

# BHAKTIVEDANTA MANOR

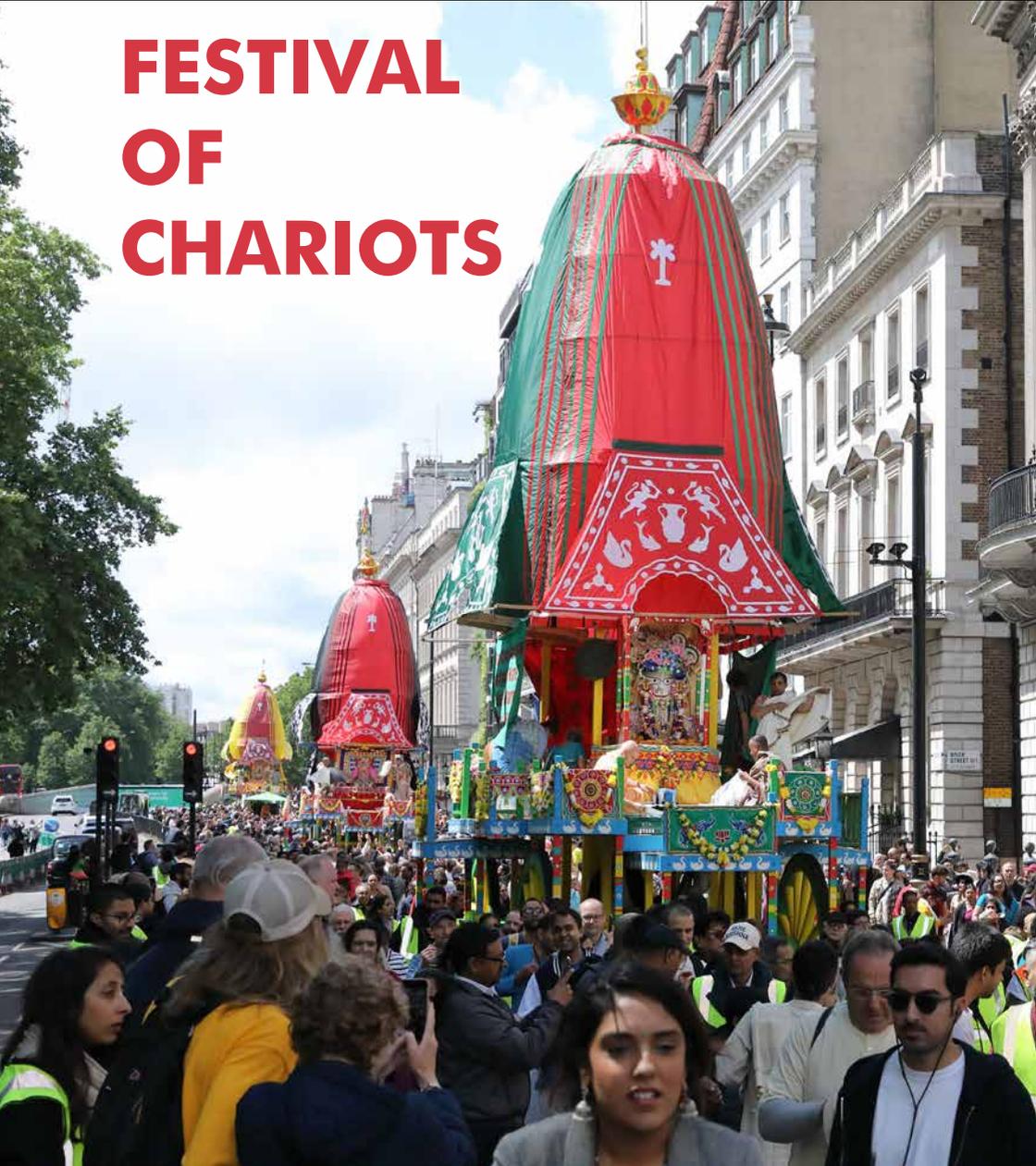
NEWSLETTER

July 2019



International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON)  
Founder Acharya His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

## FESTIVAL OF CHARIOTS



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## Srila Prabhupada:

The duty of a brahmana is to culture the quality of forgiveness, which is illuminating like the sun. The Supreme Personality of Godhead, Hari, is pleased with those who are forgiving  
*Srimad Bhagavatam*  
9.15.40

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## ANNUAL OPEN DAY

On Saturday 6th July, it was that special time of the year again when the Manor hosted its Open Day, especially for new guests to have tasters and spiritual experiences of Krishna Consciousness. Organised by the Krishna Wisdom Team, providing guests with a memorable experience was truly a community-wide effort.

Doors opened at 10am and visitors were still strolling in after 3pm. There truly was something for everyone: Extensive tours, bullock-cart rides, henna (hand decoration), face-painting,

food stalls, bouncy castle, palmistry, 'try on a sari' yoga, meditation and even 'drumfulness' (meditation with drums!). "The Open Day was a great success," exclaimed Radha Govinda das. "People came from as far as Birmingham and Bristol. It not just brought together visitors from various cultures but also many devotees to serve together. It showed how Krishna consciousness can be wonderfully integrated into everyday fun activities so that anyone can get a taste for it and engage in it in whichever way they feel comfortable".





# FESTIVAL OF CHARIOTS

As mentioned in previous Newsletters, this year marks “ISKCON 50”, the 50th anniversary since the outset of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON) in the UK.

Although there are a variety of special activities planned for this year, undoubtedly the event which has the largest public presence of devotees is the London Ratha Yatra (Chariot Procession). It is no surprise, then, that, as thousands of revellers pulled three huge multi-coloured chariots from Hyde Park to Trafalgar Square, the theme of “ISKCON 50” was on their minds.

Indeed no one should take for granted that such a wonderful festival takes

places at all in the centre of one of the world’s most influential cities. Much appreciation must be directed to the three devotee couples and one toddler who in 1969 pioneered ISKCON UK under the directorship of Srila Prabhupada.

That same year, Shyamasundar das built the first chariot for Lord Jagannath in London. Headlines in national papers read “Krishna Chant Startles London”. Srila Prabhupada instructed “make the Deities so beautiful that everyone will be attracted to them”. Under this direct order Shyamasundar carved the Deities of Jagannath Baladeva and Subhadra.

**HARE KRISHNA HARE KRISHNA KRISHNA KRISHNA HARE HARE  
HARE RAMA HARE RAMA RAMA RAMA HARE HARE**



## First ever Watford Chariot Festival

Members of the Gurukula Alumni (Manor School graduates) worked with the Watford Council to organise the first ever Ratha Yatra chariot festival in Watford! There was also assistance from the Food for All team and the Saturday harinama (street music) crew.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, the presence of the ancient traditional chariot near

Watford Market grabbed the attention of many locals. One local grocer even spontaneously offered a box of apples to Lord Jagannath, which was later distributed.

After the lively parade, there was a talk by Bhakti Rasamrita Swami at the top end of the High Street, liberal distribution of free vegetarian and vegan food, live music, dancing and singing.





## Mind Body Spirit Wellbeing Expo

ISKCON members joined together to meet thousands of spiritual seekers at the London Mind Body Spirit Wellbeing Expo. In addition to the pop-up Temple, speaker Sivarama Swami, singer Ananda Monet and veteran book distributor Adi-Karta das featured on the main stage. The day was a wonderful success with over 300 copies of Srila Prabhupada's books distributed, and hundreds of people experiencing kirtan.

## Krishna Festival at Tetbury School and in Canterbury

After becoming the new teacher of Religious Studies at Sir William Romney's School in Tetbury near Bristol, a graduate who knew of ISKCON from her Bath Spa University studies recently invited the Hare Krishna Festival team to hold an event there. Over 100 teenage pupils had a great time and were informed of different ways to understand the world through the reasoning of the Bhagavad Gita. One student was from a devotee family while one teacher was particularly delighted to meet devotees, having resided at Bhaktivedanta Manor



## Cambridge Strawberry Fair

Devotees from the Bhaktivedanta Manor community worked with local devotees to run an exhibit at the Cambridge Strawberry Fair. "At the fair, an older woman put £40 in our donation box unprompted," explained Adi-Guru das. "The lady explained that 40 years ago, in her student days, she would often eat Prasad distributed by Food for Life in Manchester, and she wanted to reciprocate!"

over 20 years ago.

The City of Canterbury, a famous and historic place of spiritual activity in the Christian tradition, played host to the Hare Krishna Festival team as they worked with the local ISKCON group to welcome over 200 guests for a spiritual evening with a wide variety of activities.



## Glastonbury

Teams of devotees from across England gathered their forces together to make sure the 'Hare Krishnas' made their presence well-known at the largest annual music festival in Europe.

Around 12 thousand plates of prasad (sanctified vegetarian food) were distributed over the 5 day period, and tens of thousands of revellers heard the chanting of Hare Krishna every day. Also hundreds of Srila Prabhupada's books were distributed.



## "Live to Give" with Vaisesika das

On Sunday 23 June Vaisesika das presented a UK National Sankirtan Retreat 'Live to Give'. 120 devotees from Wales, London, Bhaktivedanta Manor, Reading, Birmingham, the North West London Bhakti Vriksha Teams and the Sacred Street Party attended.

Devotees were provided with tips, and tools on book distribution and how they can all give the ultimate gift and be 'ambassadors of goodwill'. Vaisesika das emphasized how they need to be "empowered, confident and encouraged".

Each temple also brainstormed goals for the future how they could increase the quality & quantity of book distribution. It was just in time for the UK National Summer Marathon entitled 'Your Ever Well-Wisher In Every Town & Village' (28 June – 7 July). Their Marathon goals were:

- 1) to read 'Your Ever Well-Wisher'
- 2) to distribute a least 3,000 copies of



'Your Ever Well-Wisher'

3) 250 devotees each contributing 4 hours over 10 days

4) 2 sanga groups to start as a 'follow up' in Watford and Hemel Hempstead

Vaisesika das also personally took devotees out on book distribution, door to door and on the streets throughout the week.

## A day of inspiration - Cancer well-being retreat 2019



Over 30 inspirational individuals came to at Bhaktivedanta in June as part of Cancer Wellbeing Retreat.

The attendees were part of 'Yes to life' and 'Maggies' charity who connected with Radhika Ragini dasi to host such retreats for their members.

The day consisted of introducing the guests to the Manor and New Gokul, activities around the beautiful grounds, followed by an interactive workshop with Janakinath das speaking about the struggles with cancer. A scrumptious vegan meal was served and the day ended with lively kirtans, meditation and gifts.

"A lot of the people that attended were currently going through treatment or just found out they are diagnosed with Cancer," explained Janakinath das. "However many people left the retreat feeling uplifted and inspired. Everyone took a Bhagavad Gita and many other books and are looking forward to coming back to the Manor very soon!"

If you're interested in helping to fundraise, promote or even attend similar events, please email:  
[janakinathdas.cms@gmail.com](mailto:janakinathdas.cms@gmail.com)

## Gratitude shows gratitude to local company



A local company has donated the costs of the entire work, materials, machines and wages, to make a safe path for Gratitude's Community Pantry's service users. "Many many thanks to Borehamwood's based construction company 'Engie' for coming to the rescue!" said Shantasya dasi, who along with her husband Japa Yajna, runs the charity Gratitude. "The old slippery path will be replaced with a regulation safe graduated platforms path, complete with a side hand rails".

The path was officially opened by the Town Mayor of Elstree and Borehamwood, a representative of Engie and many local supporters.

Gratitude has been running a free community pantry for the last 8 months with growing numbers of needy families and individual's users. The pantry is stocked 7 days a week, all year around by volunteers who collect surplus food and other saved from waste food from supermarkets.

However, when the weather is wet, it isn't safe for elderly, disable members or even mums with buggies to access the pantry. The path gets very slippery.



## Walking for Hunger

350 devotees from across the south east of England took part in a 10 mile sponsored walk around central London. The walkers were raising funds for Food for Life London's new electric, carbon neutral, food distribution van, whilst bringing attention to the issue of homelessness and pollution in the capital.

The walk began at Tottenham Court Road Station, and went passed many iconic landmarks before finishing at Hyde Park. On a blisteringly hot day, other sites visited included 22 Betterton Street, where the original devotees first established themselves; 182 Drury Lane, home of the former Arts Lab where the devotees performed; and 7 Bury Place, the location of the original Radha Krishna Temple in London.

More information:

[info@foodforlifelondon.co.uk](mailto:info@foodforlifelondon.co.uk)

[www.foodforlifelondon.co.uk](http://www.foodforlifelondon.co.uk)



## Final lap of a marathon - the long run for Krishna

Bhakta Deon was a marathon runner before he took up residence at Bhaktivedanta Manor. He loved the long endurance challenge of running, but something was missing: Krishna. As Srila Prabhupada teaches, that our love and endeavours really take on a deeply fulfilling nature when we 'repose' them in Lord Krishna. When Deon received the service of managing the temple guest facilities, he thought it a good opportunity to dovetail his love for running in raising funds for a yoga room in the guest house.

Through sponsorship, so far he has raised £2,844, and the next final big event is Kings Forest Trail (50k) Ultra Marathon on 12 October. Proceeds will go towards a new yoga facilities in the guest house.

**HARE KRISHNA, HARE KRISHNA, KRISHNA KRISHNA, HARE HARE  
HARE RAMA, HARE RAMA, RAMA RAMA, HARE HARE**



## “Ganesh” song makes Chart history

The Guinness Book of World Records states that the longest period of time between an artist having two number 1 records in any chart is 32 years and 2 months. It was held by the much-loved Louis Armstrong.

Jayadev das and his Granddaughter Syama Gauri Auman, along with her friend Rasa Lila Grant, topped the American Dance Charts with a song written by Jayadev entitled “Ganesh” which is a musical tribute to the demigod responsible for removing obstacles in our lives.

So Mr Armstrong’s record was eclipsed because Jayadev’s last number one, “Baby Love”, was in June 1974 with the group he founded named The Rubettes. “There must be a God!” said Jayadev with a smile, “Otherwise how can a 72-year-old top the US Dance Charts without some sort of divine intervention?”

“We have also released a Soul Dance album for the young entitled The Original Superheroes featuring dance chant music glorifying a number of divine personalities,” he added.



## The Sunday Times covers ISKCON UK’s 50th Anniversary

The Sunday Times published an article about ISKCON UK’s 50th anniversary.

The article references 50 years of the Radha-Krishna Temple in London and the new commemorative photobook launched by the UK 50th team called ‘A Legacy Begins’ (available for sale now - it was launched at London Rathayatra).

The journalist had an in-depth discussion with Gurudas and the article features some of his original photos taken from the time.



## Skoda commercial features the Gita

Earlier this year, car manufacturer Skoda ran a commercial for Indian media, which included a woman reading Bhagavad Gita As It Is.



## Ladies' Ashram scriptural degree

By Bhaktine Abi Hughes

Within the devotee community the bhakti-shastri (scriptural degree programme) is such a buzz word. Besides of course the first and second initiation rites, studying this degree is a key seems like a milestone that many devotees look to cross. For most devotees, it is certainly not undertaken for prestige or for an external reason. So why do it then?

For myself, the 4-month residential bhakti shastri was a perfect opportunity to study the most important things in life. Sure, I'd studied before, but it wasn't until I found Krishna consciousness that I

realised what I really needed to educate myself in. And the

Bhakti shastri was the perfect opportunity to absorb myself in this transcendental knowledge.

We were also engaged in a lot of Temple service alongside the course. Our mental and physical stamina was tested, and we learnt that if we want to complete something we must do it for Krishna because if we don't then it is futile.

We are so grateful to Srila Prabhupada for giving us these books to study, so over the summer some of us are joining the ladies travelling book distribution sankirtan party!

## Organ Donation

Nila Madhava das, ISKCON UK's leading Funeral Director, delivered a presentation on "Organ Donation and the Hindu Perspective" at the Royal Free Hospital in Hampstead, in front of over 350 doctors, nurses and interfaith representatives from across London.

"The process of blood transfusion is considered a form of organ donation," explained Nila, "This process is very common and very important for a lot of

people. My presentation encouraged the approach of considering the time, place and circumstance of each case, as well as working for the greater good."

Lord Dholakia is organising a similar event at the Houses of Lords.





## New school aims to inspire creativity

Avanti Foundation is set to open a new school, Langley Hill Independent School. The school is located in Kings Langley, and is a new flagship Waldorf-inspired school, opening in September this year. The School has a unique, engaging and modern curriculum: It will draw upon the best of Waldorf principles and inspires citizenship, out-of-the-box thinking, wonder and creativity. Applications are now open for Kindergarten and Lower School.

Kindergarten (ages 3-6) is a warm, informal and inviting environment providing physical and emotional security through the rhythms and routines of the day, and self-directed play. The Lower School begins from the ages of 6-7. At this age, children learn, grow and flourish under the loving and secure care and direction of the class teacher.

For more information, including how to apply, visit: [langleyhill.org.uk](http://langleyhill.org.uk)



## Scriptural Course Team Get-together

The Bhakti Shastri administration team, which has recently grown to accommodate examination board requirements, held its inaugural get-together on 27 April.

The meeting commenced with an enlightening talk by Bhakti Rasamrita Swami on service attitude. His words of inspiration included a reminder to have the right intention behind our service, which is a vehicle for offering our devotion to Krishna. The talk was followed by presentations on the history of Bhakti Shastri and the selfless service of devotees, followed by delicious prasad.

**HARE KRISHNA  
HARE KRISHNA  
KRISHNA KRISHNA  
HARE HARE  
HARE RAMA  
HARE RAMA  
RAMA RAMA  
HARE HARE**



## Wonderful Worcester

Devotees have inaugurated a monthly outreach programme called “The Vedic Essence ” in the Worcester area. On the day of its launch, devotees came from across England to perform a 5-hour harinam procession in Worcester City Centre, distributing 200 cookies, as well as 250 flyers and books. The Mayor of Worcester, who heard the chanting, emerged from his office to officially welcome the devotees, which really inspired everyone!

“The Mayor was delighted with our endeavours and asked if we could also perform kirtan at a Council event later this summer,” explained Madhumangal das. “We are now looking to arrange the event and possibly also serve vegetarian meals to the attendees”. They now have six core devotees helping with the preaching efforts the area.

**HARE KRISHNA  
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HARE RAMA  
RAMA RAMA  
HARE HARE**



## Willow Smith sings Govindam Prayers

An Instagram post of Willow Smith beautifully singing the Govindam Prayers recently went viral. She is the daughter of the Hollywood actor Will Smith, who has been to India a few times and is known to regularly read the Bhagavad-gita.



## Improving leadership and management

Anuttama das, the ISKCON Governing Body Commissioner (GBC) for Communications, delivered a 4-day Leadership and Management course for devotees. The course included presentation skills, healthy relationship building, life and time management, teamwork, strategic planning, empowerment and delegation, assessment and accountability.



## Manor School's End of Year Show

On Friday the 6th of July, the Manor School held its End of Year Show in the assembly hall of Bushey Mead's School. The Reception class, with the help of Renuka, performed a wonderful play about the snake demon Aghasura. The Jagannath class (Years 1/2), under the direction of Gita and Dantasya dasi performed "Govardhan Hill." All the older children of the school staged a wonderful production about 'Sriila Prabhupada's life and mission', written and directed by veteran teacher Moksha Laksmi dasi.

"The children were amazing and all the parents were really proud," said Gourangi dasi. "It was a wonderful event, celebrating the devotion and talent of the little devotees in our community!"



## Deity Worship Gathering

Krishna Avanti Schools organised a special pujari (deity priest) get-together with Pankjanghri das. The open invitation extended to all pujaris serving at Bhaktivedanta Manor and ISKCON London, as well as pujaris dedicated to serving the deities installed at Krishna Avanti schools across the UK. Almost a hundred devotees attended to hear about the responsibilities and qualities that a pujari must adhere to in accordance with the deity worship procedures delineated by the ISKCON Deity Worship Ministry. Topics discussed included procedures in waking Their Lordships, quality of food offerings, arati (light offering) preparations, dressing arrangements and the importance of cleanliness standards.

Pankjanghri related wonderful stories and discussed deity worship standards at home, followed by answering questions.

Pankjanghri and his twin brother Jananivas das were born in London. After joining ISKCON at Bury Place in 1971, they moved to Mayapur, India, in 1973, where they have served ever since.

## Birmingham 24-hour Kirtan



During the early May Bank Holiday weekend, devotees from as far as mainland Europe descended on ISKCON Birmingham's huge new premises in Edgbaston for one of the most highly attended kirtan events for years. The event features the non-stop musical chanting of the Hare Krishna mantra for 24 hours, performed by a host of leading international kirtan musicians.



### Devotees help host the Radlett Festival

Devotees from the Bhaktivedanta Manor Foundation and volunteers have been organising the serving of free lunch, as well as provision of chairs and gazebos at the Radlett Festival for 18 years now. This year we served 300 plates," explained Sadananda das.

The initiative, started by Gauri das, has always been greatly appreciated by the Radlett Festival Committee and all the locals.



### In the Mood for a local café?

Hari Priya dasi, with help from her husband Mohan, has recently opened a trendy new vegetarian/vegan café in Watford, called MOOD.

"We have all kinds of coffees and a wide selection of fresh vegetarian and vegan cakes," said Hari Priya dasi. "Please come and see!"

"It's small but the atmosphere is really special and the food is great," explained regular customer Gita Dyjecinska.

How to find them:

98 Queens Road, Watford WD17 2NX  
("The Café next to the pink cow")



## SHREE KRISHNA HAVELI PROJECT UPDATE



We are very pleased to say that construction is moving forward with great momentum. Any time lost due to unforeseeable conditions is being made up by working late and over the weekends. Works now completed include the first fix of all electrical and mechanical, kitchen fridges and freezers, the windows and external doors, screeding, ridge tiles on roof. With restoring the cottage building (ladies ashram) it was found that the old roof

beams could not be saved due to rot, so a new roof is now being manufactured. Externally the hard landscaping has begun but due to the Janmashtami festival some of the work will be held back to save on public inconvenience.

A huge thank you goes to those working hard to complete on time (October/November), to all those still raising funds, and to all of you for tolerating the present inconveniences due to construction.



# YOUR INVESTMENT NEEDED

**PROJECTED COST £9.6 MILLION**

**DONATIONS  
RECEIVED  
£4,984,504**

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OUTSTANDING  
£3,629,229**

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AND IT'S ASSETS, ENSURING CONSTRUCTION DOES NOT STOP**

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## Magistrates Appointment

Kamlesh Krishna das, the International Director of the ISKCON Child Protection Office (CPO), has been appointed as a Justice of the Peace Magistrate in the British judiciary system.

He will be serving within the Magistrate Court, which handles 95% of all legal cases in the UK. He was officially appointed and sworn in on Srila Prabhupada's Bhagavad-gita As It Is and will be based primarily in Hertfordshire. Kamlesh Krishna previously worked with the Ministry of Defence, and held senior posts in the banking and financial services industry.

His new magistrates appointment came as a result of his experience in child protection in ISKCON; as well as the fact that he and his wife Gandharvika dasi – the CPO Global Assistant – are nearing the completion of master's degrees in Advanced Child Protection at the University of Kent.

Kamlesh Krishna Das (far right), just after his swearing-in ceremony at St Albans Crown Court (with High Court Judges in wigs and the Lord Lieutenant of Hertfordshire in front)



## New playground featuring Krishna's pastimes as theme

The new Haveli playground has started to take shape on site with the delivery of 'Aghasura' in the early hours of 26th June! Assembly works on the playground as a whole are now currently underway

The brief was to create a playground that brings to life Krishna's childhood pastimes in Gokul and Vrndavan using natural and sustainable materials.

Preliminary designs and quotes were submitted by various playground contractors

The final design was tweaked by taking into account 126 completed survey responses from parents of children attending: the Manor Pre School, Bhaktivedanta Manor Primary School, Avanti Schools, Pandava Sena Alumni as well as Krishna Club who were all consulted.

The winning bid for the construction work was awarded to Copper Beech Play, based on their creativity in bringing Krishna's pastimes to life, use of natural sustainable materials, and price. The main feature of the play area will be a 38m long Aghasura snake made of nine log tunnels and eight large play logs!



## European Communications Conference

This year's Europe-wide ISKCON Communications Conference was held in the New Vraja Mandala farm community in Spain.

Over 3 days there were workshops on ISKCON's relationship with the environment, politicians, morality and ethics. The overriding conclusion was that devotee communities should work to reduce their carbon footprint, engage with politicians and strive to be of the highest moral calibre.



## National Communications Day

Mina Sharma, the Head of ISKCON UK Communications, organised this year's National Communications Day. The day's workshops included media training by Anuttama das, "How to create content for social media using video and Canva" by Balarama Nityananda and "How to build relationships with external organisations" by Krish Raval OBE (Director of Faith in Leadership).

Mina herself conducted a workshop on writing stories for ISKCON news websites, and concluded the day with an update on how devotees are celebrating the 50th anniversary of ISKCON UK.



## Bathing the Lord of the universe

Snanayatra is one of the most popular annual festivals that takes place at the ISKCON -London temple. On that day, the sacred images of Jagannath, Baladev and Subhadra are bathed (abhishek), following the original tradition of worship at Jagannath Puri in India. This bathing goes on for a few hours in the midst of kirtanas glorifying Their Lordships.



## Honouring unidentified victims of the Holocaust

Members of Hertsmere Forum of Faiths, which includes Radha Mohan das and Bhagavati dasi, gathered to discuss and learn about a local event which had international significance.

United Synagogue's New Cemetery in

Bushey recently facilitated the burial of six unknown Jews murdered in Auschwitz. It was a moment 73 years in the making – a chance for many to finally, symbolically, grant their mothers and fathers, brothers and sisters the burial they were denied. The New Cemetery is close to Bhaktivedanta Manor and adjacent to the A41.



## Royal Garden Party at Buckingham Palace

Devotees were invited to attend the Royal Garden Party at Buckingham Palace as representatives of ISKCON.

Devaki dasi, and Mina Sharma attended the party, where senior members of the Royal Family met a broad range of people from all walks of life who have made a positive impact in their community.

The devotees spoke to senior staff and guests about ISKCON's 50th anniversary and the upcoming Haveli at Bhaktivedanta Manor. Devaki dasi said: "It has been an honour and a privilege to represent ISKCON at such a high-profile event – especially in the year we are celebrating our 50th anniversary. It was a fantastic experience."