

Constitution of the DharmaMind Buddhist Group

With effect November 2023, the Support Team is:

**Group Leader - Karen Piggin
Retreat Leader - Vivien Jones
Retreat Manager - Vivien Jones
Bookings Manager - Vivien Jones
Account Manager - Karen Piggin
Logistics - Thomas McKendrick
Cook - Robert Grant
IT - Karen Piggin**

Change Log:

30th Jan 2024 : Updated Support Team. New Tax Section 9(B).

20th Nov 2022 : Updated Support Team

19th Sep 2021 : First issue

dharmamind.net

1. Who Are We

We are a group of like-minded people, coming together as an Unincorporated Association called the **DharmaMind Buddhist Group (DM)**. Our spirit and aspiration, expressed by our teacher Āloka David Smith, is “*Awakening to the dharma mind, and recognising our true nature*”.

2. What We Do

We provide a framework through which we can share our spiritual journey. We aim to:

- offer a non-sectarian, western, Mahayana Buddhist meditation practice, following the teachings of Āloka David Smith as set out in his books.
- maintain the principles and practices bestowed by Āloka, whilst allowing the group to adapt and grow in his absence.
- organise weekly meditation meetings, monthly Saturdays, and residential retreats (see Appendix for more information).
- provide a traditional training framework for anyone seeking a regular Buddhist meditation practice.
- epitomise the Three Root Precepts; Do not harm others, Strive to do good, Be kind to all sentient beings.

3. Who Can Join

Our group is free, voluntary, and we join and leave as we wish. We are open to adults over 18 who accept and support our aims and constitution. We are not-for-profit and are funded on the principle of Dana (generosity), whereby we give as much as we feel able to support the running of the group (our outgoings include insurance premiums, internet subscriptions, teas and biscuits, flowers). Residential retreats are priced to cover our costs.

All those who request to be added to our distribution list are considered members of DM. Those members attending at least one residential retreat per year, or attending the majority of Saturday or weekly meetings, are known as the DM Sangha.

Anyone bringing DM into disrepute may be asked to leave the group.

4. What We Don't Do

We are not qualified meditation instructors nor are we healthcare or medical professionals. We do not provide a product, service or advice, nor do we make any claim or guarantee of improved mental, physical or emotional well-being as a result of meditating with us. Your decision to practice with us is at your own risk, and if in the past or currently you have a physical or mental condition you should consult your GP before starting to meditate. By joining you accept this advice and disclaimer.

5. How We Run the Group

We rely on volunteers to run the group and organise retreats. If we have enough people who can commit to help for 12 months or more, we create a Support Team. Otherwise, activities are shared between those who are able to help on a temporary basis. All are encouraged to help during retreats e.g. setting up the shrine, arranging flowers, making tea, cleaning, veg prep etc.

6. Our Group Leader

A Group Leader is chosen through consensus by the DM Sangha, and stays in role as long as they retain the trust of the DM Sangha. The Group Leader guides the group such that DM:

- meets our aims, as specified in section 2 above.
- remains a Buddhist Meditation Group aligned to the key tenets of the Dharma.

They also:

- make recommendations on any proposals brought to the AGM or SGM.
- select the Support Team and Retreat Leader.
- open and close retreats when attending, otherwise this is done by the Retreat Leader.
- act as a point of contact for the Retreat Leader and Support Team on any issues.
- perform a regular (minimum 3-monthly) review of the DM bank account.
- select a chair and minute-taker for our AGM and any Special General Meetings called.
- request someone leave the group if that person has brought DM into disrepute.

7. Our Meetings

At our AGM:

- A Support Team volunteer summarises activities over the past year.
- A financial summary for the group is presented.
- Any proposals received for the AGM are discussed in light of the Group Leader’s recommendation.
- Minutes from the previous AGM are reviewed and closed, or carried forward.

If at least 50% of the DM Sangha want an additional meeting, then a special general meeting (SGM) is scheduled and takes place within three weeks of the request.

8. How We Run Meetings

At least 50% of the DM Sangha need to attend the AGM or SGM, otherwise the meeting is rescheduled for a later date. The AGM and any SGM are minuted and these are circulated to us all. All proposals and questions that arise are discussed openly. Everyone can contribute and interruptions are discouraged. We aim to follow the Buddhist teaching of Right Speech, speaking with truthfulness, kindness, with goodwill and good intentions, at the right time (allowing space for reflection before responding), and for the benefit of all.

For each proposal, the Group Leader listens to contributions from the DM Sangha and makes a decision in line with the DM principles and practices.

9. Our Finances

A. Accounting: Our financial year runs from 1st January to 31st December. We have a group bank account with two signatories; typically the Accounts Manager and the Retreat Manager. Signatories cannot be related nor members of the same household. Payments under £2,500 are authorised by either of the signatories:

- Using the DM bank account cheque book.
- Via online access for internet / BACS payments.
- For other payments (including cash withdrawals, debit card payments, cash payments), a receipt is obtained and held by the Accounts Manager.

Payments of £2,500 or more require email approval from two of the Support Team.

Expenses incurred by others in DM are agreed in advance with the Accounts Manager. Expenses are reimbursed by the Accounts Manager on submission of a receipt.

B. Tax Management: Royalty payments from sales of Āloka’s books are subject to tax. US Tax Forms (IRS W8BEN-E) are submitted by a UK-resident non-tax-paying member and due to low sales volumes no tax is payable. Should this situation change, the relevant taxes will be paid.

10. How We Amend Our Constitution

Proposed changes to our Constitution can be sent to the Group Leader. These are consolidated and circulated prior to the AGM.

11. Our Continuation or Closure

As long as a viable number of the DM Sangha wish to keep meeting then the group continues.

However, if the group is no longer viable then a Special General Meeting is convened and the following items are discussed and agreed:

- Setting a period for reflection, enabling DM to consider whether closure is the correct solution.
- A timeframe for payment of all outstanding debts.
- The timing of donation of physical assets (retreat chattels etc.) to members, or to another Buddhist organisation with similar aims.
- The timing of donation of remaining money to the charities listed in Aloka’s Will and Trust.
- A process for keeping Āloka’s teachings available and in the public domain.

This constitution was adopted on19th September 2021

Signed *Karen P.* Group Leader

Name ...Karen Pigin.....