



SANGH MAIL

Sanskār • Sewā • Sangathan

JANUARY 2023:
UK Parliament Week Special

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

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HSS(UK) PLACES GREAT EMPHASIS ON RESPONSIBLE CITIZENSHIP AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT.

Since 2017, our branches across the country have put in fervent effort into holding annual UK Parliament Week (UKPW) activities to educate, engage and empower communities about Parliament and governance. Over the years, we have learnt about the role of parliamentarians, committees, the Monarch and how people can get involved have their say and in turn make a difference for the betterment of society.

In November, across all four nations of UK, HSS(UK) branches held UKPW activities participate in debating issues and holding votes, conducting campaigns, creating petitions, learning through quizzes, hosting talks and Q&A session with invited local MPs, councillors and mayors and visiting Parliament. The active involvement of HSS(UK) in UKPW has been formally recognised with an award of UKPW Official Partner of the Year Award in 2020 and commendations from speaker of The House of Commons and The House of Lords. UKPW celebrations have enabled HSS(UK) not only to build close links with local leaders , but also to encourage within it's members, the attitude of positive contribution to the society, by way of entering political arena at local and national level.

Dr Harsha Jani - member of HSS(UK) Executive Team and UKPW Lead



Leamington Spa Parivar Shakha

**DEBATE TOPIC:
WHICH TYPE OF COMMUNITY
SERVICE SHOULD BE
PRIORITISED?**



In late 2021, Leamington Nagar organised a brilliant UKPW session, which included local councillors and VIPs from the community. A debate took place to decide, discussing **where the priority should be for performing the best Sewa or service to the community**. The options were between nature and animal conservation or local humanitarian support, such as Foodbanks/ Children's Charity.

A closely debated hour between youngsters was judged by the invited elders, to decide who had the best arguments. In the end, a tough decision was made in support of humanitarian aid. A large section also took the point of view of Hindu Dharmic thinking that we should not neglect animal and nature support. We also learnt more about parliament and how it works.

**Leamington Shakha
and Balagokulam won
a UK Parliament
Commendation Award
for 2022.**

**RESULT:
IN FAVOUR OF
HUMANITARIAN
AID**





DEBATE TOPIC: IS TECHNOLOGY MAKING CHILDREN'S LIVES BETTER?



After weeks of late night planning, anticipatory group chat messages and invigorating discussions, Leamington Spa Parivaar Shakha's 2022 UK Parliament Week had finally commenced. The anticipation was slowly building through a debate masterclass, a children-oriented lesson on the guide to laws and why we should follow them and a whistle-stop tour through the true origins of Parliament. On the evening of the 6th of November, amongst whispers of excitement, we set up the opposing tables (each adorned with their very own hand-made signs and posters), in a final culmination of the past weeks of hard work.. After the initial lighting of the diyas from our esteemed guests, **including MP Matt Western and leader of WDC Andrew Day**, began a ferocious debate regarding the motion "Technology is making childrens' lives better."

All the young people brought their array of talents, sharpened by the animated debate masterclass, to the table, even, the youngest debaters. whilst facing a crowd, eloquently, clearly and simply moved the audience. This was evident in the passionate House of Lords debate, where integral point of views from specialists in education, psychology and economics were added into the mix, including thought-provoking arguments from our guests. As the evening was coming to a close, votes were being counted up and final words were being said, it became even clearer that the generation to come would amount to great things. The votes were extremely close and both teams had performed exceedingly well, however, the winner was the opposition, Team Technophobes! We look forward to a future with great leaders, speakers and most of all, a society filled with bright, sharp minds.



**RESULT:
TECHNOLOGY
IS NOT
MAKING
CHILDREN'S
LIVES BETTER**



Leamington Spa Parivar Shakha



RAMANUJA SHAKHA, CAMBRIDGE

We had a great UK Parliament Week event at Ramanujan Shakha with South Cambridgeshire MP Anthony Browne. We had a quiz based on the UK Parliament, a short informative talk by our MP followed by a lively question and answer session. We finished the programme with Prarthana and snacks.



DURGA SHAKHA, SOUTH HARROW

To celebrate Parliament Week, we had a debate on

“Introducing Hindu Heritage Month in the UK”



It was filled with excellent points from both the proposition and the opposition.

Afterwards, we all voted on the result. We also watched a video about how parliament works which was very informative, especially for the younger members. We also had a fun, interactive quiz which we all learnt from. Everyone thoroughly enjoyed it and found out more about the houses of parliament, elections and how laws are made.





LEICESTER

Sindhu Shakha, Shree Ram Shakha and Guru Nanak Shakha came together to make a difference by hosting the last-minute parliament week celebrations on 16 November 2022, in Leicester. Attended by about 60 Swayamsevaks and Sevikas, 4 councillors, 2 members of the conservatives and one former councillor. The councillors shared their experience of how they got involved in politics and how they are helping the community through various activities. It was very informative and inspiring for our younger generations.



NORTHAMPTON SHAKHA

Northampton Shakha hosted activities from a quiz to public speaking. After some warm-ups and ice-breaker Khel, the main event was a debate on the



“cost-of-living crisis and whose responsibility it is to tackle.”

We followed up with public speaking, and even the youngest among us spoke up about ongoing issues in front of the crowd. We had a quiz and then we concluded with a discussion on where one can take up personal responsibility in our community (E.g. Writing to your MPs about any issues).





QUEENSBURY & HERTFORDSHIRE



An inspiring UK Parliament Week event was held jointly by Satya, Jijabai and Arjun Shakhā's in Queensbury, North London. The occasion commenced with a quiz on the UK's parliamentary democracy, followed by a highly interactive Q&A with the **guest Councillor Anjana Patel**, Portfolio Holder for Environment; Community Safety in Harrow Council.

Cllr Anjana Patel spoke about what inspired her to be a Councillor and the issues she has worked on for the welfare in the borough so far. She also gave a call to action to encourage the youth from the community to get involved and choose public service as a valuable career path. Shri Dhiraj M Shah, Sanghchalaḥ for HSS UK's North London region, also addressed the event and spoke about the numerous events being held across the country by HSS (UK) in support of UK Parliament Week.



UK Parliament Week 2022



DEBATE TOPIC: SHOULD WE REDUCE OUR DEPENDANCE ON FOSSIL FUELS?



On Friday 18th November, Bharati Shakha Newbury took part in the UK Parliament 2022. **It was our privilege to welcome Newbury Town Council's Deputy Mayor, Cllr Nigel Foot, Deputy Leader of the Newbury Town Council Cllr Mrs Sarah Foot and Cllr Sue Farrant from Clayhill ward. Ms Laura Farris MP**, our incumbent Member of Parliament from Newbury and Thatcham Constituency, who could not be part of this event, sent a message that was read out at the beginning of the debate.

This year children debated on the issue "Should we reduce our dependence on fossil fuels?". It was an intense debate and both sides presented their arguments and countered each other. There were a total of 26 participants aged between 8 and 45 and argument were fierce both sides. 83 votes were cast in total and the side in favour won 50 to 33. The audience and our councillors were all very impressed with the amount of research that the participants put in. Mr Foot in his speech focused on importance of Parliament and its significance in a Democracy. He also picked a few of his favourite moments from the debate and gave a shout out to the participants for the discipline and decorum that they displayed.

**RESULT:
DEPENDANCE
ON FOSSIL
FUELS
SHOULD BE
REDUCED**



Bharati Shakha, Newbury



CAN WAR EVER BE JUSTIFIED?



Our special guest **Mr Alex Chalk: right honourable MP of Cheltenham and Minister of state for Defence** joined us during this event. This is the fourth consecutive year, we have been fortunate enough to have Mr Chalk at our UKPW (since 2019), even when it was online. He has always embraced and encouraged our Shakha's UKPW and brought his valuable experience to inspire our Shakha.

First, we shared some info about HSS(UK) and Kesari Shakha's outreach activities, such as Sewa Day and Raksha Bandhan. We shared a report of the different activities completed running up to UKPW, including learning about online petitions and different petition topics, such as four day school weeks, use of electric buses for school commutes and traffic control and pollution.

Then, we moved on to the debate, by the kishor/kishoris group, on the topic: "Can war ever be justified?". Both the "for" and "against" team had lots of factual and compelling arguments, that had been well researched. Each speaker also faced counter questions and proved their case. Mr Chalk was clearly impressed with the debate and gave the children wonderful comments, during his address. He mentioned **our children are very fortunate to get this platform to grow their talent and if they continue with the values they have been instilled in the Sangh, they will definitely go far and high**. We concluded the debate with voting, with a clear majority for the "For" team. We also hosted a quiz for younger children, who did very well - they are definitely our parliament experts!



**RESULT:
YES**





DEBATE TOPIC: ARE POLICE TAKING ENOUGH ACTION TO PREVENT BURGLARIES?



Amersham Nagar celebrated Parliament week on 18th November 2022. This was attended by 60 Swayamsevaks and Sevikas. **Councillor Mark Robert, the mayor of Amersham town Council**, attended the event, where we showcased our Khel, Baudhik/debate and Prarthana.

In our debate we presented the issue of Burglaries that has been affecting our Hindu community immensely, putting fear and stress in households. By doing a debate we were able to communicate the issues we face within our society to the mayor. At the end we did a poll on the question: 'Are we satisfied with the actions taken on Burglaries by the police?' An overwhelming majority voted that they disagreed with the statement which helped to not only stress on the point that more needs to be done but also get across our overall message to the mayor.

Amersham Nagar



**RESULT:
DISAGREE**





Adarsh Parivar Shakha, Liverpool

DEBATE TOPIC: INCLUSION OF YOGA IN UK'S PHYSICAL EDUCATION CIRRICULAM



Liverpool Adarsh Parivar Shakha participated in UKPW activities by creating a House Of Commons setting at our venue. 61 participants engaged in the activities, and those aged 12 years and above took part in the debate.

The debate was were well received by both parties and had very interesting discussions, with arguments backed up with well researched facts and evidence. A ballot style vote was done at the end of the debate, to allow everyone to vote on their opinion on the topic, after listening to both sides. Following the debate and voting, a Quiz on UKPW was conducted and Khels were held, based on the theme of Parliament.

The younger attendees (below 11 years old), completed a craft activity, making the Big Ben Tower, out of cardboard boxes. They also watched a video on how the House of Commons operates.



**RESULT:
YOGA SHOULD
BE INCLUDED**





HOW TO RUN FOR ELECTIONS SUCCESSFULLY?



Reading Nagar hosted UK parliament week event, by discussing the procedure about standing for local council elections. We were honoured to **have Councillor Laura Blumentahl and colleague Saadia Sadat**, share with us their experiences about to share what it is like to be a councillor, how to run in an election, and encouraging women to step forward to stand for elections. This presentation was followed by a Q&A session, which covered top tips on campaigning, how to deal with conflict, how to manage work/life balance, tips on designing a good leaflet and much more.



Reading Balagokolum hosted an activity to elect Shakti Balagokulam Mayor. Three candidates were nominated to stand for elections and each was given 5mins to prepare and present their speech on why they should be elected. Following topics were discussed by each candidate:

- Help charity, cost of living, transport, education
- Help poor/homeless, education, public transport
- Help cost of living, environment, public money to good use

There was also Q&A where the candidates had to answer questions from the panel followed by voting. The children enjoyed the activity and learned a lot about campaigning and the election process.



Reading Nagar

POLITICS IS FOR EVERYONE!



Huddersfield and Halifax Shankaracharya shakha celebrated festival of democracy, UKPW, with the presence of 2 councillors- 1 each from Huddersfield and Halifax. 40 people attended, with ages ranging from 7 to 60 years. This event provided first hand experience to young children of politics and democratic processes, like debates, voting, winner declaration and was finished with a UK Parliamentary quiz . Primary school children were involved in making bunting of “togetherness”.



“UKPW was well presented and it was wonderful to see a enthusiastic response from all children. I appreciate HSS (UK) for arranging weekly positive activities, which imparts Hindu values to children. Politics and democracy is all about making informed choices and standing up for what we believe and honour majority choice”.

- Cllr Jenny Lynn, Halifax

“HSS (UK) have a fantastic group of young debaters- I think we will have a few future Councillors and MPs in that group! Politics is for everyone and our democracy is strongest when everyone takes part no matter of faith or background”

- Cllr Tyler Hawkins, Huddersfield



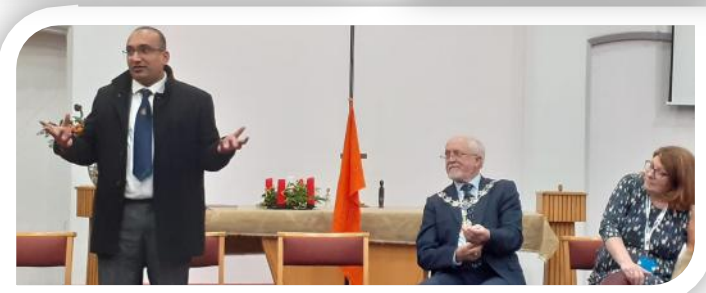
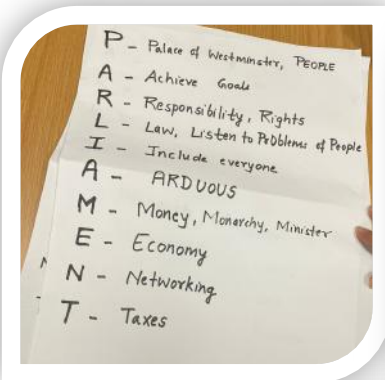


DEBATE TOPIC: SHOULD I JOIN POLITICS?



UKPW was celebrated by Ganga Balagokulam and Parivar Shakha of Sale and Trafford, on Sunday 27th November, attended by 60 people. **Chief guests were Mayor of Trafford - MS Cllr Chris Boyes, Cllr Linda Blackburn and Cllr Vimal Choksi.**

A debate on “Should I Join Politics?” was conducted with the active participation of the secondary school children. The points and counterpoints raised by the teenagers, parents and the supporting remarks shared by the guests kept the session alive and interesting. Sevaks and Sevikas from the Hindu community, who volunteered in Politics as Sewa activities and School governor, governor candidates also shared their insight on the topic - why they have opted for politics and how do they deliver it with a Sewa bhava (selfless service attitude) . An arts and crafts session for primary school aged children was conducted, where they defined a new full-form for Parliament and they also actively asked questions to the guests, to learn more about politics.



**RESULT:
YES!**



Sale and Trafford



DEBATE TOPIC: SOCIAL MEDIA IS GOOD



Rugby Shakha's program was the culmination of a weeklong UK parliament awareness campaign. During the week, various facts about the UK Parliament were delivered by social media and through regular Shakha.

The program started with a video of HSS (UK) activities running on loop while participants were arriving. After Prarthana, the group was split into two. A brief running order of the program was given before settling down to watch a video titled an 'Introduction to Parliament'. After the Video, there was a quiz, to test their understanding. The answers to the questions were read out (with a brief explanation) by our guest **The Mayor of Rugby Carolyn Watson-Merret (Conservative). Councillor Ramesh Srivastava (Labour) also attended the event.**

The final part of the evening was a debate. Four young Sevikas and Swaymsevaks were primed to start the debate off: The debate was to discuss for and against the topic: SOCIAL MEDIA IS GOOD. The 2 teams made numerous valid points with evidence that research had been done prior. The chairperson summarised all the points and the participants were given an opportunity to vote by posting their choice into the ballot box. Over 40 people participated in the ballot and the result was SOCIAL MEDIA IS BAD.



RESULT:
SOCIAL MEDIA IS
NOT GOOD



AND MANY MORE PARTICIPATED!



Belfast Nivedita Shakha



Cardiff Bhumi Shakha



Ashton Shakha



Woolwich Pannabai Shakha



Bradford Shakha



Nottingham Shakha



Bedford Lokmany Shakra



Manchester Surya Shakha



Swindon Balagokulum



Bushy Pandav Shakha



Hounslow Shakha



Bromley Sanskar Shakha



Chelmsford Shakha



Barnet Pratap and Shakti Shakha

INCLUDING OUR SISTER ORGANISATIONS



LET'S MAKE A DIFFERENCE TOGETHER

UK PARLIAMENT WEEK

with



Dr. Rami Ranger, CBE
House of Lords
UK Parliament



Gareth Williams
Councillor
Buckinghamshire Council









SATURDAY, 26th NOV from 3PM - 5.30PM



The Link will be shared
on registration

REGISTER TO JOIN

<https://tinyurl.com/KAHO-UKPW22>



Karunādina Anivāsi Hindūgala Okkoota UK
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KAHO
(Kannada Hindu Organisation)

Sanskār Sewa Sangathan

LET'S MAKE A DIFFERENCE TOGETHER

UTHO
United Kingdom Telugu Hindu Organization

**UNITED KINGDOM TELUGU HINDU ORGANIZATION
PARLIMENT WEEK**

TOPIC : HINDU HERITAGE MONTH IN UK

**27 NOV
13:00 - 14:30
SUNDAY**

UK PARLIAMENT WEEK

DISCUSS WITH OWN TEAM

VOTING AND Q&A SESSIONS

DEBATE WITH OTHER TEAMS

UTHO
(UK Telegu Hindu Organisation)

With the encouragement of HSS(UK), our sister organisations, also conducted UKPW amongst its members and hosted events.

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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

