



westernchanfellowship.org

August 2020

NEWSLETTER 39

WESTERN CHAN FELLOWSHIP NEWS AND EVENTS

Please refer to the website at www.w-c-f.org/Q342 for the latest updates and more details.

3RD – 10TH OCTOBER: FREEING THE HEART: EVERYDAY BODHISATTVA PRECEPTS

LEADER: JAKE LYNE. VENUE: ONLINE VIA ZOOM [HTTP://W-C-F.ORG/Q487-406](http://w-c-f.org/Q487-406)

There will be no need to book time off work during Monday to Friday 9-5. However participants should plan to attend all sessions: please be sure the arrangements will work for you.

A Bodhisattva is a person on the path of awakening, conscious of suffering, developing empathy for the joys of others and learning to act freely in order to help others. The Chan version of the Bodhisattva precepts incorporates the five lay precepts; five other related precepts to do with speech, intentions and views; the three refuges; and the three pure precepts – relating to personal behaviour, good works and helping others.

This online retreat will be limited to 14 retreatants and in it we will bring awareness and self-reflection to the precepts in daily life. We will practice meditation intensively for a day at the beginning and a day at the end of the retreat. During weekdays we will meet for practice in the morning and again in the evening. During daily life between these sessions our focus for awareness will be a specific precept. There will be teachings on the Bodhisattva path and the precepts and in evening sessions we will explore the Dharma in daily life by sharing our experience of holding a precept in mind during the day.

Personal interviews will be scheduled for times between group practice sessions. Participants will be offered a brief training in the use of Zoom before the retreat, if needed.

SCHEDULE

- Saturday 3rd October: Meeting and introducing the retreat – 7:00 pm - 9:30 pm.
- Sunday 4th: Practice day with meal breaks including two-hour lunch – 7:30 am - 9:00 pm
- Monday 5th to Friday 9th: practising together for two periods – 6:30 am - 8:00 am and 7:00 pm - 9:30 pm. Everyday personal practice between these times
- Saturday 10th: Practice day with meal breaks including two-hour lunch – 7:30 am - 9:00 pm. Retreat closes.

This retreat is most suitable for those with prior experience of WCF retreats. Applications will be considered and any not accepted will receive full refunds.

COVID-19 UPDATE

Unfortunately, we continue to be unable to hold residential retreats. Maintaining social distancing will be important for some time to come, especially for participants and staff who fall within protected groups due to age and co-morbidities. It is very difficult to arrange appropriate distancing for all activities (sleeping, eating and meditation) in the physical space available at retreat venues. We are keeping the situation under review but it seems that we must expect disruption to residential events to continue well into next year. All advertised events are subject to amendment and/or cancellation due to Coronavirus pandemic.

Some of our local groups are meeting online and welcome new members. We plan to schedule some shorter and longer online retreats and other events. Keep an eye on the website where we will list them when they are finalised.



Sunset over the Roaches above Shawbottom Farm – October 2019

WCF 2020 AGM, SATURDAY 5TH SEPTEMBER

All WCF members have been emailed about this event. If you are a member and have not received email notification please check your spam folder and if necessary email secretary@westernchanfellowship.org to confirm your email address and to obtain meeting details.

MAENLLWYD CLOSING EVENT, SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 26TH 2020 2PM, VIA ZOOM



WCF trustees have, after much deliberation, made the decision to cease use of Maenllwyd from 30th September 2020. Instead we will adopt Shawbottom Farm (see shawbottom.uk) as our main retreat centre.

Simon Child bought Shawbottom in 2018 and notified all WCF members about this at the time. He subsequently obtained the relevant planning permission and work is well underway converting it into a retreat and holiday centre.

The WCF trustees have undertaken all due diligence and made this decision on its merits, considering the advantages of Shawbottom over Maenllwyd. The factors considered included: Maenllwyd's lack of disability access; general access difficulties for the elderly at Maenllwyd; the practical impossibility of upgrading Maenllwyd; easier travel accessibility to Shawbottom Farm via all modes of transport; the superior accommodation at Shawbottom Farm; and, with a resident teacher at Shawbottom Farm, the opportunity for WCF to hold other WCF events there and build a stronger sangha.

Conflicts of interest have been avoided by taking these decisions at trustee meetings where Simon was not present.

As part of this transition, on Saturday 26th September 2020 there will be an event to mark this ending. We had hoped to hold this event at Maenllwyd but COVID-19 makes that impossible and so instead we will hold an online Zoom event. This will be on the afternoon of Saturday 26th September commencing at 2pm. **Full details including how to log in to Zoom will be emailed to all members a few days in advance of the event. Non-members who would wish to receive details of this event please register your interest in advance with secretary@westernchanfellowship.org**

LOCAL GROUP ACTIVITIES UNDER COVID

During current restrictions on physical meetings each group is responding in their own way as suits their membership and circumstances. Some examples are below

“The Newbury Chan group are continuing to meet weekly via Zoom for the time being. Many of our members find this a very positive way of getting together, as we can easily see and hear each other!”

“The Portsmouth group is closed for August, as it is every year, and meets again (by Google Meet, remotely) on the first Monday in September from 6.30-8.30. Newcomers would be welcome. In August we have so far had one occasional get-together in the open air on the seafront for a sit.”

“South Devon Chan Group has continued with its weekly Tuesday evening sessions and monthly Sunday afternoon sessions via Zoom. As we have access to a paid Zoom licence, we are not subject to time constraints and so keep connected all the way through, which we have found helps to maintain the sense of sangha and common endeavour.”

“In Baldock we are meeting every Tuesday between 7.30 and 8.45. We sit twice with a short break between and have just begun having a reading leading into the second sit currently from the book Being Upright by Reb Anderson (a Zen approach to the Bodhisattva Precepts).”

“The Winscombe group meets for a virtual sit for 20 mins preceded by an optional actual non virtual sit. After the sit we discuss a theme related to Buddhist theory. We have just started meeting outside on pleasant evenings and returning to our usual pattern of two sits and kinhin We can also be joined virtually by those wishing to remain in isolation”

“The Bristol Chan group is 'meeting' online every week. We sit separately in our homes for an hour, then meet for an hour via Zoom. These online discussions have proved to be remarkably valuable, and we are joined most weeks by people from other groups. The pandemic has forced us to abandon day retreats we had planned for this autumn, but we are thinking of trying to arrange something online.”

FUTURE LOCAL GROUP EVENTS

Several local groups arrange day retreats and other events from time to time. For details see the website events page <http://w-c-f.org/Q342> and individual group pages at <http://w-c-f.org/Q3>.

Events are subject to modification or cancellation depending on COVID situation and guidance nearer the time. Please contact your local group to be informed of other future events and of arrangements during the period of social distancing.

DHARMA INTERVIEWS

Personal interviews are routinely offered on residential retreats and sometimes also on day retreats. COVID has suspended these activities and left a void for those feeling the need for an interview. Simon Child is offering online interviews e.g. using Skype or Zoom, for those who would like that. This offering is primarily for those who have had WCF personal interviews in the past. If you would like to request an interview please email teacher@westernchanfellowship.org.



Shawbottom Owllet 17/8/20

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