



BENGALI CULTURAL SOCIETY, READING

Charity Registration No 1161671

Report of the Trustees for the year ended 31 March 2021

The Board of Trustees of the Bengali Cultural Society, Reading ('BCS') presents the following report for the year 2020/21 to the members.

Activities:

The principal aim of BCS is to provide activities and programmes appropriate for the community, to raise awareness among the public by giving them the opportunity to participate and appreciate the nature of Indian and Bengali culture. With this objective in mind, we organised the following events in the year:

- Poila Boishak
- Children Talent Show
- Independence Day celebration
- Mahalaya celebration
- 8th Reading Autumn Festival/Durga Puja
- Pujor Jalsa - Bijoya celebration
- Mishti-Mukh – Diwali celebration
- Saraswati Puja

The impact of COVID-19 pandemic was significant and widespread for all usual activities of BCS. We had to adapt to doing things differently and quickly created online activities and support that was a great effort and well-received by our member families. The move to a completely virtual mode of operation opened new possibilities and expanded BCS's audience and reach beyond Reading and UK. We introduced the extensive use of digital and social media platforms to plan, organise and deliver the charitable/cultural programmes all throughout the year. Thus, the list of celebrations/festivities listed above were managed and executed by our volunteer members and well-wishers, following the necessary government guidelines of social distancing and lockdown scenario.

The 8th edition of the Annual Autumn Festival was arranged through digital (e-celebrations) initiatives which culminated on the last day of Bijoya Dashami by showcasing an incredibly unique and one of its kind Durga Puja film productions namely Pujor Jalsa. BCS took the initiative and was the trailblazer organisation in the UK for this event. BCS also fulfilled its commitment with three other partnering (UK based) organisation in hosting this digital show across various locations in the UK. The success of Pujor Jalsa was carried further into yet another cultural presentation on Diwali in which BCS hosted an event called Mishti-Mukh. This show gave a unique opportunity for BCS members to interact with two very well acclaimed artists Sourendro & Soumyajit and raise funds in support for the musicians and technicians who were severely affected due to the pandemic. In addition, we were also able to conduct two workshops which were very well received by children of various age groups. The Art workshop conducted by an acclaimed artist from India recognized young talents and motivated them to continue in their journey of being an art exponent. Likewise, there was a Music workshop conducted by a highly acclaimed vocalist from the UK which enhanced the learning experience of children in the field of music.

We are extremely pleased and thankful to all our volunteers who had collaborated against all odds and successfully presented so many enthralling cultural programmes using digital means for all our members free of cost. A high degree of participation by the members and others in the community has always been a feature of all our endeavours and undertakings.

Charitable Donations:

The Trust has a policy of actively identifying and donating appropriate financial aid to charities of worthwhile causes. This year we donated **£500 to Bharat Sevashram Sangha, Kolkata towards the super cyclone Amphan Relief work** in India. Our commitment to be socially responsible at such a tragic time of natural calamity is true to the ethos of our charitable endeavours.

Milestones Achieved:

- BCS was able to represent itself in a very distinctive webinar hosted by Zakir Hussain Delhi College (University of Delhi). This webinar was a forum to share ideas with other literary exponents discussing about "Prabasi Jibon o Sanskriti".

Independent Examiners of the Accounts:

According to the regulations of the Charity Commission, where a charity's annual income is in excess of £25,000 the Trustees must arrange for an Independent Person or Accountancy Firm to carry out an independent examination of its accounts. As the gross income of BCS for 2020/21 was below this threshold, the Trustees decided that they are not required to arrange independent examination of BCS accounts for 2020/21. Trustees are, however, satisfied that the Report of Trustees and Annual Accounts of BCS being presented herewith give a true and fair view of affairs of BCS.

Financial Review:

BCS Trustees manage the finances in a way that enables the charity to carry out its charitable purposes most effectively as set out in the objective's clause of the constitution. Our principal funding sources are individual donations, commercial sponsorships at events, ticket sales and membership fees. There was no formal fund raising in the year.

It has been a uniquely challenging year but thanks to our financial prudence and strong delivery of online events we have ensured that there was no depletion to our cash reserves from the previous year. Despite several fund generating avenues drying up during the pandemic, we are pleased that we had been able to provide financial help for deserving causes.

After allowing for a restricted reserve of £4485 for new Protima, the total accumulated income, from all sources, available for BCS future activities on 31st March 2020 stood at £39,730. This represents a net increase of £6,672 or 20% during the reporting year compared to the previous year's figure of £33,058.

Presently the Board has not identified the need to earmark any of the surplus funds for investment or other purposes, although the matter would be kept under review.”.

The Board considered the risks BCS faces and identified the main risk for next year as the potential impact to fundraising income in the prevailing environment of Government-imposed restrictions on public gathering and movement of people. The Board continues to review practical ways of funding and delivering events.

Gift Aid:

During the year BCS received a Gift Aid contribution of £5679 from HMRC, most of which relate to donations made to BCS in the previous financial year.

Membership:

Several new members have joined the Society during the year as well as some previous members moving away from Reading leaving our **membership strength at 132**.

Trustees:

Consequent to the registration of BCS as a Charity, the management and administration of its affairs rest with the Board of Trustees. At the AGM held on 25th July 2021, the following were elected to the Board of Trustees and the Charity Commission had been notified accordingly. They were –

Abhijit Chakrabarti (Chairperson), Arghya Dey (Treasurer), Aniruddha Bandyopadhyay, Arindam Basu, Chandan Bhowmik, Ratna Ghosh, Jayita Guin, Soma Mandal, Sourav Dutta (General Secretary).

In accordance with the provisions of the constitution, the current Trustees will retire at the end of the AGM to be held on or before the maximum frame of 15 months from the last AGM conducted on 25th July 2020 via Zoom meeting. The retiring Trustees are eligible to seek re-election.

The Board of Trustees received resignations from Arghya Dey (Treasurer) and Arindam Basu (Trustee) in November 2020 and subsequently accepted these resignations at its meeting on 03 January 2021. At the same meeting, the Board of Trustees appointed Sanjay Paul as a Trustee & Treasurer and Himanshu Dey as a Trustee to fill the vacancies arising from the above resignations and the appointments would be valid till the 2021 AGM. Aniruddha Bandyopadhyay was appointed as the Joint Treasurer to support the treasury functions.

Impact of the pandemic on AGM 2021:

Due to the current governmental restrictions on public gatherings the Trustees have not yet decided whether to hold 2021 AGM physically or virtually. All available options will be considered nearer the time and members will be kept informed of further developments in this regard and an appropriate Notice of Meeting will be given to members for the 2021 AGM in due time.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank all our members for their help and co-operation and look forward to their support in the future.

Abhijit Chakrabarti – Chairperson
Sourav Dutta – General Secretary
Sanjoy Paul, Aniruddha Bandyopadhyay – Treasurers

Date: 24th July 2021

BENGALI CULTURAL SOCIETY, READING
STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES FOR THE YEAR
01 APRIL 2020 TO 31 MARCH 2021

	<i>note</i>	2021	2020
INCOMING RESOURCES		£	£
Members' subscription	1	907	1,009
BCS Activities	2	4,384	34,892
Interest Received		12	33
Gift Aid	3	5,679	13
Others	3	12	96
		10,993	36,043
RESOURCES EXPENDED			
BCS Activities	2	2,378	25,279
ICA Subscription		50	50
Charitable Donations		547	400
Others	3	1,347	1,796
		4,322	27,525
NET INCOMING RESOURCES for the year		6,672	8,518
Brought forward balance at 01 April		33,058	24,540
Carry forward balance at 31 March		39,730	33,058

BENGALI CULTURAL SOCIETY, READING

BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31 MARCH 2021

	<i>note</i>	2021 £	2020 £
CURRENT ASSETS			
Cash at Bank	4	43,905	37,085
Cash in Hand		140	168
Debtors & Prepayments	5	405	596
CREDITORS			
Payments Due	6	-235	-306
PROVISIONS			
New Protima		-4,485	-4,485
NET ASSETS		39,730	33,058
Members' Fund	7	39,730	33,058
MEMBERS' FUND		39,730	33,058

BENGALI CULTURAL SOCIETY, READING

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR 01 APRIL 2020 TO 31 MARCH 2021

1. Members' subscription	2021	2020
	£	£
Received during the period	907	1,009
Total	907	1,009
2. BCS Activities	2021	2020
Income	£	£
Baisakhi Utsav		991
Mahalaya		1,209
Sharad Utsav - Autumn Festival	2,957	31,728
Bijoya Sammilani		125
Tollywood Fundraisers	1,291	
Saraswati Puja	136	840
Total Income	4,384	34,892
Expense	£	£
Baisakhi Utsav		928
Reading Children's Festival		15
Members' Dinner		401
Mahalaya		1,193
Sharad Utsav - Autumn Festival	372	21,405
Bijoya Sammilani	0	166
Tollywood Fundraisers	1,966	
Saraswati Puja	40	1,171
Total Expense	2,378	25,279
3. Others	2021	2020
Income	£	£
Miscellaneous	12	96
HMRC Gift Aid	5,679	13
Total Income	5,691	109
Expense	£	£
Miscellaneous	598	413
Accountant's Fees		200
Storage Unit	749	749
Norris Road Hire (Sundays)		434
Total Expense	1,347	1,796

BENGALI CULTURAL SOCIETY, READING

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR 01 APRIL 2020 TO 31 MARCH 2021

4. <i>Cash at Bank</i>	2021	2020
	£	£
HSBC	43,905	44,959
Lloyds	0	645
Total	43,905	45,603

5. <i>Debtors & Prepayments</i>	2021	2020
	£	£
Other Debtors	200	200
Pre-payments	205	396
Total	405	596

6. <i>Creditors: due within one year</i>	2021	2020
	£	£
ICA - Hall Hire	155	105
Accountant's Fees		200
Other Creditors	80	1
Total	235	306

7. <i>Members' Fund</i>	2021	2020
	£	£
Opening Balance	28,573	18,540
Net Incoming Resources	6,672	8,518
Transfer to Restricted Funds (Durga Protima)		1,515
Closing Balance	35,245	28,573
<i>Shown as:</i>		
Restricted Fund (Durga Protima)	4,485	4,485
Unrestricted Fund	35,245	28,573
Total	39,730	33,058

8. *Accounting Policies*

The following accounting policies are used consistently with items that are considered material in relation to the accounts:

- (a) *Basis of accounting*: The accounts are prepared under the historical cost convention
- (b) *Income & Expenses*: The income and expenses are stated using the "accruals" concept