



# Harnham Buddhist Monastery Trust

*Trustees Report 2020*

**The Trustees of Harnham Buddhist Monastery** take this opportunity to offer our best wishes to the extended community of friends and supporters and to report on the activities of the monastery and the Trust during 2020.

Obviously, 2020 was a turbulent year for everyone and we had to close our doors to the lay community in order to maintain appropriate social distancing practices. However, fortunately the monastery has been able to continue to exist and function as a place of full-time training for monastic residents due to the generosity shown by the lay community. In offering the material support necessary for its survival, they ensure that there will continue to be a place for those who wish to commit themselves to the training laid down by the Buddha. While there have been severe restrictions on options for others to come and participate in the usual ways – be it to offer requisites at the daily meal offering, practise meditation, listen to a Dhamma talk or stay as a guest – the live streaming of evening pujas, Dhamma talks and regular email updates from Luang Por Munindo have offered important forms of contact between the sangha and the lay community during these strange and uncertain times. We are sincerely indebted to the lay supporters for their ongoing support and to the sangha for their continued inspiring presence, commitment and willingness to share their experience of the Buddha's path with us.

This report provides information about the organization of the monastery and its resident community together with details of the activities undertaken during the last twelve months. A summary of our financial situation is also included.

## The Trust

Harnham Buddhist Monastery Trust (HBMT) is a Registered Charity (no.1126476) and a Company Limited by Guarantee (no.6688355) and is the governing body responsible for the stewardship of Harnham Buddhist Monastery. The governing documents for HBMT are the Memorandum and Articles of Association.

The primary objective of the Trust is to promote the teachings of the Buddha:

'by providing, maintaining and supporting, in accordance with the Theravada Vinaya, residential establishments for a Monastic Sangha of persons who have undertaken the rules of training (*Sikkhapada*) and to support lay people in the practice of the teachings of the Buddha.'

The Trustees (who are also directors of HBMT Ltd.) in 2020, were: Philippa Padbury, Myint Su, Mike Pearce, John Bower, Kath Jones, and Paul Hansen (Chair) and Penny Wakefield-Pearce who is also the Trust Secretary and Treasurer. Anthony Morgan took over as Office Administrator at the beginning of 2020.

The day to day affairs of the Monastery are overseen by the 'Management Group' (comprising members of the monastic community and the Office Administrator) with reference to the Trustees. Representatives from the Thai and Sri Lankan communities have offered to act as a link between the sangha and their communities and other lay supporters have volunteered to be contacted for tasks such as helping with cooking, events and retreats.

## The Resident Community

As can be expected, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the monastic community was very stable in 2020, although there were a few changes at the beginning of the year: two of our previous *anagarikas*, Jonathan and Michael, finished their year as white-clothed postulants and returned to

lay life. After that, Samanera Adicco returned in the middle of March, a few weeks earlier than originally planned from his spending the winter retreat at Amaravati, so as to avoid being stuck by then-looming travel restrictions.

Samanera Sucinno, then at Cittaviveka Buddhist Monastery in West Sussex, did remain there and only returned to Harnham in June. On his journey, he was accompanied by a new community member, Tan Tikkhanyano, a junior *bhikkhu* of Singaporean nationality sent from Wat Nanachat on a year-long visa, renewable for another year if so desired. Thus, our connection with Thailand remains strong, as Tan Tikkhanyano counts as the third *bhikkhu* sent from Wat Nanachat over the last 5 years.

The community list at the end of 2020 was :

- Luang Por Munindo
- Ajahn Punnyo (away)
- Tan Tikkhanyano
- Tan Mahesako
- Tan Samvaro
- Tan Adicco
- Tan Sucinno
- Samanera Jotisaro
- Anagarika Gabriel

## Sangha visitors, events & activities

Due to the various restrictions imposed by the UK government in response to COVID-19, we did not hold any of the usual big events at the monastery (Songkran, Vesak, Kathina) and we did not receive any sangha visitors. Likewise, all of our retreats that would have normally been held at Kusala House were cancelled, as well as Dr. Adrian Bint's Beginner's Meditation Classes.

Luang Por Munindo carried on with his regular offering of Dhamma talks, as well as with the regular Dhammapada reflections sent to subscribers around the world, comprising of his brief contemplation on a chosen Dhammapada verse. We trust that people continue to find this offering very useful in helping to apply Dhamma to their daily lives wherever they may be.

The news blog was also sent out regularly to update the wider community on the activities of the monastery, so as to try to help our supporters feel in touch with the monastery at times when they were not able to visit.

In fact, we did make good use of contemporary online technologies as we introduced our 6-day-a-week live-streamed evening *pujas*. These online video streams have been received well by many of our supporters for whom meditating in person with their local groups - or with us in the Dhamma Hall - was impossible. With the live-stream, they were able to join virtually our meditation and chanting sessions from their home.

Additionally, two funeral ceremonies were live-streamed privately.

## Visitors during the pandemic

### Long-term guests

Although closed to the general public, the monastery offered an option for applicants interested in monastic training, in stays of 6 months or more. This program was generally comprised of online video-interviews, and if accepted followed by an initial month-long trial. Upon arrival, applicants underwent a 14-days confinement period (later on, in accordance with government guidance, reduced to 10 days) during which the resident community arranged for the

two daily meals to be brought to them in the annex of our guest-house, then transformed into a quarantine area. Special health & safety measures were taken to safely interact with them, and as far as we know, Harnham Hill remained COVID-free throughout 2020.

Thanks to our establishing this long-term stay program, several men were able to experience monastic life for a longer period of time - and test their aspiration for monastic training - and the sangha was grateful for the help with the daily running and maintenance of the monastery.

### Day visitors

One of the things that some of our local supporters missed was the ability to visit the monastery for the mid-day meal and bring offerings to the sangha. To this effect, when possible, we opened the vestibule to our Dhamma Hall and made it available from 7am to 7pm for lay visitors to bring offerings and collect some of our Forest Sangha calendars or free distribution Dhamma books.

We were not able to meet with these day visitors indoors, as it was against the government's restrictions - and we were not able to open the Dhamma Hall's vestibule in this way all year long, as some periods were "full lockdowns" - but we were grateful for the support and happy to offer to some of our local friends the ability to practice *dana* by bringing offerings to the monastery.

We also developed an online booking system of "sponsored *danas*" to offer our lay community the possibility of sponsoring a meal prepared by our resident cooks.

## Ordinations and precept ceremonies

The resident community had the good fortune this year of having two of its junior members, Samaneras Adicco and Sucinno, become *bhikkhus* by taking *upasampada* at Amaravati Buddhist Monastery on the 2nd of September, with Ajahn Amaro as their preceptor. Thanks to the Amaravati community's generosity and willingness to put in the extra effort required to accommodate visitors during the pandemic, the two new junior monks are now referred to as Tan Adicco and Tan Sucinno.

The sangha also welcomed Gabriel, a 22 year-old man from South London, as one of its new *anagarikas*, who took eight precepts with Luang Por Munindo on 22 of November. Anagarika Gabriel also took over as Kitchen Manager from Anagarika Daniel, the latter becoming Samanera Jotisaro after taking *pabbajja* on the 25th of December, also with Luang Por Munindo as his preceptor.

## Building Projects

There was no main building project this year, although a lot of work went into planning and drawing, particularly for a proposed new building at Mangala House ( an exercise room with shower and toilets, which can be potentially reconverted into a *kuti* later on) as well as, among other things, a jetty at our lake property. The project of renovating the Dhamma Hall accommodations' bathroom was postponed until April 2021.

Otherwise, the community did carry out a few smaller projects which were nonetheless a big improvement to the monastery's various properties. For instance, a water butt was installed next to each meditation hut at the lake, which number three in total. One of these meditation huts, the "Lakeside Kuti", had some of its rotting wooden beams renovated. Finally, our kitchen benefited from an upgrade as a new extractor fan and ducting-pipe system was installed.

Finally, the lake property at Harnham continues to flourish and develop every year. In order to maintain it as both a place for contemplation and a haven for wildlife, we held a lake work day on most months, although this year they were closed to the general public, members of which would, in previous years, sometimes join in for the day. The work of strimming back grass,

keeping clear the in and outflows to the lake, weeding, mowing and reviving trees damaged by inclement weather continued, come rain or shine.

## Finances

### Income

In 2020 the total income was approximately £81,476 (£206,746 in 2019). Of this £56,209 was donated to General Funds, £19,721 to Restricted Funds (i.e. specified by the donor for a particular purpose). There was an income of £1,309 from Interest and Investments.

### Expenses

In 2020 total expenses were approximately £84,718 (£124,012 in 2019), £71,067 from General Funds and £13,651 from Restricted Funds.

Here is a breakdown of the basic costs spent in maintaining the monastery: (excluding expenses such as travel, publication production, and exceptional expenses covered by Restricted Funds):

	Annual Cost (£)	Monthly Cost (£)
Utilities and firewood	21,374	1,781
Household expenses	9,081	757
Motoring expenses	6,647	554
Rent, rates and insurance	11,141	928
Repairs and maintenance	0	0
Phones and Internet	2,398	200
Welfare (medicines, dentist, etc.)	62.25	5
Office Administration (inc salary, etc.)	9,873	823
Governance costs (accountant)	3,775	315
Events (retreats, festivals, etc.)	1,160	97

The Monastery also receives many donations of food and small household items throughout the year. A number of tasks, that might otherwise represent expenses to the Trust, are undertaken by volunteers, such as gardening, maintenance, driving and IT assistance.

## Standing Orders

At present, regular donations by standing orders cover about 25% of the running costs each month. It is very helpful in managing the monastery's finances to know that regular costs will be covered to at least this extent. To set up a standing order donation, forms are available on the website [www.ratanagiri.org.uk](http://www.ratanagiri.org.uk) and at the monastery.

## Reserves

As the level of donations can be variable the Trust holds funds in reserve to ensure that immediate liabilities can be met in case of a sudden drop in donations.

The Trust currently holds the following Reserve Funds:

1. Short Term Reserve: £25,000 (approximately 3 months running costs).
2. Long Term Reserve: at the end of 2019 held £226,660 (*for improvements to monastery buildings and property purchase - for example the Trusts hopes to purchase the freehold of part of the monastery which is currently leased, should it become available.*)
3. Replacement Fund: £20,000 for emergency repairs and replacements.
4. Ageing Samanas Fund: of approximately £99,342 which is invested to provide for any increased costs involved with looking after elderly (or disabled) sangha members. It is hoped that this will enable us to provide a level of care such that aged and infirm sangha may continue to live within the monastery for the duration of their life.
5. An Endowment Fund: £3,900 invested to generate income as a safeguard for the long term future of the monastery.

## Banking

The Trust holds the funds spread over several types of bank accounts with different providers. These are two current accounts, an account to receive standing orders, two deposit accounts and a unit trust. As far as possible the Trustees have chosen banks that are ethically principled.

Should you require any further information about HMBT's finances please contact the Trust Secretary, email: [secretary@ratanagiri.org.uk](mailto:secretary@ratanagiri.org.uk)

## Policies

The Trust has adopted policies for: Risk Management, Investments, Vulnerable Beneficiaries (including Child Protection), Conflicts of Interest, Volunteer Management, Complaints Handling and Health and Safety.

*Harnham Buddhist Monastery Trust (HMBT) is the governing body responsible for the stewardship of Harnham Buddhist Monastery.*



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