

# WCCM in the UK

## The Way We Work

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### 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 in person or online.
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 encourage others to try the path. These structures and roles are intended to be light and to be clear.
3. In 2024 significant changes to The Way We Work were introduced to move toward a collaborative team based approach which would equip the UK community to respond to requests and support members and groups. The original structures and roles can be viewed [here](#).xxx

### 2. Tasks To Be Done

- 2.1. 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.
- 2.2. In most cases a team of volunteers covers the fundamental tasks - National, Area, School, Office, Communications, Special Interest and Oblate roles which are outlined in the following section. While people filling these roles work as a team they may be responsible for a specific aspect of the work but all share responsibility. One person in the team may be nominated as team leader or this may evolve naturally.
- 2.3. The people undertaking these roles may invite others to help them. Existing teams can invite new members to join them at any time.
- 2.4. With the exception of the Office support, the community relies on the goodwill of volunteers who work together for the good of the community. Our membership is diverse with a wide range of talents and we acknowledge that people will not only work differently but also have different opinions on how to work.

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### 3. Group Leaders

- 3.1. At the heart of the community are Group Leaders .The group is key to supporting individuals in their practice and in providing a place where newcomers will experience meditation.
- 3.2. Group Leaders are individuals committed to their own practice who feel they have something to offer to the community. To be registered as a Group Leader the individual is asked to complete a basic application form.
- 3.3. Group Leaders may choose to lead either a local, online or hybrid group.
- 3.4. Groups determine their own leadership and exact meeting formats. Recommended styles of meeting are outlined in publications such as *A Pearl of Great Price*.
- 3.5. Group Leaders are encouraged to share the leadership of their group with their members, to provide back up should they be unavailable. This also engenders confidence in group members.
- 3.6. The key teaching within the group is that of the Christian Tradition as passed on by John Main. Each group is charged with passing on this teaching. “We teach what we know” and only what we know, to avoid confusion.
- 3.7. The UK office maintains a database of groups that pass on this teaching. Groups can be located by enquirers on the UK website.
- 3.8. We welcome all who are happy to pray with us in silence, from any religion or none - they are absolutely free to “do what they do” in the silence.
- 3.9. 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 WCCM National Coordinators meeting together in 2005) - See Appendix 1.

### 4. Area Team Members

- 4.1. Group Leaders are supported by Area Team members who are responsible for keeping in touch with Group Leaders across their Area and being there to offer support if required. In addition they respond to enquirers. Administrative tasks associated with their role are referred to the UK Office.
- 4.2. New Area Team members are invited to join by the current Area Team and agreed with the National Coordinating Team. They may or may not be Group Leaders themselves, but if not would need to complete a short application form.
- 4.3. Each Area Team member is required to submit their details to the Area Liaison and the UK Office and give permission for their details to be publicly available.
- 4.4. When an Area Team member feels they would like to leave the team they should discuss this with their Area Team members so that steps can be taken to cover their role. The Area Liaison and UK office should be notified.
- 4.5. The role of Area Team member is set out in Appendix 2.

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### 5. Special Interest Coordinators

- 5.1. Members who would like to share and promote Christian Meditation with a Special Interest group across the UK are encouraged. Special Interests at the time of writing include Addiction, Bodywork, Clergy/Contemplative Church, Environment, Learning Disabilities, Lone Meditators, the Marginalised, Children in Schools, Palliative and Long Term Care and Prisons. There is no limit to the number of Special Interest coordinators.
- 5.2. Special Interest coordinators may also be Area Team members.
- 5.3. New appointments of Special Interest coordinators are agreed by the National Coordinating Team.
- 5.4. The role of Special Interest coordinator is set out in Appendix 3.

### 6. The National Coordinating Team

- 6.1. The National Coordinating Team comprises of a minimum of five members of the community who as part of the leadership team take decisions on the day to day running of the community. They meet at least four times a year, in practice usually eight times a year and have a rotating chairperson. The five key roles (which may be shared) and their responsibilities are described below.
- 6.2. Area Liaison
  - 6.2.1. To support and encourage Area Team members.
  - 6.2.2. To ensure that there are sufficient Area Team members to support Group Leaders.
  - 6.2.3. To enable Area Team members to come together from across the UK for meditation and discussion at regular meeting times.
  - 6.2.4. To work with the National Online Coordinator to develop links between online meditators and their local area to encourage connection with the wider community.
- 6.3. Communications
  - 6.3.1. To ensure that all aspects of the UK website are kept up to date.
  - 6.3.2. To liaise with the newsletter editor and events coordinator and International as required.
  - 6.3.3. To produce the UK online newsletter.

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### 6.4. National Liaison

- 6.4.1. To liaise with Bonnevaux and the International community and International coordinators responding to requests and enquiries.
- 6.4.2. To liaise with the UK Trustees on behalf of the National Coordinating Team attending the quarterly Trustee meetings.
- 6.4.3. To oversee the UK office, working with the Office Coordinator on day to day matters.
- 6.4.4. To be the contact for Office staff on all matters regarding their role contract and pay.

### 6.5. Office Coordinator

- 6.5.1. To be the central point of contact for all members of and enquirers to the UK community.
- 6.5.2. To coordinate and action referrals and other communications including the UK newsletter and annual appeal.
- 6.5.3. To manage the office systems including updating and extracting information from the database.
- 6.5.4. To work with the UK Treasurer to manage all aspects of the finances including donations and gift aid.

### 6.6. The School

- 6.6.1. To facilitate passing on the teaching of meditation following the guidelines of the WCCM.
- 6.6.2. To ensure that International teaching courses and retreats are available to all members of the UK community.
- 6.6.3. Supported by a small team to offer and organise online and in person events including the Essential Teaching Workshops and 7 day Silent Retreat.

- 6.7. More generally members of the National Coordinating team should be seen to be present around the community offering friendly leadership, affirming and encouraging others in their roles and maintaining awareness of meditators with skills or gifts enabling them to serve the community. They should also maintain an overview of the community leadership, proposing changes where necessary and ensuring that the teaching be disseminated effectively. Once a year they will organise the National Council meeting in order to review the year's

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activities; decide on the plan for the coming year; disseminate good practice; to exchange ideas and to action priorities.

- 6.8. Members of the National Coordinating Team would usually be reappointed at the National Council meeting in November. If the current post holder wishes to step down, suggestions for replacement would be made by the National Coordinating Team in consultation with members of the community and new members appointed at the National Council meeting by the National Council. The Chair of Trustees and Director of WCCM would be consulted about the appointment of the National Liaison.

### 7. Other National Roles

- 7.1. The UK Oblate Council supports meditators who wish to commit themselves to following the Benedictine monastic tradition as Oblates.
- 7.2. The Meditatio Country Coordinator works both with the Special Interest coordinators 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.
- 7.3. The Online Coordinator is responsible for the National Online Groups which are organised internationally and follow an internationally agreed set of guidelines.
- 7.4. Those holding other national roles are updated with developments by the National Coordinating Team and via the minutes and attend the National Coordinating Team meetings as necessary. Any member of the community can be invited to attend National Coordinating Team meetings or make a request to attend.

### 8. Working Together: Responsibilities

- 8.1. The National Council meets annually and comprises those holding leadership positions - Area Team members, Special Interest coordinators together with National Coordinating Team members and at times it may be appropriate to invite other members of the community who serve the community at a national level.

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- 8.2. The National Council provides overall direction to the UK community. It discusses and reaches conclusions on matters of wide concern within the community, notably
- 8.2.1. The strategic direction of the community.
  - 8.2.2. Exceptional new policy initiatives or expenditures.
  - 8.2.3. Appointments to the National Coordinating Team.
  - 8.2.4. Changes to The Way We Work.
- 8.3. The National Council is also consulted over the appointment of members of the WCCM in the UK Board of Trustees.
- 8.4. The National Council is also:
- 8.4.1. A forum at which leaders of the UK community share ideas, initiatives and needs.
  - 8.4.2. A time of formation for its members.
  - 8.4.3. A time to learn of international WCCM initiatives and discuss their application to the UK.
- 8.5. WCCM in the UK is a registered charity in England and Wales, number 1189977 and thus the Trustees have legal responsibilities and are accountable to the Charity Commission for the proper management and control of the charity. The Trustees may appoint a Treasurer, from their number, who will ensure that proper financial systems are in place to enable the Trustees to meet their obligations. (The Treasurer will also provide any financial input needed by the National Council). The Trustees normally meet four times a year. The Constitution requires that there be no fewer than four Trustees including, ex officio, the National Liaison. Trustees are appointed for four years and may serve for three terms. The appointment of new Trustees is to be discussed at National Council, whose views will be taken seriously by the existing Trustees.
- 8.6. 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. National Council's authority is derived from The Way We Work document, which is a moral

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covenant between meditators but has no legal force. In contrast, under the Constitution 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 National Council or the National Coordinating Team.

- 8.7. In light of the above, the Trustees will pay serious attention to National Council’s views in setting the strategic directions for the community, and will ask the National Coordinating Team to take the necessary actions. The Trustees will also pay serious attention to National Council’s views when appointing new Trustees.
- 8.8. The Trustees delegate the necessary powers to the National Coordinating Team, with the provisos that this group:
  - 8.8.1. Includes at least one Trustee who is usually the National Liaison but in the absence of a National Liaison, a representative of the Trustees.
  - 8.8.2. Has the support of the Office Coordinator who is appointed by the Trustees.
  - 8.8.3. Reports regularly to the Trustees.
- 8.9. While the delegation of authority to the National Coordinating Team is broad, the Trustees continue to retain direct control over key financial decisions.
- 8.10. The National Coordinating Team is charged with:
  - Implementing the guidance given by the National Council and endorsed by the Trustees.
  - Conducting the affairs of WCCM in the UK between meetings of the National Council.
  - Developing proposals and ideas for discussion at the National Council.
- 8.11. The National Coordinating Team members represent teams that are charged to cover the principal activities within the community as outlined in Section 6. An example of the team structure appropriate at the date of this document is included in Appendix 4. This structure is flexible and is expected to be adapted according to community needs over time.
- 8.12. It is hoped that future members of the National Coordinating Team will come from those in leadership positions, that is from Area Teams and Special Interest coordinators.

## 9. Centres

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- 9.1. The WCCM international community has two centres referred to in 9.2 and 9.3 which UK meditators are invited to attend and support.
- 9.2. The Meditatio Centre which is the international centre for outreach is based in London and holds an important place in the life of the UK community. We work with the Meditatio centre to support each other wherever practical for the benefit of all meditators.
- 9.3. The Bonnevaux Centre for Peace is based in France and provides a retreat centre and centre for online teachings for all meditators which the UK community fully supports.
- 9.4. While there are currently no centres with a programme of events organised by the WCCM in the UK any proposed new Centre has to be approved by the Guiding Board of the WCCM.

### 10. Final Thoughts

- 10.1. Whilst we need an organisational structure to function, we are a community rather than an institution.
- 10.2. We are a community of volunteers who are asked to 'do what they can' within the guidelines and they will come and go.
- 10.3. These guidelines are intended to help ensure continuity and to reduce the need to continually rethink the way in which the community works.
- 10.4. 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 the National Council. The Chair of Trustees will also be invited to comment on significant proposed changes.
- 10.5. 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 WCCM, 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.
- 10.6. A diagram of the WCCM in the UK community structure can be found in Appendix 4.



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### APPENDIX 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, and whether it is in person, online or hybrid 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 a suitable way of timing the period of meditation (e.g. using the WCCM app).
4. Arrange an introduction to the meditation period (e.g. music, reading, tape/CD, download) in such a way that the tradition of the World Community is passed on.
5. Communicate with your group members about meetings and anything else that they might find encouraging and useful.
6. Be the contact point for the group within the meditation community (e.g. receiving communications to pass on to the group from WCCM in the UK, updating the UK office about any changes to the group such as the venue/day/time and keeping in touch with Area Team members ).
7. Communicate the existence of the group to others.
8. Welcome newcomers, and introduce them to the practice of Christian meditation as taught by John Main.

#### Longer term

9. Encourage members to register with the UK office ([uk@wccm.org](mailto:uk@wccm.org)) to receive the newsletter, and make them aware of the resources to be found on the UK website ([wccm.uk](http://wccm.uk)) and the International website ([wccm.org](http://wccm.org)) which include Daily Wisdom, Weekly Readings etc.
10. At the time of the UK Annual Appeal highlight the need for the group, or its members individually, to consider financial support to the wider community.
11. Consider attendance at The School "Essential Teaching Workshop", and/or an occasional presence by someone from the group at national and local events.
12. Maintain occasional contact with an Area Team member, or National Online Coordinator if you facilitate a national online group, seeking advice where necessary or helping them with their role.
13. Encourage shared leadership so that the group doesn't become too dependent on a single leader.

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### APPENDIX 2

#### The role of the Area Team Member

Every meditation group in the UK has been assigned to one of 23 Areas. Each Area has an Area Team which might comprise up to 6 members who share the responsibilities in the way that best works for them. The number of Areas is flexible and new Areas can be formed at any time if it is agreed that this will benefit the community. Area Team members are supported by each other and by the Area Liaison who represents them at the National Coordinating Team.

#### The Essentials

1. To support Group Leaders by keeping in touch with them individually and collectively through online or physical meet-ups, encouraging them to build confidence through attendance at the Essential Teaching Workshop, the School Silent Retreat etc.
2. To assist those enquiring about Christian meditation, sharing information about the practice, encouraging them to connect with a local or online group, to access the website and to contact the UK office, ensuring that they receive newsletters etc. and are aware of the variety of resources available.
3. To keep themselves updated on community developments, liaising with and supporting their Area Team, the Area Liaison and the office while being aware of meditators with skills or gifts, enabling them to serve the community as part of the Area Team or in other ways.

#### In addition the Area Team member may wish to:

4. Work with Group Leaders and others to organise in person or online events i.e. introductory courses, quiet days, retreats and social gatherings.
5. Find ways to encourage new groups and promote meditation in their region, especially via introductory courses or days.
6. Participate in outreach activities, supporting the work of Special Interest coordinators.
7. Attend Area meetings, National Council and other national meetings.
8. Maintain their own local contact lists.

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### APPENDIX 3

#### The Role of the Special Interest Coordinator

Special Interest coordinators promote and support Christian meditation in their special interest area by developing and maintaining a network of interested people, integrating them into the community as a whole. They do not have to be an expert in the field.

#### The Essentials

1. To develop and maintain a contact list of people active or interested in the special interest 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 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.

#### In addition the Special Interest coordinator may wish to:

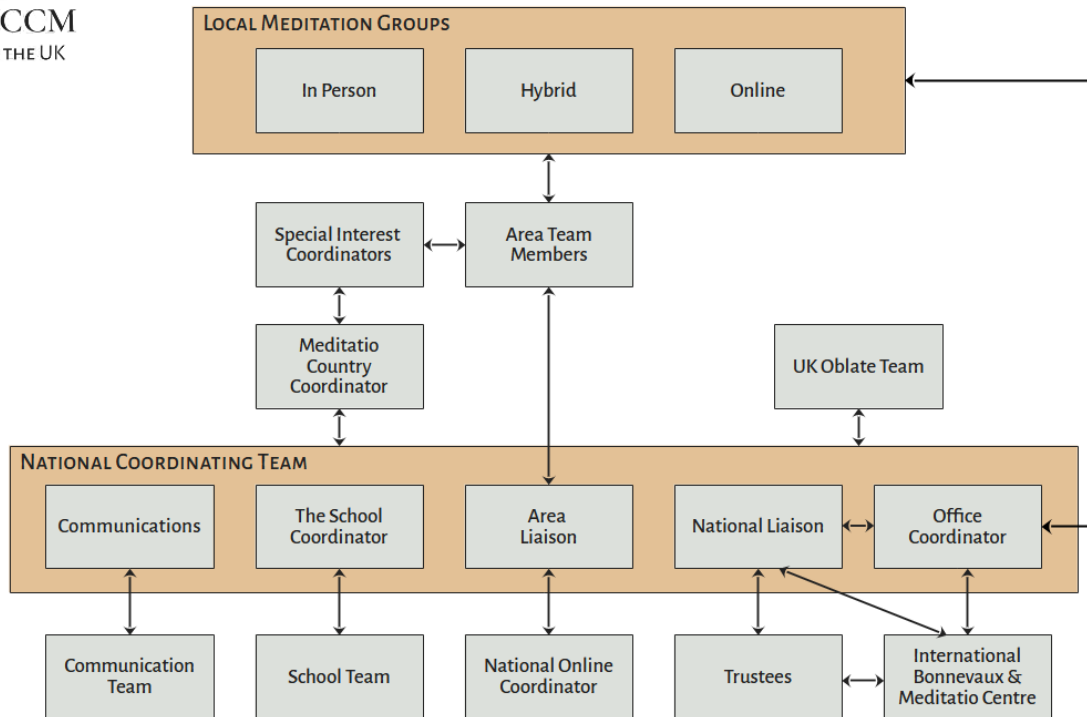
7. Select or develop resources which are of particular relevance to this interest group.
8. Find ways of conveying the relevance of Christian meditation to people outside the community but interested in the special interest area.

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### Appendix 4 : WCCM in the UK - Community Structure



### APPENDIX 4