

Registered charity number 1190154

Norwich Zen Buddhist Priory

Trustees' Annual Report

**for the period
from 29th June 2020
to 31st March 2021**

Norwich Zen Buddhist Priory
Report of the Board of Trustees
for the period from 29th June 2020 to 31st March 2021

Reference and administration details

Charity name	Norwich Zen Buddhist Priory
Other name charity is known by	Norwich Buddhist Priory
Charity's principal address	104A Unthank Road Norwich NR2 2RR
Registered charity number	1190154
Date of registration	29 th June 2020
Governing document	Constitution dated 29 th June 2020
Trustees for the charity	Rev. Gillian Frances Houn Leoma Hague (Chair & Secretary) Rev. David Houn Saido Kennaway Mr. Christopher David Loukes (Treasurer) Ms. Christine Mary Yeomans
Accountant	James Gore-Langton FCCA DChA 19 Grasmere Road Meltham Holmfirth HD9 4HF
Bankers	Lloyds Bank plc Walthamstow Branch PO Box 1000 BX1 1LT Triodos Bank (<i>account closed on 15/10/20</i>) Deanery Road Bristol BS1 5AS

Norwich Zen Buddhist Priory
Report of the Board of Trustees
for the period from 29th June 2020 to 31st March 2021

Charity structure, governance and management

Description of the charity's structure

Norwich Zen Buddhist Priory is a charitable incorporated organisation (CIO) governed by a Constitution dated 29th June 2020. It was set up to replace the charitable trust Norwich Buddhist Priory (registered charity number: 1155077). On 1st October 2020, all of the assets of the latter charity were transferred to Norwich Zen Buddhist Priory, to be used for similar purposes to those of the trust. The change of charity structure was undertaken so that Norwich Zen Buddhist Priory could purchase property and hold it in its own name.

The charity's trustees are appointed by the body of trustees. All trustees are either members in good standing of the Order of Buddhist Contemplatives or long-term members of the congregation (someone who has taken lay ordination within the Order of Buddhist Contemplatives and has subsequently been associated with the Order for at least five years). The first trustees are four in number and they are the same as the trustees of Norwich Buddhist Priory at the time of the transfer of assets: Rev. Leoma Hague (the Prior of Norwich Zen Buddhist Priory), Rev. Saido Kennaway, Christopher Loukes and Christine Yeomans.

Charity history

Norwich Zen Buddhist Priory is a temple of the Order of Buddhist Contemplatives, practising in the Sōtō Zen tradition of Buddhism (also called Serene Reflection Meditation), which originated in China and was transmitted to Japan. It emphasises the practice of meditation (zazen), living by the Buddhist Precepts and acting from the heart of compassion, love and wisdom in one's daily life. In zazen, one sits still in the present moment with an alert and all-accepting mind, allowing feelings and thoughts to arise and fall away naturally, without holding on to them or trying to push them away. Within the Sōtō Zen school there are many teaching lines and each has its own particular flavour. Serene Reflection Meditation is the name used for this practice by those who follow the Sōtō Zen lineage which was brought from Japan by Rev. Master Jiyu-Kennett. She was an English woman who trained at one of the two head temples of the Sōtō Zen Church in Japan. After qualifying as a Master and Teacher she was requested by her western disciples and the Sōtō Zen Church in Japan to spread the teaching in the West. She founded the Order of Buddhist Contemplatives to act as the international administrative and support organisation for the monks and lay ministers practising within the Serene Reflection Meditation tradition.

Over the years, throughout the UK, affiliated local meditation groups have been formed by those who consider themselves members of the lay congregation, to follow the particular forms of practice of the Order. These groups, which hold regular meetings for formal meditation, are a source of mutual help and encouragement and they also serve as a valuable first contact for members of the general public who are interested in our practice. One such group was the Norwich Serene Reflection Meditation Group, which began meeting in the 1980s. The group decided that they would like to establish a centre in Norwich to enable Zen meditation and Buddhist practice within our tradition to be offered more widely in the East

Anglia area. The group began raising funds for this purpose and in 2009 the Norwich Buddhist Priory Trust was formed.

In 2013, the Order agreed to the request of the group to establish a priory in Norwich. It was decided that Rev. Leoma Hague, who had been making regular visits to the Norwich and Cambridge groups for more than three years, would become the Prior. In September 2013, a suitable property was found to rent in Norwich. A few weeks later, the Priory began offering a full schedule of events. In December 2013, Norwich Buddhist Priory became a registered charity. In 2020, it was agreed to change the structure of the charity to become a CIO, so that the charity could purchase property and hold it in its own name. The CIO Norwich Zen Buddhist Priory was registered as a charity on 29th June 2020 and the assets of the trust were transferred to the CIO on 1st October 2020. The charity purchased a property to be its long-term home, at 23 Hellesdon Road, Norwich, NR6 5EB, on 26th March 2021.

Management of the Priory

The Prior is responsible for the day-to-day management of Norwich Zen Buddhist Priory. She consults with the congregation at the Priory's monthly Steering Meetings. The Priory does not have a fixed body of people acting as a steering group, but instead the regular meetings are open to anyone who would like to discuss how the Priory is working.

Meetings of the board of trustees of the charity take place at least twice each year.

Risk management

The trustees have considered major risks to which the charity is potentially exposed and are confident of the existing systems in place to minimise the risks. In particular, insurance cover is in place and the finances of the Priory are kept under regular review. The charity has a written risk management policy which is reviewed at least annually and amended as necessary.

We are aware of the rules protecting children and vulnerable adults from abuse that came into force 12th October 2009 and we continue to review our activities in the light of these. We do not carry out any regulated activities with children or vulnerable adults, as defined by the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 and amended by the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012. The charity has written safeguarding policies for children and for adults.

The charity has a written health & safety policy which is regularly reviewed and amended if necessary. It also has written policies on complaints, conflict of interest, data protection and volunteering.

Objectives and activities

The objects of the charity are:

- To advance the Buddhist religion for the public benefit in accordance with the doctrines and principles of the Buddhist faith, in particular the Serene Reflection Meditation school of Buddhism (also known as Soto Zen Buddhism).

- To advance the education of the public in the subject of meditation and the teachings of Buddhism, in particular (but not exclusively) by supporting and encouraging the study and practice of Buddhist meditation.

Norwich Zen Buddhist Priory offers Buddhist teaching and practice to everyone. It provides a place where people can practise meditation and it supports them in living within a Buddhist framework, according to Buddhist ethics.

Norwich Zen Buddhist Priory functions within the Order of Buddhist Contemplatives. The Order is self-regulating and ensures that those who are in good standing do not give misleading teaching and are upholding the Buddhist Precepts. The main tenets of the Serene Reflection Meditation School are:

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

One of the main ways that Buddhism is spread is by individuals making a personal commitment to practise the Buddhist teachings as best they can. Those who meditate and follow the practice are likely to advance the Buddhist faith through their example, via ordinary contact with others in their daily lives. To help this happen, Norwich Zen Buddhist Priory provides facilities that are open to the public, where the teachings and practice of the Buddhist faith, and especially the Serene Reflection Meditation School, are made available.

Some practical examples of the kind of provision that Norwich Zen Buddhist Priory makes to achieve these objects are as follows:-

- A centre with premises called the Norwich Zen Buddhist Priory, open to anyone interested in learning about Buddhist teaching and meditation and how to put it into practice in their lives. The premises include a meditation room, a quiet place of contemplation. The premises are also a venue for Buddhist ceremonies, retreats, talks/lectures and discussions. The premises are located in a place that is readily accessible for people living in Norwich and the surrounding area. The schedule of regular events at the Priory is advertised on the premises and on the Priory's website.
- Providing accommodation for a monastic teacher of the Order of Buddhist Contemplatives. In order to advance Buddhism, it is very helpful to have someone who has learnt about it in detail, has been practising it for many years and is qualified to explain the teaching to others. Norwich Zen Buddhist Priory therefore supports a teacher of the Order of Buddhist Contemplatives. This is a senior qualified priest who has a solid foundation of experience in the spiritual practice of Serene Reflection Meditation and is regulated by a wider order that has rules of conduct. This monastic teacher (the Prior) is based full-time at the Priory and is available to the public to explain and generally advance the religion. As well as providing teaching and spiritual guidance and support to the congregation, the Prior offers traditional Buddhist services including funerals, weddings and naming ceremonies.
- Providing a place for Buddhist retreats. Norwich Zen Buddhist Priory provides the

opportunity for regular retreats incorporating Buddhist teaching. This is of great value to all, allowing space and contemplation within the demands of busy lives and the pressures of jobs, families and relationships. By finding a spiritual practice and having the opportunity of spiritual retreat, emotional concerns and spiritual questions can be addressed, allowing for greater peace and harmony. This not only helps the individual but can also have a positive impact on the lives of those around them.

- A wider resource for organisations and individuals to find out about Buddhism. Norwich Zen Buddhist Priory provides a library of Buddhist books and CDs of lectures that people can borrow, as well as leaflets on Buddhist teaching and practice. Besides having the teaching and ceremonial of the Serene Reflection Meditation School available at Norwich Zen Buddhist Priory's premises, the teaching is available on request to schools and other organisations throughout the East Anglia area. Part of the Prior's role is to take up invitations to talk at schools and colleges and to extend whatever help she can to those who wish to deepen their spiritual life. There is a Serene Reflection Meditation Group in Cambridge, which holds regular meetings, and the Prior visits the group three or four times a year.

In planning the activities of the charity, the trustees have complied with the duty in section 17 of the Charities Act 2011 to have due regard to public benefit, as detailed in guidance published by the Charity Commission, in particular its supplementary guidance on the advancement of religion for the public benefit.

The Priory does not charge a set fee for any teaching, retreat or other event, as we wish to continue the ancient Buddhist practice of not charging for the teaching. Funding is solely by donations from our congregation and visitors. Other offerings besides financial, such as material and practical help, are given by the congregation and much appreciated.

Achievements and performance

Norwich Zen Buddhist Priory has introduced a variety of activities that have helped make Buddhist teaching available and also promoted Buddhism through encouraging and facilitating the practice of Serene Reflection Meditation.

On 1st October 2020, when the new CIO charity, Norwich Zen Buddhist Priory, took over from the old trust, government restrictions were in place in response to the coronavirus pandemic. Individuals (or two people from the same household) were able to visit the Priory, but all of the regular events were being held online. From 5th November, when the second national lockdown was introduced, the Priory was closed to all visitors.

The life of the Priory has continued throughout the various lockdowns and other coronavirus restrictions, with a near-normal schedule of meditation, ceremonies, teaching and Sangha meetings being maintained and shared online, using the Zoom app. We have been coming together for morning meditation and Short Morning Service on five days a week. We have also continued with our usual meetings on the evenings of Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, as well as on Sunday morning. Details of these events have been shared through the Priory's email group. We have also been offering newcomers introductions to our practice online, on an individual basis. We let the general public know about these online meetings through a prominent message on our website and our calendar. The congregation has been flourishing in this online form, with all events being attended by more people than were able to come

along to the Priory in person. Not only have we welcomed newcomers, but we have also been able to resume connections with people who had been part of our congregation and then moved away from Norwich. So well-received have these online meetings been that we are planning to maintain a Zoom element to all our events after people can once again attend the Priory in person.

Norwich Zen Buddhist Priory offers events to both newcomers and experienced practitioners in our congregation. With regard to newcomers, since 1st October, five people have been introduced to the practice of Serene Reflection Meditation, on an individual basis, either in person or via an online meeting. Once people have attended an introductory session, they are welcome to come along to any of the events scheduled, with the Basic Buddhism Evening on Tuesdays usually being the most appropriate next step.

For the more experienced practitioners in our congregation, the most popular events are the Wednesday and Thursday Dharma Evenings, where meditation is followed by a Dharma talk and discussion. In order to give people with busy lives plenty of opportunity to attend, events are scheduled on weekday evenings and at weekends. Every Sunday morning there is a scheduled event, which includes a meditation period and a ceremony, followed by a discussion over coffee. We also hold quarterly day retreats on a Saturday, where several meditation periods are interspersed with short ceremonies, a talk and a discussion. In addition, from Tuesday to Saturday, at 7.30am, people are able to join the Prior for meditation and morning service.

On 1st November 2020, the Priory marked its seventh anniversary with a special ceremony, which included a festival for our founder, Rev. Master Jiyu-Kennett, while on 20th December, we celebrated the Festival of the Buddha's Enlightenment.

The Prior has been supporting the congregation in other ways, most notably by giving spiritual counselling when requested (whether in person or via video call, telephone or email).

The Prior has been unable to visit the meditation group in Cambridge since coronavirus restrictions came into force. However, she has had online meetings with them every couple of months, to meditate with them, give a talk and lead a discussion. Online meetings of the Cambridge group are open to the general public and two lay ministers are available to introduce newcomers to our practice.

The Priory website, which includes a calendar of events, is kept up-to-date. This is the main way by which the general public find out about the Priory. The website includes an option to subscribe to our bimonthly newsletter.

ON 26th March 2021, Norwich Zen Buddhist Priory purchased a property to become its new home and the move was completed the following month. The new Priory, which is a detached house on the outskirts of Norwich, has improved facilities, including a large meditation room and extra bedrooms and bathrooms, which mean that overnight stays will be able to be offered, once coronavirus restrictions are lifted.

Financial review

Reserves policy

The trustees hold sufficient free reserves to allow the charity to continue to operate during periods of fluctuating income. The level of reserves is calculated by taking a figure of half the charity's typical annual income and adding £6,000 to that amount, to cover replacement of a major asset, giving a figure of £16,000.

On 31st March 2021, the charity had £59,734 cash available. This high level of reserves is considered to be necessary for at least the next couple of years, because the charity purchased a property for the first time on 26th March. Some large expenditure will be needed initially to cover various repairs and maintenance, including replacing part of the roof and treating Japanese knotweed. Until the trustees have a clear sense of the cost of the upkeep of the property, it is prudent to have a good level of reserves available. In a couple of years' time, if the cash reserves remain high, the charity will start to pay off its short-term loans.

Principal funding sources

The principal source of income for the charity is donations, which is the traditional method of supporting Buddhist activities. No fees are charged for attending any events. Those attending Priory events can make an entirely voluntary donation of an amount that is appropriate to their own circumstances. Although donations of cash and cheques into the Priory's Alms Bowl have not been physically possible during the coronavirus lockdowns, bank transfers have more than made up for this. Regular support is also given to the temple by those who have kindly taken out a standing order in the charity's favour. Where donors authorise us to, we are able to reclaim the tax they have paid on their donations under the current Gift Aid scheme and, in addition, we are able to claim under the Gift Aid Small Donations Scheme.

Members of the congregation, as part of their Buddhist practice, may assist both with the day-to-day running of the Priory and with one-off projects. No salaries are paid by the charity to anyone.

How expenditure has supported the key objectives of the charity

The expenditure of the charity has been in running Norwich Zen Buddhist Priory. As the presence of a resident monk at the Priory is vital to realising our charitable objects, the Prior is supported by the charity.

Income and expenditure

The total income for the period ended 31st March 2021 was £115,246. This included £56,057 of assets transferred from the trust Norwich Buddhist Priory on 1st October 2020. Donations for the six-month period from 1st October to 31st March 2021 amounted to £57,271. This was considerably more than the donations to the former charity in the previous six-month period (£12,822). The first accounting period of the new charity covers an exceptional time, as preparations were made to purchase a property for the first time. Several large one-off donations (totalling £47,100) were given specifically for this purpose. General financial support for the charity from its congregation also increased over this period, as shown by standing orders and general one-off donations which rose by £980 (12%) and £557 (73%) respectively.

In addition to donations, interest-free loans totalling £268,000 were received from members of the congregation to finance the purchase of the property. One loan, of £240,000, is secured on the charity's freehold property and is being repaid by monthly instalments over 24 years. The remaining three loans, totalling £28,000, are unsecured and repayable within 10 years.

On 26th March, the charity purchased a freehold property for £316,028 (including ancillary costs), to become Norwich Zen Buddhist Priory.

The total expenditure for the period ended 31st March 2021 was £7,484, which was very similar to the figure for the former charity in the previous six-month period (£7,397). There were no major one-off expenses during that time.

Overall, there was an excess of income over expenditure of £59,734 for the period to 31st March 2021. If the money transferred from the former charity (£56,057) is excluded, the figure for excess of income over expenditure is £3,677. This compares with £7,379 for the former charity in the previous six months.

Investment policy and objectives

Our policy is to hold sufficient working capital in our Lloyds Bank Trustee Account (current account) to cover routine day-to-day expenditure. We also have savings in an instant access savings account with Lloyds Bank. In October 2020, we closed our 90-day Treasurer's Reserve Account with Triodos Bank, because the interest rate was very low and we wished to have all our money in our Lloyds accounts readily available for the property purchase that was eventually transacted on 26th March. We continue to keep this area under review.

The monies held by the charity in the two Lloyds Bank accounts on 31st March were £59,692 (giving a total of £59,734 when petty cash was included). This was £3,677 more than the total held on 1st October when the assets of the trust Norwich Buddhist Priory were transferred.

Other information

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

The charity's assets are held for charitable purposes and the trustees have no reason to believe that the current values of the charity's assets are materially different from that shown in the accounts.

Declaration

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

Signed on behalf of the charity's trustees by:

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Gillian Frances Houn Leoma Hague

(Chair of the trustees)

29 June 2021

**Independent Examiner's Report
to the trustees of Norwich Zen Buddhist Priory
(charity registration no. 1190154)
for the period ended 31 March 2021**

I report to the charity trustees on my examination of the accounts of the charity for the period ended 31st March 2021.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the charity's trustees you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ('the Act').

I report in respect of my examination of the charity's accounts carried out under section 145 of the Act and in carrying out my examination I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

Independent examiner's statement

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

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

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

James Gore-Langton FCCA DChA

19 Grasmere Road
Meltham
Holmfirth
HD9 4HF

3 July 2021

Norwich Zen Buddhist Priory**Registered Charity No. 1190154****Receipts and Payments Account**

for the period ended 31 March 2021

		29-Jun-20 to 31-Mar-21 £	Former charity 6 mths to 30-Sep 2020 £
	Note		
Receipts			
Transfer of assets from former charity	1	56,057	-
Donations		57,271	12,822
Tax reclaimed		1,888	1,860
Bank interest		30	94
Sub-total		<u>115,246</u>	<u>14,776</u>
Loans received	4	268,000	-
Total receipts		<u>383,246</u>	<u>14,776</u>
Payments			
<i>Charitable expenditure</i>			
Food and household		834	914
Rent, rates and utilities		5,501	5,355
Office supplies		313	466
Telephone/broadband		442	336
Insurance		-	336
Sacristy		35	37
Library and missionary		36	44
Equipment and maintenance		303	7
Miscellaneous		19	-
Outside event expenses		-	(98)
Sub-total		<u>7,484</u>	<u>7,397</u>
Purchase of Priory building	3	316,028	-
Total payments		<u>323,512</u>	<u>7,397</u>
Net receipts/(payments)		59,734	7,379
Bank and cash brought forward		-	48,678
Bank and cash at 31 March 2021		<u>59,734</u>	<u>56,057</u>

All the funds of the charity are unrestricted.

Norwich Zen Buddhist Priory

Registered Charity No. 1190154

Statement of Assets and Liabilities

as at 31 March 2021

31-Mar 2021	30-Sep 2020
£	£

Cash funds

Bank	59,692	56,015
Petty cash	<u>42</u>	<u>42</u>
Total cash funds	<u>59,734</u>	<u>56,057</u>

Other monetary assets

Gift Aid tax reclaim due	11,470	1,888
Total other monetary assets	<u>11,470</u>	<u>1,888</u>

Fixed assets

Land and buildings	3	<u>316,028</u>	-
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Short-term liabilities

Creditors	<u>44</u>	-
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Long-term liabilities

Loans	4	<u>268,000</u>	-
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Approved by the trustees on 29 June 2021 and signed on their behalf by

Christine Yeomans (Trustee)

Norwich Zen Buddhist Priory

Registered Charity No. 1190154

Notes to the accounts

for the period ended 31 March 2021

1. The charity is a charitable incorporated organisation registered with the Charity Commission (registration no. 1190154). On 1st October 2020 the charity took over the assets and operations of the charity Norwich Buddhist Priory (registration no. 1155077).

2. This is the first period of account for the charity. Comparative amounts are from the last period of account of Norwich Buddhist Priory and are given for information only.

3. All the charity's funds are unrestricted.

4. On 26/03/2021 the charity purchased a property for £316,028 (including ancillary costs). The property is now the temple run by the charity.

5. Loans to the charity to finance the purchase of its property are from supporters of the charity and are interest-free.

One loan of £240,000 is secured on the charity's freehold property. This loan is being repaid by monthly instalments over 24 years.

The remaining loans totalling £28,000 are unsecured, and are repayable within 10 years.

There are no guarantees given by the charity which could result in a potential liability.

6. One of the trustees, Rev. Leoma Hague, is the resident Prior at Norwich Zen Buddhist Priory, the temple run by the charity. As such her living expenses are met by the charity, in accordance with the provisions of the charity's constitution.