

The World Zoroastrian Organisation



**THE WORLD ZOROASTRIAN ORGANISATION**  
**World Zoroastrian House, 1 Freddie Mercury Close**  
**Feltham, TW13 5DF, UK**

**Annual Report**  
**&**  
**Financial Accounts**

For the year ended  
31 December 2022

**Registration No 1510380**

**Charity No. 1023334**

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## CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE



Dear Members, Donors and Supporters of WZO,

I want to thank all of you for your continued support for WZO and your continued confidence in me as the Chair. I also want to thank the entire Board of Directors of WZO who have dedicated their time to its benefit and made my job that much easier. The workload is now shared between the Directors as we work through sub-committees on different aspects of running WZO.

Our events in 2022 have significantly increased from 2021 and I would like to thank our two joint Social Secretaries for organising them. The number of cultural events and talks are far more than in previous years. We also had two Afternoon Tea events which have proved to be very popular. We hope that you will attend the programme of events we are arranging for you. It is a great way in bringing the community together. WZO has also worked hard with the local community, particularly in the local inter-faith activities and on environmental projects.

We are pleased to inform that our resident priest, Fali Madon, is busier than ever and has proved to be very popular within the community. He offers a full range of services including Navjotes/Sudreh Pooshi, weddings for Zoroastrian couples and intermarried, funeral rites, Muktaad and jashans. He also prepares the young for their Navjotes.

Last year, we made several improvements to our hall and as a result we are receiving more bookings than before. Please do consider the use of the hall for your next event. It is available at very competitive rates to WZO members. Please also let your friends know that this is an excellent venue for their special day

WZO is pleased to say that it has increased its charitable donations to those in need, when compared to the previous year. For it is in difficult times, when the demand from charities is higher. Unfortunately, the difficult times also means that WZO received lower amount of donations in common with other charities. Together, we must reverse this trend, so may I please request you to donate generously to its funds, support its activities and consider leaving a lasting legacy to WZO in your will.

May I please request you to donate generously to its funds, support its activities and consider leaving a lasting legacy to WZO in your will.

Let me end my message by urging all of you to get involved with WZO and with your help we will continue to support the Zoroastrian community worldwide well into the foreseeable future. Once again, I personally thank each one of you for your confidence in me and the support you have given to WZO in the past. Long may this continue.

Yours humbly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Rumi Sethna', written over a horizontal line.

**Mr Rumi Sethna,  
Chair, WZO.**

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



This year with Ahura Mazda's blessings and the tireless work of the WZO committee much has been achieved for our community worldwide. I wish to thank our global WZO body, our Chair, Treasurer, and Membership for their support and kindness. I also wish to thank our esteemed Mobed Fali Madon and his wife Anahita for their religious service to our community at moments of sorrow and rejoicing. The WZO team is strong, and I salute you all.

As an author who has researched and written about many outstanding people, I realise how privileged we are to belong to a community that is overflowing with remarkable personalities. Our Zoroastrian past is magnificent. This is very evident in the new exhibition that permanently graces the walls of the WZO centre. The task of choosing who should be recognised was a collective endeavour. The writing of their extraordinary lives in just a paragraph was my task that I took on with joy. As Winston Churchill commented, it is easy to write pages on people but to write a paragraph is difficult. Darayus Motivala and I worked together on this fascinating project. We spent time to ensure that all those that visit WZO House will be awed by the groundbreaking excellence of Zoroastrian men and women from across the world and throughout history. The one aspect that stands out across their diverse and many achievements is their generosity of spirit and their social brilliance. They are an inspiration.

We must also look to the future for inspiration. I hope that my Presidency will be one that focuses on our global young. They too are special and precious. I have had over the years the privilege to work closely with many of them. They crave for all Zoroastrian groups to come together across all divides. WZO is poised to lead on this important work of a united community across all viewpoints. Our young demand that we rekindle pride in our precious heritage but also look to the future and really invest in our young. They are not impressed with those that try and tell them what to do. They want us to trust them and empower them to express their unique genius. At WZO we have taken on this challenge.

WZO has organised a weekend at the ASHA centre in the Royal Forest of Dean for our Zoroastrian young from all backgrounds. Here they can connect with each other and make new friends in the beauty of nature. Our Zoroastrian religion is known as the first Geen Religion. Our young need access to the magnificence of nature for their mental and physical wellbeing. It is hoped that in the future with the lead from one of our committee members Manijeh Parki we will be able to organise camping breaks for our young to explore nature and enjoy themselves which is their birthright.

WZO is also working with Persis Driver and Shazneen Munshi and other leaders worldwide in the field of youth education. We are putting together a book/template for every Zoroastrian community on how to enchant our young and instil in them a love, understanding and respect for their faith and its followers.

WZO is also proud of the ZASHA website to bring our women together and showcase their brilliance. Zoroastrian women are the bedrock and beauty of our community.

I hope my Presidency will be one of welcoming visitors to our centre from all faiths and none. Of introducing people to the revolutionary ideas of our prophet that spoke about the idea of free will and listening to your conscience, the importance of the equality of the sexes, protection of nature and virtuous action, all revolutionary ideas many millennia ago and still more than relevant today. WZO with the kindness of the Firuz Madon Foundation has republished the 'Z to A of Zoroastrianism, Ancient wisdom for Modern Living.' written by New Zealand editor Farida Master and me to be gifted to all those that know little of our prophet's wisdom. The book also talks about his followers and their contribution to world history.

We see at our peril that nature is daily abused, and she is reacting with dire warnings of floods, famine, and furious weather conditions. As Zoroastrians WZO will take a lead on global balancing and care of the natural world. WZO has started with little but important actions. The planting of a flower box outside Feltham station for all travellers to enjoy. The planting of a tree in memory of Freddie Mercury and my gift of roses outside the WZO centre in memory of my dear parents. In the future WZO plans to ensure that we invest in the environment as is our Zoroastrian legacy and duty.

I hope that the coming year will be filled with joy for all Zoroastrians everywhere. May we continue to work for the betterment of our shared world with nobility and goodness in the footsteps of our ancestors. May we also be an inspiration to our young who give meaning to us all.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Z. Gifford". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized 'Z'.

**Zerbanoo Gifford**  
**President, WZO.**

## Notice of WZO's AGM on 2 October 2022

### AGM NOTICE

**15<sup>th</sup> September 2023**

NOTICE is hereby given that an **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING** of **The World Zoroastrian Organisation Limited** will be held on Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> October 2023 at **World Zoroastrian House, 1 Freddie Mercury Close, Feltham. TW13 5DF at 04:00pm BST precisely**, to transact the following business. Members can also partake in the AGM vis Zoo (details below).

1. To receive and adopt the Committee's report and accounts for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> December 2022.
2. To elect members of the Managing Committee in place of the following, who retire in accordance and (3) of the Articles of Association, and being eligible offer themselves for re-election.

#### UK Committee Members

Mr Dinyar Modi

Mrs Benafsha Engineer - Mulla

#### Overseas Committee Members

Mr Kersi Shroff (America)

Mr Sam Vesuna (Canada)

The following members were co-opted to the WZO committee during the year and are now standing for election:

Mr Tirdad Sorooshian 21<sup>st</sup> May 2023

If you wish to nominate some other members of the Organisation for the Managing Committee, please send in your nomination, together with the written consent of your nominee, to reach the Honorary Secretary not later than 72 hours before the time arranged for the meeting. Nominations received thereafter will not be accepted.

3. To elect the Chairman from amongst the members of the Committee for the year 2023/2024.
4. To re-appoint the Honorary Auditors, Nash Harvey LLP, for the year 2023/2024.
5. To transact the other usual business of an Annual General Meeting.

If you informed us previously that you would like a printed copy in Abbreviated or Full format then they either enclosed with this Notice or will be posted to you separately. If you have not previously requested a hard copy or you are receiving this Notice by email then please download it from WZO's website in the WZO Reports section.

According to the Constitution, non-members may not be admitted to the meeting; however, interested Zoroastrians will be welcome but not entitled to vote.

A proxy form is enclosed for your use which should arrive not later than 72 hours before the time arranged for the meeting.

**The AGM will be held at WZO's centre in Feltham and on ZOOM.**

Kindly confirm if you would like to attend the AGM. Prior registration is a must. If you do wish to attend the online WZO Annual General Meeting then inform WZO by emailing at [agmproxy@wzo.org](mailto:agmproxy@wzo.org)

The Zoom login details are as below:

Topic: WZO Annual General Meeting

Time: Oct 8<sup>th</sup>, 2023 04:00 PM London

(India IST 8.30pm, Pakistan PKT 09.00 pm, USA EST 11am, USA PST 8 am)

To join Zoom Meeting, please click the link below

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/5910628719?pwd=N1UwNEJ0K1dobzVjck05QzJIWjZyUT09>

Meeting ID: 591 062 8719 Passcode: wzoagm

Thank you and with kind regards

Yours faithfully,



*Mrs. Benafsha Engineer-Mulla*

(Secretary)

## Minutes of WZO's AGM on 26 September 2021

### THE WORLD ZOROASTRIAN ORGANISATION LIMITED

Minutes of the 42<sup>nd</sup> **Annual General Meeting** of the World Zoroastrian Organisation held on Sunday 02<sup>nd</sup> October 2022, online via Zoom and at WZH commencing 4.00pm.

#### Present:

Rumi	Sethna	Chair	In Person
Hilda	Sethna	Member	In Person
Darayus	Motivala	Committee	In Person
Arnavaz	Motivala	Member	In Person
Zenobia	Nadirshaw	President	In Person
Zubin	Nadirshaw	Member	In Person
Armaity	Engineer	Committee	In Person
Shahin	Bekhradnia	Committee	Zoom
Fariborz	Rahnamoon	Committee	Zoom
Goody	Irani	Member	Zoom
Rustam	Dubash	Committee	In Person
Manijeh	Parki	Committee	In Person
Jimmy	Madon	Committee	In Person
Fali	Madon	Member	In Person
Anahita	Madon	Member	In Person
Farida	Madon	Non-Member	In Person
Khuushrooo	Madon	Non-Member	In Person
sheroo	Amrolia	Member	In Person
Kashmira	Cooper	Member	In Person
Darius	Potel	Member	In Person
Zerbanoo	Gifford	Committee	Zoom
Kayomarsh	Mehta	Committee	Zoom
Meher	Amersey	Committee	Zoom
Benafsha	Engineer-Mulla	Co. Secretary	Zoom
Meherborzin	Soroushrian	Member	Zoom
Maneck	Bhujwala	Committee	Zoom
Nawaz	Vatcha	Member	Zoom
Ratan	Vatcha	Member	Zoom
Eruch	Billimoria	Member	In Person
Eddy	Lawyer	Member	Zoom

In attendance 30 members of the Association.



The prayers were led by Ervad Fali Madon.

1 AGM Notice

The Hon. Secretary, Benafsha Engineer - Mulla, read out the notice convening the meeting.

2 Chairman's Report

WZO Chairman, Mr Rumi Sethna, gave a report on the workings of WZO during 2021-2022. A copy of his report is available on the WZO website, [www.w-z-o.org](http://www.w-z-o.org).

3 Annual Report and Financial Statement

The Hon. Secretary mentioned there were no questions or points raised on the Annual Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> December 2021. The report and accounts were unanimously adopted as per the votes cast in the proxies.

4 Re-election of Committee Members

The Hon. Secretary read out the names of the members standing for re-election:-

UK Committee Members

Mrs Armaity Engineer  
Ervad Jimmy Madon  
Prof. Zenobia Nadirshaw (MBE)

Proposer - Mrs Benafsha Engineer - Mulla

Secunder - Mr Dinyar Modi

Overseas Committee Members

Mr. Russi M. Ghadiali (Singapore)  
Mr Kayomarsh Mehta (USA)  
Dr Parmis Khatibi (USA)  
Mr Fariborz Rahnamoon (Canada)  
Mr. Darius Mistry (N Zealand)

Proposer – Mr Darayus Motivala

Secunder – Ms Shahin Bekhradnia

All the UK and the Overseas International Committee Members standing for re-election were unanimously elected as per the votes cast in the proxies.

New members to the WZO Committee

Nominations for election to the WZO Committee were received from:

	<u>Proposer</u>	<u>Secunder</u>	
Mrs Zerbanoo Gifford Bekhradnia	Mr Rumi Sethna	Ms	Shahin

Ms Freny Pavri

Mr Darayus Motivala

Mr Rustam Dubash

The New Committee members were unanimously elected as per the votes cast in the proxies.

## 5 Election of Chairman

Benafsha Engineer – Mulla, read out the list of nominations for the chairman.

The current Chairman, Rumi Sethna was the only nominee who indicated his agreement to stand for election. Rumi Sethna was unanimously elected Chairman for the year 2022 – 2023.

Benafsha Engineer – Mulla, read out the names of the new committee for the year 2022-23

Mr Rumi Sethna	British	Mr Homi R Khusrokhan	Indian
Dastur Dr Kersey H. Antia	American	Mrs Meher Amersey	Indian
Mr Dinyar J Modi	British	Mr Maneck Bhujwala	American
Mrs Armaity Engineer	British	Dr Parmis Khatibi	American
Ms Benafsha Engineer	British	Mr Kersi Shroff	American
Mr Darayus Motivala	British	Mr Kayomarsh Mehta	American
Prof. Zenobia Nadirshaw	British	Ervad Dr Jehan Bagli	Canadian
Mrs Zerbano Gifford	British	Mr Sam Vesuna	Canadian
Mr Rustam Dubash	British	Mr.Fariborz Rahnamoon	Canadian
Ms Shirin Mehri	Pakistani	Ms Shahin Bekhradnia	British
Ervad Jimmy Madon	British	Ms Freny Pavri	British
Mrs Manijeh Parki	British	Ms Pia Sutaria	Indian
Mr Russi M. Ghadiali	Singaporean		
Mr Darius S Mistry	New Zealander		
Mr Dadi Mistry	Indian		

## 6 Honorary Auditors

The Hon Secretary, Benafsha Engineer – Mulla, thanked the Auditors Nash Harvey LLP for their services to WZO. They were proposed for re-election as Auditors by Mrs Benafsha Engineer - Mulla and seconded by Prof. Zenobia Nadirshaw (M.B.E). They were unanimously re-elected as Auditors

## 7 Any Other Business of AGM

Darayus Motivala delivered a presentation on How WZO is leading the way.

The Hon Secretary requested members that if they had any points to raise related to the AGM, they may kindly email the same to us at: [contact@w-z-o.org](mailto:contact@w-z-o.org) There being no other business pertaining to the AGM, she declared the meeting closed with a vote of thanks to all present.



Mrs Benafsha Engineer - Mulla  
Hon Secretary

## WZO's Events in 2022.

### BOI CEREMONIES THROUGHOUT THE YEAR



Our resident priest Ervad Fali Madon continues to perform a weekly Boi ceremony every Sunday. The Boi service is broadcast live on our website <https://www.w-z-o.org/live/> and on our WZO Facebook page, <https://www.facebook.com/worldzoroastrianorganisation>,

which can be accessed without a Facebook account. The ceremony is seen by Zoroastrians from around the world.

Unless otherwise noted, all events noted below were held at our recently inaugurated World Zoroastrian House (WZH) in Feltham, Surrey.

### JANUARY



On **30th January**, WZO held a celebration of Jashn-e-Sadeh, the Zoroastrian Mid-Winter festival.

The event included a talk by Dr Ravi Khetrpal who has previously graciously spoken at WZO events on Zoroastrianism, Persian culture, and history.

In the first talk of the day, Dr. Khetrpal retold the story of Jashn-e-Sadeh from the Shahnameh, and shared beautiful illustrations. His second talk was about some of the Pirs of Yazd, Azargoshasb and other Atesh Kadeh. Dr. Khetrpal has spent an extensive time in Iran, and he accompanied the accounts given in the talks with interesting photos and slides.

Mobedyar Mahshad Khosraviani of Toronto followed with a talk about Sadeh and the importance of the festival to her personally.

A further highlight of the celebration was the lighting of a fire for which we are fortunate to have suitable outdoor space at Zoroastrian House. Prayers were performed by our three priests - Ervad Khushroo Madon, Ervad Fali Madon and Mobedyar Mahshad Khosraviani. Young Zoroastrians wearing white headscarves and carrying lit candles, and other attendees, circled the fire while music and drums were played and delicious sweets were offered to everyone, including passers-by and local residents who took an interest in the event. The optimism of the coming spring was fully embraced at the celebrations.

On the same day, a Navjote ceremony was also held in the Prayer Room for the acceptance of a young lady into the Zoroastrian faith.

### MARCH



On **6th March**, WZO Board Member (overseas), Kersi B. Shroff, spoke on Zoroastrianism in an interfaith meeting organized on zoom by the South London Interfaith Group's 'World Day of Prayer 2022'. The meeting included prayers and readings from several faith traditions.

Kersi concluded his talk with the prayer:

May understanding overcome misunderstanding; Peace triumph over discord.  
Generosity overcome avarice, Reverence triumph over contempt,  
Truth over falsehood.  
And may the Righteous Order Gain Victory Over the Lie.  
(Yasna 60.5)

*Atha Jamyad Yatha Afri Nami*



Tower of Silence in Yazd

On **12th March**, WZO Board Member, Shahin Bekhradnia, gave a talk at the 2022 Kenneth Kirkwood Lecture at the Pitt Rivers Museum in Oxford during which four eminent speakers gave accounts of last rites in various cultures.

Shahin's talk was on "A Zoroastrian End" in which she described practices relating to Vultures, Dogs & Fires. She noted the changes in our death rituals necessitated by various social and political circumstances. She explained the purpose of Towers of Silence and how they evolved and functioned. Shahin also noted that with the decline in vulture populations and the encroachment of urban settlements, the community has had to look for alternative solutions which continue to uphold the underlying environmental ethic.

On **19th March**, Nowroz, the Persian New Year, was celebrated at a Dinner/Dance. The joyous occasion was well attended at a dinner and dance by members and their friends. The event had an Iranian theme with music provided by DJ Barfi who played both Iranian and Western music. The meal included a pan fried fish cooked in an Iranian style and Chellow Kakab Koobideh (lamb skewers). At the event, two of the 8<sup>th</sup> World Zoroastrian Youth Congress committee were given the opportunity to showcase their forthcoming congress.

#### **APRIL**



On **9th April** at an informative and enjoyable afternoon event Dr Ravi Kumar Khetrpal, the previously mentioned expert on Ancient Persian culture and history, gave a talk on two interesting inter-related Zoroastrian topics. The talk on "Persian Zoroastrian History Records from the Holy Bible"

was presented in two parts.

On **29th April**, A Memorial Service was held for the late Shahroakh Vafadari who had given his collection of books to the WZO library.

#### **MAY**

On **12th May**, Ervad Fali Madon participated in an interfaith meeting organized by Hounslow Friends of Faith (HFoF) on Zoom. Fali is a committee member of HFoF.

On **29th May** WZO members and friends were treated to a sold-out fun filled event of traditional afternoon tea with a glass of chilled Prosecco.

The event was a fund raising sponsored by Tehmi and Noshir Patel, timed to celebrate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee. WZO President, Prof. Zenobia Nadirshaw, welcomed guests and read a thank you message from the chairman Mr Rumi Sethna. Tehmi Patel raised a toast to the Queen on her Platinum Jubilee, followed by guests enjoying a lavish spread of finger sandwiches, scones and pastries.

Young Zoroastrian artist Diana Mistry exhibited a variety of her work, in 2D and 3D

dimensions. She is currently exploring our Fravashi and took the opportunity to show her work to the community.

## JUNE

On **June 4th and 7th**, WZ House is a stop for the Freddie Mercury Walk organised by the Friends of Feltham Green, a local group, look after the Freddie Memorial on the High Street. During the stop the visitors were given a brief talk by Darayus Motivala and Shahin Bekhradnia on Zoroastrianism and some of the illustrious Zoroastrians. They have the opportunity to visit the Satayesh Gah should they wish to.

On **5th June** WZO's Annual Seminar was held on "The history of Zoroastrian Iran soon after the arrival of Islam."

Despite it being a Jubilee weekend, over 60 persons attended the Seminar at which the speakers gave fresh insights into current research at Oxford University being carried out by Invisible East, a team of post-doctoral researchers led by Dr Arezou Azad.



After speaking about the way in which she came across the new source materials that have provided the basis of her research, Arezou explained that the Invisible East was working its way through these and gaining insights into how the ordinary people led their lives, as opposed to high-ranking officials who are normally the focus of any such studies.

Small collections of written fragments have been found on paper, parchment, pottery sherds, papyrus, cloth, birch bark and other surfaces in different locations across Iran, Central Asia and western China dating to the immediate centuries before and after the arrival in the 7th and 8th century of Islam in the region. One important collection with a large number of such sources, so far largely unresearched, and originating in Afghanistan, is one at the National Library of Israel.

Professor Hugh Kennedy who joined us by Zoom spoke about Zoroastrianism soon after the arrival of Islam. He pointed out that alongside the state religion of Zoroastrianism, there were Christians, Jews, Buddhists, and others within the area. According to Islamic tradition, Zoroastrians were accepted and treated as "people of the book" under the Caliphs. but there were tax and employment penalties imposed. He suggested that those disadvantages were felt much more among the ruling classes and aristocrats rather than the ordinary people and that there was no sudden forced mass conversion. Rather he hinted at much worse conditions from the mid Abbasid caliphate and the Mongol period onwards.



Dr Thomas Benfey's diligent work on deciphering one of the fragments found in Middle Persian on papyrus held a fascinating content. It clearly related to a period of time very soon after the takeover by the Arabs and concerned the Zoroastrian owner of a vineyard with a number of interesting issues arising out of it.

When the morning talks came to an end, the action moved up to the Setayeshgah where WZO's resident priest, Ervad Fali Madon, conducted his usual weekly Boi, but with the added dimension of honouring HM The Queen on the occasion of her Platinum Jubilee with a recital of the Tan Dorosti prayer. Most of the attendees managed to squeeze into the prayer room for the occasion and for some this was the first experience of a genuine



Zoroastrian ceremony.



Finally, after the added bonus of a complimentary lunch, Dr Arash Zeini, a philologist specialising in Middle Persian and Zoroastrianism also working with the Invisible East team presented a somewhat radical theory: namely that the effort to translate the Avestan texts into Middle Persian may have triggered the canonisation of the corpus of prayers we know as the AVESTA, which may not have existed as a formal corpus beforehand.

WZO is extremely grateful to the speakers from the Invisible East team and the work they are doing.

## JULY



On **2<sup>nd</sup> July**, a Musical Afternoon was held at which a young Zoroastrian singer and musician, Sanaea Bubber, provided the entertainment with a mixture of Western music, mostly retro and some pop, along with Indian music. She was supported by Harish Marwaha and Firoz Kanchwalla from K2 Music Events. The event

included a served lunch.



On **10th July** marked our celebration of Jashan-e-Tirgan, the Zoroastrian Water Festival. This is an ancient Iranian tradition in honour of the life-sustaining qualities of water. It included a brief educational talk by Dr. Khetrapal on Pirouz Shah, Arash e Kamangir and the significance of Tirgan. It was followed by a live performance on a traditional musical instrument called the Santur, played by

celebrated musician Peyman Heydarian. By popular request he also played some Kurdish music accompanied by singing, some Bakhtiari and Luristani music, and finished with music that brought some of the audience to their feet to dance alongside. Nearly one hundred persons participated in the gathering. A water game was played in celebration of water and lunch was also served. The event attracted a number of new friends who became more familiar with the location and functioning of Zoroastrian House.



**2 -5 July 2022**, WZO members were well represented at the **12th World Zoroastrian Congress held in New York, USA**. Of special mention is a dance performance given by talented WZO Board member, Pia Sutaria,

who dazzled the audience with her skills. Pia was also able to give a short speech mentioning WZO. Other WZO speakers at this well attended world event were Shahin Bekhradnia, Ervad Jimmy Madon, Shirin Mehri, Kersi Shroff and Sam Vesuna. Promotional materials on the WZO included a full-page advertisement in the Program Brochure and a separate flyer, both of which were designed by Leaa Contractor.

On **20th July**, Ervad Fali Madon participated in an interfaith meeting organized by the previously mentioned HFoF at the Hounslow Methodist Church.

## AUGUST

The Parsi Shahenshahi New Year was celebrated on Saturday **20th August 2022**, starting with

a Boi ceremony. The Zoroastrian owned and run Café Spice Namasté prepared the delicious dinner, made possible by a generous donation made by a member. The occasion provided a wonderful opportunity to meet and make friends old and new, followed by plenty of dancing! From **6th to 15th August** the Shahen Shai Muktaḍ prayers for departed souls were held at WZH. The prayers were recited in front of attending members and online, by our resident priest Ervad Fali Madon, with the assistance of other Mobeds and Mobedyars (priests) in the UK. We were happy to introduce Mrs Nawaz Vatcha, a resident of London trained to become a Mobedyar with the help of Ervad Fali Madon.

On **16th August** Ervad Fali Madon participated in an interfaith funeral for the late Kevin Riley who was the Treasurer of the Hounslow Friends of Faith. Priests from all the represented faiths were given the opportunity to recite a short prayer of their faith.

## SEPTEMBER

On **4th September**, Zoroastrians and non-Zoroastrians spouses joined in a prayer service, for an "Anushe Ruvan nu Jashan" (Prayers in memory of departed souls) to remember our departed souls and thus become the torch bearers of progress, unity, and amity within our small but forward-looking community.

The prayers were held at the Zoroastrian Burial Ground, Brookwood Cemetery, Brookwood, Surrey, which provided an idyllic setting for the remembrance of the departed. The prayers were also broadcast Live on our website.

On **11<sup>th</sup> September**, a Workshop was held for the WZO committee members to discuss WZO's priorities and goals. Those committee members who could not attend in person joined in via Zoom. Members had been previously requested to answer questions how best posed in a survey. The Workshop was run by Mr. Adrian Locher, who served for many years (2006 – 2022) as the Co-Director and Trainer of the ASHA Centre in Flaxley, Gloucestershire. His experience includes working as a Course facilitator in the Peace Ambassadors programme and conducting nine-week long courses personal development and training young post-graduate women from Pune, India. The courses included training on ethical leadership and life coaching.



On **11<sup>th</sup> September**, at an interfaith Unity Walk held in Washington, DC, USA, in which WZO, together with ZAMWI, the local Zoroastrian Association, were represented and a specially printed poster and circulars regarding WZO's activities were displayed, and copies circulated. The Unity Walk is a premier event of the Interfaith Council of Metropolitan Washington (IFC), and features visits to various faith facilities in the area. Talks on interfaith topics, including Zoroastrianism, were given, followed by a reception. Financial and material donations were made to the IFC on behalf of WZO.

## OCTOBER

On **2nd October**, WZO's Annual General Body Meeting was held. The minutes of the AGM are included in this report.

On **9th October** Jashn-e-Mehregan was celebrated, and a traditional Sofreh table laid out for the occasion. This ancient Iranian festival is celebrated in the Autumn and is a thanksgiving for the bounties of the year following the end of the year's agricultural cycle. It is the second most important festival in the Zoroastrian calendar, balancing out with Nowruz which is



celebrated on the spring equinox.

Our popular speaker Dr Ravi Khetrpal spoke on the relevance of Mehrgan to Zoroastrians in his usual entertaining and educational style which is enjoyed by all.

A recital followed of part of the Mehr Yasht in the Setayeshgah by Ervad Fali Madon.

Sinai Noor a traditional storyteller accompanied by typical musical instruments gave a talk on "From Avesta to the Shahnameh". The speaker recalled the epic story of Fereydun, a Peshdadian King and hero of Eranshahr.

On **24th October**, Rumi Sethna, Darayus Motivala, Rustam Dubash and Fali Madon attended a meeting with the Mayor of Hounslow and the Councillors (in whose district the World Zoroastrian House is situated). The purpose of the meeting was to introduce WZO to the new Mayor and have mutual understanding of each other. The Mayor thanked WZO for its participation in the local activities.

#### **NOVEMBER**

On **10th November**, Ervad Fali Madon attended another interfaith meeting held by HFOF on Zoom.

On **20th November**, another musical afternoon was organized on account of the public demand. The entertainment provided by the talented singers and musicians Firoz, Indrani, and Manas from K2 Music Events. The afternoon of music, delicious food, good company, and dancing to the beats of retro, some pop and Indian music was enjoyed by all.

### **Membership & Communication**

WZO's membership is open to all Zoroastrians, their spouses and their children. Non-Zoroastrians can become Friends of WZO. A Membership form can be downloaded from the website at <https://www.w-z-o.org/membership/> . Alternatively, you can request one by email to [membership@w-z-o.org](mailto:membership@w-z-o.org)

WZO wants the Zoroastrian youth to take part in its activities. It has therefore decided to reduce the Life membership from £125 to £50 for people under 35.

WZO urges their Ordinary members to upgrade to **Life/Family membership** which decreases its administrative burden. Please do get in touch with the WZO representatives in USA, Canada, Pakistan, New Zealand and India if you wish to upgrade your membership to Life.

In the UK and other areas, please contact the Membership Secretary Mrs Anahita Madon at [membership@w-z-o.org](mailto:membership@w-z-o.org) for all membership issues. Many members have responded positively to our requests for receiving mailers and Hamazor via email. Please consider whether you can reduce WZO's cost by agreeing to receive its Mailers and Hamazor by email.

### **Website and Social Media**

WZO emails members who have subscribed to its newsletters. If you have not subscribed to it as yet, kindly do so by emailing them at [membership@w-z-o.org](mailto:membership@w-z-o.org) and your email ID will be added to its emailing list for updates about upcoming WZO events and communications.

WZO events and communication are also updated on its website at <https://www.w-z-o.org> and also on their Facebook and Instagram pages (#world\_zoroastrain\_organisation) which provides information of all WZO events and news related to Zoroastrianism worldwide.

WZO urges its members to please share with them Community related and Interfaith news. If you have participated in a programme, they would be happy to share this with their members worldwide.

### **WZO LIBRARY**

The WZO Library at WZH is open to all. It is a reference library and, therefore, no books will be lent out. Committee members, Shahin Bekhradnia and Jimmy Madon have sorted the books under broad subject matter categories. Fali Madon, our resident priest and his wife, Anahita, our Administrative Assistant, have now taken on the task of preparing an inventory of all the books in the library.

## **Helping the Organisation**

WZO can only continue to do its work in the community if it is supported by its members and supporters. There are various ways you could help WZO serve the community.

1. WZO requests you and your family members to become its Life Members / Patrons (if you are not one already). Please do encourage your friends to also become members. WZO's membership is open to all Zoroastrians, their spouses and their children. Those people who are interested in Zoroastrianism and WZO but do not qualify for full membership can join as Friends of WZO.
2. Volunteering your time and knowledge for the successful running of WZO, the community centre and its amenities. You may well have skills and expertise in areas to supplement those of the committee members. WZO is particularly looking for Young Zoroastrians to help shape its future to meet the needs of the next generation.
3. Please consider WZO in your will for a lasting legacy.
4. Please consider donating to WZO's General Fund as it gives them the flexibility to use your donation to the most pressing expenditure they face. At the time of your donation, you can indicate how you would like your donation to be used and they will do our best to honour your wish. The WZO Committee wants to thank many of their supporters who donate regularly to them through a Standing Order.
5. A community that looks after its priests who serve the flock with fairness and consideration should be supported by the laity. Please consider using the priestly services offered by WZO.
6. Donate whatever you can when you visit the Worship room to cover the cost of purchasing Sukhar and Kathi. Alternatively, please donate these items to WZO.
7. Please consider renting the hall at WZH for your next event. The facilities include audio-visual, air-conditioning, commercial kitchen and parking. Please remember that the Satayesh Gah is also available on the premises. There are reduced rates for WZO members. Please contact Anahita Madon [anahita.madon@w-z-o.org](mailto:anahita.madon@w-z-o.org), for details and bookings.

## **Security and maintenance of the community centre**

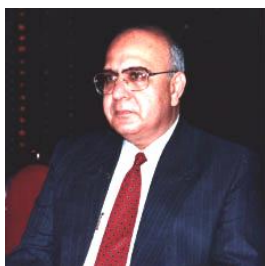
While the World Zoroastrian House sits in a pleasant garden setting, there are many security and maintenance issues in a public area. Therefore, WZO needs to secure the grounds around the property with protective landscaping.

WZO needs your wholehearted support: attitudinal, physical and also your financial commitment to maintain these premises so WZO can continue the work of its various charitable activities. The World Zoroastrian House is a stepping stone to further increase their activities. Their charitable activities are posted on the website on a regular basis. Kindly donate generously through its website [www.w-z-o.org/donate](http://www.w-z-o.org/donate).

## Supporting Zoroastrian Communities Worldwide

WZO carries out its charitable works worldwide, in partnership with other, mainly Zoroastrian charitable organisations, and through its own Trust Funds. WZO representatives in UK, Canada, USA, Pakistan and New Zealand collect substantial sums towards charitable activities. During the year, WZO endeavoured to fulfil its obligations towards community requests for medical treatment and aid, educational grants and loans for higher education, lectures and seminars for the furtherance of religious education, interfaith and social and religious activities.

### **WZO Trust of India**



The World Zoroastrian Organisation Trust (Estd. 1991), The WZO Trust for Women & Children (Estd. 1993) and The WZO Trust Funds (Estd. 1995), were established as independent Trusts under the provisions of The Bombay Public Trusts Act, 1951.

These 3 independent Trusts, collectively known as **WZO Trusts**, have been in the forefront of raising funds for various community centric welfare causes from donors – both institutions as well as individuals from all over the world and disbursing them in India to individuals in various forms of distress.

The 3 Trusts are over all managed by a team of Trustees comprised of 9 independent persons with some persons serving on all 3 Trusts as Trustees. The Chairman of these Trusts is Dinshaw K Tamboly with Homiyar F. Madan as the Managing Trustee in Mumbai and Aspi B. Ambapardiwala as the Managing Trustee in Navsari.



Multiple activities for the welfare and well-being of the Zoroastrian Community in India are undertaken by the WZO Trusts and support is also extended for the promotion of cultural and socio-economic environment.

The major welfare activities undertaken by the WZO Trust's covers extending financial support for:

1. Medical Relief,
2. Education Support,
3. Providing Relief from Poverty,
4. Distributing Food Grains to poor Zoroastrians,
5. Rehabilitating poor Zoroastrian Farmers in Gujarat and Maharashtra,
6. Converting huts into cottages in which poor Zoroastrians lives in rural areas,

7. Providing interest free financial support towards Self-Employment,
8. Supporting youth activities,
9. Extending support towards publishing books,
10. Repairs to Fire Temples,
11. Supplying 'kathi' to various Fire Temples,
12. Running and maintaining Senior Citizens Centres at Navsari,
13. Running and maintaining a Sanatorium at Sanjan.

Due to our policy of transparency & accountability, donors - both institutions and individuals from all over the world contribute generously towards our community welfare activities. During the course of Financial Year 2022-2023 the WZO Trusts received and disbursed Rs. 208,975,012 (GBP 1,983,624, USD 2,531,732) towards the various welfare activities undertaken by the Trusts.

WZO Trusts take this opportunity to extend sincere gratitude to all our donors, which include WZO London & WZO US Region, who too have been extending support to us for our various welfare initiatives.

## **News from the WZO Regional Offices**



**WZO Foundation, India** formed in 2013, operates as a charitable trust from Delhi. The Foundation is now up and running and is able to receive and process WZO membership applications, receive and distribute funds and can process application for funds. Membership issues for WZO India should be sent to Meher Amersey ([meher.amaersey@w-z-o.org](mailto:meher.amaersey@w-z-o.org)). WZO offers its sincere thanks to Meher Amersey for her hard work in managing the Foundation. WZO wishes to record its sincere thanks to Dadi Eruchshaw Mistry for forming the Foundation and for managing it until his untimely death in November 2022. Dadi was a Founder member of WZO and remained a committee member he passed away. WZO and the Zoroastrian community in India are indebted to Dadi for his passion and commitment to the community.



**WZO US Region** is ably managed by its President, Mr Kayomارش Mehta. The 2022 year was a very busy and rewarding year for the WZO US Region. Thanks to our generous donors, we collected Donations for various causes totalling to USD 463, 670.00. We were able to disburse Charitable Contributions to the tune of USD 316, 826.00. Disbursement details for the varied causes are listed

### **Medical**

Medical Assistance to India comprised of a total of USD 150,000. Covid related support to the various Hospitals for Ventilators, Oxygen Concentrators and other equipment expenses was to the tune of USD 75,000. Almost an equal amount of USD 75,000 was sent to WZO Trust Funds in India for Critical Medical Assistance of 9 plus individual appeals.

### **Religion**

To enhance Mobed Education, grants related to Religion related activities were provided to Dadar Athornan Institute in Mumbai. One scheme provides incentives to students who graduate from the Dadar Athornan Institute. To educate and train future young Mobeds for our future generations, grants were offered to the North American Mobed Council in US/Canada. Total Grants provided in support of religion was to the tune of USD 106,250.

### **Welfare**

Grants were sent to WZO Trust Funds India for dispensing various welfare activities to support their Grain distribution to poor Parsee families, building cottages, promoting self-employment and Senior Citizen Home. These amounted to USD 19,000.

### **Education**

To assist students with their high cost of Education, WZO US Region offered loan scholarships to the tune of USD 39,000 to students in Canada, US, Europe and Singapore.

## WZO New Zealand



WZO New Zealand is ably managed by its President, Mr Darius Mistry and supported by fellow Trustee, Ms Rashna Tata.

After the recent COVID lockdowns in New Zealand, the local NZ community is taking a bit longer to recover due the scale and size of our nation. Fortunately, I have not heard of anyone from our community being adversely affected by Covid.

The local ZANZ organisation has been active in conducting a Jashan on Jamshedi Navroze. We now have several young mobeds who sit for the Muktaḍ, Ghambar and Jashan prayers for the community. A number of Senior Get Togethers were organised to bring the community together.

This year the young Zarthosit's from our community had several fund-raising activities organised to collect funds for the 8<sup>th</sup> Youth World Zoroastrian congress held in London. Around 10 of our youth attend the congress this year, most of them to establish stronger bonds with the youth in other parts of the world. A few matrimonial bonds were established through past Youth congresses and some of these newlyweds now have kids, thus helping the community's growth.

Again, this year our WZO trustee, Rashna Tata, was recognised for her services to the Indian community. Rashna was invited by the Indian Consulate in Wellington to meet the Indian dignitaries who came over from India to strengthen the NZ /India business forum.

This year there was a serious effort put in by a section of our community to gather funds to buy a property so we can have a community hall established in New Zealand. Despite the strong efforts and due to the steep rise in property prices in Auckland, where the majority of the Zarthosti's reside, we have not yet managed to find the right property for us yet. It would be worthwhile spreading the word around our international Zarthosti community to see if there is a philanthropic Zarthosti family who has funds designated for this purpose, so eventually the local Zarthosti community could have our own meeting place.

Our group of motorbike enthusiasts called the "The Bawa Bikers of NZ" continue to go for week end bike rides. Although this year due the prolonged winter this year we hardly had any sunny weekends to get our motorbikes out for the weekend runs.

The ZANZ – local community organisation continues to hold social events once a month for the elderly amongst our community where they arrange for the elders to meet, and spend some fun time playing housie, or cards and them partake in some refreshments for the evening.

The Zarthosti community being a young community in NZ is still striving to establish themselves in our beloved Country, but the next generation of Zoroastrians in New Zealand are starting to make their mark by getting involved in business and some top professions such as Medicine, Law, Engineering, IT and Accountancy.

Their prayer and blessings are not only to survive but thrive in this land of theirs, they call "Aotearoa" - The land of the long white cloud.

## **Fundraising for WZO Projects**

Fund-raising is the life-blood of our organisation in supporting the community's needs. WZO made substantial disbursements towards medical assistance, education, relief of poverty and helping individuals with self-employment. Thanks to the generosity of its members and supporters, all over the world, WZO was able to finance activities that promote its objectives.

### **WZO funds**

A list of the various designated funds held within WZO to support communities worldwide is given below:

**Noshirwan F. Cowasjee Medical Benevolent Fund** supports applications for assistance where family resources cannot meet the escalating costs of medical treatment. WZO requests donors to continue supporting this very worthy and humanitarian cause for the benefit of our community. During 2022, over £16,000 was given by WZO to deserving cases from this fund.

### **Educational loans**

Throughout its existence since 1979, WZO has been working discreetly behind the scenes to reach out to young Zoroastrians, wherever they may be, in furthering their educational achievements. In 2022, over £14,000 was loaned to deserving students pursuing higher education. The loans are given from the following WZO funds

**Aloo Vatcha Education Fund** generously started with the guidance of the Vatcha family continues to grow through donations and our fund-raising activities. Students seeking to achieve their academic ambitions face escalating fees towards higher education. WZO welcomes further support from their well-wishers.

**Ervad Framroze Edulji Gazi and Allan Framroze Gazi Education Fund** was endowed with a donation of £10,000 from Miss Thrity Framroze Gazi in loving memory of her dear departed parents. WZO offers its sincere thanks to Miss Gazi for this generous donation.

**The WZO General Fund** serves a plethora of applications be they administrative or charitable, thus giving it the freedom to apply resources where urgently needed. Support towards the implementation of any of its activities is essential for the effective working of the organisation and WZO would request our donors not to overlook the benefits of supporting the General Fund.

At the time of the heavy floods in Pakistan in 2022, WZO appealed to all its members and patrons to support the affected people. The response was highly positive and the monies received plus an additional amount were sent to five relief organizations in Pakistan.

WZO has continued to donate Zoroastrians in the Kudistan Region of Iraq for their welfare, the maintenance of their administrative offices and for the continuation of their religious activities.

### **WZO's ardent supporters**

WZO extends its sincere appreciation to all their donors, big and small, for their munificent support and co-operation without which very little would be possible. They especially acknowledge, with immense gratitude, the extremely generous support received from:

1. World Zarathushtrian Trust Fund, UK towards general charitable donations and publications.



2. The Dasturji Dr. S. H. Kutar Benevolent Fund for relief of poverty, medical cases and higher education.
3. The Erach and Roshan Sadri Foundation has channelled substantial funds towards Zoroastrian and non-Zoroastrian causes worldwide over the years. WZO offers its sincere thanks to the Trustees of The Erach and Roshan Sadri Foundation for their magnanimous support.
4. The Firuz Madon Foundation. WZO is deeply indebted to FMF for their ongoing commitment towards the furtherance and study of Zoroastrianism through lectures and seminars held worldwide. Have sponsored a number of issues of the Hamazor.
5. Mr Rumi Sethna and his wife, Hilda, for their continued financial support, their precious time and sound advice.
6. Mr Behram Baxter of San Diego, USA and his wife, Rena, for their continued financial support.

### **Individual Donors**

The Committee of WZO wishes to thank all the supporters and donors worldwide who helped them to carry on their charitable activities for the Community.

The Committee also extend its thanks to members of our community who have placed their confidence and trust in WZO and leaving a lasting legacy for future generations by including WZO in their will.