



# SANGH MAIL

**Sanskār • Sewā • Sangathan**

**DECEMBER 2022:**  
**Sewa Special- Supporting our Communities**

*Sangh Mail is a monthly publication showcasing the activities of Hindu Swayamsevak Sangh (UK) for circulation to it's members and well-wishers.*

• 46-48 Loughborough Road, Leicester, LE4 5LD • Registered Charity No. 267309 •  
• [info@hssuk.org](mailto:info@hssuk.org) • [www.hssuk.org](http://www.hssuk.org) •



# Editor's Note

Namaste!

2022 has been a fantastic year, packed with so many important activities happening at various Shakhas and Balagokulams across the country, of which merely a snippet is captured by Sangh Mail. It has been a challenge for everyone to return to some form of normality, post the pandemic lockdown. This year we were fortunate enough to be able to physically come together for our Utsavs, SSV and multiple Shibirs/ Vargs and Sangh Mail has kick started back into action, to share the wonderful activities all our Swayamsevaks and Sevikas have been involved in!

The final edition of this year captures a few of the Sewa activities completed throughout 2022. Sewa (meaning selfless service) is a core part of our organization, which instils the ethos of selflessly working and making a positive impact on our local communities. With increases in the cost of living and the climate crisis, many people across the world are facing hardships and are struggling to meet ends on a daily basis. Our members of all ages have come together, dedicating time, effort and funds towards noble causes, helping our communities, country and planet.

In this year alone, 20 Sewa events were conducted across the UK, supporting local schools and charities, by HSS(UK) members. Fundraising activities raised over £13,700 for 16 different charities, supporting local, national and international initiatives. HSS(UK) will continue to contribute to the well-being of our society in 2023.



[hssuk.org/sanghmail](http://hssuk.org/sanghmail)

We wish everyone a very happy and prosperous new year and don't forget to keep sending in your articles to Sangh Mail!

*Pranam from  
The Sangh Mail Team*



## Sewa Activities

सेवा परमो धर्मः

”Sewa Parmo-Dharma”

*“Sewa is the supreme form of Dharma”*



# Coffee Morning

*Bharati Shakha, Newbury*



Members of Bharati Shakha Newbury with Kiera Miles, nine, from The Castle School

## Coffee morning boost for children's charities

**MEMBERS** of a local branch of a national Hindu organisation held a coffee morning in Newbury Town Hall to raise money for children's charities.

Organised by Bharati Shakha Newbury, a branch of Hindu Swayamsevak Sangh (HSS) UK, an impressive £1,670 was raised for The Castle School and Children in Need.

The money was raised through the sale of home-

cooked Indian savouries and sweets at the coffee morning which took place in the town hall on Saturday, June 11.

HSS volunteer Sanjeev Agarwala said: "It was a fantastic event and it went better than our expectations. We are encouraged by the response, we hope to organise similar fund-raising events in the future."

Guests at the coffee morning included most of the Newbury Town Council members,

including mayor Gary Norman and deputy mayor Nigel Foot.

The coffee morning began at 9.30am and due to the high demand from residents for the food on offer, members of Bharati Shakha Newbury were kept busy until 12.30pm.

Mr Agarwala said: "Apart from the volunteers from Bharati Shakha Newbury, the wider Newbury community joined this drive and contributed greatly."

Funds were collected by selling home-cooked Indian savouries and sweets at the Newbury Town Council Hall On 11th June 2022. There were as many as 21 varieties of snacks on offer. With just 2 hours to sell to raise funds, the footfall was constant and got a bit overwhelming at times. Apart from the Indian community members of Newbury, the guests included most of the Newbury council members along with the Mayor, Gary Norman and Deputy Mayor, Cllr Nigel Foot.

**The collection for the day was £1670.58.**

**With the help of Greenham Trust and employee corporate match up we hope to increase it to approximately £3000.00 which will be shared between Castle School Newbury and producing toys for Children in Need.**





# COFFEE MORNING

Bharati Shakha, Newbury







# Ultra 50K Thames Path Challenge

## Reading



### TEAM ENDURED 50KM WALK TO RAISE FUNDS FOR THE UNDERPRIVILEGED

On 11<sup>th</sup> September 2022, a team of 6 HSS and Pranyog walkers completed Ultra 50K Thames Path challenge. They also overachieved their pledge to raise £2000 and have raised over £2500 at the time of this update. All these funds will go to our fantastic charity **Sewa UK** to help people with disabilities, natural disasters, schools for poor children, building hospitals to improve healthcare facilities, and reach out to those in need of support anywhere in the world.



As Sewa volunteers, team members have been able to witness the important work Sewa UK did during Covid times and the transformational impact it has created, so they couldn't think of a better cause to endure blisters, calf spasms and chaffing for. It was not hard to persuade friends and family to join also for walks during training and the fundraising push. Now it has become a movement and talks of Everest Base Camp expedition next year are already underway. Group mission remains to bring life changing impact in society, in a way to also motivate people to rise to the challenges, to make world a better place to live.



During the walk someone asked, "Why do we go through such pain and suffering", came a reply "So that some underprivileged don't go through suffering". Despite the enormity of such challenges we take up on ourselves, the team now plans to continue their mission **Sewa** by taking more challenging fund-raising events and by encouraging more to join the group (whatsapp group link QR code on this page).

It is tough and by no means should be treated as an easy walk-in-the-park challenge. The team had practiced hard over last few months including a pilgrimage walk in searing heat to Vedanta Centre in Bourne End.





# Supporting our Schools

## Newton Mearns

### HSS / SEWA UK CONTINUES CREATING DEEP IMPACT IN NEWTON MEARNES COMMUNITY

Temperatures were high in this August; so was the fervor of Newton Mearns HSS / Sewa UK team. The major Sewa effort undertaken was painting of fences of Kirkhill Primary School (KPS). KPS is one of the oldest schools in the area with as many as three generations attended this school. However, budgetary constraints might have caused no painting for years. After permission from KPS, NM Karyakartas bought the supplies by pooled contributions. It took three days with 10+ volunteers with work spanned over a week-juggling with job and family duties especially in summer holidays. Special support was also provided by the families and friends who kept team running with ample delicious snacks, teas, and juices. It received huge applause from school, parents, kids and all residents. One resident (Jim) was so impressed that he not only mentioned to his friend at the local council but also put a donation amount.



Sandeep Bhat

@KirkhillPS This fence was in dilapidated condition and needed urgent repairs, volunteers of @HSS\_UK accepted the task and completed during summer holidays. Hope teaching staff and pupils will be pleased to see the change.



5:04 PM · Aug 14, 2022 · Twitter Web App



# Prakriti Sewa – Respecting Nature

## Cardiff Bhoomi Balagokulam

छायामन्यस्य  
कुर्वन्ति तिष्ठन्ति  
स्वयमातपे ।  
फलन्त्यपि परार्थाय  
वृक्षाः सत्पुरुषा इव ॥

(They) give shade  
to others (but)  
stand in the sun  
themselves; (and)  
bear fruit for the  
benefit of others;  
trees are like the  
noble.



Keeping the shloka in mind, Cardiff Bhoomi Balagokulam joined the **Coed Caerdydd Project** at Forest Farm Country Park in Cardiff to help with their tree nursery. This project is part of a 10 year programme to increase number of trees in Cardiff, supporting the 'One Planet' climate change strategy.

Shakha Parivar helped to plant over 350 trees in a single day over the school holidays. These trees will be uprooted and replanted next year all over the city. Prakriti Sewa will become an annual activity for the shakha.





# Prakriti Sewa – Respecting Nature



## *Bristol Balagokulam & Parivar Shakha*



Bristol Balagokulam and Shakha held a charcha last year related to the topic global food or local food. As part of this, they discussed the important issue of climate change and increasing carbon footprint due to food transportation. Hence it was decided to grow some food locally.

This project has been going on for almost one year. Over this time, while learning about plants, their properties and when to harvest, we are giving back to the Mandir and the community, providing a source of food and flowers as well as an activity for the whole family. The children have built a planter bringing in a sense of togetherness.







## Kishors' Sewa Experience

At Bristol Balgokulam, we learnt about the Valmiki Ramayan and were inspired by Ram connecting with nature when he went to the forest. During Parliament Week in November last year, the Shakra group held a debate over which was better: global or local food. In this, the important issue of climate change and our carbon footprint was raised, as global food is transported on planes and lorries which use petrol/diesel. We decided to produce some of our own local food at the Mandir. We were motivated by helping children to learn about nature and be interested in where their food comes from originally. Over the course of the project, we hope to learn about which plants grow in different seasons, when to plant and harvest vegetables, and the different properties each plant has.

We are giving back to the Mandir and our community, providing a source of food and flowers for any passers by, and an activity for the whole family. The Mandir is surrounded by concrete so we decided to build a planter. We bought wooden planks, gravel and lots of screws. Older children used saws and drills to put the planter together. Younger children held the planks in place or used a screwdriver. The next week, we received a delivery of compost. We all helped to shovel it into wheelbarrows and pour it into the planter. We have planted a variety of vegetables such as potatoes, onions, broad beans, and peas. In addition, we planted primroses, marigold and daisies.

These can be used as offerings and also help ecologically. Bees and other pollinators are attracted to the bright colours, and so pick up their pollen. They then carry the pollen to other plants in the patch and surrounding area, benefitting all of them. To bring an element of this home with us, we started a sunflower competition. Everyone has a pot filled with compost and a giant sunflower seed to water and nurture at home. Whoever grows the tallest sunflower will win! We look forward to nurturing the patch weekly- hopefully under the sun!





# Bringing Colour into Lives

*Shankaracharya Shakha and Balagokulam,  
Halifax/Huddersfield*

On 20<sup>th</sup> of March Halifax-Huddersfield Shankaracharya Balgokulam Shakha celebrated Holi Utsav, the Festival of Colours in the Savile Park, Halifax. More than 200 people including kids and people from different backgrounds joined the celebrations at the park. Together with the Holi celebrations, everyone generously donated towards the fundraising efforts and we **raised a total of £911.00, which went towards our local charity “Forget Me Not Children’s Hospice”.**

We took our Kishore / Kishoris to the charity’s care centre to hand over the collection cheque in presence of Ms. Holly Lynch MP, who has always been supportive of our charity work. The tour of the facility was quite an eye opener for everyone. The staff there showed us how they work tirelessly helping families to live the best lives they can. Besides nursing care, they have rooms dedicated to hydrotherapy, creative therapy, memory making, days out to make their hospice a happy, fun and welcoming place.

## CELEBRATION TO RAISE FUNDS FOR FORGET ME NOT CHILDREN’S HOSPICE (CHARITY THAT BRINGS COLOUR IN LIVES OF FAMILIES)



Holly Lynch MP

It was a real pleasure to meet with these young people who worked hard to raise much needed funds for such a great cause 🙌🙌🙌



Salma Pandor

A massive thank you to @HSS\_UK for your amazing donation of £911 and thank you to @HollyLynch5 for taking the time to visit @ForgetMNotChild last week. Was a total pleasure to show you all around our hospice. Thank you for support!!



Forget Me Not does excellent work in supporting families across West Yorkshire delivering care and support through pregnancy, childhood and loss and whenever a family needs them. (<https://www.forgetmenotchild.co.uk/>)





# Navaratri Workshop

## Bradford Krishna Balagokulam



During Navratri, the Bradford Balagokulam team organised a Navratri workshop on the 1st and 2nd of October, during the day, for parents with young children. The workshop included learning Garba steps, dandiya and collective Aarti. 100 parents and children from Bradford, Leeds, Wakefield, and Sheffield participated across the 2 days. Families were asked to make a voluntary contribution for attending the workshop. **£139 was raised for the Bradford Hospitals Charity - Neonatal unit.**







# Cleeve Hill Walkathon & Toy Collection

## Cheltenham Kesari Shakha



### CLEEVE HILL WALKATHON

Swayamsevaks and sevikas participated in the annual charity fund raising event WALK-A-THON on the 3rd Sep 2022, walking and climbing Cleeve Hill. It was a glorious day with breathtaking views of Cheltenham, Malvern hills and many more. It was not only a memorable day for both the children and adults, but also provided the opportunity to spread the values of HSS Sewa and interest in supporting local cause. The purpose of this event was to raise funds for local charities such as '**Priors Park Neighbourhood Project**' and **Opendoor** - they provide key services to the vulnerable and disadvantaged in Cheltenham and Gloucester.

### TOY COLLECTION

Our Swayamsewaks and sevikas collected toys for the **Pied Piper Appeal** (a charity raising funds for the children's centre at Gloucestershire Royal Hospital), to improve the wellbeing for children, who may be spending time at the hospital during Christmas 2021 and New Year's Day. It was a great experience for the young members of the shakha to purchase and donate popular toys which the children at the hospital enjoyed greatly. At a similar time, they also donated Christmas Shoeboxes filled with warm clothing for the winter months ahead along with an assortment of Christmas goodies for the homeless at Cheltenham Opendoor.





# Walkathon

## Coventry

Coventry Nagar had organised 'Sewa Walkathon 2022' on October 01, 2022 at War Memorial Park, Coventry, to support the charitable organisation the **Motor Neurone Disease Association (MND) Coventry and Warwickshire**.

Participants were encouraged to either walk, run or cycle by completing the 10KM. We got 133 participants of mixed ages from starting from 4 to 85 years.

The event started with warm welcome speech, followed by some warm up exercise before everyone started to walk, run or cycle. Everyone completed 4 laps around the park while some of the young boys cycling preferred to complete an extra lap. Water and fruits were served to participants during their rest time. Overall participants completed 324 laps around the park and covering approximately 3240km of walk, cycle and run. Thus, event was a huge success as all the participants were generous enough to contribute to our just giving page and we could raise **£735 for MND Association Coventry and Warwickshire**.



Dear Dharmish and all who took part in the Sewa Walkathon 2022

I wanted to say a huge thank you to you all for taking part in the recent Walkathon for The Coventry and Warwickshire MND Association Group and raising an amazing £735 and awareness for the MND Association. You truly are Superhero's!

The fantastic amount of £735 will go such a long way towards helping local Coventry and Warwickshire people living with or affected by Motor Neurone Disease. We rely almost entirely on donations from supporters like you to continue our work.

With your help we can improve care and support for people with MND, their families, and carers across England, Wales, and Northern Ireland. We also fund and promote research, and campaign to raise awareness so the needs of those affected by the disease are addressed by wider society. As you are aware, few conditions are as devastating as MND and that's why we are so determined to achieve our vision of a world free from MND.

Thank you again for making a difference in the fight against MND, we really cannot continue in our fight to find a cure without the amazing help and support of people like you four –  
**THANK YOU SO VERY MUCH!**







## SANSKAR PARIVAR SHAKHA, LEAMINGTON

On Sunday 8th May, the Leamington Spa Sanskar Pariwaar Shakha and Balagokulam did a charity walk hosted by **Myton Hospice** in memory of Preetiben Gupta (former Leamington Nagar Karyawaha) and Shampaben Gupta (sevika) who both passed away from cancer in 2021. The younger participants did a 3-mile walk, a majority did 6 and some did the full 12 miles.



## LEICESTER

On Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> June, a HSS Sewa Walk was completed by Leicester Swayamsevaks, to fundraise for a local charity **Leicester Musical Memory Box**. This initiative supports people with dementia and brain injuries through music and singing. **A total of £787 was raised.**





# BIRMINGHAM



On 1st October a group of Swayamsevaks and Sevikas walked from Cannon Hill Park to Acorns Hospice and back, in the 10 mile charity walk for **Acorns Children's Hospice**, raising a total of **£1432.50**.

Late Shyam Chandegra who attended shakha in Birmingham also stayed at the hospice and he was also a patron for them. A representative from Acorns said "This incredible group raised an incredible £1,432.50 for Acorns Children's Hospice in memory of Shyam, who stayed with us at our Birmingham Hospice. Walking 10 miles across Birmingham is no easy feat, but their members were able to pull together to show their support"

## Walkathons







## Walkathons

### RUGBY SHAKHA



This year Rugby Shakha walkathon we have raised funds for **The Rugby Dementia Support Group**, a local charity that is very close to our hearts.

We are grateful for the 81 walkers and the Mayor of Rugby Councillor Carolyn Watson-Merret, who was able to join us for the event and devote their precious time to helping a good cause. Our initial target of £600 was far exceeded with our final **incredible amount of £1001.**

### RAMANUJA SHAKHA, CAMBRIDGE

Cambridge Ramanuja Shakha organised a 5 km walk as HSS Sewa project for 2022. The funds we collected from this Sewa project are for **Cambourne Town Council for the Soul Youth building project.** This in turn supports the focused Youth activities in Cambourne and addresses the anti-social behaviour at root level. **We raised around £300 to support this cause.**

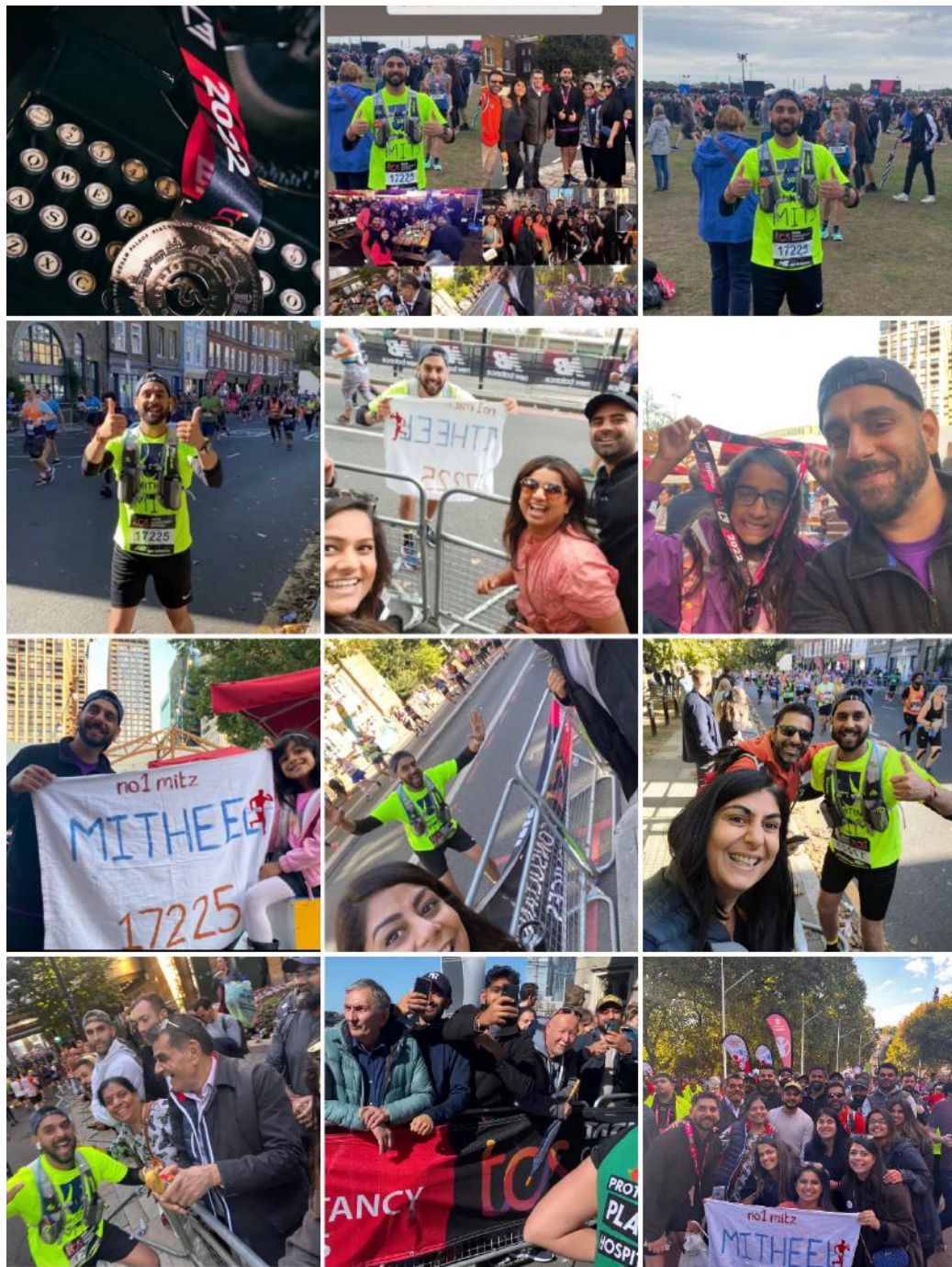






# PRATAP SHAKHA, FINCHLEY

## London Marathon



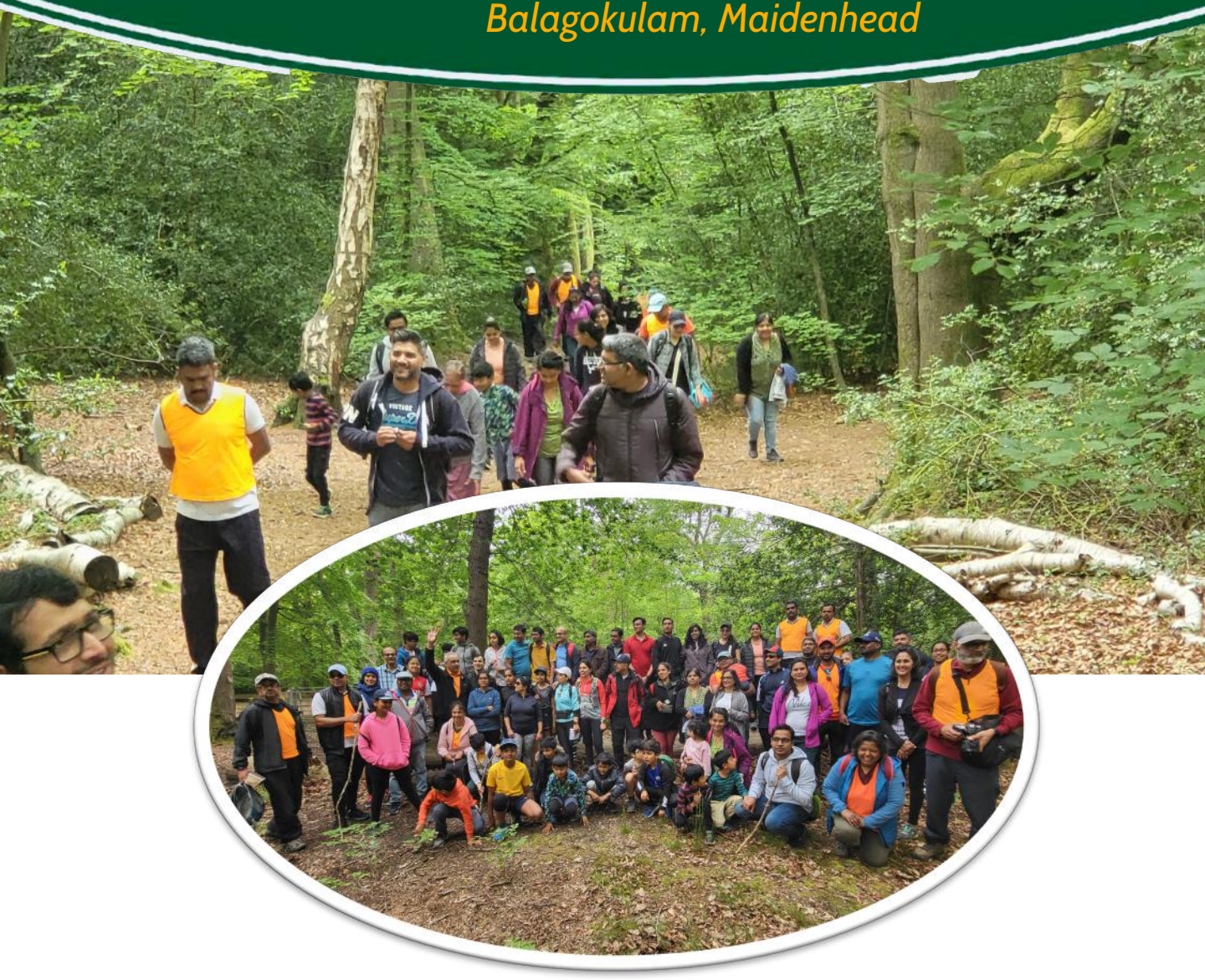
As a karyakarta from Pratap Shakha, Finchley, this was Mitheel's first London marathon raising money for **SEWA UK** and it lived up to his expectations! The support and atmosphere on the day were incredible. Seeing familiar faces from Pratap Shakha and Shakti Samiti at different stages of the marathon gave him the motivation and support to cross the finish line and achieve one of his lifelong goals. However, more importantly this challenge gave us the opportunity to raise money for SEWA UK. With the support from Finchley Shakha and Shakti Samiti, this **raised £2600 for SEWA UK**.





# Walkathon

*Abhimanyu, Sita Shakha, Slough and Aumkaar  
Balagokulam, Maidenhead*



On Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> May 2022, around 70+ enthusiastic and energetic Swaymasevaks and Sevikas, of ages 3 to 75+ participated in an 8 mile Walkathon at Burnham Beeches. The Sewa team from HSS Slough and Maidenhead organised this event to raise funds for **The Samaritans of Slough, Windsor and Maidenhead.**

The walkers navigated through various tree lines and scenic forests/fields enjoying the sunshine and engaging in conversations, singing songs. The participants took photo opportunities of the beautiful surroundings, where films like James Bond Goldfinger and Harry Potter were filmed. During the route, we came across a film shoot, which added to the excitement. The walkers had to negotiate a muddy crossing by building a small bridge with broken branches, enhancing the adventure. The children were climbing trees and absorbing the joys of the fresh air and the countryside. **A grand total of £1150 was raised.**





# Fundraising

## Maidenhead & Slough

During 2022, Hindu Swayamsevak Sangh (HSS) Sewa teams in Maidenhead and Slough organised events to raise funds for the Samaritans of Slough, Windsor and Maidenhead.

A number of activities were organised such as Walkathon at Burnham Beeches, Yoga sessions and other activities like selling plants etc. to help raise and request donations from friends, families and members of the community.

On Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> November 2022, Mr Eamonn Phelan, Ms Penelope Windebank and Mr Simon Heales of the Samaritans were invited one of the HSS weekly sessions at the Langley Academy to receive a cheque for around £2000.

This year HSS Maidenhead and Slough decided to raise funds for the local Samaritans charity, because of the great support the charity provides to those who are impacted by mental health problems that affect around one in four people every year, which was even more prevalent during the Covid-19 Pandemic.

Mr Eamonn Phelan thanked the HSS Sewa team and its supporters for the funds and said that being a Samaritan has been most rewarding thing that he has ever done and that others in the organisation would say the same.

The Samaritans here typically take 30 to 40 thousand calls a year from members of the community who seek help and advice on the daily struggles of life. The Samaritans absolutely could not exist without the support, kindness and generosity of organisations like HSS Sewa and others in the community”.





# Ben Nevis Challenge



## HSS GLASGOW & EDINBURGH SUPPORTS SEWA UK (CTA) BEN NEVIS CHALLENGE 2022

On 13th August, a team of 30 determined Kishoris, Yuvatis, and Yuvas from various Scotland's Shakhas decided to take up the challenge of climbing to the peak of Ben Nevis, in aid of Sewa UK, through the support of CTA (Charity Thru Adventure). It certainly was a herculean task for first-timers. The team wanted to celebrate Bharat Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav - the 75th Independence Day of India, on the peak of Ben Nevis. After spending some time at the peak, the team started Beating Retreat for the base at their own pace. Most of us completed the trek successfully.



A donation page set up for CTA raised over £1410 for SewaUK, our partner charity that supports multiple 'DisAbility' projects.





# Supporting the Ukraine Crisis Appeal

## Bradford & Reading



### **£401 was donated to Bradford Ukranian**

**Centre** where Madhav Kendra Elders, project of HSS UK meets every Thursday!

Over 60 elders meet here every week. It was time to lend a supporting hand to the Ukrainians in a crisis!

This centre is part of National Ukrainian crisis appeal. Our elders feel we should help in this worthy cause and spontaneously donated generously.



Children from Reading Balgokulum took part in an initiative to bring a smile to children from Ukraine by making happiness parcels. They were asked to fill a shoe box with toys, puzzles, crayons, books and a message to let children from Ukraine know that they are thinking of them and to bring some happiness to them.

**Over 20 boxes were kindly donated** by the young swayamsevaks and sevikas.





# Family Fun Day

## Manchester Surya & Sale Ganga Shakha

HSS – SEWA Manchester Nagar (Manchester Surya Shakha and Sale Ganga Shakha ) organised a charity event on 16<sup>th</sup> July 2022 at Wythenshaw Park Athletic facility in Manchester. The aim was to raise funds for a local charity known as **Francis house** which is a children's hospice that provides high levels of care to the families of children and young adults with life-limiting and life-threatening conditions. They also offer physical, emotional, psychological and bereavement support.

We also supported a charity called Simply Cycling that works to develop cycling skills among disabled and to provide all ability cycling to promote inclusion and healthy lifestyle.

The fun packed day consisted of different athletic games, such as tug of war, shotput and cycling, whilst raising funds. Further funds were collected by selling food hampers and on food stalls. There were approximately 230 attendees, helping us raise **a grand total of £1331.**



Watch the media footage of the event at this link:  
<https://youtu.be/fCt2O5Our4c>





# LITTER PICKING



Newbury Town Council

Dear Sanjeev,

Many thanks to you and all the Sewa Day volunteers! Litter picking is such a helpful way to help in the community. It is not glamorous but very satisfying when you look at the 'Before' and 'After' when you have cleared an area (or that is what I find anyway!)

Sadly, the litter always seems to return and that is why it is such a great way to help and improve the environment in which we all live.

Many thanks again for all your efforts!

Kind regards,

Nigel.

14 Swayamsevaks and Sevikas (Volunteers) from Newbury participated in the annual SEWA Day activity which organized in association with Newbury Town Council. This was a litter picking activity and the enthusiastic volunteers included children as young as 5 years, to help maintain beautifulness of Newbury Canal. After collecting safety debris picking kits from the council, Swayamsevak's/Sewika's picked **up 3 bags of debris after walking for almost 5 km**, an effort which was appreciated by the council and councillors. We even received appreciation note by the deputy mayor Mr Nigel Foot.





## SUPPORTING LOCAL SCHOOL



During July, the Sewa team assisted with painting and tidying up the grounds at St. Nics School Newbury. A total of 30 Swayamsevak/ Sevikas were involved, in response to an appeal made by the school requiring volunteers for this activity. The team worked together to complete sanding of 18+ benches and painted them, removing unwanted plants/weeds and clearing the garden and painting the school walls, making the grounds all neat and tidy, ready for the next school year.

## WEEKLY FOOD DONATIONS



Newbury's Sewa Team have been running a weekly food donation over the last 3 years. Food is collected from superstores or people and is delivered to two local charities **Loose ends** and **Two Saints**, as well as an elderly couple. **Until date 50,000+ meals have been collected and donated, total 22,000+ kg food collected!**

A total of 30 Sevaks and Sevikas are engaged with this campaign, working with local superstores and they created a scheduling web portal and automated SMS notifications to 27 volunteers. The food is collected every Friday and Saturday and donated it the same day or next day. This campaign has been appreciated by the Newbury Mayor and by the Directors of the Charities.



# SANGH MAIL



**Sanskār • Sewā • Sangathan**

**WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!**



When submitting your articles, here are a few points to consider:

- Provide a summary- keep articles short, highlighting the best parts
- A picture tells a thousand words - select your best photos (maximum of 8) to go with your article in the same email
- Don't forget to include your Shakha name and location

**Send all articles to [sanghmail@hssuk.org](mailto:sanghmail@hssuk.org)**

