



# Shree Pretoria Hindu Seva Samaj

Established in 1932

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"Satyameva Jayate" - Truth Alone Prevails

## Celebrating 86 Years of Selfless Service

### Minutes of the AGM held at the Mini Hall on Sunday 26 May 2019 at 3:00pm

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#### 1. PRAYER & WELCOME

The meeting opened with a prayer led by the resident priest, Mr Sunilbhai Bhatt. The Master of Ceremony, Ms Priyamben Singh, welcomed all present.

#### 2. ATTENDANCE & APOLOGIES

Attendance was as per the attached register. Formal apologies were received from Vinaybhai Chagan and Arvindbhai Chhagan.

A total of 38 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 Pavanbhai and Ileshbhai Gandhi.

#### 4. MATTERS ARISING

Members did not raise any issues that arose from the previous AGM minutes.

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

#### 5. PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Namaste

Imagine what our lives would be like if all the activities of the Samaj that give us our identity, that bring us together as a community, were suddenly stopped? What would our social and cultural life be like if it was all gone?

This was the possibility we faced last year before elections when almost half of the Samaj executive had resigned amid allegations of all kinds of wrongdoing. Some left because they were tired of the infighting, the insults and the sheer inability of some exec members to behave like mature adults. There were even accusations of money laundering. After a thorough independent audit, all the

allegations of financial mismanagement were proved to be baseless and mischievous. There was no money laundering. The Samaj had not lost a cent but the idle troublemakers had done enough to kill any incentive anyone had to serve. So the damage was done!

Matters were so bad that no one wanted to stand for elections last year. A small band of us decided to salvage what we could and begin the process of rebuilding the Samaj. Despite our best efforts, we could not find anyone to fill the positions of Deputy President, Secretary General, Navyug Mandal, Health, Welfare & Gender as well as Special Projects.

Slowly but surely, the few of us who agreed to serve worked tirelessly to ensure the Samaj did not collapse. I am therefore pleased to report the following achievements during our short time in office, despite the adverse circumstances:

### **Achievements**

- We started by hosting a strategic planning session after our election as officials. Together with Trustees, we identified key goals and refocused many of our activities. We reaffirmed our commitment to work as a team and live the values of the Samaj.
- We have revived the Gujarati School. Whereas at the beginning of 2019 we had only 2 children enrolled, today we have 15. We took away fee payments for Gujarati school, thus making it affordable to anyone who wished to ensure their children learnt at least the basics of our culture and language. We have also offered free transport to those who need it. I thank Jayshreeben Mangalia for injecting a new spirit within the Gujarati School.
- Revitalisation of the Balmandir. For many years the Balmandir was leaderless in that each teacher was left to her own devices, her own teaching method, her own engagement with parents. We have taken the step of appointing Chetanbhai Bhodoo to be a supervisor and support for our hard-working teachers in the Balmandir. We hope that this would lead to a more focused approach and result in an increase in enrolment next year.
- Another achievement is the establishment of the multi-media centre. The Balmandir children will soon start receiving computer-based learning. We also hope to announce soon a wide range of activities that would be undertaken by the MMC now that we have a dedicated person to run it. My thanks go to Ileshbhai and Pavanbhai for the hard work done in setting it up, and to Urvi Mehta who took the initiative of hosting an Arts, Craft and Painting exhibition which showcased local artists in our community. Her initiative opened our eyes to what is possible with the new Multi-Media Centre.
- Our Religious & Culture Committee members, Ketanbhai & Naynataben, are to be commended for their dedication in ensuring the Samaj hosted all our normal religious functions with dignity and grace. We have received much positive feedback and most of our functions were well attended, even though Naynataben constantly complains that Samaj Executives do not attend.
- We have received an unqualified audit. The work being done by Harshadbhai, Pavanbhai and Priyamben in maintaining the highest standards of financial discipline is commendable. This year we have introduced a more advanced accounting package which provides officials the ability to remotely manage Samaj accounts.
- As the financial results show, despite several new initiatives, we have grown Samaj's bank balance

- We must thank Vinaybhai for ensuring that the Samaj premises are in a good condition. Through his efforts we have strengthened all the Samaj chairs thus getting them to be serviceable for at least another 5 years; we have renovated the flat to let out and have upgraded the living conditions for our long standing friendly cleaner, Mr Noel Choema, who we have also promoted to Caretaker.
- Some of you might have noticed that the Samaj is now permanently draped. Every year the Samaj spends over R35 000 on draping the auditorium for religious functions. We took the decision to turn this loss into a profit-making venture by having it permanently draped. Our calculations indicate that within 3-5 years we will recoup the expense and make a small profit thereafter. Our next improvement is to put in a proper sound system once and for all. Our office staff comprising of Khushiben and Priyamben must be commended for the work they have put in.
- The Women's desk of the HWG Portfolio have thus far hosted three events. Their special focus on the needs of women are greatly appreciated.
- We started a Samaj Newsletter. We have had a naming competition and I am pleased to announce that the winning entry was the suggestion to combine the word "Samaj" with the word "Samachar", thus creating "Samajchar".
- An important initiative was to create and adopt an Internal Audit Policy. This policy should give clear direction to the Samaj trustees on conducting proper internal audits to ensure financial probity.
- We have also started a process of improving security on our premises. A project has been initiated to install CCTV cameras throughout our premises and improve on access control.
- Last year we partnered with the High Commission of India to produce the highly successful Tshwane Diwali Festival. For the first time, this event did not lose money. This year many different organisations have joined hands with the Samaj in producing this signature event on our calendar.

### **Our Way Forward**

As a Samaj, we need to continue to strive towards meeting the needs of our people, both young and old. We are grateful to Dharmilbhai Mehta, Taraben Bhaga and Jasminben Magan who agreed to serve as head of the Youth, Senior Citizens Club and HWG Committees. We need more officials willing to serve to help the delivery of all our programmes.

Through innovative thinking and dedicated service, we can do much more. We have great expectations from the newly appointed head of the Multi-Media Centre. I envisage establishing a fully functioning Gujarati Resource Centre where our people can read at leisure the literature of our forefathers, of computer literacy classes for young and old, of a gaming centre for our younger generation, and various exhibitions and workshops, including in the visual and creative arts.

Let us join hands in working together. If not, we run the risk of the remaining few resigning and the Samaj closing its doors.

Hari Om Tat Sat



**Rameshbhai Chhagan**  
**President: SPHSS**

## 6. FINANCIAL REPORT

### Finance Report of Shree Pretoria Hindu Seva Samaj for the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> December 2018

Income	2018	2017	% Change
Balmandir	584,114	513,392	12%
Building Fund	-	422,400	0%
Bursary Fund	-	14,640	0%
Complex Rentals	1,139,989	1,088,670	5%
Facilities	220,616	215,375	2%
Gujarati School	12,430	77,625	-524%
RCC	448,431	329,241	27%
Seva Samaj	149,798	403,175	-169%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>2,555,378</b>	<b>3,064,518</b>	<b>17%</b>

**Balmandir.** Revenue increased by 12%, a growth in student numbers and affordable fees. Attendance is good with sustained growth in the future years.

**Bursary Fund.** Study loans were availed during the reporting period. There are many needy students requiring funds to achieve their desired study goals. A request is made to our community to contribute to this student fund. We need to continue to grow this student loan fund to accommodate the increase in assisting our future leaders to achieve their higher qualifications. Please be generous in investing in our future.

**Marabastad Complex.** Annually, rental income from SPHSS Property in Marabastad, has consistently managed to sustain SPHSS with all its Cultural Community services. We now reap the benefits from the foresight of our predecessors.

**Facilities.** The hiring of the Auditorium and Classrooms is the main source of this income. Where in the past the popularity of the Auditorium was mainly for the hosting of wedding functions, this has gradually declined. SPHSS auditorium rates are highly attractive in comparison to other venues. We have invested in décor to enhance the venue, adding greater value and beauty.

**Gujarati School.** We are still facing challenges to attract students to the Gujarati school. We hope with the new teacher we see substantial increase in number of students. Our current incentive is Free education to learners. This has increased student attendance. We encourage you to take advantage of this free classes. Educate your children in our mother tongue.

**Religious Cultural Committee.** Whilst on the one end of the spectrum there was hefty gains made through sponsorship, especially with the Diwali Festival; there is also a substantial drop in willingness from community members to offer Daan; We hope to make our festivals more attractive with the aim of alluring droves of our beloved community. Fresh ideas are being implemented by our youth, our future leaders from the revived Navyug Mandal.

**Seva Samaj Revenue.** Almost 100k was received from The Modi Organisers. This is for the upgrade of the MMC. This centre is for the benefit of community members and scholars.

#### Nett Returns:

	2018	2017	% Change
Surplus for the Year	786,787	844,338	
Taxation	116,495	233,274	
	<b>670,292</b>	<b>611,064</b>	10%

We see a 10% increase in revenue.

#### Breakdown as per SPHSS Segments.

Income	Income	Expenses	Nett
Gujarati School	12,430	88,856	(76,426)
Balmandir	584,114	279,303	304,811
Complex Rentals	1,139,989	108,631	1,031,358
Facilities	220,616	316,093	(95,477)
RCC	448,431	575,073	(126,642)
Seva Samaj	149,798	763,943	(614,145)
Interest Income	373,308		373,308
Bursary Fund		10,000	(10,000)
Grand Total	2,928,686	2,141,899	786,787

**SPHSS** rentals sustain our organisation. We invest these funds in our community through the sprightly observance of all our Religious and Cultural festivals.

#### Liquidity

Seva Samaj Cash & Bank Balances at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2018

Cash & Cash Equivalents	2018	2017
Bursary Fund Fixed Deposit	304,774	283,042
CA SPHSS 62238050330	110,035	73,959
Fixed Deposit	3,500,000	3,500,000
Money Market	940,993	213,507
Petty Cash	-	148
Grand Total	<b>4,855,802</b>	<b>4,070,656</b>

To date the Samaj liquidity remains healthy.

#### Accounts Receivable

Current Assets	2018
School Deposits	8,160
Accounts Receivable	129,119
Student Loans	520,163
VAT Control	150
Grand Total	<b>657,592</b>

#### Looking Ahead:

The SPHSS has been in existence for the past eighty-seven years. 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 Sanathan 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

## **7. QUESTION TIME ON REPORTS**

No questions were raised on any of the reports.

## **8. CORRESPONDENCE**

No correspondence related to the AGM was received.

## **9. AMENDMENTS TO CONSTITUTION**

The following amendments to the Samaj Constitution were received:

### **PROPOSED AMENDMENT 1**

Correct the numbering of the content page in the Constitution

#### ***Rationale:***

The page numbers reflected on the content page is not 100% correct.

This was unanimously approved.

### **PROPOSED AMENDMENT 2**

Change the Vision & Mission statement as follows:

#### **Current Vision**

To forge a dynamic and progressive Hindu community based on the fundamental tenets of Hinduism through dedicated service excellence

#### ***Amended Vision***

*To forge a dynamic and progressive Hindu community that is anchored on the fundamental tenets of Hinduism, resulting in the SPHSS becoming the leading Hindu organisation in Pretoria / Tshwane*

#### ***Rationale:***

At a strategic planning session held in October 2018, the trustees and executive members present adopted the revised vision

### **Current Mission**

The current mission reads:

In pursuit of the vision, the Samaj will:

- a) Ensure that it effectively addresses the social, economic, cultural, spiritual, educational and political needs of the Hindu Community of the Pretoria/Tshwane region;
- b) Further the community's image of being worthy citizens of Pretoria/Tshwane region & South Africa;
- c) c) Improve the quality of life of the Gujarati community of Pretoria/Tshwane region as well as the wider community within which we co-exist

### **Amended Mission:**

*In pursuit of this vision, the Samaj will:*

- *Ensure that it effectively addresses the social, economic, cultural, spiritual, educational and political needs of the Hindu Community of the Pretoria/Tshwane region;*
- *Further the Hindu community's positive image of being a good citizen;*
- *Improve the quality of life of the Gujarati community in particular and the wider community in which it co-exists.*

### ***Rationale:***

At a strategic planning session held in October 2018, the trustees and executive members present adopted the revised mission

This amendment was unanimously approved

## **PROPOSED AMENDMENT 3**

Clause 3.3 dealing with values reads as follows:

The following values are "*ETCHED*" into our lives and underpin everything we do or undertake to do in the name of the Samaj:

**E** = Empowerment

**T** = Transparency

**C** = Committed to Excellence

**H** = Honesty and Integrity

**E** = Education

**D** = Dharma

Amend clause 3.3 to read as follows:

The following values are “ETCHED” into our lives and underpin everything we do or undertake to do in the name of the Samaj:

E = Empowerment of Community

T = Transparency and Teamwork

C = Committed to Excellence

H = Honesty, Integrity and Respect

E = Ethical Behaviour

D = Dharma

***Rationale:***

At a strategic planning session held in October 2018, the trustees and executive members present adopted the revised values

This proposal was unanimously approved

**PROPOSED AMENDMENT 4**

To amend Clause 7.8 dealing with meetings of the Trustees reads as follows:

To meet at least quarterly to receive reports, from the Executive Committee. In addition, to hold at least two joint meetings with the Executive Committee.

*Amend Clause 7.8*

*To meet at least quarterly to receive reports from the Executive Committee and to ensure adequate oversight takes place.*

***Rationale:***

There is no need to prescribe joint meetings as 4 members of Trustees are Executive Committee members. Joint meetings can be called as and when needed.

Objections to the amendment were received from Miheerbhai Joshi and Nayantaben Naran. After due deliberation, the amendment to the constitution was approved.

**PROPOSED AMENDMENT 5**

Drop clause 7.27 which reads as follows:



“The Trustees may sanction a deviation from a constitutional provision only under exceptional circumstances; such deviation must be ratified by the community at a Special Meeting called up for this purpose or at the earliest AGM/BGM”

***Rationale:***

Giving power to the trustees to be able to change the constitution is a potentially dangerous thing to do. All changes to the Constitution should only be allowed with the approval of the members.

This amendment was unanimously approved.

**PROPOSED AMENDMENT 6**

Remove Clause 10.2 (c) which reads as follows:

“Assist the President with the following duties and responsibilities”

***Rationale:***

There are no duties listed after the statement, thus making the statement meaningless.

Objection to removing this clause was received from Miheerbhai. After due deliberation, he agreed to revoke his objection and the amendment was unanimously passed.

**PROPOSED AMENDMENT 7**

Remove clause 15:14, which reads as follows:

“An employee of the Samaj is ineligible to stand concurrently for election as an official or trustee”

***Rationale***

This clause was originally inserted to avoid “conflict of interest” situations. However, this can be managed by asking the official concerned to recuse him/herself when such decisions are being taken. In the context of having very few persons willing to serve as officials, it is important that capable staff members are also able to stand for positions.

Objections to this amendment were received from Miheerbhai and Nayantaben. After due deliberation, the objection was upheld, and the amendment did not pass.

**PROPOSED AMENDMENT 8**

Remove the provisions of Clause 19 which reads as follows:

19.1 The President of the Executive Committee and the Chairperson of the Board of Trustees may serve for a maximum of two consecutive terms (i.e. 4 years);

19.2 He/she may, however, make him/her-self available for re-election as President of the Executive or Chairman of the Board of Trustees after at least two (2) years have elapsed;

19.3 Executive Committee members can similarly serve a maximum of 2 terms (4 years) in any single position;

19.4 Notwithstanding clause 19.3 above, any executive committee member can be nominated for another position other than the one he/she has already served in;

***Rationale:***

In the light of the unwillingness of community members to serve as officials or trustees, the provision of time limits for officials willing to serve is counterproductive.

Objection to this amendment was received from Miheerbhai. After due deliberation, the amendment was withdrawn.

## **PROPOSED AMENDMENT 9**

Clause 25 states the following:

“No reimbursement may be given to officials for attending regular *Samaj* meetings held in the greater Pretoria / Tshwane area; however, all expenses incurred by officials for the hosting of strategic sessions are deemed to be legitimate”

### ***Suggested amendment***

*Samaj officials and trustees are to be remunerated a fair stipend or allowance to compensate them for expenses incurred and time spent in the execution of their duties. The conditions of such stipend or allowance must be clearly set out in a policy document and should empower the President to suspend such stipend if he/she is of the opinion that the official(s) concerned is not fulfilling tasks assigned to him/her.*

### ***Rationale***

It is becoming increasingly apparent that new generation members are not willing to serve if they are not compensated. Currently, the Samaj executive has four vacant positions despite all efforts in securing volunteers. The introduction of a stipend will help in attracting young talent into the Samaj as well as enable the President to hold officials accountable to deliver on their mandate. Such a move will also help ensure the long-term survival of the Samaj.

Objection to this amendment was received from Miheerbhai and Nayantaben. After due deliberation, the amendment was withdrawn.

## **PROPOSED AMENDMENT 10**

The insertion of an additional clause under Power of Trustees to read as follows:

*The Executive Committee and Trustees can only alienate Samaj property if it has sought and obtained the approval of two-thirds of members present at an AGM or a special meeting called specifically for this purpose.*

### ***Rationale***

Currently, the constitution provides permission to the Executive Committee, with the approval of Trustees, to alienate any property. The addition of this clause provides extra security in that it gives the community the final say on such an important matter.

This amendment was unanimously approved by the members present.

## **PROPOSED AMENDMENT 11**

Shift the Preamble to the Constitution to the front cover page and remove reference to the review done in 2017

### ***Rationale***

The reference to the Constitutional Review done in 2017 is now dated. It is more appropriate to place the preamble on the cover page to set the right tone for the constitution.

This amendment was unanimously approved by the members present.

## **PROPOSED AMENDMENT 12**

Removal of Postal Address reflected under Clause 2

### ***Rationale:***

The Samaj no longer has a postal box.

This amendment was unanimously approved by the members present.

## **PROPOSED AMENDMENT 13**

Add the following subclause under Clause 11

The Secretariat is responsible for ensuring the following databases are regularly maintained: membership database, email database, WhatsApp database, SMS database.

### ***Rationale:***

The management of the Samaj databases are an essential part of the secretariats responsibility.

This amendment was unanimously approved by the members present.

## **PROPOSED AMENDMENT 14**

Insert the word “calendar” days before all references to days mentioned in the constitution

### ***Rationale:***

Currently, it is unclear whether the numerous references to “days” or “weeks” are calendar or working days. This insertion will remove uncertainty.

This amendment was unanimously approved by the members present.

## **PROPOSED AMENDMENT 15**

Make any amendments to the Constitution as required by the South African Revenue Service in order for the Samaj to comply with section 50 of the Companies Act.

### ***Rationale:***

The Samaj has applied for Section 18A status that is granted to Non-Profit Organisations that wish to become a Public Benefit Organisation and that comply with relevant provisions of the Companies Act. Being granted

section 18A recognition would enable the Samaj to grant donors a certificate that will allow them to get a rebate when completing their tax returns.

This amendment was unanimously approved by the members present.

**10. GENERAL**

No requests were received to discuss any matter under General.

**11. PRAYER & CLOSURE**

With no further business, Priyamben declared the meeting closed after the closing prayer led by the resident priest, Shri Sunilbhai Bhatt. Refreshments were served.

**ILESHBHAI GANDHI**  
**ASSISTANT SECRETARY**

**RAMESHBHAI CHHAGAN**  
**PRESIDENT: SPHSS**