

West London Buddhist Centre Chair's Report 2020

Trustees

Bodhilila (Wendy Young) Chair

Abhayadevi (Abhayadevi Tissington) Secretary, resigned 24 August 2020

Maitripushpa (Carol-Anne Bois) Secretary, joined 12 September 2020

Prajnanita (Hana Dilley) - Treasurer, from October 2020

Sudurjaya (Marilyn Therza)

Vilasamani (Tim Kirkpatrick)

Viramati (David Sampson)

Ratnadeva (Sean Quigley)

Paramananda (John Wilson) resigned 24 August 2020

Overview

The year was dominated by the ongoing impact of the COVID 19 pandemic and all its consequences, including living with change and uncertainty on both a global and local level throughout the year. 2020 began and ended with our annual City Retreat to see in the New Year. These retreats exemplified our changed circumstances as the first was an in-person event and the second online.

During January and February 2020, the West London Buddhist Centre was offering our usual range of in-person activities with a focus on teaching meditation, Buddhism and secular mindfulness through courses, drop-in classes, workshops and day retreats. Alongside this, our studio teachers offered yoga, Qi Gong and Feldenkrais Method classes and workshops (in line with our commitment to wellbeing) and we also hosted some art events (in line with the Triratna emphasis on the role of the arts in spiritual practice). The centre was open daytimes and evenings throughout the week and it provided a hub and meeting place for our community.

We closed the WLBC building when the first lockdown began in mid-March and it remained closed throughout 2020. Upcoming courses and events (including a residential retreat) were cancelled, with fees refunded. An introduction to Buddhism course which was already in progress moved online. Our small, dedicated team worked hard to make our core weekly classes available online via zoom and we were offering these very soon after the closure. The West London Buddhist Centre's online programme continued to develop over the year and received a lot of positive feedback.

Finances

A key concern when we closed the centre building was the short-term financial survival of the centre, as we immediately lost all of our main income streams. Toward the end of March, the financial kula carried out an internal financial risk assessment and we then carried out a similar process the following month with two external advisors. The results of both were very sobering as, alongside the loss of income streams, there remained high ongoing expenses, in particular associated with the West London Buddhist Centre building and the centre team.

My appeal for help from our sangha at the beginning of the first lockdown resulted in many one-off donations and a few more people making regular donations. Joining the government's Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme and receiving financial assistance while furloughing team members enabled us to retain the centre team with much lower employment costs. We were able to generate income from our online activities and Prajnanita (with the help of a new fundraising kula) began a fundraising campaign in the autumn which continued into 2021. The combination of all of these, while also drawing on our reserves, meant that the charity ended the year in a better position than our financial risk assessments had anticipated.

For a full report on the centre finances, please see the 2020 Accounts and the Treasurer's Report 2020.

Trustees

The Trustees took on a more active role during the year, with Council members planning and implementing a furloughing process for the centre team and then meeting more frequently once the team had been furloughed. From March, Council meetings were held online. Unfortunately this meant that one Trustee was not able to attend many meetings due to the impact Zoom meetings had on their health.

There were two resignations at the end of August. Abhayadevi (the Secretary) stepped down, as did Paramananda. They had both contributed greatly to the Charity not only through volunteering as Trustees but also as part of the teaching community. Although this was not continuous, Paramananda had served as a Trustee over a period of 30 years, including two periods when he was Chair of Trustees.

At the AGM (which was delayed until September due to the pandemic), Maitripushpa became a Trustee, taking on the role of Secretary and in October Prajnanita temporarily took on role of Treasurer.

Team

The team did some tremendous work under very challenging circumstances. All team and kula meetings were held online from March onwards and there were also optional team meditations each week. Team members had to adapt to a pattern of working very intensively from home for a few days each month while they were unfurloughed before being re-furloughed for a minimum of three weeks.

The team had to quickly learn new skills and to create new systems as all the centre activities moved online with Sophie Crocker (Mindfulness Coordinator and Publicity Manager) and Prajnanita (Centre Manager) carrying out a lot of this work. The Finance Officer, Sahananda, put in many hours making it possible to carry out his work online and then had additional tasks associated with the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme and the fundraising campaign.

Toward the end of the year, it became possible for team members to work part-time under the furlough scheme but the team was still unable to meet in-person. This made it much harder to work effectively together and experience ourselves as a team. This contributed to the stress of individual team members and also impacted on the team as a whole.

Sangha

When we closed the centre building I was aware of how hard this would be for the West London Buddhist Centre community, especially for those who regularly attended the centre and saw it as their spiritual home. I was concerned about the impact this would have on the sangha and keen to create spaces where people could study, practice and talk with others so that they could still experience a sense of community.

One result of our activities going online is that the West London Buddhist Centre sangha now includes people who live farther afield and who may never visit the centre building. It has become more international. At the same time, some of the West London Buddhist Centre sangha began visiting other online Buddhist centres and groups and, as a result, gained an experience of the wider Triratna and Buddhist community.

Although not everyone was able to or interested in attending online events, those that did were able to make and deepen their connections with others. Many (including people who first attended online) found that the Buddhist teachings and practices on offer helped them to deal better with both the inner and outer challenges they experienced during the year.

Prajnanita and the fundraising kula organised many events with opportunities for people to contribute and to witness others contributions which not only raised money but were very effective in sangha building. I also believe that the series of Going

Deeper courses and online retreats resulted in a greater depth and breadth of Dharma knowledge and strengthened the network of friendships within the sangha.

Order Sangha

At the beginning of the year, both the men and women Order Chapters were meeting weekly in-person at the centre and there was also a combined meeting of both men and women Order Members meeting every two weeks. After lockdown, these meetings all moved online with the combined meeting becoming monthly.

In September, Kamalashila and Yashobodhi, both longstanding and valued members of the West London Buddhist Centre sangha, moved out of London. Yashobodhi generously continued to run our weekly Buddhism in the City class online, with Kamalashila making occasional guest appearances as a teacher at our Dharma Night class. Prior to their move, Yashobodhi and Kamalashila had invited people to join them in weekday morning meditations which was much appreciated by many sangha members.

Dharmavadana contributed a huge amount to the fundraising kula, not least by launching the campaign with a sponsored Sutrathon, an all-night session reciting the entire White Lotus Sutra, an inspiring and heroic achievement.

Programme

Our online programme began with weekly drop-in classes including the Tuesday Sangha Night (later renamed Dharma Night) and Buddhism in the City on Saturday mornings. Paramananda led weekly meditation classes on Thursday evenings and Sunday mornings. Later, Bodhilila offered lunchtime meditation drop-in classes on Wednesdays and Fridays and Sophie led a secular mindfulness drop-in class on Monday lunchtimes. This meant we were able to offer something online every day of the week.

During June, I was unfurloughed and used this as an opportunity to explore offering courses and retreats online and to see whether these could attract new people, give existing sangha members opportunities for more intensive practice and provide an additional income stream. I led our first online Introduction to Meditation and Introduction to Buddhism courses, co-led our first online retreat with Paramananda and led weekly lunchtime classes twice a week.

I was very heartened by how effective the online classes and courses were, providing opportunities for people to learn, to connect and to go deeper in their practice. We had new people joining the courses and drop-in classes who then

continued to attend our activities and later became committed members of our sangha. The meditation retreat proved to be very successful and attracted experienced practitioners from the wider Triratna community, including mitras and Order members.

All of the June activities resulted in increased income, particularly the week-long retreat. This led to developing a programme of online retreats and courses in the second half of the year which has continued in 2021. The Going Deeper courses were particularly successful with many people attending a number of consecutive courses.

In addition, I also ran a meditation summer school and from September, we began offering 7am meditations on weekday mornings with mitras and Order Members leading the sessions and hosting Zoom. Wolf at the Door writing workshops led by Dharmavadana and Vishvantara and Drawing and the Art of Mindfulness workshops led by Amitajyoti also proved popular.

Retreats

While we were not able to run any residential retreats during 2020, we offered a series of week-long meditation retreats led by Paramananda and Bodhilila and weekend Buddhism retreats led by Ratnadeva, Prajnanita and Bodhilila. I was pleased to see how effective these were in allowing people to experience a depth of practice, while also having an experience of coming together for collective practice and supporting each other as a retreat community. The retreats attracted people from outside our local sangha and were also an important income source during the second half of the year.

People of Colour Events

During 2019, after discussions with Suryagupta, Chair of the London Buddhist Centre, the West London Buddhist Centre and London Buddhist Centre became partners in a project offering in-person People of Colour (POC) events to encourage more POC into our respective sanghas and also to support existing POC sangha members to become mitras and Order Members. After March 2020 we moved these POC activities online and, as well as offering some day and weekend retreats, we started a weekly online meditation and Buddhism class on Sunday afternoons.

Outreach

Dharmavadana, with regular support from Sahananda (and occasional support from other West London Buddhist Centre order members and mitras) continued to lead the

weekly outreach class in Ealing, which moved online during lockdown until the end of the year.

Studio

The studio closed when the centre building closed in March, with many teachers who had been running weekly classes at the centre moving their classes online. MayMay, one of our most popular teachers, offered her regular yoga and Qigong classes online and very generously donated a share of her class income to the centre.

Therapy Room

Practitioners continued to hire the therapy room up until the lockdown in March. There was very little room hire for the rest of the year, just a few hours in between lockdown periods when the government Covid guidelines permitted this.

Breathworks Centre of Excellence

We only ran one in-person and one online Mindfulness for Stress course during 2020, with the partnership with Breathworks effectively put on hold.

Concluding Comments

Although this was a very challenging year, the West London Buddhist Centre was able to adapt to constantly changing circumstances, continuing to offer the Buddha's teachings and a context for individual and collective Dharma practice. We welcomed new people and developed an online community as part of our established sangha.

In one of my early messages to the sangha during the first lockdown, I said that the West London Buddhist Centre was not the centre building, it was the people, the spiritual community and the network of friendships at the heart of the community. I believe that in some ways this network has been strengthened during these difficult times and I was moved by the many examples of kindness, generosity and support people showed to each other and towards the centre over the course of the year.

Bodhilila 6 September 2021

West London Buddhist Centre Treasurer's Report 2020

Background

The financial accounts for Triratna Buddhist Community (West London), referred to below as the West London Buddhist Centre or the Centre, are operated from 1st January to 31st December each year. In the year 2020, the Centre did not have an elected Treasurer until October when Prajnanita (Hana Dilley) took on this role on a temporary basis.

In line with global and the UK trends this year, the activities of the Centre (and consequently the financial results) were greatly impacted by the Covid-19 Pandemic. The operating deficit from the start of the financial year was halved from £37,167 to £18,582 and in this way the challenge of finding a sustainable financial model was shifted into the subsequent financial year 2021.

The contributing factors included the following:

- The number of employees was limited to five people and consultancy that was relied on in previous years was discontinued.
- The Centre building was closed to the public from the first lockdown in March 2020 and core activities shifted online.
- Closing the building enabled a cost-cutting strategy to be put in place limiting the costs associated with running the building and maintenance.
- Changes to the programme and shifting to online provision enabled the number of employees' working days to be reduced and thus benefit from the Government Job Retention Scheme introduced in April 2020.
- The Studio (body-based activities including yoga, Feldenkrais and qigong provided by visiting teachers) was on a downward financial trajectory in the first quarter of the year and was closed at the start of the first lockdown in March 2020.
- The Treatment Room was closed at the start of the lockdown and only re-opened in between lockdowns with limited take-up by therapists.
- Focused fundraising became a priority in order to adapt to the online provision and also raise additional funds to cover the running of the Centre and maintain the support for the community it serves.

Operations

Classes, Courses and Events: Classes, courses and events stopped at the start of the lockdown in March 2020 and some were re-introduced online over the period of March, April and May, with the online provision building up from September 2020. The online provision was mostly run on a donation basis with the exception of secular mindfulness courses and Wolf at the Door art event. As a result, the income from classes, courses and events dropped by 80%, from

£84,633 in 2019 to 17,037 in 2020. This was largely mitigated by donation income rising by 78%, from £58,293 in 2019 to £103,698 in 2020.

Retreats: In 2020, the cancellations of in-person retreats and payment of retreat venue from the previous financial year resulted in the loss of £6,885 as opposed to a profit of £4,480 in 2019. However, the reinventing of the programme and offering online retreats on a donation basis has led to boosting of the donation income, and the online retreats have contributed £20,860 to the donation income in 2020, approximately 20%.

Secular Mindfulness: Following a successful growth of the secular mindfulness programme in 2019 and its significant financial contribution to the Centre, this area was negatively impacted by the Covid-19 Pandemic. The shift to online provision meant that there was an increased competition from various secular mindfulness providers for participants, which was no longer driven by geographical considerations. As a result, we were not able to fill online classes and therefore ran only 2 mindfulness courses at the start of 2020 in person and 1 online Mindfulness for Stress course in the Autumn, contributing £4,029 to the Centre.

Bookshop: Following the closure of the building in March 2020, the bookshop was closed and stock stored away. This represents a 55% loss in this area in 2020, from a profit of £875 in 2019 to £394 in 2020. The reopening of the bookshop in 2021 will require an initial investment into the stock.

Arts Events: The annual programme of Art Events and the financial contribution to the Centre stopped with the onset of the Pandemic. Wolf at the Door art events were transferred online and contributed £1,194 to the Centre.

Team Costs: From January 2020, there were 5 people employed by the Centre, 4 full-time and 1 part-time. The adaptation of the programme and running of the Centre during the onset of the Pandemic meant that the members of the team were able to be furloughed and worked at a reduced capacity. This brought about a grant of £39,260 from the Government Job Retention Scheme in 2020, of which £4,589 arrived into the accounts in January 2021.

Reserve Policy Limit

The Reserve Policy Limit was set at £61,514 for the year 2020 and was calculated on the basis of covering the expenses of the centre for three months. In order to keep to this limit, £27,600 were transferred from our designated fund.

Fundraising

Following the onset of the Pandemic, the Chair launched an initial appeal for financial support in April 2020 which brought in a surge of additional donations, mostly one-offs (approximately £19,000). Following on from this, it was seen as important to create a more long-term fundraising strategy and that resulted in forming a Fundraising Kula (Team) made up of two members of the West London Buddhist Centre Team and three volunteers. In October, The Precious Jewel Appeal was launched which included the following fundraising events: Sutathon (£1,351), Friday Night Sangha Fever (£360) and Slow Down Friday (£630). Overall, the fundraising appeal raised £9,216 in the autumn period and provided a context for giving for the remaining 3 months in 2021. A huge thank you to all our donors who stepped forward and gave generously, the members of the Fundraising Kula (especially our volunteers, Dharmavadana, Rebeka and Susanna, as well as Sahananda, the Finance Officer) and all those that were at the forefront of the fundraising events, including Dharmavadana, Arvind, Jo, Peter, Jonathan, Patricia, Vilasamani, Norman and Maitripushpa. An enormous appreciation goes also to Sophie from the WLBC Team, the Publicity Officer, for working behind the scenes and making all these events possible, including all the technical aspects.

Summary

The West London Buddhist Centre was able to weather the inevitable financial crisis of the Covid-19 Pandemic primarily due to a quick adaptation of operations, organising fundraising appeals and the use of the Government Job Retention Scheme. The challenge of creating a sustainable financial model for the Centre remains for 2021 and is exacerbated by the changed socio-economic conditions in the aftermath of the Pandemic and its effects.

Compiled by Prajnanita (Hana Dilley, WLBC Treasurer), September 2021

TRIRATNA BUDDHIST COMMUNITY
(WEST LONDON)

2020 Annual Accounts

Independent examiner's report to the trustees of

TRIRATNA BUDDHIST COMMUNITY (WEST LONDON)

I report on the accounts of Triratna Buddhist Community (West London) for the year ended 31/12/2020

Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner.

The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. You consider that an audit is not required (under section 43(2) of the Charities Act 1993) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to examine the accounts following the procedures laid down in the General Directions given by the Charity Commissioners (under section 43(7)(b) of the 1993 Act), and to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of examiner's statement.

My examination was carried out in accordance with the General Directions given by the Charity Commissioners. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from you as trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently I do not express an audit opinion on the view given by the accounts.

Independent examiner's unqualified statement.

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention which gives me reasonable cause to believe that, in any material respect, the requirements to keep accounting records in accordance with section 41 of the 1993 Act; and to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and to comply with the accounting requirements of the 1993 Act have not been met, or to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.



F.G McMahon (Accountant)
3 Plough Lane, Purley, CR8 3QB
12 March 2021

West London Buddhist Centre
2020 Accounts

Statement of Financial Activities

	<u>2020</u>	<u>2019</u>
<u>Income</u>		
<u>Generated Funds</u>		
Voluntary income	107,284	62,965
Investment income	260	1,405
	<u>107,544</u>	<u>64,370</u>
<u>Charitable Activities</u>	33,716	181,687
<u>Other Income</u>	0	0
 Total Income	 141,260	 246,057
 <u>Expenditure</u>		
<u>Fundraising Costs</u>	0	0
<u>Governance & Administration</u>	7,146	9,813
<u>Charitable Activities</u>	152,696	273,411
 Total Expenditure	 159,842	 283,224
 Net Income	 -18,582	 -37,167

There was no restricted income or expenditure

West London Buddhist Centre
2020 Accounts

Notes to Statement of Financial Activities

	<u>2020</u>	<u>2019</u>
<u>Voluntary income</u>		
Donations	103,689	58,293
Gift Aid tax	3,596	4,673
	<u>107,284</u>	<u>62,965</u>
<u>Investment income</u>		
Bank interest & Dividend	260	1,405
<u>Charitable activities</u>		
Bookshop	880	4,212
Classes, Courses & Events	26,500	109,616
Other income	70	0
Room Hire	6,266	49,241
Retreats	0	18,618
	<u>33,716</u>	<u>181,687</u>
 Total Income	 141,260	 246,057
<u>Charitable activity costs</u>		
<u>Governance & Administration</u>		
Management & Admin	5,335	8,557
Finance charges & Interest	1,811	1,256
	<u>7,146</u>	<u>9,813</u>
<u>General Costs</u>		
Bookshop	486	3,337
Building , Utilities, Centre	21,914	16,567
Classes, Courses, Events	9,463	24,977
Depreciation & Amortization	1,980	4,188
Donations made	8,830	17,077
Financial Support	101,148	130,658
Wages	0	1,198
Other Expenditure	3,639	11,918
Residential Retreat costs	6,126	14,138
Sundry Creditors	-7,775	7,775
Studio	6,885	41,579
	<u>152,696</u>	<u>273,411</u>
 Total Expenditure	 159,842	 283,224
 Net Income	 -18,582	 -37,167

There was no restricted income or expenditure

West London Buddhist Centre
2020 Accounts

Balance Sheet

	<u>2020</u>	<u>2019</u>
<u>Fixed Assets</u>		
Leasehold Property	1,726,409	1,728,133
Art & Ritual Objects	3,780	3,780
Fixtures & Fittings	1,023	1,279
	<hr/>	
Total Fixed Assets	1,731,212	1,733,192
<u>Current Assets</u>		
Bank & Cash	160,214	187,851
Debtors	4,589	
Bookshop Stock	4,118	4,039
	<hr/>	
Total Current Assets	168,921	191,890
Total Assets	1,900,134	1,925,081
<u>Liabilities</u>		
Short Term	1,410	7,775
Long Term		
	<hr/>	
Total Liabilities.	1,410	7,775
Net Worth	1,898,724	1,917,306
<u>Represented by</u>		
Funds Brought Forward	1,917,306	
Surplus/Deficit for year	-18,582	
	<hr/>	
	1,898,724	

West London Buddhist Centre
2020 Accounts

Creditors & Debtors

Creditors

V Schofield	Studio Refund	9.50
Paramananda	Dana	<u>1,400.00</u>
		1,409.50

Debtors

HMRC	JRS for December	4,589.33
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West London Buddhist Centre
2020 Accounts

Tangible Fixed Assets

Leasehold Property

Brought Forward 01/01/20	1,728,133
Additions	0
Amortization	1,724
Carried Forward 31/12/20	1,726,409

Fixtures, Fittings, & Equipment

Brought Forward 01/01/20	1,279
Additions	0
Depreciation	256
Carried Forward 31/12/20	1,023

Art & Ritual

Brought Forward 01/01/20	3,780
Additions	0
These assets are not depreciated	
Carried Forward 31/12/20	3,780

Total Fixed Assets at 31/12/20 1,731,212

Trustees

Abhayadevi (Helen Tissington)	Left 12 September 2020
Bodhilila (Wendy Young)	
Maitripushpa (Carol-Anne Bois)	Joined 12 September 2020
Paramananda (John Wilson)	Left 12 September 2020
Sadurjaya (Marilyn Therza)	
Vilasamani (Timothy Kirkpatrick)	
Prajnanita (Hana Dilley)	
Ratnadeva (Sean Quigley)	
Viramati (David Sampson)	

Trustees Receiving Support For Services Rendered

	<u>2020</u>	<u>2019</u>
Bodhilila (Wendy Young)	21,086	29,088
Prajnanita (Hana Dilley)	16,688	7,563
Ratnadeva (Sean Quigley)	20,671	9,916
	58,445	46,567

Total Staff Costs 123,364 131,856

West London Buddhist Centre

Leasehold Property (45a Porchester Rd, London, W2 5AL)

Depreciated over the duration of the lease (999 years)

31/12/2014	Cost	459,350.66
19/01/2015	Irwin Mitchell LLP	1,000,000.00
25/02/2015	New Centre Costs	171,963.74
16/04/2015	New Centre Costs	5,000.00
15/06/2015	New Centre Costs	85,880.74
		<u>1,722,195.14</u>
31/12/2015	Depreciation	<u>-1,723.92</u>
		<u>1,720,471.22</u>
31/12/2016	Depreciation	<u>-1,723.92</u>
		<u>1,718,747.30</u>
21/01/2017	Cube(final fitout)	14,557.78
31/12/2017	Depreciation	<u>-1,723.92</u>
		<u>1,731,581.16</u>
31/12/2018	Depreciation	<u>-1,723.92</u>
		<u>1,729,857.24</u>
31/12/2019	Depreciation	<u>-1,723.92</u>
		<u>1,728,133.32</u>
31/12/2020	Depreciation	<u>-1,723.92</u>
		<u>1,726,409.40</u>

WLBC Asset Register

	<u>Leasehold</u>	<u>Art & Ritual</u>	<u>FFE</u>	<u>Total</u>
31/12/2019	1,728,133.32	3,780.00	1,279.00	1,733,192.32
2020 Additions	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
	1,728,133.32	3,780.00	1,279.00	1,733,192.32
2020 Depreciation	-1,723.92	0.00	-256.00	-1,979.92
31/12/2020	1,726,409.40	3,780.00	1,023.00	1,731,212.40

Leasehold is amortised over the duration of the lease (999 years)

Art & Ritual is not depreciated

FFE is subject to declining balance depreciation at 20%