

# MBC Trustees Meeting: 25<sup>th</sup> October 2023

**Present:**, Aparajita (AJ - Ajay Gilbert), Vishangka (VS – Keith Green), Upekshapriya (UP - Jeff Cole), Suryaka (SK – Helen Ellis), Lilasuri (LS - Claire Morris) Treasurer, Silabodhi (SB (Chris Effendowicz), Chair, Aryarakshita (AK – Sundeep Grewal, Abhayanara (1.00p.m. on zoom), Mary Tait.

**Apologies:** None

## 1. Budget

Bhuddhasamagama presented the proposed budget for 2024, showing a surplus of £7,121.

- Classes are strong, standing orders are steady and going up slightly. People are being asked to take out a standing order when starting study groups.
- All community properties are now mortgage free and the deeds have been received. The budget has been based on a 'normal' year without reference to the decision of staying or going.
- Classes are strong.
- Standing orders are steady and going up slightly.
- The distribution of energy costs in the Centre has been explored and the Gosinga community is the biggest contributor. The results indicate that there might be a possibility to reduce energy costs by around £2,000.

A request was made to compare the energy bills of all the communities in terms of amount per head.

**Action: Buddhasamagama**

A question was asked as to what the costs of school visits were, budgeted at £3,370.

Answer: the plan is to make school visits into a proper paid job in the future.

The figure of £2,400 was thought to be low for maintenance of the communities. It was explained that this represents an average of past spending on maintenance by the communities and does not include capital costs.

A question was asked as to whether it would be worth adding some small capital additions into this budget item.

Answer: there has been an assessment of current needs, and this is a realistic figure.

Potential needs will be assessed and discussed. Some of those needs will be covered by community maintenance. Some of the Gosinga rent is retained by the tenants for small repairs to be done at their own discretion. There needs to be clarity as to what the money retained is used for. Paranayaka is doing a full assessment.

A question was asked as to why there was a marked difference between the previous year's budget and the year-end accounts.

A review to be done to identify what has changes in occurred to produce this difference before it is communicated to the Sangha

**Action: Buddhasamagama**

The meeting expressed its thanks to Buddhasamagama for all his hard work and the clarity of the presentation of the information.

A request was made for more detail on the separate aspects of the income from the bookshop e.g., new, books, second hand books etc.

**Action: Buddhasamagama**

Title 'move costs' to be changed to 'project costs'.

**Action: Buddhasamagama**

A request was made for the breakdown of income from dana into

Standing orders

One off payments.

Gift aid

How many people have Standing Orders

**Action: Buddhasamagama**

Karunatarata was thanked for all the work she is doing in promoting donations and standing orders. It was agreed that the Trustees would like to thank her with a gift and a card. Silabodhi to give some thought to an appropriate gift.

**Action: Silabodhi**

Back up documents to be sent to Trustees – added as tabs to the budget.

**Action: Buddhasamagama**

Some clarity was requested as to the position on the payment of rates with reference to the charitable status if there is no longer a café in the basement.

**Action: Buddhasamagama**

### **Sanghadara Proposal**

Sanghadara has proposed having an events space in the basement. He may be providing some food, probably snacks, but it would no longer a café as such. The proposal is to start in January 2024.

#### **Pros**

- It is an exciting and different proposal which could potentially continue if we leave the building.
- It is a creative vision.
- It involves the Sangha and could be used for Sangha building events.
- It fits well with the principle of right livelihood which we would generally support.
- We could provide help with the business model to set it up.

#### **Cons**

- The earliest he could start would be January and there is a significant amount of money which would need to be raised for investment.
- Maybe not the right timing – we are already managing large amounts of change.
- Doubtful if it could be set up by January. A lot needs to be worked out.
- Centre couldn't guarantee more than a year if the decision is to move.
- Other right livelihood businesses are not finding things easy at the moment

Possible that Sanghadara could be involved in other Sangha building events.

Need to meet with Sanghadara to discuss Trustees' feedback

**Action: Lilasuri/Aryarakshita**

### **Presentation: Abhayanara**

Abhayanara had been requested to review the MBC building from a professional standpoint and has visited Manchester to do so.

He presented his first thoughts:

#### **Pros**

- Location in relation to public transport and its position on the edge of the Northern Quarter.
- The history and the mythical place it has in the history of the movement.

#### **Cons**

- Repair the roof circa £100,000.
- Difficulties and cost of installing disabled access.
- Shape of the building i.e. tall and thin:
  - Increases access difficulties
  - Decreases options for interaction
- No outdoor space
- Dark building – little natural light
- Expensive to increase energy efficiency and may change ambience of the building:
  - Insulation on inside walls would cover brick
  - Double glazing on windows

- For user comfort it would need increased ventilation and ideally underfloor heating

All this would mean spending a lot of money to make it how we want.

A new building could provide space and light, energy efficiency and access. It could be smaller and cheaper and give the option of having more than one presence around Manchester.

### **Practical Consideration**

Where would we go during the conversion period?

Estimated 4-6 months for refurbishment.

9-12 months if we wanted to build up.

We have to decide what we value most.

### **Project Update**

- Conversations have taken place with Viryanaga around raising money.
- Details of requirements for disabled access have been reviewed.
- Land Aid have offered to look at how best we can use our assets.

### **Process for Decision**

- Project team to give presentation to Trustees on progress to date.
- Trustees brief Sangha.
- Who wants to be involved?
- Now to December, final information gathered, and Trustees agree.
- Trustees brief Sangha on final decision.

### **Key Points**

- Time is being taken to gather professional input and review the information gathered.
- The trustees are pleased with the progress being made.
- It has taken longer than expected.
- The date for the decision is now expected to be Spring of 2024.

### **Silabodhi Resignation**

Silabodhi announced that he will be stepping down as Chair in May 2024. He made it clear that this was not to do with his role of chair of the Buddhist Centre but because of other major events in his life. He will remain on the project team for the implementation of whatever decision is made about the Centre and continue to make a full contribution at the Centre in leading study, teaching, and supporting other events.

The Trustees supported his decision with empathy and understanding.

It was agreed that Dayanandi be approached regarding advice on the process of electing a new Chair.

**Action: Upekshapriya/Lilasuri**

### **Date of Next Meeting**

Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> November 2023 10.00a.m. – 1.00p.m. in the Library. Manchester Buddhist Centre or on zoom