

Suman is honoured with MBE

Suman Vohra is Vice Chair of the Edinburgh Hindu Mandir and Cultural Centre, and she has been awarded the MBE in the New Year Honours List.

When she arrived from India in the early 1970s along with her husband and young family Mrs Vohra was keen to connect with other Indians in Edinburgh. Using the telephone directories she identified Indian businesses and families and got in touch with them. Firstly they met in their homes but when numbers increased she hired halls to celebrate Diwali and other festivals.

Mrs Vohra spoke English and was able to interpret for people needing help settling children into schools, or requiring medical care. She often brought food for them there and acted in situations when a language barrier made things difficult.

It is 30 years since the Lothian Racial Equality Council helped her to procure a derelict church – with no floorboards or heating. Despite this people attended, often wrapped in blankets to keep warm

Mrs Vohra told The Edinburgh Reporter: " I am delighted to be recognised for such an honour. It is a huge achievement that will give me courage to carry on and inspire others to come forward and to serve."

- She motivated the group as together they painstakingly fundraised for resources to carry out major refurbishments. As a result of her determination, the

Edinburgh Hindu Mandir Cultural Centre (EHMCC), now a major tourist attraction, is a thriving organisation attracting over 5000 people each year.

- As longstanding Vice-Chair of the EHMCC committee, her duties are many – overseeing sub committees; supporting bereaved families through funeral services and last rites; supporting families during childbirth and weddings.
- Working as the Scotland-wide Marriage Celebrant she travels at her own expense, providing her services free of charge.
- Realising that many families cannot travel to India to immerse the ashes of their deceased loved ones, she worked with Edinburgh Council to establish an alternative dispersal of ashes place.
- By the River Almond, The Ganga Ghat is one of her most invaluable contributions to British Indians and she was instrumental in having the symbol “Aum” feature on a large panel at Mortonhall Crematorium.





