

BRISTOL INSIGHT MEDITATION

England & Wales · Charity number 1162182

Details

Other names BRISTOL INSIGHT

Status Registered

Legal form CIO

Registered 2015-06-15

Register [View on the Charity Commission register](#)

Contact

Address 93 Stonebridge Park
Bristol
BS5 6RN

Phone 07742736350

Email bristolinsightmeditation@gmail.com

Website www.Bristolmeditation.org.uk

Activities

Objects: TO ADVANCE THE EDUCATION OF THE PUBLIC IN THE SUBJECT OF MEDITATION AND THE TEACHINGS OF THE BUDDHA IN PARTICULAR BUT NOT EXCLUSIVELY BY SUPPORTING AND ENCOURAGING THE STUDY AND PRACTICE OF BUDDHIST INSIGHT MEDITATION (ALSO KNOWN AS VIPASSANA MEDITATIVE PRACTICE) FOR THE BENEFIT OF PEOPLE IN BRISTOL AND THE SURROUNDING AREAS.

Activities: - Introductory courses on Insight meditation practice- Teacher led meditation practice courses - Teacher led retreat meditation days- Weekly evening sitting group, combining practice and discussion to support individual practice- Monthly day time sitting group.- Monthly 'self led' day retreats- Monthly group to support focusing practice.

Classification

- **How:** Provides Services
- **What:** Religious Activities
- **Who:** The General Public/mankind

Geography

- **Area of benefit:** LOCAL
- Bath And North East Somerset
- Bristol City
- Cardiff
- Gloucestershire
- Newport City
- North Somerset
- Somerset
- South Gloucestershire

Finances

Period end	Income	Expenditure	Assets	Employees
2024-12-31	£13,748	£14,387	-	-
2023-12-31	£15,919	£12,479	-	-
2022-12-31	£5,221	£5,618	-	-
2021-12-31	£2,236	£1,999	-	-
2020-12-31	£3,311	£3,799	-	-

Trustees

Name	Role	Appointed
Dr Christine Elizabeth Ramsey-Wade		2020-07-07
Dr Lesley Wye		2020-07-07
Joe Pusey		2025-03-31
Mx Eugene Furniss		2025-03-31
Nadja Klose		2025-01-15

Accounts

Bristol Insight Meditation



Annual Report and Financial Statements Year Ended 31 December 2024

**Charitable Incorporated Organisation
Registered Charity No 1162182**

About Bristol Insight Meditation

In this ninth annual review, we set out our charitable objectives and our activities to promote those objectives for public benefit.

Background information

In 2003, a small group of people who had been to retreats at Gaia House in Devon got together to support each other in their meditation practice – and Bristol Insight (originally named Bristol Gaia House Group) was born. Today, whilst our original, supportive intentions remain unchanged, that small group has grown organically into a peer-led registered charity - a network of over 350 people involved in a wide range of organised activities.

Our approach

At Bristol Insight Meditation, we support the practice and study of Buddhist Insight Meditation, also known as Vipassana (literally translated as ‘seeing deeply or clearly’). This is the practice of developing a calm and mindful investigation into the nature of experience, leading to wisdom, compassion, and the end of suffering. The Vipassana movement began in the Theravada schools of Buddhism in the early 20th century in Burma, and Thailand, and attempts to reconnect with the teachings of early Buddhism. In its spread to the West, teachers such as Jack Kornfield and Christina Feldman integrated Vipassana with understandings from Western culture, while remaining true to the Buddha’s teachings.

It is from this group of pioneer Western teachers that centres such as Gaia House in Devon and Spirit Rock and IMS in the USA were formed. Bristol Insight Meditation has close links with Gaia House and draws inspiration from the wide range of teachers and teachings from the worldwide Insight meditation community. As well as Vipassana, some of us have practice backgrounds in traditions such as Quakerism or Tibetan and Zen Buddhism.

Our approach emphasises inquiry, experiential exploration, and mindfulness amongst many other influences. It is not important to hold particular beliefs or to consider yourself to be a Buddhist to participate in our activities; all are welcome. What we do have in common is an interest in our own personal development as part of a supportive community. Ethical living is important to us too, including our collective responses to current social and environmental challenges.

Our aims and values

Through our groups and activities, we aspire to build a community that nurtures wisdom and compassion: for ourselves, for others, and for the world we live in. We strive to be open to all

and do not seek to convert or discriminate, irrespective of religious or political beliefs, ethnicity, gender, social background, age, sexual orientation, or disability. We invite donations to cover our costs but our activities are open to everyone, irrespective of means.

What we do

We offer a range of activities to support meditation practice. Please visit our website: **www.bristolmeditation.org.uk** for full details. Our longstanding association with Gaia House, a well-known retreat centre for Insight Meditation, means we regularly invite their teachers, as well as those from other linked traditions, to lead our own retreat days and courses. These are reputable, highly experienced teachers who commit to a code of ethics. Our supporter-led charity is run by a small team of volunteers.

2024 Annual Review

Charitable Objective

To advance the education of the public in the subject of meditation and the teachings of the Buddha in particular but not exclusively by supporting and encouraging the study and practice of Buddhist Insight Meditation (also known as Vipassana meditative practice) for the benefit of people in Bristol and the surrounding areas.

Education

During the year we organised the following activities to promote education:

Four teacher-led day retreats:

- Martine Bachelor - Mindfulness of Feeling Tone
- Venerable Canda - Liberating Perspectives on Death & Dying
- Mark Ovland – The Breath Reimagined
- Jane Cutler - Investigation on Spiritual Friendship for your community

One five-week teacher-led course:

- The Meditator's Toolkit (Taught by Mark Ovland in spring at Quaker Meeting House)

One introductory course:

- We ran a four-week introduction to insight meditation course in the autumn of 2024, led by Joss James and Mike Baker

Supporting practice

We provide a number of opportunities for people to support and develop their meditation practice through small group communities:

- Weekly evening sitting group, combining practice and discussion to support individual practice
- Monthly 'Self-led' day retreat, which provides alternative sitting and walking practice sessions, together with opportunities for discussion
- Monthly nature meditations in open woodland
- Overnight camping meditation retreats in open woodland
- Monthly Insightful Ageing group
- Regular Sangha walks
- A monthly newsletter with news and contributions from the sangha
- A website that provides up to date information and links to bookings for our events
- A WhatsApp group for the Sangha

All activities are publicised widely, including on our website, in the WhatsApp group, and in our monthly email newsletter. Participants are requested to make donations to cover associated running costs, but low income is not a barrier to participation.

"Without community my practice would mean very little. I take delight in helping to run the Tuesday meditation group. This involves welcoming newcomers and overseeing the meditation and mindful sharing sessions. As we sit in a circle a deep sense of connection and community emerges. I'm also a member of the day retreats team helping to bring dharma teachers to Bristol for a day of practice for our wider community. It is deeply satisfying to work within a team to plan retreats, from the initial idea to organising the day itself and to know that many people have benefited."

Highlights from 2024

Teacher-Led Retreats (Claire-Louise Symonds)

We facilitated 4 teacher-led day retreats in 2024. These were facilitated by teachers associated with Gaia House Retreat Centre, Devon, on a range of subjects, combining teaching and practice. In 2024, one retreat was online and all of the other retreats took place in person at

Glenfrome Primary School. We had to cancel one retreat as the teacher was not able to run at the last minute. So we had the following retreats:

- Martine Bachelor - Mindfulness of Feeling Tone
- Venerable Canda - Liberating Perspectives on Death & Dying
- Mark Ovland – The Breath Reimagined
- Jane Cutler - Investigation on Spiritual Friendship for your community

The Teacher Led Retreats team have worked hard over the last year to organise 5 retreats (one was cancelled at the last minute because the teacher couldn't run it), which feels more manageable for the team. The retreats have reflected a rich variety of perspectives and practices within the Insight tradition. We tend to run one online retreat each year to be accessible to a wider group of participants and to attract teachers who are not able to travel to Bristol.

The in-person retreats took place at our usual venue at Glenfrome School. Numbers are steadily growing again but are still a bit lower than they were pre-Covid. We now have a four-tiered system of tickets that is working better to cover our costs.

We continue to ask for feedback from participants after each retreat, and a number have fed back that the online facility suited them as they live further afield.

Since Lesley took over the treasurer post we get regular updates regarding the Led Team finances which is helpful.

We have made a large profit over the last few years. The team decided to donate an extra amount to each teacher at the end of 2024 so there wasn't a surplus in the account.

We continue to run a structured booking system with four levels (early bird and tier 1, waged and unwaged) to try to encourage people to book on earlier and to endeavour to cover our costs. However, we also have a freely given option for people who have limited funds so as to be as inclusive as we can.

We continue to ask people to sign up for Gift Aid. Therefore, we are claiming back on a large number of the booking fees through this scheme.

We have now capped our accommodation budget at £30 for those teachers choosing to stay overnight in accommodation other than that offered by the team.

We encourage teachers to book travel etc as early as possible to keep those costs to a minimum. Many teachers are now choosing to travel to Bristol and back on the same day as our day retreats finish at 4pm rather than 5pm. This saves on the accommodation costs quite considerably.

We have had quite a lot of new people attending these days which is encouraging.

Introductory course (Joss James, Mike Baker)

We ran a four-week introduction to insight meditation course in the autumn of 2024 at the Central Quaker Meeting House, led by Joss James and Mike Baker. The maximum of 12 participants signed up most of whom attended regularly. Feedback from the course was very positive, with those who were new to practise as well as those who'd come to establish a more regular practise benefitting. Further regular courses will be run in 2025, facilitator and premises permitting.

Teacher-Led Courses (Mark Ovland)

In May 2024 I ran a 4-week evening course at the Central Quaker Meeting House called the Meditator's Toolkit. Over the weeks we practised various skills that a meditator can find helpful, including adjusting the direction, intensity, and width of one's awareness, and working with difficulties in the bodily experience. We had 20 signups and the majority of people attended at least 3 sessions. Feedback was positive, with a request for more teacher-led courses in the future.

Self-Led Day Retreats (David Ringsell)

The self-led retreats were well attended in the last year. We had between 8 and 15 participants approximately each Saturday. We kept the same popular structure of silent sitting and walking meditation periods. We included a one-hour recorded Dharma talk and 1/2 hour sharing period. The day does not include any specific meditation instruction. Participants generally have some meditation experience. They select a meditation style that works for them. The day starts with a clear introduction to the meditation schedule.

The verbal feedback from participants is positive. They appreciate the opportunity to meditate for a whole day in a supportive atmosphere. The talk and sharing sessions are also valued. Full details of the retreat can be found on the Bristol Insight website.

The team of organisers continue to volunteer their services including David and Caroline. When they are not available, Tony has facilitated the retreat. We have occasional short meetings and emails to coordinate this.

Tuesday Evening Sitting Group (Jonathan Edwards)

During 2024 the weekly evening sit met every Tuesday at the Central Quaker Meeting House (except 2nd January and 24th & 31st December). Weekly attendance ranged between 8 and 22 practitioners, averaging out at 14, with several new people joining the group during the year. The evening starts with a round of names, where each person's name is repeated back by the Sangha to recognise and appreciate the presence of each person. There is a space for our "Caring Sangha" where we bring to mind a person, or group of people, who may be suffering, or maybe we bring something in our life to share and celebrate with the Sangha. This is followed by a 40-minute unguided silent meditation session, after which for 20 minutes we appreciate

each others company whilst enjoying a cup of tea. In the "second half" of the evening we have our "Deepening our Practice" programme of practices, studies, and activities. During 2024 this included a monthly "Mindful Sharing", quarterly "Poetry & Prose" sharing, mindful walking, mindful movements, and mindful joy, chanting, listening to, and reflecting on, some of the suttas and studying various aspects of the Buddha's teachings including the three refuges, the four Noble Truths and Anatta, and reflecting on formal versus informal practice. We end each quarter with a social "Chat Café" evening. A special session was held on 30 January to celebrate 20 years of Bristol Insight.

Focusing Group (Gordon Adam)

The focusing group has been taking place on Sundays throughout the year.

Sangha Walks (Gordon Adam)

There were 8 sangha walks in 2024:

North Stoke & Kelston

Shipham and Mendips

Ebbor Gorge

Black Mountains

Uley Bury Hill Fort

Clevedon

Bradford on Avon

Blaise Castle

Sangha walks have been happening intermittently since the first walk in 2005 – we have had over 80 walks in total since then. There has been an increase in the frequency and attendance on the walks in the last few years. Most of the walks have been led by Gordon and occasionally by a volunteer walk leader.

Children and dogs are welcome on the walks (but remain the responsibility of the adults who brought them) and part of the walk is held in silence. We walk at a gentle pace and walks generally last for 2–4 hours and include a pub or picnic lunch during or at the end of the walk.

The sangha walks are open to anyone, and new people often come on the walks.

Connections get made and new people get to hear of other group activities through conversation with sangha members on the walks.

Insightful Ageing Group (Meg Hunter)

This group has been going for more than eight years. When it began, we wondered if it would last but it has in fact continued and thrived. The composition has changed over time, and it now has nine members who meet monthly for two hours. I would describe the group as friendly, supportive but serious in its aim to understand and support meditative practice in the context of ageing.

Sessions consist of a period of meditation plus another activity such as exploring readings on the subject of Buddhism and ageing; listening to readings from the dharma; sharing poetry; with a brief opportunity for us all to share issues that arise for members if individuals want to share but no obligation to do so. We are currently coming to the end of the book, *Five Invitations - What Death Can Teach Us About Living Fully* by Frank Ostaseski. Frank is a Buddhist teacher and leader in contemplative end-of-life care. We have found this inspiring and would thoroughly recommend this book to others.

We meet in people's houses and there is always a possibility of new members joining.

Nature Meditation (Lesley Wye)

In 2024, we offered nine Sunday afternoon nature meditation retreats with between 7-20 participants attending. Lasting about three hours with a variety of sitting, walking and nature practices, each retreat has a theme. For 2024, themes included: 'Equanimity: this too belongs', 'Letting go', and 'Sense-foraging'.

Increasingly, members of the nature meditation sangha are leading the retreats. Morag Ruffell led the April retreat on 'Abundance' and Michael Gregg led the March retreat on 'Writing in the Woods'.

Three retreats included the sharing of delicious vegan food (June, Nov and Dec) and we had our first night time retreat on 1 Nov with the theme of 'Honouring the Ancestors'.

Overall, nature meditation retreats continue to attract new participants while retaining a core of regular attenders. They appear to be highly valued.

Rewilding Retreats (Lesley Wye)

2024 was the fifth year in which we offered overnight nature meditation retreats. The aim is to reconnect with nature to deepen practice so that the woods become a place of refuge, joy, nourishment and beauty.

This year, we held four overnight weekend retreats of one-, two- and three- night duration from the end of April until mid-Sept. All retreats took place in Wildflower Woods near Bruton.

Between four to eight practitioners attended each retreat. Themes included: 'Welcoming the New', 'Listening to the Heart; Listening to the Land' and 'Rest, Release, Renewal'.

Two retreats were cancelled; one because of low numbers (LBGTQ+ in July) and one because of adverse weather (June).

For the first time, a retreat was open to all, including men, which was a great success. We also offered our first three night retreat in August, which went well. Some retreats continued to include optional sessions on writing and mindful art. These were very well received. Those attending the retreats fed back how much they appreciated extended time to practice in the woods, enjoying all that nature offers. These retreats will continue for 2025.

Charity Information

Legal Status

The charity was registered by the Charity Commission on 15 June 2015 as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO)
Charity No 1162182

Charitable Objective

To advance the education of the public in the subject of meditation and the teachings of the Buddha in particular but not exclusively by supporting and encouraging the study and practice of
Buddhist Insight Meditation (also known as Vispassana meditative practice) for the benefit of people in Bristol and the surrounding areas.

Further Information

Website: www.bristolmeditation.org.uk

Governance

The charity is managed by a group of trustees. All trustees are required to be members (supporters) of Bristol Insight. Trustees are recruited on the basis of skills needs identified by the group of trustees. A variety of methods is used to identify suitable candidates. Trustees are elected by the members (supporters) of the charity at the Annual General Meeting. Each year one third of the trustees retires by rotation. The group 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. Trustees are given an induction pack containing key information about our organisation and on becoming a trustee. Trustees are encouraged to identify gaps in their knowledge, which are then addressed by briefings or other training delivered to some or all of the trustees as appropriate.

Management

The Committee of Trustees comprised 5 members and met approximately 6 times a year. The trustees are supported by 'organisers' who organise and support activities on an operational basis.

Trustees serving during the year 2024 were:

Jocelyn James (elected 7 July 2020, re-elected 25 September 2023)

Christine Ramsey-Wade (elected 7 July 2020, re-elected 25 September 2023)

Morag Rose Ruffell (elected 14 Sept 2022, re-elected 17 April 2024)

Lesley Wye (elected 7 July 2020; re-elected 14 Sept 2022)

Maddy Longley (elected 25 September 2023)

Financial Review

Total income for the year was £13,748.87 (2023: 15,919.51) and total expenditure for the year was £14,387.20 (2023: 12,478.49). The total net assets held at 31st December 2024 were £7,017.38 represented by cash at bank.

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 has arranged employers and public liability insurance cover of £10M through an insurance policy underwritten by the Ecclesiastical Insurance Group.

Format of financial statements

The report and accounts have been prepared in accordance with the Charities Act 2011.

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 Charities Act 2011. 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.

Bankers

The Co-operative Bank, PO Box 250, Skelmersdale WN8 6WT

Independent Examiner

Independent scrutiny of accounts is not required where the gross income for the financial year is £25,000 or less.

Statement of Financial Activities for the year ended 31 December 2024

INCOME	Day retri	Selfled	Tues sit	Cours es	Rewild Med	Nat Med	TOTAL 2024	TOTAL 2023
Dona- tions	2052.5	1638.81	3051.51	560.0 1	4014.26	790.50	£12,107.58	£13,457.60
Gift Aid 2023						76.66	£76.66	£2,461.91
Gift Aid 2024	155	238.01	304.67		617.80	74.25	£1,389.73	
Internal Transfer	175						£175	
TOTAL	2382.5	1876.82	3356.17	560.0 1	4632.06	941.45	£13,748.97	£15,919.51

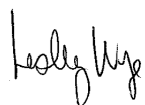
EXPENDITURE	Day retreat	Selfled	Tues sit	Cou rses	Rewild Med	Nat Med	TOTAL 2024	TOTAL 2023
Venue Hire	-230	-2171.18	-3325	-520	-1100	-340	-£7,686.18	-£7,631.48
Food & drink		-11.95			-531.39	-40.50	-£583.84	-£794.75
Catering					-1051.67		-£1,051.67	-£1,025
Travel & accom	-94				-142.48	-27	-£263.48	-£558.86
Admin	-667.50						-£667.50	-£690
Purchases	-109	-9	-9		-320.79	-7	-£454.79	-£804.41
Printing	-33	-11	-11				-£55	-£30
Insurance	-100.8	-25.20	-25.20		-25.20		-£176.40	-£161.40
Website	-103.18	-25.80	-25.80		-25.80		-£180.58	-£104.99
Refund & xfer		-21			-610	-7	-£638	-£372.51
Donations *	-1500	-100			-862.17	-167.59	-£2,629.76	-£155.09
TOTAL	-2837.48	-2375.13	-3396	-520	-4669.50	-589.09	-£14,387.20	-£12,478.49

*Donations = Dana for dharma teachers, Dharmaseed & Wildflower Woods infrastructure, as per agreement with trustees.

Balanced and net movement of funds

Activity	Balance 01-Jan-24	Income	Expenditure	Net movement	Balance 31-Dec-24
Day retreats	£2,148.66	£2,382.50	-£2,837.48	-£454.98	£1,693.68
Self-Led	£1,945.60	£1,876.82	-£2,375.13	-£498.31	£1,447.29
Tues Sit	£1,532.31	£3,356.17	-£3,396	-£39.83	£1,492.48
Courses	£1,382.17	£560.01	-£520	£40.01	£1,422.18
Rewilding Meditation	£646.87	£4,632.06	-£4,669.50	-£37.44	£609.43
Nature meditation	0	£941.41	-£589.09	£352.32	£352.32
Total	£7,655.61	£13,748.97	-£14,387.20	-£638.23	£7,017.38

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



Lesley Wye, Trustee and Treasurer

Accounts

Bristol Insight Meditation



Annual Report and Financial Statements

Year Ended 31 December 2023

Charitable Incorporated Organisation
Registered Charity No 1162182

About Bristol Insight Meditation

In this our eighth annual review we set out our charitable objectives and our activities to promote those objectives for public benefit.

Background information

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2023 Annual Review

Charitable Objective

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Education

During the year we organised the following activities to promote education

Six Teacher Led Day Retreats

These were facilitated by teachers associated with Gaia House Retreat Centre, Devon on a range of subjects, combining teaching and practice. In 2023 all of the retreats took place in person at Glenfrome Primary School. We had the following retreats:

- Mark Ovland - Freedom Right Here: A Beginner's Guide to Meditation
- River Wolton - Impermanence: a doorway to peace?
- Zohar Lavie - Cultivating Wellbeing, Ease and Freedom
- Laura Bridgman – Knowledge from the present moment
- Mark Ovland - Dharma -fundamental questions on practice
- Jaya Rudgard – Natural Wellbeing - Cultivating samādhi through movement and stillness.

Two five week evening teacher led courses

These were facilitated by Mark Ovland and took place at the Central Quaker meeting house

- Spring - loving kindness
- Autumn - Ways of Looking

Supporting practice

We provide a number of opportunities for people to support and develop their meditation practice through small group communities:

- Weekly evening sitting group, combining practice and discussion to support individual practice;
- Monthly 'Self-led' day retreat, which provides alternative sitting and walking practice sessions, together with opportunities for discussion;
- Monthly nature meditations in open woodland;
- Overnight camping meditation retreats for women in open woodland
- Monthly Insightful ageing group;
- Regular Sangha walks;
- A monthly newsletter with news and contributions from the sangha;
- A website that provides up to date information and links to bookings for our events.

All activities are publicised widely, including on our website and in our monthly email newsletter. Participants are requested to make donations to cover associated running costs, but low income is not a barrier to participation.

"Without community my practice would mean very little. I take delight in helping to run the Tuesday meditation group. This involves welcoming newcomers and overseeing the meditation and mindful sharing sessions. As we sit in a circle a deep sense of connection and community emerges. I'm also a member of the day retreats team helping to bring dharma teachers to Bristol for a day of practice for our wider community. It is deeply satisfying to work within a team to plan retreats, from the initial idea to organising the day itself and to know that many people have benefited."

Some Highlights from 2023

Teacher Led Retreats

The Teacher Led Retreats team have worked hard over the last year to deliver 6 retreats. The retreats have reflected a rich variety of perspectives and practices within the Insight tradition. We ran all of the retreats at our usual venue at Glenfrome School with no online retreats this year.

However, the numbers that have returned to in person are still lower than they were pre covid so we have actually made a loss on at least one of our led retreat days due to lower

numbers and having to cover the cost of hall hire, refreshments, travel and accommodation costs in comparison to just zoom fees being the only out going previously. We continue to ask for feedback from participants after each retreat, and a number have feedback that the online facility suited them as they live further afield.

Since Lesley took over the treasurer post we get regular updates regarding the Led Team finances which is helpful. We continue to run a structured booking system with two levels (early bird and tier 1) to try to encourage people to book on earlier and to endeavour to cover our costs. However, we also have a freely given option for people who have limited funds so as to be as inclusive as we can.

We continue to ask people to sign up for Gift Aid. Therefore, we are claiming back on a large number of the booking fees through this scheme. We need 25 people to attend in order to break even. We have now capped our accommodation budget at £30 for those teachers choosing to stay overnight in accommodation other than that offered by the team. We encourage teachers to book travel etc as early as possible to keep those costs to a minimum. Although we may make a loss on some retreat days, overall, we break even over the course of the year. There is a pot of profit which can act as a buffer if needs be. We have had quite a lot of new people attending these days which is encouraging.

Claire-Louise Symonds

Teacher led courses

In 2023 I ran two 5-week evening courses at the Central Quaker Meeting House. In the spring we explored loving-kindness practice, and in the autumn we took a dive into 'ways of looking', the approach to Insight Meditation developed by the late Rob Burbea. Both courses had 20+ signups, and most people attended at least 3 of the sessions. The autumn course was also followed up with a number of online drop-in sessions. The feedback suggests that this sort of continued guidance and group exploration over a period of time was greatly appreciated, and that people would welcome more (and longer) teacher-led courses in the future.

Mark Ovland

Self Led Day Retreats

The self-led retreats were well attended in the last year. We had between 8 and 15 participants approximately each Saturday. We kept the same popular structure of silent sitting and walking meditation periods. We included a one hour recorded Dharma talk and 1/2 hour sharing period. The day does not include any specific meditation instruction. Participants generally have some meditation experience.

The verbal feedback from participants is positive. They appreciate the opportunity to meditate for a whole day in a supportive atmosphere. Full details of the retreat can be found on the Bristol insight website.

The team of four organisers continue to volunteer their services. We have occasional short meetings to coordinate this. Some members of the team now wish step back. We have put out a call for new volunteers in person at retreat and on the website.

David Ringsell

Tuesday Evening Sitting Group

The weekly evening sit continues with in-person meetings at the Central Quaker Meeting House throughout 2023. Attendance for the meetings continues to be good with newcomers each week. Several of the newcomers have volunteered to become facilitators at the meetings. Our “Deepening our Practice” programme covered explorations of the relationship between meditation and ethics, neuroscience and early Buddhism, and sympathetic joy. The group also listened to recordings of the spoken discourses of the Buddha and recorded talks from meditation teachers. These often formed the basis of lively discussion. We continued with our popular Poetry and Prose sessions and brought back the Spiritual resource sharing sessions. Ending each quarter with socialising during our Chat Café sessions. The group also continued to provide support for meditation practice both for beginners and those more experienced in meditation through its monthly Mindful Sharing sessions.

Joss James

Focusing Group

We had one meeting in January, then after a break, the monthly in-person meetings re-started with a first meeting on Sunday 5th November and a further meeting on 17th December.

We have continued to meet monthly since then at our usual venue of Bristol Zen Dojo from 11am—2pm. Group attendance generally ranges from 6 to 12 people

The group is open to anyone interested in Focusing, regardless of experience, and we frequently have new people coming to the group. People give a donation towards covering the rental of the dojo and for my facilitation of the group.

Sangha Walks

There were 2 sangha walks in 2023 – in November, to the Llangattock Escarpment in South Wales, and in December to Bourton Combe, near Flax Bourton. Both walks were attended by 8 people. I intend to continue to have walks every 4-6 weeks throughout 2024. Walk leaders are welcome.

Sangha walks have been happening intermittently since the first walk in 2005 – we have had 80 walks in total since then. There has been an increase in the frequency and attendance on the walks in the last few years. We had 24 people for a Wye Valley walk a few years ago! Most of the walks have been led by Gordon and occasionally by a volunteer walk leader. Children and dogs are welcome on the walks (but remain the responsibility of the adults who brought them) and part of the walk is held in silence. We walk at a gentle pace and walks generally last for 2–4 hours and include a pub or picnic lunch during or at the end of the walk.

The sangha walks are open to anyone, and new people often come on the walks. Connections get made and new people get to hear of other group activities through conversation with sangha members on the walks.

Insightful Ageing Group

This group has been going for more than seven years. When it began, I wondered if it would last but it has in fact continued and thrived. The composition has changed over time, and it now has nine members who meet monthly for two hours. I would describe the group as friendly, supportive but serious in its aim to understand and support meditative practice in the context of ageing.

Sessions consist of a period of meditation plus a number of different activities. These include exploring readings on the subject of Buddhism and ageing; listening to readings from the dharma; sharing poetry; with opportunities to share issues that arise for members in their practice or more generally in life. We continued to work with Carmel Shalev's book "In Praise of Aging" for the first half of the year and chose different themes for the later groups. We meet in people's houses and there is always a possibility of new members joining.

Ray Woolfe

Nature Meditation

In 2023, we offered eleven Sunday afternoon nature meditation retreats with between 13-28 participants attending. Lasting about three hours with a variety of sitting, walking and nature practices, each retreat has a theme. For 2023, themes included: 'Just one thing' (concentration practice), 'Green' and 'Change with feeling tone'. In February 2023, we moved back permanently to Leigh Court Woods, as Wraxall Woods were no longer on lease.

Innovations this year included the highly popular retreat 'Writing in the Woods' combining writing and meditation offered by Michael Gregg, a frequent attendee. We also had celebration retreats on Summer Solstice ('Fire and light') and New Year's Day Eve ('Endings and Beginnings') where retreatants shared food after practising. Overall, nature meditation retreats continue to attract new participants while retaining a core of regular attenders. They appear to be highly valued.

Lesley Wye

Rewilding Women

2023 was the fourth year in which we offered overnight nature meditation retreats for women. This aim is to reconnect women with nature to deepen their practice and help the woods become a place of refuge, joy, nourishment and beauty.

This year, we provided five overnight weekend retreats of one- and two-night duration from the end of April til mid-Sept. All retreats took place in Wildflower Woods near Bruton. Between six to eight women attended each retreat. Themes included: 'Transition & Transformation', 'Reaping the Harvest' and 'Sowing the Seeds'. For the first time, we also offered optional sessions on writing poetry, plant identification and 'active hope'. These were very well received.

Women attending the retreats fed back how much they appreciated extended time to practice in the woods, enjoying all that nature offers. They often spoke of how nourishing the retreats are, not least because of the delicious vegan meals (that they didn't prepare!). For 2024, retreatants asked for a three-night retreat and to open up the retreats to those of any gender.

Lesley Wye

Charity Information

TRUSTEES

Jocelyn James

Christine Elizabeth Ramsey-Wade

Lesley Wye

Morag Rose Ruffell

Maddy Longley

LEGAL STATUS

Registered Charitable Incorporated Organisation

Charity No 1162182

FURTHER INFORMATION

Website: www.bristolmeditation.org.uk

BANKERS

The Co-operative Bank, PO Box 250, Skelmersdale WN8 6WT

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER

Independent scrutiny of accounts is not required where the gross income for the financial year is £25,000 or less.

Annual report of the trustees of Bristol Insight Meditation for the year ended 31 December 2023

1 Factual information

1. Structure

Bristol Insight Meditation ("Bristol Insight") is a registered Charitable Incorporated Organisation (No: 1162182)

1.2 Object

The Object of the charity is:

To advance the education of the public in the subject of meditation and the teachings of the Buddha in particular but not exclusively by supporting and encouraging the study and practice of Buddhist Insight Meditation (also known as Vispassana meditative practice) for the benefit of people in Bristol and the surrounding areas.

1.3 Governance

The charity is managed by a group of Trustees. All trustees are required to be members (supporters) of Bristol Insight. Trustees are recruited on the basis of skills needs identified by the group of Trustees. A variety of methods is used to identify suitable candidates. Trustees are elected by the members (supporters) of the charity at the Annual General Meeting. Each year one third of the Trustees retires by rotation. The group 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. Trustees are given an induction pack containing key information about our organisation and on becoming a trustee. Trustees are encouraged to identify gaps in their knowledge, which are then addressed by briefings or other training delivered to some or all of the trustees as appropriate.

1.4 Management.

The Committee of Trustees comprised 5 members and met approximately 6 times a year. The Trustees are supported by 'organisers' who organise and support activities on an

operational basis. The charity was registered by the Charity Commission on 15 June 2015. Trustees serving during the year 2023 were:

Jocelyn James (elected 7 July 2020, re-elected 25 September 2023)
Barbara Kenny (elected 7 July 2020, resigned 25 September 2023)
Christine Ramsey-Wade (elected 7 July 2020, re-elected 25 September 2023)
Heather - now known as Morag Rose Ruffell (elected 14 Sept 2022)
Lesley Wye (elected 7 July 2020; re-elected 14 Sept 2022)
Riley Yin Au (elected 14 Sept 2022, resigned 25 September 2023)
Maddy Longley (elected 25 September 2023)

2. Review of Activities

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

3 Financial Review

Total income for the year was £15,919.51 (2022: £5,221) and total expenditure for the year was £12,478.49 (2022: £5,618). The total net assets held on 31st December 2023 were £7,655.61 (2022: £4,878.65) represented by cash at bank.

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 has arranged employers and public liability insurance cover of £10M through an insurance policy underwritten by Zurich.

5 Format of financial statements

The report and accounts have been prepared in accordance with the Charities Act 2011

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 Charities Act 2011. 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.

Statement of Financial Activities for the year ended 31 December 2023

INCOME	Teacher Led Day retreat	Self-led	Tues sit	Courses	Rewilding	Nature Meditation	TOTAL 2023	TOTAL 2022
Donations	2,593.10	2,161	3,581.50	685	3,640	797	£13,457.60	£5,221
Gift Aid 2019-2022		471.60	705.90				£1,177.50	
Gift Aid 2023	349.40	406.25		50	478.75		£1,284.41	
TOTAL	£2,942.50	£3,038.86	£4,287.40	£735	£4,118.75	£797	£15,919.51	£5,221

EXPENDITURE	Teacher Led Day retreat	Self-led	Tues sit	Courses	Rewilding	Nature Meditation	TOTAL 2023	TOTAL 2022
Venue Hire	-660	-1,854.06	-3,675.60	-395	-1,118.67	-140	-£7,631.48	-£3894
Food & drink	-46.39				-708.36	-40	-£794.75	
Catering					-1,025		-£1,025	
Travel & accommodation	-262.97				-295.80		-£558.86	-£103.29
Admin	-690						-£690	-£697.50
Purchases			-162.85		-595.63	-46.13	-£804.41	-£2.65
Printing	-30						-£30	-£28
Insurance	-100.80	-20.20	-20.20		-20.20		-£161.40	-£364
Website	-59.99	-15	-15		-15		-£104.99	-£79.17
Refunds		-7.50			-230		-£237.50	-£375
Transfers		-90.01	-14			-31	-£135.01	-£10
Training						-150	-£150	

Donations		-155.09					-£155.09	-£64.39
TOTAL	-£1,850.15	-£2,141.86	-£3,675.60	-£395	-£4008.75	-£407.13	-£12,478.49	£5,618

Balance Sheet at 31 December 2023

	2022	2021	2020	2019
Tangible Fixed Assets				
Current Assets				
Cash at bank	4226.58	4623.58	4362.70	4752.75
Cash in PayPal account	197.84	178.89	178.89	178.89
Cash in hand	60.25	76.18	76.18	174.98
Net Current Assets	4484.67	4878.65	4617.77	5106.62
Net Assets	4484.67	4878.65	4617.77	5106.62
Unrestricted funds	4484.67	4878.65	4617.77	5106.62
Restricted funds				
Total Funds	4484.67	4878.65	4617.77	5106.62

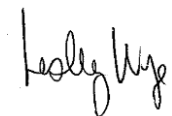
BANK BALANCES

TEACHER LED DAY RETREAT	£2,148.66
SELF LED	£1,945.60
TUES SIT	£1,532.31
COURSES	£1,382.17
OUTDOOR MEDITATION	£646.87
TOTAL	£7,655.61

RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS

ASSETS		2023	2022	2021
BALANCE AT 1 JAN		£4,214.59	£4854.65	£4,617.77
NET MOVEMENT		£3,441.02	-£640.06	£236.88
BALANCE AT 31 DEC		£7,655.61	£4,214.59	£4,854.65

The financial statements were approved and authorised for issue by the Trustees on 18 April 2024 and signed on their behalf by



Lesley Wye

Trustee and Treasurer

Independent Examination

Independent scrutiny of accounts is not required where the gross income for the financial year is £25,000 or less.

Accounts

Bristol Insight Meditation



Annual Report and Financial Statements

Year Ended 31 December 2022

Charitable Incorporated Organisation
Registered Charity No 1162182

About Bristol Insight Meditation

In this our seventh annual review we set out our charitable objectives and our activities to promote those objectives for public benefit.

Background information

In 2003, a small group of people who had been to retreats at Gaia House in Devon got together to support each other in their meditation practice – and Bristol Insight (originally named Bristol Gaia House Group) was born. Today, whilst our original, supportive intentions remain unchanged, that small group has grown organically into a peer-led registered charity - a network of over 350 people involved in a wide range of organised activities.

Our approach

At Bristol Insight Meditation, we support the practice and study of Buddhist Insight Meditation also known as Vipassana (literally translated as ‘seeing deeply or clearly’). This is the practice of developing a calm and mindful investigation into the nature of experience, leading to wisdom, compassion and the end of suffering. The Vipassana movement began in the Theravada schools of Buddhism in the early 20th century in Burma and Thailand, and attempts to reconnect with the teachings of early Buddhism. In its spread to the West, teachers such as Jack Kornfield and Christina Feldman integrated Vipassana with understandings from Western culture, while remaining true to the Buddha’s teachings.

It is from this group of pioneer Western teachers that centres such as Gaia House in Devon and Spirit Rock and IMS in the USA were formed. Bristol Insight Meditation has close links with Gaia House and draws inspiration from the wide range of teachers and teachings from the worldwide Insight meditation community. As well as Vipassana, some of us have practice backgrounds in traditions such as Quakerism or Tibetan and Zen Buddhism.

Our approach emphasises inquiry, experiential exploration and mindfulness amongst many other influences. It is not important to hold particular beliefs or to consider yourself to be a Buddhist to participate in our activities, all are welcome. What we do have in common is an interest in our own personal development as part of a supportive community. Ethical living is important to us too, including our collective responses to current social and environmental challenges.

Our aims and values

Through our groups and activities, we aspire to build a community that nurtures wisdom and compassion: for ourselves, for others and for the world we live in. We strive to be open to all and do not seek to convert or discriminate, irrespective of religious or political beliefs, ethnicity, gender, social background, age, sexual orientation or disability. We invite donations to cover our costs but our activities are open to everyone, irrespective of means.

What we do

We offer a range of activities to support meditation practice. Please visit our website:

www.bristolmeditation.org.uk for full details. Our longstanding association with Gaia House, a well-known retreat centre for Insight Meditation, means we regularly invite their teachers, as well as those from other linked traditions, to lead our own retreat days and courses. These are reputable, highly experienced teachers who commit to a code of ethics. Our supporter-led charity is run by a small team of volunteers.

2022 Annual Review

Charitable Objective

To advance the education of the public in the subject of meditation and the teachings of the Buddha in particular but not exclusively by supporting and encouraging the study and practice of Buddhist Insight Meditation (also known as Vipassana meditative practice) for the benefit of people in Bristol and the surrounding areas.

Education

During the year we organised the following activities to promote education

- Six Teacher Led Day Retreats

These were facilitated by teachers associated with Gaia House Retreat Centre, Devon on a range of subjects, combining teaching and practice. In 2022 most of the retreats took place in person at Glenfrome Primary School. We had one online retreat and one cancelled one. We had the following retreats:

- Stephen Fulder “What Can We Rely On? Living with Steadiness in an Uncertain World” - online
- Bernat Font Clos - ‘Pain, Pleasure & Beyond: practising with how it feels – in Person
- Yanai Postelnik - ‘Either Boundless Heart, Vulnerable Earth or Contemplating our Mortality’- in person but cancelled by Yanai
- Julia Wallond – ‘Befriending ourselves and the world’– In Person
- Nathan Glyde - ‘Freedom of the Heart Unbound’– In Person
- Gavin Milne – ‘Aligning with a liberating flow of life’– In Person

Supporting practice

We provide a number of opportunities for people to support and develop their meditation practice through small group communities:

- Weekly evening sitting group, combining practice and discussion to support individual practice;

- Monthly 'Self-led' day retreat, which provides alternative sitting and walking practice sessions, together with opportunities for discussion;
- Monthly nature meditations in open woodland;
- Occasional overnight camping meditations for women in open woodland
- Insightful ageing group;
- Occasional Sangha walks;
- A monthly newsletter with news and contributions from the sangha;
- A website that provides up to date information and links to bookings for our events.

All activities are publicised widely, including on our website and in our monthly email newsletter. Participants are requested to make donations to cover associated running costs, but low income is not a barrier to participation.

"Without community my practice would mean very little. I take delight in helping to run the Tuesday meditation group. This involves welcoming newcomers and overseeing the meditation and mindful sharing sessions. As we sit in a circle a deep sense of connection and community emerges. I'm also a member of the day retreats team helping to bring dharma teachers to Bristol for a day of practice for our wider community. It is deeply satisfying to work within a team to plan retreats, from the initial idea to organising the day itself and to know that many people have benefited."

Some Highlights from 2022

Teacher Led Retreats

The Teacher Led Retreats team have worked hard over the last year to deliver 6 retreats though one was sadly cancelled due to teacher illness. The retreats have reflected a rich variety of perspectives and practices within the Insight tradition. We ran most of the retreats at our usual venue at Glenfrome School with one retreat online due to the locality of the teacher being abroad. However, the numbers that have returned to in person are still lower than they were pre covid so we have actually made a loss on at least one of our led retreat days due to lower numbers and having to cover the cost of hall hire, refreshments, travel and accommodation costs in comparison to just zoom fees being the only out going previously. I have recently asked for feedback from participants and a number have feedback that the online facility suited them as they live further afield.

Since Lesley took over the treasurer post we get regular updates regarding the Led Team finances which is helpful.

We have decided to run a structured booking system with two levels (early bird and tier 1) to try to encourage people to book on earlier and to endeavour to cover our costs.

We are also asking people to sign up for Gift Aid so we can claim back on some of the booking fees through this scheme.

We need 25 people to attend in order to break even.

We have also capped our accommodation budget at £30 for those teachers choosing to stay overnight in accommodation other than that offered by the team. We encourage teachers to book travel etc as early as possible to keep those costs to a minimum.

Although we may make a loss on some retreat days, overall we break even over the course of the year. There is a pot of profit which can act as a buffer if needs be.

We do have a freely given option for those that are in financial difficulty to ensure we are as accessible as possible.

We have had quite a lot of new people attending these days which is encouraging.

Claire-Louise Symonds

Self Led Day Retreats

The self-led retreats were well attended in the last year. We had between 8 and 14 participants approximately each Saturday. We kept the same popular structure of silent sitting and walking meditation periods. We included a one hour recorded Dharma talk and 1/2 hour sharing period. The day does not include any specific meditation instruction. Participants generally have some meditation experience.

The verbal feedback from participants is positive. They appreciate the opportunity to meditate for a whole day in a supportive atmosphere. Full details of the retreat can be found on the Bristol insight website.

The team of four organisers continue to volunteer their services. We have occasional short meetings to coordinate this.

David Ringsell

Tuesday Evening Sitting Group

The weekly evening sit returned to in-person meetings in the Spring of 2022 at the Central Quaker Meeting House. This was much appreciated by many after a long period of meeting on Zoom. Attendance for the meetings continued to be good with newcomers each week. Several of the newcomers have volunteered to become facilitators at the meetings. Our "Deepening our Practice" programme covered explorations of the relationship between meditation and therapy, scientific research, working from home and the cost of living crises. The group also listened to recordings of the spoken discourses of the Buddha and recorded talks from meditation teachers. These often formed the basis of lively discussion. We continued with our popular Poetry and Prose sessions and enjoyed socialising during our Chat Café sessions. The group also continued to provide support for meditation practice both for beginners and those more experienced in meditation through its monthly Mindful Sharing sessions.

Mike Baker

Focusing Group

After a break three monthly in person meetings took place from September to November.

Daytime Meditation and Sharing Group (formerly Daytime Sangha Group)

This group disbanded towards the end of 2021 and did not meet in 2022.

Sangha Walks

There were 2 local sangha walks this year in October and December, the popular Sugar loaf walk in the black mountains and Dolebury Warren.

Sangha walks have been happening intermittently since the first walk in 2005. There have been fewer walks this year due to facilitator illness. Most of the walks have been led by Gordon and occasionally by a volunteer walk leader, we would like to encourage other volunteers to lead walks going forward. Children and dogs are welcome on the walks and part of the walk is held in silence. We walk at a gentle pace and walks generally last for 2–4 hours and include a pub or picnic lunch during or at the end of the walk.

The sangha walks are open to anyone, and new people often come on the walks. Connections get made and new people get to hear of other group activities through conversation with sangha members on the walks.

Joss James

Insightful Ageing Group

The Insightful Ageing group continued to meet about once every two months throughout the year. The membership of the group remained constant but continued to remain open to new membership. The group largely used the book “In Praise of Ageing- Awakening to Old Age with Wisdom and Compassion by Carmel Shalev” as a basis to explore the challenges of ageing. Many lively discussions took place around the themes in the book which included Courage, Freedom, Compassion, Joy and Wisdom in older age. Group members continue to express that they highly value the continuing support of the group.

Mike Baker

Nature Meditation

Nature meditation retreats continued to rise in popularity with 11 retreats offered attended by an average of 10 people (lowest attendance = 5 and highest = 17). Themes included 'managing difficulty using RAIN', 'feeling tone' and working with the phrase 'true freedom is about being without anxiety about imperfection'. Rupert Marques, formerly of Ecodharma in Catalunya, offered a whole day retreat combining the four directions (North, South, East & West) with dharmic principles. This proved very popular. Three retreats were cancelled because of high winds, low interest or facilitator illness. All the retreats took place in Wraxall woods near Bristol.

Lesley Wye

Rewilding Women

In 2022, Rewilding Women was in a transitional phase, being partially under the BIM umbrella although the finances were kept separately. Four retreats were offered with three garnering sufficient interest to run; the March retreat had few takers! Themes were 'Wild Garlic & Bluebells' (May), Abundance & Gratitude (July) and Letting Go; Starting Afresh (Sept). The first two retreats ran in Wraxall woods while the final one was held in Wildflower Woods near Bruton. An average of 7 women attended (6-8). Feedback was very positive.

Lesley Wye

Safeguarding training

An online session for facilitators and supporters was run in July and a new safe guarding policy has been put in place.

Charity Information

TRUSTEES

Michael Baker

Jocelyn James

Barbara Kenney

Christine Elizabeth Ramsey-Wade

Geoff Windle

Lesley Wye

Heather Ruffell

Riley Yin Au

LEGAL STATUS

Registered Charitable Incorporated Organisation

Charity No 1162182

FURTHER INFORMATION

Website: www.bristolmeditation.org.uk

BANKERS

The Co-operative Bank, PO Box 250, Skelmersdale WN8 6WT

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER

Independent scrutiny of accounts is not required where the gross income for the financial year is £25,000 or less.

Annual report of the trustees of Bristol Insight Meditation for the year ended 31 December 2022

1 Factual information

1. Structure

Bristol Insight Meditation ("Bristol Insight") is a registered Charitable Incorporated Organisation (No: 1162182)

1.2 Object

The Object of the charity is:

To advance the education of the public in the subject of meditation and the teachings of the Buddha in particular but not exclusively by supporting and encouraging the study and practice of Buddhist Insight Meditation (also known as Vispassana meditative practice) for the benefit of people in Bristol and the surrounding areas.

1.3 Governance

The charity is managed by a group of Trustees. All trustees are required to be members (supporters) of Bristol Insight. Trustees are recruited on the basis of skills needs identified by the group of Trustees. A variety of methods is used to identify suitable candidates. Trustees are elected by the members (supporters) of the charity at the Annual General Meeting. Each year one third of the Trustees retires by rotation. The group 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. Trustees are given an induction pack containing key information about our organisation and on becoming a trustee. Trustees are encouraged to identify gaps in their knowledge, which are then addressed by briefings or other training delivered to some or all of the trustees as appropriate.

1.4 Management

The Committee of Trustees comprised 5 members and met approximately 6 times a year. The Trustees are supported by 'organisers' who organise and support activities on an operational basis. The charity was registered by the Charity Commission on 15 June 2015. Trustees serving during the year 2022 were:

Michael Baker (elected 25 June 2016, re-elected 13 April 2019; resigned 14 Sept 2022)

Jocelyn James (elected 7 July 2020)

Barbara Kenny (elected 7 July 2020)

Christine Ramsey-Wade (elected 7 July 2020)

Heather Ruffell (elected 14 Sept 2022)

Geoff Windle (elected 13 April 2019; resigned 14 Sept 2022)

Lesley Wye (elected 7 July 2020; re-elected 14 Sept 2022)

Riley Yin Au (elected 14 Sept 2022)

2. Review of Activities

The review of activities is set out in the 2022 Annual Review earlier in this report.

3 Financial Review

Total income for the year was £5221 (2021: £2236.22) and total expenditure for the year was £5618 (2021: £1999.34). The total net assets held at 31st December 2022 were £4484.67 (2021: £4878.65) represented by cash at bank.

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 has arranged employers and public liability insurance cover of £10M through an insurance policy underwritten by the Ecclesiastical Insurance Group.

5 Format of financial statements

The report and accounts have been prepared in accordance with the Charities Act 2011

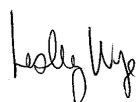
6 Trustees' responsibilities in relation to the financial statements

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 Charities Act 2011. 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



Lesley Wye, Trustee and Treasurer

Statement of Financial Activities for the year ended 31 December 2022

	Day retreats	Self-Led	Tuesday Eve	Cou rses	RW	Bursa ry	2022 total	2021 Total
INCOME								
Donations	1190	1952.50	1973.50	0	90	15		
Total Income	1190	1952.50	1973.50	0	90	15	5221	2236.22
EXPENDITURE								
Hire of Halls & Venues	(660)	(1806)	(1428)				(3894)	(786.05)
Travel & Accommodation	(103.29)						(103.29)	(121.80)
Admin Services	(697.50)						(697.50)	(667.50)
Printing & Stationery	(28)						(28)	
Liability Insurance	(124)	(120)	(120)				(364)	(364)
Website & IT	(79.17)						(79.17)	(59.99)
Purchases		(2.65)					(2.65)	
Dharmaseed		(64.39)					(64.39)	
Refunds			(375)				(375)	
Transfers		(10)					(10)	
Expenditure	(1691.96)	(2003.04)	(1923)				(5618)	(1999.34)
Net Movement							(397)	236.88
Reconciliation of Funds								
Balance B/F at 1 Jan 2022							£4878.65	£4617.77
Paypal account							18.95	
Day retreats cash							(15.93)	
Net movement							(397)	
Balance C/F at 31 Dec 2022							£4484.67	£4878.65

Balance Sheet at 31 December 2022

	2022	2021	2020	2019
Tangible Fixed Assets				
Current Assets				
Cash at bank	4226.58	4623.58	4362.70	4752.75
Cash in PayPal account	197.84	178.89	178.89	178.89
Cash in hand	60.25	76.18	76.18	174.98
Net Current Assets	4484.67	4878.65	4617.77	5106.62
Net Assets	4484.67	4878.65	4617.77	5106.62
Unrestricted funds	4484.67	4878.65	4617.77	5106.62
Restricted funds				
Total Funds	4484.67	4878.65	4617.77	5106.62

The financial statements were approved and authorised for issue by the Trustees
on and signed on their behalf by



Lesley Wye
Trustee and Treasurer

Accounts

Bristol Insight Meditation



Annual Report and Financial Statements

Year Ended 31 December 2021

About Bristol Insight Meditation

In this our sixth annual review we set out our charitable objectives and our activities to promote those objectives for public benefit.

Background information

In 2003, a small group of people who had been to retreats at Gaia House in Devon got together to support each other in their meditation practice – and Bristol Insight (originally named Bristol Gaia House Group) was born. Today, whilst our original, supportive intentions remain unchanged, that small group has grown organically into a peer-led registered charity - a network of over 350 people involved in a wide range of organised activities.

Our approach

At Bristol Insight Meditation, we support the practice and study of Buddhist Insight Meditation also known as Vipassana (literally translated as ‘seeing deeply or clearly’). This is the practice of developing a calm and mindful investigation into the nature of experience, leading to wisdom, compassion and the end of suffering. The Vipassana movement began in the Theravada schools of Buddhism in the early 20th century in Burma and Thailand, and attempts to reconnect with the teachings of early Buddhism. In its spread to the West, teachers such as Jack Kornfield and Christina Feldman integrated Vipassana with understandings from Western culture, while remaining true to the Buddha’s teachings.

It is from this group of pioneer Western teachers that centres such as Gaia House in Devon and Spirit Rock and IMS in the USA were formed. Bristol Insight Meditation has close links with Gaia House and draws inspiration from the wide range of teachers and teachings from the worldwide Insight meditation community. As well as Vipassana, some of us have practice backgrounds in traditions such as Quakerism or Tibetan and Zen Buddhism.

Our approach emphasises inquiry, experiential exploration and mindfulness amongst many other influences. It is not important to hold particular beliefs or to consider yourself to be a Buddhist to participate in our activities, all are welcome. What we do have in common is an interest in our own personal development as part of a supportive community. Ethical living is important to us too, including our collective responses to current social and environmental challenges.

Our aims and values

Through our groups and activities, we aspire to build a community that nurtures wisdom and compassion: for ourselves, for others and for the world we live in. We strive to be open to all and do not seek to convert or discriminate, irrespective of religious or political beliefs, ethnicity, gender, social background, age, sexual orientation or disability. We invite donations to cover our costs but our activities are open to everyone, irrespective of means.

What we do

We offer a range of activities to support meditation practice. Please visit our website: **www.bristolmeditation.org.uk** for full details. Our longstanding association with Gaia House, a well-known retreat centre for Insight Meditation, means we regularly invite their teachers, as well as those from other linked traditions, to lead our own retreat days and courses. These are reputable, highly experienced teachers who commit to a code of ethics. Our supporter-led charity is run by a small team of volunteers.

2021 Annual Review

Charitable Objective

To advance the education of the public in the subject of meditation and the teachings of the Buddha in particular but not exclusively by supporting and encouraging the study and practice of Buddhist Insight Meditation (also known as Vipassana meditation practice) for the benefit of people in Bristol and the surrounding areas.

Education

During the year we organised the following activities to promote education:

Six Teacher Led Day Retreats

These were facilitated by teachers associated with Gaia House Retreat Centre, Devon on a range of subjects, combining teaching and practice. In 2020 we had the following retreats:

20th March: Power Mindfulness with Venerable Canda

29th May: Resilience and the Art of Happiness with Zohar Lavie

24th July: Boundless Heart, Vulnerable Earth with Yanai Postelnik

25th September: Enriching Life with Kirsten Kratz

20th November The Kaleidoscope Heart with Julia Wallond

Having these teachers come to Bristol Insight was greatly appreciated by us all.

Supporting practice

We provide a number of opportunities for people to support and develop their meditation practice through small group communities:

- Weekly evening sitting group, combining practice and discussion to support individual practice;
- Teacher-led retreat days every two months with teachings and guidance in the practice of insight meditation;
- Monthly 'Self-led' day retreat, which provides alternative sitting and walking practice sessions, together with opportunities for discussion;
- Monthly nature meditations in open woodland;
- Monthly group to support focussing practice;
- Insightful ageing group;
- Book group to support practice;
- Occasional Sangha walks;
- A monthly newsletter with news and contributions from the sangha;
- A website that provides up to date information and links to bookings for our events.

All activities are publicised widely, including on our website and in our monthly email newsletter. Participants are requested to make donations to cover associated running costs, but low income is not a barrier to participation.

"Without community my practice would mean very little. I take delight in helping to run the Tuesday meditation group. This involves welcoming newcomers and overseeing the meditation and mindful sharing sessions. As we sit in a circle a deep sense of connection and community emerges. I'm also a member of the day retreats team helping to bring dharma teachers to Bristol for a day of practice for our wider community. It is deeply satisfying to work within a team to plan retreats, from the initial idea to organising the day itself and to know that many people have benefited."

(A Bristol Insight volunteer)

Some Highlights from 2021

Teacher Led Retreats

These were facilitated by teachers associated with Gaia House Retreat Centre, Devon on a range of subjects, combining teaching and practice. In 2021 we had the following retreats:

20th March: Power Mindfulness with Venerable Canda

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24th July: Boundless Heart, Vulnerable Earth with Yanai Postelnik

25th September: Enriching Life with Kirsten Kratz

20th November The Kaleidoscope Heart with Julia Wallond

Having these teachers come to Bristol Insight was greatly appreciated by us all. In particular the special atmosphere of a retreat was felt to be most supportive and deeply enhanced our sense of community.

Self Led Day Retreats

The retreat continues to run successfully on the first Saturday of each month. Attendance varies between approximately 10 to 15 people. The format of the day has not changed significantly from previous years. It consists of periods of silent sitting and walking meditation. Plus, a recorded Dharma talk. The day concludes with a period of group sharing.

After more than a year of providing a home-based retreat supported by a Zoom meeting, the retreat returned to its Bristol venue at the Friends Meeting House last Autumn. COVID precautions included wearing of masks, lateral flow testing, packed lunches, and social distancing. These precautions are no longer required. There is a welcome return to a shared lunch at 1:00 o'clock.

The cost of the retreat has gone up to £20 for the day for waged participants. This covers the cost of hiring the venue. This is the only significant cost of running the retreat. There is a small surplus in the retreat's bank account.

The small team of volunteers continues to organise the retreat. This includes sending out a monthly e-mail, managing the finances, facilitating the introduction to the day and the sharing period. Also selecting and playing the Dharma talk, etc. Plus managing the annual contract with the venue.

Attendees vary between those who have been coming for several years and newcomers. Most people have either some or significant experience in meditation. As such, we do not teach meditation during the day. People can choose to practise whatever technique they are happiest with. The feedback from attendees has been very positive. They're happy with the format of the day and the venue itself.

David Ringsell

Tuesday Evening Sitting Group

The weekly evening sit continued throughout 2021 in an online format with many newcomers and a dedicated team of facilitators. We introduced a “Caring Sangha” space at the start of the evening where we invite members of the group to bring to mind with loving kindness individuals or groups of people suffering from illness, accidents or other forms of distress, or to hold in our hearts those who have experienced joyful events for celebration. Our “Cultivating our Practice” programme covered in-depth exploration of several Dhamma topics – including the Five Hindrances, the Five Precepts, the Seven Factors of Awakening, the Three Poisons, non-duality and the ego and an exploration of mandalas. The group also listened to recordings of the spoken discourses of the Buddha and recorded talks from meditation teachers. These often formed the basis of lively discussion. We continued with our popular Poetry and Prose and Spiritual Book Sharing sessions. The group also continued to provide support for meditation practice both for beginners and those more experienced in meditation through its monthly Mindful Sharing sessions.

Focusing Group

The Focusing group continued to meet on a fortnightly basis alternating between meeting online and meeting at the Zen centre on the Gloucester Road. The flexibility of venues was much appreciated by focusers. Participants appreciated the willingness to sit with one’s experience from a place of presence, acceptance, warmth and curiosity in the presence of the partner or companion .

Sangha Walks

Sanga walks provided an opportunity to socialise with other sangha members, ground ourselves in our natural environment, take gentle exercise and to practice mindful walking.

Three sangha walks happened this year:

In April the Long Ashton circular walk

In May the Stanton Drew Stone Circles

And in July a Pilgrimage to the Holy Cross church Kilgwrrwg Monmouthshire

Sadly the October walk was cancelled.

Insightful Ageing Group

The Insightful Ageing group continued to meet about once every two months throughout the year. The group used the book “Older and Wiser - Classical Buddhist Teachings on Ageing, Sickness and Death” as a basis to explore the challenges of ageing. Many lively discussions took place offering new perspectives to view meditational practice as a support for the process of ageing.

Mike Baker

Nature Meditation

This group started in June 2020 and has grown in success over the past year with over 100 people on the mailing list. We meet monthly on Sunday afternoons in some beautiful woods just outside Bristol. Each retreat has a theme e.g. Rain! (July 2021), Letting Go of Wanting Things to be Different (Sept 2021), The Gift (Dec 2021). The retreats last three hours with periods of sitting, personal and nature meditation practice followed by a facilitated sharing. In the winter, we had fires. Covered areas offer protection from the rain. Between 6-14 people attended every month. A major success is that we have perfected the vegan nature meditation flapjack recipe!

Lesley Wye

Book Group

March to Sept 2021 a small group (3) of us read 'Life of the Buddha: according to the Pali Canon' by Bhikkhu Nanamoli. This wonderful text had been put together by Nanamoli entirely from passages translated from the Pali Canon. It felt like we were being given privileged access to the Buddha and his entourage, their lives and concerns, in a way that felt almost contemporaneous. As we read it we found that different parts stood out for us, or we interpreted things differently, and the discussion we had around the text enhanced the reading for all of us.

Nov 2021 we got together to decide on the next book we would read together, settling on 'Standing at the edge: Finding fear and freedom where courage meet' by Joan Halifax. We were joined by two more people and read this book in 2022. In the near future, those of the 5 that wish to be involved in a group next year will have a zoom meeting to determine which book to read, and a time/day that suits all. At which point we will seek to advertise it in the monthly newsletter, all are welcome to join.

Mandy Stuart

Charity Information

TRUSTEES

Michael Baker

Jonathan Edwards

Jocelyn James

Christine Elizabeth Ramsey-Wade

Alastair Wakely

Geoff Windle

Barbara Kenney

Lesley Wye

LEGAL STATUS

Registered Charitable Incorporated Organisation

Charity No 1162182

FURTHER INFORMATION

Website: www.bristolmeditation.org.uk

BANKERS

The Co-operative Bank, PO Box 250, Skelmersdale WN8 6WT

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER

Independent scrutiny of accounts is not required where the gross income for the financial year is £25,000 or less.

Annual report of the trustees of Bristol Insight Meditation for the year ended 31 December 2021

1 Factual information

1.1 Structure

Bristol Insight Meditation ("Bristol Insight") is a registered Charitable Incorporated Organisation (No: 1162182)

1.2 Object

The Object of the charity is:

To advance the education of the public in the subject of meditation and the teachings of the Buddha in particular but not exclusively by supporting and encouraging the study and practice of Buddhist Insight Meditation (also known as Vispassana meditative practice) for the benefit of people in Bristol and the surrounding areas.

1.3 Governance

The charity is managed by a group of Trustees. All trustees are required to be members (supporters) of Bristol Insight. Trustees are recruited on the basis of skills and needs identified by the group of Trustees. A variety of methods are used to identify suitable candidates. Trustees are elected by the members (supporters) of the charity at the Annual General Meeting. Each year one third of the Trustees retires by rotation. The group 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. Trustees are given an induction pack containing key information about our organisation and on becoming a trustee. Trustees are encouraged to identify gaps in their knowledge, which are then addressed by briefings or other training delivered to some or all of the trustees as appropriate.

1.4 Management

The Committee of Trustees currently comprises 7 members and meets approximately 6 times a year. The Trustees are supported by 'organisers' who organise and support activities on an operational basis. Organisers report to the Trustee Committee. The charity was registered by the Charity Commission on 15 June 2015. Trustees serving during the year 2021 were:

Michael Baker (elected 25 June 2016, re-elected 13 April 2019)

Jonathan Edwards (appointed 15 June 2015, elected 25 June 2016, re-elected 7 July 2020, retired 13th July 2021)

Alastair Wakely (elected 13th April, 2019, retired 13th July 2021)

Jocelyn James (elected 7 July 2020)

Christine Ramsey-Wade (elected 7 July 2020)

Geoff Windle (elected 13 April 2019)

Barbara Kenney (elected 13th July 2021)

Lesley Wye (elected 7 July 2020)

2 Review of Activities

The review of activities is set out in the 2021 Annual Review earlier in this report.

3 Financial Review

Total income for the year was £ 2236.22 (2020: £3,310.50) and total expenditure for the year was £1999.34 (2020: £3,799.35). Both income and expenditure were significantly reduced as very few in-person events were held due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The total net assets held at 31st December 2021 were £4,854.65 (2020: £4,617.77) represented by cash at bank and in hand.

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 has arranged employers and public liability insurance cover of £10M through an insurance policy underwritten by the Ecclesiastical Insurance Group.

5 Format of financial statements

The report and accounts have been prepared in accordance with the Charities Act 2011

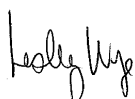
6 Trustees' responsibilities in relation to the financial statements

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 Charities Act 2011. 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



Lesley wye, trustee and Treasurer

Statement of Financial Activities for the year ended 31 December 2021

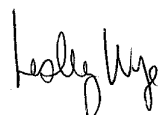
	Teacher Led Day Retreats & Admin	Self-Led & Nature Day Retreats	Tuesday Sitting & Introd Course	Teacher Led Courses	2021 Total	2020 Total
INCOME						
Voluntary Income						
Donations		£598.72	£180		£778.72	£1,853.00
Investment Income						
Bank Interest					£0.00	£0.00
From charitable activities						
Event booking fees	£1,457.50				£1,457.50	£1,457.50
Total Income	£1,457.50			£0.00	£2,236.22	£3,310.50
EXPENDITURE						
Cost of charitable activities						
Payments to Teachers	£121.80				£121.80	£702.12
Hire of Halls & Venues	£110.00	£676.05			£786.05	£1,748.25
Travel & Accommodation					£0.00	£40.07
Admin Services	£667.50				£667.50	£825.00
Coffee, Tea, Biscuits					£0.00	£13.80
Printing & Stationery					£0.00	£15.00
Liability Insurance	£364.00				£364.00	£364.00
Website & IT	£59.99				£59.99	£91.11
Purchases					£0.00	£0.00
Total Expenditure	£1,323.29	£676.05	£1,092.00	£0.00	£1,999.34	£3,799.35
Net Movement of Funds	-£232.73	-£16.12	-£240.00	£0.00	£236.88	-£488.85
Reconciliation of Funds						
Balance B/F at 1 Jan 2021					£4617.77	£5,106.62
Balance C/F at 31 Dec 2021					£4,854.65	£4,617.77

Balance Sheet at 31 December 2021

	2021	2020	2019
Tangible Fixed Assets	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
Current Assets			
	£4,599.5	£4,362.7	£4,752.7
Cash at bank	8	0	5
Cash in PayPal account	£178.89	£178.89	£178.89
Cash in hand	£76.18	£76.18	£174.98
	£4,854.6	£4,617.7	£5,106.6
Net Current Assets	5	7	2
	£4,854.6	£4,617.7	£5,106.6
Net Assets	5	7	2
Represented by			
	£4,854.6	£4,617.7	£5,106.6
Unrestricted funds	5	7	2
Restricted funds			
	£4,854.6	£4,617.7	£5,106.6
Total Funds	5	7	2

Note: we have a credit of £672 with the Friends Central Meeting House for 16 Tuesday evening sessions prepaid but not used in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The financial statements were approved and authorised for issue by the Trustees on 13th July 2021 and signed on their behalf by



Lesley Wye
Trustee and Treasurer

Independent Examination

Independent scrutiny of accounts is not required where the gross income for the financial year is £25,000 or less.

Accounts

Bristol Insight Meditation



Annual Report and Financial Statements

Year Ended 31 December 2020

About Bristol Insight Meditation

In this our sixth annual review we set out our charitable objectives and our activities to promote those objectives for public benefit.

Background information

In 2003, a small group of people who had been to retreats at Gaia House in Devon got together to support each other in their meditation practice – and Bristol Insight (originally named Bristol Gaia House Group) was born. Today, whilst our original, supportive intentions remain unchanged, that small group has grown organically into a peer-led registered charity - a network of over 350 people involved in a wide range of organised activities.

Our approach

At Bristol Insight Meditation, we support the practice and study of Buddhist Insight Meditation also known as Vipassana (literally translated as ‘seeing deeply or clearly’). This is the practice of developing a calm and mindful investigation into the nature of experience, leading to wisdom, compassion and the end of suffering. The Vipassana movement began in the Theravada schools of Buddhism in the early 20th century in Burma and Thailand, and attempts to reconnect with the teachings of early Buddhism. In its spread to the West, teachers such as Jack Kornfield and Christina Feldman integrated Vipassana with understandings from Western culture, while remaining true to the Buddha’s teachings.

It is from this group of pioneer Western teachers that centres such as Gaia House in Devon and Spirit Rock and IMS in the USA were formed. Bristol Insight Meditation has close links with Gaia House and draws inspiration from the wide range of teachers and teachings from the worldwide Insight meditation community. As well as Vipassana, some of us have practice backgrounds in traditions such as Quakerism or Tibetan and Zen Buddhism.

Our approach emphasises inquiry, experiential exploration and mindfulness amongst many other influences. It is not important to hold particular beliefs or to consider yourself to be a Buddhist to participate in our activities, all are welcome. What we do have in common is an interest in our own personal development as part of a supportive community. Ethical living is important to us too, including our collective responses to current social and environmental challenges.

Our aims and values

Through our groups and activities, we aspire to build a community that nurtures wisdom and compassion: for ourselves, for others and for the world we live in. We strive to be open to all and do not seek to convert or discriminate, irrespective of religious or political beliefs, ethnicity, gender, social background, age, sexual orientation or disability. We invite donations to cover our costs but our activities are open to everyone, irrespective of means.

What we do

We offer a range of activities to support meditation practice. Please visit our website: www.bristolmeditation.org.uk for full details. Our longstanding association with Gaia House, a well-known retreat centre for Insight Meditation, means we regularly invite their teachers, as well as those from other linked traditions, to lead our own retreat days and courses. These are reputable, highly experienced teachers who commit to a code of ethics. Our supporter-led charity is run by a small team of volunteers.

2020 Annual Review

Charitable Objective

To advance the education of the public in the subject of meditation and the teachings of the Buddha in particular but not exclusively by supporting and encouraging the study and practice of Buddhist Insight Meditation (also known as Vipassana meditative practice) for the benefit of people in Bristol and the surrounding areas.

Education

During the year we organised the following activities to promote education

- **Six Teacher Led Day Retreats**

These were facilitated by teachers associated with Gaia House Retreat Centre, Devon on a range of subjects, combining teaching and practice. In 2020 we had the following retreats:

- Venerable Canda - *'Contented and easily Satisfied'*
- Chris Cullen - *'Practising Wisdom and Compassion in Turbulent Times'*
- Jenny Wilks - *'Gratitude and Joy'*
- Yanai Postelnik – *'Love in the time of Extinction'*
- Kirsten Kratz - *'Stretching the Heart -Liberating the Heart'*
- Ramiro Ortega – *'The Power and Art of Slowing Down'*

Having these teachers come to Bristol Insight was greatly appreciated by us all.

Supporting practice

We provide a number of opportunities for people to support and develop their meditation practice through small group communities:

- Weekly evening sitting group, combining practice and discussion to support individual practice;
- Monthly daytime sitting group, combining practice and discussion to support individual practice;

- Monthly 'Self-led' day retreat, which provides alternative sitting and walking practice sessions, together with opportunities for discussion;
- Monthly nature meditations in open woodland;
- Monthly group to support focussing practice;
- Insightful ageing group;
- Book group to support practice;
- Occasional Sangha walks;
- A monthly newsletter with news and contributions from the sangha;
- A website that provides up to date information and links to bookings for our events.

All activities are publicised widely, including on our website and in our monthly email newsletter. Participants are requested to make donations to cover associated running costs, but low income is not a barrier to participation.

“Without community my practice would mean very little. I take delight in helping to run the Tuesday meditation group. This involves welcoming newcomers and overseeing the meditation and mindful sharing sessions. As we sit in a circle a deep sense of connection and community emerges. I’m also a member of the day retreats team helping to bring dharma teachers to Bristol for a day of practice for our wider community. It is deeply satisfying to work within a team to plan retreats, from the initial idea to organising the day itself and to know that many people have benefited.”

Some Highlights from 2020

Teacher Led Retreats

The Teacher Led Retreats team have worked hard over the last year to deliver 6 retreats which feels more manageable for the team. The retreats have reflected a rich variety of perspectives and practices within the Insight tradition. We had to move from the venue at Glenfrome School onto Zoom as from the March retreat due to Covid restrictions. By all accounts the retreats have been much appreciated during these strange and difficult times and provided access to some participants who can't make a day long in person. They have continued to be seen as an enrichment and valuable support for our practice.

Self Led Day Retreats

The self led retreat has continued to run monthly in 2020 and 2021. Since April 2020, the day retreats have been in peoples' own homes rather than at the Bristol venue. The structure of the day has remained like previous years. But an online Zoom meeting has been available to participants throughout the day.

Participants have been encouraged to adapt the structure of the day to meet their domestic requirements. The event has been free. Participants can join the day via a meeting link that is emailed to them. Along with a link to a Dharma talk for the month.

The same small team has successfully organised the retreats. Attendance has varied from about 7 to 14 participants throughout the year. Our provisional plan is to return to the Bristol venue from September.

Tuesday Evening Sitting Group

The weekly evening sit continued to thrive in an online format with many newcomers and a dedicated team of facilitators. Our "Cultivating our Practice" programme covered in-depth exploration of several Dharma topics – including the Noble Eightfold Path, The Five Aggregates, the Middle Way, Gratitude, and the Feminine in Buddhism. We also explored the contributions of the Thai teacher Ajahn Chah to the practice of contemporary meditation, the teachings of Stephen Lavine on insightful approaches to ageing and dying amongst many other themes. The group also listened to recordings of the spoken discourses of the Buddha and recorded talks of meditation teachers. These often formed the basis of lively discussion. We continued with our popular Poetry and Prose sessions. The group also continued to provide support for meditation practice both for beginners and those more experienced in meditation through its monthly Mindful Sharing sessions.

Focusing Group

Prior to the first lockdown the group was meeting once a month for 3 hours (10am-1pm), generally on the second Sunday of the month. The group shifted to meeting on Zoom at the end of

March last year and we met weekly every Sunday in April and May 2020. Since then and through the last year the group has met fortnightly.

We started meeting in-person once a month at Bristol Zen Dojo in April this year, alternating with Zoom meetings once a month – so there is currently a meeting every fortnight. The dojo has done a covid risk assessment and we follow the safety protocols they have developed. The in-person meetings have been well-attended. Average overall attendance (both zoom and in-person) has generally been in the range 6-10 people.

The group is open to anyone interested in Focusing, regardless of experience, and a number of people have joined the group since lockdown and had their first experiences of Focusing online. The group is offered on a dana (voluntary donation) basis by Gordon, but in practice most people attend freely, especially on Zoom.

Daytime Meditation and Sharing Group (formerly Daytime Sangha Group)

Four of the former regular members of the group have been meeting on Zoom about once a month over the last year – this has felt supportive to all concerned. It hasn't however felt appropriate to open these meetings more widely.

Sangha Walks

There were 8 local sangha walks last year between June and December. The walks were all in and around Bristol and accessible easily by public transport, car or bicycle to remove the need for lift sharing. Average attendance was about 6 people, and we followed covid safety protocols.

No walks happened in January, February and March due to the second lockdown. Walks re-started in April this year and we have had 3 walks since then – around Long Ashton, Stanton Drew, and The Lower Wye Valley. These walks have been very popular, with the Wye Valley walk attracting a record 24 people!

It is hoped to continue to have walks every 4-6 weeks through the rest of the year.

Sangha walks have been happening intermittently since the first walk in 2005. There has been an increase in the frequency and attendance on the walks in the last few years. Most of the walks have been led by Gordon and occasionally by a volunteer walk leader. Children and dogs are welcome on the walks and part of the walk is held in silence. We walk at a gentle pace and walks generally last for 2–4 hours and include a pub or picnic lunch during or at the end of the walk.

The sangha walks are open to anyone, and new people often come on the walks. Connections get made and new people get to hear of other group activities through conversation with sangha members on the walks.

Insightful Ageing Group

It was the shock of witnessing sickness, old age and death that moved the youthful Prince Siddharta Gautama (the future Buddha) to search for a way out of suffering. How to respond this challenge is the aim and subject matter of the Group.

We have been meeting monthly for over two years, firstly in peoples' homes and since lockdown via zoom. Each session has lasted two hours. Over the past year, we have worked systematically through two books. The first "A year to live" by Stepehen Levine focuses on how to live this year as if it were your last. The second By Ma Soeng, Ambrosia and Olendzki is entitled "Older and Wiser " and introduces classical Buddhist teachings on ageing, sickness and death. Discussion of the texts has been accompanied by practical meditation exercises. In the future, the intention is to focus more on meditative practices of relevance to the subject matter of ageing.

The group is fairly small, about seven or eight members and we would welcome expressions of interest from new people. As the issue of dealing with suffering is of relevance to people of all ages, not just older people, you do not have to be "old" to join and hopefully to gain insight on the challenges of living a mindful life.

Nature Meditation

This group started in June 2020 as an offshoot of the self-led group, when COVID-19 restrictions meant that only outdoor events were possible. We meet monthly on Sunday afternoons in some beautiful woods just outside Bristol. The retreats last three hours with periods of sitting and nature meditation practice followed by a facilitated sharing. In the winter, we had fires. Covered areas offer protection from the rain. Between 6-14 people attended every month. When 'rule of 6' was in force, we would break into smaller groups, each with its own facilitator. Nature meditation events were not held in November 2020 or from January to March 2021, in line with government guidance. The group recently celebrated its one year anniversary and plans to continue.

Charity Information

TRUSTEES

Michael Baker

Jonathan Edwards

Jocelyn James

Christine Elizabeth Ramsey-Wade

Alastair Wakely

Geoff Windle

Lesley Wye

LEGAL STATUS

Registered Charitable Incorporated Organisation

Charity No 1162182

FURTHER INFORMATION

Website: www.bristolmeditation.org.uk

BANKERS

The Co-operative Bank, PO Box 250, Skelmersdale WN8 6WT

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER

Independent scrutiny of accounts is not required where the gross income for the financial year is £25,000 or less.

Annual report of the trustees of Bristol Insight Meditation for the year ended 31 December 2020

1 Factual information

1.1 Structure

Bristol Insight Meditation ("Bristol Insight") is a registered Charitable Incorporated Organisation (No: 1162182)

1.2 Object

The Object of the charity is:

To advance the education of the public in the subject of meditation and the teachings of the Buddha in particular but not exclusively by supporting and encouraging the study and practice of Buddhist Insight Meditation (also known as Vispassana meditative practice) for the benefit of people in Bristol and the surrounding areas.

1.3 Governance

The charity is managed by a group of Trustees. All trustees are required to be members (supporters) of Bristol Insight. Trustees are recruited on the basis of skills needs identified by the group of Trustees. A variety of methods is used to identify suitable candidates. Trustees are elected by the members (supporters) of the charity at the Annual General Meeting. Each year one third of the Trustees retires by rotation. The group 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. Trustees are given an induction pack containing key information about our organisation and on becoming a trustee. Trustees are encouraged to identify gaps in their knowledge, which are then addressed by briefings or other training delivered to some or all of the trustees as appropriate.

1.4 Management

The Committee of Trustees currently comprises 7 members and meets approximately 6 times a year. The Trustees are supported by 'organisers' who organise and support activities on an operational basis. Organisers report to the Trustee Committee. The charity was registered by the Charity Commission on 15 June 2015. Trustees serving during the year 2020 were:

Michael Baker (elected on 25 June 2016, re-elected 13 April 2019)

Gillian Bird (appointed 15 June 2015, elected 25 June 2016, resigned 7 July 2020)

Max Beseke (appointed 15 June 2015, elected 25 June 2016, resigned 7 July 2020)

Jonathan Edwards (appointed 15 June 2015, elected 25 June 2016, re-elected 7 July 2020)

Jocelyn James (elected 7 July 2020)

Christine Ramsey-Wade (elected 7 July 2020)

Alastair Wakely (elected 13 April 2019)

Geoff Windle (elected 13 April 2019)

Lesley Wye (elected 7 July 2020)

2 Review of Activities

The review of activities is set out in the 2020 Annual Review earlier in this report.

3 Financial Review

Total income for the year was £ 3,310.50 (2019: £8,050.25) and total expenditure for the year was £3,799.35 (2019: £8,170.30). Both income and expenditure were significantly reduced compared to the previous year as very few in-person events were held due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The total net assets held at 31st December 2020 were £4,617.77 (2019: £5,106.62) represented by cash at bank and in hand.

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 has arranged employers and public liability insurance cover of £10M through an insurance policy underwritten by the Ecclesiastical Insurance Group.

5 Format of financial statements

The report and accounts have been prepared in accordance with the Charities Act 2011

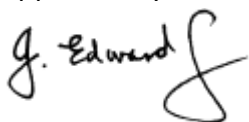
6 Trustees' responsibilities in relation to the financial statements

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 Charities Act 2011. 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



Jonathan Edwards, Trustee and Treasurer

Statement of Financial Activities for the year ended 31 December 2020

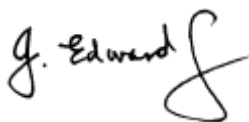
	Teacher Led Day Retreats & Admin	Self-Led & Nature Day Retreats	Tuesday Sitting & Introd Course	Teacher Led Courses	2020 Total	2019 Total
INCOME						
Voluntary Income						
Donations		£1,001.00	£852.00		£1,853.00	£5,082.67
Investment Income						
Bank Interest					£0.00	£0.00
From charitable activities						
Event booking fees	£1,457.50				£1,457.50	£2,967.58
Total Income	<u>£1,457.50</u>	<u>£1,001.00</u>	<u>£852.00</u>	<u>£0.00</u>	<u>£3,310.50</u>	<u>£8,050.25</u>
EXPENDITURE						
Cost of charitable activities						
Payments to Teachers	£240.00	£462.12			£702.12	£560.00
Hire of Halls & Venues	£101.25	£555.00	£1,092.00		£1,748.25	£5,506.63
Travel & Accommodation	£40.07				£40.07	£602.60
Admin Services	£825.00				£825.00	£765.00
Coffee, Tea, Biscuits	£13.80				£13.80	£131.64
Printing & Stationery	£15.00				£15.00	£51.00
Liability Insurance	£364.00				£364.00	£364.00
Website & IT	£91.11				£91.11	£71.93
Purchases					£0.00	£117.50
Total Expenditure	<u>£1,690.23</u>	<u>£1,017.12</u>	<u>£1,092.00</u>	<u>£0.00</u>	<u>£3,799.35</u>	<u>£8,170.30</u>
Net Movement of Funds	<u>-£232.73</u>	<u>-£16.12</u>	<u>-£240.00</u>	<u>£0.00</u>	<u>-£488.85</u>	<u>-£120.05</u>
Reconciliation of Funds						
Balance B/F at 1 Jan 2020					£5,106.62	£5,226.67
Net movement of Funds					-£488.85	-£120.05
Balance C/F at 31 Dec 2020					<u>£4,617.77</u>	<u>£5,106.62</u>

Balance Sheet at 31 December 2020

	2020	2019
Tangible Fixed Assets	£0.00	£0.00
Current Assets		
Cash at bank	£4,362.70	£4,752.75
Cash in PayPal account	£178.89	£178.89
Cash in hand	£76.18	£174.98
Net Current Assets	£4,617.77	£5,106.62
Net Assets	<u>£4,617.77</u>	<u>£5,106.62</u>
Represented by		
Unrestricted funds	£4,617.77	£5,106.62
Restricted funds		
Total Funds	<u>£4,617.77</u>	<u>£5,106.62</u>

Note: we have a credit of £672 with the Friends Central Meeting House for 16 Tuesday evening sessions prepaid but not used in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The financial statements were approved and authorised for issue by the Trustees on 13th July 2021 and signed on their behalf by



Jonathan Edwards
Trustee and Treasurer

Independent Examination

Independent scrutiny of accounts is not required where the gross income for the financial year is £25,000 or less.