



Skanda Vale

The COMMUNITY of the MANY NAMES of GOD

LEGAL & ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

The full name of the Charity is:

- The Community of the Many Names of God. (Reg Charity No. 511166)

Working names of the Charity are:

- Skanda Vale
- Skanda Vale Hospice
- Vale Hospice Continuing Care.

The governing instrument of the Charity is a Trust Deed. The declaration of trust is dated 17th September 1980 and includes the Supplementary Trust Deed dated 9th February 2002. The Charity constitutes a Board of Trustees. Skanda Vale Hospice and Vale Hospice Continuing Care are a part of The Community of the Many Names of God and are governed by the same governing document and Board of Trustees.

ORGANISATION OF THE CHARITY

The Charter of the Community, the monastic rule of the Order, is the basis on which the Charity is run and organised. All monastic members of the Community (consisting of novices, monks, nuns and swamis) have to abide by the Charter which has been drawn up and evolved through experience, by the Council of Swamis.

The Council of Swamis is a group of six senior monks responsible for ensuring the smooth running of the Community on a daily basis, meeting weekly to discuss the changing needs and developments necessary to further the work of the Community, discussing and addressing the problems and difficulties that come to light in creating a harmonious environment for the worship and service of God.

Every quarter, the Trustees of the Community meet to discuss overall policy, financial position, projects and matters relating to the Community on a wider scale. As four of the Trustees, including the Chairman, Secretary and Director of Finance are members of the Council of Swamis, the Trustees are able to maintain clarity of vision and purpose in adherence to the spiritual teachings of Krishna which form the basis of the Declaration of Trust for the Charity.

Consultation and discussion with the lay Trustees, not only in the meetings but on a regular informal basis throughout the year, helps to enrich the breadth and perspective of the Trustee body as a whole. All Trustees are consulted and a majority consensus sought prior to acting on any matter judged significant by the Swami's Council that may affect the Charity's financial position or ability to fulfil its objectives. The Charity observes a strict internal financial control policy submitted as part of our annual audit.

Skanda Vale Hospice Day Care Centre is run and organised on a daily basis by the Hospice Day Care Centre Manager who has been appointed by the Trustees and liaises regularly with the Trustees on a formal and informal basis. Strict supervision and control is maintained at all levels to ensure that the service grows and develops in a way that is in keeping with the spirit of the Community. All decisions of financial matter and policy are referred to and discussed by the Council of Swamis and Trustees. Main items of large expenditure are presented for discussion to the Board of Trustees before authority is given to use Charity funds. At the quarterly Trustees meetings, a report from the Manager detailing the progress and requirements of the service is presented.

OBJECTIVES OF THE CHARITY

1. To promote, for the benefit of the public, the public worship of God in his Universality in accordance with the spiritual teachings of Krishna as set out in the Bhagavad-Gita, at the Hindu Temple maintained by the Community at Skanda Vale or any other places of public worship maintained or used by the Community.
2. To advance religion and religious education by propagating to the public the said spiritual teachings about the worship of God in his Universality.
3. To maintain a Community of people living together in accordance with the aforesaid spiritual teachings as a religious Community promoting such public worship both at the temples maintained by the Community and elsewhere, offering shelter, hospitality and spiritual refreshment and, where relevant, relief from poverty to those who by reason of penury, physical disability or any form of mental or spiritual breakdown are in need of such refuge, without regard to race or creed, sending out members of the Community to provide spiritual refreshment and spiritual advice to members of the public, who are for the foregoing reason, in need of such refreshment or advice and assisting in the rehabilitation of alcoholics, drug addicts or delinquents who are in need of such rehabilitation.
4. To relieve the poverty of deserving persons who are in need and to support by donations and otherwise charitable institutions for the relief of poverty.
5. To relieve the sickness and suffering and to promote the spiritual well being of persons of all ages requiring palliative, specialist and medical care by the provision of home care and hospice care for both day patients and resident patients.

There are several fundamental principles based on the spiritual teachings of God, as set out in the Bhagavad-Gita, to which all aspects of the Community's life and work adhere:

God is free.

There is no place for commercialism in Skanda Vale and Skanda Vale Hospice. There is no charge to any member of the public for food, accommodation, temple services, advice, counselling, or care provided by members of the Community in any aspect of the Charity's work. It is a fundamental principle of the Community never to ask for, infer the need of, or solicit in any way, funds or goods for the use of the Community at Skanda Vale.

Donations and gifts in kind, including the substantial amount of food stuffs that are brought to the Community, are offered anonymously in the temples to God and are used in the service of God for the benefit of the public. Devotees are thus able to worship God, free from the feeling of being expected to provide goods or money to the Community. Opportunities for the public to financially support the Hospice work of the Charity are created in Skanda Vale by the provision of a tea stall and gift emporium, where goods are available on a donation basis to pilgrims. In addition, the work of the Hospice is supported by fundraising events and activities where all funds raised are treated as restricted and applied for the Hospice part of the Charity's work.

Skanda Vale is a sanctuary for life.

Worship of God in his Universality is recognising and serving the embodied divinity in all of life and creation. The many animals and plants that are part of the Community provide an opportunity for both the monastic Community and the general public to discover and serve God not only in fellow human beings, but also in all aspects of life and nature. It is therefore a policy of the Charity to provide all necessary facilities, veterinary care, feed, and any other related items to ensure all animals under the care of the Community receive the highest possible quality of life from their birth, through life, health and sickness, to their natural death.

HOW OUR ACTIVITIES DELIVER PUBLIC BENEFIT

Public Worship

The Community of the Many Names of God is committed to holding and facilitating daily public worship in the three temples maintained at Skanda Vale, promoting religious harmony to the public. In the main temple, the world's major religions are represented and treated with equal reverence and respect.

Generally six services are held each day, starting at 5.00am, with the last service being at 9pm. Two of the temples are opened for worship at specific times, whilst the Sri Ranganatha Temple and Guru's Samadhi are always open, enabling pilgrims to benefit from personal contemplation and prayer at any time during their visit to Skanda Vale.

Pilgrims are encouraged to visit as families and make best use of the opportunity for worship, towards which the Community provides free prasad (blessed food) and accommodation. The daily timetable of religious services is structured to give pilgrims time to experience worship in all three temples and enjoy the beautiful grounds, animals and natural environment of the monastery. Members of the resident monastic Community are always available to assist pilgrims in whatever way possible and the Swamis are on hand to give spiritual counselling. Highlights of the year are focused around the main religious festivals of different faiths and traditions.

Development of Facilities and Services

Emphasis is placed on extending hospitality to all members of the public coming to Skanda Vale. The Community has an ongoing program to maintain and improve facilities at the monastery, to adequately support the orderly running of an organisation that caters for an annual congregation of 90,000 visiting pilgrims.

Education

The Community makes every effort to engage with pilgrims and their families through dialogue and 'satsang', drawing upon the spiritual inspiration and experience of our lives, educating people on how to develop a living, vibrant partnership with God.

During the course of the year, members of the Community lead a total of five spiritual seminars in Switzerland, hosted by the Swiss Association of Skanda Vale, a financially separate organisation to the Community of the Many Names of God that shares the same spiritual values.

This annual program of seminars provides an invaluable opportunity for people to learn how to develop a partnership with God in their everyday lives. All travel and living expenses for the Community members involved in the seminars are sponsored by the Swiss Association.

The Community welcomes a number of educational groups throughout the year, with students from various universities coming to stay at the monastery for a week, to participate in daily Community life. The students have the opportunity to visit Skanda Vale Hospice and experience the spiritual life and work of the Community in a different context.

We also offer day visits to a broad range of different groups. Trainee priests and lay preachers come to experience how people of different religions can worship together. School groups studying Hinduism come to learn more about the basics of the religion, and have an opportunity to join in a puja and take aarthi and prasad. Groups of children with profound learning difficulties have also benefitted from being in the temple, and meeting some of our animals. We also have groups of religious studies teachers come to experience how different religions can co-exist side by side. Members of the Community are on hand to guide people around the monastery, answer their questions and help show people that God can be more than a belief or philosophical concept, but an exciting way of life.

Direct Food Aid

As a result of the generosity of the large numbers of visiting pilgrims, the Community is able to work with local, national, and international charities to supply Food Aid. Local charities include Women's Aid, Mind and Home Start, to whom we donate around one tonne of fresh and dried food every year. Further afield, The Community work with Fare Share in London and Bristol, and the Huggard drop in centre in Cardiff to help feed the homeless and vulnerably housed – these charities receive a combined figure of around six tonnes of food each year.

Our main charitable partnership is with Feed the Children, to whom we donate an average of 60 tonnes of dried pulses, rice and flour every year. The food is sent to those in need in Sri Lanka, Uganda, Ethiopia, Liberia, or anywhere else in the world. In total the Community donates approximately 80 tonnes of food throughout the year.

Skanda Vale Hospice Day Care Centre

The Hospice is open five days a week from Monday to Friday. Opening times are from 9.30am to 4.00pm, but can be flexible to suit the needs of patients. All care, meals, refreshments, facilities and complementary therapy treatments are provided free of charge.

The facilities available on a daily basis include a high level of one-to-one personal care, assisted bathing, a large selection of quality food and refreshments to suit individual choices and dietary needs, two purpose built rest rooms, reflexology, aromatherapy, massage, a range of activities and the hospice garden. The monks and nuns are available to discuss spiritual matters if requested by the patients. If patients require any nursing tasks these are currently provided by their district nurse who is able to use the facilities at the hospice.

The hospice is staffed on a daily basis by a trained and experienced core care team and manager from the Community. The Day Care Centre

has also provided an opportunity for members of the public to become involved on a voluntary basis helping with administration, fundraising, cleaning and gardening and also providing additional company for the patients. It is a policy of the Charity that all volunteers that work with vulnerable adults are subject to enhanced criminal records checks.