



# Swindon Hindu Temple Trust

(Charity Registration Number: 1158603)

## TRUSTEES' REPORT

The Trustees present their annual report and Financial Accounts of the Charity for the year ended 31 March 2021. The financial accounts have been prepared generally, in accordance with Accepted Accounting Practice.

## REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

**Charity Name:** Swindon Hindu Temple Trust

**Charity Registration Number:** 1158603

**Website:** [www.swindonhindutemple.com](http://www.swindonhindutemple.com)

**Email:** [swindonhindutemple@gmail.com](mailto:swindonhindutemple@gmail.com)

**Bankers:** Barclays Bank

### Board of Trustees

(who served during the year or up to the date of this report)

1. Mrs Neetu Bhardwaj
2. Mr Vinay Kumar
3. Mr Ram Thiagarajah
4. Mr Pradeep Bhardwaj
5. Mrs Nirupama Satish
6. Mr Suresha Gattapur

## STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

### Governing Document

Swindon Hindu Temple Trust is constituted as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) registered with the Charity Commission on 17<sup>th</sup> September 2014 under Charity Number 1158603. It is governed by a constitution/deed of trust last updated in Sep 2014.

### Organisational Structure

The Charity Trustees are responsible for the general control, management and governance of the Charity. The Trustees give their time, skills and services freely and receive no remuneration or financial benefits.

The Trustees meet together as a body on a regular basis and are responsible for all decisions taken in relation to running the Trust and the community facilities and activities provided by the charity.

## Recruitment and Appointment of Trustees

Seven (7) Trustees were appointed initially at the time of setting up the Trust in 2014. Currently there are six (6) Trustees. Appointment of Trustees was made taking into consideration their individuals' skills, expertise, variety of backgrounds, past contributions, commitment and availability to undertake the Trust's activities and duties. In selecting new trustees, we seek to identify people who have consistently demonstrated strategic leadership, vision & forward thinking, regularly contributed to the objectives of the Trust, attend events and functions organised by the charity and are willing to volunteer to help in our broader community work and main objectives of establishing and managing the Hindu Temple and Cultural Centre in Swindon. New trustees are appointed only after they have successfully demonstrated their eligibility, personal competence, contributions, commitment, availability, specialist knowledge and skills over a period of time. No new trustees were appointed in the reporting period. There were no resignations in the reporting period.

## Induction and Training of Trustees

Following appointment, new Trustees are introduced to their role, the governing document, aims of the Trust, policies of the charity and the guidance from Charity Commission on charities and public benefit. This ensures that the new Trustees are aware of the scope of their responsibilities under the Charities Act. All Trustees are given induction training. The Trustees are also encouraged to undertake other training such as Basic First Aid Training.

## Risk Management

The Trustees regularly assess the risks the charity faces, the nature of those risks, the likelihood of the risks occurring, and measures taken to manage them. The Trustees are satisfied that systems/arrangements are in place to manage the risks identified.

## AIMS & OBJECTIVES

### Aim

The aims of the charity are set out in the charity's deed of trust and summarised below:

To advance the Hindu faith in the Swindon area for the benefit of the public in particular through the holding of prayer meetings, lectures, public celebration of religious festivals.

To build and manage a Hindu Temple and Cultural Centre in Swindon.

To provide facilities for religious, social and cultural activities for the use of the public with the objective of improving the conditions of life for all residents of Swindon and the neighbourhood by the provision, maintenance and management of a community/cultural centre.

### Objectives

To promote Hindu Faith, its doctrines, its scriptures and practice Hindu beliefs through assembly, worship and discourse.

To establish, maintain and manage a Hindu Temple and Cultural Centre for religious, social, and cultural activities for the use of the public.

To offer facilities for religious functions and for performing religious rites (as per Hindu Faith) related to births, deaths and marriages for people of all faiths.

To provide a meeting place for Hindus and for others who are interested in Hinduism.

To advance traditional Hindu cultural activities, religious studies & performing arts.

To provide facilities for and actively co-ordinate social care, social interaction, friendship and goodwill among people in the wider community.

To form a charitable and educational organization to promote social, cultural, religious principles and practice.

To conduct educational programmes for children as well as adults based on Hindu values and traditions.

## PUBLIC BENEFIT

The objects of the Trust are the promotion of any charitable purposes for the benefit of all residents in the Borough of Swindon and any other exclusively charitable purposes which are in the opinion of the Trustees beneficial to the peoples of Swindon. The Trust offers facilities for religious, social and cultural activities for the use of the public and for thousands of Hindus in the region in particular who do not have any such facilities. Within a short period, the Trust has already made its presence felt within the wider community in several ways.

The Trustees confirm that they have referred to the guidance contained in the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit when reviewing the Aims and objectives and in planning future activities. The Trustees also confirm that they have complied with their duty to have due regard to the Charity Commission's public benefit guidance when exercising any powers or duties to which the guidance is relevant.

The charity carries out a wide range of activities in pursuance of its charitable aims. The Trustees consider that these activities provide benefits both to those who attend prayers/religious events and the wider community of Swindon. Detailed information is provided in the Activities and Achievements sections in this Report about how activities of the Trust further the charity's purposes for the public benefit. The immediate identifiable benefits are (1) the value to those who regularly participate in the worship and other events of the charity and to the wider community of Swindon of the Trust's work, and (2) how the facilities provided by the Trust are made available to Hindus and the faith of Hinduism is communicated to non-Hindus through its work and that any member of the wider community of Swindon can benefit from the Trust's facilities, and social, cultural, community & charitable activities.

## STRATEGIES ADOPTED

In order to carry out day to day activities of the of the Trust, several volunteers are identified with specific skill-sets required for the various activities. Swindon Hindu Temple & Cultural Centre continues to serves as the focal point within the region for all matters related to the Hindu faith and population in respect of their religious, cultural, social, community and charitable aspirations and endeavours.

## ACTIVITIES

During the reporting period, the Trust organised regular prayers, religious, social and community events, congregations and festivals at its own premises as well as many fundraising and charitable activities and provided free meals to the congregation at its events. Most of these events were well attended by people of all ages within the Hindu community. All the events organised by the Trust are free to attend for everyone.

The Trust has a significant online presence on website, email newsletter and social media like Facebook, Twitter and WhatsApp.

The Trust has also established excellent communication channels with the local government, press & media, and charitable sector to further the main objectives as well as part of a wider community integration. The Trust has worked very hard in last few years and has left no stone unturned in highlighting and bringing attention to the urgent needs of the vast Hindu population in the region.

The following activities are currently being run/planned:

- Regular prayers (satsang, aarti, havan, paath)
- Religious ceremonies
- Religious rites related to births, deaths, marriages, grah-pravesh, etc.
- Religious festivals
- Narration of religious scriptures
- Prerna- Inspiration discourse by prominent speakers across the world
- Regular sessions for the elderly people
- Chess Club
- Language Classes- Kannada, Gujarati and Hindi
- Wellbeing:
  - Daily Yoga classes
  - Regular Meditation classes
  - Weekly activity for children focusing mental and physical well-being
  - Weekly elderly club
  - Monthly ladies club

## ACHIEVEMENTS

The Trust has accomplished several milestones in a short period. The Trust has a good visibility into the local community and the local government. The Trust has now truly become the focal point of contact within the region for all matters related to the Hindu faith and population. In addition to the regular congregations, the Trust has also organised celebration of several Hindu festivals and important community events. Also, since it is now the only Hindu Temple in this region, there is a huge demand for regular school visits from both schools within and outside the area which the Temple has been very actively hosting on a frequent basis. In addition, the Trust also takes huge pride in its proactive outreach to the other faiths to promote interfaith integration.

## EVENTS /FESTIVALS

The years 2020 and 2021 have been very different and difficult in more ways than one. The COVID-19 pandemic and as a result, the lockdown started in the country in March 2020, and since then the entire nation has been in the grip of the COVID-19 pandemic through most part of the reporting period barring brief periods when the restrictions were lifted. Therefore, compared to the previous years, it was a very striking contrast this year in terms of the number of events we would organise. But still, we managed to organise a few events. And, the volunteers of the community went out of their way to help significantly in a variety of community and charitable activities to alleviate the impact of the pandemic.

On 12<sup>th</sup> August 2020, the very highly revered festival of Shri Krishna Janmashtami (birthday celebration of Lord Sri Krishna) was celebrated.

On 15<sup>th</sup> August 2020, India Day (Independence Day of India) was celebrated with the hoisting of British and Indian flags and singing the national anthem.

On 22<sup>nd</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> August 2020, we celebrated Ganesha Chaturthi, a popular form of God everyone worships.

From 17<sup>th</sup> to 25<sup>th</sup> October 2020, we celebrated Navaratri, a celebration of goddesses Durga, Lakshmi and Saraswathi, females forms of God, for nine nights. Celebration included puja and bhajan (devotional singing).

On 4<sup>th</sup> November 2020, Karwa Chouth festival was celebrated by married ladies in Temple.

On 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> November 2020, it was time for our Diwali celebrations, which was very difficult, as we organised traditional Diwali festivities, namely Chopda puja & Laxmi puja on 14<sup>th</sup> Nov. On 15<sup>th</sup> Nov, we had to organise Diwali event was shifted to a Zoom only event, very well attended by host of dignitaries and devotees only.

During this year, we organised 3 Blood Donation Camps for the NHS – on 11<sup>th</sup> May 2020, 2<sup>nd</sup> Sep 2020 and 8<sup>th</sup> Feb 2021. The Temple is a registered and certified venue for such camps and a very popular one for that matter. The Temple takes huge pride in such activities and its volunteers work with great enthusiasm to prepare the venue and provide excellent hospitality to our hardworking NHS staff and the donors.

On 11<sup>th</sup> March 2021, Maha Sivarathri was celebrated in the Temple in a curtailed way with Abhishekam to Lord Shiva, Archana and prayers. Bhajans (devotional songs) were sung at the event.

On 28<sup>th</sup> March 2021, we organised Holika Dahan even in a curtailed way in the outside open car park area, keeping in mind the COVID restrictions.

## CONTRIBUTION OF VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers are an important and valuable resource in both our faith and community work. While the Trustees provide overall leadership and strategic long-term oversight for the Trust, the day-to-day activities of the Trust are mainly managed and run by a team of enthusiastic volunteers who strongly believe in the cause and offer full support to the Trust. Swindon Hindu Temple Trust is well known in the entire area for its charitable work and activities and the strength of its volunteers. In fact, as the COVID-19 pandemic and as a result, the lockdown started in the country in March, the volunteers of Swindon Hindu Temple Trust were one of the very first in the country to start volunteering in different ways to help the elderly and the vulnerable in the society. The entire nation has been in the grip of the COVID-19 pandemic through most part of the reporting period during which the volunteers of the community helped significantly in a variety of community and charitable activities to alleviate the impact of the pandemic.

There are several aspects/areas which are fully supported by the volunteers:

- Membership
- Website, Social Media
- Communication
- Public Relations
- Liaising with Local Government & officials
- Dealings with HMRC and other govt. bodies
- Bhajans, singers, musicians, equipment
- Dates, diaries, venues
- Setting up venue
- Clearing & cleaning up the venue after the event
- Setting up PA system & equipment
- Managing Parking
- Decoration of the Centre
- Organising priests and coordination
- Preeti bhoj meals (logistics, cooking, coordination).

The volunteers not only support the activities of the Trust but are also involved in similar voluntary contributions in other community organisations and the wider community in Swindon in general.

The Trust formally records its immense gratitude and thanks to all the volunteers for devoting their time, efforts and support for the activities of the Trust.

## FINANCIAL STATEMENT

Total income for the financial year ending 31 March 2021 is £8,895.72. The Income is mainly generated by donations given to the Trust by its members and the general public. The Expenditure for the same period is £3,257.12. The main expenditure items include refurbishment and Maintenance, utility charges, broadband charges, insurance, bank fees, waste collection, website charges and for organising religious events, congregations, festivals,

providing free meals to the congregation. Financial statement for the year 2020-2021 is submitted along with the Trustees Annual Report.

### **RESERVES POLICY**

The Trust's policy is to maintain unrestricted funds in the form of free reserves, at a level that equates to approximately 12 months of operational expenditure, to organise regular events/activities and to raise funds to facilitate the establishment of a permanent building or premises for Swindon Hindu Temple & Cultural Centre which can be used by community. The balance of reserves at the end of 31 March 2021 is £204,314.51.

**Approved by the Trustees and signed on its behalf by**

Chairman