

ANANDA KUTIR ASHRAMA
COMMUNITY YOGA CLASSES

REPORT PREPARED FOR ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, MAY 2018

Last year we reported that we had been asked to introduce a second community class. This newer class started in February last year and is taught every Tuesday morning in the Maitland Town Hall. Devi Harker selected to teach this class as an offering of seva, in honour of Mother Yogeshwari's 50 years of service. The class has been very well received and is well supported. There are 12 enthusiastic students who regularly express how they benefit from regular attendance of these classes.

There have been similar 'teething problems' to those experienced in Maitland Garden Village (MGV). The building sees chunks of screed falling from the ceiling, leaks in winter, dirty floors, clutter from celebrations, windows that don't open, noise, change of team leaders every 3 months, etc. These initial problems have steadily been worked through.

The office administrators appear to have more defined job descriptions and are now very clear around what preparation is needed for these classes. This involves getting a registration form signed by all attending, making sure the room is clean, well-ventilated, etc. An unexpected knock-on effect is that their in preparing the hall is seen as a new skill which they have added to their CVs.

This class is well located and attracts students from various suburbs. The MGV class, in contrast, is made up of residents from the village which fits with the Green Light Project's goal of improving relationships within the village. So, this class forms part of an overall strategy to build more supportive relationships.

The MGV class has presented a few problems to teaching as my personal circumstances this year have demanded a refocusing of my time and energy. As a result I have relied very heavily on Shanti who agreed to co-teach this class last year. Shanti has covered many of my classes as well as her own and at some point was the only teacher in the village for a month, if not two. In August/September we postponed the classes indefinitely as my situation had not changed and this put pressure on our other commitments. We hadn't anticipated that the delay would be as long as we were only able to teach again in March this year. With such a long break I'd half expected that the class would not continue but the student co-ordinator informed us that there were 12 students who were keen that this class continue. So, while we have returned to teach in the village, the last few months is certainly not a story of regular practice!

We have expanded our small team to include a stand-in teacher who trained at Ananda Kutir many years ago and has since done level two of Iyengar training. This will hopefully go a long way to ensuring continuity of these classes.

Given the challenges of teaching in MGV this year, we have done some reflecting around what it means for us to teach in these communities. While these reflections don't form part of this report, I can say that in our attempt to make some of the benefits of Yoga accessible to those who would ordinarily not have the opportunity, there is a very steady stream of benefits that come our way. On the whole, it feels as if we gain so much more than we give.

Kamala Wengrowe