

The Way We Work

1. Introduction

1. The Christian meditation community in the UK comprises many people who meditate on their own and a larger number who, in addition to their individual practice, meet regularly in groups.
2. The main aims of any structures and roles within the community are to provide ways of supporting each of us in our practice, and to encourage others to try the path. These structures and roles are intended to be light and to be clear.

2. Groups

- 2.1. The group is key in supporting individuals in their practice and in providing a place where newcomers will find meditation.
- 2.2. Groups determine their own leadership and exact meeting formats. Recommended styles of meeting are outlined in publications such as *A Pearl of Great Price*.
- 2.3. The role of the group leader (or facilitator) is important. An outline definition of the role is appended (based on a document produced by the World Community's National Coordinators meeting together in 2005)
- 2.4. Each group is charged with passing on the teaching on meditation of John Main. "We teach what we know". And only what we know, to avoid confusion. The UK office maintains a database of groups that pass on this teaching.
- 2.5. We welcome all who are happy to pray with us, in silence: they are absolutely free to "do what they do" in the silence.

3. Tasks to be done

- 3.1. There are various tasks to be done in serving the community and encouraging and supporting individual meditators and groups. Various roles or positions are defined to help carry out these tasks. As the community evolves the tasks will remain but the roles may change.
- 3.2. Some fundamental roles are regional, national, school, office, special interest and oblate coordinators, and these are outlined in the following section. People filling these roles are called "coordinators" – a word carefully chosen to indicate that they provide leadership, support and guidance, not management or supervision. The people undertaking many of these roles rely on others to help them.

4. Regional Coordinators

- 4.1.** Regional Coordinators are nominated by the outgoing coordinator in consultation with the National Coordinator or a member of the Action Group, or by regional Group Leaders meeting with an Action Group member. The appointment is made either by the National Coordinator or the Regional and Special Interest Coordinators' Liaison.
- 4.2.** A document setting out the role of Regional Coordinators is appended.
- 4.3.** The term of office for a Regional Coordinator is four years. At the end of the term, the Regional Coordinator discusses and agrees with the National Coordinator or a member of the Action Group whether or not to serve a further term.

5. National Coordinator

- 5.1.** The National Coordinator's term of office is two years, renewable once.
- 5.2.** The role of the National Coordinator is set out on the appended sheet.
- 5.3.** In the choice of National Coordinator, at least one nomination is to be made to the National Council by the outgoing coordinator and/or the Action Group, having consulted others, especially the Chair of the Trust and the Director of the World Community. The appointment is to be made by the National Council.

6. Other national roles

- 6.1.** The School Coordinator's task is to facilitate passing on the teaching of meditation following the guidelines of the WCCM School of Meditation. The coordinator has a particular task in organising workshops on the essential teaching and retreats.
- 6.2.** The UK Oblate Council supports meditators who wish to commit themselves to following the Benedictine monastic tradition as Oblates.
- 6.3.** The community's central office plays an invaluable role and is led by an Office Coordinator. This position and others may be paid, dependant upon the needs of the community.
- 6.4.** The Meditatio Country Coordinator works both with the Special Interest Advisors in the UK, and any others wishing to develop outreach projects, and acts as a liaison with the Meditatio Office and the International Meditatio Coordinators.
- 6.5.** People will also be asked from time to time to carry out other tasks on behalf of the national community, leading to roles such as: webmaster, newsletter editor.

7. Working together: responsibilities

- 7.1. The National Council comprises all Coordinators listed in sections 4 and 6 above, together with Action Group members. At times it may be appropriate to invite other members of the community who serve the community at a national level. It meets at least annually.
- 7.2. The National Council provides overall direction to the UK community. It discusses and reaches conclusions on matters of wide concern within the community, notably
 - 7.2.1. The strategic direction of the community
 - 7.2.2. Exceptional new policy initiatives or expenditures
 - 7.2.3. The appointment of the National Coordinator
 - 7.2.4. Changes to The Way We Work
- 7.3. The Council is also consulted over the appointment of members of the Board of WCCM in the UK.
- 7.4. The Council is also:
 - 7.4.1. A forum at which leaders of the UK community share ideas, initiatives and needs
 - 7.4.2. A time of formation for its members
 - 7.4.3. A time to learn of international WCCM initiatives and discuss their application to the UK
- 7.5. The WCCM in the UK is a registered charity and thus the Trustees have legal responsibilities and are accountable to the Charity Commission for the proper management of the assets of the Trust. The Trustees appoint a treasurer who prepares accounts and information enabling the Trustees to meet their obligations. (The Treasurer will also provide any financial input needed by the National Council). The Trustees normally meet three or four times a year. The Trust Deed requires that there be no fewer than three Trustees - there are normally six or seven including, ex officio, the National Coordinator. The appointment of new Trustees is to be discussed at National Council, whose views will be taken seriously by the existing Trustees.
- 7.6. Although the National Council is responsible for articulating the directions to be followed by the WCCM in the UK, it has no authority to implement these conclusions in any operational, financial or legal sense. Council's authority is derived from The Way We Work document, which is a moral covenant between meditators but has no legal force. In contrast, under the Trust Deed that establishes WCCM in the UK as a charitable organisation under the laws of England and Wales, the Trustees have very wide ranging powers to pursue the objectives of the charity – which are defined as “the advancement of the Christian religion...and in particular...the teaching of the Christian tradition of meditation and prayer.” The Deed does not give any powers to the Council or the Action Group.
- 7.7. In light of the above, the Trustees will pay serious attention to Council's views in setting the strategic directions for the community, and will ask a committee called the Action Group to take the necessary actions. The Trustees will also pay serious attention to Council's views when appointing new Trustees.
- 7.8. The Trustees delegate the necessary powers to the Action Group, with the provisos that this group:
 - 7.8.1. Includes at least one Trustee who is usually the National Coordinator but in the absence of a National Coordinator, a representative of the Trustees
 - 7.8.2. Has a secretary appointed by the Trustees
 - 7.8.3. Reports regularly to the Trustees
- 7.9. While the delegation of authority to the Action Group is broad, the Trustees continue to retain direct control over key financial decisions.

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7.10. The Action Group comprises approx. eight people and is chaired by the National Coordinator. These members represent teams that are charged to cover the principal activities within the community, which may include, although not necessarily exclusively:

7.10.1. Liaison with the Regional and Special Interest Coordinators

7.10.2. Meditation with Children

7.10.3. Communications – covering Newsletter, Website and printed materials

7.10.4. The School of Meditation

7.10.5. Administration

7.10.6. The community's relationship with Meditatio and outreach activities

7.10.7. Regional representation

7.10.8. A previous National Coordinator (for an undefined time) to serve as the link with previous decision making and who may be referred to as the Community Memory

7.10.9. Oblates

An example of the team structure appropriate at the date of this document is included in the appendices. This structure is flexible and is expected to be adapted according to community needs over time.

7.11. The Action Group acts as a team to help its individual members and in particular is an important source of counsel for the National Coordinator. It is envisaged that the Action Group will meet four times a year. It is charged with:

7.11.1. Implementing the guidance given by the Council and endorsed by the Trustees

7.11.2. Developing proposals and ideas for discussion at Council

7.11.3. Conducting the affairs of WCCM in the UK between meetings of the Council

7.12. It is hoped that future National Coordinators may come from the Action Group membership - or at the least that the knowledge built up in this group will help any National Coordinator who comes from outside it.

8. Centres

8.1. The community or its regions have from time to time chosen to establish Meditation Centres where a regular programme of events is offered. Any proposed new Centre has to be approved by the Guiding Board of the World Community. Each Centre has its own leadership arrangement.

8.2. An important place in the life of the UK community is held by the Meditatio Centre which is the responsibility of the international community, with which the UK community works in cooperation.

9. Tailpieces

9.1. All the above may make us sound institutional! But we have always to remember that we are a community rather than an institution.

9.2. The people filling various roles within the community will come and go. These guidelines are intended to help ensure continuity and to reduce the need for successive coordinators to rethink the way in which the community works.

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- 9.3.** As the UK community evolves, changes to the guidelines laid out in this document are fully to be expected and will be discussed and decided upon by National Council. The Chair of the Trust will also be invited to comment on significant proposed changes.
- 9.4.** We also remember that we meditators in the UK are but one part of the World Community for Christian Meditation. Thus the UK community draws heavily on the work and resources of the World Community, and hopes to learn from the experience of other national communities. It also hopes and expects that some of its members will contribute to the international activities of the WCCM.

1. The Role of the Group Leader

There may be one group leader, or more than one: a group may choose to share leadership tasks among its members in any way it wishes. However a group chooses to operate, the following points need to be covered.

The Essentials

1. Arrange time and place for meetings.
2. Ensure that the room is ready for meeting.
3. Organise suitable way of timing the period of meditation.
4. Arrange for introduction to meditation period (e.g. music, reading, tape/CD, download) in such a way that the tradition of the World Community is passed on.
5. Be the contact point for the group within the meditation community.
(e.g. receiving communications to the group from WCCM; the person with whom people interested in the group can be put in touch; telling the office and regional coordinator of changes to meeting time or venue).
6. Communicate the existence of the group to others.
7. Welcome newcomers, and introduce them to the practice of Christian meditation as taught by John Main.

Longer term

8. Encourage members to register to receive the newsletter, and to be aware of the WCCM and WCCM-UK websites, Daily Wisdom, weekly readings etc.
9. Highlight the need for the group, or its members individually, to consider financial support to the wider community (perhaps once a year).
10. Consider attendance at The School of Meditation “Essential Teaching Workshop”, and/or an occasional presence by someone from the group at the national conference, or a meditation retreat or workshop.
11. Maintain occasional contact with the regional coordinator or online coordinator if you facilitate a national online group, seeking advice where necessary or helping the coordinator with his/her role.
12. Encourage shared leadership. Don't let the group become too dependent on a single leader.

2. The role of the Regional Coordinator

This document was approved by National Council in November 2016, with the proviso that it represents something of an ideal. The Council also urged coordinators to invite others to share their responsibility and to take on particular tasks.

1. Keep a **distribution list of local meditators** and of non-meditators who could be interested in local events. Use the lists to circulate news – e.g. new groups, regional events (and, where appropriate, national events). See ‘Notes for new Coordinators’ section for guidelines on data protection and managing your lists.
2. Contact the office so that it can update **the regional list of groups** on the national database and website whenever changes occur.
3. Deal with **enquiries** – typically, people looking for a local meditation group and direct them toward the most convenient in-person or online group.
4. Attend or contact **meditation groups** periodically and offer support as required.
5. Encourage **the development of new groups** – perhaps making use of the six-week course concept - and assist prospective leaders in the start up of new groups.
6. Be a **channel for the region to and from the rest of the UK community**. Keep aware of existing resources available to help in the nurturing and spread of Christian Meditation. Encourage people to make use of these resources, including the websites www.wccm.org and www.wccm.uk
7. If possible attend **the National Council** annually to exchange ideas with other coordinators and to share responsibility for steering the development of the Community.
8. If possible attend the coordinators monthly meetings to exchange ideas, to share, to receive and offer support to peers getting to know coordinators in adjoining regions.
9. Occasionally promote, or encourage others to promote, **local or online talks/days/retreats** that will help meditators deepen their practice and/or attract new meditators. (This might also be done in collaboration with nearby regions).
10. Make yourself aware of training available and encourage meditators in the region to consider participating in **The School Essential Teaching Workshop** (residential or online) and the silent retreat.
11. Encourage groups in a given geographic area occasionally to **meet together socially online or in- person**, to build up a sense of community.
12. Be aware of **meditators within the region with the skills or gifts** enabling them to serve the community in some capacity, including people who could take over the regional coordinator role, or who could help the existing coordinator.
13. Once in a while, if you feel able, raise **the profile of Christian Meditation** in your region – encouraging all comers, not only through local churches.
14. Look for ways in which your region could participate in **outreach activities**, notably meditation with children. Encourage people to make use of all WCCM resources, see www.meditatiocentrelondon.org and www.bonnevauxwccm.org

3. The Role of the UK National Coordinator

The National Coordinators within WCCM met in 2005 and suggested the following as a one-line definition of their role: “to provide the leadership to build and nurture a national community”.

Why do we have a community? To support each of us on our path, and to encourage others to try the path.

The specific roles of the National Coordinator in the UK community:

1. To be seen to be present around the community, offering friendly leadership, affirming and encouraging without getting too involved in details.
2. To maintain an overview of the structure of community leadership, proposing changes where these may be necessary and the teaching to be disseminated effectively.
3. To work with the staff in the UK office to ensure that the community is supported.
4. To ensure that we have people in place (either individuals or small teams) who are responsible for coordinating regional and functional activities.
5. To be one of the supports for the coordinators, meeting them at least occasionally.
6. To ensure that the National Council takes place annually, in order to disseminate good practice, to exchange ideas and to debate priorities.
7. Working through the Action Group, to facilitate the implementation of the chosen priorities.
8. To ensure that an adequate programme of national events (School, Conference, retreats) takes place.
9. To be a link for the UK with the rest of the WCCM – notably with its Director and other National Coordinators
10. To watch for people able to take on substantial roles in the community, where possible finding such roles for them; developing some so that at some stage they could be ready to become National Coordinator.
11. Chair of the Action Group and ex officio member of the Board of Trustees of the Christian Meditation Trust (UK), reporting to the Trust on the activities of the Action Group.

The above sounds pretty institutional! In doing these things the coordinator must always recall that we are not an institution but a community.

Also, although the role requires the coordinator to do some things himself or herself, much of the task is one of facilitation. It is the time and talents of others around the UK that will move the community forward.

4. The Role of the Special Interest Coordinator

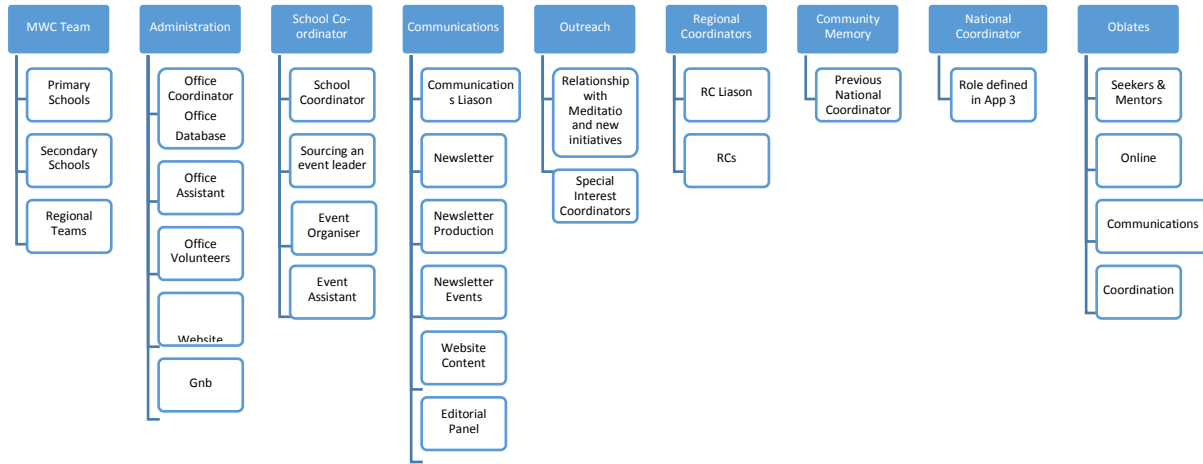
Objective: to help promote and support Christian meditation in the special interest area and to develop and maintain a network of interested people, integrating them into the community as a whole.

1. To develop and maintain a contact list of people active or interested in the special area in the UK.
2. To maintain awareness and interest among contacts in the network by means such as email, articles in the newsletter, items of interest on the UK website, at the UK conference, through occasional gatherings, local or national.
3. To put network members in contact with each other as appropriate.
4. To put members in contact with the wider meditation community in the UK and worldwide.
5. To be aware of WCCM networks, websites and resources provided for this area and to bring these to the attention of the community, coordinators and the people on the list.
6. To liaise with the Meditatio Country Coordinator to inform him/her of progress and to advise on ways the special interest area can be nurtured and represented.
7. To select or develop resources which are of particular relevance to this interest group.
8. Find ways of conveying the relevance of Christian meditation to people outside the community but interested in the special interest area.
9. If possible attend the National Council annually to exchange ideas with other coordinators and to share responsibility for steering the development of the Community.
10. If possible attend the coordinators monthly meetings to exchange ideas, to share, to receive and offer support to peers.

The Special Interest Coordinator does not have to be an expert in the field.

Community Organisation - Example of Teams Structure

The boxes at the top of the chart represent Action Group members.



Action Group meetings are chaired by the National Coordinator or in rotation amongst the members of the AG in the absence of a National Coordinator.

In addition to the teams above, teams which support the community and the National Coordinator in general and who are part of the Action Group, there is also a finance function, led by the Treasurer, who may at times be asked to join the Action Group meetings, although the Treasurer's primary role is as a Trustee of WCCM in the UK funds and as such sits on the board of WCCM in the UK.