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# Full Report: *In Conversation with the British Hindus*

UK Parliament, Churchill Hall – 1st September 2025

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## Executive Summary

On **1st September 2025**, the UK Parliament hosted *In Conversation with the British Hindus*, a first-of-its-kind gathering that brought together **30+ MPs** and **50+ community leaders** representing more than **65% of British Hindus**. Organised by **Action for Harmony**, this event marked a historic moment for the Hindu community in Britain, enabling structured dialogue with policymakers in the heart of Westminster.

The programme, hosted across **two sessions**, combined spiritual reflection, cultural expression, and policy dialogue. It highlighted the **immense contribution** of British Hindus to national life while setting out **key community concerns** around identity, security, education, representation, and social inclusion.

The event received **cross-party support**, with presentations from parliamentarians including **Baroness Verma, Lord Sewell, Bob Blackman MP, Gareth Thomas MP, Jack Rankin MP, Lord Popat**. **Full list of attendees is attached..**

This event created a **new precedent for Hindu–Parliament engagement**, establishing the Hindu community as a collaborative and constructive partner in shaping the UK's multicultural future.

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## Background & Purpose

British Hindus make up over **1.2 million people** (approx. 1.7% of the UK population), contributing significantly to the economy, healthcare, education, business, technology, and cultural life. Despite this, the community has often felt **underrepresented in policymaking** and **misrepresented in public discourse**.

Key catalysts for this event included:

- The **Leicester disturbances of 2022**, where Hindu voices were sidelined.
- Exclusion from critical policy consultations (e.g., cremation laws, religious provisions).
- Media narratives that often generalise Hindus within the broader “Asian” label.
- Increasing concerns over **hate crimes, safeguarding of children, and representation in schools**.

Action for Harmony, established in 2023, sought to address this gap by creating a professional and representative voice for British Hindus. The *In Conversation* event was designed to:

- **Showcase Hindu contributions** to British society.
  - **Articulate community needs and challenges** directly to parliamentarians.
  - **Foster partnerships** for long-term collaboration.
  - **Launch a platform** for ongoing dialogue and representation.
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## Event Structure

### Session One

- **Compere & Opening:** *Mita Samani (Chinmaya Mission UK)*
- **Prayers:** *Prof. Lakshmanan Shivakumar (Chinmaya Mission UK)*
- **Welcome Address:** *Baroness Verma*
- **Setting the Context:** *Vinay Tanna (Garner Hancock Solicitors, ISKCON Trustee)*
- **Community Presentation:** *Nitin Palan MBE (Action for Harmony)*
- **Concluding Remarks:** *Bob Blackman MP*
- *Additional remarks from Lord Popat*

## Session Two

- **Compere & Opening:** *Jayminiben Patel (Brahmakumaris)* – moment of reflection
- **Welcome Address:** *Gareth Thomas MP*
- **Setting the Context:** *Dr. Mayank Shah (BAPS Swaminarayan Mandir)*
- **Community Presentation:** *Nilesh Solanki (Action for Harmony)*
- **Concluding Remarks:** *Lord Sewell*

## Attendance Highlights

- **MPs Confirmed:** 27+ across Conservative, Labour, SNP, and Liberal Democrats
- **Community Leaders Confirmed:** 45+ representing temples, cultural bodies, interfaith organisations, and educational institutions
- Representation spanned **London, Midlands, Scotland, and beyond.**

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## Key Messages from the Event

### 1. Hindu Contributions to British Society

- Over **100,000 Hindus in the NHS** and healthcare sector.
- Significant contributions in **business, finance, and technology** (including founders of major UK firms).
- Cultural events like **Diwali at Trafalgar Square** and the upcoming **Royal Albert Hall Diwali Celebration**.
- Grassroots **volunteerism and interfaith work**, reflecting values of Seva (selfless service) and community harmony.

### 2. Concerns & Community Needs

#### Identity

- Hindus seek recognition as *British Hindus*, not under a generic “Asian” category.
- Policies and data collection should reflect specific identities.

### **Security & Justice**

- Release the **Leicester riots report** in full to restore confidence.
- Stronger police response to **anti-Hindu hate crimes**.
- Equitable funding for security of Hindu temples.

### **Education & Media**

- Improved **RE curriculum and teacher training** on Hinduism.
- Greater accountability for media misrepresentation of Hindu practices and values.
- Optional teaching of **mother languages** for Hindu children.

### **Safeguarding & Social Issues**

- Addressing targeted **grooming of Hindu girls**.
- Culturally appropriate **foster care placements**.
- Greater support for **elderly care**, heating, and home assistance.

### **Religious Practices**

- Inclusion in consultations on **cremation policies**.
- Visa access for priests to serve in UK temples.

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## **Political Engagement & Responses**

- **Baroness Verma** urged deeper recognition of Hindu voices beyond election cycles.

- **Gareth Thomas MP** highlighted opportunities for inclusive policy development.
- **Vinay Tanna & Dr. Mayank Shah** stressed the need for proactive Hindu engagement in politics.
- **Nitin Palan & Nilesh Solanki** presented the Action for Harmony vision, urging structured collaboration with government.
- **Lord Sewell** commended Hindu values of *Family, Religion, Education, and Entrepreneurship* as guiding principles for integration.
- **Bob Blackman MP** reaffirmed the APPG for British Hindus' commitment to amplifying Hindu concerns in Westminster.

Notable MPs such as **Seema Malhotra, Baggy Shanker, Louie French, Jack Rankin** and **Lord Popat** also lent their support, signalling broad cross-party recognition.

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## Impact & Outcomes

### Immediate Impact

- **Visibility:** Hindu issues and contributions formally discussed in Parliament for the first time at this scale.
- **Unity:** Representation of over 65% of British Hindus through Action for Harmony.
- **Policy Engagement:** Key asks placed directly before MPs, including on security, education, and community recognition.

### Long-Term Outcomes

- Strengthened **APPG for British Hindus** with renewed purpose.
  - Commitment from MPs to engage with Hindu representatives at **both national and constituency levels**.
  - Momentum for upcoming events, including the **National Hindu Conference (Sept 2025)** and **Diwali at Royal Albert Hall**.
  - Established a framework for **annual Hindu–Parliament dialogue**.
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## Voices from the Event

- *“Hindus in the UK have lived like sugar in milk — enriching society without displacing anyone.”* – **Baroness Verma**
  - *“We need structured engagement so Hindu voices are no longer absent from national debates.”* – **Nitin Palan**
  - *“Our values of family, education, and entrepreneurship (FREE) make us natural partners in building Britain’s future.”* – **Lord Sewell**
  - *“This is only the beginning — Hindus must continue to engage with MPs locally and nationally.”* – **Bob Blackman MP**
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## Conclusion & Next Steps

The *In Conversation with the British Hindus* event was a **historic success**, laying the foundation for deeper, more constructive dialogue between British Hindus and Parliamentarians.

### Next Steps:

- **Formal Report Submission** – sharing this document with MPs, government departments, and community organisations.
- **Follow-Up Consultations** – on Leicester report, education, temple security, Islamophobia - a legislation to be inclusive of all religions and safeguarding.
- **Identity**– Being branded as ASIAN, Anti Hindu Hate and Hindutva Narratives
- **Strengthen APPG Engagement** – ensuring Hindu perspectives are represented in debates and inquiries.
- **Annual Dialogue** – institutionalising this event as a recurring fixture in Parliament.
- **Crematorium** - Work with Lord Popat with need for further Hindu Crematoriums and pick up the conversation from 3 years ago
- **Action For Harmony** to begin the process of setting up relationships in Education, Foreign , Health and other departments so there is an awareness of issues that we can enter into a dialogue with.

British Hindus left Parliament with a renewed sense of recognition and commitment, confident that their voice is being heard. The message was clear: **British values and Hindu values are one and the same —**





**Attendee List - Lords - MPs - Councillors - Community Leaders**

|                                                               |                           |                                   |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Ayoub Khan MP                                                 | Independent               | Birmingham Perry Barr             |
| Baroness Prashar                                              |                           | Runnymede, Surrey                 |
| Chris Turner by ( Representing Baron Wajid Khan)              | PA                        | Ministry of Housing and Community |
| Baroness Verma APPG BH                                        | Conservative              | Sutton Coldfield                  |
| Bob Blackman MP APPG BH                                       | Conservative              | Harrow East                       |
| David Pinto-Duschinsky MP                                     | Labour                    | Hendon                            |
| Dierdre Costigan MP APPG BH                                   | Labour                    | Ealing Southall                   |
| Gareth Thomas MP                                              | Labour                    | Harrow West                       |
| Jack Rankin MP                                                | Conservative              | Windsor                           |
| Jim Shanon                                                    | Democratic Unionist Party | Strangford (Northern Ireland)     |
| Liam James Dean (Senior Parliamentary Assistant) Shivani Raja | Conservative              | Leicester East                    |
| Lord Gadhia                                                   |                           | Northwood                         |
| Lord Popat                                                    | Conservative              | Harrow                            |
| Lord Sewell                                                   |                           | Sanderstead                       |
| Louie French MP - APPG BH                                     | Conservative              | Old Bexley and Sidcup             |
| Luke Murphy MP                                                | Labour                    | Basingstoke                       |
| Luke Taylor MP - APPG                                         | Liberal Democrats         | Sutton and Cheam                  |
| Mat Western                                                   | Labour Party              | Warwick and Leamington            |
| Matthew APPG Assistant Louie                                  |                           |                                   |
| Matthew Glude Assistant                                       |                           |                                   |
| Neil Hudson                                                   | Conservative              | Epping Forest                     |
| Seema Malhotra MP                                             | Labour                    | Feltham and Heston                |
| Sonia Kumar MP                                                | Labour                    | Dudley                            |
| Susan Murray MP - APPG BH                                     | Liberal Democrats         | Mid Dunbartonshire                |
| Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi MP                                     | Labour                    | Slough                            |

|                           |              |                            |
|---------------------------|--------------|----------------------------|
| Theresa Villiers          |              | Barnet London              |
|                           |              |                            |
| Councillors               |              |                            |
| Cllr Parveen Rani         | Labour       | Borehamwood, Hertfordshire |
| Cllr Kantilal Rabadia     | Conservative | Kenton West                |
| Mayor Prerna Lau Bhardwaj | Conservative | Buckinghamshire            |
| Cllr Prish Sharma         | Conservative | Shirley West               |

### Community and Organisations Leaders

| Name of Attendees | Organisation                       | Name of Attendees      | Organisation                                  |
|-------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|
| Ashok Verma       | Businessman                        | Kailash Parekh MBE     | Lancashire Creative Common Wealth Association |
| Ashish Channawar  | INSIGHT UK                         | Kamlesh Patel          | Businessman                                   |
| Ashvin Patel      | Chairman West Midlands Hindu Forum | Mayaji Sonia           | Foster care                                   |
| Bharat Sodha      | President Lohana Samaj UK          | Mehool Sanghrajka      | One Jain                                      |
| Dhiraj D Shah     | Hindu Swayamsevak Sangh UK         | Miss Swati Shukla      | Brahma Kumaris                                |
| Dilip Shah        | One Jain                           | Mita Samani            | Chinmaya UK                                   |
| Dipak Naik        | Balaji Temple, Birmingham          | Nilesh Solanki         | Action for Harmony Director                   |
| Dr Mayank Shah    | BAPS Swaminarayan Sanstha          | Nitin Palan MBE        | Action for Harmony Director                   |
| Girish Patel      | BAPS Swaminarayan Sanstha          | Piyush Mistry          | Shree Prajapati Association UK                |
| Heena Solanki     | Hindu Support Network              | Pravar Petkar          | International Centre for Sustainability       |
| Hridesh Gupta     | Indian Diaspora                    | Prof Atul K Shah       | London School of Economics                    |
| Jagannadha Pawan  | India Knowledge Consortium         | Prof Bharat Pankhania  | Head of Public Health Medicine Teaching       |
| JagdishBhai Patel | Federation of Patidar Association  | Prof Shiva Kumar       | Chinmaya UK                                   |
| Janhavi Dadarkar  | Hindu Lawyer                       | Prof. Sunil Poshakwale | Indian Knowledge Consortium                   |
| Jas Sharma        | Hindu Council Central England      | Rahul Prakash          | Isha Foundation                               |
| Jaymini Patel BK  | Brahma Kumaris                     | Rajesh Govind          | Willesden Swaminarayan Mandir                 |
| Jesbir Kaur Uppal | Lawyer                             | Richa Sinha            | Scottish Hindu Foundation                     |
|                   |                                    |                        |                                               |

| Name of Attendees  | Organisation                            |  |
|--------------------|-----------------------------------------|--|
| Jonny Newton       | CST                                     |  |
| Rohan Tanna        | ISKCON UK                               |  |
| Sanjay Gadhvi      | ISKCON UK                               |  |
| Santosh Patil      | INSIGHT UK                              |  |
| Satish Chatwani    | Anoopam Mission                         |  |
| Satish Kamath      | APPG British Hindus                     |  |
| Shashikant Vekaria | HFB Patron - Vascroft Foundation        |  |
| Simon Evans        | Associate Partner PR Walk through walls |  |
| Subhash Thakkar    | Chambers of Commerce                    |  |
| Suresh Wadhwani    | Chinmaya Mission UK Trustee             |  |
| Vinay Tanna        | ISKCON UK                               |  |
| Vinod Tikoo        | APPG British Hindus                     |  |

**Nitin Palan MBE FCA & Nilesh Solanki**  
**Joint Managing Directors, Action for Harmony**  
[www.actionforharmony.org](http://www.actionforharmony.org)

**8th September 2025**