



"May I wish you all a blessed and peaceful Diwali. At this time of celebration and thanksgiving, I pray that you are all able to enjoy a precious time with your families and friends. But I want to go further in thanking you for the wonderful example you set as a community working for the good of all.

"There is much to give thanks for as we look back on a year when local Hindu and Christian communities continue to work together in the Near Neighbours project to catalyse and inspire a grassroots movement of people transforming their local areas. This sense of taking responsibility not just for our homes but for our communities too is deeply embedded in our respective faith traditions. The call to renew and restore the environment is deeply resonant for all of us.

"I have been deeply challenged by the enthusiasm and willingness of so many in the Hindu Community to participate in local inter faith initiatives and to be a driving force in civic engagement. The many Hindu communities have brought life and dynamism to many different aspects of British life, not least in business, culture and education.

"The desire to be at the very heart of British civic life is much to be admired and imitated and is a model for all of us as we wrestle with the challenges of integration as a society. It would be good to see this contribution more widely recognised and publicly acknowledged.

"I would like to convey my thanks to the whole Hindu community for contributing so much to the building of Hindu Christian relations in this country. Please be assured of my prayers and best thoughts for these relations to flourish in the coming year."

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