

Dr Jasdev Singh Rai, General Secretary, British Sikh Consultative Forum

Welcome to everyone.

Happy Vaisakhi!

Honoured guests, Mr Speaker, Members of Parliament, Lords, members of faith communities, thank you all for gracing this event with your presence and to both Pat McFadden and Jane Stevenson for sponsoring the event.

I also want to thank our many sponsors and the Punjab Restaurant for the delicious food, Sri Guru Singh Sabha for the sweets and Guru Amardas Gurdwara ji for support with folders etc. A special thanks is for the children from Nishkam Nursery who sang beautiful kirtan at the beginning.

British Sikh Consultative Forum continues to work with the Sikh community on many issues. Our focus has also been to strengthen interfaith networking this last year.

We have a group of young Sikhs who are keen to ensure Sikh engagement in interfaith activities.

There is also a growing body of young British Sikhs who are engaged in Sewa or voluntary work on several levels. They give their time and skills to help Sikh institutions, educate children within the community, run help groups for the community and much more.

This great volunteer force is also keen to offer skills and time generally to other communities and people who may benefit from them. Indeed, the Sikh community rose to the challenge of the pandemic serving elderly and vulnerable people who could not get to the shops.

This same passion and spirit remains as dynamic today.

BSCF will do whatever it can to encourage young Sikhs getting involved in wider projects. There are a number of issues facing society in general, such as fuel poverty, loneliness, cost of living crises etc. we are encouraging young Sikhs to engage with these challenging issues as well.

I again wish everyone a happy Vaisakhi. On behalf of British Sikh Consultative Forum, I thank every one who has joined us in these celebrations.