



Frequently Asked Questions for Volunteer Coordinators at The Coach House

1. When will The Coach House open?

The building works are well advanced. Allowing for fitting out and any delays, we hope to open by April 2022. The intention is that the Manager starts ahead of this to help with planning and preparation. We would like Coordinators to start in March so we can prepare to open.

2. What is the ethos of the new centre?

The Coach House aims to connect people with the natural world through mindfulness. Participants will spend time living in community and doing mindful work or activities on the land. We also aim to connect people with our rewilding project on the Sharpham Estate.

3. Is it the same as the Barn Retreat?

No, but there are similarities in that weekly retreats are facilitated by long-term volunteers. The Coach House will not be Buddhist but its ethos will be underpinned by Buddhist philosophy. There will be a strong ecological focus. Unlike the Barn, The Coach House programme may include some external groups running their own programmes. There will be more participants staying at The Coach House than The Barn but there will be additional staff to support them including a cook and gardeners.

4. Will The Coach House Manager lead the retreats?

No. The Manager is there to oversee the operation of the centre and support the Volunteer Coordinators. She may be directly involved at times during a retreat but the majority of facilitation will be done by the Volunteer Coordinators. The Manager may have to step in if for any reason a Coordinator was indisposed.

5. Who will come to The Coach House?

The Trust has a well-established and loyal audience which we hope The Coach House will appeal to. Most of our retreats and courses are heavily over-subscribed and one objective of opening The Coach House is to enable us to help more people than we currently are able to. Our retreats are aimed at those who are not currently experiencing significant mental health difficulties and we have processes in place to assess this prior to attendance.

6. What support will the coordinators get?

The Volunteer Coordinators will be supported by The Coach House Manager and various members of The Sharpham Trust staff team who are responsible for programming, finance, marketing, bookings, health and safety, property management, gardening and catering. The Sharpham Trust is governed by a board of volunteer trustees who set the overall direction and strategy.

7. Where do the Volunteer Coordinators live?

The Volunteer Coordinators will be recruited to come and facilitate retreats for a year and they will live on site, in a bungalow close to The Coach House. Each week there will usually be two Coordinators facilitating, one supporting and one off.

8. What does mindfulness mean at Sharpham?

We teach experiential mindfulness that is not aligned with any specific philosophy or tradition but tries to embrace many different approaches.

Please see the [Mindfulness at Sharpham document here](#) and visit this page of our website: www.sharphamtrust.org/mindfulness-retreats/mindfulness-resources/mindfulness-at-Sharpham

9. Is The Coach House Buddhist?

The Coach House offers contemplative mindfulness practice that is underpinned by the teachings of Buddhist philosophy as well as the modern science of psychology and neuroscience.

10. Will it be the same every week?

The Coach House will run regular weekly retreats for 18 participants interspersed with external groups who are hiring the facilities. These external groups will usually be running retreats or courses and their numbers may be slightly higher. The Coordinators will need to be flexible and prepared for the programme to evolve.

11. Who will oversee the gardening?

The gardening team will organise the retreatant tasks in the gardens supported by the Volunteer Coordinators.

12. Do Coordinators need to drive?

Not necessarily as we will not be picking retreatants up from the station and food is delivered.

13. What is the time commitment?

When supporting a retreat, Coordinators will be involved from Sunday night to Saturday morning. They should get either the morning or afternoon off each day. We are hoping to initially recruit Coordinators who are able to stay different lengths of time: 4, 8 and 12 months. This will allow new Coordinators to join in a staggered rotation rather than all at the same time.

14. Do we fund volunteer expenses?

Yes. We provide:

- expenses of £45/week plus dana as well as free food and accommodation
- relocation allowance of £500 at the end of the completed year
- monthly group support sessions
- bi-monthly support from dharma teacher or therapist