

Sheffield Insight Meditation.

Annual Report 1.1.20 – 25.9.2021

This is our second annual report as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation in which we set out our charitable objectives and our activities to promote those objectives for public benefit.

Background Information

Sheffield Insight Meditation began life in 2006, established by a small group of people who had attended retreats at Gaia House retreat centre in Devon and wanted to continue meditating with others in the Insight Meditation tradition. SIM has expanded over the years to offer a range of retreats, meditation groups, short courses, and social events and we now have over 500 people on our mailing list. In April 2019 we became a registered Charitable Incorporated Organisation.

Our Aims and Values

Insight Meditation, also known as Vipassana (literally translated as 'seeing deeply or clearly') began in the Theravada (South East Asian) schools of Buddhism in the early 20th century, and sought to reconnect with the teachings of early Buddhism. Sheffield Insight Meditation has close links with Gaia House meditation Centre, and draws inspiration from the wide range of teachings in the worldwide Insight Meditation community.

Although several of us practise at Gaia House, some of us also practise in traditions such as Tibetan and Zen Buddhism, Quakerism, and the secular mindfulness approach. Some of us consider ourselves 'Buddhists', some not. We aim to offer a practical and accessible opportunity to develop and directly experience freedom, compassion and wisdom, in ways that take account of our psychology and embodiment as human beings. You do not need to have any particular beliefs or think of yourself as a Buddhist to attend our events.

We welcome all, irrespective of religious or political beliefs, race, ethnicity, gender,

social background, age, sexual orientation or disability. We do not seek to convert others or to discriminate against those who hold differing views. Our retreats and groups are open to anyone, irrespective of means. We have offered a sliding scale for events including a 'freely given' option. We operate on a not-for-profit basis. Our events are organised by a team of volunteers and we warmly welcome all contributions of time and service, however small.

As a Sangha (community of practitioners) we are committed to building and supporting community, through developing our understanding and practice of ethical living, interconnection, and compassion for ourselves, others and the world we live in. As part of compassionate action we seek to engage with the challenge of climate change, and the many forms of social and economic injustice. We seek to support each other in rooting the Dharma (teachings of the Buddhist tradition) in our daily lives, in ways that are accessible and relevant for the 21st century, and are for the benefit of all.

Our 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 Meditation (also known as Vipassana meditative practice) for the public benefit, in particular, but not exclusively, for the benefit of people of Sheffield and surrounding areas.'

Our Activities

We offer a range of activities to support meditation practice: day and weekend retreats, regular sitting groups, and courses. Our regular groups and practice days are led by volunteers from within our community and our retreats are led by teachers associated with Gaia House Retreat Centre. These are reputable, trained, highly experienced teachers who commit to a code of ethics.

When planning and carrying out our activities we have considered the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit. We provide a range of activities through which education in meditation and Buddhist teaching for people with different levels of experience can take place. We endeavour to make our activities as accessible and welcoming as possible, paying attention to physical ability, income

level, flexibility of time and place, and participant welfare and safety. We have a formal safeguarding policy with a named responsible person who has undergone training.

All our venues are wheelchair accessible and on public transport routes. We take steps to support participants' mental health: we plan carefully with teachers before events making sure that participants know what to expect, and during events volunteers are available to give individual support in consultation with the teacher. We have a sliding scale for teacher-led events including a 'freely given' option. Fees contribute to our running costs; the teaching is given freely and participants are invited to give donations of their own choosing to the teacher. Our volunteer-led events are offered for voluntary donation. We publicise our events widely with a bi-monthly newsletter, social media updates and our website.

Events

Our events since the beginning of 2020 were of course very much influenced by the demands of the pandemic. We started, as usual, with our fortnightly sitting group, a well attended course which picked up on themes from the New Year retreat, a day retreat in February and Sangha Saturday in January, but all events after that were online. Managing events over Zoom was at first a challenge but we gradually became more technically confident and this transition went smoothly. We were able to keep all our regular events going. We invited back teachers who knew us well and who were helpful in addressing the demands of lock-down in their teaching, and who replicated, as far as possible, the retreat structure we are familiar with. We also made available on our website a list of related helpful resources.

Although many of us missed meeting each other in person and being online did not suit everyone, there were some advantages. Numbers were not limited by the size of venues, many people found attending in their own homes more convenient and people were able to attend from a wider geographical area – sometimes from across the world! We were able to run smaller events – at the sitting group and Sangha Saturdays - which connected a handful of people in a very companionable

way, and larger events – the new year retreat drew in more than 100 people each day. Sangha members expressed their appreciation for these online offerings:

‘Much needed gentle focus on compassion at this difficult time’

‘Lovely to be amongst everyone even if only able to do so virtually’

‘Very appreciative that this format is offered’

‘Zoom is great in that it allows those of us not in Sheffield to more easily take part.’

‘This was my first on line retreat. It was good to have the 'routine' of doing the New Year retreat. ’

Retreats

29 February 2020. Peace in Ourselves, Peace in the World with River Wolton

25 April 2020. Living an Embodied Life with Jaya Rudgard.

5 September 2020. Waking the Heart Embracing the World with Zohar Lavie.

14 November 2020. Embodying Compassion with Jake Dartington.

29, 30 31 December 2020. New Year Retreat with Venerable Canda.

24 April 2021 A Holiday for the Heart with Catherine McGee. Shared with Oxford Insight

22 May 2021. Compassion and Allyship with Esther Slattery and River Wolton.

‘The talk at the beginning from River cemented the theme, giving great suggestions to reflect on throughout the day.’

‘Jaya’s calm, relaxed, warm, friendly and encouraging presence. The wisdom of her talks.’

‘Jake seems to sum things up so well and doesn’t overcomplicate and references to theories’

‘The immense care and kindness from the organizers and in particular by Ven. Canda were simply amazing! The great teachings were very inspiring and down to earth, very easy to relate to daily life and practice, yet profound.’

Courses

We provided two courses during 2020 both facilitated by River Wolton and supported by another trustee. Both were planned as 3 weekly evening sessions followed by a Saturday morning. The second was completed online.

Tending Joy. January and February 2020

Sustainable Compassion. March 2021

In January 2021 we offered a 6 week online course led by Kareem Ghandour and River Wolton, Cultivating Joy in Difficult Times.

'A great way to encourage us to practice, to engage with other people during lockdown, and practical suggestions to cultivate Joy. I especially enjoyed the guided meditations, particularly on the last evening.'

'I enjoyed the human warmth and sense of inclusion by the leaders.'

Outdoor Events

In July 2021 we had our first in-person event – a picnic lunch and meditative walk in Whirlow Park.

Fortnightly sitting groups

Our fortnightly sitting groups continued moving online in March. Many thanks to Julian and Gen for facilitating. We continued to offer two sessions: the earlier one for beginners with guided meditation and the later one for those with some experience which also includes discussion of a text or short talk. Texts discussed included 'Unseating the Inner Tyrant' by Ajahn Sucitto and 'The 5 Mindfulness Trainings' by Thich Nhat Hahn. The sitting groups have been paused since the spring 2021 as numbers became very low.

Sangha Saturdays

We ran Sangha Saturdays in January, May, April, July and October 2020 and March 2021. These are opportunities for Sangha members to meet and share an afternoon of walking and sitting meditation and to listen to a recorded talk. They are facilitated by members of the Sangha – many thanks to those who offered this, especially Catherine and Lesley.

Structures and Governance

Sheffield Insight Meditation is a CIO managed by a group of trustees who meet monthly to plan and develop activities and oversee policy. Chairing and minute taking at meetings is rotated between trustees and decisions are recorded. Trustee meetings have been held online since March 2020. Simon took over financial oversight from Catherine at the 2020 AGM but Catherine has continued to manage the accounts. At the second Annual General Meeting, on 25 September 2021, 2 existing trustees will stand down, 3 will continue and new trustees will be elected by 'supporters' (members of the charity). All trustees are volunteers and 'supporters'.

Anyone who attends our events, supports our values and wishes to further our aims may register as a 'supporter' (member of the charity) on our website. There are no fees. Supporters will receive notification of the AGM by email, may vote at general meetings and may stand as supporters.

The charity also relies on the work of volunteer organisers who are not trustees. During 2020 there was less opportunity for volunteer organisers to contribute but we're very grateful to those who facilitated Sangha Saturdays and the sitting group and to Catherine who continued to manage the accounts. As we open up to in-person events this support will be even more vital and we welcome all offers of help.

Administrative Information

Sheffield Insight Meditation CIO

Charity number: 1183157

Postal address: The Circle, Rockingham Lane, Sheffield, S1 4FW

Trustees:

Simon Atkins 20/6/2020 - 25/9/2021

Sara Bartlett- Brown 20/6/2020 - 25/9/2021

Julian Briggs 20/6/2020 - 25/9/2021

Sue Kay 20/6/2020 - 25/9/2021

Mary Ann Orme 20/6/2020 - 25/9/2021

Declaration

The trustees declare that they have approved the trustees' report above.

Signed on behalf of the charity's trustees:

Name	Signature	Position if any	Date
Julian Briggs	Julian Briggs	Trustee	9/09/21

Mary Ann Orme	Mary Ann Orme	Trustee	9/09/21
Simon Atkins	Simon Atkins	Trustee	9/09/21
Sara Bartlett Brown	Sara Bartlett Brown	Trustee	9/09/21
Sue Kay	Sue Kay	Trustee	9/09/21

Income/Receipts	Governance/Admin	Teacher/CDL led retreats and courses	Peer groups	Total
From charitable activities				
Event booking fees		£3,907.81		£3,907.81
Voluntary income				
Donations			£213.63	£213.63
Investment income				
Total Income		£3,907.81	£213.63	£4,121.44
Expenditure				
Retreats/courses				
Retreats/courses venue costs		£470.00		
Zoom annual fee		£143.21		
Teacher/CDL costs		£65.89		
Eventbrite fees		£175.33		
Misc retreat costs		£79.71		
Peer Practice Groups				
Peer groups venue cost			£235.00	
Peer group misc.			£10.70	
Governance/Admin				
Trustee meeting venue	£54.00			
Trustee exps (travel)	£7.69			
Insurance	£336.00			
Registered office contract	N/A			
Website hosting	£160.00			
Website domain/SSL	£70.00			
Training	£93.40			
New website development	£790.00			
Miscellaneous	£114.97			
Total Expenditure	£1,626.06	£934.14	£245.70	£2,805.90

Net movement of funds	-£1,626.06	£2,973.67	-£32.07	£1,315.54
Reconciliation of Funds				
Balance B/F at 1 Jan 2020	£4,679.29			
Balance C/F at 31 Dec 2020	£5,994.83	(adjusted see below)		

Balance sheet at 31 December 2020

Tangible Fixed Assets		£0.00
Current Assets		
	Cash at bank 31 Decem	£3,911.57
Adjusted for		
	Outstanding liabilities 20:	-£38.71
	Outstanding net income :	£2,117.27
	Duplicate expense pd in	£4.70
Net adjusted assets		£5,994.83
Represented by		
	Unrestricted Funds	£5,994.83
	Restricted Funds	£0.00
Total Funds		£5,994.83