



Sheffield Buddhist Centre

November 2020 to

November 2021

Annual Report
of the
Sheffield Triratna Buddhist
Community

Introduction

Sheffield Buddhist Centre is run by the Sheffield Triratna Buddhist Community. Our main activities include **teaching the Dharma**, (ie the teachings of the Buddha) to people at all levels and supporting around 300 Buddhists to deepen their practice and to benefit the world at large. In order to do that we seek to **build a thriving, supportive Sangha** (ie spiritual community) based on friendship, shared spiritual values and clear Buddhist principles.

We aim to **benefit the world** through these activities. People from all over Sheffield (and beyond) are welcome to attend our events for newcomers and to move on to become committed members of our Sangha. Through supporting people in their practise of Buddhist ethics, meditation and wisdom we aim to encourage them to live in a way that benefits the world at large.

This annual report is about the Sangha that meets and practises at Sheffield Buddhist Centre and what it has been doing in the last year. The period of November 2020 to November 2021 was in many ways dominated by the restrictions that responding to Covid placed on activities at the Centre. However, even with these challenges it has been a positive year for the Sangha which has continued to meet online and in person and has responded creatively to the challenges of the Covid restrictions.

Throughout the pandemic our approach has been to enable the Sangha to meet in person safety where possible, often outside in the gardens and also in our large and well ventilated Great Hall, whilst still supporting members of the Sangha who are unable to attend in person to be involved on zoom-only and hybrid events.

Contents

- 1) Building Sangha
- 2) Practising and Celebrating Together
- 3) The Dana Economy
- 4) Leadership and Vision at the Centre
- 5) Adminstrative Information

1) Building Sangha

A Shared Enterprise

One of our basic principles, taught from newcomers' courses onwards, is that people need the support of a spiritual community (sangha) if they are to make consistent progress on the Buddhist path. Building Sangha is therefore the Centre's primary aim and everyone who comes to the Centre is invited to get involved.

Sheffield Buddhist Centre is the joint project of the Sheffield Sangha and Sangha members take responsibility for it to the extent that they are willing and able. For some that simply means regular attendance at classes; for some it means helping with Centre activities from teaching to cleaning. In this year volunteering in person has been restricted at times but there have still been many opportunities to contribute to the Centre including:

- Regular Sangha Works Days, working outside in the garden and grounds, and also inside decorating and maintaining the building
- Getting back together - the Great Hall decorating project for the re-opening of the Centre
- Gardening teams on Mondays and Fridays
- Building Maintenance team on Thursday mornings
- Teams running and supporting newcomers courses
- Sangha night team
- Shrine team

Living Together

There are currently 16 people living together in 3 Buddhist residential communities. Such communities give important, stable contexts for groups of people to strengthen friendship and to deepen their Buddhist practice. They offer opportunities to live a more full-time Buddhist life. People in these communities eat together, meditate together and meet regularly to share their lives and reflect on Buddhist teachings.

- The men's community above the Centre has 6 men living there. Three community members have been away on retreat in the autumn of 2021 and the opportunity has been taken to invite men to stay for a week to get a taste of community life.
- The Vajramandala women's plus community has 6 residents
- A community of 4 men live together in a rented flat.

Working Together

Dana Café

Dana Café is based about ten minutes' walk from the Centre in Crookes. The café celebrated 4 years of trading in May 2021.

The Centre was closed for some time during the lockdown, but overall it managed to trade for much of the time, sometimes just providing take away drinks and coffees. It is doing very well overall and is usually busy, with a warm and inviting atmosphere. Many Sangha members are involved in working at the café, volunteering or just coming for a coffee or a meal.

In October 2021 Amalassiddhi took over the direction of the cafe and Dayavajra who has been instrumental in setting up the cafe and keeping it afloat and thriving has stepped back.

The Café is a separate business from Sheffield Buddhist Centre but there are many links with the Centre. Dana was able to donate funds so that the Centre could buy a marquee for the garden.

Still Learning

Still Learning offers schools and colleges visits to the Buddhist Centre and runs sessions in schools. In 20-21 Still Learning was not able to operate, but there are plans to re-open when it is possible

Working in teams is a key activity at the Centre as it encourages the Sangha to get to know each other well and to practice going beyond the self. Getting together in teams has been challenging at times, but we have encouraged people to get together to work outside in the gardens or to meet outside, For many Sangha members this offered companionship during lockdowns. and an opportunity to feel part of a community contributing towards something bigger.

- 4 people work together on the **Centre Team** which has overall responsibility for Dharma teaching and Sangha building in the Centre.
- 8 people have worked together on the **Hridaya Team** which looks after the day to day administration and upkeep of the Centre.
- About 12 people have worked together on our **Sangha Night Team** to ensure the smooth running of our weekly Tuesday evening Sangha Night. Teams of people also support the running of our weekly Wednesday evening **Newcomers Class**.
- The **Young Buddhists (YUBS)** work together to organise Dharma events at the Centre for those under 30. This is part of our core principle of presenting the Dharma in a way that is attractive to younger people

The **Shrine team** have built very beautiful shrines in the Great Hall for Sangha night and for festivals.

- Many people have worked together weekly in the **Gardening Team** to keep our wonderful garden thriving. The cutting garden continues to be a success and has led to shrines in the Buddhist Centre having a supply of home grown fresh flowers throughout the year.
- A **Cleaning team** is being developed which meets together weekly and is responsible for cleaning the Buddhist Centre
- About 10 people have worked together on the **Maintenance Team** to ensure the building is kept in good repair. They ran several Sangha Works Days throughout the year when Sangha Members came and worked together in a spirit of friendship for a day to keep the building and the garden well maintained. These are days when people get a taste of what it is like to work in a team of Buddhists.

- A team of people have also worked together in the **Families Kula** which runs events throughout the year for people of all ages, including events at the Centre and in the Peak District
- For a while a group met regularly as part of the **Landscaping team** to work together on projects around the Centre. This was helpful to the Centre but also provided companionship for people who were on furlough or working from home.

Communications at the Centre

As we could not be together in person in the same way, the Centre set up a couple of new forms of communication for the Sangha:

- A Slack Channel which has over 300 members and has successfully enabled the Sangha to communicate directly with each other without going through the office
- A weekly essentials email with news of activities and events at the Centre

Significant Sangha Numbers

- **7** Private Preceptors and 1 Public Preceptor in Sheffield
- **51** Order Members involved in the Centre
- **16** people live in residential Buddhist communities
- **4** people were ordained into the Order: Kshantichara, Mahaprasara, Paranita and Dayaloka
- **1** (so far!) has been invited for 2022
- **71** people are training for ordination and are supported through pre-ordination study groups and practice sessions as well as “kulas” to advise and support individuals. We continue to provide opportunities for more experienced mitras to take responsibility and to have some experience of teaching the Dharma in supported contexts (eg our **winter mornings** series)
- **168 people are** active mitras (this figure includes those who are training for Ordination)

2) Practising and Celebrating Together

There have been regular opportunities for the Sangha to come together including Sangha Nights, Sangha retreats, festivals, mitra nights, study and meditation events. These continued online in lockdowns and also in the garden.

1) Spreading the Dharma

- Spreading the Dharma is also a volunteer activity, and one in which every Sheffield Order Member engages to some extent, through teaching, leading events or study groups and through spiritual friendship.
- Although there were restrictions in place during this time which meant we could not meet in person at times or we needed to socially distances we have still run a full programme of activities of ongoing classes and events.
- Teams of experienced Order members and mitras ran **5 Introduction to Buddhism and Meditation' courses** during this period, responding to the changing Covid regulations of the time. We ran one large and successful course completely on zoom, with a large team of presenters and support team and then, in response to the need for social distancing and therefore smaller numbers of people in the Great Hall the Centre ran a series of courses with smaller numbers of people attending in person, often running more than one course at a time, We ran the following courses in this time.
 - 10th Feb 2021 - Wednesday evening - Zoom - 12 Weeks - 100 people started
 - 28th April - Wednesday evening - In Person - 10 Weeks - 30 people started
 - 7th June - Monday Evening - 12 Weeks - In Person - 33 started
 - 29th September - Wednesday evening - In Person - ongoing 12 Weeks - 35 People started
 - 25th October - Monday Evening - In Person - ongoing 8 Weeks - 35 People started

Those who join the Sangha from introductory courses attend our popular **Sangha night** on a Tuesday evening. In November 2020, Sangha night was on zoom with around 80 people attending. As regulations allowed we invited the Sangha to come in person from March 30th 2021, at first in restricted numbers due to the need for social distancing. We started a shared meal before Sangha night outside when that was possible. In November 2021 Sangha night is hybrid with usually around The Sangha Night themes this year have been

- November 2020, [Encounters with Enlightenment](#)
- January 21, [Stories of the Path](#)
- May 21, [Building the Buddhaland](#)
- July 21 [The Great Way](#)
- October 21 [Attitudes of Enlightenment](#)

Numbers attending are usually between 30-50 in the Great Hall with 30-40 on zoom

Meditation

We have offered a range of ways for the Sangha to meditate together

- **Morning sessions, lead by the men's community** which was first on zoom , then hybrid and then in person
- **Sundays** in person in the Great Hall from November to January when private prayer was allowed under the regulations for places of worship.
- **Friday evenings** on zoom
- **Thursday lunchtime meditation** on zoom for many months
- **Meditation Challenge** In January 2021 the Centre took part in a 9 day Meditation Challenge, led by London Buddhist Centre. 100 people from Sheffield signed up

Retreats

We encourage Sangha members to deepen and intensify their practice by attending residential retreats at retreat centres. We also ran retreats ourselves including:

- **Online mitra retreat 15-17 January** led by Jayagupta, Maitridasa and team
- **Online Sangha retreat** "Keys for the Rowdy prisoners" with options to use the garden and meet for walks
- **In person camping/sleeping at home retreat** at the Centre in summer 2021 "The liberation that is called the beautiful"

3. The Dana Economy

Our dana (generosity) economy means that all our Buddhist activities are free of charge – from newcomers courses to Sangha retreats. It means that anyone can learn the Dharma and be part of the Sangha, regardless of their financial resources, and that has been pivotal in enabling younger people and those without incomes to get involved. Many people take part in the life of the Centre without paying anything while others give generously. Those supported to work at the Centre and in right livelihood businesses take only living expenses rather than salaries as an act of generosity, to help the Centre's resources go further.

Managing the consequences of Covid.

During this time the Centre has not run any yoga or Tai-chi classes and so has not received any income from these activities. Thanks to the generosity of Sangha members, Standing orders have remained steady at about. With income from the men's community and dana given for courses, this has allowed the Centre not to need to go into the reserves For the financial year of 2020-21 there is a surplus of £7,200 due to careful management of finances and the generosity of the Sangha.

Currently 160 people give standing orders totalling £58,750

Our Buddhist Centre runs on “dana” or generosity

All Dharma events are offered free of charge in a spirit of generosity.
This is only possible because Sangha members give money and time.

Giving money away

As part of the flow of generosity, the Centre practises giving away 5% of its annual income to other charitable causes and this year gave money to the **European Chair's Assembly** Development Fund, to the India Dhamma Trust and to support new Centres.

The Sangha also raised funds specifically for the Karuna Trust as the situation in India was so challenging

We we are unable to run the Summer Fair at which we normally raise money for charities. However we did organise skill share sessions on zoom, held a plant sale, a book sale and the families group made afternoon teas, raising about £1,800 in total.

We also run a retreat bursary fund which enables Sangha members who couldn't otherwise afford it to go on residential retreats.

Giving ourselves

The Dana Economy is not just about giving money. Sangha members of all levels of experience give their time, energy, skills and friendship in many ways. This ranges from cleaning, gardening and decorating to running the Centre library and bookshop to supporting classes to running events to serving on the Centre's council

4) Leadership and Vision in the Centre

The Buddhist Centre Council consists of 12 trustees who meet monthly to discuss business relating to the financial, legal and spiritual vitality of the Centre. They are listed below. In addition, Ian Hewson is co-opted by the council to act as Treasurer and this period Prajnasri, Aryadasa and Pradaya were observers at the Council meetings.

The Centre Team is delegated to co-ordinate Dharma teaching and Sangha building. The team this year has consisted of Satyajyoti, Bodhinaga , Aryadasa and Maitrivasin. All the team receive living expenses which is funded by the standing orders of Sangha Members. From September 2021 the team has been supported by Paranita who is co-ordinating a newcomer's course and assisting with Sangha night and receives some financial support to allow her to do this.

The Hridaya Team takes care of the day to day admin and premises work. It is a context where mitras training for ordination can work alongside Order Members. In 2020-21 , Aryadasa, Maitrivasin and Edward were supported financially for the whole year. Maitridasa, Helen, Emma and Vicki received support for some of the year.. At various times other Sangha members gave valuable voluntary support including Kshantichara, Cesca, Gavin, Rick and Sarah Blagdon.

The Mitra Convenors are responsible for the spiritual welfare of mitras. Bodhinaga is the mitra convenor for men supported by a kula of Order members. Sanghagita became the women's mitra convenor and is also supported by a kula of Order members, In the autumn of 2021 Dharmamayi began supporting the mitra convenors by meeting with people who are gender diverse.

The Chair of Sheffield Buddhist Centre in 2020-21 was Satyajyoti. Bodhinaga is the Deputy Chair.

The President of the Centre is Padmavajra. He usually visits the Centre twice a year but was unable come in the spring of 2021 because of Covid restrictions. He kept in touch with the Centre and gave talks on zoom, led study for the Centre team and was available on the phone for Sangha members, which was all very valuable support during this time. In October 21 he was able to come in person to the Centre. His visit was much appreciated and he met with many Sangha members, led study, gave a talk at Sangha night and led the India Day festival.

5) Administrative Information

Registered Charity Name: Sheffield Triratna Buddhist Community
 Also known as: Sheffield Buddhist Centre
 Registered Charity Number: 1024087
 Address: Sheffield Buddhist Centre, Howard Road, Walkley, Sheffield S6 3RT

Structure, governance and management

We are an independent registered charity voluntarily linked to the network of Triratna Buddhist Community (formerly Friends of the Western Buddhist Order) charities. We are governed by a standard Triratna Buddhist Community constitution. Our membership consists of all ordained Members of the Triratna Buddhist Order who are active in helping run the Sheffield Buddhist Centre. They elect a Council of up to 12 trustees to run the charity on their behalf.

Safeguarding

Aryasakhi was the Centre's safeguarding officer until April 2021. Since then Satyajyoti and Bodhinaga have been acting safeguarding officers, supported by a kula of trustees.

Trustees:

Order Name:	Legal Name:
Amoghavamsa	William Burdett
Aryasakhi	Susan Hill
Bodhinaga	Allan Kirkman
Dayaloka	Peter Wells
Khemasuri	Frances Hooker
Prajnasri	Prajansri Tracy Dibble
Punyamala	Alison Wray
Satyajyoti	Nicola Edmonds (Chair)
Sanghagita	Terry Sanghagita Gallagher (Secretary)
Santasiddhi	Isobel Derricourt Resigning from November 2021
Suryamati	Dorothy McGahan
Vadanya	Christopher Pauling
	Ian Hewson (co-opted Treasurer)

Risk Management

The trustees regularly review the risks to which the charity is exposed. Where appropriate, systems or procedures have been established to mitigate these risks. We keep 4 months of annual income as a reserve in case of emergency. We have implemented procedures for ensuring financial security. We have a health and safety policy and a nominated health and safety officer.

Agreed at the Annual General Meeting held on November 17 2021

Signed _____
Dharmacharini Satyajyoti (Nicola Edmonds)

Charity number 1024087

Sheffield Triratna Buddhist Community

Statement of accounts for the Year ended 5th April 2021

Contents

Statement of receipts and payments

Balance sheet

Notes to the Accounts

Accountant's Report

Sheffield Triratna Buddhist Community

Receipts and payments account for the year ended 5th April 2021

	Notes	12 months to 05.04.21 £	12 months to 05.04.20 £
Receipts			
Standing orders		58,750	58,470
1			
Donations		13,347	19,268
Gift Aid tax recovered		15,398	16,989
Yoga & tai-chi income		363	19,495
Men's community rents		24,480	20,255
Women's community rents		20,685	21,084
Other earned income		1,250	6,904
Sangha fundraising		1,693	8,783
		135,965	171,561
Payments			
Yoga and tai-chi costs		-	12,822
Costs re. other earned income		370	2,504
Sangha fundraising expenses		-	1,891
Premises costs		21,131	23,870
Men's community expenses		133	5,238
Women's community expenses (including interest)		7,853	11,415
Centre team support		68,483	69,860
Retreats, courses, events & projects		8,583	24,979
Charitable giving		9,295	13,207
		115,848	166,927
Surplus arising on ordinary activities		20,117	4,634
		=====	=====
		==	===

Being

Designated women's community fund	12,832	9,669
2		
Undesignated fund	7,285	(5,035)
	<u>20,117</u>	<u>4,634</u>
	=====	=====
	==	==

Sheffield Triratna Buddhist Community

Balance sheet at 5th April 2021

	2020	2019
	£	£
Fixed assets		
Property at cost	624,693	624,693
	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
Stocks	5,000	5,000
Bank and Building Society deposits	106,408	137,163
	<u>111,408</u>	<u>142,163</u>
Current liabilities		
Other creditors	11,000	11,000
	<u>100,408</u>	<u>131,163</u>
Net current assets		
	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
Long term liabilities		
Property loans	315,813	366,685
	<u>409,288</u>	<u>389,171</u>
Net assets	=====	=====
	==	==
Reconciliation of net assets		
Net assets brought forward at start of year	389,171	384,537
Surplus for the year	20,117	4,634
Net assets at end of year	<u>409,288</u>	<u>389,171</u>

=====

=====

Being -

Women's community designated fund	73,239	60,407
Undesignated fund	336,049	328,764
	<u>409,288</u>	<u>389,171</u>
	=====	=====
	=====	=====

Signed on behalf of the Trustees

Date

17th November 2021

Notes to the accounts

1. Standing Orders income is ring-fenced to support the Team who run the Centre and its activities. With the associated Gift Aid, the standing orders income is currently sufficient for this purpose. We monitor this regularly and communicate with the Sangha about our financial situation at least once per year.
2. The Women's Community House income and expenses are ring-fenced as a separate designated fund, with all profits from the community (rental income less expenses) being set aside for this purpose. When this is taken into account (ie. both income and expenses of the Women's Community House are removed from the receipts and payments for the year) the Charity made a profit of £7,285.

Accountant's Report

In accordance with instructions given to me by the Trustees I have prepared, without carrying out an audit, the annexed financial statements. I confirm that these are consistent with the underlying accounting records, and with the information and explanations supplied to me.

Andrew Howson

17th November 2021

Chartered Accountant

Accountant's Report

In accordance with instructions given to me by the Trustees I have prepared, without carrying out an audit, the annexed financial statements.

I confirm that these are consistent with the underlying accounting records, and with the information and explanations supplied to me.

Andrew Howson

17th November 2021

Chartered Accountant