



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 2022. 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

Email: 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 17th 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, & 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 mainly organised volunteering activities, and moved many of its activities to virtual/online format. As the Trust faced multiple break-ins at its premises and as a result subsequently lost the premises during the reporting period, it also had to deal with remedial measures first, safeguarding the premises and the assets, and then having to try find new premises to move the items and the temple. This has taken a significant toll on our energy and resources, and it has been the most difficult period for the organisation as well as its members, office bearers and the congregation at large.

ACHIEVEMENTS

The Trust has accomplished several milestones in a short period in last few years. 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 matters related to the Hindu faith and population. In addition to the regular congregation, the Trust has also organised celebration of several Hindu festivals and important community events. Also, since it was the only Hindu Temple in this region, there was 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. However, the biggest achievements of the Trust were to contribute to the society at a period of great difficulty due to pandemic and to stay float as an organisation in spite of multiple break-ins faced by the temple and the total loss of the Temple subsequently. The Trust Chairman as well as one of our Executive Committee members were honoured by Rotary Club of Swindon Phoenix with Rotary Vocational Service Award, in recognition of "demonstrating Service above Self commitment to community during Covid19 pandemic".

EVENTS /FESTIVALS

Whist the years 2020 and 2021 were particularly difficult due to COVID and the lockdowns, 2021 brought unprecedented misery and tragedy for the Temple and the Hindu community of Swindon. As the Temple is located in an industrial estate and lockdowns and restrictions were in place, the bad actors used this as an opportunity to burgle and break-into the Temple on no less than 6 different occasions, taking away many religious artefacts including 2 big brass lamps, several small lamps, bells, deepams, etc. as well as the electrical substation equipment, and most of the electrical cabling in the temple and the adjoining warehouse, causing complete and permanent loss of power supply, hence the lighting, security systems, alarm systems, evacuation systems, etc. We incurred significant costs and efforts in remedial measures to mitigate the situation through a multi-pronged strategy but ultimately, **the lease of the premises was terminated on 21st Oct 2021**, by the authorities on health & safety grounds and we **lost the first Hindu Temple in the County** that we had managed to establish after years of toil, hard work and personal/collective sacrifices. This was a period of nightmare we never imagined in our worst dreams that we would face and go through. But the sheer character and perseverance we displayed as individuals, as a community and as an organisation, allowed us to stay afloat and continue to work for the future of the Hindu community in the region and the next generations to follow. We organised events at outside hired venues, we moved many events to online format. And importantly, we continued to work tirelessly to find a new venue for the Temple.

Swindon Hindu Temple took active part in supporting and promoting the Census 2021 within our communities and we were awarded Census Champion certificate by ONS in recognition of our hard work.

On 6th June 2021, we hosted Chai-for-Charity event, to support fundraising by Arsha Dipa in support of its COVID-19 relief activities in India.

On 3rd July and 30th July 2021, we hosted COVID-19 Vaccination walk-in clinics at the Temple.

On 30th August 2021, we celebrated Krishna Janmashtami festival.

On 10th, 11th September 2021, we organised the very popular Ganesh Utsav festival.

On 24th October 2021, we organised Karwa Chauth festival virtually on Zoom, this is a festival celebrated by married ladies.

On 4th and 5th November 2021, we hired an outside venue for our Diwali celebrations, which was very difficult as we had lost our own Temple but in spite of all the challenges, we managed to deliver a successful Diwali event and experience for our devotees. We also celebrated Govardhan Pooja and Annakoot festivals.

On 8th November 2021, we facilitated a visit by the Rotary Cub of Swindon to the Sikh Gurudwara – it was a visit to the temple that was planned in advance but as we had lost the temple, we did not want to cancel the event and cause disappointment to the Rotarians, so managed to take them to our Sikh Temple, also showcasing our inter-faith commitment.

On 17th Feb 2022, Swindon Hindu Temple hosted a very unique and prestigious event titled “From Antarctica to Swindon” at New College Swindon, whereby we hosted the incredible British Army Captain Preet Chandi nicknamed Polar Preet, for an inspirational talk and an insight into her most amazing solo expedition 700 miles in 40 days to South Pole, Antarctica, which she completed on 3rd Jan 2022 and in the process became the first woman of colour to do so.

On 26th Feb 2022, the Trust Chairman participated in an initiative by Wroughton Parish Council to plant 1,000 saplings of Birch, Maple and Oak trees, at the Maunsell Way Field Recreation Ground in Wroughton, and served the volunteers delicious hot Indian meals.

On 28th Feb 2022, Maha Sivarathri was celebrated at Park South Community Centre, in conjunction with Arshdipa charity with Abhishekam to Lord Shiva, Archana and prayers. We carried our very big and heavy Shiva-parivar Moorthy to the venue for the big festival event.

We launched our new website – <https://swindonhindutemple.org.uk/> on the occasion of Maha Shivarathri. This comprehensive website narrates our story – our past, our present and our future. It encapsulates our struggles, our accomplishments and our vision moving forward. It provides our history, our mission, our shrines, our services, festivals, events, classes and initiatives, our policies, projects.

On 19th March 2022, we organised the Festival of Colour with a partner at an outdoor venue in the outside open car park area.

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 2020, 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. As the country grappled with new waves and variants of the COVID-19 pandemic, we continued the great work in 2021-2022, hosting mobile vaccination clinics at the temple, working together with NHS/CCG to increase the uptake of vaccination and tackling vaccination hesitancy through panel sessions like Open Doors, volunteering at vaccination centres, engaging in a variety of community and charitable activities to alleviate the impact of the pandemic, to name a few.

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 2022 is £14,515.83. 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 £14,866.06. The main expenditure items include maintenance, utility charges, hall hire charges, bulk disposable cutlery, security at premises, Planning Application fees, equipment for COVID-related safeguards, fire-safety, broadband charges, insurance, bank fees, waste collection, website charges. Financial statement for the year 2021-2022 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 2022 is £203,964.28.

Approved by the Trustees and signed on its behalf by

Chairman

SWINDON HINDU TEMPLE TRUST
INCOME & EXPENSES FOR 2021-22
(Registered Charity number : 1158603)

	2021-22	2020-21
Cash and Cash Equivalents 1st April	£204,314.51	£198,675.91
Income for the year	£14,515.83	£8,895.72
Total	<u>£218,830.34</u>	<u>£207,571.63</u>
Less: Expenses	<u>£14,866.06</u>	<u>£3,257.12</u>
	£203,964.28	£204,314.51
Unaccounted	£203,964.28	£204,314.51
Cash in hand		
Cash at Bank	£203,964.28	£204,314.51
Cash and Cash Equivalents 31st March	<u>£203,964.28</u>	<u>£204,314.51</u>