

THE SCHOOL OF CONTEMPLATIVE LIFE

England & Wales · Charity number 1195159

Details

Status Registered

Legal form CIO

Registered 2021-07-14

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

Contact

Address 53 Portland Street
Cheltenham
GL52 2NX

Phone 07952917995

Email info@schoolofcontemplativelife.com

Website www.schoolofcontemplativelife.com

Activities

Objects: THE OBJECT OF THE CIO IS TO PROMOTE AND PROTECT EMOTIONAL, MENTAL AND SPIRITUALHEALTH FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE PUBLIC BY THE PROVISION OF MEDITATION AND IN SUCH OTHERWAYS AS THE CHARITY TRUSTEES MAY DECIDE.

Activities: The purpose of The School of Contemplative Life is to teach meditation from the Christian wisdom tradition as spiritual path to peace, community and oneness. Please refer to www.schoolofcontemplativelife.com for our aims.

Classification

- **How:** Provides Services, Other Charitable Activities
- **What:** General Charitable Purposes, Education/training, The Advancement Of Health Or Saving Of Lives, Human Rights/religious Or Racial Harmony/equality Or Diversity
- **Who:** The General Public/mankind

Geography

- Throughout England And Wales

Finances

Period end	Income	Expenditure	Assets	Employees
2024-12-31	£210,511	£202,052	-	-
2023-12-31	£189,605	£191,110	-	-
2022-12-31	£14,219	£5,347	-	-

Trustees

Name	Role	Appointed
Maggie Farrar CBE	Chair	2025-06-26
Christopher Ian Whittington		2021-07-14
Peter Ruxton Ph.D		2024-06-06
Rev Janet Williams Ph.d		2024-09-26

THE SCHOOL OF CONTEMPLATIVE LIFE

England & Wales - Charity number 1195159

Accounts

Charity Registration Number: 1195159

The School of Contemplative Life
Financial Statements
For the Year Ending
31 December 2024

JANE ASCROFT ACCOUNTANCY LIMITED

Chartered accountants
Enterprise House
Harmire Enterprise Park
Barnard Castle
County Durham
DL12 8XP

The School of Contemplative Life

Financial Statements

Year Ended 31 December 2024

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The School of Contemplative Life

Trustees' Annual Report

Year Ended 31 December 2024

The trustees present their report and the unaudited financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31 December 2024.

Objectives and Activities

The Object of The School of Contemplative Life (SoCL) is to promote and protect emotional, mental, and spiritual health for the benefit of the public by the provision of meditation and in such other ways as the Charity Trustees may decide.

Our vision is to help people establish peace in themselves and become places of peace in the world. Our aims are to:

- 1) Contribute to the restoration of contemplative practice as a way of life which purifies our motives and opens us to the Divine - the foundation of peace within us and between us, and the deepest basis for our care of each other and our precious world.
- 2) Promote the inseparable relationship between interior transformation and social transformation.
- 3) Be a source of peace and an antidote to the fundamentalism which gives rise to so much conflict and violence in the world.
- 4) Nurture the common ground between faiths by teaching meditation rooted in the Christian tradition as a simple, universal practice for all people.

Significant activities

The core activities of the SoCL include:

- Hosting a free online meditation group every Saturday morning and Wednesday evening that's accessible to all. Each session involves a contemplative teaching, simple practice guidelines for anyone new, 20-25 mins of silent meditation and some conversation.
- Leading in-person and online day event and residential retreats.
- Publishing blogs and podcasts.
- Running workshops and events for organisations on a request basis.

The School of Contemplative Life

Trustees' Annual Report (*continued*)

Year Ended 31 December 2024

Public benefit

In accordance with their duties pursuant to Section 4 Charities Act 2011, the Trustees have considered the Trust's objects and activities in light of the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit. 'Charities and Public Benefit'.

Volunteers

Much of the programme activity during 2023 and 2024, the financial period concerned, was delivered on a voluntary basis.

We therefore decided to include donations in-kind within our accounts from 2023 as the charity receives substantial resources from a small group of specialised individuals who are committed to building the capacity of the charity over the long-term.

Donations in-kind total £149,000, which is broken down as follows:

- £56,556 relates to retreat development/leadership and teaching
- £88,444 relates to organisational development and planning
- £4,000 relates to fundraising and communications

Achievements and Performance

2024 was a very successful year as we expanded our reach and impact considerably. A selection of testimonials is included at the bottom of this report. Countless others were received, most unsolicited, demonstrating similar impact.

Points of note are set out below:

- As of December 2024, approx. 140 people were attending the Saturday morning practice group and 115 attending the Wednesday evening practice group. 'Word of mouth' recommendations and awareness raising via social media accounts for the majority of new sign ups.
- Donations from people who regularly attend the online meditation group are steadily growing which reflects the impact which people say this group/the practice is having on their life.
- A series of events were run including thematic events at key moments in the Christian calendar, others centred on social issues such as peace, and a selection focused on making the teachings of contemplative teachers, such as Meister Eckhart, as accessible as possible. We ran our first five-day silent retreat which received excellent feedback (and as a result we are running this again twice during 2025). Events are charged at cost and no one is turned away due to affordability issues. All but one of our in-person events sold out and increasing numbers attend online events.
- Due to the demand we are experiencing for our core offering, we have decided that the best use of our resources, certainly in the short term, is to proactively focus on delivering activities targeting individuals (B2C). We will progress selected organisational opportunities (B2B) on a reactive basis.

The School of Contemplative Life

Trustees' Annual Report *(continued)*

Year Ended 31 December 2024

A selection of testimonials

Every week we receive unsolicited words from people who wish to express how the practice is impacting their life. Here are a few examples from Christians and people of other faiths or none:

Online practice group:

- "Our meditation sessions have become a quiet haven and a sacred space for me to breath. Thank you so much for everything you do! You'll probably never know the full extent of the ripples you are making for good in this troubled world."
- "Today I can say with honesty that I live in accordance with my nature maybe for the first time ever. I know myself, I acknowledge and trust myself, I can feel my anchoring in myself, in the world and in God".
- "There are some people I have previously avoided and crossed the road so I didn't have to talk to them. Now, I deliberately cross the road in order to talk to them."
- "People around me have noted a less reactive me and so are feeling calmer themselves. Also, I am sleeping better."
- "Although I have been meditating for a few years, becoming part of this group has propelled it onto a whole new level by integrating and nurturing my faith."
- "I feel the self-compassion I have as a result of meditation has increased. This comes from having a greater sense of God within. I am already held in the embrace of God's creation."
- "Since meditating, I am finding that I'm more sensitive when I'm out walking, in a wonderful way. I find I'm much more 'in the present moment' and that moment is much more often filled with the sheer joy of being alive and appreciation of this incredible universe that we find ourselves inhabiting, along with the amazing variety of other people."

Retreats and events:

- "The retreat felt like a homecoming, as if I was waking up from a deep sleep and discovering God's arms welcoming me home."
- "I so appreciated the spirit of the delivery, the structure and the content. I left feeling, very profoundly, that I am loved by God and that this love, this peace is always available. Meditation was presented as simple and accessible, as something that anyone can use to touch the divine."
- "I attended with great trepidation, not having had a great experience of Christian "love". My experience of Church ministry has left me deeply traumatised. However, I found an oasis of safety and acceptance at today's retreat. Thank you."
- "I just loved the retreat. Chris was an amazing teacher. It felt like a true feast for my hungry soul. The day was warm, inclusive and enlightening. The teaching helped to open my eyes that there is so much to be gained from the practice of meditation in this way. Chris helped us to see that it need not be complicated. It's encouraged me to learn more about it and to continue this road of discovery. We would all benefit from making the time to meditate in this way. Thank you for such a wonderful and interesting day. It taught us so much."

The School of Contemplative Life

Trustees' Annual Report *(continued)*

Year Ended 31 December 2024

Financial Review

Financial position

Income of £210,511 generated during this period reflects the emerging success of our strategy to build a sustainable funding model. There is an almost equal split between income from donations and earned revenue.

Grassroots donations have grown substantially (from £3,336 to £21,610 excluding a restricted bursary fund of £6,250) and most people who regularly attend the online practice group donate to support our mission.

It is also encouraging that the majority of people purchasing tickets for paid events opted to make a small donation on top of the ticket price.

Ticket sales from in-person and online events have demonstrated healthy growth.

Fee income (a day rate paid in exchange for SoCL leading events on behalf of retreat centres as opposed to the charity hiring the facility and selling tickets directly) is also becoming an important income line and is also less labour intensive for us.

Expenses, excluding donations in-kind, during this period totalled £55,008 which were largely associated with delivering charitable activities.

We are intentionally building a lean and agile organisation which is not encumbered by high fixed costs. The majority of our expenses are flexible. Fixed costs largely equate to governance, compliance and maintaining our free digital offering which sits at the heart of our mission.

Principal funding sources

During the financial period concerned, the primary source of funds was from ticket sales supplemented by voluntary donations.

Reserves policy

Our reserves policy was revised in 2024 to ensure as much resource is available as possible to advance of mission. It considers our fixed cost base, ensuring that we always have sufficient funding to wind-up the charity if required and the need to demonstrate our going concern in the event we are required to fund general expenses from reserves should income for a given year fall below projections.

The board has agreed to keep the equivalent of nine to twelve months fixed costs in reserve (which equates to £5k - 7k at the date of writing this report). Our position will be continually assessed as we grow.

It should be noted that the commitment of the individuals offering donations in-kind is a long term one meaning that we have substantial assets available that are not reflected in our reserves.

The reserves held at 31st December 2024 were £9,576 (2023: £7,367).

The School of Contemplative Life

Trustees' Annual Report *(continued)*

Year Ended 31 December 2024

Going concern

We have ambitious growth plans and a strategy to develop unrestricted and restricted income. However, this does not affect our going concern - activity and impact generated during the financial period concerned demonstrates our ability to deliver significant impact with a moderate cost base.

Principal Risks

The top three principal risks identified are shown below (and indicative of where we are in our organisational lifecycle):

- Over-reliance on Chris Whittington as our primary teacher.
- Christians (a core audience) not being aware that contemplative practice sits at the heart of Christian spirituality and having the view that meditation practice comes from another faith tradition.
- A third-party retreat organisation we partner with does not effectively discharge their duties which may cause some related reputational risk.

Each has an associated mitigation strategy in place.

Structure, Governance and Management

Governing document

The charity is controlled by its governing document, a deed of trust and constitutes an unincorporated charity.

Charity constitution

The charity is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO).

Recruitment and appointment of new trustees

Trustees are appointed by the Members. All trustees are required to have a personal meditation practice and have proven skills which complement those of their fellow trustees.

Organisational structure

During 2024, the charity relied mostly on volunteers to deliver its purpose. The in-kind value of the specialist skills donated in 2024 equates to £149,000.

The School of Contemplative Life

Trustees' Annual Report *(continued)*

Year Ended 31 December 2024

Reference and Administrative Details

Registered charity name	The School of Contemplative Life		
Charity registration number	1195159		
Principal office	53 Portland Street Cheltenham GL52 2NX		
The Trustees	R A Candlin		
	C Cooper Ph.D		
	C I Whittington		
	P Ruxton Ph.D		(Appointed 6 June 2024)
	Rev. J W Williams Ph.D		(Appointed 26 September 2024)
Independent Examiner	Jane Ascroft FCA MA (Cantab) Enterprise House Harmire Enterprise Park Barnard Castle County Durham DL12 8XP		

The trustees' annual report was approved on 14th May 2025 and signed on behalf of the board of trustees by:



C Cooper Ph.D
Trustee

The School of Contemplative Life

Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees of The School of Contemplative Life

Year Ended 31 December 2024

I report to the trustees on my examination of the financial statements of The School of Contemplative Life ('the charity') for the year ended 31 December 2024.

Responsibilities and Basis of Report

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

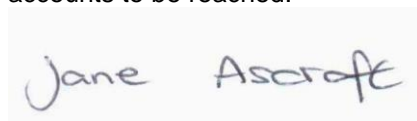
I report in respect of my examination of the charity's financial statements carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

Independent Examiner's Statement

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material 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 financial statements do not accord with those records; or
3. the financial statements do not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair' view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination.

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.



Jane Ascroft FCA MA (Cantab)
Independent Examiner

Enterprise House
Harmire Enterprise Park
Barnard Castle
County Durham
DL12 8XP

The School of Contemplative Life

Statement of Financial Activities

Year Ended 31 December 2024

		2024	2023		
		Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total funds	Total funds
	Note	£	£	£	£
Income and endowments					
Donations and legacies	4	170,610	6,250	176,860	170,536
Charitable activities	5	33,400	–	33,400	18,878
Investment income	6	251	–	251	191
Total income		<u>204,261</u>	<u>6,250</u>	<u>210,511</u>	<u>189,605</u>
Expenditure					
Expenditure on raising funds:					
Costs of other trading activities	7	6,500	–	6,500	4,000
Expenditure on charitable activities	8,9	195,552	1,956	197,508	187,110
Total expenditure		<u>202,052</u>	<u>1,956</u>	<u>204,008</u>	<u>191,110</u>
Net income/(expenditure) and net movement in funds		<u>2,209</u>	<u>4,294</u>	<u>6,503</u>	<u>(1,505)</u>
Reconciliation of funds					
Total funds brought forward		<u>7,367</u>	<u>–</u>	<u>7,367</u>	<u>8,872</u>
Total funds carried forward		<u>9,576</u>	<u>4,294</u>	<u>13,870</u>	<u>7,367</u>

The statement of financial activities includes all gains and losses recognised in the year. All income and expenditure derive from continuing activities.

The notes on pages 10 to 15 form part of these financial statements.


The School of Contemplative Life

Statement of Financial Position

31 December 2024

	Note	2024 £	2023 £
Current Assets			
Cash at bank and in hand		14,586	9,666
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	13	<u>716</u>	<u>2,299</u>
Net Current Assets		<u>13,870</u>	<u>7,367</u>
Total Assets Less Current Liabilities		<u>13,870</u>	<u>7,367</u>
Net Assets		<u><u>13,870</u></u>	<u><u>7,367</u></u>
Funds of the Charity			
Restricted funds		4,294	–
Unrestricted funds		<u>9,576</u>	<u>7,367</u>
Total charity funds	14	<u><u>13,870</u></u>	<u><u>7,367</u></u>

These financial statements were approved by the board of trustees and authorised for issue on 14th May 2025, and are signed on behalf of the board by:



C Cooper Ph.D
Trustee

The notes on pages 10 to 15 form part of these financial statements.

The School of Contemplative Life

Notes to the Financial Statements

Year Ended 31 December 2024

1. General Information

The charity is a public benefit entity and a registered charity in England and Wales and is unincorporated. The address of the principal office is 53 Portland Street, Cheltenham, GL52 2NX.

2. Statement of Compliance

These financial statements have been prepared in compliance with FRS 102, 'The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and the Republic of Ireland', the Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (Charities SORP (FRS 102)) and the Charities Act 2011.

3. Accounting Policies

Basis of Preparation

The financial statements have been prepared on the historical cost basis, as modified by the revaluation of certain financial assets and liabilities and investment properties measured at fair value through income or expenditure.

The financial statements are prepared in sterling, which is the functional currency of the entity.

Going Concern

There are no material uncertainties about the charity's ability to continue.

Judgements and Key Sources of Estimation Uncertainty

The preparation of the financial statements requires management to make judgements, estimates and assumptions that affect the amounts reported. These estimates and judgements are continually reviewed and are based on experience and other factors, including expectations of future events that are believed to be reasonable under the circumstances. The trustees consider that there are no significant estimates or judgements affecting these financial statements.

Fund Accounting

Unrestricted funds are available for use at the discretion of the trustees to further any of the charity's purposes.

Designated funds are unrestricted funds earmarked by the trustees for particular future project or commitment.

Restricted funds are subjected to restrictions on their expenditure declared by the donor or through the terms of an appeal, and fall into one of two sub-classes: restricted income funds or endowment funds.

The School of Contemplative Life

Notes to the Financial Statements *(continued)*

Year Ended 31 December 2024

3. Accounting Policies *(continued)*

Income

All incoming resources are included in the statement of financial activities when entitlement has passed to the charity; it is probable that the economic benefits associated with the transaction will flow to the charity and the amount can be reliably measured. The following specific policies are applied to particular categories of income:

- income from donations or grants is recognised when there is evidence of entitlement to the gift, receipt is probable and its amount can be measured reliably.
- legacy income is recognised when receipt is probable and entitlement is established.
- income from donated goods is measured at the fair value of the goods unless this is impractical to measure reliably, in which case the value is derived from the cost to the donor or the estimated resale value. Donated facilities and services are recognised in the accounts when received if the value can be reliably measured. No amounts are included for the contribution of general volunteers.
- income from contracts for the supply of services is recognised with the delivery of the contracted service. This is classified as unrestricted funds unless there is a contractual requirement for it to be spent on a particular purpose and returned if unspent, in which case it may be regarded as restricted.

Expenditure

Expenditure is recognised on an accruals basis as a liability is incurred. Expenditure includes any VAT which cannot be fully recovered, and is classified under headings of the statement of financial activities to which it relates:

- expenditure on raising funds includes the costs of all fundraising activities, events, non-charitable trading activities, and the sale of donated goods.
- expenditure on charitable activities includes all costs incurred by a charity in undertaking activities that further its charitable aims for the benefit of its beneficiaries, including those support costs and costs relating to the governance of the charity apportioned to charitable activities.
- other expenditure includes all expenditure that is neither related to raising funds for the charity nor part of its expenditure on charitable activities.

All costs are allocated to expenditure categories reflecting the use of the resource. Direct costs attributable to a single activity are allocated directly to that activity. Shared costs are apportioned between the activities they contribute to on a reasonable, justifiable and consistent basis.

Financial Instruments

The charity only has financial assets and liabilities of a kind that qualify as basic financial instruments. Basic financial instruments are initially recognised at transaction value and subsequently measured at their settlement value.

The School of Contemplative Life

Notes to the Financial Statements *(continued)*

Year Ended 31 December 2024

Debtors

Trade and other debtors are recognised at the settlement amount due after any trade discount offered. Prepayments are valued at the amount prepaid net of any trade discounts due.

Accrued income and tax recoverable is included at the best estimate of the amounts receivable at the balance sheet date.

Cash at Bank and in Hand

Cash at bank and cash in hand includes cash and short term highly liquid investments with a short maturity of three months or less from the date of acquisition or opening of the deposit or similar account.

Creditors

Creditors are recognised where the charity has a present obligation resulting from a past event that will probably result in the transfer of funds to a third party and the amount due to settle the obligation can be measured or estimated reliably. Creditors are normally recognised at their settlement amount after allowing for any trade discounts due.

4. Donations and Legacies

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds 2024 £
Donations			
Donations	21,610	–	21,610
Restricted donation for bursaries	–	6,250	6,250
Gifts			
Donations in kind	149,000	–	149,000
	<u>170,610</u>	<u>6,250</u>	<u>176,860</u>
	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds 2023 £
Donations			
Donations	3,336	–	3,336
Gifts			
Donations in kind	167,200	–	167,200
	<u>170,536</u>	<u>–</u>	<u>170,536</u>

The School of Contemplative Life

Notes to the Financial Statements (continued)

Year Ended 31 December 2024

5. Charitable Activities

	Unrestricted Funds £	Total Funds 2024 £	Unrestricted Funds £	Total Funds 2023 £
Ticket sales	28,285	28,285	18,878	18,878
Fee income	5,115	5,115	–	–
	<u>33,400</u>	<u>33,400</u>	<u>18,878</u>	<u>18,878</u>

6. Investment Income

	Unrestricted Funds £	Total Funds 2024 £	Unrestricted Funds £	Total Funds 2023 £
Bank interest receivable	<u>251</u>	<u>251</u>	<u>191</u>	<u>191</u>

7. Costs of Other Trading Activities

	Unrestricted Funds £	Total Funds 2024 £	Unrestricted Funds £	Total Funds 2023 £
Fundraising costs	<u>6,500</u>	<u>6,500</u>	<u>4,000</u>	<u>4,000</u>

8. Expenditure on Charitable Activities by Fund Type

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds 2024 £
Retreat costs	185,773	1,956	187,729
Support costs	<u>9,779</u>	–	<u>9,779</u>
	<u>195,552</u>	<u>1,956</u>	<u>197,508</u>

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds 2023 £
Retreat costs	180,797	–	180,797
Support costs	<u>6,313</u>	–	<u>6,313</u>
	<u>187,110</u>	<u>–</u>	<u>187,110</u>

9. Expenditure on Charitable Activities by Activity Type

	Activities undertaken directly £	Support costs £	Total funds 2024 £	Total fund 2023 £
Retreat costs	187,729	6,679	194,408	182,600
Governance costs	–	<u>3,100</u>	<u>3,100</u>	<u>4,510</u>
	<u>187,729</u>	<u>9,779</u>	<u>197,508</u>	<u>187,110</u>

The School of Contemplative Life

Notes to the Financial Statements *(continued)*

Year Ended 31 December 2024

10. Independent Examination Fees

	2024	2023
	£	£
Fees payable to the independent examiner for: Independent examination of the financial statements	600	900

11. Staff Costs

The total staff costs and employee benefits for the reporting period are analysed as follows:

	2024	2023
	£	£
Wages and salaries	15,700	–

The average head count of employees during the year was 2 (2023: Nil).

No employee received employee benefits of more than £60,000 during the year (2023: Nil).

12. Trustee Remuneration and Expenses

During 2024 C Whittington, trustee, was paid a salary of £8,144 and consultancy fees of £2,500. His wife, R Sharpe, was paid a salary of £7,556.

Trustees' expenses

Trustees received no expenses during the year (2023: £556)

Donations in kind

Donations in kind for retreat development/leadership and teaching costs of £56,556 (2023: £67,200) relate to professional time provided by Chris Whittington on a voluntary basis.

Donations in kind for organisational development and planning costs of £88,444 (2023: £96,000) relate to professional time provided by Rachel Sharpe, who is the spouse of Chris Whittington, on a voluntary basis.

13. Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

	2024	2023
	£	£
Trade creditors	116	–
Accruals and deferred income	600	900
Other creditors	–	1,399
	<u>716</u>	<u>2,299</u>

The School of Contemplative Life

Notes to the Financial Statements (continued)

Year Ended 31 December 2024

14. Analysis of Charitable Funds

Unrestricted funds

	At 1 January 2024	Income	Expenditure	At 31 December 2024
	£	£	£	£
General funds	<u>7,367</u>	<u>204,261</u>	<u>(202,052)</u>	<u>9,576</u>

	At 1 January 2023	Income	Expenditure	At 31 December 2023
	£	£	£	£
General funds	<u>8,872</u>	<u>189,605</u>	<u>(191,110)</u>	<u>7,367</u>

Restricted funds

	At 1 January 2024	Income	Expenditure	At 31 December 2024
	£	£	£	£
Bursary fund	<u>–</u>	<u>6,250</u>	<u>(1,956)</u>	<u>4,294</u>

	At 1 January 2023	Income	Expenditure	At 31 December 2023
	£	£	£	£
Bursary fund	<u>–</u>	<u>–</u>	<u>–</u>	<u>–</u>

15. Analysis of Net Assets Between Funds

	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total Funds 2024
	£	£	£
Current assets	10,292	4,294	14,586
Creditors less than 1 year	<u>(716)</u>	<u>–</u>	<u>(716)</u>
Net assets	<u>9,576</u>	<u>4,294</u>	<u>13,870</u>

	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total Funds 2023
	£	£	£
Current assets	9,666	–	9,666
Creditors less than 1 year	<u>(2,299)</u>	<u>–</u>	<u>(2,299)</u>
Net assets	<u>7,367</u>	<u>–</u>	<u>7,367</u>

The School of Contemplative Life

Management Information

Year Ended 31 December 2024

The Following Pages Do Not Form Part of the Financial Statements.

The School of Contemplative Life

Detailed Statement of Financial Activities

Year Ended 31 December 2024

	2024 £	2023 £
Income and endowments		
Donations and legacies		
Donations	21,610	3,336
Restricted donation for bursaries	6,250	–
Donations in kind	149,000	167,200
	<u>176,860</u>	<u>170,536</u>
Charitable activities		
Ticket sales	28,285	18,878
Fee income	5,115	–
	<u>33,400</u>	<u>18,878</u>
Investment income		
Bank interest receivable	251	191
	<u>251</u>	<u>191</u>
Total income	<u>210,511</u>	<u>189,605</u>

The School of Contemplative Life

Notes to the Detailed Statement of Financial Activities

Year Ended 31 December 2024

	2024 £	2023 £
Expenditure		
Fundraising costs		
Fundraising costs in kind	4,000	4,000
Other fundraising costs	2,500	–
	<u>6,500</u>	<u>4,000</u>
Expenditure on charitable activities		
<i>Activities undertaken directly</i>		
Staff costs	15,700	–
Travel and accommodation	4,689	–
Digital, comms & IT	11,426	2,483
Retreat costs	8,958	15,114
Teaching costs in kind	56,556	67,200
Strategy & communication costs in kind	88,444	96,000
Bursaries	1,956	–
	<u>187,729</u>	<u>180,797</u>
<i>Support costs</i>		
Insurance	970	–
Professional fees	2,539	293
Postage & stationery	119	830
Advertising	–	680
Dues and Subscriptions	1,517	–
Training	762	–
Other costs	772	–
	<u>6,679</u>	<u>1,803</u>
Governance costs		
Accountancy fees	600	900
Consultancy fees	2,500	3,610
	<u>3,100</u>	<u>4,510</u>
Expenditure on charitable activities	<u>197,508</u>	<u>187,110</u>
Total expenditure	<u>204,008</u>	<u>191,110</u>
Net income/(expenditure)	<u>6,503</u>	<u>(1,505)</u>

THE SCHOOL OF CONTEMPLATIVE LIFE

England & Wales - Charity number 1195159

Accounts

**REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES AND
UNAUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER 2023
FOR
THE SCHOOL OF CONTEMPLATIVE LIFE**

Thomas Coombs Limited
Chartered Accountants
3365 The Pentagon
Century Way
Thorpe Park
Leeds
West Yorkshire
LS15 8ZB

THE SCHOOL OF CONTEMPLATIVE LIFE

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FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER 2023**

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THE SCHOOL OF CONTEMPLATIVE LIFE

**REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER 2023**

TRUSTEES	R A Candlin C Cooper C I Whittington N E Gillespie
PRINCIPAL ADDRESS	53 Portland Street Cheltenham GL52 2NX
REGISTERED CHARITY NUMBER	1195159
INDEPENDENT EXAMINER	Thomas Coombs Limited Chartered Accountants 3365 The Pentagon Century Way Thorpe Park Leeds West Yorkshire LS15 8ZB

THE SCHOOL OF CONTEMPLATIVE LIFE

REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER 2023

The trustees present their report with the financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31st December 2023. The trustees have adopted the provisions of Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2019).

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

Objectives and aims

The Object of The School of Contemplative Life (SoCL) is to promote and protect emotional, mental, and spiritual health for the benefit of the public by the provision of meditation and in such other ways as the Charity Trustees may decide.

Our vision is to help people establish peace in themselves and become places of peace in the world.

Our aims are to:

- 1) Contribute to the restoration of contemplative practice as a way of life which purifies our motives and opens us to the Divine - the foundation of peace within us and between us, and the deepest basis for our care of each other and our precious world.
- 2) Promote the inseparable relationship between interior transformation and social transformation.
- 3) Be a source of peace and an antidote to the fundamentalism which gives rise to so much conflict and violence in the world.
- 4) Nurture the common ground between faiths by teaching meditation rooted in the Christian tradition as a simple, universal practice for all people.

Significant activities

The main activities of the SoCL include:

- Hosting a free online meditation group every Saturday morning and Wednesday evening that's accessible to all. Each session involves a teaching, simple practice guidelines, silent meditation and group conversation.
- Hosting in-person and online day event and residential retreats.
- Developing pilot programmes for specific audiences including school-staff and people living in Israel-Palestine.
- Publishing regular blogs and podcasts.
- Running introductory workshops for organisations on a request basis.

Public benefit

In accordance with their duties pursuant to Section 4 Charities Act 2011, the Trustees have considered the Trust's objects and activities in light of the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit. 'Charities and Public Benefit'.

Volunteers

All programme activity during the financial period concerned was delivered on a voluntary basis.

We decided to include donations in-kind within our accounts from 2023 as this represents the first year which the charity has received substantial resources from a small group of specialised individuals who are committed to building the capacity of the charity over the long-term.

Donations in-kind total £167,200, which is broken down as follows:

- £67,200 relates to retreat development/leadership and teaching
- £96,000 relates to organisational development and planning
- £4,000 relates to fundraising and communications

THE SCHOOL OF CONTEMPLATIVE LIFE

REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER 2023

ACHIEVEMENT AND PERFORMANCE

Charitable activities

We badged 2022 - 2023 as a period of 'test and learn' whilst also working to establish strong foundations. We are deliberately building the charity at a considered pace so that what's being created is built to last.

We have continued to experience significant demand for what we are offering during 2023. The online practice community has steadily grown and the majority of our events were sold out.

We have understood how to be effective and impactful with limited resources. It is significant that we are not burdened by complexity or the need to maintain costly overheads.

Points of note are set out below:

- As of December 2023, approx. 80 people were attending the Saturday morning practice group and 55 attending the Wednesday evening practice group. Word of mouth still accounts for much of the growth, but social media is now playing an increasingly important part.

- A very encouraging early milestone was the response to our first fundraising ask which we made to regular attendees of the online practice community. Approx. 70 people donated, with the majority of donations being regular commitments.

- A series of events were run including thematic events at key moments in the Christian calendar, others centred on social issues such as peace and a selection focused on making the teachings of wisdom teachers, such as Meister Eckhart, as accessible as possible. Events are charged at cost and no one is turned away due to affordability issues.

- We launched our Instagram and Facebook social media channels in 2023. Both gained immediate traction and have been responsible for generating engagement with a broader audience and new segments.

- We continued the development of a pilot wellbeing programme for school staff (Flourishing Staff, Flourishing Schools) and will begin fundraising for this in 2024.

- It was with a heavy heart that our trip to Israel-Palestine in October 2023 needed to be cancelled as a result of the tragic conflict in the region. At the invitation of a local leader, our intention was to scope a two-year project and begin developing a local meditation and peace programme. We hope to reschedule this trip as soon as it is practically possible to do so.

A selection of testimonials is included below. Countless others were received, most unsolicited, demonstrating similar impact.

In addition to delivering our purpose, we have continued to work on developing the systems and processes needed to underpin a scalable mission. This included implementing an automated finance system and more sophisticated database processes.

It's important to note that all activity during this period was delivered on a pro-bono basis as we continued to develop our offering. We are grateful for our talented volunteers and trustees who have graciously offered their time and wisdom to the SoCL at this critical moment in our evolution.

A selection of recent testimonials

Every week we receive unsolicited words from people who wish to express how the practice is impacting their life.

Here are a few examples from Christians and people of other faiths or none:

"It has taken decades for me to find a community that answers my need to connect with the God who is Love, the God whose voice has been difficult to hear in the Christianity surrounding me for most of my life. Discovering the community has been transformative. Our times of shared silence have already changed my life. I am so grateful for what you are offering."

"Thank you so much for this evening's meditation. I find myself slightly stunned by the fact that: (a) even though I was Catholic by birth, I've never come across meditation in a Christian context before; and (b) you popped up on my Instagram just when I was starting to feel uneasy about the possibility of tension between Buddhist meditative practice and Catholic dogma. Thank you for showing that one can meditate like this without having to step "outside the fold".

THE SCHOOL OF CONTEMPLATIVE LIFE

REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER 2023

"I struggle to find the words to express my gratitude for the SoCL. Having been torn between Buddhist and Christian ways in earlier life and having settled at last to look on both with wonder, the great loneliness of not pinning my colours to a mast of one tradition or another, not being part of a clear spiritual family, has been a burden and deeply isolating. I can still hardly believe that I have stumbled across your practice community and I am so very, very grateful."

"I have recently started to take part in the meditation sessions with the School of Contemplative Life. Having tried a number of different guided meditations in an attempt to ease anxiety, it has been your simple, silent practice that is beginning to have a significant impact."

"The ability to finally have compassion for myself (which I have sought for years) along with a sense of deep, inner dignity has been life-changing. Today, I can say that I have found peace and I can trust. I cannot explain how much the online practice group has meant to my journey."

"Thank you so very much for these evening sessions, which I am beginning to find create in me a more peaceful individual. Something is happening at the moment and I'm not quite sure what."

"Meditation has changed my manner, especially in potential conflict situations. I feel more thoughtful about my thoughts! I also think I'm becoming a better partner to be around."

"I am attending the sessions regularly now and my mental health is benefiting. It is truly wonderful to have found the practice community."

"I love being part of the community, even though I'm one so quiet - it's such a nurturing group and so accepting of all our differences & has become a firm part of my life now. Maybe it's a combination of a regular practice and the group as well but, over time, as the routine of the sessions has bedded in, I sense a greater security in myself and more confidence and that has helped me be more brave in my life too."

"I am so grateful for the encouragement and teaching you give us all, showing that when we open up to God's peace we are more able to convey it to others, and to empathise with them in a life-giving way."

FINANCIAL REVIEW

Financial position

Income of £22,405 generated during this period is largely reflective of revenue associated with tickets purchased for events. It is encouraging that the majority of people purchasing tickets opted to make a small donation to support the charity, on top of the ticket price.

In terms of fundraising, we made our first official 'ask' to regular attendees of the online practice community in December which was extremely successful (the majority of participants opted to donate). However, we have not yet implemented a formal grant fundraising strategy - this will be a priority from 2024.

Expenses, excluding donations in-kind, during this period totalled £23,910 which were largely associated with operations, capacity building and venue hire.

Principal funding sources

During the financial period concerned, the primary source of funds was from ticket sales supplemented by voluntary donations.

Reserves policy

Our reserves policy considers a) our fixed cost base, ensuring that we always have sufficient funding to wind up the charity if required and b) the need to demonstrate our going concern in the event we are required to fund general expenses from reserves if income for a given year falls below projections.

As we are intentionally building an agile and scalable operation with a low fixed cost base, the board has agreed to build up our reserves to £12,000. This reflects the funding needed to cover fixed and variable costs (excluding events and special projects) for a period of six months.

We recognise that there is a discrepancy between our turnover and reserve levels due to the inclusion of donations in-kind. However, as a young charity, the commitment of the individuals offering the donations in-kind is a long term one and therefore it's important to note that we have substantial assets available that are not reflected in our reserves

The reserves held at 31st December 2023 were £7,367 (2022: £8,872).

THE SCHOOL OF CONTEMPLATIVE LIFE

REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER 2023

FINANCIAL REVIEW

Going concern

We have ambitious growth plans and a strategy to develop unrestricted and restricted income. However, this does not affect our going concern - activity and impact generated during the financial period concerned demonstrates our ability to deliver significant impact with a moderate cost base.

Principal Risks

The top three principal risks identified are shown below (and indicative of where we are in our organisational lifecycle):

- Over-reliance on Chris Whittington as our primary teacher
- Limited unrestricted funds available for investment in growth opportunities that present themselves until we implement a grant funding strategy
- Low awareness of our brand.

Each has an associated mitigation strategy in place.

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

Governing document

The charity is controlled by its governing document, a deed of trust and constitutes an unincorporated charity.

Charity constitution

The charity is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO).

Recruitment and appointment of new trustees

Trustees are appointed by the Members. All trustees are required to have a personal meditation practice and have proven skills which complement those of their fellow trustees.

Organisational structure

During 2023, the charity relied wholly on volunteers to deliver its purpose.

The in-kind value of the specialist skills donated in 2023 equates to £167,200.

Key management remuneration

The key management personnel of the charity are the trustees themselves.

Approved by order of the board of trustees on 5th June 2024 and signed on its behalf by:

Carla Cooper

C Cooper - Trustee

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT TO THE TRUSTEES OF THE SCHOOL OF CONTEMPLATIVE LIFE

Independent examiner's report to the trustees of The School of Contemplative Life

I report to the charity trustees on my examination of the accounts of The School of Contemplative Life (the Trust) for the year ended 31st December 2023.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the charity trustees of the Trust 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 Trust's accounts carried out under Section 145 of the Act and in carrying out my examination I have followed all 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 material 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 Trust as required by Section 130 of the Act; or
2. the accounts do not accord with those records; or
3. the accounts do not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 other than any requirement that the accounts give a true and fair view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination.

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.



Christopher Darwin FCA
The Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales

Thomas Coombs Limited
Chartered Accountants
3365 The Pentagon
Century Way
Thorpe Park
Leeds
West Yorkshire
LS15 8ZB

5th June 2024

THE SCHOOL OF CONTEMPLATIVE LIFE

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER 2023

		Year Ended 31/12/23 Unrestricted fund £	Period 14/7/21 to 31/12/22 Total funds £
INCOME AND ENDOWMENTS FROM	Notes		
Donations and legacies	2	170,536	316
Charitable Activity Income	3	18,878	13,903
Investment income	4	191	-
Total		<u>189,605</u>	<u>14,219</u>
EXPENDITURE ON			
Raising funds	5	4,000	-
Charitable activities	6		
Event expenditure		187,110	5,347
Total		<u>191,110</u>	<u>5,347</u>
NET INCOME/(EXPENDITURE)		(1,505)	8,872
RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS			
Total funds brought forward		8,872	-
TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD		<u><u>7,367</u></u>	<u><u>8,872</u></u>

The notes form part of these financial statements

THE SCHOOL OF CONTEMPLATIVE LIFE

BALANCE SHEET
31ST DECEMBER 2023

	Notes	2023 Unrestricted fund £	2022 Total funds £
CURRENT ASSETS			
Cash at bank		9,666	9,772
CREDITORS			
Amounts falling due within one year	11	(2,299)	(900)
NET CURRENT ASSETS		<u>7,367</u>	<u>8,872</u>
TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES		<u>7,367</u>	<u>8,872</u>
NET ASSETS		<u>7,367</u>	<u>8,872</u>
FUNDS	12		
Unrestricted funds		<u>7,367</u>	<u>8,872</u>
TOTAL FUNDS		<u>7,367</u>	<u>8,872</u>

The financial statements were approved by the Board of Trustees and authorised for issue on 5th June 2024 and were signed on its behalf by:

Carla Cooper

C Cooper - Trustee

The notes form part of these financial statements

1. **ACCOUNTING POLICIES**

Basis of preparing the financial statements

The financial statements of the charity, which is a public benefit entity under FRS 102, have been prepared in accordance with the Charities SORP (FRS 102) 'Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2019)', Financial Reporting Standard 102 'The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland' and the Charities Act 2011. The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention.

The financial statements are prepared on a going concern basis under the historical cost convention, modified to include certain items at fair value. The financial statements are presented in sterling which is the functional currency of the charity and rounded to the nearest £1.

The significant accounting policies applied in the preparation of these financial statements are set out below. These policies have been consistently applied to all years presented unless otherwise stated.

Income

All income is recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities once the charity has entitlement to the funds, it is probable that the income will be received and the amount can be measured reliably.

For donations to be recognised the charity will have been notified of the amounts and the settlement date in writing. If there are conditions attached to the donation and this requires a level of performance before entitlement can be obtained then income is deferred until those conditions are fully met or the fulfilment of those conditions is within the control of the charity and it is probable that they will be fulfilled.

Income from trading activities includes income earned from fundraising events and trading activities to raise funds for the charity. Income is received in exchange for supplying goods and services in order to raise funds and is recognised when entitlement has occurred.

Expenditure

Liabilities are recognised as expenditure as soon as there is a legal or constructive obligation committing the charity to that expenditure, it is probable that a transfer of economic benefits will be required in settlement and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably. Expenditure is accounted for on an accruals basis and has been classified under headings that aggregate all cost related to the category. Where costs cannot be directly attributed to particular headings they have been allocated to activities on a basis consistent with the use of resources.

Taxation

The charity is exempt from tax on its charitable activities.

Fund accounting

Unrestricted funds can be used in accordance with the charitable objection at the discretion of the trustees.

Debtors and creditors receivable/payable within one year

Debtors and creditors with no stated interest rate and receivable or payable within one year are recorded at transaction price. Any losses arising from impairment are recognised in expenditure.

THE SCHOOL OF CONTEMPLATIVE LIFE

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS - continued
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER 2023

2. DONATIONS AND LEGACIES

	Year Ended 31/12/23 £	Period 14/7/21 to 31/12/22 £
Donations	3,336	316
Donations in kind	167,200	-
	<u>170,536</u>	<u>316</u>

3. CHARITABLE ACTIVITY INCOME

	Year Ended 31/12/23 £	Period 14/7/21 to 31/12/22 £
Ticket sales	18,878	13,903

4. INVESTMENT INCOME

	Year Ended 31/12/23 £	Period 14/7/21 to 31/12/22 £
Deposit account interest	191	-

5. RAISING FUNDS

Raising donations and legacies

	Year Ended 31/12/23 £	Period 14/7/21 to 31/12/22 £
Fundraising costs in kind	4,000	-

6. CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES COSTS

	Direct Costs (see note 7) £	Support costs (see note 8) £	Totals £
Event expenditure	178,314	8,796	187,110

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS - continued
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER 2023

7. DIRECT COSTS OF CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES

	Year Ended 31/12/23 £	Period 14/7/21 to 31/12/22 £
Retreat costs	15,114	3,681
Teaching costs in kind	67,200	-
Strategy and communication costs in kind	96,000	-
	<u>178,314</u>	<u>3,681</u>

8. SUPPORT COSTS

	Management £	Governance costs £	Totals £
Event expenditure	<u>4,286</u>	<u>4,510</u>	<u>8,796</u>

Support costs, included in the above, are as follows:

	Year Ended 31/12/23 Event expenditure £	Period 14/7/21 to 31/12/22 Total activities £
Postage and stationery	830	150
Advertising	680	-
Bank charges	293	616
Computer costs	2,483	-
Consultancy fees	3,610	-
Independent examination	900	900
	<u>8,796</u>	<u>1,666</u>

9. TRUSTEES' REMUNERATION AND BENEFITS

There were no trustees' remuneration or other benefits for the year ended 31st December 2023 nor for the period ended 31st December 2022.

Expenditure in relation to professional time provided in kind is detailed in note 13.

Trustees' expenses

During the year, there were expenses of £556 relating to Trustee's expenses comprised of IT equipment and travel. (2022: £NIL)

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS - continued
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER 2023

10. COMPARATIVES FOR THE STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES

	Unrestricted fund £
INCOME AND ENDOWMENTS FROM	
Donations and legacies	316
Charitable Activity Income	<u>13,903</u>
Total	<u>14,219</u>
EXPENDITURE ON	
Charitable activities	
Event expenditure	<u>5,347</u>
NET INCOME	<u>8,872</u>
TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD	<u><u>8,872</u></u>

11. CREDITORS: AMOUNTS FALLING DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR

	2023 £	2022 £
Other creditors	<u>2,299</u>	<u>900</u>

12. MOVEMENT IN FUNDS

	At 1/1/23 £	Net movement in funds £	At 31/12/23 £
Unrestricted funds			
General fund	<u>8,872</u>	<u>(1,505)</u>	<u>7,367</u>
TOTAL FUNDS	<u><u>8,872</u></u>	<u><u>(1,505)</u></u>	<u><u>7,367</u></u>

Net movement in funds, included in the above are as follows:

	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Movement in funds £
Unrestricted funds			
General fund	<u>189,605</u>	<u>(191,110)</u>	<u>(1,505)</u>
TOTAL FUNDS	<u><u>189,605</u></u>	<u><u>(191,110)</u></u>	<u><u>(1,505)</u></u>

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS - continued
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER 2023

12. MOVEMENT IN FUNDS - continued

Comparatives for movement in funds

	Net movement in funds £	At 31/12/22 £
Unrestricted funds		
General fund	8,872	8,872
	_____	_____
TOTAL FUNDS	<u>8,872</u>	<u>8,872</u>

Comparative net movement in funds, included in the above are as follows:

	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Movement in funds £
Unrestricted funds			
General fund	14,219	(5,347)	8,872
	_____	_____	_____
TOTAL FUNDS	<u>14,219</u>	<u>(5,347)</u>	<u>8,872</u>

13. RELATED PARTY DISCLOSURES

During the 2023 year there were expenses equating to £974 reimbursed to the trustees for the expenditure related to event and IT costs. (2022: £NIL)

Donations in kind

Donations in kind for retreat development/leadership and teaching costs of £67,200 (2022: £nil) relate to professional time provided by Chris Whittington on a voluntary basis.

Donations in kind for organisational development and planning costs of £96,000 (2022: £nil) relate to professional time provided by Rachel Sharpe, who is the spouse of Chris Whittington, on a voluntary basis.

THE SCHOOL OF CONTEMPLATIVE LIFE

England & Wales - Charity number 1195159

Accounts

**REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES AND
UNAUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE PERIOD 14TH JULY 2021 TO 31ST DECEMBER 2022
FOR
THE SCHOOL OF CONTEMPLATIVE LIFE**

Thomas Coombs Limited
Chartered Accountants
3365 The Pentagon
Century Way
Thorpe Park
Leeds
West Yorkshire
LS15 8ZB

THE SCHOOL OF CONTEMPLATIVE LIFE

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FOR THE PERIOD 14TH JULY 2021 TO 31ST DECEMBER 2022**

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THE SCHOOL OF CONTEMPLATIVE LIFE

**REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS
FOR THE PERIOD 14TH JULY 2021 TO 31ST DECEMBER 2022**

TRUSTEES	R A Candlin (appointed 21/10/21) C Cooper (appointed 19/5/22) C I Whittington (appointed 14/7/21) N E Gillespie (appointed 14/7/21)
PRINCIPAL ADDRESS	53 Portland Street Cheltenham GL52 2NX
REGISTERED CHARITY NUMBER	1195159
INDEPENDENT EXAMINER	Thomas Coombs Limited Chartered Accountants 3365 The Pentagon Century Way Thorpe Park Leeds West Yorkshire LS15 8ZB

THE SCHOOL OF CONTEMPLATIVE LIFE

REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES FOR THE PERIOD 14TH JULY 2021 TO 31ST DECEMBER 2022

The trustees present their report with the financial statements of the charity for the period 14th July 2021 to 31st December 2022. The trustees have adopted the provisions of Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2019).

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

Objectives and aims

The Objective of The School of Contemplative Life (SoCL) is to promote and protect emotional, mental and spiritual health for the benefit of the public by the provision of meditation and in such other ways as the Charity Trustees may decide.

The purpose of The School of Contemplative Life is to teach meditation as a simple pathway to peace and community - a new way of seeing for a new way of being. As we establish peace in ourselves, we become places of peace in the world.

Our aims are to:

1. Contribute to the restoration of contemplative practice as a way of life which purifies our motives and opens us to the oneness of being - the foundation of peace within us and between us, the deepest basis for our care of each other and our precious world.
2. Promote the inseparable relationship between interior transformation and social transformation.
3. Be an antidote to the fundamentalism which gives rise to so much conflict and violence in the world.
4. Nurture the common ground across faith traditions through teaching meditation within the Christian tradition as a simple and universal practice for people of all ages, beliefs and circumstances.

Significant activities

The main activities of the SoCL include:

- Hosting an online meditation group every Saturday morning which involves teaching, simple guidelines for the practice, 25 minutes of silent meditation and group conversation.
- Holding in-person and online events at regular intervals including day retreats, our first silent retreat and an online weekend retreat.
- Developing pilot programmes for audiences working in specific contexts including school-teachers.
- Providing spiritual counsel on a limited and pro-bono basis.
- Publishing regular blogs and podcasts.

Public benefit

In accordance with their duties pursuant to Section 4 Charities Act 2011, the Trustees have considered the Trust's objects and activities in light of the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit. 'Charities and Public Benefit'.

Volunteers

All programme activity during the financial period concerned was delivered on a voluntary basis by individuals employed elsewhere in demanding professional roles. This was necessary as we tested the appetite for and impact of our work.

ACHIEVEMENT AND PERFORMANCE

Charitable activities

The pilot activity delivered during this period demonstrated the appetite that exists for what we have to offer.

Much of this was developed and delivered during the Covid-19 pandemic which, in hindsight, created as many opportunities as it did challenges.

The highlights are set out below:

- Delivering regular in-person talks introducing people to meditation in the Christian tradition. We targeted the business community in Birmingham and drew approximately 40 people to each event.
- These talks drove the establishment of our Saturday morning online meditation group which now self identifies as a practice community. Having been introduced to the practice, people were seeking ongoing engagement, teaching and support. Over the period reported, the group's membership steadily grew to an average weekly attendance of about 45 people by the end of 2022. The diversity of our audience is of particular note, as is the fact that the majority of people who attend have heard about us through 'word of mouth'. In keeping with our desire to ensure that what we do is as accessible as possible to all, the online meditation groups are offered free of charge. Once we have an agreed fundraising strategy in place, we will ask regular participants to offer a voluntary donation, according to their means.
- A series of events were held during 2021 and 2022 including a three-day silent retreat in Oxfordshire in Wantage. This sold out in just over a week.
- A pilot programme introducing school-teachers, primarily within Chris' networks, to meditation was created and will inform the development of a more formal, scalable and programme from 2023. During the pandemic, we reached approximately 2,000 teachers including heads and MAT CEOs. Some were Christian, others were affiliated to different faith groups or none. Impact was reported by all.

Example testimonials for each of the activities above are included below. Countless others were received, often unsolicited, demonstrating similar impact. It is the quality and quantity of feedback we have received that warrants a strategic scale up of our activities from 2023 making the most of volunteers and without creating a burdensome and costly operating platform. One of the advantages of the model we are creating is its agility.

In addition to external facing activity, we worked hard on developing the systems and processes needed to underpin a scalable mission and well-functioning organisation. This included developing our board, website, comms, database, policies and procedures.

It's important to note that all activity during this period, as we tested our proposition, was delivered by part-time volunteers who held senior positions at other organisations.

We are grateful for our talented trustees and support volunteers who have graciously offered their time and expertise to the SoCL at this important moment in our development.

Testimonial 1 - Secondary School headteacher who participated in our pilot programme for schools

Career pressures have, in the past, left me completely broken. Where medical therapies have proved useless for me, talking therapies were my only support option and got me back on an even keel and working again. Returning to school leadership has been a joy, though not without its stresses and strains, particularly in the era of the pandemic.

I was invited to an introductory workshop on meditation in the Christian tradition led by Chris as a support for headteachers during the exceptional COVID challenges. Being secular in outlook and with a science background, I was sceptical to say the least. I did not go in expecting to gain much. But I was immediately struck by the simplicity of the practice and glimpsed for the first time how meditation might help me to deal better with my everyday challenges.

I started to attend the weekly online sessions of the practice community and it soon became obvious that I was being helped to find and retain a sense of calm through these troubled times. Within a month I was meditating every morning and evening and I am learning more about the practice all the time.

THE SCHOOL OF CONTEMPLATIVE LIFE

REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES FOR THE PERIOD 14TH JULY 2021 TO 31ST DECEMBER 2022

It is hard to express the significant difference the practice makes. Apart from feeling calmer, when discussing whether I should arrange a session for my whole staff team I asked a colleague whether they thought the practice was having any effect on me. I was genuinely shocked by their reply - that in the 10 plus years they had known me, they had never seen me so calm and balanced despite us facing the toughest challenges we have ever faced.

Furthermore, they said my calmness was becoming infectious across the organisation. Subsequent discussions across my senior leadership team, staff and students confirm this as being a noticeable change in me since I started the practice.

It is difficult to see these things for myself, but that has given me encouragement to continue the practice. Having introduced the idea to staff already, The School of Contemplative Life will soon be working with my academy to explore how the practice can help us as an organisation across all staff and students. We are especially keen to see how we can use the practice to support some of our most vulnerable children, who desperately need healing and support.

I do not begin to understand how the practice of silent meditation is proving to have such a positive effect on my relationships, but I feel more at one with those around me and with God than I have ever experienced before. My continued practice is therefore inevitable as calm relationships are the only way I will get through these troubling times.

I and many of my colleagues have discovered a simple pathway to mental peace. It has been revolutionary. Rather than skilling us up, it has started a movement. I have come through the toughest of years with a smile in my heart.

Testimonial 2 - A young black woman who attends the weekly online meditation group and struggled with processing her feelings around the murder of George Floyd

I wanted to get in touch and say 'thank you'.

I was sceptical, though I know that in theory, mediation will at the very least provide a time of quiet and space. What I couldn't really understand is how this can be used as a form of prayer, that silence in its essence is prayer. I think at an intellectual level I still don't understand, but I have had such a positive time in practicing meditation (and by practice, I mean still very much learning) that even if my brain doesn't fully grasp the discipline and merit of meditation, my soul and spirit does.

I was finding it very difficult to switch off those negative, repetitive arousing thoughts. The following evening after we spoke, I tried to meditate. I sat, focusing on only the prayer phrase and to my great surprise, the anger that had overtaken my thoughts for days disappeared immediately and was replaced by a sense of peace, and calm that followed very quickly afterwards.

I was so amazed that I found it almost non-sensical. How could just sitting still (whilst fighting off the distracting thoughts) be as effective as prayer? I don't have the answer to that, but I do know that it works.

I feel sitting quietly before God is transformational. It almost seems like this is a secret weapon. Thank you Chris, thank you for dedication, your commitment, your knowledge and willingness to share your valuable time with us.

Testimonial 3 - An ordinand who attended a residential retreat in 2022

Twenty months ago, we received the devastating news that my husband had inoperable cancer.

As I've journeyed with my husband over these months, the sense of heartache has been overwhelming at times. It was through an encounter with the hospice chaplain that I was introduced to mindfulness. However, at the end of the course I asked where God is in mindfulness meditation. I felt vulnerable in silence with all my thoughts and worries. It was at this point that the chaplain introduced me to The School of Contemplative Life.

Despite being brought up in the Church, a committed Christian since the age of 13, actively involved in the Church for over 35 years, and now in the final year of theological training to become a Methodist minister, I knew very little of the rich Christian tradition of contemplative prayer. Therefore, with little familiarity with silent prayer and a personal fear of silence, I was fearful of whether this was the right thing for me. Silence, particularly at night, was difficult as my mind felt weighed down with thoughts and worries about what the future would be like.

THE SCHOOL OF CONTEMPLATIVE LIFE

REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES FOR THE PERIOD 14TH JULY 2021 TO 31ST DECEMBER 2022

It was at this point that I met online with Chris and he introduced me to the practice of contemplative prayer. The starting point for me was a gentle invitation to trust that God meets us in the stillness. To trust in a place where there were no words was difficult and only possible through being part of the weekly Practice Community on a Saturday morning, being offered regular spiritual guidance and suggested guided reading. It was Chris's openness and ability to reframe my questions which encouraged me to explore the answers that enabled me to grow in understanding and to have the confidence to explore the early Fathers and Mothers of contemplative practice within the Christian tradition.

The turning point for me was going on a weekend silent retreat run by Chris. The gift of being with community members of The School of Contemplative Life and meditation practice over the weekend was transformative. At times the silence was intense and I cried many times. But I came to understand that healing occurs through the tears in the silence. All that God asks of me is to be present and rest in God's love.

I continue to feel vulnerable, because I am facing loss each day as I slowly watch my husband cope with his treatments while gradually becoming weaker. However, being part of The School of Contemplative Life community has encouraged me greatly to continue to walk forward. The effect of contemplative prayer has been and continues to be transformative. During the last year, the theological framework I previously held has been shattered and replaced by a place of Love - God's love - in which I can rest and from which I boldly challenge the theological constructs which I once held tightly to and am being set free from. I am learning to live in the presence, to "Be still and know that I am God" (Psalm 46:10). I am seeing that the Kingdom of God is here now, within us, and have the confidence to walk forward in peace knowing that while God is ultimately unknowable, he loves each one of us unconditionally.

My situation of heartache has not changed. I continue to care for my husband with terminal cancer. What has changed is my relationship with it. I sense a peace in the silence which words cannot express. I have learnt to reduce my suffering by not focusing on the what if's and/or how awful our situation is. My awareness of these thoughts is still there, but I am learning a new relationship with them and not to chatter with them. This has given me space to breathe and enabled me to be in control of my responses any given situation. The gift of space to be, and to learn a new relationship with my thoughts, has enabled me to experience a wholeness and peace in the midst of heartache that I believe has only been possible by the grace of God.

FINANCIAL REVIEW

Financial position

Income of £14,219 generated during this period is largely reflective of revenue associated with tickets purchased for events. It is encouraging that the majority of people purchasing tickets opted to make a small donation to support the charity on top of the ticket price. Other than what's stated above, we did not actively solicit voluntary donations during this period or have a grant-funding strategy in place.

Expenses during this period of £5,347 were largely associated with venue hire for events. This paints a slightly unrepresentative picture for two reasons:

- 1) Other one-off expenses, such as food for events, were paid for by those involved in the start-up of the charity
- 2) Time, whether teaching or administrative, was provided on a pro-bono basis, again, because this period was focused on testing and learning.

Principal funding sources

During the financial period concerned, the primary source of funds was from ticket sales supplemented by donations.

Reserves policy

As a start-up we have limited reserves, however a priority is to build these up from 2023. At the year end, reserves held totalled £8,872.

Going concern

We have ambitious growth plans and a strategy to develop unrestricted and restricted income. However, this does not affect our going concern - activity and impact generated during the financial period concerned demonstrates our ability to deliver significant impact with minimal cost.

THE SCHOOL OF CONTEMPLATIVE LIFE

REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES FOR THE PERIOD 14TH JULY 2021 TO 31ST DECEMBER 2022

FINANCIAL REVIEW

Principal Risks

The top three principal risks identified are shown below and reflect where we are in our lifecycle:

- Over-reliance on Chris Whittington as the primary teacher;
- Limited unrestricted funds available for investment in growth opportunities;
- Low awareness of our brand.

Each has an associated mitigation strategy in place.

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

Governing document

The charity is controlled by its governing document, a deed of trust and constitutes an unincorporated charity.

Recruitment and appointment of new trustees

Trustees are appointed by the Members. All trustees are required to have a personal meditation practice and have proven skills which complement those of their fellow trustees.

Organisational structure

At present, the charity relies wholly on volunteers to deliver its purpose. This equates to a minimum of 2,000 volunteer hours or 285 days during the reporting period.

Induction and training of new trustees

As well as an induction, all new trustees are provided with the Charity Commission's guidance entitled 'The Essential Trustee'. This guidance explains to each trustee, their important role in a sector that contributes significantly to the character and wellbeing of the country through the delivery of public benefit.

Key management remuneration

The key management personnel of the charity are the trustees themselves.

Approved by order of the board of trustees on 24th May 2023 and signed on its behalf by:

Carla Cooper

C Cooper - Trustee

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT TO THE TRUSTEES OF THE SCHOOL OF CONTEMPLATIVE LIFE

Independent examiner's report to the trustees of The School of Contemplative Life

I report to the charity trustees on my examination of the accounts of The School of Contemplative Life (the Trust) for the period 14th July 2021 to 31st December 2022.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the charity trustees of the Trust 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 Trust's accounts carried out under Section 145 of the Act and in carrying out my examination I have followed all 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 material 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 Trust as required by Section 130 of the Act; or
2. the accounts do not accord with those records; or
3. the accounts do not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 other than any requirement that the accounts give a true and fair view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination.

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.



Christopher Darwin
Chartered Accountant

Christopher Darwin FCA
The Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales

Thomas Coombs Limited
Chartered Accountants
3365 The Pentagon
Century Way
Thorpe Park
Leeds
West Yorkshire
LS15 8ZB

24th May 2023

THE SCHOOL OF CONTEMPLATIVE LIFE

**STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES
FOR THE PERIOD 14TH JULY 2021 TO 31ST DECEMBER 2022**

	Notes	Unrestricted fund £
INCOME AND ENDOWMENTS FROM		
Donations and legacies	2	316
Charitable Activity Income	3	13,903
Total		14,219
EXPENDITURE ON		
Charitable activities	4	
Event expenditure		5,347
NET INCOME		8,872
TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD		8,872

The notes form part of these financial statements

THE SCHOOL OF CONTEMPLATIVE LIFE

**BALANCE SHEET
31ST DECEMBER 2022**

	Notes	Unrestricted fund £
CURRENT ASSETS		
Cash at bank		9,772
CREDITORS		
Amounts falling due within one year	8	(900)
NET CURRENT ASSETS		8,872
TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES		8,872
NET ASSETS		8,872
FUNDS	9	
Unrestricted funds		8,872
TOTAL FUNDS		8,872

The financial statements were approved by the Board of Trustees and authorised for issue on 24th May 2023 and were signed on its behalf by:

Carla Cooper

C Cooper - Trustee

The notes form part of these financial statements

1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES

Basis of preparing the financial statements

The financial statements of the charity, which is a public benefit entity under FRS 102, have been prepared in accordance with the Charities SORP (FRS 102) 'Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2019)', Financial Reporting Standard 102 'The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland' and the Charities Act 2011. The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention.

The financial statements are prepared on a going concern basis under the historical cost convention, modified to include certain items at fair value. The financial statements are presented in sterling which is the functional currency of the charity and rounded to the nearest £1.

The significant accounting policies applied in the preparation of these financial statements are set out below. These policies have been consistently applied to all years presented unless otherwise stated.

Income

All income is recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities once the charity has entitlement to the funds, it is probable that the income will be received and the amount can be measured reliably.

For donations to be recognised the charity will have been notified of the amounts and the settlement date in writing. If there are conditions attached to the donation and this requires a level of performance before entitlement can be obtained then income is deferred until those conditions are fully met or the fulfilment of those conditions is within the control of the charity and it is probable that they will be fulfilled.

Income from trading activities includes income earned from fundraising events and trading activities to raise funds for the charity. Income is received in exchange for supplying goods and services in order to raise funds and is recognised when entitlement has occurred.

Expenditure

Liabilities are recognised as expenditure as soon as there is a legal or constructive obligation committing the charity to that expenditure, it is probable that a transfer of economic benefits will be required in settlement and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably. Expenditure is accounted for on an accruals basis and has been classified under headings that aggregate all cost related to the category. Where costs cannot be directly attributed to particular headings they have been allocated to activities on a basis consistent with the use of resources.

Taxation

The charity is exempt from tax on its charitable activities.

Fund accounting

Unrestricted funds can be used in accordance with the charitable objection at the discretion of the trustees.

Debtors and creditors receivable/payable within one year

Debtors and creditors with no stated interest rate and receivable or payable within one year are recorded at transaction price. Any losses arising from impairment are recognised in expenditure.

THE SCHOOL OF CONTEMPLATIVE LIFE

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS - continued
FOR THE PERIOD 14TH JULY 2021 TO 31ST DECEMBER 2022

2. DONATIONS AND LEGACIES

Donations	£ 316
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3. CHARITABLE ACTIVITY INCOME

Ticket sales	£ 13,903
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4. CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES COSTS

	Direct Costs (see note 5) £	Support costs (see note 6) £	Totals £
Event expenditure	3,681	1,666	5,347

5. DIRECT COSTS OF CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES

Retreat costs	£ 3,681
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6. SUPPORT COSTS

	Management £	Governance costs £	Totals £
Event expenditure	766	900	1,666

Support costs, included in the above, are as follows:

	Event expenditure £
Postage and stationery	150
Bank charges	616
Independent examination	900
	1,666

7. TRUSTEES' REMUNERATION AND BENEFITS

There were no trustees' remuneration or other benefits for the period ended 31st December 2022.

Trustees' expenses

There were no trustees' expenses paid for the period ended 31st December 2022.

THE SCHOOL OF CONTEMPLATIVE LIFE

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS - continued
FOR THE PERIOD 14TH JULY 2021 TO 31ST DECEMBER 2022

8. CREDITORS: AMOUNTS FALLING DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR

Other creditors	£ 900
-----------------	-----------------

9. MOVEMENT IN FUNDS

	Net movement in funds £	At 31/12/22 £
Unrestricted funds		
General fund	8,872	8,872
	-----	-----
TOTAL FUNDS	8,872	8,872

Net movement in funds, included in the above are as follows:

	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Movement in funds £
Unrestricted funds			
General fund	14,219	(5,347)	8,872
	-----	-----	-----
TOTAL FUNDS	14,219	(5,347)	8,872

10. RELATED PARTY DISCLOSURES

There were no related party transactions for the period ended 31st December 2022.

THE SCHOOL OF CONTEMPLATIVE LIFE

**DETAILED STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES
FOR THE PERIOD 14TH JULY 2021 TO 31ST DECEMBER 2022**

£

INCOME AND ENDOWMENTS

Donations and legacies

Donations

316

Charitable Activity Income

Ticket sales

13,903

Total incoming resources

14,219

EXPENDITURE

Charitable activities

Retreat costs

3,681

Support costs

Management

Postage and stationery

150

Bank charges

616

766

Governance costs

Independent examination

900

Total resources expended

5,347

Net income

8,872

This page does not form part of the statutory financial statements