

NEB Spring Meeting Minutes **5 April 2008**

1. Apologies – Megan Criffiths, Sally Rasmden, Roselle Angwin, Melissa Meek, Sheila Shaffer, Shantiprabha.

2. Present – Guy Malkerson, Maitrīsārā, Michael Lewis, John Fullerton, Keith Motherson, Tony Golding, Paul Beswick, Modgala, Claire Martin, Kaspalita, Phil Henry, Ken Jones.

3. Matters arising – re the posting of supplies to the Zambian health project, one package has come back.

4. Membership – there are now 194 NEB members and its growing. Some are in arrears. Joyce handed round a list of people who were in arrears so that we could contact them if we know them.

5. Finance

Our new treasurer Claire handed out a summary of income and expenditure – 1 April 2007 to 18 March 2008. Expenditure (£1395) Income (£1295). Though the expenditure was £100 more than the income, this is likely to be a bigger deficit for this period because some of the Indra's Net expenses have not yet been claimed by Maitrīsārā (which she will now do!). We were aiming to reduce our bank balance of £3903 (as at 1/4/07) anyway as we have agreed in previous meetings to spend money rather than build it up so the fact that we are spending our reserves is what we had planned and a good thing.

£200 was agreed to sponsor the UK book tour of **Broken Voices** – interviews with India's Dalit Women about their experience of caste and gender oppression. The women are from a range of backgrounds but many talk about the role of Buddhism in their liberation. The donation will go towards the cost of inviting one of the women interviewed in the book from India. Maitrīsārā and Claire to arrange payment.

6. Indra's Net

Maitrīsārā reminded members to try to commission articles and to write them for Indra's Net. She explained that the cost of printing Indra has gone up. This is because the printing system which allows decent photograph quality also has a minimum printing of 500 copies. The meeting agreed to keep the current system but that now we were producing a lot of extra copies, we needed to have a better distribution system probably to established retreat centres such as Chithurst and Gaia House where they could be given away or even sold. The summer festivals especially Buddhafield are also a good distribution point. Phil will canvas contacts in different Sanghas for possible distribution points. Distribution is a project in itself and this will be discussed at Chagford – we will probably need a volunteer for this. Phil to send his remaining copies of Indra's Net to the Amida conference "Breaking the Mould: Does Buddhism Need to Change" which starts on 1 May 2008. see: www.amidatrust.com

We discussed the idea of printing £1 on the front of Indra's Net but members with multiple copies to distribute have the option of waiving the cost when they think its necessary.

7. NBO

NBO are organising a conference at Taplow Court The British Buddhist Landscape – Transplantation and Growth 27 - 29 June 2008 and Phil is speaking there. Their website is now a good networking place for Buddhist groups and more details of the conference are there too. See www.nbo.org.uk

8. Branding

Sally had found a Buddhist logo designer – in Germany! The designer had done some proposals for the new NEB logo - we looked at three of them. We wanted to see a more explicitly Buddhist design – though the designer has cautioned us against iconography that is too complicated and related to a particular school of Buddhism. *Maitrīsārā* will pass these suggestions on to the designer and the next round of drafts will be circulated to the EXECUTIVE for final decision.

We have found a designer for the website but this is on hold until the logo is finalised so that we have consistency in our design.

9. Buddhafield 2008

Is 16 – 20th July this year and the theme is The Dance of the Elements. We have four tickets for the team (Amida have two of their own extra to that) and we can give out 2 to people who are going to run Work that Reconnects workshops like last year (very successfully) We will try to have our outdoor space again with gazebo and hope it doesn't rain!

We want to clarify the contract with the team members this year and be more specific about the role/commitments of the team who get free tickets. Those interested at the moment (at this meeting!) are *Maitrīsārā*, Joyce, Claire and Michael. *Maitrīsārā* will co-ordinate the team, talk to other potential team members and be in touch with notes about the role of team members.

10. NEB presence at Big Green Gathering

Paul Beswick distributed a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analysis for NEB's involvement in the Big Green Gathering. We will discuss this further at Chagford. Modgala will email the Executive all festivals she is going to and needs NEB leaflets and Indra's Nets for that. *Maitrīsārā* to send them.

11. Dalai Lama visit

Having considered the time and money it would take to host a stall at the Dalai Lama's talks in May, we have decided we can't do it.

12. International Climate Forum

On 14/15 June 2008. We have been asked to provide a speaker. *Joyce* will do this if we will help her think it through. *Maitrīsārā* will also Akuppa but she doesn't think he will be free.

13. Tibet and Burma

Burma: Stephen Harding has been keeping in touch with NEBSangha about the organising going on particularly in Brighton around solidarity with the Burmese over the situation there.

Tibet: We have sent off a NEB statement on the Tibet situation to key political figures. There will be a demonstration in London around the Torch procession on April 6 2008 and the NEB banner will be going with Lokabandhu and Shantiprabha. We have also tried to get the blue Buddhists for Peace banner which has been residing with Modgala. Networking meeting up points have been emailed through NEBSangha. The plan is to do some meditation there. There will probably need to be further networking as the Tibet actions have been linking with the route of the torch and the Olympics. Joyce and Guy agreed to take on being the links for further networking.

The meeting resumed on 6 April to discuss two more issues:

14. Chagford Summer Retreat

Will take place 11 – 15th September 2008 Phil will organise and Ken will lead. Theme around the idea of: Being at ease in the world/Finding your place of ease. Ken to get outline of the invitation to Maitrīsārā by 30th May for the next Indra's Net.

15. Triple Gem

Chris Ward visited the NEB Gathering on Sunday morning to explain the setting up the Triple Gem project. This is a new Buddhist thinktank in the form of a website which can take a role in debating the Buddhist point of view about current events and issues. Some of these issues could be directed to Government departments looking for faith group perspectives though it wouldn't represent "the Buddhist viewpoint". The website address is triplegem.terapad.com. We discussed how NEB might help Triple Gem and decided to try an experiment using the NEBSangha discussion group. We would invite the writing of a number of short pieces and then rotating members of the Executive would summarise them for the TripleGem website. Triple Gem and NEB would keep in touch about good issues to be debating. Any divergence of view would be represented, we wouldn't be trying to find a majority view or consensus. Ken will draft the first outline of the protocol for participating and circulate to the Exec.

Material generated in this way could be suitable for printing in Indra on for leaflets.

The first theme would be Climate Change because that will be helpful to Joyce in the preparation of her talk at the climate change conference – Joyce will summarise it for Triple Gem. Individual members of NEB are of course welcome to contribute to Triple Gem in their own right.