



cambridge university  
mindfulness society

**Freshers' Handbook**

# Welcome!

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## About us

The Mindfulness Society welcomes **all students, staff, and non-university members** to participate in weekly meditations, activities, discussions, and informal social events centred on the practice of mindfulness. The Society will have something for you whether you are returning to mindfulness practice or want to discover it and learn from scratch.

Cambridge University is **one of the first Universities** to offer free meditation courses to its students, and the Mindfulness Society provides a community that facilitates ongoing mindfulness practice for people from these courses and elsewhere.

Mindfulness meditation is a **secular meditation method** that harnesses the natural human qualities of awareness and kindness, both for yourself and for others. It has become increasingly popular among students and it is proven to help with concentration, productivity, and stress reduction.

Every week during term we offer a meditation session **led by an experienced teacher**. We also have visiting experts in the field on topics from neuroscience and lucid dreaming to nature conservation, Buddhist philosophy, tai chi and more—as well as social activities such as mindful dinners, games, and walks.

Online:

[www.cumindfulness.co.uk](http://www.cumindfulness.co.uk) - [facebook.com/cumindfulness](https://facebook.com/cumindfulness)



## What is mindfulness?

### Mindfulness is...

- A well-researched and effective approach to improving well-being
- An entirely secular approach to meditation
- A natural human impulse to be aware, alert and centred
- An umbrella term for practices which develop these qualities

### Benefits include...

- Clearer and calmer body and mind (thinking and emotions)
- Resourceful responses to stress and anxiety
- Staying alert, aware and focused under pressure
- Feeling more confident and resilient
- Growing understanding of yourself and others

### Mindfulness involves...

- Learning a series of short secular meditations
- Developing a regular 'practice' (much like learning a language, musical instrument, or going to the gym)
- Attending a mindfulness course, such as the ones offered in our current timetable
- Time and willingness to practice between 15-30 minutes daily

Magdalene College, Benson Room Wednesdays 7.30pm – 9:00pm		
1	Wednesday 16 October	<b>Keeping Healthy Perspectives</b> Simon McKibbin <i>Mindfulness In the face of planetary threat</i>
2	Wednesday 23 October	<b>Mindful Mindset for Sports Success</b> Rachel Findler <i>Professional extreme skier ranked 3rd in the world tells exhilarating stories from the mountains, with meditations to grasp the mindful athlete mindset</i>
3	Wednesday 30 October	<b>Deep Ecology: 'The Work that Reconnects'</b> Anna McIvor <i>Exploring our connection to ourselves, each other and the world around us</i>
4	Wednesday 6 November	<b>Staying Mindful in Autumn &amp; Winter</b> Claire Thompson <i>Bringing mindfulness into the colder, darker seasons of the year, including short night walk outside</i>
5	Wednesday 13 November	<b>Love Me, Love My Dog</b> Simon McKibbin <i>Looking at deep connections and how that can spread through the world</i>
	Friday 15 November <b>Pembroke College 7:30pm</b>	<b>Mindfulness and Music</b> Greg Drott and Elizabeth English <i>Greg conjures your responses to the natural world into music, spontaneously improvised – special event in Old Library, Pembroke College</i>
6	Wednesday 20 November	<b>Lucid Dreaming as a Pathway to Empowerment</b> Charlie Morley <i>How dreaming with more awareness builds confidence in ourselves, and our power to change the world</i>
7	Wednesday 27 November	<b>Heffers Games Night</b> <i>A combo evening with Heffers Bookshop! Boardgames especially chosen for mindful minds... with nibbles n' fun</i>
8	Wednesday 4 December	<b>Keep inspired – Meeting the Mindfulness Society!</b> <i>Your mindfulness committee, and teachers Come and meet us for pre-Christmas mindful inspiration</i>

## Sessions

Anyone can drop in on one of our weekly sessions by paying a **one-off fee**, to try out meditation or just see what the society is like. This can be paid at the door (cash only):

- £3 (students)
- £5 (university staff and non-members)

## Membership

Buy a fabulous **year's membership** for access to all events at nearly 75% discount (still a bargain if you buy in Easter term!), plus a free mindfulness app **MindPilot**:

- £20 (students)
- £30 (staff, non-members)

## PAYMENT

To pay for your membership, put through an online payment to the Mindfulness Society bank account (details below) and contact us to confirm your payment at [mindfulnesssociety@cusu.cam.ac.uk](mailto:mindfulnesssociety@cusu.cam.ac.uk)

- Name: CU Mindfulness Society
- Sort Code: 20-17-20
- Bank account: 43014029
- Reference: Member - CRSID [or surname]

Committee members receive free entry: see information on the following page.

## Life membership

Coming soon



## Committee roles

If you want to be more involved, why not join the lively committee? Members can take on different roles and help the society grow.

If you're tempted, a great option is to first become a **Supporting Officer**. This grants you **free entry to all events** simply for committing in advance to attend a number of sessions.

Plus, you get to spend more time with lovely, mindful people!

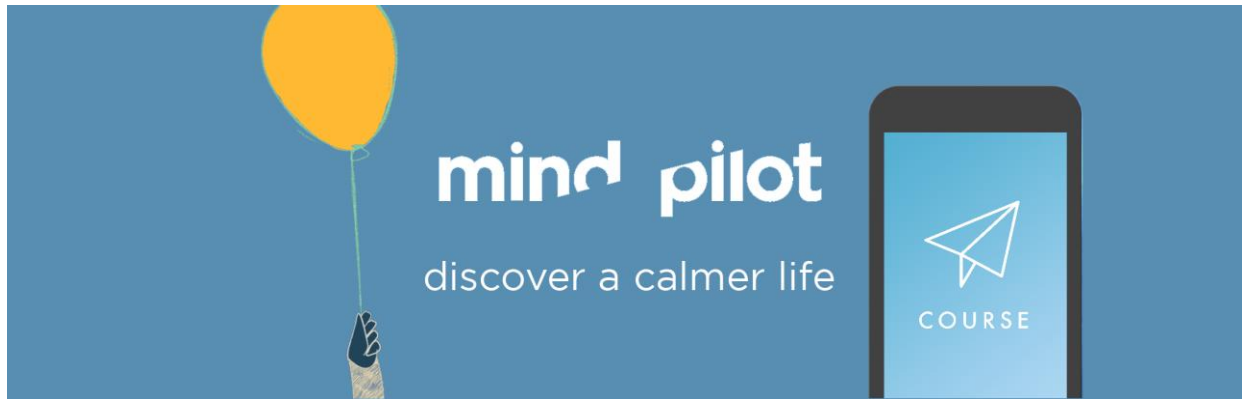
If you are interested, contact the university mindfulness practitioner Dr Elizabeth English at [elizabeth.english@admin.cam.ac.uk](mailto:elizabeth.english@admin.cam.ac.uk).

## The 2019-20 committee

Roles may be created, changed, and have several officers

- **President:** Hakan
- **Secretary:** Caryn
- **Treasurer:** Botty
- **Committee Mum:** Naomi
- **Supporting officers:** Several, TBC
- **Staff support:** Dr Elizabeth English
- **Mindfulness after Cam:** Parastoo
- **Communications:** Caryn, Naomi
- **Sponsorship Officer:** TBC
- **Webmaster:** Hakan

On behalf of our sponsor:

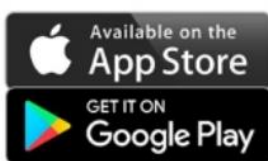


## Download the MindPilot app for free today

Learn to harness the powerful skill of Mindfulness

Boost your energy levels and focus, reduce stress and anxiety, and achieve your goals. Experience the benefits that meditation can bring to your daily life with just a few minutes' practice a day.

(1) **Install** the app and register on it, (2) **email** [help@mindpilot.com](mailto:help@mindpilot.com) using your CU email address\*, (3) **review the app** as a 'thank you' in the App Store or Play Store, and (4) **enjoy the app** – MindPilot will confirm your *free* lifetime access within two weeks.



1

DOWNLOAD  
APP



2

CONFIRM  
REGISTRATION



3

REVIEW APP



4

GAIN LIFETIME  
APP ACCESS

*\*If you are a non-student member of the society, send a polite request to MindPilot.*



## Mindfulness at Cambridge

Other than the student-run Mindfulness Society, there's a range of information and courses available to you in terms of mindfulness as a Cambridge student.

Mindfulness often proves helpful to students, supporting their wellbeing and ability to study.

The University of Cambridge wishes to support students to learn mindfulness by offering classes free of charge to any student affiliated to a Cambridge University College.

On the website you will find:

- Termly timetables & bookings
- Research & evidence about the effects of mindfulness
- Information about the course book and other resources

Visit: [www.cambridgestudents.cam.ac.uk/welfare-and-wellbeing/mindfulness-cam](http://www.cambridgestudents.cam.ac.uk/welfare-and-wellbeing/mindfulness-cam)



## Frequently asked questions

### *Is meditation the same as relaxation?*

You may find overlaps with other hobbies or disciplines which encourage awareness, such as some kinds of sports, creative work such as writing or music, bodywork practices (e.g. yoga or tai chi), contemplative prayer, and emotional or psychological self-reflection. However, every different system holds its gems. It is likely that you will discover something new and different in the mindfulness approach (if only because you are also doing it in this particular situation, at this time, with this teacher).

### *Does meditation involve emptying my mind?*

You may experience moments of clarity and calm, in which thoughts quieten down and dissolve. However, meditation always involves and includes your thinking capacity. Mindfulness is about learning to accept what happens inside you in a self-accepting way, not getting rid of it or suppressing it.

### *Do I need to sit cross-legged?*

The University of Cambridge course is taught seated on chairs. If you would like to try using a stool or cushion, you can ask advice from the teacher. In general, you can practise meditation seated or lying on your back. The principle is that you are aiming to "fall awake", not fall asleep. A relaxed but alert and dignified position is ideal.

### *Suppose I experience strange symptoms? Can meditation ever cause damage?*

Some people experience interesting things when they meditate. Many of these are completely normal, and often enjoyable. For example, you may feel unusual body sensations; some people experience vivid imagery. Meditation is about discovering what is already within you, and listening to it more deeply in a caring, non-judgemental way. If you have fears that your thoughts and emotions will overwhelm you when you meditate, it may not be the right time for you to learn mindfulness meditation. If in doubt, please talk it over with your college nurse or tutor before you start the course. If you are worried about your experience as you start to meditate regularly, please contact your meditation teacher (Elizabeth English, term time only) on [mindfulness@admin.cam.ac.uk](mailto:mindfulness@admin.cam.ac.uk).