

About the Hornchurch Buddhist Group 2018 Retreat – November 23rd to 25th



Where and when is the retreat?

The retreat will take place at Kench Hill (kenchhill.co.uk), a house in the Kent countryside, formerly owned by Hackney Council and used for young people's events. It is now an independently run operation still used for its former purpose but also open to other users. We (the Hornchurch group) used the centre in 2014, 2015, 2016 and 2017 and it has worked well for us.

The 2018 Hornchurch retreat takes place on Friday November 23rd to Sunday November 25th, commencing at 5.30 pm on the Friday and finishing at 2 pm on the Sunday. It will be possible to arrive a little earlier than this to avoid the traffic and also a little later if you can't get away from work, latest arrival 7.30 pm on the Friday. It will not be possible to join the retreat on Saturday.

Who is the retreat open to?

The retreat is open to all of those who regularly attend the Hornchurch Buddhist Group, it will be led by Saddhabhaya and Nandaketu supported by a core team of regulars.

What is a retreat?

A retreat is a valuable opportunity to take some time away from your normal living situation, away from work, the demands of family life and input such as television, the internet and mobile phones. In doing this we are able to relax and refresh ourselves, experience how we are as an individual away from our everyday routine and deepen our meditation practice and understanding of the Dharma in favourable conditions.

Importantly, it is also a chance to enjoy the company of others and get to know better those with whom we have shared many evenings at Fairkytes.

To get the best from the time on retreat please leave electronic equipment turned off, we'll make sure that there is a contact number for emergencies at all times. Short as it is, a weekend retreat can be surprisingly effective but this effect is easily lost by the urge to have a chat with someone elsewhere on a mobile or check the football results, email, Facebook etc.

What will happen on the retreat?

There will be meditation sessions each day before breakfast, before lunch and before supper (Saturday only), there will also be an evening session which will include meditation and puja. There will be some talks, discussions and activities but also time just to share the company of the other retreatants, go for a walks, enjoy the gardens etc. You don't have to attend all of the meditation sessions but it would be good if everyone came to the mornings and evenings at least, we are going on retreat *together*. There will be some cooking and washing up to do which we will share with a rota so there will probably be rather less than at home.

Tell me about the accommodation...

The accommodation at Kench Hill is spread over two floors, one of which will be allocated for men and the other for women, accommodation will be shared in rooms of various sizes and there are plenty of bathroom facilities. The accommodation is quite simple but comfortable and professionally cleaned and maintained. See kenchhill.co.uk for more information.

...and about the food

We'll be taking and cooking our own food which will be vegetarian. We'll plan some fairly simple dishes and as advised above we'll have a rota for assisting the cook (let us know if you would like to cook this year) and washing up. Between meals there will be tea and coffee available at all times. If you have any particular dietary requirements then let us know beforehand, we managed gluten free and vegan in previous years without difficulty.

What should I bring?

Comfortable indoor and outdoor clothes, shoes for country walks, washing things, maybe a notebook but that's about it...

Transport

We'll try to ensure that everyone has transport by road from Hornchurch to and from Kench Hill. Depending upon the numbers who decide to come this will be via car sharing or a minibus. In previous years we managed car sharing for everyone which is far less expensive than mini bus hire. In the event of car sharing this will be an informal arrangement which we'll facilitate as best we can and which will not imply any acceptance of liability over and above the normal insurance held by the driver.

How much will it all cost?

The cost of the retreat is £120 excluding transport. Transport costs will be dependent upon the arrangements as mentioned above; if we hire a minibus the cost will probably be around £25, car sharing will work out less.

How do I book?

Tell Nandaketu or Saddhabhaya that you would like to come, give us your contact details and provide a cheque (payable to Hornchurch Buddhist Group) or cash for £30 deposit or £120 full payment. In the unlikely event that the retreat cannot take place *all* money will be returned.

Questions?

Drop us an email via contact@hornchurchbuddhistgroup.org.uk or catch us on a Monday night. Nineteen of us went in 2018 so ask around on a Monday night and you are pretty sure to find someone who can tell you about it.

