



The Community of Interbeing UK

Annual Report and Financial Statements

Year Ended 31 December 2023

Registered Charity

No 1096680

Company Registration

No 04623280

About the Community of Interbeing UK

The Community of Interbeing UK is the network of people in the United Kingdom who practise Buddhism according to the teachings of Zen master Thich Nhat Hanh (*Thầy* -pronounced 'tie' - as we call him, meaning teacher in Vietnamese). The UK Community of Interbeing is part of the wider international Sangha of many thousands of practitioners worldwide, all of whom follow *Thầy's* mindfulness practice and teachings.

Mindfulness is the energy of being aware and awake to the present moment. It is the continuous practice of touching life deeply in every moment of daily life. To be mindful is to be truly alive, present and at one with those around us and with what we are doing. We bring our body and mind into harmony while we wash the dishes, drive the car or take our morning shower, learning to do them with mindfulness, with an awareness that we are doing them. We practise mindfulness throughout every moment of the day and not just during meditation.

Practising mindfulness cultivates understanding, love, compassion, and joy. This practice helps us to take care of and transform suffering in our lives and in our society.

In practising together as a group, our practice of mindfulness becomes more joyful, relaxed and steady. We support each other along the path of practice. With the support of the community, we can practise to cultivate peace and joy within and around us, as a gift for all of those whom we love and care for. We can cultivate our solidity and freedom - solid in our deepest aspiration and free from our fears, misunderstandings, and our suffering.

In addition to providing national retreats and training, the Community of Interbeing supports around one hundred and twenty local Sangha groups around the UK, sells books and other media, and provides a weekly update for members called *Dharmabites*, plus a monthly e-News called *Here & Now*, as well as distributing the international *Mindfulness Bell* magazine.

Through our programmes of education and practice the Community of Interbeing endeavours to encourage more people to practise mindful living.

2023 Annual Review

In this annual review we set out our charitable aims, and for each aspect of our activities, the actions taken to implement them in this year as well as our future plans.

Charitable aims

The Objectives of the Community of Interbeing UK are:

- a) To advance, support and encourage the study and practice of Buddhism and mindful living in accordance with the teachings of meditation master Thich Nhat Hanh, in the UK and overseas, in keeping with the Five Mindfulness Trainings.
- b) To assist and encourage the formation and activities of regional and local groups having this common purpose.

National practice and training

What we do

- Organise retreats for adults, families and young people.
- Provide an in-depth training programme on the core teachings.
- Run 6 and 8 week introductory courses to Plum Village mindfulness practice.
- Offer and share our practice online in a variety of formats.

How what we do delivers public benefit

The principal benefit comprises the provision of opportunities for members of the public (including Buddhists and those interested in Buddhism) to learn more about mindfulness and Buddhism. We provide instruction from beginner to advanced levels, enabling people to deepen their knowledge and experience. We offer retreats for both individuals and groups, to enable them to develop their meditation experience and increase their understanding of the mindful way of life in the Plum Village tradition of Thich Nhat Hanh.

Our events are advertised publicly on our website, social media channels (e.g. PlumVillageUK Facebook page) as well as our weekly Dharmabites offerings for members and monthly e-News (which anyone can sign up to). We offer a warm welcome to anyone who wishes to attend. We make a charge to recover the cost of running our retreats and training programmes with a lower rate applying to those in special circumstances. We also endeavour to raise funds to offer bursaries towards the cost of some of the events.

Action taken in 2023

Across the broad community in the UK, we supported a wide range of activities which included:

- **Mindful Morning (1st January):** We celebrated being together as a national sangha, online, for a New Year's Day mindful morning – the first of the new year. We offered a guided meditation, a talk by our dear teacher (recorded in 2013), dharma sharing, and a song or two.
- **Sunday Evening Sangha (every Sunday):** Our Sunday Sangha welcomes friends, newcomers and experienced practitioners alike, from 5pm to 6pm UK time every Sunday.
- **Morning Meditations (every weekday throughout the year):** A group of regular volunteers including Dharma Teachers and members of the Order of Interbeing, offer morning meditations every weekday. We practice with the Love Meditation twice each week, generating the energies of Love and Compassion in the world. We also practice regularly with other meditations drawn from the book, 'The Blooming of a Lotus'.

- **Engaged Practice for Peace (twice a month throughout the year).** Many people are deeply affected by the wars and conflicts around the world, causing great suffering. We meet twice a month online for a guided meditation, a reading, and the precious opportunity to connect with the wider Sangha, to listen deeply to each other, to look deeply, and to collectively nourish our mindfulness.
- **Thich Nhat Hanh memorial event with Plum Village (22 January 2023):** January 2023 marked one year since our beloved Thay's (Thich Nhat Hanh's) passing. We were warmly invited to join Plum Village Monastery online for a special one-year anniversary memorial.
- **Buddhists across Traditions Event, Shining a Light of Wisdom on Patriarchy and Queerness (26 January):** We gathered to honour and celebrate LGBTQIA+ History month (UK) and Black History Month (USA) by shining a mindful light on patriarchy, its impact on Buddhism and especially, on our Queer, Trans and Non-Binary BIPOC/Global Majority family. Together we explored how mindfulness and Buddhist wisdom can free us from the shackles of patriarchy towards healing, reconciliation, and liberation. We heard deep lived wisdom from Lama Rod Owens (he/his, USA), Ven Tashi Choedup (they/her India) and Fresh "Lev" White (he/they, USA).
- **Mindful Morning, Innocence and Insight (5 February):** This month we welcomed back Rev. Colin Hodgetts, at the time when the Christian church were still celebrating the season of Epiphany. Colin offered a talk on the theme of Innocence and Insight.
- **Discourse on Happiness retreat, Purley Chase (10-12 Feb 2023):** On this retreat we looked deeply into the Discourse on Happiness (Mangala Sutta) and explored how we can bring happiness into our practice, and our everyday lives. The retreat was facilitated by UK Dharma teachers Murray Corke and Teri West.
- **Mindful Morning, Earth Caring (5 March):** Featuring a talk from Bill Crook, coming together as a Sangha is a powerful way to generate positive energy and to strengthen our commitment to living in harmony with the Earth. This morning was part of a PV UK initiative to integrate protecting and caring for our planet into our mindfulness practice.
- **Being Peace Practice Centre Sangha Meetings (bi-monthly from 26 February):** The bi-monthly Being Peace Sangha meetings include a practice offered by UK Dharma Teachers, updates on how we are progressing with the project, and an opportunity to share questions and thoughts with the centre project's steering group.
- **Education for the Ecological Crisis, Buddhists transforming education (4 March):** A conversation online with three Buddhist practitioners who are innovating and actively transforming education. They shared how the Buddhist/mindful/ethical foundations of love, compassion and interconnection are being adopted into the learning centres of tomorrow.
- **White Awareness Sangha, 4-Week Practice Group (Sundays from 5 March – 2 April):** The 4-week practice group aimed to study and reflect on white identities, history, and bias, as well as practices to help people reflect on their racial identity and the world around them in a compassionate space, encouraging sharing and togetherness.
- **Creative Mindfulness, Monthly drop-in sessions (from 20 March):** Previously called 'Mindfulness & Music', the newly titled 'Creative Mindfulness' sessions included guided mindfulness practices, songs, creative exercises, time for reflection and sharing of experiences and creative work.
- **Being Peace Centre Fundraiser Launch and Be-In (26 March):** An evening of celebration, music, talks, meditations, poetry and more, launching a year of fundraising to establish the Being Peace Practice Centre in the UK.
- **Mindful Morning, The Great Grief – Practicing with Eco-Anxiety (2 April):** As the ecological crisis grows more acute, many people are struggling with fear, anger, and depression. In 2022, Sita Brand facilitated an international festival on the theme of the climate crisis. In this mindful morning we heard the story of what she learned and how it impacted her practice.

- **Monastic Tour 2023 (8th May to 11th June 2023):** We were delighted to welcome eight monastic siblings from Plum Village in France, coming to the British Isles and Ireland to lead retreats, Days of Mindfulness, mindful walks, and Sangha building events. Deep gratitude to the many people and local Sanghas who worked to create the conditions for us all to come together and nourish our practice during these in-person events. Funds raised during the tour supported sustaining Plum Village (the 'Roots') and creating the UK Being Peace Practice Centre in the UK (a 'Blossoming Branch').
- **'The Insight that Brings Us to the Other Shore (Heart Sutra)' Retreat, Ilkley (26-28 May 2023):** With UK Dharma Teacher, Jane Coatesworth. The Insight That Brings Us to the Other Shore (Heart Sutra) is recited and chanted regularly in Buddhist monasteries around the world. This sutra is held in high respect, but the words can seem perplexing and obscure. On this retreat we looked together at some aspects of the sutra, at what it may be saying, and at how it is relevant to our daily lives.
- **Mindful Morning, How to tell your own future (4 June):** This month we offered a guided meditation, a talk by Thay Phap Dung, Abbot at Deer Park Monastery (recorded in 2018), dharma sharing, and songs in a spirit of togetherness.
- **Transforming Climate Anxiety - Public Talk and Workshop for Climate Activists (11 June):** A public talk by Sr. Annabel from Plum Village, and a workshop for climate activists organised as a part of the UK & Ireland Monastic Tour 2023. In these troubling times we all yearn for a better world. But many of us feel powerless and uncertain about what we can do. Thich Nhat Hanh (Thay) was blazingly clear: there's one thing that we have the power to change - and which can make all the difference - our mind. How we see and think about things determines all the choices we make, the everyday actions we take (or avoid), how we relate to those we love (or oppose), and how we react in a crisis or when things don't go our way.
- **Mindful Morning, Reaching Out (2 July):** A panel of four established practitioners (Dene Donalds, Fleur Lobascher, Kevin Place, and Ally MacKenzie) shared how they are continuing our teacher's life work by bringing Plum Village practice off the cushion and into the wider community.
- **The Online Dharma Dog Show – A World First! (29 July):** How can having a dog as a life-partner inspire and nourish the practice of mindfulness? Practitioners living with canine companions shared the joys and insights that such a relationship brings in what must be the world's first dog show that involved no judgement; only appreciation for their many different shapes and sizes, skills and personalities, and the teachings that they offer in compassionate, mindful living. In a light-hearted, joy-filled event, friends brought their dog online to have 2 minutes in the spotlight in aid of the Being Peace Practice Centre. All four-footed participants received a doggie dharma name, a certificate to celebrate receiving the Four-Paw Mindfulness Trainings, and an opportunity to offer a quote for publication in an e-book.
- **Touch the Earth - Mindfulness Retreat, Wiston Lodge (18-21 August):** This retreat, led by Murray Corke and Dene Donalds, explored the causes of climate change, what we can do to prevent further damage, and how we can maintain our sense of well-being in the face of the changes this involves.
- **Mindful Morning, Mindfulness and Neurodiversity (3 September):** Mindfulness practice can seem an impossible challenge for many people who live with neurodiversity. In this session with Sylvia Clare, we found out how, with a sensitive and creative approach, mindfulness practices can be accessible, healing and worthwhile to anyone who identifies as neurodiverse. Sylvia is a founder member of the 'Be Calm, Be Happy' course leaders' team, author of 'Living with and Loving ADHD' and 'Neurodiversity', co-authored with her husband David about their journey to accept her diagnosis of ADHD within a loving marriage, with mindfulness practice and psychology at the heart of their journey.
- **Mindful Morning, Mindfulness in the Midst of Cancer (1 October):** How can our practice support us during a health crisis? When she was diagnosed with cancer in 2014, Katie Sheen found solace, wisdom, support and practical guidance in the teachings of Thay and the presence of her Sangha. Katie is a founder member of the 'Be Calm, Be Happy' course leaders' team, and has been practising in the Plum Village tradition for over 10 years. Eternally grateful to have had an established mindfulness practice before her diagnosis, she has since trained as a Breathworks accredited mindfulness teacher specialising in mindfulness for pain management,

anxiety and health conditions. This Mindful Morning, Katie read her published short story, and then shared some of the key Plum Village practices that supported her throughout her cancer treatment and recovery.

- **Weekend Be Calm, Be Happy Retreat - in person (6-8 October):** This Be Calm, Be Happy weekend retreat was an opportunity to experience ways to generate mindful awareness and wellbeing, create new friendships and release the stresses and strains of life.
- **Peace Sounds 3 - Album Launch (15 October):** The latest release from the Peace Sounds Label project by Wake Up London. Following Peace Sounds 1 (2012) and Peace Sounds 2 (2016) the album features 12 new songs from international artists associated with the Plum Village tradition. All proceeds from the album will go to the Being Peace Practice Centre fundraiser.
- **'Discourse on Love' Retreat, Sidcot (26th -30th October).** Facilitated by UK Dharma teachers Vari McLuskie and Angie Searle, we explored the wisdom of the Discourse on Love and related teachings, to understand how to cultivate true love in our lives for ourselves, for others, and for the Earth.
- **Art for Peace Sake (1-14 November 2023):** An auction of donated artworks was developed to raise funds for the Being Peace Practice Centre. We brought together a series of small (and some large) works of art to sell in our online fundraising auction.
- **Mindful Morning, Peace in Action (5 November):** In this mindful morning we began with a meditation given to us by our elders at the European Institute of Applied Buddhism, and Plum Village, offering peace in ourselves and into the world, followed by an extract from a Dharma talk given at the end of the WakeUp retreat in August this year by Sister True Dedication: 'Our Actions are our True Legacy'.
- **Clown and the Art of Mindfulness Residential workshop, Kench Hill Centre, (17-19 November):** A weekend course exploring how the two paths of mindfulness and meeting the clown that exists within us all, are deeply connected.
- **Joyfully Facilitating retreat, Shallowford House (24-26 November):** A retreat for those who are currently facilitating a sangha or those who want to begin to offer this within their sangha. The retreat explored what the role entails and built our ability to support our sangha more fully. The retreat was facilitated by UK Dharma Teachers Murray Corke and Vari McLuskie.
- **Mindful Morning, Mindful Consumption (3 December):** This Morning of Mindfulness, facilitated by the Community of Interbeing Earth Care group, included meditation, a chance to explore and share about Mindful Consumption, and a period of Deep Relaxation to help us connect deeply with ourselves and with Mother Earth.
- **Cultivating Our Bodhisattva Qualities, online talk with Dene Donalds (3 December).** A special Sunday Sangha session with a talk from Dene Donalds and Q&A on the theme of 'Cultivating Our Bodhisattva Qualities'.

Future plans for 2024 and 2025

Looking forwards we were excited to announce that in March 2024, a group of Plum Village Monastics would travel for a five-day retreat in the UK, 'Peace Begins Here', where we will learn how to cultivate peace, clarity, joy, and resilience. This is a precious and rare opportunity to be able to practise with a team of monastics from the tradition of Thich Nhat Hanh in the UK. The retreat will include sessions of guided meditation, walking meditation, mindful eating, talks and sharing circles – plus time to simply relax and to be with others and nature in a peaceful environment. All ages will be welcome, and we will live simply, enjoying mindful activities together as a community. There will be a separate programme for children and teens, young adults (aged 18-35) in addition to that for other adults.

Community Engagement and Volunteer Opportunities

We actively sought out volunteers to support our myriad offerings and boost our web and community engagement in 2023. This outreach was essential for us to help our community blossom and expand.

Being Peace Cottage:

In the Spring of 2022, a decision was made to sell the Being Peace Cottage. A young family gave us a fair offer and the sale was completed in 2023. More details can be found in the Financial Report section 3.

Mindfulness courses

- **Be Calm Be Happy (BCBH)**
 - We continued with Be Calm Be Happy courses online and in person. The course is an introduction to Plum Village mindfulness, from our teacher Thich Nhat Hanh - suitable for beginners, as well as those wishing to gain an overview of the key teachings and how they support each other. We also offered Mindfulness for Neurodiversity twice. This is a popular adaptation of BCBH.
- **Looking Deeply**
 - A follow-on course from BCBH, where we discover how to develop our mindfulness further into our experiences and life.
- **Living Mindfully**
 - Also a follow-on course from BCBH, focusing on bringing the Five Mindfulness Trainings (5MTs) more fully into our lives, using them as practical guidance and spiritual friends on our intended path of living mindfully.

When Be Calm Be Happy was first developed the original idea was to have 3 courses which become a pathway leading people from no/little experience of Plum Village practices into attending a Sangha and hopefully retreats on a regular basis. We feel these 3 courses give a good grounding into PV practices and Thay's teachings along with the Dharma Training Programme and retreats run by PVUK and PV itself.

Future plans for 2024 and 2025

- In 2024 we aim to offer additional seminars describing this pathway and giving information on all 3 courses. We will support each of the courses to mature with continuity of the facilitation team.

Being Peace Residential Practice Centre

- Work continued throughout the year to progress the Being Peace Practice Centre project. The Steering Group continued to meet regularly, as did the four working groups: Finance; People and Programme; Property; and Fundraising. When Dominic Munro-McCarthy moved on from the project, Hugh Jones took over as project manager, joined later in the year by Noah Walton.
- Funds for the centre continued to grow throughout the year, thanks to the generosity of Sangha friends and other supporters.

- As part of the property search, two properties in the Derbyshire Peak District were visited and assessed in detail. Although neither turned out to be fully suitable as a potential home for the Being Peace Practice Centre, this process of evaluation helped to refine our understanding of requirements for the Centre, and to build a robust model for evaluating properties and their associated financial details. This model is now being usefully applied to the evaluation of new candidate properties.
- The 2023 monastic tour of the UK and Ireland presented a wonderful opportunity for publicity and fundraising for the Centre, as well as for Plum Village. During the course of the year we also enjoyed great support from our dear monastic sisters and brothers and are walking ever more closely with them on our journey to realising a UK Practice Centre.
- During the later part of the year, detailed planning took place to launch some major new initiatives in 2024.

Future plans for 2024 and 2025

- Carry out a major fundraising drive to substantially increase funds available from donations, loans and legacies.
- Strengthen the Being Peace project team by appointing new Trustees and establishing a new Trustees' Being Peace sub-committee to guide the work of the project and subsequently the Centre itself. Also to appoint a new Project Director to lead a more intensive phase of the project.
- Identify and buy the most suitable available property for the Being Peace Practice Centre, and realise Thay's vision by turning it into a home for the whole UK Sangha.

Local Sanghas – practice and training

What we do

- Nationally we encourage and support the formation of local practice groups (Sanghas) by putting people in an area in touch with one another, offering public liability insurance to affiliated groups and by providing opportunities to benefit from the national Dharma teachers.
- Local groups run a variety of regular practice evenings, days of mindfulness, study groups and retreats to provide opportunities to practise and learn about mindful living and Thay's teachings.

How what we do provides public benefit

These activities provide the same public benefits as the National practice and training programme but on a local level making them as widely geographically accessible as possible.

Action taken in 2023

- We maintained contact with Sanghas across the UK to understand how best to sustain their development.
- We encouraged the development of new Sanghas drawing on the experience of members of established Sanghas to assist.
- We supported and encouraged local Sanghas to engage in organising the Monastic Tour 2023. Local Sangha activity in this was extraordinary and the tour could not have been realised so beautifully without their diverse support.

Future plans

- Support Sangha facilitators with opportunities for development.
- Continue to be open to opportunities to increase the number of Sanghas and to help them deepen the practice of people attending.
- Continue to develop guidance material, including Safeguarding guidance, for people wishing to form new Sanghas and to grow existing Sanghas.
- Identify ways to attract more diverse Sangha members.
- Build a closer relationship with Sanghas by co-organising a Monastic Tour in 2024 and by creating closer links between Sanghas and the Being Peace Practice Centre Steering Group.

Publications service

What we do

- Provide a service selling books, CDs and DVDs of Thich Nhat Hanh's teachings and meditation bells.

How what we do provides public benefit

- Our service is available from our website and at retreats and Dharma training events and is open to any member of the public. Profits from the service are used to fund the development of our national and local activities.

Action taken in 2023

- We continued to provide the publications service. Feedback indicates how positively this service is viewed by members. We are able to recommend specific books based on people's interests.
- We established a new online shop on the website and shared new book releases with members via our monthly newsletter. Almost all activity for the shop now takes place online, though opportunities to run a shop for participants at large retreats remains important.

Future plans for 2023 - 24

- We plan to improve the way the online shop works on the website, developing our service and making it easier to find publications and to order them. We also intend to have a shop at the monastic-led retreat in March 2024, with smooth payment processing.

Communications

What we do

- Maintain a website and social media sites and feeds which provide information and inspiration about our practice and about opportunities to take part in retreats and training and to join like-minded people in local Sanghas.
- Provide a facility for UK residents to subscribe to "Mindfulness Bell", the international journal of the art of mindful living. "Mindfulness Bell" is an inspiration and teaching resource for those practising mindfulness in daily life. Each issue features a teaching by Thich Nhat Hanh.

- Liaise with Plum Village, the monastery in France established by Thich Nhat Hanh.
- Provide a monthly e-News (Here & Now). This is an email newsletter to the broadest subscribing list of friends and it provides updates from Plum Village, the UK community, and details of upcoming retreats and activity in the UK. It also includes short dharma teachings to inspire.
- We aim to provide and share inspirational dharma teachings – this has been done in a regular way through our weekly e-News “Dharmabites” and via social media.

How what we do benefits the public

Our communications programme supports and facilitates the achievement of our other activities and hence benefits the public as explained above.

Action taken in 2023

- We continued to publish “Here and Now” to detail our programme of events each month.
- We published weekly Dharmabites emails for subscribing members throughout 2023.
- We maintained membership using online direct debit, allowing us to build effective ad hoc communication with COI members. We regularly communicated with members about our events.

Future plans for 2024 and 2025

- Grow the communications Sangha with additional volunteers who have a background in practice and specialist communication skills.
- Understand how our community is reached and engaged online in ways that are most broadly and fully inclusive.
- Continue to develop social media presences (including blog) and our newsletters to promote our charity and our major events in 2024/25.
- Make it much easier for people to become members through the website.
- Offering Sanghas the opportunity to affiliate to the COI through the website, ensuring they continue to benefit from being covered by our public liability insurance provision, support for Safeguarding and other charity policies, and benefit from being listed on the PVUK website which is resourced and maintained through our charity’s funds.

Technical systems

What we do

As our organisation grows we are using more IT systems, against a growing global background of hacking attempts. We manage all our systems, e.g. our web sites and their many components. We provide secure workspace for many users and support them with any issues. We manage software licences for all our systems, e.g. Zoom. We manage other systems for event bookings and mailshots. We maintain up to date information for all Sanghas who wish to be listed on our website.

How what we do benefits the public

- Our web site makes our offerings visible to the public who can engage with us in many ways:
 - book events in advance such as retreats
 - sign up for membership and newsletters
 - follow our major projects such as Being Peace

- join in online practice such as Morning Meditations
- order resources such as books, bells etc.
- We manage the charity risks to protect our members and other stakeholders
- We are using a CRM system to be more aware of people's engagement with the charity
- By looking after data management and security, we protect the data of all members and donors

Actions taken in 2023

- Revamped the website home page and the donations page to make them easier to use
- Supported many events both online and in-person, including transmission of the Five Mindfulness Trainings
- Supported the monastic tour round the UK
- Supported an Art Auction and a Dharma dog show
- Changed contractor for the Events Co-Ordinator role
- Started work on Risk Management at Trustee level
- Added resources for safeguarding
- Increased use of our CRM system for fundraising, added integrations with (and imported data from) our other systems.
- Improved the performance of our web hosting plan
- Assisted OI with data management and security

Future plans for 2024 and 2025

- Support of the Monastic Tour and Stourbridge retreat
- Start transition from Eventbrite to Ticket Tailor - more cost effective.
- Create a separate website for Being Peace Project
- Add the new search function to the online shop
- Improve the appearance of the events calendar
- Continue moving all Dharma Teachers to PVUK accounts
- Adding two factor authentication to all PVUK accounts
- Make continual improvements to web site security
- Rationalise our Mailchimp audiences into one with tags
- Move financial data from personal computers to shared Google workspace

Dana

What we do

The practice of dana or giving is a fundamental practice in Buddhism. The Community of Interbeing provides opportunities for people to give of their time and expertise and to give monetary donations. There are opportunities to support us in the UK and to contribute to international charities associated with Thich Nhat Hanh and Plum Village including the Thich Nhat Hanh UK Action Fund and the relief of poverty in Vietnam.

How what we do benefits the public

Our dana programme benefits the public both directly and indirectly. Direct benefits come through the alleviation of suffering and the teaching of programmes of mindful living. Indirect benefits come through the encouragement of responsible living and of the importance of charitable giving.

Action taken in 2023

- Continued to offer a variety of opportunities for financial giving including joining the Community of Interbeing. We centred fundraising efforts on the creation of the Being Peace Practice Centre.
- Enabled more use of the website to manage fundraising and payment across all our activities.

- Continued to offer opportunities to volunteer to help the development of the Community of Interbeing. The Community directly benefits from the countless hours of selfless service provided by many members and supporters. Over 70 people offer their time and skills lovingly to do many of the tasks needed in the organisation including looking after the cottage, organising retreats, managing our members, looking after our money and much more.

Future plans

- Continue with our existing programmes and try to encourage more people to join and/or donate to and support the Community of Interbeing.
- Develop our legacy programme to encourage members and supporters to provide us with funds for future project development.
- Recruit more volunteers to help us mindfully support our initiatives including but not limited to:
 - Marketing support to help us get our message out there more clearly
 - Be Calm Be Happy Course Leaders
 - Fundraising, financial and project support for the Residential Practice Centre
 - Supporting our retreat organisation at all levels

Engaged Action

What we do

Many of our community members are very active in offering mindfulness practice to others in an engaged way. Examples include activism in racial and social justice, climate action and Earth holding, prison chaplaincy, healthcare chaplaincy, and teaching in schools. Many community members are engaged in significant ways across many such areas.

How what we do benefits the public

The engaged action of our members benefits the public both directly and indirectly. Direct benefits come through the contact and support with chaplains, teachers, and activists, and the associated ability to live more mindfully and calmly. This indirectly benefits all around those who have benefited from this contact.

Action taken in 2023

- We continued to financially support a project led by Dharma teacher Dene Donalds (assisted by dharma teacher Vari McLuskie) to continue an outreach project with groups of people who are often on the fringes of society e.g. refugees and victims of sexual violence. This benefited the recipients considerably and provided insights and experience of how to best engage with these groups of people and how our teaching approach can be tailored.

Future plans for 2024 and 2025

- The Outreach programme will continue to be delivered in 2024 by Dharma teacher, Dene Donalds.
- There will be a clear review of the learnings and benefits of the Outreach programme to identify future possible initiatives.
- We will introduce some website pages (under the resources section) about engaged practice to care for the Earth.
 - The Plum Village community has been active in environmentalism and responding to climate change since the 1970s, and it has always been a part of the practices, for example the Five Contemplations recited before eating include the line, 'Let us eat in such a way that we reduce the suffering of living beings and reverse the process of climate change.'
 - A Working Group are working on increasing the presence and importance of responding to climate change and the environment in our community, partly by offering meetings and afternoons where there is space for building connections and momentum for action, and partly by articulating ways that we can act from a Buddhist perspective of being interwoven with the Earth to support and contribute to the response and transformation required by the increasing urgency of the climate crisis.

Charity Information

CURRENT TRUSTEES

Ms Liz Beth
Mr Philip Croton
Mr Miles Dunmore
Dr Jonathan Edwards
Ms Rehana Harilall
Ms Janet Hemsall
Ms Phuong Quach
Mr William Robinson
Mr Esteban Ruseler
Ms Angela Searle

COMPANY SECRETARY

Ms Isabelle Wen

LEGAL STATUS

Registered Charity

No 1096680

Company Registration

No 04623280

FURTHER INFORMATION

Website: www.plumvillage.uk

BANKERS

Bath Building Society, 15 Queen Square, Bath, BA1 2HN
The Co-operative Bank, PO Box 250, Skelmersdale, WN8 6WT
Ecology Building Society, 7 Belton Road, Keighley, West Yorkshire, BD20 0EE
Monmouthshire Building Society, Monmouthshire House, John Frost Square, Newport, NP20 1PX
Nationwide Building Society, Nationwide House, Pipers Way, Swindon, SN38 1NW
Flagstone Group Ltd, 1st Floor, Clareville House, 26-27 Oxendon Street, London, SW1Y 4EL

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER

Alex Chandler ACA, Sygma Chartered Accountants, 1 Sopwith Crescent, Wickford, Essex, SS11 8YU

Annual Report of the Trustees of the Community of Interbeing UK for the year ended 31 December 2023

1 Factual Information

1.1 Structure

The Community of Interbeing UK is a company limited by guarantee (company number 04623280) and a registered charity (Charity number 1096680). The Charity also uses the working name "Plum Village UK".

1.2 Objects

The Objects of the Community of Interbeing are:

- a) To advance, support and encourage the study and practice of Buddhism and mindful living in accordance with the teachings of meditation master Thich Nhat Hanh, in the UK and overseas, in keeping with the Five Mindfulness Trainings.
- b) To assist and encourage the formation and activities of regional and local groups having this common purpose.

1.3 Governance

The Charity is managed by a Committee of Trustees. The trustees are also the directors of the Charity for the purposes of the Companies Act. All trustees are required to be members of the Community of Interbeing who have taken the Five Mindfulness Trainings. Trustees are recruited on the basis of skills needs identified by the Board of Trustees. A variety of methods is used to identify suitable candidates. Trustees are elected by the members of the Charity at the Annual General Meeting. Each year one third of the Trustees retire by rotation. The Committee of Trustees has the power to co-opt members during the year but these members must stand for election at the next Annual General Meeting.

1.4 Management

The Committee of Trustees currently comprises 10 members and meets formally in person or via videoconference call several times a year. Members of the Committee individually or in small groups also act to take forward the Charity's plans assisted by other volunteers. Trustees serving since the last annual report have been:

Ms Liz Beth (appointed 15 February 2020, elected 19 September 2020, re-elected 9 October 2021)
 Mr Philip Croton (appointed 17 April 2020, elected 19 September 2020, re-elected 24 September 2022)
 Mr Miles Dunmore (appointed 10 May 2024)
 Dr Jonathan Edwards (Treasurer, appointed 6 January 2014, elected 24 May 2014, re-elected 23 September 2023)
 Ms Rehena Harilall (appointed 10 May 2024)
 Ms Janet Hemsall (appointed 13 September 2024)
 Mr Kevin Place (appointed 12 June 2020, elected 19 September 2020, resigned 26 April 2024)
 Ms Phuong Quach (appointed 10 May 2024)
 Mr William Robinson (appointed 10 May 2024)
 Mr Esteban Ruseler (appointed 10 May 2024)
 Ms Angela Searle (appointed 30 August 2018, elected 29 September 2018, re-elected 24 September 2022)

The Company Secretary is Ms Isabelle Wen (appointed 5 April 2008).

2 Review of Activities

The review of activities is set out in the 2023 Annual Review of activities.

3 Financial Review

Total income for the year was £314,405 (2022 £317,443). The monastic tour generated net surpluses of £20,658 for the Plum Village construction fund and £18,162 for the Being Peace Practice Centre fund. In addition donations amounting to £40,352 for Plum Village and £81,515 for the Being Peace fund were received.

Total expenditure for the year was £262,677 (2022 £244,836). Donations of £86,368 were sent over to Plum Village and costs for setting up the Being Peace project amounted to around £44,000.

The Community of Interbeing UK owned freehold premises (fixed assets) occupied by the Charity as a retreat practice centre (the Being Peace Cottage in Dorset). The property was purchased in September 2008 at a cost of £227,569 and revalued in October 2021 at £300,000. During the year 2022 the property was put on the market for sale with an

asking price of £300,000. An offer was accepted in July 2022 and the property was finally sold for the sum of £305,000 on 9th March 2023.

The net proceeds from the sale of the freehold premises plus the remaining balance in the Cottage account (a total of £307,306) have been transferred from Unrestricted to Restricted funds.

When a registered Charity disposes of a property the Trustees are required to obtain a Qualified Surveyors Report in accordance with Sections 117-119 of the Charities Act 2011 and Statutory Instrument No 2980.

The Trustees instructed Howard R Johnson MRICS of Charter Royle Limited to undertake a survey of the property and provide the Trustees with the Qualified Surveyors Report. This report valued the property at £255,000.

4 Risk Management

The major risks to which the Charity is exposed, as identified by the trustees, have been reviewed during the year and the trustees are satisfied that systems have been established to mitigate those risks.

The Charity holds an insurance policy ("Buddhist Combined Charity Policy") underwritten by Ecclesiastical Insurance. The policy includes public and employer's liability insurances, both up to £10M covering employees and volunteers, accident cover for our volunteers, and covers all of our events (including major retreats and walking events for example) and Trustee liability. Building and contents insurance for the Cottage were included in this policy until we sold the Cottage in March 2023. Events organised by all local sanghas affiliated to the Community of Interbeing UK are covered by our Liability Insurance

The Charity has in place Child and Safeguarding Protection Policies which are reviewed annually.

5 Format of Financial Statements

The report and accounts have been prepared in accordance with the Small Companies and Groups (Accounts and Directors' Report) Regulations 2008.

6 Trustees' Responsibilities in relation to the Financial Statements

Legal regulations require the trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the Charity's financial activities for the year and of its financial position at the end of the year. 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 and statements of recommended practice 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 in business.

The trustees are responsible for keeping accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the Charity and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. 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.

Approved by the Committee of Trustees and signed on their behalf by



Dr J Edwards
Trustee and Director

5 October 2024

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

	Notes	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total 2023	Total 2022
INCOMING RESOURCES					
From generated funds					
Voluntary income:					
Subscriptions			-	-	36,451
Donations	11	55,112	125,613	180,725	191,549
Activities for generating funds					
Merchandise sales		-	-	-	-
Investment income:					
Income from sale of Being Peace Cc	6	5,000		5,000	
Interest		1,455	3,582	5,036	547
From charitable activities					
Educational events & publications	2	84,824	38,820	123,644	88,896
Other		-	-	-	-
Total incoming resources		146,391	168,014	314,405	317,443
EXPENDED RESOURCES					
Costs of generating voluntary income					
Marketing & Communications		24,933	-	24,933	18,318
Cost of charitable activities					
Educational events & publications	3	90,840	-	90,840	85,322
Donations, bursaries and expenses	11	355	131,204	131,558	133,599
Administrative costs	4	14,852	-	14,852	7,104
Governance costs	5	493	-	493	493
Total resources expended		131,474	131,204	262,677	244,836
Net incoming/outgoing resources before transfers		14,917	36,811	51,728	72,607
Transfers	11	(307,306)	307,306	-	-
Net movement of funds		(292,388)	344,116	51,728	72,607
RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS					
Balance brought forward at 1 January		511,718	349,539	861,257	788,651
Balance carried forward at 31 December		£ 219,330	£ 693,655	£ 912,985	£ 861,258

The Accounting Policies and the Notes on pages 19 to 23 form part of these Accounts.

BALANCE SHEET AT 31 DECEMBER 2023

	Notes	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total 2023	Total 2022
TANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS	6	-	-	-	300,000
CURRENT ASSETS					
Stock of publications		3,689	-	3,689	3,256
Debtors	7	17,622	88,764	106,386	123,235
Cash at bank and in hand		259,962	604,891	864,853	439,593
		<u>281,273</u>	<u>693,655</u>	<u>974,928</u>	<u>566,084</u>
CURRENT LIABILITIES					
Amounts falling due within one year	8	61,943	-	61,943	4,826
NET CURRENT ASSETS		219,330	693,655	912,985	561,258
NET ASSETS		<u>£219,330</u>	<u>£693,655</u>	<u>£912,985</u>	<u>£861,258</u>
Represented by:					
FUNDS					
Unrestricted		£219,330	-	£219,330	511,719
Restricted	11	-	693,655	693,655	349,539
TOTAL FUNDS		<u>£219,330</u>	<u>£693,655</u>	<u>£912,985</u>	<u>£861,258</u>

For the year ending 31 December 2023 the company was entitled to exemption from audit under section 477 of the Companies Act 2006 relating to small companies.

Directors' responsibilities:

- the members have not required the company to obtain an audit of its accounts for the year in question in accordance with section 476,
- the directors acknowledge their responsibilities for complying with the requirements of the Act with respect to accounting records and the preparation of accounts.
- the accounts have been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies subject to the small companies' regime.

Approved by the trustees on 5 October 2024 and signed on their behalf by:



Dr J Edwards (Trustee and Director)

The Accounting Policies and the Notes on pages 19 to 23 form part of these Accounts

Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2023

1. Accounting Policies

(a) Basis of preparation

These financial statements have been drawn up under the historical cost convention. The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice 'Accounting and Reporting by Charities' published in March 2005, applicable UK accounting standards, and the Companies Act 2006.

(b) Company status

The Charity is a company limited by guarantee. In the event of the Charity being wound up, the liability in respect of the guarantee is limited to £10 per member.

(c) Fund accounting

The Charity has two types of funds, unrestricted, and restricted. The unrestricted funds are available for use at the discretion of the trustees in furtherance of the general objectives of the Charity. Restricted funds are funds that are to be used in accordance with specific restrictions imposed by the providers of the funds.

(d) Recognition of Income

Donations, and other forms of voluntary income are dealt with when the Charity is legally entitled to the income and the amount can be quantified with reasonable accuracy. Membership subscriptions are due on 1 January each year and are recognised as received. Sales of publications and income from retreats are dealt with on an accruals basis. Gift Aid receivable is included in the category of income to which it relates. No amounts are included in the financial statements for services donated by volunteers.

(e) Recognition of Expenditure

Expenditure is recognised when a liability is incurred. Expenditure on future retreats is deferred until the retreat takes place.

(f) Depreciation

No depreciation is provided on freehold premises since this would be immaterial having regard to the length of the useful economic life of the property. Depreciation of equipment is provided on cost at the rate of 25% per annum.

(g) Assets

Fixed assets are stated at cost less depreciation. Stock of publications is stated at the lower of cost and realisable value. Debtors are stated at the amount expected to be recoverable.

2. Income from educational events and publications

	2023	2022
Retreats, courses and Being Peace Cottage income	72,407	79,755
Income from organising major retreat (i)	38,820	-
Sale of publications & bells	12,417	9,141
	<u>£ 123,644</u>	<u>£ 88,896</u>

(i) Reported as net income for 2023 and applied to restricted funds

3. Expenditure on educational events and publications

	2023	2022
Retreat, Courses and Being Peace Cottage expenditure	79,569	77,133
Books, other publications & bells	11,271	8,189
	<u>£ 90,840</u>	<u>£ 85,322</u>

Related distribution costs are included in the cost of books and other publications

Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2023 (continued)**4. Administration costs**

	2023	2022
Bookkeeping and accountancy	410	782
Insurance	1,135	1,602
Website, Zoom and other IT costs	9,590	4,251
IT Fees for processing donations (ii)	3,211	
Bank charges & other administrative costs	505	469
Project cost salary	-	-
	<u>£ 14,852</u>	<u>£ 7,104</u>

(ii) Donation income previously reported as net of fees.

From 2023 reported as gross income and fees.

The Charity employed one member of staff during 2023, the employment costs during the year totalled £23,517 and are included under "Marketing and Communications" expenditure. Otherwise the work of the Charity is carried out by volunteers and by the purchase of services from a number of individuals. These expenses are included under expenditure on educational events and publications (Note 3) and administration costs (Note 4).

5. Governance

	2023	2022
Room hire	-	-
Independent examination and statutory costs	493	493
Trustees' meeting travel expenses	-	-
	<u>£ 493</u>	<u>£ 493</u>

No Trustees (2022: 0) received reimbursement of their travelling expenses totalling £NIL (2022: £NIL) in relation to their role as Trustee.

6. Fixed assets

	2023		
	Freehold premises	Equipment	Total
	£	£	£
Purchase cost (September 2008)	227,569	-	227,569
Revaluation (October 2021)	72,431		72,431
Book value as at 31 December 2022	<u>300,000</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>300,000</u>
Gain on Sale of Property (March 2023)	5,000	-	5,000
Disposals (Sale of Property)	(305,000)	-	(305,000)
Book value as at 31 December 2023	<u>NIL</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>NIL</u>

The freehold premises were occupied by the Charity as a retreat practice centre. During the year 2022 the property was put on the market for sale with an asking price of £300,000. An offer was accepted in July 2022 and the property was finally sold for the sum of £305,000 on 9th March 2023.

Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2023 (continued)

7. Debtors	2023	2022
Gift Aid	104,664	120,894
Other debtors	1,722	2,341
Prepayments		
	<u>£ 106,386</u>	<u>£ 123,235</u>

8. Liabilities: Amounts falling due within one year	2023	2022
Loans	-	-
Deposits received for Retreats	56,677	-
Accruals	5,266	4,826
	<u>£ 61,943</u>	<u>£ 4,826</u>

9. Reserves adequacy

Much of the Unrestricted fund represents fixed and working assets required by the Charity to carry on its day to day work. The remainder of the Unrestricted fund comprises cash at bank. For the Charity to function successfully, it must maintain an adequate level of Unrestricted reserves that can be used to finance the Charity's day to day operations and provide a precautionary reserve in case of fluctuations in the future level of income. The Trustees consider it appropriate that the level of precautionary reserve should be of the order of twelve months' expected future expenditure plus an allowance for property maintenance. At 31 December 2023, the Charity's bank balances were in excess of £50,000 above this level. The Trustees are satisfied that this situation is satisfactory having regard to the expected pattern of expenditure over the next few years especially the set up costs of future major events and the acquisition of new practice centres.

10. Statutory and general information

This note contains information required to comply with statutory and technical accounting pronouncements:

(i) In relation to the statement of financial activities

None of the Charity's activities was acquired or discontinued during the current or previous years. Accordingly all of the Charity's results relate to continuing operations.

As the Charity is a company limited by guarantee, it is required to present an income and expenditure account in its financial statements. The Charity's Statement of Financial Activities includes all matters that would require inclusion in an income and expenditure account and hence no separate income and expenditure account is presented.

Because the Charity has no gains and losses not disclosed in the Statement of Financial Activities, a statement of total recognised gains and losses for the year has not been presented as this would be the same as the Statement of Financial Activities.

No taxation is payable as the Society is a registered Charity and accordingly is entitled to exemption from taxation on its charitable activities.

(ii) Balance sheet

There are no pension or other contingencies at 31 December 2023 and 2022.

Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2023 (continued)**11. Donations and Subscriptions****Unrestricted Funds**

Donations and subscriptions are reported collectively from 2023

Restricted Funds

	UK Action Fund for PV	Vietnam Dana	Practice Centre Fund	Wake Up Fund	Total
	£	£	£	£	£
Balance at 01 January 2023	84,568	14,227	232,264	18,480	349,539
Donations received 2023	40,352	3,745	81,515	-	125,613
Other income	20,658	-	18,162	-	38,820
Interest	-	-	3,582	-	3,582
	145,578	17,972	335,523	18,480	517,553
Applied during the year	(86,368)	-	(44,836)	-	(131,204)
Transfer from Unrestricted funds	-	-	307,306	-	307,306
Balance at 31 December 2023	£59,210	£17,972	£597,993	£18,480	£693,656
Comprising					
Debtors (GiftAid)	37,800	3,064	47,900	-	88,764
Creditors	-	-	-	-	-
Cash	21,410	14,908	550,093	18,480	604,892
	£59,210	£17,972	£597,993	£18,480	£693,656

The net proceeds from the sale of the Being Peace Cottage plus the remaining balance in the Cottage account (a total of £307,306) have been transferred from Unrestricted to Restricted funds.

Prior year comparison:

Balance at 01 January 2022	82,480	11,342	192,852	18,480	305,154
Donations received 2022	127,088	2,885	47,721	-	177,694
Other income	-	-	-	-	-
Interest	-	-	290	-	290
	209,568	14,227	240,863	18,480	483,138
Applied during the year	(125,000)	-	(8,599)	-	(133,599)
Transfer	-	-	-	-	-
Balance at 31 December 2022	£84,568	£14,227	£232,264	£18,480	£349,539
Comprising					
Debtors (GiftAid)	54,300	3,194	45,200	-	102,694
Creditors	-	-	-	-	-
Cash	30,268	11,033	187,064	18,480	246,845
	£84,568	£14,227	£232,264	£18,480	£349,539

Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2023 (continued)

The UK Action Fund for Plum Village (PV) comprises donations given to support the monastic community in Plum Village, France and the European Institute of Applied Buddhism (EIAB) in Germany.

The Vietnam Dana Fund comprises donations given to support Plum Village's "Humanitarian Relief" programme which offers material and spiritual support to hundreds of communities in the poorest areas of Vietnam where education, development, social services and relief work are in great need to ensure healthy and happy lives for all. The donations received are paid to Plum Village to be spent in Vietnam in the way Plum Village considers best to meet current needs.

The Practice Centre Fund collects donations to finance the acquisition of practice centres for the UK Sangha.

The Wake Up Fund is for donations to support Wake Up, which promotes Thây's teachings for young people.

Independent Examiner's Report

To the trustees on the unaudited accounts of the Community of Interbeing UK;

I report on the accounts of The Community of Interbeing UK for the year ended 31 December 2023, which are set out on pages 17 to 23.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the charity trustees of the company (and also its directors for the purposes of company law) you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 ('the 2006 Act').

Having satisfied myself that the accounts of the company are not required to be audited under Part 16 of the 2006 Act and are eligible for independent examination, I report in respect of my examination of your company's accounts as carried out under section 145 of the Charities Act 2011 ('the 2011 Act'). In carrying out my examination I have followed the Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act.

Independent examiner's statement

Since the company's gross income exceeded £250,000 your examiner must be a member of a body listed in section 145 of the 2011 Act. I confirm that I am qualified to undertake the examination because I am a member of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales, which is one of the listed bodies.

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 company as required by section 386 of the 2006 Act; or
2. the accounts do not accord with those records; or
3. the accounts do not comply with the accounting requirements of section 396 of the 2006 Act 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; or
4. the accounts have not been prepared in accordance with the methods and principles of the Statement of Recommended Practice for accounting and reporting by charities [applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102)].

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.



Alex Chandler ACA
Sygma
Chartered Accountants
1 Sopwith Crescent, Wickford, Essex, SS11 8YU
21 October 2024