**ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE BRAHMIN SOCIETY NORTH LONDON**

**HELD ON 24TH MARCH 2024 AT BSNL HOUSE FOR YEAR 1ST SEPTEMBER 2022 TO 31ST AUGUST 2023**

Agenda:

1. Welcome & Chair’s Report

2. Secretary’s Report

3. Treasurer’s Report & Accounts

4. Appointment of Independent Examiner

5. Building Trustee’s Report

6. Resolutions to amend BSNL Constitution

7. Any Other Resolutions Received

8. Any Other Business for which Notice has been Received

9. Election of Trustees for 2023 -2025 Term

10. Close AGM

**Minutes:**

**Attendance:** 106 (103 full & life members and 3 associate members)

**Trustees Present:** Parulben Jani, Gunvantbhai Dave, Vinodbhai Mehta, Pramathbhai Pandya, Sameetbhai Pandya, Ameetbhai Sharma, Ashwinbhai Thaker, Chandrashekharbhai Thaker.

**Trustee Apology:** Ramnikbhai Joshi.

**Quorum** reached by 2.10 pm.

**Meeting started** at 2.15

**1. Welcome & Chair’s Report**

Parulben Jani, Chair, welcomed everyone to BSNL’s 49th Annual General Meeting and expressed pride that we have reached BSNL’s 50th Anniversary and wished all a Very Happy Holi.

She recited 5 Gayatri Mantra and asked all for a minute silent prayer for recently departed souls.

She outlined that after the AGM we will celebrate Holi followed by Prashad.

PJ Thanked all for attending the AGM, and that it was good to see many old and new faces.

PJ wished Happy 50Th Birthday to our BSNL – Thanked all Vadils who had the vision to form a community and after 50 years she was proud to be part of this successful community. She wished all many more happy years. She recognised Pravinbhai Vyas, Dhirubhai Vyas and Vinodbhai Mehta as being there from the beginning.

* Q – Rajivbhai Vyas (RV) asked if Vinodbhai Mehta (VM) was really with BSNL from the beginning?
* A - VM confirmed that he has been with BSNL from the beginning and that he was in the Interim Committee prior to the first Formal Committee that was formed at the first General Meeting in 1974 and that he has worked from outside and inside BSNL in various roles ever since.

PJ continued that it has been a challenging year but obviously, with a great team it's been a fun year too.

The program her team delivered this year included:

* Bhajans and AGM on the same day in 2023.
* Mahashivratri which was very popular.
* 51 Hanuman Chalisa programme
* International Yoga Day Celebration
* Joint Navaratri with Valam Brahm Samaj
* Nav Chandi Havan
* Participation in Diwali in London – DIL

PJ - Members have been enjoying various subgroups. One of the big achievements this year is we now have active YBs. Many of us Trustee and past Ybs have worked very hard to talk to young members of the samaj to come forward and build the YB team again and as a result, we have active Ybs. Thank you, Simran Mehta & Simran Vyas, for taking this step. Wishing you all the best. I am sure the new BOT team will give you all the support you need.

Trustees have been busy managing all the subgroups and building, Media, and membership.

I would like to thank All the trustees.

* Gunwantbhai – Vice-chair and for his guidance
* Vinodbhai – Has managed many roles, Secretary, Tclub, OM club.
* Ramnikbhai – Our Treasurer, kept all the accounts up to date and all of us on our toes.
* Ashwinbhai – Media Manager & Health and safety advisor
* Chandrashekharbhai - Membership trustee, has cleaned up our membership database
* Sameet Pandya – 1st time trustee - Eclub Trustee. Has done a fantastic Job.
* Ameet Sharma – Ex YB chair is giving his full support to our current Ybs
* Pramath Pandya – Building Chair – BSNL House is his first home!

I would like to thank all the members for their support, subgroup subcommittee members, all the volunteers at the clubs and events.

Lastly thank you to my Mum (Avantikaben Jani) for all the ongoing Support.

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**2. Secretary’s Report**

Vinodbhai Mehta (VM), Secretary, welcomed all and congratulated all for 50 years of successful and enjoyable services delivered by so many volunteer members for members over this period, and raising funds to buy and own our own building and now having enough funds to think about developing our building.

VM pointed out the Fire Exits and wished all a Happy Holi – Let us burn away all the negative and move forward with all the positive.

Well done BSNL! 50 Years Anniversary – Should be celebrated in style!

* BSNL reputation is amongst the highest.
* Let’s pray for another 50 years of success for BSNL
* This AGM is late as the previous 2022 AGM was late on 5th February 2023 and we had a members petition to delay this AGM - but we are still within 15 months of last AGM.

BOT & Volunteers have all worked hard looking after members via programmes and BSNL sponsored Sub-Groups

**BSNL Membership:**

* Our Membership Trustee in Charge (TiC) is Chandrashekharbhai Thaker (CT)
* We have 1030 members. Around 340 Life Members + 10 Associate Members + Rest Full Members.
* CT had a huge task of cleaning up and updating our membership database.
* We have welcomed many new joiners from Bardai Brahm Samaj recently – and we look forward to working with them to make BSNL even better for all of us.

**Sub Groups**

**1 Elders Club** – started in 2009 with Navalshankerbhai Vyas and ran for 2 years, then ran by VM for 8 years and now run by Shilaben Vyas.

* Our TiC is Sameetbhai Pandya and the chair is Shilaben Vyas with her team of volunteers doing a great job of looking after our elderly members over the age of 65.
* Meeting every Tuesday enjoying manoranjan, Hindu festivals and lunch.
* It has reached House Full popularity – >100 members >Hall Capacity.
* Well done Shilaben and team.

**2 Men’s Club** – started in 2016 targeting Men members.

* Our TiC is Ramnikbhai Joshi and the chair is Bharatbhai Desai with his team doing an excellent job.
* Meeting every Wednesday - providing games, exercise and lunch.
* Has around 20 to 30 regular attendees.
* Well done Bharatbhai and team.

**3 Thursday Tea Club** – started in 2023 targeting all ages.

* Our TiC is VM and chair is Anjanaben Thaker – with her team doing a wonderful job.
* Meeting every Thursday – providing entertainment and lunch
* Around 40 to 50 regular attendees and growing enjoy T Club
* Well done Anjanaben and team.

**4 Open Mic** – started about 10 years ago targetting Singers.

* Our TiC is VM – chair is Bipinbhai Thanki – with his team providing excellent opportunity to members to sing – mostly to Karaoke track and often to Live Music also.
* Generally meeting in the evening on the last Friday of the Month.
* A daytime session was held for the elders which was very well attended.
* Around 40 regulars attend – about 25 singers and rest audience – all enjoy.
* Well done Bipinbhai and team.

**5 Ladies Club** – is dormant but we wish to resume it very soon.

* We may have a volunteer to take this up.
* Watch this space.

**6 Young Brahmins** – resumed by Parulben Jani and Ameetbhai Sharma (AS)

* TiC is AS and chairs are joint Simran Mehta and Simran Vyas – and team organising events for the Ybs.
* Target members are 18 to 30 year old plus members’ children
* Meetings and events will be announced via social media and BSNL newsletter.
* Ybs are BSNL future and they have full support of BOT.
* Well done the two Simrans and team.

**7 Harmonium Class** – for students of music

* Our TiC is Parulben Jani and chair is Vandanaben Y Joshi – Teacher is Meenaben Trivedi
* Classes are every Monday - On Zoom – during term time.
* Up to 6 students per class - 2 classes – basic and advanced.
* Well done Vandanaben and all the students and teacher.

**8 Yoga Class** – has been dormant but we want to resurrect it asap.

**9 Children’s Culture Class** – we tried to get this going again – need trained volunteers who are qualified to work with children. Please come forward.

**Social Media**

* Our TiC is Ashwinbhai Thaker
* Newsletter sent every month – keeping members informed.
* Face Book page – maintained by Bipinbhai Thanki.
* Website maintained by Yagneshbhai Shukla.
* We have several WhatsApp Groups – including – eClub, mClub, tClub, Ybs, etc.

**Building**

* TiC is Pramathbhai Pandya (PP) – his report will follow in the agenda.
* PP is responsible for Maintenance, Development & Hires of our building.

**Affiliations:**

BSNL is affiliated with several organisations including:

* NCGO (National Congress of Gujarati Organisations)
* BIA (Brent Indian Association)
* HCB (Hindu Council of Brent)
* HFB (Hindi Forum of Britain)
* DIL (Diwali In London) – we are hosts this year!

**Charity Incorporated Organisation (CIO)**

This year BOT started investigating potential transfer of BSNL from our current status of Unincorporated Charity to Charity Incorporated Organisation (CIO) Association Model.

Our current Unincorporated Charity status limits us – e.g.

* We cannot hold property under BSNL name – so at the moment we have 4 custodians on the 128 Building Title.
* We cannot do contracts under BSNL name – e.g. Nursery Lease – so we have individual Trustees signing the lease agreement.
* Trustees are individually liable – and yes we do have Trustee Liability Insurance.
* We cannot offer Voting by Proxy, etc.

CIO Association Model seems to be the right fit for BSNL and we are looking into it with our solicitors. We will let you know more in due course.

**Thank you**

* Members and Thank you fellow Trustees:
* Giving me opportunity to serve
* I have had an enjoyable year with all of you.
* Let us all work together for the betterment of our samaj.

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**Q&A following VM’s report:**

* Q – Bhartiben Shukla asked - What Grants have we got this year?
* A – PJ - None, the Tesco grant we had in previous years has been used up.
* Q – RV asked – Are non-members attending Thursday Club?
* A – VM - Yes – and we monitor attendance for better than 70:30 ratio to make sure that more than 70 % attending are BSNL members.
* Q – RV asked - Whose names are on the Title of BSNL House?
* A – PJ – Gunvantbhai Dave, Ramnikbhai Joshi, Ameetbhai Sharma and Harshaben Trivedi.
* Q – RV asked – Why are the names not of 4 Trustees – it should not be in the names of 4 “Custodians”. This must be corrected.
* A – PJ – we are in consultation with our solicitor about this.
* Q – RV said that he agreed with BSNL becoming a CIO and that 2 years ago he had proposed the same to the BOT to transfer BSNL to become a Charity Incorporated Organisation (CIO).
* A – VM – Thanked RV for proposing CIO and said the BOT are working with our solicitors to investigate CIO association model for BSNL and will keep members informed of progress and welcome his help.
* Q – Simran Vyas and Simran Mehta asked if they could address the floor?
* A – PJ said that this is an AGM and they are not on the agenda but PJ agreed saying that as the Ybs (Young Brahmins) have recently been resumed and need all the support that we can give. Simran Mehta and Simran Vyas spoke about their journey with BSNL from their childhood to now as young adults. They introduced other members of the YBs committee - Kishen Joshi as Treasurer and Secretary, Ghanshyam Raval as social media Officer, with Mehul Vyas, Manisha Raval, Divya Acharya, Juhi Pandya, and Soham Pandya.
* Summarised message - YB mission is to preserve the essence of our Brahmin community and nurture the spirit of togetherness among our youth - reaching out to Young Brahmins aged 18 to 30, and also reaching out to include those under 18, by offering events, workshops, and enjoyable activities tailored for children and teenagers. And using social platforms including Instagram and Facebook. YBs first event was in January, celebrating Makar Sankranti, which was a success, as children and adults came together to make kites which they flew in a nearby park. More YB events to follow.
* Q – Shilaben Vyas (SV) asked if she could address the floor?
* A – PJ said that the sub-groups reports were covered by the secretary and sub-group chairs are not required to report separately.
* However as SV insisted PJ allowed her to address the floor. SV, as Chair of eClub, shared her experience and concerns. (Post AGM SV requested not to include these in the minutes).

**2.2 Minutes of Last AGM held on 5th February 2023**

These had been sent in advance with the Notice of the AGM. VM asked if there were any amendments before the minutes can be proposed and seconded?

* Q - Shankerbhai Modha referred to Section 5 and pointed out that the discussion on “eGroup funds of £19 thousand” was missing.
* A - VM agreed to check with Selina Rawal (previous secretary) and PJ to incorporate this.
* Q - Shilaben Vyas clarified that the reference at the end of Section 3 that “everyone is welcome” was simply to reassure non members that they are welcome to attend.
* A - VM agreed to incorporate this clarification.

Minutes were approved subject to incorporation of above omissions.

* Proposed by Shilaben Vyas
* Seconded by Shankerbhai Modha

**3. Treasurer’s Report & Accounts**

PJ said that Ramnikbhai Joshi, Treasurer, could not attend today as he is celebrating his 70th birthday with his family, so she will present the accounts. She thanked RJ and Ninaben, RJ’s wife, for their hard work for the last 20 years.

PJ referred to the Annual Report & Accounts sent with the Notice of the AGM and presented Ramnikbhai Joshi’s report as follows:

**RJ - BSNL - TREASURER’S REPORT FOR THE YEAR TO AUGUST 2023**

RJ Report - I take pleasure in presenting the BSNL accounts for the year ending 31 August 2023.

Income and expenditure for the year Sep 2022 to Aug 2023 has been approved by the Board of Trustees and the accounts have been examined by Puneet Kumar Sharma, our appointed independent Examiner. Special thanks for his kind service to the society.

After COVID lockdown lifted, Year 2022/2023 was in full operation including the running of several day clubs and the celebration of Hindu festivals. Financial records have shown increase in Donations, Membership and Rental income from hall hire. The Nursery has continued to honour their commitments.

The interest rates are going up, so have significant increase in interest income.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| BSNL Account summary y/end 31 Aug 2023 | | |
|  | **2023** | **2022** |
| **Income** | £ | £ |
| Donations & Gift aids | 8,067 | 3,687 |
| Rental income | 58,333 | 48,324 |
| Interest received | 13,135 | 2,653 |
| Membership | 8,313 | 6,131 |
| Net programme income | 2,517 | 924 |
| Grant Received | 0 | 0 |
| Other income | 0 | 0 |
|  | **90,365** | **61,719** |
|  |  |  |
| **Expenditure** |  |  |
| Building maintenance | -28,776 | -18,749 |
| General Cost | -5,774 | -7,923 |
| Grant expenses | 0 | -1,250 |
| Donations to other charities | -1,000 | -700 |
| Property depreciation | -7,257 | -8,889 |
|  | **-42,807** | **-37,511** |
| **Net income for the year** | **47,558** | **24,208** |
| **Cash at bank** | **545,325** | **499,438** |

Notes:

General Cost – Saved £2k on printing and postage.

Building maintenance - increased due to Purchased new Gas cookers £1.3k, Car parking work, £4.2k, Fire alarm upgrade £1.5k and increased cost of Elec and Gas by £4k due to National increase in utilities price.

Full details of income and expenditure are listed on accounts pages 8 to 14.

**Banking Matters:**

**CAF Bank current Ac**: This account is fully functional with online payment facilities. This enables us to release payment faster and more secure.

**Charity Deposit Hub account (via CAF)**: We have access to range of deposit accounts offering market-leading and exclusive interest rates. BSNL have totally £472,500 invested with six different banksand earning good interest on it.

**All deposits are 100% FSCS protected.**

I specially would like to thank Nina Joshi, my wife for continued support in bookkeeping BSNL finance and preparing accounts. I am also thankful to my fellow trustees, Sub-groups chairs and volunteers for their support in providing financial information on a timely manner.

Ramnik Joshi

Hon.Trustee - Treasurer

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PJ said that questions were received in advance from Harubhai K Rawal (HK) which she will answer first and then any other.

Q – HK – Why has the Debtors amount increased so much?

A – PJ – these are accruals – around £8k are bank interest accruals and the rest are Gift Aid accruals.

Q – HK – Why is lighting and heating costs gone up significantly? What action is taken to reduce it?

A – PJ – cost went up as energy price shot up after COVID and Ukraine war and the nursery and BSNL activities resumed. We are looking at lower cost energy suppliers.

Q – HK – Do the Trustees have an action plan to install a lift?

A – PJ – This will be covered under Building Report.

Q – RV – Ref Accounts Report - What policies do the BOT have? These should be listed.

A – PJ – We will list them in the report.

Q – RV – Ref page 8 – we need to see donors list and Gift Aid should be apportioned and credited to the individual sub-group where the donation came from.

A – PJ – these accounts are done at a high level for the Charity Commission submission.

A - Puneetbhai Sharma (PS) – said that professional help should be taken to update reporting template to Charity Commission standards and to also to satisfy members’ requirements.

Q – Shankerbhai Modha (SM) – asked why are the sub-group accounts not included?

A – PJ – RJ sends individual accounts to each sub-group.

Q – SM – if Gift Aid was apportioned to eClub then its deficit will become a positive income.

A – PJ – it is not a deficit as eClub is not a separate entity to BSNL.

Q – RV asked if eGroup had its own bank account in VM’s time?

A – VM said yes and this bank account was used to bank surplus funds and it was closed, during COVID lockdown and after he had already resigned due to catching Dengue, and the balance was moved by the BOT to BSNL general funds. No money was ever needed or withdrawn from this account.

Q – Bhartiben Shukla – Why were Harmonium class students charged for Hall hire?

A – PJ – The hall use was not for BSNL but for a private ticketed function and that is chargeable. In any case the charge was kept to a minimum amount as our members were also taking part in the function.

PJ – These accounts and narrative will be revised and updated when RJ is back and with the help of Puneetbhai Sharma and as agreed at this AGM.

**4. Appointment of Independent Examiner**

* PJ said that Punitbhai Sharma (PS) has been doing an excellent job, thanked him and she proposed him to continue.
* This was seconded by Shankerbhai Modha and Rajivbhai Vyas.
* PS was appointed unopposed.
* PJ thanked PS for accepting to continue in this role.

**5. Building Trustee’s Report**

Pramathbhai, Trustee in Charge of Building, greeted all and said that his was a solitary and thankless task but he was happy to do it.

He presented his report as follows:

1. Maintenance of our Drains And Gutters done.
2. Repairs of the Alarm and Fire Alarm System done.
3. Repaired the Boiler, due to faulty pump and thermostat.
4. Replaced part of the wooden floor that was damaged due to radiator leakage.
5. The Plumber has replaced all radiator valves, Taps downstairs and fixed the leak in the radiator upstairs.
6. Fitted Fans.
7. Created car park.
8. Our Fire Extinguishers have been service, as per our annual service.
9. Our Electrical and Wiring certification has been done; I am waiting for the report.
10. Downstairs leak fixed.
11. Lighting replaced with LED lights in the upstairs landing area.
12. Plumbing and heating certification completed.
13. We have done our research on lifts, and cost to fit a lift is very high, as it was not fitted while construction of the building, the estimated cost is about £40,000. We have formed a new team to take forward in looking at our New Building Project, We have a team who will look into various option, available to us, and take it forward, till we have some sort of plan, and the cost of a New Building or Extension. This will be where BSNL’s financial resources be better utilized.
14. Have a New Building Project Team, where we have professionals in the Building industry, to take this project forward.
15. We will be building a shelter with a canopy in the front of the building, where we can put a few Benches for our Elderly to sit down, the canopy will keep the rain off the people. This should be done in April.

Pramath Pandya

PP asked if there were any questions.

Q – RV – members must be consulted on any major project.

A – PP – we will do that when we have any major proposal – still investigating options.

Q – Punitbhai Sharma (PS) asked if we need a bigger building given that demographics have changed?

A – PP – we are looking at improving this site and will take demographics into account.

Q - Geetaben Sharma asked if a chair lift can be fitted?

A – PP – A chair lift will narrow the stair case and make the stair well unsafe for fire evacuation.

Q – Hansaben Khetia asked if the elders group can use downstairs and the nursery upstairs?

A – PP – This will require substantial building works to make a down stairs hall suitable for sub-groups – but it is one of the options.

Q – Dimple Joshi asked by show of hands how many people are prepared to come and help clean / paint the hall?

A – 5 hands went up.

Q – Truptiben Joshi (TJ) asked if the hall usage can be predicted in 10 years time given diminishing membership and youngsters interest?

A – PJ said that the elderly population needs to be looked after while we need to attract the youngsters to start using our hall.

Q – Shankerbhai Modha asked if BOT would consider hiring a bigger venue when needed for the eClub – such as the Masonic Centre in Kenton?

A – PJ said that a proposal with costs needs to be submitted to the BOT for consideration.

Q – Nareshbhai Joshi asked all to be more tolerant and flexible and learn lessons from Bardai Brahm Samaj that “fell apart”.

A – PJ – we all have to work together in unity to safe guard our BSNL and stop “us and them” blame culture.

**6. Resolutions to amend BSNL Constitution**

PJ announced that the trustees are withdrawing all the resolutions due to a technicality and under legal advice. VM clarified that our constitution section 8.1 requires that the proposed changes should be marked up in the constitution copy and sent to members with the AGM notice. BOT had not sent this. BOT were proposing a staged approach – first agree the changes in principle with members at this AGM, then edit the constitution accordingly before referring it back to members and filing with the Charity Commission.

PJ said that this agenda item is removed therefore there should not be any discussion about any of it.

Q - Rajivbhai insisted to know who the proposers were for each resolution?

A – PJ said that all the resolutions were discussed and agreed jointly and unanimously by all the trustees.

Q – RV asked if our solicitor had said that Resolution 1 was legal?

A – VM - we were informed that it is not illegal but it is subject to Charity Commission acceptance.

**7. Any Other Resolutions Received**

PJ said that no other resolutions had been received.

**8. Any Other Business for which Notice has been Received**

PJ said that no notice had been received.

**9. Election of Trustees for 2023 -2025 Term**

* PJ proposed Jayantbhai Joshi (JJ) as the “Returning Officer” to conduct the Trustee elections.
* JJ was appointed unopposed.
* PJ thanked all the Trustees and asked them to step down so that new Trustees can be elected.
* JJ explained the Trustee Nomination and Election process and how to fill the Ballot papers.
* There were 13 Trustee nominations to fill 9 vacancies: Nominees were:
  1. Gunvantbhai Dave
  2. Vinodbhai Mehta
  3. Parulben Jani
  4. Ashwinbhai Thaker
  5. Pramathbhai Pandya
  6. Sameetbhai Pandya
  7. Chandrashekharbhai Thaker
  8. Ramnikbhai Joshi
  9. Bipinbhai Thanki
  10. Selinaben Rawal
  11. Geetaben Sharma
  12. Jagdishbhai Mehta
  13. Sumantbhai Desai
* Ballot papers were given to BSNL members and collected after completion.
* JJ requested Kishorbhai Modha, Simran Vyas, Nareshbhai Joshi and Bileshbhai Joshi to help him count the votes.
* The above team retired to the privacy of the office to count the votes.
* In the mean while PJ asked members to go to the Holi celebration in the garden and stay downstairs for Mahaprashad and that the votes will be announced downstairs.
* The votes were announced by JJ at 6.45 pm downstairs during Holi Celebration and Prashad.

JJ announced the following top 9 names as elected Trustees for the term 2023 to 2025:

* + 1. Bipinbhai Thanki – 85 votes
    2. Pramathbhai Pandya – 80 votes
    3. Gunvantbhai Dave – 74 votes
    4. Ramnikbhai Joshi – 74 votes
    5. Sameetbhai Pandya – 68 votes
    6. Vinodbhai Mehta – 66 votes
    7. Parulben Jani – 62 votes
    8. Selinaben Rawal – 53 votes
    9. Ashwinbhai Thaker – 50 votes
    10. Chandrashekharbhai Thaker – 49 votes
    11. Geetaben Sharma – 49 votes
    12. Jagdishbhai Mehta – 36 votes
    13. Sumnatbhai Desai – 35 votes

**10. Close AGM**

The AGM was formally closed by PJ at 6.45 after the Trustee Votes were announced by JJ.

PJ thanked all and congratulated the elected Trustees.

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Minutes by:  
Vinod Mehta