

Livingstone House Annual report 2018

This year has been dominated by the repairs and improvements to the house, to the endless debates on the future use of Livingstone House and the ill health and eventual departure to the spiritual world of our brother and gardener Hideo Suda and consequently the need for more staff to help manage the building its gardens and activities. Financially the building continues to be self-sufficient with a small profit being generated which is being used to improve the interior of the building over time.

Repairs to the masonry on the tower above the main entrance and 7 Chimneys has now begun with scaffolding being erected around the front of the building and over the roof. This is expected to take several months into the new year to complete. The process of planning, organizing and contracting this work has taken a considerable part of the year. This is the first part of the repairs that the building's main structure will require over the next few years. More repairs to the roof will need doing next, although this work isn't urgent, the sooner it is completed the better. It is important to note that no major structural work has been done on the building for at least 30 years.

At the same time, we have upgraded 9 Bathroom/toilets in the house many of which needed a complete rebuild and major replumbing work. The corridor "landing" floor outside of the ballroom is presently having a new wooden laminate floor installed as the carpet was old and thread-bare and the underlying floorboards needed attention. This is a high traffic area so needs to look presentable and be durable. High quality commercial/industrial standard materials are being used as has been our policy with all the other repairs that we have carried out in the house. Unfortunately, many of the repairs being undertaken are a result of domestic standard materials being used and poor workmanship from the past. Our goal is to slowly but surely improve the building so that it can continue to serve the movement for many years to come.

Livingstone House continues to be very busy as we try to keep a balance between the business and church use of the building. The business use is still mainly renting to Yoga, Pilates, Mother and toddler groups as well as the antenatal classes run by the National Child Birth Trust. We have regular longstanding classes running 5 days a week with between 150 and 200 non-unificationist people using the building every week.

The local Bromley Unification church uses the building all day Sunday, for Holy days and meetings and activities. The number of national and regional level workshops that we have hosted this year has increased greatly.

The number of members living in the building has remained fairly constant with our ability to take more, limited by the lack of kitchens that can be used by them. We are hoping to address this in the coming year.

In conclusion Livingstone House is a very busy place and the limiting factor to it being busier is not the building itself but the number of staff employed. We are constantly turning both business and church events away because we do not have the manpower to cope with everything. If there are any members interested to train and work in bringing Livingstone House to its full potential, then please contact me.

Clive Pollitt, Manager., Livingstone House.