



卐 IPSWICH HINDU SAMAJ 卐

## **IPSWICH HINDU SAMAJ ANNUAL REPORT AGM 2008**

**The Samaj has had a very eventful year. And we certainly would have liked to do even more but time and resources are an obvious constraint. I took over in spring from Anil Khosla after the last AGM. The main responsibility of Secretary is to attend EC meetings, do agendas and minutes besides coordinating the work of the EC and the Events' Committee who were given responsibility for organizing key events.**

**The three newsletters from last year give a comprehensive account of the functions held by the Samaj. These were Holi, Mahashivratri, Ramnaumi, stall at the Indian Summer Mela, Janmashtami, Ganesh Chaturthi, Navratri, Diwali Milan, as well as the monthly bhajans/hawan. In the summer the Samaj held bi-monthly socials at St Lawrence Centre on Sunday afternoons. The venue was provided free by the Ipswich borough Council. These were stopped due to lack of support in October. These events and the Orwell Charity walk helped tremendously with fundraising.**

**Of the events described above, I would specially mention the Indian Mela, which attracted more than 8,000 persons countywide, visited our stall. The Ganesh Chaturthi for 5 days was attended by over 200 devotees each day, and besides holding cooking and children fancy dress competitions, for the first time the visarjan of Lord Ganesh took place in the river Orwell. Finally the Navratri celebration at the Gurdwara Community Centre was a great success.**

**The other key occupations of the Committee was organizing a business plan and locating suitable sites for a Cultural Centre for the Samaj. So far we have viewed**

**some properties, but no definite site or offer has been finalized. The business plan has been completed by the Emica Consultancy, and is at present with graphic designers. Once we have the business plan, we will be in a much better position to bid successfully to various organizations for funding and support.**

**In November, we have been given £5,000 by Suffolk Grassroots which will be used to employ a temporary Co-coordinator to work for the Samaj, a position we really need in order to advance the development of the Samaj. The position was recently advertised and the Co-ordinator Mrs. Abha Bansal has been appointed.**

**In July we had a special EC meeting to look at fundraising and this was successful in coming up with ideas and plans for this purpose. We hope that we can successfully take up some of the main strategies, such as charity collection boxes at local Indian shops, encouraging members to sponsor IHS events, charging nominal entrance fees at social events etc.**

**New members and Life members have been recruited, and we enjoy good support from some of the main organizations and bodies in the area, thanks to Dr Soni's long established position in the Community. In recognition of this Dr Soni was awarded the Community Champion for Suffolk this year. Dr Soni also awarded the Glory of India Award by the India Overseas Friendship Society.**

**As a Committee, we are progressing with the aims and objectives of the Samaj, and we hope to continue to build the profile of the Samaj both within the Hindu Community and with the Ipswich and Suffolk regions. In December, the Samaj hosted the United Nations Human Rights Day with Anil Khosla chairing the event at the Unitarian Meeting House. It was a great success thanks to the efforts of Mrs. Vinaya Kulkarni.**

**We want to continue efforts with other organizations such as the Indian Association, the Councils, ISCRE and others to unite people and strengthen our communities. We don't want families or individuals to feel isolated or vulnerable. The IHS website is a tool which we are using to bring the Samaj near to members and other organizations. Dr Soni has been keeping the website up to date with the help of Kerry Burn, website advisor for OneSuffolk.**

**So I call upon all Hindus and local activists to unite and give support, because through solidarity and being together, we can deal with problems and also enrich our own lives and that of the community.**

**I would like everyone to participate and also to let us know what we can do or organize for them, so that the activities and development of the Samaj can go from strength to strength.**

**Certainly I would like to see regular educational activities which teach and enlighten people about the Vedic culture and lifestyle, which I think is still relevant and highly beneficial to Hindus and for others too. So everyone's participation and support will be welcome.**

**Finally I wish to give my heartfelt thanks to all members of the Executive Committee for their work during the year. Everyone contributed, and I think that organizationally we are stronger and functioning better as a result.**

**Lila Patel  
Secretary**