

Strategic Priority (8) – Head office

Aim:

- Create a supportive, dynamic, and impact-focused spiritual environment.

Objectives:

- Ensure all staff are fully supported and adequately trained to fulfil their roles.
- Develop a culture of collaborative working and co-production.
- Realign, deploy or second staff to fulfil the mission and purpose of the organisation as a church, charity, and corporation.



Through the fire

We have returned to the office, but many things have changed.

by Pastor Eglan Brooks,

President of the British Union Conference

*'Some through the water,
Some through the flood,
Some through the fire –
But all through the blood.'*

(G. A. Young, 'God Leads His Dear Children Along')

On 16 November 2008, the former British Union Conference head office went up in flames. In January 2011, staff returned to the rebuilt office, which was dedicated on 13 March 2011 by the General Conference President, Pastor Ted Wilson.

From November 2008 to January 2011, the head office of the BUC was situated in an industrial estate in Frogmore, just outside St Albans. We moved from a building with individual offices to open-plan offices. Some people disliked this new arrangement due to lack of privacy, but working in such proximity forced us to collaborate. Lunchtime walks together through the surrounding woodlands were a daily addition to our work schedule, and carpooling was introduced. For me, it was one of the best times of my working life – there was a such a great family atmosphere.

Returning to the rebuilt and

contemporary building was also a joy. But we wondered: *This is the new BUC... I wonder if things are going to change?*

And, yes, our working lives returned to a sense of normality. The carpooling was no longer needed, and the lunchtime walks ceased. We settled into revised routines that mimicked life before the fire.

Head office in 2023

How should we operate in our head office in 2023?

In March 2020, the BUC offices were closed due to COVID-19. We have since returned to the office, but many things have changed. Flexi-working is in place for most staff. The Adventist Discovery Centre (ADC) and the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA), located in the head office, have adopted hybrid working models in keeping with contemporary working practices.

Continuing professional development

Our head office is adapting to the changing face of employment in the UK. We have already started the process of ensuring that our staff are adequately trained and prepared for these changes, and are committed to this process. Continuing professional development (CPD) is essential for staff to keep abreast of changing legislation, emerging business trends and technology.

Collaboration & co-production

During the aftermath of the 2008 fire, there was a sense of togetherness and family. This atmosphere should be revived and embedded into our DNA. Through the grace of Almighty God, we need to exemplify empowered Christian living and represent the Seventh-day Adventist Church and its values.

In addition to this, we are seeking to be more collaborative – department with department, conferences, missions, and institutions working together and producing resources that are relevant for the twenty-first century. Silo working and territorialism are not an option.

Realign, deploy, second

To fulfil our mission as a church and to ensure that we are complying with charity law and also our corporate responsibilities, it may be necessary at times to realign our internal structures, and/or deploy and second staff. These are governance decisions that will be rolled out by the Executive Committee with detailed consultations as appropriate.

Conclusion

As I conclude this article, I find myself looking out over the rolling landscape of Stanborough Park. The rain is light but steady, enhancing the beauty of our surroundings. Through the water of the daily challenges that we face as a church, charity and corporate body; through the flood of secularism; through the literal fire we experienced in 2008 – we praise God that, through His blood, He has kept us, and that we are here in 2023, willing to be His hands and feet in this world.