

Young Buddhist Events and initiatives: Report from Singhamati

- Report back on research
- Evidence showing that YB events are increasingly first point of contact and young adults are going on to make deeper commitment – becoming mitra's and asking for Ordination.
- Local events take off when people attend retreats and get enthused. So encourage to come on big retreats
- Young Facilitators gathering every spring – important that all Mitras facilitating YB events come to these and would be great if centres could help with funding if required and strongly encourage them to attend
- Leaflets and posters available for display at centres communicating purpose and nature of YB projects and initiatives
- From meeting of steering group:
 - Developing healthy young order – make sure they are well supported and plugged in and getting the training that they need (event with MB)
 - Outreach – develop University groups and street med projects
 - Creating intensity – going deeper
 - Community (two new have formed)
 - TBRL
 - Projects at Adhithana
 - Involvement in Buddhafiled
- Driving down the age limit
- List of under 25's
- Hope to run an event or retreat for under 25s

At heart of project: encouraging young people to take initiative and responsibility, but demanding commitment and that they are committed and provide mentorship and support

General discussion then took place.

Abhyaratna Trust: Shantiprabha

- Where there is a health or social or hardship need Abhyaratna can become involved and possibly help
- Charity with trustees (of long experience and representing all strands of Triratna, and experience in voluntary sector) + President
- In future will be looking for a treasurer
- Employs Taradakini (part-time secretary) + Shantiprabha as part-time development worker: brief 1. Increase profile 2. Increase donations 3. Increase applications
- Have about £75K funds to grant about £12K per annum. Anticipate needed £250K in 5 years time to meet application
- Income through standing order donations, legacies and personalised appeals
- Fund: heating bills, disability equipment, medical bills, retreats, conventions
- Anticipating sharp increase over next 5 years
- Running £50K campaign later in 2014

- Consider applications on 'points' / 'weighting system' and where hardship is becoming a barrier to practice: 'taking poverty out of practice'.
- Aspect of being a community where we regard ourselves as a 'family' and where we take care of each other. The value of communality.
- Most European countries are facing massive government debt and increasing burden of aging population. It is going to put more pressure on our order and broader Sangha.

Windhorse:Evolution update: Keturaja

- W:E are struggling to survive and there is a real possibility they will have to close in spring 2015
- The last 5 years have been very difficult with the recession but until last year they broke even
- Last year there was a loss of £230,000 and in the last 4 months wholesale and retail sales are 10% down
- If falling sales continue likely to have to close next spring (spring because it can be done most ethically at that point, paying off most creditors)

Reasons for difficulties:

- Disposable income has declined and continues to decline
- There have been massive sales in the retail sector, which is incredibly competitive, and with on-line selling

To survive:

- Need to see sales increase again and next 4 month are crucial and need to see initiatives have some effect. Probably clear by November if will be able to survive
- The team have been working very hard and responding creatively, working with experienced people in the Order and developing a retail website
- Have also been exploring the possibility of remodelling the business but that would also require some increase in sales.

How can Chairs help?:

1. Consider linking Centre website to W:E retail website (which also outlines their ethical trading policy) and promote W:E as an ethical right livelihood business and source of ethically sourced gifts at the Centre
2. If the business doesn't recover there will be a workforce in Cambridge who will be looking for employment (especially people on visas who need work for their visas)

All members of the business what it to pull through and are responding very fully and generously.

Urban retreats in 2015: short presentation by Vajragupta

Vajragupta canvased interest in two urban retreats in 2015:

1. Movement wide Urban Retreat
 - Run by Adhsthana in partnership with the Development Team
 - Similar to last year with resources provided for Centres including online
 - Keep it simple and aimed at people already involved
 - A theme (yet to be decided) with input and talks providing depth and substance
 - Involve members of the Public Preceptors College delivering teaching (and giving them a profile)
 - Meeting enthusiastic and in agreement with this suggestion and agree to the Development Team involvement
 - Vajragupta to consult Centres on possible dates
2. Urban retreat for Order members
 - Run Adhsithana without the involvement of the ECA / Development Team
 - Perhaps on the theme of the Bodhicitta practice
 - Many members of the meeting through that this was a good proposal

Buddhist Action Month (BAM) June 2014: report back from Munisha and Mokshini

Munisha:

- BAM is a pan-Buddhist initiative by the NBO as part of the government's 'together in service' initiative
- Munisha has concluded it is not worth being involved in the 'together in service' initiative
- Triratna largely the only Buddhist organisation engaged in BAM and with a focus on the environment and climate change (Soka gakkai focus on world peace)
- For future BAMs have a menu of options and find the best way of people across Triratna to talk to each other about what they are doing – not much was posted on TBCO page about BAM, for example.

Mokshini:

- Context:
 - BAM has the potential for making it more obvious how the Dharma can transform society – the radical edge
 - The 2014 International retreat (The Bodhissattva's reply) set the scene: many participants very enthusiastic about making a difference.
- Centres involved included: Birmingham, Brighton, Cambridge, Colchester, Croydon, Exeter, LBC, Liverpool, Manchester, Norwich, Sheffield, Worcester, Padmaloka Community, Essen and Dublin.
- For future BAM / observations:
 - Needs more preparation and promotion – many people didn't know it was happening/ only heard about it on the International Retreat, and so didn't tap in to interest and enthusiasm
 - Not everyone liked the publicity style
 - Wasn't completely clear what it was about – BAM is wider than (ecological) sustainability

- All those people who reported back are keen for it to happen again and for it to be an annual event
- A key message to get across: Environmental issues and responding to a suffering world are not an add on, they are an integral part of Dharma practice – needs to become part of our discourse and we frame it in Dharmic terms
- In some places it seemed that the mitras were very engaged but there was a lack of interest from order members. If we wish to make this part of our identity, it is crucial that the order is behind it. Need a few people to champion it
- Can make environmental issues and sustainability and focus for an order convention?!
- How can we achieve good coordination / communication across our movement? This was seen to be essential (e.g. to the success of the Living Witness movement with the Quakers). Ways of strengthening networks and communication through social media, and linking sustainability groups.
- The environment is such a concern for wider society and Triratna needs to find a response and keep the discussion going.

Majority at the ECA meeting in favour of BAM next year and most Centre would join in. Willing for Development Team to be involved in organisation and resourcing.

Beyond BAM and Sustainable Centres: Amalaketu

- A way of developing BAM, bringing Centres together and moving towards sustainability
- Inviting trustees of Centre / projects to apply for 'certificate of sustainability' issued by Amalaketu, environmental consultant
- For certificate to be issued have to:
 1. Complete energy audit
 2. Have a sustainability champion / kula reporting to the trustees
 3. Move to 100% green energy
 4. Look to becoming 'Fair Trade' (tea, coffee, biscuits, etc)
 5. Move towards adopting recommendations of energy audit
 6. Promote being vegetarian and moving towards veganism
 7. Promote public transport and shared care use, cycling and walking in local Sangha
 8. Have a recycling policy
 9. Spread awareness (display the certificate)
 10. Take part in Bam and encourage people to take a 'green' precept
- Centres issued with certificates: Colchester and Brighton