



On the 3rd August Nicola Sturgeon announced the schedule for Scotland moving “beyond level zero” and some of the framework as to what that might mean for us. Although this is far from the end of the COVID-19 pandemic it does feel like a significant step on the long road to recovery. For Dhanakosa it means we can now confirm the next step in our own plan. So, for retreats starting on and after the 13th August we will now be moving to a maximum of 18 retreatants and three team members. This level of occupancy is still only 60% of our pre-covid occupancy. Although it will involve some room sharing (with a maximum of two people sharing a room), it does feel like a proportionate change which will allow more people to come on retreat whilst still enabling us to maintain a more spacious environment than pre-covid full occupancy. We will be opening out these additional places in a staged process, so please wait until the web site lists a retreat as having spaces before phoning to book. For people with outstanding COVID transfers who want to wait until the 2022 programme is released, we expect this to go live on the web site sometime in September. Yep, the office team have a super busy time ahead of them!

Opening out retreat spaces does not mean the end of all COVID infection control protocols. We will still have additional cleaning in place, a proactive approach to supporting good hand and respiratory hygiene and our “site zoning” protocols to limit the possibility of infection transfer between the retreat group and the resident community. Alongside operating at 60% capacity to allow a more spacious and better ventilated retreat environment, we are also using lateral flow testing on (or immediately before) arrival and towards the end of the retreat to give further confidence both during the retreat, and on return home. This last measure will also allow us to target additional cleaning measures between retreats if required.

So far we have not had a COVID case on retreat or in the community, but this does remain a possibility. As it stands there is still a requirement to self-isolate and avoid public transport if you test positive. To protect the retreat group and Dhanakosa, if someone does test positive, the retreat will end and everyone will have to go home. Retreatants therefore need to have thought about how they will get home if they test positive as self-isolation at Dhanakosa is not an option. Although we do still have protocols in place to reduce the risk of transmission, people who are especially vulnerable should remember that we cannot rule out all risk of infection. Also, we are not currently requiring double vaccination. This is a complex issue and one on which we will take our lead from the Scottish government as their advice is further developed.

Lastly, this has been a very difficult period for many, and I would just like to thank everyone for their patience and their support. And, particularly to thank the Dhanakosa team for their careful and conscientious engagement through what has been a demanding and complex period. It is

striking that this has not only been a very harmonious period in the team, it is also a period in which three members of the team (Abi, Leif and Lisa) will be heading off to get ordained.

We look forward to welcoming more of you on retreat again soon

Best wishes

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Nayaka', written in a cursive style.

Nayaka

Centre Director