

Sheffield Insight Meditation

Annual Report 2023

1 Jan - 31 Dec 2023

Background Information

This is our 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.

Sheffield Insight Meditation began 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, sex, 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 offer 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 newsletter, social media updates and our website.

Events

Since our last AGM in October 2022 we have offered in-person and hybrid events. Online offerings also enable people to participate if they are feeling unwell or are otherwise constrained. The number of people choosing to attend online is small however. We restarted our regular Tuesday evening meditation sessions online but they were poorly attended, probably because many people felt they had attended sufficient online activities.

Retreats

22-23 April: Ajahn Jutindharo

In-person only

Venue: Whirlow Spirituality Centre

Sun 23 July: Julia Wallond

In-person only

Venue: Whirlow Spirituality Centre

21-22 Oct 2023: Kirsten Kratz

Due to storm Babek the teacher was unable to get to Sheffield despite Herculean efforts. So at short notice we arranged for her to Zoom in to the in-person retreat. This worked remarkably well. We may use this format in future.

New Year 28-30 Dec 2023: Ven Canda

Hybrid at Sheffield Central Quaker Meeting House

Courses

We ran one course this year which was well attended

- In-persons morning Saturday 6 May 2023
- + 6 online sessions on Thursday evenings 11 May - 15 June 2023

Sangha Saturdays

We offered several Sangha Saturdays. 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.

Evening sitting group

We ran the sitting group monthly until Easter. Then we paused it due to low numbers and lack of facilitators.

Structure 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 and in person since our last AGM. We usually have hybrid meetings because 1 trustee lives in West Yorkshire and others are sometimes away from home.

At the Annual General Meeting, on 4th November 2023, the existing trustees will continue and one is stepping down and one new trustee 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. We're very grateful to those who facilitated Sangha Saturdays and the sitting group and to Catherine who continued to manage the accounts and to Mary Ann who has taken over editing the newsletter. Such support is 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

- Julian Briggs 25/9/2021-
- Carol Abramson 4/11/2023-
- Cath Parker 25/1/2024-
- Josephine Curtin 25/1/2024-

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	29 September 2024
Carol Abramson	Carol Abramson Trustee	1 October 2024
Catherine Parker	Cath Parker	3 October 2024
Josephine Curtin	Josephine Curtin	6 October 2024

Income/Receipts	Governance/Admin	Teacher/CDL led retreats & courses	Peer groups	Unattributed	Total
From charitable activities					
Event booking fees		£4,569.00			£4,569.00
Voluntary income					
Donations		£151.00	£71.50	£124.77	£347.27
Adjustment				£5.69	£5.69
Total Income		£4,720.00	£71.50	£130.46	£4,921.96
Expenditure					
Retreats/courses					
Retreats/courses venue costs		£2,171.00			
Teacher/CDL expenses		£512.99			
Teacher/CDL fees		£600.00			
Eventbrite fees		£608.24			
Misc retreat costs		£62.56			
Zoom annual fee		£143.88			
Peer Practice Groups					
Peer groups venue cost			£180.00		
Room cost peer group training			£30.00		
Peer group misc.			£0.63		
Governance/Admin					
Trustee meeting venue					
Trustee exps (travel)					
AGM costs	£50.00				
Insurance	£336.00				
Registered office contract	£96.00				
Website hosting	£80.00				
Website domain/SSL	£70.00				
Website maintenance	£35.00				
room booking anomaly	£90.00				
Miscellaneous	£7.99				

Total Expenditure	£764.99	£4,098.67	£210.63		£5,074.29
Net movement of funds	-£764.99	£621.33	-£139.13	£130.46	-£152.33
Reconciliation of Funds					
Balance B/F at 1 Jan 2023	£6,664.77				
Balance C/F at 31 Dec 2023	£6,512.44				

Balance sheet at 31 Dec 2023

Tangible Fixed Assets		£0.00
Current Assets		
	Bank balance 31 Dec 23	£5,840.24
	Paypal balance 31 Dec 23	£48.10
	Total accounts 31 Dec 23	£5,888.34
Adjusted for		
	Outstanding liabilities 2023	£1,720.87
	Outstanding income 2023 NYR (net)	£2,344.97
Net adjusted assets		£6,512.44
Represented by		
	Unrestricted Funds	£6,512.44
	Restricted Funds	£0.00
Total Funds		£6,512.44