



Shree Pretoria Hindu Seva Samaj

Established in 1932

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"Satyameva Jayate" - Truth Alone Prevails

Minutes of the Elective AGM held on Sunday 16 May 2021 at the Samaj Auditorium at 3:00pm

1. PRAYER & WELCOME

The meeting opened with a prayer by our resident priest, Sunilbhai Bhatt. The MC, Khushiben Dave, welcomed all present.

2. ATTENDANCE & APOLOGIES

Attendance was as per the attached register. No formal apologies were received. A total of 45 members signed the attendance register which resulted in a quorum being formed in terms of clause 17 of the Samaj Constitution.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS AGM

The minutes of the previous AGM were tabled and was unanimously adopted, without amendments, on the motions of Devidasbhai Ramjee and Jasminben Govind.

4. MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising from the previous minutes and members did not raise any issues during the meeting.

The following reports were presented at the AGM and which are reproduced verbatim below:

4.1 PRESIDENT & SECRETARIAL REPORT

Namaste

For the first time in the history of the Shree Pretoria Hindu Seva Samaj, a joint report of the President and General Secretary is being presented. This is happening because of a sad reality, namely that despite frequent requests, no one in the community was willing to serve as a Secretary or as Deputy President. This resulted in the President having to step in and fulfil all three functions. I hope and pray that this situation does not repeat itself for the in-coming officials.

Despite the fact that the Samaj Executive was operating with a skeleton staff, I am pleased to report that the Samaj has not only fulfilled all its commitments and duties in observing and celebrating all major religious and cultural festivals but has also adopted an innovative approach to meet the challenges of the Wuhan virus (Covid-19) which has inflicted the world for much of 2020 and will continue to do so for most if not all of 2021.

The report below details some of these achievements but I will be remiss if I did not thank all my committee members, teachers and office staff for their hard work and dedicated service in fulfilling their responsibilities. Most of my executive team comprised of new inexperienced individuals but their dedication and selflessness were of the highest order and for that I salute them all.

Ladies & Gentlemen, please give a hand of applause to these officials.

I don't wish to bore you with details of all that the Executive has done, but we are especially proud of the following achievements:

1. Institutionalising Governance Measures: introducing a range of policies & procedures to ensure that all activities of the Samaj follows the principles of equity, consistency, fairness and transparency. Please do acquaint yourself with these policies that are on our website and provide feedback so that we can continue to professionalise our Samaj.
2. Writing the History of the Samaj – Part 2 (1980-2021): For some time now, the Samaj had a recorded history of itself only from its inception in 1932 until 1980. I had written this history by using the notes of past secretaries who had captured some highlights of previous years. I am now happy to announce that I have written part 2, which is the history of the Samaj from 1980 to 2021. This will be uploaded on the website within the next week and circulated via the next edition of the SamajChar newsletter. Hopefully, future officials will update this as the years go by. It might also be a good idea for future officials to create a little booklet in time for the Samaj's 100-year centenary celebrations that will take place in 2032. My thanks goes to Jivanbhai Kalyan for giving me this idea.
3. On the religious front, despite the tremendous challenge posed by Covid-19 on gatherings, the Religion & Culture Committee, headed by Ketanbhai and Nayantaben, still managed to commemorate all our important festivals, even though much of it was done virtually. It was heartening to see how many in our community quickly adapted to this new reality and attended in their hundreds (virtually, that is). In addition, the Samaj hosted India Republic Day that falls on 26 January and The Kite Festival (14 January) together in one function. This was a hit with the young and old and even delegates from the High Commission of India attended. Jalaram Jayanti was celebrated for the first time in the Mandir. Local bhajan group, the Sunday Mandir Bhajan Group rendered bhajans and lunch was served. We also hosted the singer Vikashbhai Gajjar for our Navratri Celebrations. This was a huge success. Another recent innovation is the introduction of the Mandir Flag Consecration Ceremony. The success of this committee's work is in no small measure to our young and with-it priest, Sunilbhai Bhatt, who took to conducting the festivals virtually as a duck takes to water. Sunilbhai, amara khub khub aabar ane dhanyavad.
4. The obtaining of 18A Public Benefit Organisation status with the South African Revenue Service (SARS). This means that for the first time in its history, the Samaj can provide a certificate to all their donors which they (the donors) could use to claim a rebate from SARS for their donations to the Samaj.
5. Migration from SMS to WhatsApp. Last year the Samaj took the decision to migrate from our SMS system to a WhatsApp group system, resulting in the Samaj saving hundreds of rand per month.

6. Revamping of the Samaj website, giving it a modern look.
7. Creation of the “SamajChar” newsletter to keep the community up to date with Samaj news. We have received much positive feedback from the community who appreciate the effort put in, in producing it. Much praise goes to our administrator, Khushiben Dave, who is the custodian of this newsletter.
8. Improved security by installing CCTV cameras and intercom system.
9. Introduction of a debit order system for Balmandir payments as well as a card machine to make payments easier for facilities bookings. The goal here is to discourage the handling of cash, thus reducing the risk of crime to our staff.
10. Upgrading printers in the Samaj office.
11. Upgrading of internet infrastructure from ADSL to fibre.
12. Installing a whole new sound system in the auditorium.
13. Purchasing drapes for use in the auditorium.
14. Establishing a computer lab in the Multi-Media Centre (Room no. 1). We intend using this facility for the introduction of various computer-related courses for the Balmandir and Gujarati School learners as well as the community.
15. We are in the process of installing a Wi-Fi connection in the Mandir for virtual/live pooja and bhajan sessions. We thank the Sunday Mandir Bhajan Group who have agreed to partner with us in this project.
16. Another project that is still underway is a water harvesting project whereby JoJo tanks will be installed. The goal is to use this water for the gardens and toilets.
17. Reviving the Gujarati school by doing away with school fees and introducing focused and fun learning. Jayshriben is doing a great job here and I thank her.
18. A major project that the committee has decided to embark on is the Auditorium Renovation Project under the leadership of Jasminben Govind. The auditorium is in need of a modern facelift and Jasminben has some great ideas on what needs to be done.
19. On the education front, the Balmandir continues to fulfil its role of providing an excellent foundation for pre-school children. This year, three Grade R classes have been created to minimise the Covid-19 risk. Our teachers consistently exceed expectations and have developed a solid reputation for excellence. Well done, Balmandir teachers!
20. On the Social Services front, under Jasminben’s able leadership, a Ladies High Tea attended by over 200 ladies, of diverse age and religions, was organised. In 2019 over 51 Diwali hampers and in 2020, 31 Diwali hampers were distributed to needy families. During Covid-19 lockdown period in 2020, food vouchers to over 55 families (some for

three months in a row) were provided while R4000 was donated to a local family in severe need. The cost of several funerals of indigent families who succumbed to Covid were also covered by the Samaj. Finally, 300 goodie bags consisting of fireworks and sweets were distributed to children as part of Diwali celebrations in 2020. Let's give Jasminben a warm applause for the services rendered.

A major challenge for the incoming committee would be the development of the 11 stands belonging to the Samaj situated on Es'kia Mphahlele (formerly DF Malan) Drive in Marabastad. The idea is to develop the stands into a viable business centre that will provide a permanent income for the Samaj so that we can continue fulfilling our cultural, educational, and religious mandate. I am pleased to inform you that Sanjaybhai Govind has agreed to lead a team that will be driving this project. I will leave it to Sanjaybhai to shortly give you a report on his teams plans and the progress they have made.

In conclusion, I leave the incoming committee with a final thought. In 10 years-time the Shree Pretoria Hindu Seva Samaj will be 100 years old. Maybe it's still early to start planning, but I think at the very least a team should be assembled which will produce a blueprint for the anniversary celebrations. If the new committee decides to do so, I appeal to members of the community to volunteer their services so we can put together a truly memorable event for this remarkable milestone in our Samaj's history.

I thank you for your patience in listening to me.

Hari Om Tat Sat

Rameshbhai Chhagan
President: SPHSS

4.2 BOARD OF TRUSTEES – CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Namaste to one and all. It is with pleasure for me to present the chairman's report on behalf of the trustees.

In 2020 & 2021 two audits were carried out, the last one in March 2021. No adverse comments were made.

Meetings – Four meetings were held during the year. A special risk assessment meeting was convened, facilitated by Pranaybhai Devchand. Unfortunately, the Risk Assessment was not completed. This to be followed through by the new incoming committee, using the blueprint as a basis.

Financials – These were audited by Tayfin Financial Accountants (Pty) Ltd and countersigned by the Trustees and Exco of SPHSS. No adverse findings were made by the auditors.

Staffing of the Executive Committee (Exco) – Exco was hamstrung in their operation due to lack of volunteers to fill the various posts. However, I must praise Rameshbhai for doing such a wonderful job of looking after the Samaj affairs. It is imperative that volunteers come forward from the community to take up the various posts so that the Samaj can live up to its motto of "selfless service to the community".

The duty of the Samaj is to be transparent in all its activities. i.e., Social – looking after the wellbeing of the financially destitute. Have health meetings, looking after the elderly.

Education – Provide for the young i.e., Balmandir school, if possible, Gujarati classes for all. Bursaries for higher education.

Provide financial support wherever possible.

Thus far we have tried our best to meet these obligations. I must stress that some or many Samaj activities had to be curtailed or stopped all together because of the threat of Covid-19.

And now the whole world and especially the Indian communities are stressed with epidemic unfolding in India. A special appeal to all to pray and give financial assistance. This appeal has gone out to one and all from the Samaj.

Namaste,

DEVIDAS RAMJEE

CHAIRMAN OF TRUSTEES

4.3 FINANCE REPORT

Finance Report of SPHSS for the year ending 31st December 2020.

Namaste:

INCOME	2020	2019	% Change
Facilities	204 546	189 179	8%
Marabastad	1 206 974	1 211 613	0%
RCC	96 731	270 240	-179%
Samaj Office	445 200	380 542	15%
School	452 421	628 782	-39%
	2 405 872	2 680 356	

Facilities. The hiring of the Auditorium, Classrooms is the source of revenue here. Covid has dampened the use of the Auditorium. We trust the future holds better prospects. The Revenue has increased as a result of the Flat that has been Let.

Marabastad Complex. The Complex revenue is relied upon for sustaining SAMAJ expenditure. Our SAMAJ has remained afloat through this revenue stream. Future growth within the Samaj would be through similar revenue source.

Religious Cultural Committee.

Cultural celebrations have been restricted, leading to lack of Religious functions being hosted at the Samaj Auditorium. We have Virtually celebrated most of the Celebrations, with the aim of keeping our culture alive.

Trust new ideas would be invented in these cyber times to continue our celebrations.

Seva Samaj Revenue. Almost 82k was raised for Covid Aid for this community. Donated through support for needy families. A major portion of the revenue is Interest Received from Fixed Deposits. R281K

Balmandir. Revenue decreased by 39%, During these difficult Covid time. We believe the future holds better growth.

Nett Returns:

	2020	2019
Surplus	172 939	372 392
Taxation	36 482	53 110
	136 457	319 282

We see a 134% decrease in NETT revenue.

Breakdown as per SPHSS Segments.

Segment	Income	Expenses	Nett
Facilities	204 546	187 676	16 870
Marabastad	1 206 974	422 850	784 124
RCC	96 731	237 453	- 140 722
Samaj Office	445 200	1 017 486	- 572 286
School	452 421	403 949	48 471
	2 405 872	2 269 414	136 457

Liquidity

Seva Samaj Cash & Bank Balances at 31st December 2020

Cash & Equivalent	2020	2019
Bursary Fund	354 532	328 924
Current Acc	22 075	145 268
Fixed Deposits	4 486 183	4 191 107
Smaller Other	27 411	9 345
	4 890 200	4 674 644

To date the Samaj liquidity remains healthy.

Looking Ahead:

The future of the SPHSS's existence weighs solely on the unified efforts of Samaj members. The Vision as promoted by our predecessors is to serve to infinity; through sustained growth and promotion of Sanatan Dharma. We are earnestly attempting to get the stands in Marabastad developed. With this additional investment, we expect greater sustainability of revenue for the SPHSS. This will bear fruits for our next generation.

Thank You.

Namaste

CFO: Harshadbhai B Pema

Treasurer: Pavan Gandhi.

4.3 REPORT BY THE MARABASTAD STANDS DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Sanjaybhai Govind was scheduled to deliver a progress report but was not present. Some members of his committee then informed the Chairman that he had nominated someone else to make the presentation but there was no one present who indicated he had a mandate to do so. Vinaybhai then addressed the members by giving a short background to the project.

4.4 REPORT BY THE AUDITORIUM REFURBISHMENT TEAM

The leader of the Auditorium Refurbishment team, Jasminben Magan, presented a short PowerPoint presentation on the need to refurbish the auditorium and shared some ideas she had. She requested the community to support this project by providing financial assistance as well as volunteering their services.

5. QUESTION TIME ON REPORTS

Khushiben invited questions on all the reports presented. However, no questions were raised on any of the reports.

6. CORRESPONDENCE

No correspondence related to the AGM was received.

7. AMENDMENTS TO CONSTITUTION

No requests for amendments to the Samaj constitution was received.

8. GENERAL

Khushiben announced that there were no matters of a general nature that had been raised by any member of the community but invited members present to raise any issue of concern. Devidasbhai raised the issue of the damage to the Mandir caused by a storm not so long ago. Rameshbhai informed the House that a flagpole had snapped and damaged the dome of the mandir. A claim had been submitted to the Samaj insurers and is receiving attention. No further questions were raised.

9. ELECTIONS

The outgoing President, Rameshbhai Chhagan, informed members that only one person has been nominated for the various positions, despite several reminders sent to the community to nominate persons for the various positions. In terms of the constitution such nominated persons automatically become elected unless objections are raised on the fitness of any nominated person to serve as an official. Rameshbhai read out the list of nominated individuals and no objections were raised. He also requested that members present nominate a person from the floor to occupy the Social Services position for which no nomination had been received. As no nominations were received, he undertook to fill the position by secondment with the approval of the Executive Committee.

The following nominated persons were unanimously elected:

Position	Nominated persons
Trustee 1 - Chairperson	Dr Devidas Ramjee
Trustee 2	Arvind Chhagan
Trustee 3	Venod Mistry
Trustee 4	Upendra Parmar
Trustee 5	Hitesh Nandani
President	Ramesh Chhagan
Deputy President	Jasmin Govind
General Secretary	Dhvinsi Valand
Assistant Secretary	Ilesh Gandhi
Chief Financial Officer	Mansi Nandani
Treasurer General	Harshad B Pema
Head of Education	Nayanta Naran
Head of Religion & Culture	Ketan Parmar
Head of Youth Affairs (Navyug Mandal)	Khushi Nandani
Head of Facilities Management & Funerals	Vijay Naran
Head of Social Services	Manisha Lakha
Head of Special Projects	Vinay Chagan

10. ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS – CITATIONS OF LIST OF AWARDEES

The President explained that some years ago, he had introduced the Academic Achievement Awards Ceremony to honour all those in the community who had achieved academic excellence. Unfortunately, the previous administration had dropped this ceremony and he had decided to revive it by honouring all those who had received degrees and diplomas in the last three years. The following persons were honoured:

	<u>KIRTI KANAK</u>
<p>Kirti passed her final year in her BTech: Architecture with 4 distinctions in construction materials, law and contract management, project management and theory of design. She also achieved the highest grade for principles of urban design. This granted her the opportunity to work on one of the top architecture firms in South Africa (Paragon Architects South Africa), where she had worked for 2 years, on projects such as pharmaceutical factories, office precincts, student</p>	
<u>HARSHAN VALLABH</u>	
<p>Harshan Vallabh obtained his BSc. Actuarial and Financial Mathematics Degree in 2016 - with distinction, and obtained a BSc. Honour's degree in Actuarial Science in 2017. He qualified as a Fellow of the Actuarial Society of South Africa in March 2021.</p>	
	<u>SWARUPA VALLABH</u>
<p>Swarupa Vallabh completed BCom Law in 2013 and LLB in 2015. She completed 2 years of articles of clerkship, 6 months of Practical Legal training and passed 4 board exams. She was admitted as an Attorney in January 2018.</p>	
<u>VARSHIKA BHANA</u>	
<p>Varshika Bhana has completed a Doctor of Philosophy in Nursing Science degree. Her studies involve the use of music interventions in cardiac and cancer care. She continues to do work in areas of Indigenous Knowledge Systems, Complementary and Alternative care and transdisciplinary teaching and learning.</p>	
	<u>VIRAL CHAGANLAL</u>
<p>Viral Chaganlal completed his Bachelors of Engineering (BEng) degree in Mechanical engineering at the University of Pretoria in 2020 and is currently pursuing his honours degree in Mechanical engineering.</p>	

11. SWEARING-IN OF NEW OFFICIALS

Sunilbhai Bhatt conducted a swearing-in ceremony whereby all the newly elected members

swore to serve the Samaj faithfully and diligently.

12. CLOSURE

Sunilbhai lead the members in a closing prayer. Khushiben thanked all those who were present, declared the meeting closed by 16:30 and invited them to participate in the refreshments provided.

**DHVINSIBEN VALLAND
GENERAL-SECRETARY**

**RAMESHBHAI CHHAGAN
PRESIDENT**