

Dr Sadhu Singh, Director, British Sikh Consultative Forum

Honoured guests, members of Parliament, Ministers and Party Leaders, and Mr Speaker, welcome to the sixteenth Vaisakhi function.

Happy Vaisakhi to everyone.

A very big thank you to Sir Lyndsay Hoyle, Speaker of the House for hosting Vaisakhi again in these wonderful rooms.

This function has become very popular among Sikhs. we get many, many requests to attend but have to keep the numbers down to permissible level. This shows how keen Sikhs are to engage with their members of Parliament and with the political process.

Sikhs across the country respect the hard work that MPs put on their behalf.

As a community, Sikhs appreciate people who are hard-working particularly on behalf of the public in general. This is because Sikhs themselves do a lot of Sewa, or voluntary work for the benefit of others.

When you partake in Langar in Gurdwaras, remember Langar is generally prepared and served by volunteers. In our period of cost-of-living crises, langar helps many individuals and families who would otherwise have difficulties in eating healthy diets. Langar is for anyone. Langar is part of a Sikh's Sewa from donations, ingredients, cooking, serving and clearing up.

Sewa is one of the virtues that Sikhs try to live up to. There is a tremendous amount of voluntary work that goes on around Gurdwaras. Sewa can be greatly beneficial in our times if Governments also support it. There can be many ways of supporting it, whether financially, with time off, with infrastructure or with logistics support.

We think that integrating Sewa into wider needs of our times will be greatly beneficial to many people who face hard times. We hope State institutions will also see the benefit of this integration at little costs.

Thank you to all the MPs who grace us with their presence and To Mr Pat McFadden and Jane Stevenson for sponsoring the event.

From the British Sikh Consultative Forum, we thank the many organisations and personalities from across UK for joining us in this celebration.