

SHEFFIELD BUDDHIST CENTRE ANNUAL REPORT

December 2023 to
November 2024

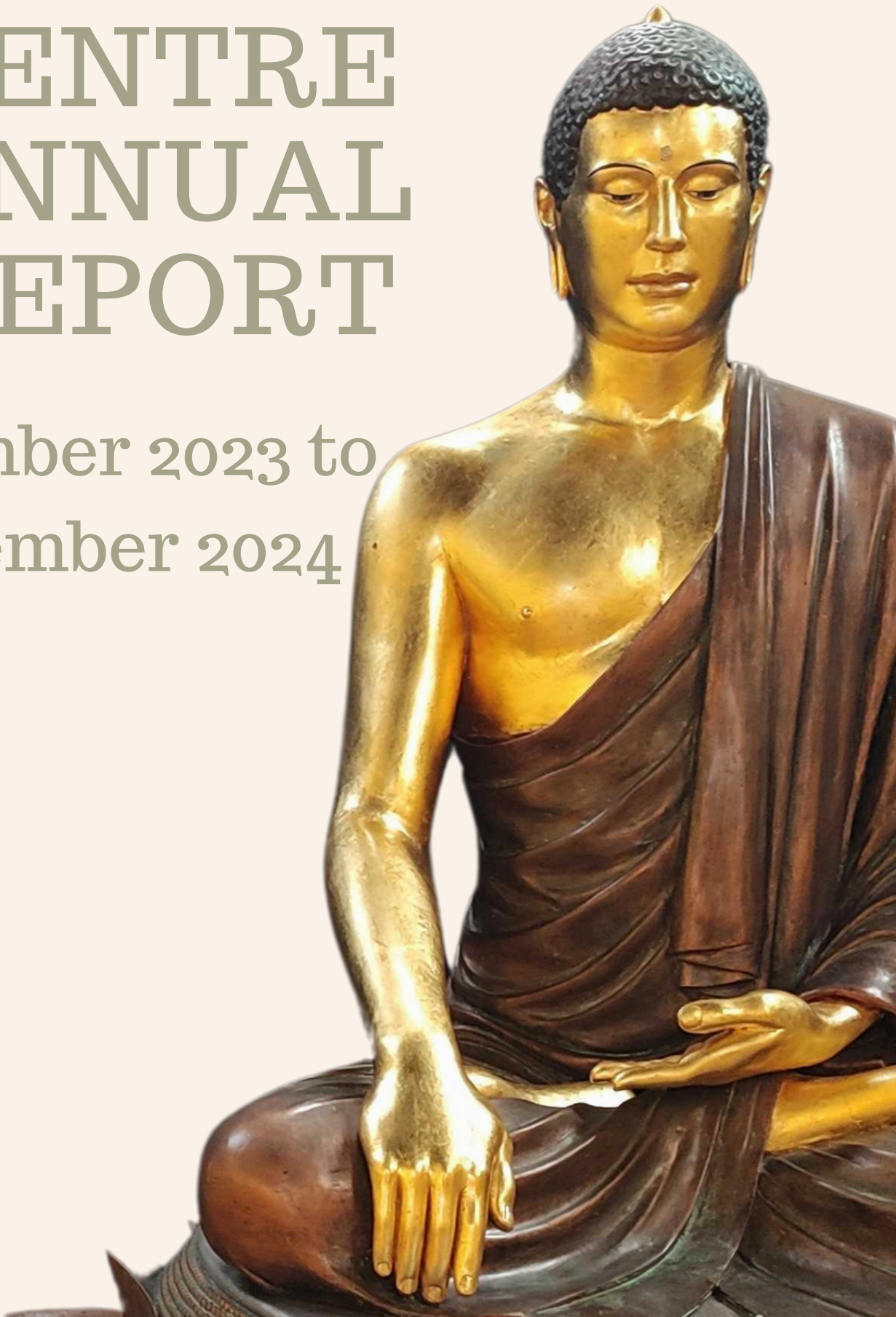


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Cherish the Doctrine



Live United



Radiate Love

1. Introduction



Sheffield Buddhist Centre is run by the Sheffield Triratna Buddhist Community. Our main activities include **teaching the Dharma** (i.e. the teachings of the Buddha) to people at all levels and supporting around **350** 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** (i.e. 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 becoming committed members of our Sangha. Through supporting people in their practice of Buddhist ethics, meditation and wisdom, we aim to encourage them to live in a way that benefits the world at large.

2. Building Sangha

A Shared Enterprise

One of our basic principles, taught from the 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 means regular attendance at classes; for others it means helping with Centre activities, from teaching to cleaning.



Gardening team members 2023

There are many opportunities to contribute to the running of the Centre, including:

Gardening teams - Mondays & Fridays

Caretaking/cleaning team - Tuesday mornings

Sangha night team - Tuesday nights

Maintenance team - Thursday mornings

Newcomers' course teams

Shrine-building team

Regular Sangha Works days - working outside in the garden and grounds, and inside decorating and maintaining the building



Maintenance team members 2023

Living Together

In 2023/24 there were **12** people living together in two Buddhist residential communities connected with the Centre. Such communities provide **important, stable contexts for people to strengthen their friendships and deepen their Buddhist practice** together. 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 **Vimalakula men's community** above the Centre had 6 residents in 2023/24 Alex, Aryadasa, Paul, Prajnahridaya, Vidya and Viryananda. The community also had a number of men staying with them for short periods of time.
- The **Vajramandala women's+ community** lives together in a house in Walkley, and in 2023-24 had six residents: Dharmajivana, Satyajyoti, Vicki, Kately, Anna and Saffron. Vicki moved out during the year and Nicolle moved in. Katie and Caroline stayed for about a month each to get a taste of community living.



Working together

Centre teams

Working in teams is a key activity at the Centre, as it encourages the Sangha to get to know each other well and to practise going beyond the self. During 2023/24

- **7** people worked on the **Centre Team**, which has overall responsibility for Dharma teaching and Sangha
- **8** people worked on the **Hridaya Team** which looks after the day to day administration and upkeep of the Centre.
- Approx **20** people worked on the **Sangha Night Team** to ensure the smooth running of our weekly Tuesday evening Sangha Nights.
- Teams of people also support the running of our weekly evening **Newcomers' Courses**. Places on these courses continue to be very much in demand. A team also ran newcomers courses at Sheffield University.
- The **Young Buddhists (YUBS)** team organise Dharma events at the Centre for those under 35. This is part of our core principle of presenting the Dharma in a way that is attractive to younger people
- The **Shrine team** build very beautiful shrines in the Great Hall for Sangha night and for festivals



YUBs facilitator team 2023

Working together, continued ...

- Many people work weekly in the **Gardening Team** to keep our wonderful garden thriving. The garden is an amazing resource: it adds beauty to our environment, gives us an outdoor space in which to meet, and ensures that our Centre shrines have a homegrown supply of fresh flowers throughout the year. Thanks to Suryamati's creative vision and a hard-working and dedicated team, the garden is flourishing and growing more beautiful year on year.
- A **Caretaking team** meets together weekly on a Tuesday morning, and is responsible for cleaning the Buddhist Centre
- About **10** people worked together on the **Maintenance Team** under the leadership of Dayasingha 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 group is working together on projects such as better insulating for the Centre and exploring the most effective way to heat the Centre.
- A Sheffield team of **Tiratanaloka [Un]limited Champions** are raising money as part of the wider fundraising campaign for a bigger women's ordination retreat centre

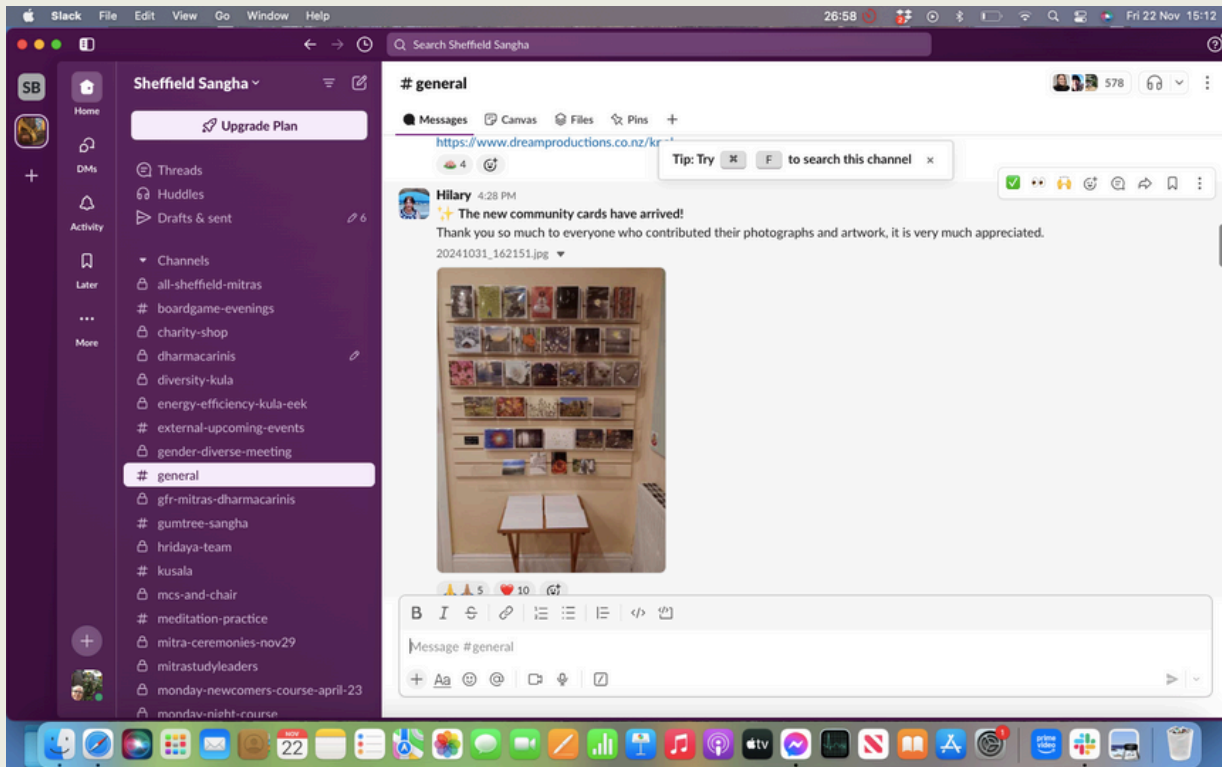


Prostrating up Mam Tor to raise funds for
Tiratanaloka Unlimited
Dayasingha and team

Communication within the Sangha

Communication and connection within the Sangha is aided by the following online resources:

- A **YouTube channel**, with uploads of Sangha Night and other event talks. The channel also enables a weekly online discussion group for those who are unable to be at Sangha Night in person
- A **Slack Channel**, which has over 570 members and has successfully enabled the Sangha to communicate directly with each other without going through the office or using social media
- A **'Weekly Essentials' email**, containing news of activities and events at the Centre
- an **Instagram** account



Vadanya streamed on the Youtube channel

Significant Sangha numbers

In 2023-24 there were:

7 Private Preceptors and **1** Public Preceptor in Sheffield

63 Order Members involved in the Centre

13 people living in residential Buddhist communities associated with the Centre

6 people who were ordained into the Order

2 people who had been invited for ordination in 2025

80 people training for Ordination, and being 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 gain some experience of teaching the Dharma in supported contexts (e.g. our Winter Mornings series)

210 active mitras (including those training for Ordination), who were undertaking or had completed the Triratna Dharma Training Course in study groups facilitated by Order Members (supported in some cases by experienced GFR mitras).

18 people who became mitras

7 people who asked for Ordination

18 mitra study groups meeting at the Centre throughout the week, including one group for gender-diverse people



3. Practising & Celebrating Together

Through the year there are many opportunities for the Sangha to come together. There are regular events such as Sangha Night, celebrations of the major Buddhist festivals, newcomers' course nights, mitra study nights and both meditation and Sangha retreats. There are also special study, meditation and social events, and a number of other regular groups based around particular themes or interests. Here we give examples of some of the many activities that have happened in the sangha over the course of a year!

Spreading the Dharma

Spreading the Dharma is a voluntary activity, and one in which every Sheffield Order Member engages to some extent, through teaching, leading events or study groups and through spiritual friendship with individuals.

Newcomers' courses

Teams of experienced Order Members and mitras ran **3** 'Introduction to Buddhism and Meditation' courses during this period.



Sangha Night

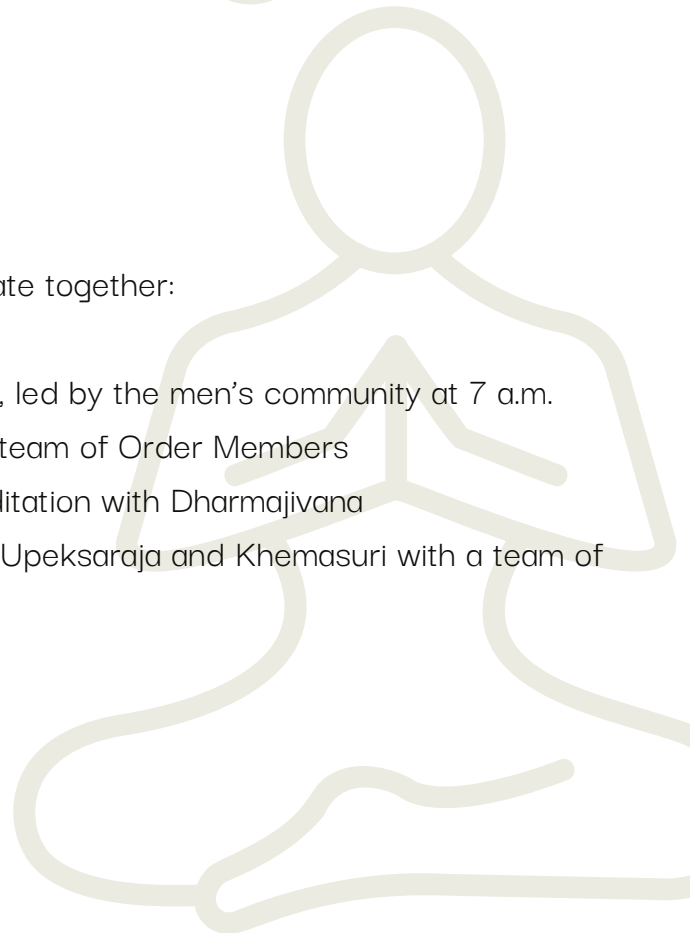
Those who join the Sangha from introductory courses attend our popular **Sangha nights** on Tuesday evenings. In October 2024 around 60-80 people were attending Sangha nights in person, and around 20 were attending online.



Meditation

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

- **Mon-Fri morning meditation** in the Red Shrine Room, led by the men's community at 7 a.m.
- **Friday evenings on Zoom**, 7.30 - 9.30 p.m., led by a team of Order Members
- **Monthly Sunday mornings** of walking and sitting meditation with Dharmajivana
- **Adventures in Meditation**, a six-week course run by Upeksaraja and Khemasuri with a team of Order Members



Retreats

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

- **Sangha Retreat** December 2023 at Duke's Barn [Peak District residential centre]
- **Mitra Retreat** January 2024 at Adhithana: The System of Practice
- **Northern GFR Women's** retreat March 2024 at Dukes Barn
- **Sangha Retreat** April 2024 at Lockerbrook:
- **Sangha Retreat** August 2024 at Adhithana:
- **Men's Retreat** November 2024 at Padmaloka
- **Chapter and mitra groups retreats and sollaries** November 2024 in Moksadara's barn



Festivals

The **Sangha Day festival** happened in November 2023 featuring a wonderfully funny and entertaining pantomime. The Sangha hustings vote to decide how to give away the money raised at the Garden Party,

Parinirvana Day in February was a day to celebrate the final passing of the Buddha into Nirvana and to remember loved ones who had died during the past year.

Ambedkar Day Festival in April offered an Indian feast and a chance to hear from some of our Indian Sangha.

The biggest festival of the year, **Buddha Day** in May, offered a morning families session, a Buddhānusati (recollection of the Buddha) meditation, opportunities to create ritual offerings and a beautiful puja.

Dharma Day in July included activities for families, study sessions and 'Dharma Gems' talks, as well as the main ritual.

And finally, **Padmasambhava Day** was a very powerful ritual.



Vidya and Shanker speaking at the Ambedkar Festival

Rituals and ceremonies

Mitra ceremonies

Throughout the year we held many rituals to mark Sangha night themes, seasons and special occasions:

We had a **mitra ceremony** in October 2024 where 17 people committed themselves to the Dharma. May all blessings be yours!!



Six new Order members

We welcomed 6 new Order members back from their Ordination Retreats

:

Danadhi, Sanghajiva, Tarajaya, Manjusuri, Nagavajri, Amalaghosha.
Sadhu!



L-R: Danadhi, Sanghajiva, Tarajaya, Manjusuri, Nagavajri, Amalaghosha

Other Sangha activities

One-off events through the year

Sangha members and visiting guests have organised an enormous variety of **one-off events** this year.

Including: the regular **Winter Mornings** series We also held the annual **Winter Solstice** and **New Year's Eve** rituals. **Earth Metta Day Retreats** and events, including a midsummer **Yatra** took place during the year.

The **Wolf at the Door** writing weekend and **Poetry evening** with Ananda and friends took place in September.

Plus many many other events, study sessions and day retreats.



Regular events and groups

As well as the one-off events, we have other regular opportunities throughout the year for study, retreat, ritual and creativity, either open to all or organised for particular groups. These include:

Men's mornings: opportunities for meditation, talks, puja and discussion

Women's Order/mitra mornings:

Women's Order/GFR mitra day retreats

The **People of Colour** team have run meditation and check-in events for those from an ethnic minority/global majority background,

The **Neurodiverse group** has met and has a channel on Slack.

YUBS [Young Under 35 Buddhists] events: the team have organised monthly evenings of meditation, Dharma discussion and ritual with other young Buddhists, and an annual retreat, offering opportunities to explore what it means to practise as young people living in the world today.



Regular events and groups

Arts Events

We have expanded the number of opportunities to engage with the arts this year, thanks to a number of committed creative beings! There is now a regular Sangha **Arts Expo** event (which ran this year in November, April, October) where members of the Sangha can share their creations and hear about others'. And there are regular changing exhibitions on the **Art Wall** in the bookshop,

Earth Metta Sangha

The Earth Metta Sangha team has run regular Puja in the Peaks events: opportunities for outdoor meditation, poetry and ritual organised by Lilamati, Liz Annable and Liz Zijlstra. This year they celebrated the Spring Equinox, Midsummer the Autumn Equinox.

Sangha choir

The Sangha choir, led by Sanghagita, has added much beauty and joy to our festivals and celebrations.



L-R: Sangha choir with Sanghagita,

Garden Party

In July we held the annual Summer Garden Party which was a huge success. The hard work of many Sangha members who ran stalls selling plants, books, food, refreshments and a Bazaar raised valuable funds for good causes. The charities which will benefit from this will be decided by votes at the Sangha Day festival in November.



The arts stall and games stall at the 2024 Summer Garden Party

Foodbank

Throughout the year, the Sangha has brought in contributions of food and other essential items towards the Sheffield S6 foodbank. These efforts have been coordinated with great dedication by Aryasakhi.



4. The dana economy

Our Buddhist Centre runs on a 'dana' or generosity basis.

All Dharma events are offered free of charge in a spirit of generosity.

This is only possible because Sangha members give money and time.

Our dana 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 with low or no incomes to get involved. Many people take part in the life of the Centre without paying anything, while others give generously, including giving regularly through monthly standing orders. Those who are 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.

Thanks to the huge generosity of Sangha members, standing orders this year have been around £5500 per month. With income from the men's community, the bookshop and dana given for courses, this has allowed the Centre not to need to use our reserves. We would like to thank Vimaladasa, Ian Hewson and the Finance kula for all their help this year.

This year **191** people
gave standing orders totalling
£72,750

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 Tiratanaloka Unlimited (towards a much-needed larger Retreat Centre for women's ordination training) and the European Chairs' Assembly Development Fund.

The money raised by the hard work of many at the Summer Garden Party the previous year was given away to charities including the Future Dharma Fund, India Dhamma Trust, the Abhayaratna Trust and Tiratanaloka Unltd.

We also run a retreat bursary fund (from income and special gifts) 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, as can be seen throughout this booklet. This includes cleaning, gardening and decorating, running the Centre library and bookshop, supporting classes, running events and social activities and serving on the Centre's Council



5. Leadership & vision

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. In 2023/24 they were: Aryasakhi, Bodhinaga, Dayaloka, Khemasuri, PrajnaHridaya, PrajnaSri, Punyamala, Satyajyoti (Chair), Sanghagita, Suryamati, Vadanya and Vimaladasa (Observer). In addition, Ian Hewson is co-opted by the Council to act as Treasurer.

The Centre Team is delegated to coordinate Dharma teaching and Sangha building. The team for most of this year has consisted of Bodhinaga, Paranita, PrajnaHridaya, Satyajyoti and Sanghagita. and Vimaladasa. All the team receive living expenses which are funded by the standing orders of Sangha Members or are able to support themselves financially.

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 23-24, team members include PrajnaHridaya, Moksatra, Paddy, Phoebe, Tee, Ellie, Emma Foley, Joy.

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 is the women's mitra convenor and is also supported by a kula of Order members. Dharmamayi supports the mitra convenors by meeting with people who are gender diverse.

Safeguarding: PrajnaHridaya is the safeguarding officer and Satyajyoti is the acting safeguarding trustee.

The Chair of Sheffield Buddhist Centre in 2023 -24 was Satyajyoti. Bodhinaga is the Deputy Chair.

The **President** of the Centre is Padmavajra.

Charity number 1024087

Sheffield Triratna Buddhist Community

Statement of Accounts for the year ended 5th April 2024

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Sheffield Triratna Buddhist Community
Receipts and payments account
for the year ended 5 April 2024

	Notes	12 months to 5 April 2024 £	12 months to 5 April 2023 £
Receipts			
Standing orders	1	72,772	65,947
Donations	3	50,529	64,139
Gift Aid tax	1	22,118	17,775
Mens' community rents		26,425	25,495
Womens' community rents	2	20,610	20,738
Other earned income (book shop etc.)		5,412	4,827
Sangha fundraising		7,074	7,569
Bank interest		1,483	276
		<u>206,423</u>	<u>206,766</u>
Payments			
Costs re. other earned income		3,056	3,844
Sangha fundraising expenses (mainly summer fair)		1,822	1,234
Premises costs		34,992	32,850
Mens' community expenses		1,464	1,032
Womens' community expenses	2	836	2,649
Centre team support	1	88,875	74,055
Retreats, course, events & projects		37,650	18,308
Charitable giving		12,315	10,851
Interest on Womens' Community Property loans	2	13,976	10,886
Interest on Sangha Property loan		-	180
		<u>194,986</u>	<u>155,889</u>
Surplus arising on ordinary activities		<u>11,437</u>	<u>50,877</u>
Being			
Designated womens' community fund	2	5,798	7,203
Undesignated fund		5,639	43,674
		<u>11,437</u>	<u>50,877</u>

Sheffield Triratna Buddhist Community
Balance sheet at 5 April 2024

	Notes	12 months to 5 April 2024 £	12 months to 5 April 2023 £
Fixed assets			
Property at cost		<u>624,693</u>	<u>624,693</u>
Current assets			
Stocks		5,000	5,000
Bank		120,495	124,698
Gift Aid Income accrued		22,118	17,775
		<u>147,613</u>	<u>147,473</u>
Current liabilities			
Other creditors		11,000	11,000
Net current assets		<u>136,613</u>	<u>136,473</u>
Long term liabilities			
Property loans		270,248	281,545
Net assets		<u>491,058</u>	<u>479,621</u>
Reconciliation of net assets			
Net assets at start of year		479,621	428,744
Surplus for the year		11,437	50,877
Net assets at end of year		<u>491,058</u>	<u>479,621</u>
Being			
Womens' community designated fund	2	99,385	93,587
Undesignated fund		391,673	386,034
		<u>491,058</u>	<u>479,621</u>

Notes to the accounts

- 1 Standing Orders income is ring-fenced to support the Team who run the Centre and its activities. Together with the associated Gift Aid, this is currently sufficient for this purpose. Trustees monitor this regularly and communicate with the Sangha about our financial position at least once per year.
- 2 The Womens' Community House income and expenses are ring-fenced as a separate designated fund, with all the profits from the community (rental income less direct costs and interest on loans) being set aside for this purpose. When this is taken into account (ie. both income and expenses of the Womens' Community House are removed from the receipts and payments for the year) the Charity made a surplus of £5,639, which amount includes two specific donations - see note 3 below.
- 3 Donations include a gift from the Dana cafe (£10,391) together with £5,000 from a member of the Sangha which is ring-fenced to be spent on the project relating to improving insulation at the Centre.

Independent examiner's report to the Trustees of the Sheffield Triratna Buddhist Community

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the Sheffield Triratna Buddhist Community Trust ("the Trust") for the year ended 5 April 2024.

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 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 Trust as required by Section 130 of the Act; or
2. the accounts do not accord with those records.

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

Ian Hewson

Chartered Accountant

23-Nov-24

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Ian Hewson

Chartered Accountant

23-Nov-24