



EVENT REPORT

In Conversation with the British Hindu Community

Churchill Room, House of Commons
Monday 29 June 2026 • 12:30 – 14:30

Hosted by Navendu Mishra MP and Baroness Verma



Navendu Mishra MP and Baroness Verma
Will host a Lunch on behalf of Action for Harmony
in Churchill Room, House of Commons
on Monday 29th June 2026 at 12.30pm to 2.30pm
and requests the pleasure of your company

Entrance via Cromwell Green
Please allow up to 30 minutes to clear security
Smoking/e-cigarettes not permitted • No parking facilities available

Admittance upon presentation of invitation only

Guests are advised to bring personal photo identification

Executive Summary

On Monday 29 June 2026, Action for Harmony convened its second annual ‘In Conversation with the British Hindu Community’ gathering in the Churchill Room of the House of Commons. Hosted jointly by Navendu Mishra MP and Baroness Verma, the event brought over 20 parliamentarians, peers, elected councillors and more than 40 community leaders from across the United Kingdom into direct dialogue with the British Hindu community.

Where last year’s inaugural event was an introduction, an extension of friendship and the opening of a conversation, this year’s gathering returned with purpose. Following an opening address, five distinguished trustees from some of the largest Hindu organisations in the UK spoke to specific areas of shared concern: wellbeing, community safety, social cohesion and hate crime, education, and chaplaincy. Barry Gardiner MP gave the closing remarks, and Action for Harmony set out a clear call to action. Each presentation combined an introduction to the organisation’s work with evidence-led representations and a constructive offer of partnership with the institutions of the nation.

This report records the proceedings, profiles the speakers, summarises the community’s representations, and sets out the shared commitments that emerged. It is offered in the spirit that defined the day: honest, respectful, evidence-led conversation in service of a stronger, safer and more cohesive nation.

Programme & Running Order

The event followed a structured programme, opening with an invocation and welcomes from the parliamentary hosts, followed by an A4H film, the opening address, five community representations, closing remarks and a call to action.

Segment	Speaker / Detail
Welcome & Invocation	Host — Nilesch Solanki, Action for Harmony — Director. Welcome — Navendu Mishra MP (House of Commons) and Baroness Verma (House of Lords), parliamentary hosts
A4H Video	Introductory video from Action for Harmony
Opening Address	Nitin Palan MBE FCA, CEO Action for Harmony
Wellbeing & Mental Health	Mahesh Patel, Brahma Kumaris UK — Trustee
Community Safety & Young People	Anup Vyas, BAPS UK — Trustee (introduced by Lord Krish Raval)
Social Cohesion & Cultural Safety	Kamlesh Vara, GAA London / GAKM — Trustee Hershey Champaneri - GAKM UK
Education, SACRE & Representation	Sandeep Patel, Chinmaya Mission UK — Trustee
Hindu Chaplaincy	Vinay Tanna, ISKCON UK — Trustee
Closing Remarks	Barry Gardiner MP
Call to Action	Nilesch Solanki, Action for Harmony — Director
Appreciation & Thanks	Action for Harmony, with thanks to supporting organisations

Event at a Glance

Event	In Conversation with the British Hindu Community (2nd annual)
Date & Time	Monday 29 June 2026, 12:30 – 14:30
Venue	Churchill Room, House of Commons, Westminster
Hosts	Navendu Mishra MP and Baroness Verma
Convened by	Action for Harmony (A4H)
Format	Invocation & welcomes, A4H video, opening address, five community representations, closing remarks, call to action and networking lunch

Supporters	BAPS, ISKCON UK, GAA London (GAKM), Chinmaya Mission UK and Brahma Kumaris UK
Attendance	Parliamentarians, peers, councillors and 40+ community leaders nationwide

About Action for Harmony

Action for Harmony is a community collaboration platform for the British Hindu community, uniting more than 150 organisations, including BAPS Swaminarayan Sanstha, ISKCON, Brahma Kumaris, Chinmaya Mission and GAKM — across the United Kingdom. A4H is deliberately positioned as a collaboration platform rather than an umbrella body: its purpose is to share, learn, resource and empower its community partners, strengthening their collective capacity to serve their communities and to engage constructively with national institutions.

Through parliamentary and ministerial engagement, community-safety advocacy, and large-scale community events, A4H works to give the British Hindu community a confident, unified and responsible voice, rooted in the conviction that a healthy, secure and prosperous nation is one in which every community flourishes together.

A Collective Platform, Not a Single Voice

The scale and breadth of the gathering underlined this collective character. In total, more than forty parliamentarians, peers, councillors and community leaders attended, with representation from many of the UK's leading Hindu organisations, among them BAPS Swaminarayan Sanstha, ISKCON UK, Brahma Kumaris UK, Chinmaya Mission UK, GAKM and GAA London, alongside temple networks, samaj associations, HSS UK and community-safety and welfare bodies. This demonstrates that Action for Harmony is not a single-organisation initiative but a genuine collective platform through which the British Hindu community can speak with one considered, representative voice.

The Hindu Community's Contribution to Britain

The British Hindu community continues to add lasting value to national life. Hindus contribute strongly through education and enterprise, through charitable giving and volunteering rooted in the principle of seva, and through a deep commitment to family values and civic responsibility. Hindu organisations run schools, feed the vulnerable, support the elderly, mentor young people, and partner with public bodies on health and wellbeing. They are active in interfaith friendship and community cohesion, building bridges of trust across faiths and backgrounds. This spirit of contribution, giving rather than taking, is the foundation on which the community's requests to Parliament and Government are made.

Opening Address

Delivered by Nitin Palan MBE, CEO, Action for Harmony

The event opened with a welcome to the second 'In Conversation with the British Hindu Community' gathering. The address set out the community's foundational message: Hindus in the United Kingdom are proud British citizens who believe in one nation, one law and one national identity, and who see themselves not as separate from the wider majority but as partners in the national project, here to give, to contribute and to add lasting value.

The address framed the day's representations within a set of expectations that the community holds of its institutions, expectations described as entirely aligned with those of any responsible government and thoughtful citizen. These included governance secure in its purpose and resistant to narrow interest; the courageous protection of the most vulnerable, both the young and the elderly; a police force that acts with integrity, consistency and independence; a free and accurate press; fair and proportionate immigration control; and the strongest possible protections for children, online and offline.

On human rights, the address affirmed the Hindu conviction that reconciliation and harmony are not signs of weakness but the highest form of strength, and called for consistency, courage and compassion in how the nation engages with these questions at home and abroad. It closed with gratitude for the presence and willingness of those attending to listen, and an invitation to build together the kind of nation that people of every faith and background can be proud to call home.

"We are not here to take. We are here to give, to contribute, and to add lasting value - to our communities, to our institutions, and to this great nation."

Community Representations & Speaker Profiles

Five community representatives spoke, each a trustee of their organisation, introducing its work and reach before setting out a specific area of concern and a clear offer of partnership. Their representations are presented below in the order delivered.

Brahma Kumaris UK

Presented by Mahesh Patel — Trustee, Brahma Kumaris UK - **Theme:** Wellbeing, Mental Health & Holistic Practice

Established as a charity in 1975 and part of a network in more than 120 countries, the Brahma Kumaris teach Raja Yoga meditation and offer courses and events in over 45 locations across the UK, run entirely by volunteers and funded by voluntary contributions. Their work spans meditation for medics, youth wellbeing circles, listening walks, digital wellbeing and interreligious friendship, in partnership with bodies such as The Janki Foundation and local public health teams. Their representation focused on integrating holistic wellbeing into public services.

- Mental health is a national crisis, yet the evidence-based tools of meditation, yoga and mindfulness - long practised within Hindu traditions - remain largely inaccessible within the NHS and public services.
- The NHS, care homes, schools and prisons would benefit from structured integration of meditation-based programmes, reducing anxiety, improving outcomes and lowering long-term costs.
- The Brahma Kumaris' established wellbeing capacity, with demonstrated impact in schools, workplaces and community settings, should be formally partnered with public institutions.
- Holistic wellbeing - mental, spiritual and emotional health together, should be recognised as a legitimate and cost-effective complement to conventional healthcare, not an afterthought.

Call to action: *Funded pilot programmes embedding Hindu-led wellbeing practices into NHS trusts and local-authority services, with proper evaluation and pathways to scale.*

BAPS Swaminarayan Sanstha

Presented by **Anup Vyas** — Trustee, BAPS UK (introduced by Lord Krish Raval)

Theme: Community Safety & Protection of Young People

A socio-spiritual organisation with roots in early-nineteenth-century Gujarat, BAPS is known in the UK for the iconic Neasden Temple and centres across the country, and internationally for landmarks such as the BAPS Hindu Mandir in Abu Dhabi, inaugurated in 2024 as a symbol of peace and friendship between communities. Its representation focused on the safety, dignity and religious freedom of young Hindus, drawing on documented cases including a pupil ostracised over wearing the tilak chandlo.

- Hindu children in schools, colleges and universities can face discrimination for visible expressions of faith, such as wearing the kanthi (sacred necklace) or tilak chandlo (forehead mark), which are elements of religious identity, not fashion; the Equality Act 2010 protects religion and belief, but a gap remains between law and practice.
- Educational institutions have a duty of care to all students; Hindu students must be able to practise their faith visibly and without fear of harassment, bullying or institutional pushback.
- A consistent, enforceable national framework is needed to protect students' rights to wear religious symbols, applied equally across all faiths, just as the wearing of a cross is accommodated within uniform policies.
- Young Hindus are increasingly targeted online and in person; coordinated safeguarding, with schools and police working together, is essential.
- Clear guidance should be issued to schools affirming the rights of Hindu students and holding institutions accountable for breaches.

Call to action: *Clear national guidance affirming pupils' rights to religious expression, and a willingness to work with government to formulate safety regulations that benefit all communities.*

GAKM — Gujarati Arya Kshatriya Mahasabha (GAA London)

Presented by **Hershey Champaneri** - GAKM & **Kamlesh Vara** - Trustee, GAA London

Theme: Social Cohesion, Hate Crime & Cultural Safety

The national representative body of the Gujarati Arya Kshatriya Hindu community in the UK, established in 1975, GAKM supports more than 5,000 families, around 20,000 people, through a network of local associations across England, with international chapters. Its work spans cultural and religious festivals, sports (including a partnership with Aston Villa FC and the FA), youth and seniors' programmes, and charity fundraising, all grounded in the Hindu principle of seva. Its representation addressed anti-Hindu hate and the fair treatment of the community by public bodies.

- Cultural safety is not a Hindu issue alone but a British value that protects every community; the 2024 independent review by Dame Sara Khan found local government struggling to manage social cohesion threats.
- Anti-Hindu hate crime is underreported, under-recorded and under-prosecuted, partly because 'Hindu' is not consistently recognised as a distinct category in police data.
- Hindu cultural events - Holi, Navratri, Garba and temple gatherings, have faced targeted intimidation and unlawful disruption; responses from some authorities, including in Leicester and Harrow, have been inadequate or inconsistent.
- There is a troubling pattern of unequal treatment by some local councils in the allocation of resources, permissions and support.
- Cremation rights, burial-ground access and death-certification processes continue to present unnecessary bureaucratic barriers to Hindu families at their most vulnerable and should be reviewed and reformed.

Call to action: *A dedicated anti-Hindu hate-crime monitoring category in police recording systems, and a national review of council-level fairness in the treatment of all faith communities.*

Chinmaya Mission UK

Presented by **Sandeep Patel** — Trustee, Chinmaya Mission UK

Theme: Education, SACRE & Accurate Representation of Hinduism

Chinmaya Mission is dedicated to sharing the knowledge of Vedanta and to education, working with schools and communities to foster accurate understanding of Hindu thought. Its representation addressed not only the correction of inaccuracies in UK schools, but the deeper need to ensure Hinduism is taught as a living, sophisticated and plural spiritual tradition, not reduced to stereotypes, festivals or outdated textbook descriptions.

- Religious Education materials in UK schools frequently contain outdated, inaccurate or disrespectful representations of Hinduism, instilling misconceptions from an early age; the deeper issue is that Hinduism is too often reduced to festivals and caricatures rather than presented as the living, plural and philosophically rich tradition it is.
- SACRE frameworks must be updated so Hinduism - one of the world's oldest and most practised religions - is taught with the same depth, accuracy and respect as other major faiths.
- Inequality in the teaching of faiths risks creating a hierarchy of religions in children's minds, undermining social cohesion.
- Hindu organisations, including Hindu Education Board, Chinmaya Mission, have developed high-quality, peer-reviewed educational materials that could be made available to schools at scale.
- Ring-fenced support for teacher training is essential, so that educators are equipped to teach Hinduism accurately, confidently and with proper depth.

Call to action: *A formal review of SACRE-approved Hinduism content, meaningful involvement of Hindu organisations in curriculum development, and ring-fenced support for teacher training.*

ISKCON UK

Presented by **Vinay Tanna** — Trustee, ISKCON UK

Theme: Hindu Chaplaincy in Public Institutions

The International Society for Krishna Consciousness maintains a national network of trained priests and community leaders. Its UK headquarters, Bhaktivedanta Manor near Watford — donated by George Harrison in 1973 — draws some 70,000 people for Janmashtami, the largest such gathering outside India. ISKCON serves over one million free meals daily across sixty countries, is a faith partner to twelve Avanti state schools, and pioneered cow protection in Britain. Framing Hindu chaplaincy as a bridge, a barometer and a peacemaker, its representation focused on spiritual care in public institutions.

- Hindu chaplains are absent or severely under-resourced in the UK's hospitals, prisons and universities, leaving many Hindus without spiritual care at the most critical moments of their lives.
- Unlike Christian and some Muslim chaplaincies, Hindu chaplaincy receives no dedicated government funding, an inequality that should be addressed as a matter of basic fairness and pastoral duty.
- Trained Hindu priests and chaplains are needed to provide spiritual support and to advise institutions on dietary, ritual and culturally appropriate care.
- ISKCON stands ready to provide structured, professional chaplaincy services, but requires government recognition and funding to do so at scale.

Call to action: *A funded Hindu Chaplaincy Programme, in partnership with established Hindu organisations, ensuring parity of provision across NHS trusts, HM Prison Service and higher education.*

Closing Remarks & Call to Action

Closing Remarks - Barry Gardiner MP

Barry Gardiner MP, Member of Parliament for Brent West and founder and former Chair of Labour Friends of India, delivered the closing remarks, reflecting on the representations made and the community's consistent offer of partnership with the institutions of the nation.

Call to Action - Nilesh Solanki, Director, Action for Harmony

Nilesh Solanki set out how Action for Harmony intends to take the day's conversation forward, committing the platform to serve as:

- a trusted conduit for policy consultation, when requested by government departments;
- a body that ensures consultations reflect genuine, representative community input;
- a network to encourage civil-society participation among British Hindus; and
- a platform to ensure the community's concerns are clearly and constructively conveyed.

Parliamentary & Distinguished Attendees

The following members of both Houses of Parliament, elected councillors and invited guests attended on the day, alongside more than thirty community leaders from across the country. Party affiliations are shown as documented at the time of the event; the period coincided with a government transition, and ministerial responsibilities were subject to confirmation.

Name	Party	House / Title	Role & Notes
Lord Krish Raval OBE	Labour	House of Lords	Director of Faith in Leadership; Chair of Labour Indians; introduced the BAPS representation.
Baroness Verma	Conservative	House of Lords	Co-host of the event; former minister; long-standing voice on international development and cohesion.
Baroness Prashar CBE	Crossbench	House of Lords	International Relations & Defence Committee; APPG officer.
Lord Sikka	Labour	House of Lords	Active on tax, finance and economic justice; Prof. Prem Sikka.
Navendu Mishra MP	Labour	Stockport	Co-host of the event; active on workers' rights and community issues.
Barry Gardiner MP	Labour	Brent West	Delivered the closing remarks; founder & former Chair, Labour Friends of India (Padma Shri).
Seema Malhotra MP	Labour (Co-op)	Feltham and Heston	Government minister (roles subject to confirmation); of Indian Punjabi Hindu descent.
Matt Western MP	Labour	Warwick and Leamington	APPG chair; active on education and higher education.
Paula Barker MP	Labour	Liverpool Wavertree	APPG member; active on housing, local government and trade-union matters.
Rachel Hopkins MP	Labour	Luton South and South Bedfordshire	Select-committee member; active on defence, equalities and local issues.
Deirdre Costigan MP	Labour	Ealing Southall	Select-committee member; active on work, pensions and local issues.
Jas Athwal MP	Labour	Ilford South	Former Leader of Redbridge Council; active on housing and community issues.
Sally Jameson MP	Labour (Co-op)	Doncaster Central	Former prison officer; active on justice and community matters.
Luke Taylor MP	Liberal Democrat	Sutton and Cheam	Liberal Democrat spokesperson duties and constituency casework.
Bobby Dean MP	Liberal Democrat	Carshalton and Wallington	Liberal Democrat Treasury/business duties and committee work.
Susan Murray MP	Liberal Democrat	Mid Dunbartonshire	Liberal Democrat Spokesperson (Scotland).

Name	Party	House / Title	Role & Notes
Joy Morrissey MP	Conservative	Beaconsfield	Opposition Deputy Chief Whip (Commons); member of the APPG for British Sikhs.
Cllr Vishal Srinivasan	Local Government	Councillor	Local councillor attending in a civic capacity.
Holly Huntrods	Guest	House of Commons	Attending in a parliamentary staff / guest capacity.

Alongside these parliamentary attendees, community leaders from across the United Kingdom were present, reflecting the breadth of the collaboration platform Action for Harmony convenes. Those who attended are listed below.

Community Leaders in Attendance

More than forty community leaders, representing Hindu organisations and community bodies from across the country, attended the event. Their presence reflects the collaborative network that A4H brings together.

Anup Vyas — BAPS UK	Dipak Hirani — SKLPC UK
Sanjana Kanani — BAPS UK	Ashish Halai — SKLPC UK
Hitan Waghela — BAPS UK	Piyush Mistry — Prajapati Samaj UK
Mahesh Patel — Brahma Kumaris	Miran Mistry — Prajapati UK
Jaymini Patel — Brahma Kumaris	Mahendra Pattni — Brent Hindu Council
Shantanu Mandal — Brahma Kumaris	Vishal Shah — HSS UK
Moti Shewakramani — Brahma Kumaris	Ashwin Parmar — BPM
Vinay Tanna — ISKCON UK	Rajni Bhudiya — Swaminarayan Temple, Willesden
Rakesh Shah — ISKCON UK	JagdishBhai Patel — Patidar Samaj, Ealing Road
Alpesh Patel — ISKCON UK	Rajnish Kashyap — Vishwa Hindu Kendra, Southall
Jyoti Joshi — ISKCON UK	Kashmira Kalsi — Black Sisters
Minaxi Pattni — ISKCON UK	Prof Atul K Shah — City, University of London
Rohan Tanna — ISKCON UK	Varinder Hyre — CPS - Hate Crime Lead North London
Sanjay Gadvi — ISKCON UK	Nitin Palan — Action for Harmony
Sandeep Patel — Chinmaya Mission UK	Nilesh Solanki — Action for Harmony
Suresh Wadhwani — Chinmaya Mission UK	Harsha Trivedi — Action for Harmony
Kamlesh Vara — GAKM	Kamu Palan — Action for Harmony
Hershey Champaneri — GAKM	Ashok Verma
Pradeep Chavda — GAKM & GAA London	Yaduraj S Krishnawat
Priya Vara — GAA London	Kuldeep Singh

Names and organisations are recorded as provided on the day.

Shared Commitments & Next Steps

Across all five representations, a consistent theme emerged: the British Hindu community does not come to Parliament with grievance alone, but with capacity, evidence and a genuine offer of partnership. Each organisation set out not only a concern but the resources and willingness to help address it. The common commitments arising from the day were:

- **Community safety** - clear national guidance protecting pupils' rights to religious expression, and joint working on safeguarding that benefits all communities.
- **Education** - a review of SACRE-approved Hinduism content and meaningful involvement of Hindu organisations in curriculum development.
- **Chaplaincy** - a funded Hindu Chaplaincy Programme delivering parity of spiritual care across the NHS, prisons and universities.
- **Social cohesion** - a dedicated anti-Hindu hate-crime monitoring category and a national review of council-level fairness, including reform of cremation and death-registration processes.
- **Wellbeing** - funded pilot programmes embedding meditation and holistic wellbeing practices within public services, with proper evaluation.

Action for Harmony will follow up with the hosts and relevant ministers to translate these representations into structured engagement, and looks forward to continuing this dialogue as partners in building a stronger, safer and more cohesive nation.

Five Practical Requests from the British Hindu Community

- 1 Education reform.** Review SACRE-approved content and involve Hindu organisations in curriculum development, with ring-fenced teacher training, so Hinduism is taught accurately and in depth.
- 2 Hindu chaplaincy.** Establish a funded Hindu Chaplaincy Programme delivering parity of spiritual care across the NHS, HM Prison Service and universities.
- 3 Hate-crime recording.** Introduce a dedicated anti-Hindu hate-crime monitoring category in police recording systems, with a national review of council-level fairness.
- 4 Religious-symbol protection.** Issue clear national guidance protecting pupils' rights to wear religious symbols such as the kanthi and tilak, applied equally across all faiths.
- 5 Wellbeing pilots.** Fund pilot programmes embedding meditation and holistic wellbeing practices within NHS trusts and local-authority services, with proper evaluation.

Follow-up & Next Steps

This report is intended not only as a record of the event but as a forward action document. Action for Harmony will now:

- seek follow-up meetings with relevant ministers, All-Party Parliamentary Groups, government departments and local authorities;
- prepare short, focused policy briefs on each of the five themes - education, chaplaincy, hate-crime recording, religious-symbol protection and wellbeing;
- work with community partners to provide evidence, case studies and practical proposals in support of each request; and
- report back to the community on progress, maintaining transparency and momentum.

The event demonstrated that the British Hindu community seeks constructive partnership, not special treatment. Its requests are practical, evidence-led and rooted in the shared British values of fairness, dignity, safety, education, and equal respect for all faith communities. Action for Harmony will now work with parliamentarians, government departments and community partners to translate these representations into focused policy engagement and measurable outcomes.

With gratitude,

Nitin Palan MBE • Nilesh Solanki

Directors, Action for Harmony

Uniting Hindu Organisations Across the UK • actionforharmony.org

Photo Gallery

Scenes from the day at the House of Commons - the opening address and community representations, group gatherings and networking.





