



The Cape Hindu Cultural Society

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Newsletter | June 2025

Chairperson's message

Namaste,

It's been a while since our last newsletter, and I'm pleased to share a snapshot of our vibrant journey over the past year.

The Cape Hindu Cultural Society ("CHCS") has continued its mission to preserve our heritage, deepen community bonds, and promote meaningful partnerships. From our regular calendar events to celebrating the inauguration of the Ayodhya Mandir and Garba of Gujarat's UNESCO recognition, to insightful and inspirational talks by visiting Swamis; community members' and guests; to our flagship annual *Raksha Bandhan* home visits and a collaboration with the Consulate General of India, Cape Town, on hosting a Consular Camp. 2024 was indeed rich in culture and connection.

Our connection strengthened this year by our participation in the Republic Day and Holi celebrations, Meet & Greet event, and witnessing two Indian women naval officers complete their global circumnavigation.

A joyful milestone was the reopening of the Sri Radha Krishna Mandir, now enhanced in both accessibility and beauty, following the successful completion of the Lift and Caretaker Project. Our deep gratitude goes to Sudhierbhai Magan, our architect, for his invaluable guidance over the years.

We continue to observe the events on our yearly calendar, reaffirming our commitment to preserving our rich heritage and culture. Most recently our co-hosted *Hindu Heritage Family Leadership Camp* brought generations together to learn and grow, reinforcing our shared values.

At the Gandhi Memorial School, learners continue to thrive in a values-rich environment. Our Outreach programmes, from Diwali hampers to health drives, continue to place seva at the heart of our work.

We are grateful to our resident priest, teachers, caretaker, sister organisations, and all volunteers for their dedicated support.

As we face rising costs and strive for deeper youth engagement, we encourage continued support — through time, skills, or resources, so that we may sustain our shared legacy.

May we be inspired by service, strengthened by unity, and guided by Parmatma always.

With warm regards

Sangeetabhen Valodia



Officials

The auditors are finalising the audit of the annual financial statements (“AFS”) for the last three years up to 28 February 2025 in preparation for the Annual General Meeting. Once the financial statements are signed off, the annual NPO Narrative Reports will be submitted to the NPO authorities.

The cost of running the organisation continues to rise.

Appeal for Regular Donations: As the cost of running the organisation continues to rise we humbly appeal to all those that attend and participate in our events to make regular donations to sustain our cultural and spiritual traditions. Donations can be made conveniently via EFT. For added ease, Yoco machines are also available.

Trustees

The focus of the Trustees is on the legal, contractual, and fiduciary aspects pertaining to the Society.

Surplus funds of the Society are managed carefully

and have been reinvested at the best rates currently available. The investment returns have been carefully and responsibly utilised for the ongoing operations of the Society.

We are currently undertaking a complete review of our constitution with the assistance of Naleenbhai Jeram, and the final review by attorneys ENSafrica. This has been a long process and numerous discussions have been held. Once we have a final draft, the constitution will be circulated to the members for comment and approval.

The Trustees are grateful to the community for their on-going support and remain committed to looking after the interests of the Society.

Communication

The Communications Committee primarily facilitates communications between the CHCS and the community.

There have been ongoing event updates of the Society and funeral messages through communication platforms and social media.



Maintenance and Upgrades

This portfolio is responsible for all the repairs and maintenance required on the premises.

We are pleased to report that the Lift and Caretakers Quarters project was completed successfully. After many years of deliberation, the project was approved at the AGM on 05 March 2023. Several quotations were obtained, and a contractor was appointed and construction commenced on site in August 2024. Upon inspection and recommendation by the engineer who indicated that the mandir entrance steps and podium will be difficult to repair. As a result the demolition and full reconstruction of the mandir steps was added to the scope of the project. Despite the added scope the construction works were completed timeously, within budget, by February 2025.

The lift was inaugurated on 26th February 2025, on the auspicious day of Maha Shivratri.

We engaged the services of a professional landscaper who has completed the planting and landscaping installation, which will enhance the aesthetics and image of our Mandir.

Regular maintenance is ongoing. All the old fluorescent tubes have been replaced with LED fittings throughout the premises thereby helping to reduce the electricity consumption. The roof gutter along the eastern side of the school building was replaced due to leaks and the upstairs steel windows were serviced and handles replaced where necessary. Externally, the broken and missing covers to the rainwater catchpits were replaced.

The next phase will focus on remedial works on the outside wall of the school building and Mandir.



Mandir

Mandir Reopening – Sri Radha Krishna Mandir

Access to the Mandir was restricted to all devotees during the period August 2024 to January 2025 due to essential construction works. Despite the temporary closure, all regular programs and events continued at alternative venues in the CHCS Centre. The Mandir reopened on 26 February 2025 and is now fully accessible to all devotees.

Highlights of 2025 Events & Celebrations

- 12 January – Tribute to Swami Vivekananda
- 26 January – India Republic Day flag hoisting
- 18 February – Ramakrishna Paramhansa Jayanti

The first Mandir event post-renovation was Maha Shivratri held on 26 February 2025 – a truly auspicious day that brought much joy as devotees gathered once again in the sacred space.

- 13 March – Holi celebrations hosted by our sister organisation, The Cape Hindu Mahila Mandal
- 6 April – 32nd Patotsav, celebrated jointly with Ram Naumi
- 12 April – Hanuman Jayanti with 11 recitations of Hanuman Chalisa
- 20 April – Participation in 108 Hanuman Chalisa recital
- 12 May – Buddha Purnima
- 11 June – Kabir Jayanti

Daily Thaar Offering

Thaar is offered daily from 12h00 to 12h30. If you wish to offer Thaar, please contact, the resident priest, Sri Kirtibhai Pandya.



Love Offering

Should you wish to make donations of items for the running of the Mandir—such as flowers, ghee, agarbatti (incense sticks), divet (lamp wick), havan samagri, or other devotional items—please contact Mandir Coordinator, Sureshbhai Desai.

Regular Mandir Programs:

- Morning Aarti – 06h20 & 08h55
- Evening Aarti – 18h55
- Poonam Yagna – 08h15
- Sundarkand Recitation – Every Tuesday at 19h00
- Amas Deep-Yagna – monthly at 19h15
- Yoga/breathing – every Thursday at 19h15
- 12-Hour Continuous Prabhu Smaran – First Monday of every month (06h30 – 18h30)
- Monthly Bhajans hosted by our sister organisation, The Cape Hindu Bhajan Mandal.
- Individual Darshan/Visit – by appointment



Gandhi Memorial School

Celebrating a Year of Culture, Community and Connection at The Gandhi Memorial School

Over the past academic year, the learners of The Gandhi Memorial School have actively engaged in a variety of enriching cultural and community-focused activities.



- **10 August 2024 – Shravan Bhajan and Aarti**
Learners participated in the auspicious month of Shravan by attending a bhajan session and offering Aarti, immersing themselves in devotional singing and prayer.
- **17 August 2024 – Raksha Bandhan**
As part of the Raksha Bandhan celebrations, our learners visited members of the community to personally tie rakhi, spreading joy and strengthening bonds across generations.
- **2 October 2024 – Gandhi Jayanti Commemoration**
In honour of Mahatma Gandhi's birth anniversary, students contributed to the programme by delivering a short discourse, reflecting on Gandhiji's teachings and legacy.
- **20 October 2024 – Annual Meravdoh Showcase**
Our annual Meravdoh was a vibrant celebration of talent and tradition, with learners performing bhajans, showcasing their Gujarati conversational skills, and presenting lively dances.

30 November 2024 – Year-End Class Fun Day
The year closed on a cheerful note with a fun-filled day of games, snacks, and treats, allowing students to relax and celebrate their accomplishments.

16 March 2025 – Family Picnic at Green Point Park
Families came together for a joyful day at Green Point Park, enjoying games, nature, and each other's company in a spirit of unity and friendship.

20 April 2025 – 108 Hanuman Chalisa Programme
Learners participated in a spiritual gathering where they collectively chanted the Hanuman Chalisa twice as part of the 108-recitation programme, deepening their spiritual connection.

We look forward to our upcoming **Havan for the learners on 21 June 2025**, to be conducted by Resident Priest Kirtibhai at the Sri Radha Krishna Mandir, a special occasion to mark the mid-year with blessings and reflection.

We are proud of our students' enthusiastic participation and grateful to the parents, guardians and volunteers whose support makes these events successful.



Outreach

The Outreach Fund was established to offer sustainable support to those in distress within our community and neighbouring areas. Thanks to your incredible generosity together with the CHCS contributions, we've been able to assist many individuals and families across Cape Town through targeted, impactful initiatives.

- **January 2024 – Stationery Drive**
R9,803 was raised to provide much-needed stationery for a school in Elsies River. Supplies were purchased according to the specific needs of the school.
- **July 2024 – Blanket Drive & Flood Relief**
R8,100 was raised and used to donate 50 blankets to the Haven Night Shelter. In response to severe floods in Cape Town during the same month, we collected and distributed non-perishable food items to affected communities.
- **October 2024 – Support for Girls' Health & Diwali Hampers**
R9,500 was raised for reusable sanitary pads, ensuring up to five years of safe, hygienic use for young girls. Additionally, R44,000 was raised for the **Diwali Hamper Drive**, providing food parcels to over 1,000 people via the Callas Foundation and the Saartjie Baartman Centre for Women.
- **October 2024 – Groote Schuur Neonatal Unit**
R9,950 was raised which was used to supply clothing and essential daily consumables for premature babies Groote Schuur Neonatal Unit.
- **December 2024 – Fire Relief Support**
R4,300 was raised to purchase non-perishable food for communities affected by local fires.
- **June 2025 – Winter Drive**
R10, 942 was raised which will be used to purchase blankets for both vulnerable individuals and animals during the cold winter months.



If you enjoy knitting, continue knitting for the Diwali drive for premature babies. Beanies, jerseys, mittens and booties can be knitted and donated for the Neonatal Unit at Groote Schuur Hospital. We are deeply grateful to all who have donated to the Outreach Fund.

Your contributions have enabled us to respond to emergencies and provide ongoing care where it's needed most. We encourage continued support so that we can maintain a reserve for future natural disasters and humanitarian needs.

Banking details

Bank: Standard bank
Name of Account: CHCS OUTREACH FUND
Account number: 072 792 302
Branch Code: 051 001
Reference: Project/Your Name
As a community we can continue to make a meaningful difference.

Sports and recreation

The sports and recreation portfolio are more suited to the youth of our community and was handed over to the Cape Yuvak Sungh in 2024. However, due to inactivity the CHCS Committee is considering resuming control of this portfolio to facilitate meaningful engagement between youth.

Tenants

The Tenant portfolio manages the relationship between the organisation and the various tenants who utilise our premises; including ensuring that the relevant rental contracts are in place, rental is being paid timeously and ensuring the smooth operation of all tenancies.

There are two categories of tenants, namely “permanent” tenants - those who occupy dedicated spaces - and then the “part-time” tenants - those who utilise our premises on various days of the week on an on-going basis.

We have four permanent tenants who utilise the classrooms and ground floor of the Gandhi Memorial School building.

In addition to managing the tenants, the coordinator oversees the rental of the premises to the community for their private functions. These facilities include functions in the Cultural Hall, workshops in the Gandhi Memorial School classrooms, and small wedding ceremonies in the Sri Radha Krishna Mandir.

The rental income received by the society plays a vital role in helping to cover part of our operating costs. We thank the community for the support over the years and encourage all to continue utilising the CHCS centre for their private functions as well as using the centre to promote Hindu culture, religious and spiritual activities. May this vision of the CHCS continue growing stronger.

Yoga for Body & Mind

To support overall well-being, the organisation hosts weekly yoga sessions at alternative venues within the CHCS Centre:

- Rhythmic & refining breathing exercises – Every Thursday – 19h15
- Ladies Yoga - Every Wednesday – 10h00

All are welcome to participate in these calming and rejuvenating sessions.

Important Calendar Date Change

Please kindly note a change to the Diwali celebration date from what was previously listed in the CHCS calendar as 21 October.

CHCS has decided to celebrate Diwali on Monday, 20 October 2025, in line with other Hindu organisations.

We apologise for any inconvenience caused.

We sincerely thank all volunteers, donors, and community members for your continued support and for your active participation in all events and festivals. We look forward to your ongoing involvement in all upcoming events and regular programs.

Contact details		
Chairperson	Sangeetabhen Valodia	082 450 0644
Secretary	Raakheebhen Ooka	084 095 7223
Treasurer	Deepakbhai Kalan	079 492 0401
Communication Coordinator	Jeeteshbhai Bhoodia	082 667 7230
Gandhi Memorial School Coordinator	Meeneshbhai Hira	082 434 8615
Maintenance Coordinator	Dolatbhai Makan	082 743 2118
Mandir Coordinator	Sureshbhai Desai	082 777 0046
Outreach Coordinator	Meeneshbhai Hira	082 434 8615
Tenant Coordinator	Janakbhai Rama	072 263 8391
Trustees' Chairperson	Bharatbhai Bhikha	082 377 4767
Resident Priest	Kirtibhai Pandya	072 046 3636

Banking Details – General Account

Bank: Standard bank
Name of Account: The Cape Hindu Cultural Society
Account number: 07 279 202 7
Branch Code: 051 001
Reference: Donation or Membership/ Name