

Padmaloka annual report for the Surlingham Parish Council

This report covers the period January 1st – December 31st, 2017.

Founded in 1976, Padmaloka is a Buddhist semi-monastic religious community, temple, seminary and charity run by members of the Triratna Buddhist Order. There are fourteen of us who currently live at Padmaloka. Although we live as one community, we work in two teams, the Ordination team who lead most of the retreats and oversee people's Buddhist training; and the Support team who take care of the day-to-day running of the place. Those living at Padmaloka are either Ordained members of the Triratna Buddhist order, or those in training to join the Order. The purpose of Padmaloka is to provide all who come here with the best possible conditions to transform their lives in the light of the Buddhist tradition. The bulk of our retreats are for men training to join the Triratna Buddhist Order.

2017 was my first year as Padmaloka chairman, taking over from Aryapala (who some of you knew as Mark).

One of the challenges we faced in 2017 (and still do) is the level of development in the village and the impact increased noise has on our religious observances. The Covey being particularly sensitive as it's next to our shrine room where the bulk of our silent meditation and devotional rituals take place.

Another ongoing challenge for us has been the upkeep of all the old buildings we are responsible for and the need to upgrade outdated facilities. In 2017 we were able to achieve this in several areas, most notably installing solar thermal hot water panels and replacing single glazed windows with wood framed double glazing. Looking forward there are many other upgrades that need to take place, particularly ensuring accessibility. We have increasing numbers of older people involved with our tradition and some of dormitory accommodation (particularly those that contain bunk beds) just isn't suitable.

Whilst we need to upgrade our facilities, we are loathe to raise our prices as we are keen to ensure that people are not excluded from the religious training on offer due to their financial circumstances, to this end we also provide a bursary fund.

We ran a full programme of retreats, 38 in total, mostly for men training to join our order, but also for those already Ordained and those simply looking to take their practice of the Buddhist faith deeper.

The community also helped support activities at Buddhist Centres round the UK and Europe.

As ever there was a lot of change in the community, but a high degree of continuity was maintained in terms of the harmony and culture of friendship that exists in the Padmaloka community.

Robin and Will received their invitations to attend the 2018 four-month Ordination course in course where they will be Ordained in to the Triratna Buddhist Order.

We continued to do what we can for the village which included:

- Cutting back our boundary hedges to help improve pedestrian access to the verge on The Green, where neighbours have expressed concern about speeding.
- Painting the playground fence.
- Litter picking
- Volunteering at the school fayre and donating goods to it.

- Volunteering at a work afternoon at the school.
- Donating Padmaloka bread for the Winter Fayre at the church.
- Hosting a series of meditation classes for the village, the proceeds of which were donated to the Ted Ellis Trust.
- We continued to do what we could to support Sylvia and the Post-Office in general. This included having Sylvia round for dinner and giving her a lift to doctors' appointments.

Best wishes to all,

Dh. Sanghanistha
Padmaloka Chairman