1,328	3,025
Car purchase	22,140	-	22,140	-
Legal fees	672	-	672	-
Miscellaneous	1,348	-	1,348	773
Total payments	37,828	-	37,828	13,982
Net receipts/(payments)	1,051	-	1,051	9,604
Bank and cash brought forward	56,917	-	56,917	47,313
Bank and cash at 31st March	57,968	-	57,968	56,917

Telford Buddhist Priory

Registered Charity No. 1088942

Statement of Assets and Liabilities

as at 31 March 2024

	2024	2023
	£	£
Cash funds		
Bank	57,966	56,816
Petty cash	2	101
Total cash funds	<u>57,968</u>	<u>56,917</u>
Other monetary assets		
Expense reimbursements due	-	1,015
Tax reclaim due	6,766	3,478
Total other monetary assets	<u>6,766</u>	<u>4,493</u>
Fixed assets		
Land & buildings	130,000	130,000
Equipment & furnishings	12,726	12,726
Vehicle	20,595	7,200
	<u>163,321</u>	<u>149,926</u>

Approved by the trustees and signed on their behalf by

Rev. Mugo White (Trustee)

22 January 2025

Telford Buddhist Priory

Registered Charity No. 1088942

Notes to the accounts

for the year ended 31 March 2024

1. All the charity's funds are unrestricted.
2. One of the trustees, Rev. Mugo White, is the resident Prior at the Telford Buddhist Priory, the temple run by the Trust. As such her living expenses are met by the Trust, in accordance with the Trust Deed's provisions.
3. The original cost of the vehicle was £20,595 in March 2024.
4. The original cost of the building and grounds was £130,000 on 24 October 2000 when the purchase was completed. The current market value is likely to be considerably more than the original cost.
5. During the year the charity received a grant of £15,000 from the Order of Buddhist Contemplatives Activities Trust (OBCAT). This comprised money that had been donated or otherwise allocated for Rev. Mugo White's use before her appointment as Prior of the charity. The grant is not restricted, but the expenditure is being tracked in the accounting records. It has been primarily used to contribute towards the purchase a more reliable car, and for various health and medical expenses.
In addition OBCAT is making an annual contribution of £1,000 towards travel and other expenses incurred by the charity in support of the Prior in her OBCAT roles.