

# **BIRMINGHAM BUDDHIST CENTRE**

## **TRUSTEES' ANNUAL REPORT 2023/2024**

### **CONTENTS**

Reference and administrative details  
Structure, governance and management  
Objectives, activities and achievements  
Financial review  
Accounting and reporting by charities  
Financial statements and notes



The Trustees present their report and independently examined financial statements for the year ended 31 May 2024. These have been prepared in the light of the Statement of Recommended Practice - Accounting and Reporting by Charities and the Charities Acts.

## REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

All information given was correct at 31 May 2024.

Charity Name: Birmingham Buddhist Centre

Registered Charity Number: 516568

Address: Birmingham Buddhist Centre, 11 Park Road, Moseley, Birmingham B13 8AB

Trustees of the charity:

Maitrisara (Philippa Bobbett) Chair

Shuddhakirti (Neal Greenwood), Treasurer

Pasannamati (Pasannamati Frances Neal), Secretary

Singhamati (Singhamati Hannah)

Dharmashura (Alan Sabatini)

Prajñabandhu (Clive Simpson)

Dharmashalin (William Sullivan)

Bankers:

The Charity has a current account with:

CAF Bank Limited, 25 Kings Hill Avenue, Kings Hill, West Malling, Kent ME19 4JQ

The charity also has a savings account with:

Skipton Building Society, The Bailey, Skipton, North Yorkshire, BD23 1DN

Hinckley and Rugby Building Society, Upper Bond Street, Hinckley, Leicestershire, LE10 1NZ

Dudley Building Society, 7 Harbour Buildings | The Waterfront | Brierley Hill | DY5 1LN

Saffron Building Society, Saffron House, 1a Market Street, Saffron Walden, Essex CB10 1HX.

Independent Examiner: Satyapara (Annemie Philips), ACCA.

## STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

The charity is run as an unincorporated association and its constitution sets out its aims and objects, as well as the rules governing the way it is run.

A council of trustees is responsible for overseeing the affairs of the charity and setting the direction for its development. The constitution specifies that there should be no fewer than five and not more than ten members of the council. The council meets approximately four to six times per year. The Trustees delegate the day-to-day running of the charity to the members of the Centre team.

Recruitment and appointment of trustees

The trustees are elected each year at the Annual General Meeting by the members of the charity.

Other trustees may be co-opted by the Council during the year.

New trustees are invited through discussion between existing trustees, to ensure that they are in harmony with the aims of the charity. In practice this means that trustees are selected from the pool of ordained Buddhists within Birmingham. Prior to their appointment, the new trustee's eligibility will be checked according to the guidance of the Charity Commission and they will be asked to complete a declaration confirming that they are not disqualified from acting as a charity trustee.

The trustees are aware of the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit.

## Induction and training of trustees

On their appointment, the new trustee is given a copy of the constitution, the latest annual accounts and copies of the policies agreed previously by the trustees. An induction by the Chair of the trustees is also available. The new trustee is also provided with the Charity Commission guidance: The Essential Trustee - What you need to know and what you need to do.

## OBJECTIVES, ACTIVITIES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

### Principal purpose of the charity

The principal object of the charity continues to be the advancement of the Buddhist religion, according to its constitution. This includes encouraging people to live in accordance with the Buddha's teachings, supporting ordained Buddhists (at the council's discretion), and maintaining close links with the Triratna Buddhist Order.

The charity functions as part of a network of independent Buddhist charities, known collectively as the Triratna Buddhist Community, which are run by members of the Triratna Buddhist Order. The charity works to promote Buddhism in the West Midlands by providing a full programme of classes, courses, festivals, ceremonies and retreats. The teachings of the Buddha are offered freely to anyone who is interested. Donations are encouraged at events but not insisted upon, the principle being: 'Give what you can, take what you need.'

Main activities, undertaken to further the purpose and for public benefit, and our achievements  
All our events are run on a donation basis except for residential retreats.

During this year, we completely re-designed our website making all our activities and facilities easier to find and more attractive and inspiring to engage with.

We ran 21 six-week courses open to the public aiming to introduce people to basic Buddhist teachings and meditation. This reached a total of 461 people at introductory level and 93 at post-introductory level. A volunteer offered her research skills to explore the experience of newcomers to the Centre, particularly aiming to find out what would enable those interested to continue their involvement.

We ran 49 drop-in evening sessions with a programme of talks, workshops, ceremonies and discussions about Buddhism and meditation. A new design for these evenings, based on short themed series, doubled the numbers attending these sessions. These were led by local members of the Order and we also benefited from four visiting speakers from outside Birmingham.

We ran two meditation day events for newcomers. We also ran weekly meditation mornings, one weekly in person lunchtime meditation class, one online class per week and monthly weekend men's and women's mornings.

We also ran four residential events, three mixed events in Herefordshire and one in Shropshire for women specifically. One of the events was a week in length, the rest weekends. There were also six day-retreats and one non-residential weekend retreats. Six more events aimed at supporting people's meditation practice.

The Buddhist Centre continues to run groups open to the public for young people and people of colour, both on a monthly basis.

Many other public events took place during the year, including five festival days one of which was family-friendly. A series of open mic nights were held which included poetry, story-telling, writing

and meditation. Over the winter period there was also a soiree/social evening with performances and a Christmas lunch - all events open to all.

An art project involved building a large figure of the Buddhist figure Tara out of thousands of tiny wooden pieces which required hundreds of hours of volunteer time to complete. This is now on display in the Buddhist Centre.

Buddhist Action Month in June 2023 comprised three evenings on the relationship between Buddhism and global social and environmental issues.

We also held a course on Death and Dying over three days throughout the autumn of 2023.

#### Difference made

Feedback at events confirm that the Centre is helping people deal with the stress in their lives, find companionship and support and an ethical framework within which to lead their lives in a more meaningful and positive way. It is a source of inspiration and a pathway to a richer and more satisfying way of living. This is true of people who have quite a short involvement in the Centre as well as those that have been practising for many years.

In the Spring of 2023, we commissioned a member of the community to carry out research with those attending the Introductory Courses. 21 interviews took place and people highlighted the warm welcome and the value of meeting others saying it was "great to meet new and exciting people" and that they felt cared for. They appreciated the meditation teaching and the Buddhist content communicated.

Another more regular and long-standing participant referred to the Birmingham Buddhist Centre as "a place that has brought so much freedom to me"

Many visiting the Centre refer to it as an oasis and visibly breath out with relief when they come through the door.

#### Facilities at the Buddhist Centre

Our building in South Birmingham is a peaceful space with numerous rooms and a well-tended large garden. When we are not using the rooms ourselves, we let them out for a wide range of wellbeing activities including art therapy, sound baths, yoga and counselling.

#### Carers wellbeing

Commissioned by Forward Carers, we provided day breaks and weekly bodywork session in both Tai Chi and yoga and mental-wellbeing group work for unpaid carers (of any faith and none). In 2023, we were able to offer overnight and weekend breaks to carers as a result of our new funding agreement.

#### Providing for needs of Buddhists in Birmingham

Ten people became mitras during the year. This is a step people take when they want to express publicly that they are following the Buddhist teachings and practising the ethical principles of Buddhism within the context of Triratna, the Buddhist tradition to which we belong. Five women's and four men's study groups are provided for mitras to enable them to build on their understanding, deepen their practice and strengthen their friendships and connections.

We have developed more training this year, with seven evenings per year for volunteer class teams on a variety of topics and a training programme to prepare mitras and order members to lead sessions and courses.

We held a memorial event in February 2024 marking the death of one of the founders of the Birmingham Buddhist Centre, Virachitta. The event was accompanied by a booklet and display of photos and written rejoicings in him and all he had given to the Birmingham Buddhist Centre.

There are also three residential communities and six flats that the Buddhist Centre rents to members of the local sangha creating a space for collective practice and Buddhist neighbourly contact.

Several events took place to support the ordination training of the 42 mitras who are training for ordination within our community. Two men and three women asked for ordination during the year.

## Volunteers

The Centre team is supported by dozens of volunteers who help in many wide-ranging ways. 19 people help with leading groups, classes and courses. 21 more support the classes and hold small discussion groups which are very much appreciated. There are also teams for cleaning, gardening, recycling, reception, bookshop, library, website, maintenance and hosting special events. 42 volunteers help in these ways. The Trustees wish to express their thanks to all who participate in this way.

## Supporting other charities

We collected food donations for the local food bank and clothes for the homeless charity in Birmingham SIFA Fireside - where some of the members of our community also volunteer. We also raised money for an appeal by Tiratanaloka, another charity within our spiritual community, based currently in Wales, in their efforts to buy a new property which will help them accommodate more women training for ordination, which is their purpose.

We also donated to the Triratna European Chairs Assembly which organises support and networking with other similar charities.

Finally:

The trustees wish to thank the talented and committed Centre team for all their work over the year.

## FINANCIAL REVIEW

For practical purposes our finances fall into three categories: Buddhist Centre, Residential Properties and Carers Wellbeing Project. Each made an important contribution to the combined presentation of our Annual Accounts which give an overall picture of the charity's financial position - a surplus of £26,849 for the year, which is a little less than the previous year.

It was a reasonably successful year for the Buddhist Centre itself, with income around 3% over budget and expenditure 5% over budget, resulting in a modest surplus. This is remarkable considering the impact of inflation and higher energy bills and largely attributable to an increase in donations from our generous supporters and in income from renting out rooms for which we have no immediate need.

Income and expenditure from residential properties were both around 5% above their budgeted figures, resulting in a modest surplus which we applied to the property refurbishment and loan repayment reserve. There are significant works in the pipeline, but we are confident that the reserve is sufficient to cover them and occupancy levels remain good.

Our long-established Carers Wellbeing Project continued to cover its costs and make a helpful contribution to the charity's overheads.

## ACCOUNTING AND REPORTING BY CHARITIES

### Trustees' Responsibilities

Charity law requires the trustees to prepare financial statements for the year that give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity, the incoming resources for the year and the application of resources for that period. In preparing those financial statements the trustees are required to:

- \* select suitable accounting policies and apply them consistently;
- \* make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- \* state whether applicable accounting standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements.
- \* prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue on that basis.

The trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and enable it to ensure that the financial statements comply with applicable standards and the Charities Acts. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities, as well as exercising proper financial control.

### Risk Management

The trustees have a duty to identify the risks to which the charity is exposed, and to ensure appropriate controls are in place to provide reasonable assurance against the negative consequences of those risks.

The trustees continue to consider risks, their likely impact, an estimation of the likelihood of each risk, measures that have been taken to avoid exposure to the risk, and those responsible for doing this. These risks are reviewed on a regular basis.

Insurances are in place and regularly reviewed to ensure they meet our needs. We keep our policies on Financial Management, Health and Safety, Safer Recruitment and Safeguarding up to date. We have access to the Triratna Safeguarding Officer and we are members of the safeguarding advisory body for faith groups, Thirtyone:Eight. Training is provided in those policy areas plus other relevant areas, such as Mental Health First Aid.

### Policy on Financial Reserves

Most of the charity's fixed assets are in the form of five properties. All of these properties are used by the charity in the furtherance of its aims. While the charity's fixed assets more than cover its long-term liabilities, the trustees recognise that the charity incurs current liabilities in the running of the Buddhist Centre. Therefore the council has agreed that the charity should maintain a cash reserve of at least £60,000 and review this sum annually. So that we may continue to meet this requirement, we will give attention to increasing income and restraining current expenditure. The charity also has some cash reserves invested short-term in savings accounts, most of which has been earmarked for further refurbishments to the Birmingham Buddhist Centre and our residential properties and the repayment of the loan to Triodos Bank.

On behalf of the Trustees: Maitrisara

On behalf of the Trustees: Dharmashura

Approved by the Trustees 4 October 2024

**BIRMINGHAM BUDDHIST CENTRE**

**FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**

**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MAY 2024**

## STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES 2023/24

Unrestricted Funds						
	Notes	General Fund	Designated Funds	Restricted	2023/24 Total	2022/23 Total
		£	£	£	£	£
<b>INCOMING RESOURCES</b>						
Donations and Legacies	2	81,906	0	0	81,906	67,604
Activities to Further Charity Objectives	2	101,626	129,313	31,890	262,829	249,586
Investment Income	2	0	3,571	13	3,583	1,858
<b>TOTAL INCOMING RESOURCES</b>		<b>183,532</b>	<b>132,883</b>	<b>31,903</b>	<b>348,318</b>	<b>319,047</b>
<b>RESOURCES EXPENDED</b>						
<b>Direct Charitable Expenditure</b>						
Buddhist Centre Administration	3	140,916	24,746	22,351	188,013	164,489
Property Running Expenses	3	25,840	33,972	0	59,812	48,010
Financial and Other Costs	3	16,510	57,134	0	73,644	76,540
<b>TOTAL RESOURCES EXPENDED</b>		<b>183,267</b>	<b>115,852</b>	<b>22,351</b>	<b>321,470</b>	<b>289,040</b>
<b>NET INCOME/EXPENDITURE</b>		<b>266</b>	<b>17,031</b>	<b>9,552</b>	<b>26,849</b>	<b>30,008</b>
<b>TRANSFERS</b>						
Transfers to General Fund	4	14,649	-500	-14,149	0	0
Transfers from General Fund	4	-64,045	63,920	125	0	0
<b>NET MOVEMENT IN FUNDS</b>		<b>-49,130</b>	<b>80,451</b>	<b>-4,472</b>	<b>26,849</b>	<b>30,008</b>
Balance brought forward		<b>1,283,123</b>	<b>107,600</b>	<b>9,250</b>	<b>1,399,973</b>	<b>1,369,920</b>
Net Prior Year Adjustment		-7	0	0	-7	45
<b>Balance carried forward</b>		<b>1,233,986</b>	<b>188,051</b>	<b>4,778</b>	<b>1,426,815</b>	<b>1,399,973</b>



## BALANCE SHEET AT 31 MAY 2024

	Notes	31/05/24	31/05/23
		£	£
<b>FIXED ASSETS</b>			
Freehold Property	7	1,702,242	1,738,772
Vehicle	7	0	0
Equipment	7	0	132
		<u>1,702,242</u>	<u>1,738,904</u>
<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>			
Bookshop Stock		6,545	7,320
Accrued Revenue		3,316	5,357
Prepaid Expenses		2,899	5,170
Other Debtors	8	5,598	3,329
Bank Savings Accounts		249,310	138,140
Bank Current Accounts		49,773	148,543
Cash in Hand		146	150
		<u>317,587</u>	<u>308,009</u>
<b>LIABILITIES (falling due within 1 year)</b>			
Loans	9	40,535	48,768
Trade Creditors		5,813	7,652
Tenant and Key Deposits		2,916	2,791
Accrued Expenses		1,611	2,575
Prepaid Revenue		2,666	5,153
		<u>53,541</u>	<u>66,938</u>
<b>LIABILITIES (falling due after 1 year)</b>			
Loans	9	539,473	580,009
		<u>539,473</u>	<u>580,009</u>
<b>NET ASSETS</b>			
		<u>1,426,815</u>	<u>1,399,966</u>
<b>FINANCED BY</b>			
General Fund		1,233,986	1,283,116
Designated Funds	10	188,051	107,600
Restricted Funds	11	4,778	9,250
		<u>1,426,815</u>	<u>1,399,966</u>

Note: Prior year represented with £13.40 increase in Debtors.

## NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

### 1. PRINCIPAL ACCOUNTING POLICIES

- a)** Basis of accounting: The financial statements have been prepared in the light of applicable charity law and accounting standards and the Statement of Recommended Practice: Accounting and Reporting by Charities (SORP).
- b)** Voluntary income is received by way of donations and gifts and is included in full in the Statement of Financial Activities when received. All income is included on a receivable basis.
- c)** All liabilities are recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities at the point at which the charity is deemed to have become contractually liable for payment. The trustees do not consider that the charity had any contingent liabilities at the Balance Sheet date.
- d)** Unrestricted funds are donations and other income received or generated for charitable purposes.
- e)** Restricted funds are used for specific purposes laid down by the donor. Expenditure that meets these criteria is charged to that fund.
- f)** Designated funds are unrestricted funds designated by the trustees for particular purposes.
- g)** All tangible assets (including freehold property) over £1,000 are depreciated at rates calculated to write off the cost of each asset evenly over its estimated useful life. The estimated useful lives are as follows:
- |                                   |          |
|-----------------------------------|----------|
| Computers, Equipment and Fittings | 4 years  |
| Motor Vehicles                    | 4 years  |
| Fixtures and Installations        | 10 years |
| Freehold Property                 | 50 years |
- h)** Management and administration costs of the charity relate to the central costs of the management including the costs of statutory compliance.
- i)** Debtors are measured at their recoverable amounts.
- j)** Creditors and provision for liabilities are measured at their settlement value or best estimate.
- k)** Stocks of books, publications and other bookshop products are valued at the lower of cost and net realisable value.
- l)** The charity has taken advantage of the option in the SORP not to prepare a Cash Flow Statement on the grounds that it is not a large charity.

## 2. ANALYSIS OF INCOMING RESOURCES

	2023/24 £	2022/23 £
<b>Donations and Legacies</b>		
Donations	81,906	67,604
	<u>81,906</u>	<u>67,604</u>
<b>Activities to Further the Charity's Objectives</b>		
Classes and Retreats	34,121	37,937
Bookshop	11,351	10,949
Rental Income (Buddhist Communities)	125,804	118,272
Room Hire	48,018	44,014
Carers Project	31,890	16,754
Miscellaneous Centre Activities	5,652	5,070
Other Income	5,993	16,599
	<u>262,829</u>	<u>249,594</u>
<b>Investment Income</b>		
Interest on Savings Accounts	3,583	1,858
	<u>3,583</u>	<u>1,858</u>
<b>Total Income</b>	<u><b>348,318</b></u>	<u><b>319,055</b></u>

Note: Prior year represented to include minor reallocation among Classes and Retreats, Bookshop, Room Hire and Miscellaneous - net increase in total income £7.90.

### 3. ANALYSIS OF RESOURCES EXPENDED

	2023/24 £	2022/23 £
<b>Buddhist Centre Administration</b>		
Bookshop Purchases	7,347	6,663
Centre Team Costs	112,847	92,303
Office Running Costs	1,779	2,307
Insurance	8,159	8,465
Publicity	1,001	1,101
Centre Activities	27,039	37,791
Carers Project	22,351	9,027
Centre Administration Costs	7,492	6,846
	<u>188,013</u>	<u>164,504</u>
<b>Property Running Expenses</b>		
Council Tax	9,284	8,721
Property Maintenance	29,082	24,339
Major Works and Improvements	1,024	1,000
Utilities	20,422	13,950
	<u>59,812</u>	<u>48,010</u>
<b>Financial and Other Costs</b>		
Mortgage Costs	19,634	21,220
Depreciation of Freehold Property	47,500	47,500
Donations	4,352	6,345
Legal and Professional Costs	0	0
Independent Examination	275	275
Governance: Attendance Expenses	0	0
Fundraising Costs	953	273
Sundry Expenses	930	928
	<u>73,644</u>	<u>76,540</u>
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<u><b>321,470</b></u>	<u><b>289,054</b></u>

Note: Prior year represented to include £14.50 increase in Bookshop Purchases.

#### 4. TRANSFERS

Transfers represent contributions to staff costs and overheads from the Carers Project and the Warwick Group, also a sum transferred to Restricted Funds to account for key deposits received during the year, another set aside to meet our mortgage contract obligations and funds earmarked to help meet the cost of a new electricity supply to one of our properties.

#### 5. INFORMATION REGARDING STAFF

The charity employed 6 full-time-equivalent staff during the year who were in receipt of remuneration based on the National Living Wage to meet their financial needs and support a simple Buddhist lifestyle. No employee was paid more than £60,000. The charity is also assisted by many unpaid volunteer workers.

	£
Aggregate Support	102,329
Aggregate Employer's NI	713
Aggregate Employer's Pension Contributions	4,455

#### 6. TRUSTEES

The trustees do not receive any emolument for their services as trustees, but 3 trustees received support payments for other services provided to the charity (included in note 5). 3 trustees were also reimbursed for receipted goods and services purchased on behalf of the charity.

	£
Support	50,079
Out of Pocket Expenses	13,943

One trustee paid rent at the going rate as a tenant in one of our community houses.

#### 7. TANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS

The valuation of freehold property was last reviewed in June 2010.

Depreciation was charged as follows:	£
Cumulative charge at 31 May 2023	656,436
Charged during the year	47,500
Cumulative charge at 31 May 2024	703,936

<b>Depreciation of other assets:</b>	<b>£</b>
Cumulative charge at 31 May 2023	59,477
Charged during the year	7,709
Cumulative charge at 31 May 2024	67,186

No fixed assets were written down or written off during the year.

The charity's depreciation policy was last reviewed (but not changed) in August 2022.

## **8. DEBTORS**

Debtors represents invoices unpaid at the end of the year. There is a reasonable expectation that all of this sum is recoverable.

## **9. CREDITORS**

Loans represents the capital repayments due on the mortgage for 12 Park Road, 36 Park Hill and 80 Park Hill.

## **10. DESIGNATED FUNDS**

This represents:

- (a) Residue of the Llewellyn legacy which has been allocated, along with other funds raised specifically for the purpose, to the refurbishment of the Buddhist Centre (to be used in the next five years).
- (b) Money set aside for improvements to our residential properties and to help repay the mortgages (to be used when required).
- (c) Money set aside for a new electricity supply in one of our residential properties.
- (d) A reserve created to meet the contractual obligations of our mortgage.
- (e) Funds generated by and for the Warwick Group (to be used as needed).

## **11. RESTRICTED FUNDS**

This represents:

- (a) Funds relating to the Carers Wellbeing Project.
- (b) Deposits held for tenants and keyholders.
- (c) Funds held for the Jewel Quest series of retreats.
- (d) Funds collected to pay for local Buddhists to go on retreat.
- (e) Funds collected to help team member with mobility issues.

# Independent Examiner's Report

Report to the trustees of

BIRMINGHAM BUDDHIST CENTRE

Accounts for year ended

31 May 2024

Charity no

516568

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity for the year ended 31 May 2024.

**Responsibilities and basis of report**

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

I report in respect of my examination of the Charity's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 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**

The charity's gross income exceeded £250,000 and I am qualified to undertake the examination by being a member of the Association of Certified Chartered Accountants.

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

- the accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act; or
- the accounts did not accord with the accounting records; or
- the accounts did 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.

Signed:

Annemie Philips

Date:

19/09/2024

Name:

Annemie Philips (Satyapara)

**Relevant professional qualification(s) or body:**

Association of Certified Chartered Accountants.

Address:

9 Linden Road, Hampton, TW12 2JG