

Introducing The Abbey Sutton Courtenay Oxfordshire



A Centre for Transformation

The Abbey's Purpose

The Abbey is a Retreat, Education and Conference Centre near Oxford. It offers opportunities for visitors, coming as individuals or in groups, to engage with spiritual development, personal growth, organisational inquiry and to celebrate significant life events.

The Abbey offers a peaceful and reflective environment. The house itself is a beautiful Grade 1 listed medieval building, with an inner courtyard, set in four acres of mixed garden and woodland. The Abbey's architectural heritage links back to the work of the Benedictines in the 13th century, and as such provides a welcoming and meditative atmosphere.

The daily life of The Abbey is managed and run by a small residential lay community. This community is part of a wider body, The Abbey's Council and Company Membership, who are responsible for its care and stewardship.

The Vision of the Founders

The Abbey was established in 1979 by the Rev Fred Blum and Bishop Stephen Verney. The work grew directly out of the life experiences of the two founders. Fred Blum was a German Jewish refugee from the Holocaust, who became a psychotherapist and later an Anglican priest. Stephen Verney is an Anglican Bishop and highly innovative theologian. They established the Abbey as a place for spiritual development, exploration and transformation of community, and as a centre for workshops and events for the public.



The Grounds



The Great Hall



The Hearth

The Abbey Today

The Abbey's work, rooted in the Judaeo-Christian tradition, has gradually evolved into a Centre for the exploration of a universal experience of spirituality.



The Courtyard

The Abbey runs its own programme of courses and events with particular themes focused on different aspects of spiritual practice and growth.

Individuals who wish to come for spiritual exploration or simply time out from daily pressures are welcomed at The Abbey's monthly Rest and Renewal retreats. "Music at The Abbey" is a growing strand of the programme and offers world class chamber music in the intimate and beautiful setting of the Great Hall. The Abbey can be hired for wedding receptions and significant ceremonies and blessings. The Abbey also welcomes groups and teams who use the facilities for their own training and development needs.

The Abbey's Facilities: Simple and Relaxing

- A magnificent Great Hall, with log fire, direct access to the garden, seating up to 75. Wheelchair accessible with assistance.
- Three attractive public rooms with garden windows, log fires, seating 12-20 people;
- Dining room, seating 35 or up to 50 buffet style;
- Meditation room on the ground floor, seating 15;
- Accommodation for up to 19 (sharing) or 13 (single). Four bedrooms in the main house; a further nine bedrooms in a separate self-contained Guest House with its own kitchenette and sitting room/dining area;
- In house catering facilities serving excellent, fresh, vegetarian cuisine (very good local caterers who serve meat can also be arranged);
- Large lawn for marquees, mixed garden and woodland walks, and attractive riverside walks in the local village;
- Broadband internet access.

Whatever your purpose for visiting The Abbey we aim to offer an enriching experience of community in a peaceful and transformative setting. Guests frequently refer to the quality of their experience here: "Really good alternative to a hotel or conference centre the relaxed atmosphere helped us to think and the food was delicious". "Our stay with you has been very special, calm, peaceful and inviting".

Stewardship of The Abbey and ways to be involved

The Abbey is a registered charity (No 278687) and limited company (No 1446667). It is managed by The Resident Community, with a governing Council of Trustees accountable to The Abbey's Membership. There are a variety of ways to experience The Abbey and be involved in its stewardship.

For all enquiries contact the administrator (details below).

- ▶ Come on a programme event or course, or hire The Abbey for your own requirements.
- ▶ Volunteer at The Abbey on a residential basis for up to one week, by living and sharing in the day-to-day life of The Abbey. Expect to participate in a variety of jobs, share community meals and enjoy the challenges and opportunities of community life.
- ▶ Volunteer on a regular non-residential basis. We welcome the offer of specific skills e.g. for:
 - The Abbey's marketing, PR and fundraising efforts
 - Publicity for programme events
 - Practical support in the garden and small scale maintenance.
- ▶ Partnership: we welcome discussions with individuals or organisations interested in forming a negotiated partnership to provide mutual benefit.
- ▶ External Support: enquiries are sought from those with expertise in marketing, recruitment, facilities management, interfaith and philanthropic knowledge, who feel a resonance with The Abbey's work and who would like to contribute to its sustainability.
- ▶ Donations: most of The Abbey's income is generated from the hire of facilities and participation in programme events. Should you be interested in making a donation to the work or fabric of The Abbey please see our address below, or request a gift aid form from our administrator.

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This leaflet is available in alternative formats on request