

## Diwali: bringing Northampton together

This year's Diwali celebration proved to be the largest ever, rivalling the likes of London.

NORTHAMPTON, Oct. 21, 2019 -- The Indian Hindu Welfare Organisation (IHWO) hosted Northampton's 19th annual Diwali celebration on Saturday 19 October at Northampton's historic market square on Abington Street. The annual celebration is reported to have been the biggest and most diverse event yet. The event, alongside other local initiatives, highlights the council's growing commitment to improve the local community and encourage diversity.

*Nitish Shah, an IHWO volunteer, highlights the importance of the 'festival of lights' on bringing Northampton communities together; "Diwali is a fantastic opportunity for Northampton communities to share and express happiness through music, dance and participating in richly colourful activities." He further emphasised "it simply reflects everything across the spectrum".*

The event saw thousands of Northampton residents from all different communities crowding the market square to join in on the fun. The festival included a variety of fantastic experiences including the traditional cultural game Karom, arts & crafts, community stalls and much more, allowing Northamptonians to enjoy delicious Indian dishes and explore Hinduism at the cultural exhibitions and stalls.

*David Cassidy, a local resident, reported that the event had "opened up a whole new insight into the fantastic festival and what the Hindu culture has to offer." "It was something new and something that the local residents really enjoyed. It was a fresh outlook on the cultural diversity of Northampton" he claimed.*

The event concluded with a magnificent procession across the whole town centre with 7 large Diwali structures including the glorious Harminder (the only mechanical elephant in the UK!). Following this year's success, the IHWO cannot wait to up their antics even more in 2020.

Company Information: The IHWO (Northampton) Limited was established in 1996, with the primary aim of "Enriching the lives of Northampton's Hindus". IHWO works tirelessly in delivering an ever changing and exciting programme of activities and events to people of all ages, which includes classes, clubs, trips, sports, entertainment and cultural events.

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The Diwali Procession, introducing Rama, Ravana, Sita and Hanuman. Photo by Billy Little, 2019.



The Kolam, a common symbol found in many Rangoli designs. Photo by Billy Little, 2019.