



# Ananda Kutir Ashrama

*serve . love . give . purify . meditate . realise*

Affiliated to the Divine Life Society, Rishikesh, India

**ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING held on  
Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> May 2018 at 14:30**

## MINUTES

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### 1. OPENING PRAYER

Swami Vidyananda opened the meeting with a prayer. Mother Yogeshwari led a special prayer for Swami Parvathiananda who was going to leave Perth, Australia to come back to Cape Town.

### 2. WELCOME

Vani (Chairperson) welcomed all to the meeting.

### 3. ATTENDANCE

Mother Yogeshwari	Swami Vidyananda	Vani
Deonath Punwassi	Damyanti Gajjar	Daya Naidu
Shanti Roopnarain	Kamala Wengrowe	Kavi Makan
Sri Guru Krishna	Maitri Makan	Devi Harker
Uma Edwards	Yogakirtee Meyer	Priti Lewis
Mother Priya	Karuna Whitebread	Elsa Oliver
Santosh van der Merwe	Ravi Liebman	Natie Uren
Sukha Allerton	Hamsa Felbert	
Priyanka Makan		

### Apologies

Eleanor Strassner	Jennifer Stephens
Joan Lilley	Nishani Punwassi
Jill Woods	Rosemary Frith
Lalita Magan	Sandra Smith
Natividade Rodrigues	PatsyAnne Johnson
Rukmini Miller	Tina Goodchild
Lina Dilraj	Suren Dilraj
Swami Parvathiananda	Gang Naidoo

The members present constituted a quorum.

**4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF AGM HELD ON 20<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2017**

The minutes of the previous year's Annual General meeting were taken as read, approved and signed.

**5. DANCE ITEM BY MAITRI AND PRIYANKA MAKAN**

Maitri and her daughter Priyanka rendered a very beautiful Indian classical dance item. It was both in the Bharatanatyam and Taarini style of dance.

**6. AMENDMENT OF CONSTITUTION - SWAMI VIDYANANDA**

Swamiji opened with a prayer. Thanked the sub-committee, especially Kavi Makan for what is almost a total rewrite of the existing constitution. Procedural flaws led to discussions around the "Spiritual Head" as set out in the existing constitution. A special sub-committee meeting was held at which the role and title was debated and decided upon.

- ❖ Currently General Secretary is part of the Management Committee.
- ❖ Constitution – the Mothers remain "Spiritual Heads" also after they have passed away.
- ❖ The role of General Secretary and Spiritual Head to be combined into one - Secretary General.
- ❖ Secretary General to be a position on the board of Trustees.
- ❖ Whilst the Mothers are alive, one of them will be elected as Secretary General.
- ❖ After the Mothers' demise the Secretary General will be elected by the Trustees.

Clauses are in line with NPO Act. However, Clause 32 was questioned and it was agreed that 3.3.1 (page 24) must be changed to add "General Meeting". One of the Trustees needed clarity to whether – one of the founding members would become "Secretary General" and if this was suitable. This question was raised at a recent Trustee meeting where it was recommended that one of the "Spiritual Heads" should not be the "Secretary General".

They felt that Swami Vidyananda would be best placed to carry out the general running of the ashram and they were not fully decided on the role of Spiritual Head and General Secretary being one person. They felt the duties of the ashram would be too much for the Mothers.

As this point was unfortunately not brought to the attention of the General Secretary or the sub-committee – it led to a lengthy discussion with clarity being provided around the roles of a "Spiritual Head" and "Secretary General". At the member's workshop it had been agreed that these are not two separate roles. Therefore the sub-committee decided that one of our existing Spiritual Heads will be appointed as the "Secretary General", following a vote by the current Board of Trustees. In this way the Trustees will appoint the Secretary General, following the adoption of the new amended constitution.

In the event of the Secretary General passing away, the role will fall to the remaining Spiritual Head, namely Mother Yogeshwari or Swami Parvathiananda. While the Secretary General's role encompasses both spiritual and administrative aspects, provision has been brought in so that all duties and functions to be delegated.

Another question was raised around what would happen if the Secretary

General was unable or incapable of fulfilling his/her duties effectively. Allowance for this has been made in the constitution and the relevant clause was highlighted.

Swami Vidyananda assured that the outcome was not to have a split. The Mothers will not do the work; he (SV) always consults the mothers on all matters relating to the ashram. The founding members will be in authority. The importance of communication between the management structures of the ashram was highlighted.

The constitution should be mutual, it's the blueprint of how AKA runs. A unanimous decision was then taken to adopt the amended constitution. Mother Yogeshwari was asked by the Trustee member if she was happy. Swami Vidyananda shared some of his reflections and thoughts on the "SPIRITUAL HEAD".

- ❖ Spiritual head represents Guru Principal. The danger is expectations placed on an elected spiritual head. Expectations raise conflict. The elected person may not live up to all the expectations. Many may not be attached to a future head; will they be able to adopt the new person. If there is no spiritual head, it allows everyone the freedom to seek guidance from those they choose.
- ❖ Appointment of Spiritual authority – are they a disciple or student. Are they related to spiritual head – there is no point to a spiritual head if there is no "discipleship" in one's actions. When we see someone as a spiritual authority, there is a shift in focus needed – am I being a disciple. More important is "discipleship". If discipleship is there, then it does not matter what the other is labelled as.
- ❖ AKA should be a community that supports one another even the "Secretary General".
- ❖ Swami Vidyananda led the chant of Hymn no 91 from book 10 of the Rig Veda.

## 7. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Vani presented the Chairman's report, summarising the key activities and all the events that took place over the past year. Highlight of this past year was the celebration of Mother Yogeshwari's "50 Years of SEVA (1967 – 2017)" to the community.

Sri Swami Padmanabhanandaji Maharaj, General Secretary of the Divine Life Society, Rishikesh was invited as the special guest.

The book "Conversations with Mother Yogeshwari" was also launched.

Swami Vidyananda also did a trip to India at Swami Padmanabhanandaji invitation to accompany him to Andhra Pradesh visiting the Shanti Ashram. This trip was taken in January 2017.

Ongoing weekly ashram activities continue with Satsangs, Meditation classes, Bhagavad Gita classes; Hatha Yoga; spiritual events and observance of spiritual days.

Maintenance is on-going, the bigger project being the paving around the pillar area in front and the parking area.

Vani thanked all those who offer Seva. **[See full report attached.]**

## 8. TREASURER'S REPORT

Deonath presented the financials report for 2017/2018. He explained the total assets and equity values have reduced on the balance sheet for the 2018 financial year compared to 2017. The main reason for this was an active decision taken to spend money on maintenance, to clear up some of the maintenance backlog and there were projects that fell into the "urgent" bracket due to safety concerns and water crisis.

The Outreach account also shows a higher spends, but there is no cause for alarm as there is enough liquidity.

The overall financial position for both AKA and Outreach is a healthy one.

Deonath thanked all who has supported the ashram during this period.

**[See full report attached.]**

Items that need to be actioned:

- ❖ **The name in the financials must be changed from "Ananda Kutir Education Foundation" to Ananda Kutir Ashrama.**
- ❖ **A formal thank you letter to Pavin Vassen and company for their valuable assistance and preparation of the annual financial reports.**

## 9. APPROVAL OF ANNUAL FINANCIAL STATEMENTS AND APPOINTMENT OF ACCOUNTING OFFICER

The financial statements were officially approved and signed by Vani and Deonath Punwassi, and the reappointment of Vassen Bros as the accounting officer was confirmed. **A copy of the financial statements is attached.**

## 10. BHAJAN

Swami Vidyanda presented a beautiful classical Indian Bhajan, accompanied by Maitri on table.

## 11. OUTREACH REPORT

Elsa Oliver presented the Ananda Kutir Outreach Report. As per the financial statements the Outreach account did show a higher spends.

The sandwich making still continues for the clinics, Crossroads, Phumlani, Macincedane and Brown's farm. Included in the support for the clinics the Outreach also did other events like Mandela day; Aids day; Nurse's day; handing out blankets; food hampers; and children's toys for the Xmas drive. Supporting the Stormont Madubela School is an ongoing programme by the Outreach members and volunteers. They also had some extra fund-raising drives so that children could attend graduation camps during the December holidays.

Other activities include bread donation weekly to Haven's Nest Children Home and Church of Reconciliation.

Elsa gave some heartfelt thanks all who give off their time, thoughts and energy to support the Ananda Kutir Outreach Project. **[See full report attached.]**

## 12. MESSAGE FROM MOTHER YOGESHWARI

Mother Yogeshwari thanked all who participate in all of the Ashram activities and make a contribution.

She then read a poem and sang a delightful song.

## 13. ANANDA KUTIR EDUCATION TRUST REPORT

Maitri presented the report by introducing her team:

Karuna Whitebread – Treasurer

Swami Vidyananda – SH

Kavi Makan – Secretary General

Amit Makan – Marketing

Triveni Fredericks – Fundraiser

Devi Harker – Administrator

Juliet – School assistant.

AKET is registered as an NPO. COLT is a project of AKET – offering free quality education to children.

The school officially commenced on 17<sup>th</sup> October 2017. Currently it serves the children from the Hadji Ebrahim and Pooke Road informal settlements. These children are exposed to neglect, abuse and constant change. They are extremely traumatised and developmentally delayed due to their living conditions.

As teachers, Maitri, Devi and Juliet found the children quiet challenging and other methods of teaching had to be explored.

The Waldorf and Montessori Education Philosophy is currently being implemented which is proving to be fruitful as the children are beginning to feel secure, to play and explore.

Every effort is made to protect the children, and for now they have “hope and smile “.

**[See full report attached.]**

Swami Vidyananda congratulated Maitri, Devi and Juliet for their patience, courage and every effort made working with these special children.

## 14. COMMUNITY YOGA CLASSES

Kamala Wengrowe presented a report on two Community classes. The newer one being taught at the Maitland Town Hall was offered as seva by Devi Harker, in honour of Mother Yogeshwari’s 50 years of service. This class has been well received and is set to continue.

The Maitland Garden Village class has not run as smoothly due to a change in the teacher’s personal circumstances. Being unable to meet this commitment each week lead to a heavy reliance on Shanti Roopnarain, who co-teaches this class. The co-ordinator informed us that we will have more students this year.

Upon reassessing the situation, this class was stopped in September last year and teaching only resumed again March this year. To try and ensure continuity for the students, the team has been included a stand-in-teacher. Kamala thanked the team for their dedication, and expressed gratitude to Ananda Kutir and Anthea Parkinson for the offering of remedial yoga classes to the AKA’s yoga teachers. This course is particularly useful in teaching these community classes.

## 15. ELECTIONS

One resignation from the management committee was received - Amit Makan.

One new nomination was received – Mother Priya.

The management committee members were unanimously elected as follows:

Swami Vidyananda – Committee member	Vani (Chairperson)
Kamala Wengrowe (Vice – Chairman) (Treasurer)	Deonath Punwassi
Shanti Roopnarain (Secretary)	Maitri Makan (AKET)
Elsa Oliver (Outreach)	Kavi Makan
Pramila Koooverjee	Nishani Punwassi
Ravi Liebman	Mother Priya

## 16. MATTERS ARISING

- Residents of Ananda Kutir ashram should automatically be a member of the Management committee as opposed to them having to apply and pay for membership.

**To be discussed at Management Committee.**

- Guru Krishna requested that late Sri Vijaybhai Gianpersadh be remembered for his seva and contribution to the Ashram. His passing has left a huge void. Suggested a letter be forwarded to Sunitha.

Vani thanked all for members for their attendance and support. A special thank you to Damyanti Gajjar for co-ordinating the tea and refreshments.

## 17. CLOSING PRAYERS

Swami Vidyananda closed the meeting with a prayer.

The meeting was followed by tea and Satsang.