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Auroville Bulletin 25

AVFO Takes over Town Hall and the Auroville Archives, Results of the Selection Process and Legal Updates

A Summary of Events Happening in Auroville Today

28th June 2022

*Note: There are **important actions** to take at the end of each Bulletin, if you are reading on your phone you may need to click 'see more' to view the entire bulletin.*

ACUR (Town Hall) taken over by AVFO

On 21st June, an [Office Order](#) was issued by the Office of the Secretary, Auroville Foundation (AVFO) informing the Auroville Centre for Urban Research (ACUR) executives - the team that manages Town Hall - that they have been removed and replaced by a team approved by the AVFO. The previous executive & management team, Anne-Marie, Donata and Laxmanan were removed and replaced by Lieve (ATDC Administration), Venkatesh (Housing) and Balu Kuppasamy. The reason given for the takeover was that the “ACUR team had been directed to hand over the keys of the Working Committee office rooms on 12-05-22. No effective action was taken or responded to the request”. As ACUR are responsible for allocating the office space in Town Hall, the AVFO may now restrict access to the Town Hall by any of the Working Groups recently selected by the Residents’ Assembly.

On 27th June, the FAMC computer equipment was removed without warning. Additionally, one of the new ACUR Executives (Lieve Claes) has possession of all the keys to the Town Hall complex, so that anyone wishing to access any of the spaces in Town Hall now has to make a direct request to her. This also includes spaces which are meant for cultural purposes such as Cinema Paradiso.

Auroville Archives taken over by AVFO

On 22nd June, the Auroville Archives were [taken over](#) by the AVFO through [an Office Order](#). This Office Order, similar to the previous ones, is “issued with the approval of the competent authority” without specifying who this authority is.

The Auroville Archives were initiated by General K.K Tewari in 1991 to record the challenges and progressive growth of Auroville. The historical records have been meticulously collected by a number of Aurovilians over the past 50 years. Gilles Guigan, who has spent years compiling the Mother’s words on Auroville, was among the management team dismissed by the recent Office Order.

The new management of the Archives are Muriel Ghion and a non-Aurovillian, Varun Kapur, both of whom are active supporters of the Secretary, Dr Jayanti Ravi. The written documentation of Auroville’s entire history along with photos, videos and artifacts are now potentially at risk.

The Office Order also states that there have been requests by the Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Education, UNESCO desk and other institutions to source photos, videos

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Archives team who diligently managed the Archives until now.

Results of the selection process announced

This weekend (25th & 26th June), the Selection Process for the Working Groups took place using the new RA-approved selection methodology. This Selection Process is conducted annually and aims at filling the vacancies in the 'Participatory Working Groups', which are Working Groups of the Residents' Assembly. These new teams, made up of ongoing members and newly appointed members (in **bold**), are:

AV Council: Balaji, Claudine, **Julia**, **Philippe**, **Samrat**, Shiva, Shivaya, Suryan, **Svenja**

AV Town Development Council: **Allan B**, **Anan**, **Divya L**, **Dorle**, **Fabian O**, **Island L**, **Lata**, **Meera**, **Natasha**, **Tom**

Entry Board: Alain S, **Aurore**, Dheena, Jayanthi, Lakshmanan, Matriprasad Matilde, Ramanarayana, Swadha

Funds & Assets Management Committee (FAMC): Amy, **Bobby P**, **Danny**, **Elodie**, **Mita R**, Palani M, Ranjithkumar

Working Committee: **Aravinda**, **Bharathy**, **Chali**, Hemant, **Maël**, Sauro, **Valli**

The detailed results of the Selection Process can be found [here](#).

Important to note: There has been no comment thus far from the AVFO or the AVFO endorsed 'Working Groups' on the selection process.

Other Updates and Information

Serendipity room demolished

On the morning of 24th June, a room at Serendipity guest house as well as a bamboo thicket was cleared on the orders of the Governing Board (GB) endorsed 'ATDC'.

Meeting notes & updates from GB approved 'Working Groups'

In the past week, [meeting notes](#) from a joint meeting of the GB endorsed groups that are claiming to be the WCom, the FAMC & the ATDC were released, along with an [update](#) posted on Auronet by the GB endorsed 'ATDC'. The notes express a resolve to push forward with the Governing Board's directives without collaboration with the Resident's Assembly. There is no mention of the National Green Tribunal (NGT) verdict which ruled that there must be Environmental Impact Assessment carried out by a Joint Committee. Nor is there an indication that any of the recent Residents' Assembly decision-making processes (RADs) will be respected.

Update on legal case by the WCom

The WCom have released a [massbulletin](#) to update the community about the legal cases against the AVFO, and the 6 FIRs that have been filed by the AVFO against some of their members and other Aurovilians. They clarify that going to court to protect the rights of the RA to form working groups was a last resort after trying all other options.

Previously anticipatory bail was granted to the Aurovilians who have been given FIR's in Chennai High Court. Yesterday on 27th July, the details for posting the surety for bail were handed to the local court with two volunteers per person volunteering to stand as guarantors.

The WCom has had difficulty communicating with the community via massbulletin since the AVFO took over the main channels of communication in Auroville and blocked the @auroville.services domain that is now being used by the RA-endorsed groups. The massbulletin contained the following information about how to ensure that you can receive information from WCom.

- Subscribe to Wcom's mailing lists using non-auroville email IDs via this link: <https://forms.gle/n5dTTthnekpzfdsgs7>
- **Massbulletin Telegram channel: mass bulletins and other important messages to be transmitted. To join this channel, install the Telegram application and join using this link <https://t.me/+H3mX73hLJ9w3MjJI>**
- To contact the Auroville massbulletin team write to avmassbulletin@auroville.services with CC to avmassbulletin@gmail.com

Changing the narrative

Article by Rod Hemsell

Long read: A recent [article](#) by Rod Hemsell on competing narratives.

Action needed

- **Support the Working Groups:** Show support to the new Working Groups members and the RAS for the work they are doing in these intense times. If you have any specific skill that you can offer as a resource person, please write to the relevant Working Groups.
- **Call for financial support:** If you would like to contribute towards legal and delegations please email evolvingalaxy@gmail.com.

About us

We are a group of Aurovilians who are actively involved in understanding the current crisis situation in Auroville in order to find a way forward together.

We stand for:

- Respecting our community processes for decision-making

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- Transparency and fairness in the organisation of Auroville
- Creating unity with our diverse voices

Please note that the website <https://standforaurovilleunity.com/> contains a great deal of information and a detailed timeline.

With regard to future actions, those who have particular skills such as writing, social media, film editing etc. are welcome to write to evolvinggalaxy@gmail.com.

Please also share your thoughts and suggestions by replying to this email.

We hope this has been helpful. Let's keep working to find a way to bring us closer together to the beautiful dream of human unity in Auroville. We can do it ... together.

For those who have had previous technical problems receiving the Bulletin, the list of all previous Bulletin issues is accessible here: <https://linktr.ee/evolvinggalaxy>

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