

MBC Trustees Meeting: 22nd June 2022

Attendees

Present: – Silabodhi (SB – Chris Effendowicz, - Chair, Suryaka (SK – Helen Ellis), Aparajita – (AJ - Ajay Gilbert), Aryaraksita (AK – Sundeep Grewal), Vishangka (VS – Keith Green), Lilasuri (LS – Claire Morris), Mary Tait (MT)

Apologies: Vidyapala, (VP – Paul Whitehead), Prasadu (PS), Dharmakarunya (DK – Ursula Tidd),

1. Welcome

SB welcomed all to the meeting

2. Apologies

VP, PS, AK, DK, DK.

3. Check In

All present checked in.

4. Spiritual Welfare of MBC Sangha and Centre Team

To be reported next meeting

5. Approval of the Minutes of 16th March 2022

- a. The minutes were approved as a true copy
- b. Matters Arising

Ongoing Actions

Gender Diversity

See agenda item.

Rent increases

Silabodhi has approached the businesses with a view to a rent increase to cover the rising cost of fuel:

- OneTek will not accept a rent increase on the basis that the building is very wasteful of energy but is willing to explore all possibilities for grants to help remedy this, for example, window replacements.

A question was raised as to whether this would happen fast enough to act as a buffer for rising energy costs given that energy costs are one third larger than previously. It was explained that the Centre has £7,000 credit with the energy provider so any improvements will reduce the rate of reduction of the credit, rather than incurring a debt, so it is unlikely we will exceed the budget this year – the impact will be felt in the years ahead.

- The basement business is not yet up and running.
- Bodywise business has not returned to its former levels
- Breathworks have agreed to consider the proposal

Silabodhi to speak to Lee (OneTek) and Steve Hodgson Ridgeway about the detail of Lee's proposals.

Action: Silabodhi

The Centre Team will review the role of the Centre shop.

Action: Centre Team

6. AGM

It was proposed that the AGM should be held on Saturday 16th July 2022. AK, LS, confirmed they were able to attend. Other Trustees availability to be established. The question was raised as to whether the AGM should be seen not just as a legal requirement but as an opportunity to have a dialogue with Order Members, who are all invited. This could be an opportunity to share the Centre's vision with them or seek their views and opinions on how things are going. Possibly even eat cake.

7. Search for a President

The Presidents kula needs to approve approaches to order members who have not already been president.

Arthapriya has confirmed that Kalyacitta would be a good choice and it was agreed to approach her.

Action: Silabodhi

8. Trustees Roles and Discussions

AK has agreed to take on the role of Secretary with help from Mary Tait and will be proposed for appointment at the next AGM.

A discussion has taken place between AK, SB and VS about the role of the Trustees and how they operate. AK will write up the notes of the meeting for those present.

A date to be arranged with all Trustees for a half day meeting in September to discuss how to take this forward.

Action: Silabodhi

9. Sangharakshita Picture on the Shrine

Questions have been raised and issues have arisen in several forums as to whether Sangharakshita's picture should continue to be on the shrine.

The points made were:

- Other centres do not have a picture on the shrine because of the issues it raises. They have pictures in the centre, but not on the shrine.
- The issues are often raised by newcomers to Buddhism, who may not have the same dharmic perspective as more experienced practitioners. Once they have 'caught the dharma' they may see things in a different light.

Suggestions were:

- Have pictures in the Centre, or the shrine room, but not on the shrine, except, on specific occasions.
- Have some of Sangharakshita's dharma texts on the shrine
- Add a picture of Sangharakshita's funeral to those of his life on the first-floor corridor display, with some additional text
- Have a refuge tree in the shrine room which would include Sangharakshita, for reverence or respect.

A request was made that the text be circulated before it was put up with the picture.

Action: Centre Team

This might be something to be discussed with Order Members at the AGM to appraise them of what we are trying to achieve – that we are trying to balance the two perspectives of those who revere him and those who find parts of his life difficult.

10. Where Sangha is up to Post Buddha Day and Sangha Retreat

- Fresh new energy is very tangible. There is a good mix of older and younger people.
- The Sangha provides something that cannot be found online

- There is a shift to decentralisation from the top and the impetus to make clear what we do and why we do it.

Next steps:

- Share Trustees thoughts around the new energy – possible discussion point for AGM
- Team has ideas on how to build on this for the next retreat.
- There have been exciting successes in welcoming young people to the movement, but we must also keep the focus on other areas where we lack diversity such as colour and gender which need space for discussion.

Trustees to find space for a discussion on this.

Action: Silabodhi

11. Team Direction and Changes

A discussion took place on how the Centre Team roles should be configured in order to ensure:

- The roles focus on best use of the financial resources available to us to make Buddhism available in Greater Manchester.
- the best use of the skills and enthusiasm of the people who might be interested in working with members of the team
- we have the skills needed for the future should members of the team wish to move on

12. Latest Gender Diversity Update

- There are active discussions continuing and gender diverse people want to form a group.
- Shraddhasiddhi is to do an event later in the year for Order Members and Trustees
- A retreat led by Shraddhasiddhi at the MBC will be on next year's programme.

Something to consider in the future is whether we could do some bridge building between nonbinary people, people of colour and the Sangha.

13. Date of Next Meeting

Wednesday 10th August 2022 at 7.00p.m.in the Library, MBC.