

Irish Yatra Survey Responses Part 1 (29)

1. What do you feel are the Irish yatra's greatest current STRENGTHS?

1. Maturity, openness, enthusiasm and lack of bitterness from the devotees, who can still find energy and enthusiasm to work together on their own volition to improve the current situation despite years of political warfare and complete lack of encouragement or interest from management. If we can all unite and work together the Irish yatra could be an amazing, dynamic and real community.

We are lucky in Ireland to three amazing temples – Govindadwipa, Belfast and Dublin, mainly due to the voluntary hard work of a few devotees.

Two of the Govinda's restaurants are excellent – the one on Aungier street is very popular and the one on Abbey street provides the building for the Dublin temple. However, the third restaurant is just a weight around the neck of the other two, and nobody is really sure why it exists or why it was opened.

Sat, Oct 9, 2010 1:19 AM

2. that there is a somewhat distant yet loving bond between us all. Also the independant initiative, that is taken by some devotees. This should be a group effort however.

Thu, Oct 7, 2010 12:50 PM

3. There are some wonderfully kind people operating on a real humane level in Irish yatra

Thu, Oct 7, 2010 9:25 AM

4. The steady maintenance of the 3 temples in Fermanagh, Belfast and Dublin are great strenghts but an even greater but invisible strength is the large congregation that may not feel so involved at Temple level.

Wed, Oct 6, 2010 9:48 AM

5. That dispite all negativity, disruptions, and interferences that come with being in the material world, devotees have made a lifetime commitment to the philosophy of Krishna Consciousness and chanting the Holy Name.

Tue, Oct 5, 2010 3:25 PM

6. The devotees as they make the irish yatra, then the Temples,& Diety's, There are good devotees out there, that are genuine, not critical, affectionate and main aim is for the Irish Yatra to strive & for devotees to become more friendly and associate more often.

Tue, Oct 5, 2010 1:51 PM

7. Small country, simple devotees, easy for us to take our power back in ONE swoop.

Tue, Oct 5, 2010 1:08 PM

8. The Irish Yatra has the potential to be a wonderful body. Krsna consciousness arrived here many years ago, and I feel that the Irish Yatra's greatest strength comes from the fact that there are many individuals here who have come into contact with the movement over the last 20 – 30 years. For me personally, the most precious aspects of the Irish yatra are the friendships I have formed over many years with certain devotees who are very dear to me. There are also within Ireland many young dynamic individuals who have so much to offer, but currently their contributions are not being encouraged.

Tue, Oct 5, 2010 6:41 AM

9. We have everything we need; intelligent devotees, a good relationship with the general public and a very friendly devotee-centred environment.

Tue, Oct 5, 2010 5:05 AM

10. the devotees are amazing ... After being disappointed by by appalling going ons in the movement (child abuse, fund embezzlement, quarrels and hypocrisy, guru falldowns, murder, poor leadership. still they have some faith in KC

Mon, Oct 4, 2010 10:52 AM

11. The ability to look at itself and analyse. The honesty of devotees and sincerity of their wanting to be Krishna conscious in a congregation that is supportive and encouraging to all who are trying to be part of it

Sun, Oct 3, 2010 1:22 PM

12. Desire to connect with eachother - basically to be friends and help eachother. Think its amazing that devotees organised Dublin and now IR just to do this. and that so many people made the effort to attend

Sat, Oct 2, 2010 1:34 PM

13. Inis Rath Island. Excellent pujaris there. High standard of Deity worship

Sat, Oct 2, 2010 12:16 PM

14. The devotees are of all ages. We have young people with lots of energy and older people with plenty of life,s experience . Together its a great combination. Also there are lots of cells of devotees all over Ireland.

Sat, Oct 2, 2010 12:14 PM

15. The 3 govindas we have in Dublin are great strengths in themselves. 3 fully vegetarian restaurants with nice devotees working there.

Fri, Oct 1, 2010 12:15 PM

16. Nice devotees, beautiful Deities, a country which allows free religious expression, lots of harinamas, book distribution and prasadam distribution over the years to create a preaching field which is now ripe, yearly visits from 3 or 4 senior Iskcon members who are committed to coming yearly and developing relationships with the devotees here, maturity which has developed over the years, long standing friendships, a lot of capable and intelligent and dedicated Vaisnavas, recent improvements in community dealings and mood.

Fri, Oct 1, 2010 7:14 AM

17. First for me would genuanly be the love of the diety's. I think Insh Rath eing a beautiful place, also the restraunt and Temple in Dublin, And of course the beautiful historic Temple & gardens of Belfast. I dont no what to say!! Prasadam Kirtan.

Thu, Sep 30, 2010 3:38 PM

18. I think there is a lot of people who care about the Irish yatra which is a strength in itself. at last months istagoshti i felt an openness from the devotees to hear everyone's opinion. Of course having temples is also a strength and the center in Dublin is great as it is in the capital where we didn't have a temple for so long. having restaurants is also a good thing

Wed, Sep 29, 2010 11:27 PM

19. Friendly and close-knit.
Wed, Sep 29, 2010 6:42 AM

20. The quality of the devotees
Wed, Sep 29, 2010 4:24 AM

21. 1.Many very beautiful swanlike devotees, all at different levels of the yoga ladder.
2.Deep friendships and mutual appreciation between devotees who strictly follow all the rules and regulations and those who don't (I PERSONALLY FEEL THAT THIS IS THE BEST THING ABOUT THE IRISH YATRA) which cannot be said of many other yatra's.
3.A genuine family mood between the devotees (this is just my own personal experience) I know others may not agree 100%.
4. Govindas restaurants.....you really have to go out on book distribution in Dublin to fully appreciate the positive effect that the restaurants are having on people. (I will also include Govindas in the list of weaknesses simply due to the recession.....hopefully we will pull through.....of course we all know that if the 3rd restaurant had not been opened then we would be in a much better position, but that is a whole other subject)
5. devotee surveys
Wed, Sep 29, 2010 2:53 AM

22. Open-mindedness
Tue, Sep 28, 2010 6:01 PM

23. the strength of the Irish yatra is undoubtedly the wonderful devotees... Despite experiencing so many set backs and horrific goings on in our hare krsna movement. Still so many devotees still care... they are extraordinary human beings.
Tue, Sep 28, 2010 2:30 PM

24. our temples and friendly devotees
Tue, Sep 28, 2010 1:48 PM

25. The sweet devotees
Tue, Sep 28, 2010 8:10 AM

26. - Three fantastic temples in excellent locations
- A lot of people involved in the yatra (at one time or another) with a lot of different skills and talents in all sorts of areas
- A lot of children and young people who are interested in knowing more about the philosophy
- Three great vegetarian restaurants open to the public
- A couple of Krsna conscious bands in the making
- Sincere individuals who really care about the growth and development of the Irish Yatra and who have all the necessary skills to manage and run the temples if they were given the chance.
- A desire within most of the congregation to make changes in order to improve the current situation and resolve any issues.
- A desire within the congregation to get together and support one another more and to be open and honest amongst each other about where we are in our spirituality.
Received anonymously offline on Thursday 7th October 2010

27. 1) Presenting Krishna to the public 2) Bringing the devotees together for a day 3) Involving devotees in the participation of devotion to Krishna

Received anonymously offline on Friday 8th October 2010

28) Wonderful honest and maturing devotees,the congregation.

Saturday, October 9, 2010 6:05:11

2. What do you feel are the Irish yatra's greatest current WEAKNESSES?

1. The main weakness in the yatra is in the way things are being run by the supposed leaders and management, who are failing to bring the devotees together. There is a lack of unity between the devotees. There are many devotees who do not feel welcome in the temples due to personal differences and objections to the current managers.

Far from encouraging unity, enthusiasm, and discourse, the current manager/GBC has encouraged/caused divisiveness in our community, as there are many, many devotees on the sidelines who never come to temples because they have such a problem with the ways things are being run, but are unable to speak out. This is another huge weakness with the ways things are being run – not only is there no forum for feedback on the running of our community and our temples, but it is actively discouraged and greeted with aggression, threats and even blackmail. The current mood is to toe the line and not mess with the status quo, for fear of retribution or that “the plug will be pulled” by the man who has control of all the reins, finances and assets.

This is yet another very serious weakness with the ways things are being run – There appears to be one man – the GBC, Pragosa – who has complete autocratic control over the finances and assets of ISKCON yet he does not and will not disclose any of the financial accounts or decision-making. Not only is this blatantly illegal, as ISKCON is a registered charity, and therefore a threat to the continued existence of ISKCON (all it takes is one disillusioned individual to invite a government audit to have the whole thing shut down) but it greatly damages the morale of workers, managers and devotees who visit the temple. There are so many devotees who have worked and are working so hard to provide the current temple and restaurants in Dublin, but there is a sense that everything could just disappear overnight – no one has a clue of the current financial situation, even though they want to help and do something about it.

The fact is that the current GBC Pragosa has absolutely no personal relationship with any of the current devotees or congregation, he never attends any programs or gatherings unless to give class or show a Swami around and take credit for everything. Pragosa in fact had nothing to do with the development of the temple – which is why other devotees on their own volition, got together, fundraised, and physically put it together. However as soon as anyone oversteps the line and dares to criticise Pragosa, they're demonised and ejected.

Pragosa as the figurative GBC head of ISKCON Ireland is in itself actually causing huge divisiveness in our community. This does not mean he cannot be a good manager or a good leader – however to be those things he has to develop a relationship with the people he's meant to be leading and managing, and actively take an interest in improving things for the devotees. Perhaps he should not be GBC for so many countries and become more in touch with the devotees he's meant to be representing.

No-one in Ireland knows the purpose of the GBC or what his role is meant to be. No-one feels represented by the current system of management. At the moment we seem to have neither autocratic rule from a centralised GBC (as the GBC were rightly hesitant to get involved in local matters) OR an elective representative system, but an autocratic middle management with no accountability to either the GBC or the devotees. Disillusionment with this dysfunctional lack of transparency also puts many devotees, old and new, off involvement with the structural and political side of ISKCON, and unfortunately this can also include the temples.

Due to all of the above we are not making full use of the amazing assets we have, namely the

temples and all the devotees. There is also a lack on integration between the temples and the restaurants. It is as if they are being run in competition with each other.

Despite all I've said above, I am also aware that it is easy to demonise one person and pin the blame elsewhere. I feel a very large weakness in the Irish yatra is the lack of responsibility we take for it as individuals. If we were able to stand up for what we believe and be intolerant of injustice, many of the failings I have described above would never have happened. There is a mood in the yatra of sitting back and complaining when someone does something we don't like. While ultimately the responsibility does lie with leaders and managers to facilitate and create a nice mood in the yatra, I feel it is also up to those-in-the-know to take action when they see wrong. In part this is due to a feeling that it's impossible to bring about change – but I am heartened to see so many devotees getting involved in the recent istagosthi and taking an interest in the health of our community and the devotees.

Sat, Oct 9, 2010 1:19 AM

2. A lack of organisation and communication.

Thu, Oct 7, 2010 12:50 PM

3. my experience is limited to one area - inability of the core congregation to engage in some practical service now and then to support the temple devs

Thu, Oct 7, 2010 9:25 AM

4. A serious lack of communication with congregational members and no way to access and discuss what people feel is needed.

A lack of a 'community spirit' and a perceived sense of separation between managers/temple devotees and those outside the temples with not much opportunity, apart from at annual festivals, for any coming together and no forum for open discussion.

Also a perceived intolerance towards anyone struggling with spiritual life, even though that very struggle is often what spiritual life is all about.

A fear of showing our human failings with a resulting lack of intimacy or real relationship in many cases.

Wed, Oct 6, 2010 9:48 AM

5. Severe lack of trust and a feeling of alienation from the sense of community that only strong vaishnava sanga, good leadership, and rekindled enthusiasm can cure - of course by going back to basics, what attracted us initially and the Holy Name.

Tue, Oct 5, 2010 3:25 PM

6. lack of enthusiasm, & effection, need to pull more together as a team, work together as friends, become less judgemental

Tue, Oct 5, 2010 1:51 PM

7. No communication with leadership in Ireland at all, need a real servant with heart.

Tue, Oct 5, 2010 1:08 PM

8. ISKCON today is a hierarchical, non-democratic institution, and the Irish Yatra, as part of this institution, reflects this situation. As the current system dictates that all geographical areas should be overseen by a GBC member, it would seem logical that this position should be occupied by someone of unquestionable motivation; someone capable of bringing together those interested in, and trying to practise spiritual life; someone whose motivation and enthusiasm stems from a

profound desire to serve Krsna and to encourage others, from whatever background, to join in doing the same, to develop warm friendships and to get involved in spiritual life, to whatever degree and level of commitment they feel they wish.

However I feel there are currently problems in several areas, and I will mention for example two categories where there is a definite need for immediate change:

Exclusions and divisiveness:

The Irish Yatra has a long and unfortunate history of division among the congregation, arising from one person's desire for power and control. This was fostered for many years under the leadership of Prthu, where individuals who found themselves in favour (for supporting Prthu and his plans), were welcome to take part in the Irish Yatra's activities. However those who were out of favour, due to what Prthu saw as questionable loyalty to him personally, were unwelcome in the temples and at festivals. This brought about great heartache among the congregation, as individuals had to weigh up their loyalty to Prthu (and thus their permission to participate in the Irish Yatra), against personal relationships.

It was to be hoped that after many years of this situation, we might have the good fortune to have someone who would bring people together, with an emphasis on repairing relationships which had been damaged under Prthu's leadership. What we do not need is a further expression of control or power being in the hands of one individual. What we do desperately need in Ireland is a mood of open friendship where the congregation can be mutually supportive and welcoming.

However, what we have instead is another era of divisiveness. Some of those who feel they have control of certain buildings or festivals, have again been welcoming and excluding individuals, making such decisions on the basis of perceived loyalty to the current hierarchy, headed by the GBC for Ireland. This is an incredibly unspiritual atmosphere to cultivate, more akin to medieval feudalism, than to what is desirable in a place or circumstance for worshipping Krsna.

The temple is surely a "church", open to anyone to enter and take part in, or listen to, programmes, festivals, acts of worship, and a place to develop meaningful friendships etc. It is surely a location for the bringing together of disparate souls. However more and more I am hearing of individuals being asked to leave temple premises, and even a public street festival, not because they are acting offensively/ violently/ antagonistically; but simply because they practise a different flavour (therefore seen as the wrong flavour) of Krsna consciousness, or are not perceived to be sufficiently loyal to the current hierarchy.

Financial arrangements and accountability:

The present modus operandi for a GBC does not seem to require openness of accountability to the ISKCON congregation of his area. As far as I am aware, the present GBC for Ireland has no requirement to reveal his, or his family's income from ISKCON, ISKCON projects or the Irish Yatra, through salary, expenses, perks of office or other financial benefits. Under the current situation the GBC appears to have total access to all ISKCON finances, accounting and financial decision-making in his area, and has authority to make financial decisions privately, on ISKCON's behalf, regarding his own and his family's income from ISKCON and ISKCON projects in his area. Surely this is a very dubious situation, open to exploitation. As ISKCON is both a religious institution and a registered charity, I find this surprising and thoroughly unhealthy.

I moved into an ISKCON temple in Ireland in 1984, and have consequently known Pragosa, the current GBC for Ireland, for a long time. I have been resident in temples where he was Temple

President and lived for many years in a rural community of five families, including his and my own.

Pragosa is obviously an intelligent and articulate person, and also obviously I am not questioning his personal devotion to Krsna or Prabhupada; however I feel that he is not the right person for the role of GBC for Ireland.

This is because I regard him as not only an intelligent and articulate person, but also a skilled and artful politician; successful in influencing people and situations to his own advantage. Pragosa's wife told me many years ago that he was keeping records on file about others, including friends, with a view to being able to use the information in the future. However he was generally secretive and obfuscating regarding his own affairs, and encouraged his family to behave in a similar manner. It was clear to me that he liked and aimed to be in charge, and knew how to keep his position by encouraging (and sometimes causing) divisiveness among those he sought to control. This is how I experienced him operating over many years, and I am not convinced that there has been any change in his motivation since his appointment as a GBC member.

I therefore found it surprising, and disappointing, that those who had the power to choose who should be GBC for Ireland, decided that Pragosa would be the best candidate for this position of spiritual authority, care of the congregation and overseeing of the Irish Yatra.

Tue, Oct 5, 2010 6:41 AM

9. No financial transparency, the reckless betting of the island temple on an unnecessary business venture, poor management of the restaurants which are often dirty, no leadership (before this survey I have never once been asked about the direction of the yatra), a complete disinterest in the devotees by the GBC.

Tue, Oct 5, 2010 5:05 AM

10. The leadership is non representative of the ordinary devotees. It is an imposition .. It was done without any consultation and only has an effect of fragmenting and dividing the society. The leadership is TOTALLY unaccountable to the devotees, and the community are censored with the mechanism of fear of committing offenses when raising concerns.. this makes for a very stunted and frustrated yatra holding up its progress.

Mon, Oct 4, 2010 10:52 AM

11. Sometimes people hold on to 'old' pain of negative experiences in the movement. This could stand in the way of progress and growth

Sun, Oct 3, 2010 1:22 PM

12. Not letting go of past issues - past is past

Sat, Oct 2, 2010 1:34 PM

13. Complete lack of interest from our G.B.C representative. No temple president on Inis Rath. No vice temple president on Inis Rath. No secretary ,on Inis Rath. A climate of secrecy at top level. No care for devotees. No guidance. A community without a head.

Sat, Oct 2, 2010 12:16 PM

14. The way things are done by one person acting alone making decisions that devotees know nothing about. Also there is a lot of fear and mistrust among devotees.

Sat, Oct 2, 2010 12:14 PM

15. A lack of communication and understanding

Fri, Oct 1, 2010 12:15 PM

16. the ability to make people feel welcome

Fri, Oct 1, 2010 10:23 AM

17. Lack of communication, direction, and leadership to pull devotees together and inspire preaching and projects. That about sums it up for me. (Plus the situation in Belfast).

Fri, Oct 1, 2010 7:14 AM

18. I dont want to come accross cinical, ut I feel the biggest weakness is the lack of associating, Devotees are not always honest amongst each other!!! somtimes critical, I feel some are on trips thinking there better. no enthusiasm amongst each other, supperficial. lack of genuine honest authourity for devotees to look up to?

Thu, Sep 30, 2010 3:38 PM

19. current weaknesses would be that even though i felt an openness from devotees at the istagoshti this was created by the devotees themselves as there doesn't seem to be any attempt by leadership to hear our views or find out what we think about anything. also we don't have a very transparent system. this means any query someone may have can be wrongly attributed to mistrust of other devotees. if there is a transparent system then nobdy will become personally offended

Wed, Sep 29, 2010 11:27 PM

20. Our kirtans. And Inis Rath and Dublin are very much linked but Belfast is a bit out there on its own.

Wed, Sep 29, 2010 6:42 AM

21. Lack of appreciation for the quality of devotees and lack of congregational chanting

Wed, Sep 29, 2010 4:24 AM

22. 1. Govindas restaurants (see strengths for details) 2. Over emphasis on diety worship (which is not the yuga dharma) creating a neglect or practical abandonment of harinama sankirtana (which is the yuga dharma)

Wed, Sep 29, 2010 2:53 AM

23. Compaicency

Tue, Sep 28, 2010 6:01 PM

24. The current weaknesses of the Irish yatra is the "leadership" there is practically no communication with the GBC and the congregation... There is a frightening tolerance of arrogance, unaccountability and unilateral decision making. Probably worst of all devotees are treated very cruelly by especially pragosh prabhu. He thinks nothing of ostracizing a prabhu if he deems them to dare criticize him. This kind of underdeveloped behaviour is holding up the progress of the Irish yatra very detrimentally.

Tue, Sep 28, 2010 2:30 PM

25. selfish leadership and diversity

Tue, Sep 28, 2010 1:48 PM

26. There is little or no representation of the general devotee. The mood is one of autocracy and the creative propensivity of devotees is not at all utilised.

Tue, Sep 28, 2010 8:10 AM

27. 1. Temples/restaurants being run by power driven individuals which results in the mistreatment of others and bad relationships within the movement.

2. An overall feeling of disgust by the majority of the congregation due to the bad managing of the temples and bad treatment of devotees. The majority of devotees who have ceased coming to the temple have given up coming due to the constant fight for power and control amongst the recent leaders, which has led to terrible disrespect and mistreatment of sincere devotees who really care for the growth and development of the Irish yatra. Janmastami Dasa (a youth in the yatra) took on the project of building the Dublin temple and spent every minute he wasn't in work slaving over every detail of the temple to ensure it was completed to perfection. Despite being extremely busy with his home/work life, he made sure that all the temple programs were organised and run smoothly and that people were aware of the temple. It was also Janmastami who brought the return of the Rathayatras in Dublin, which is a highlight in the year. Thanks to his determination and sincere interest in the temples growth and his inclusive mood, Dublin now has a beautifully constructed temple and annual Rathayatras. However, he was recently asked to step down from his managerial, organisational and all other duties with the temple due to a power driven command by a "high up" individual which was immediately accepted and not questioned by any other senior devotee despite the majority feeling that injustice was taking place. What happened to being humbler than the blade of grass on the street?

3. There is currently little/ no interest in encouraging the youth to attend the temple more often. So much of the philosophy is very interesting but it can be discussed in a fairly dull way in classes.

4. The supportive community aspect of the Irish yatra seems to be almost completely non-existent. Families and individuals are tending to move away from the temples and practice their own worship in the home. This is the case for me and I prefer it this way at the moment because I know I can really focus on the lovely parts of Krsna consciousness and forget about all the politics, misinterpretations and expectations that I feel are inflicted on me when attend the temple. I know this is how most people feel who currently don't attend the temple.

5. Children do not have a place at all in the Dublin or Belfast temple at the moment. I think some of the parents have created a Sunday school on Inis Rath; however, this is not the case in any of the other temples.

6. I think there is a need for more fun and interest to be added to going to the temple. People have given up coming to the temple for various reasons and it seems to me that we need to add more features to the temple to appeal to everyone and make the temple a really enjoyable place to be.
Received anonymously offline on Thursday 7th October 2010

28. 1) Not enough contact/participation of the larger body of devotees 2) Communication problems
Received anonymously offline on Friday 8th October 2010

29) Lack of cohesion, slightly scattered. Lack of communication.
Saturday, October 9, 2010 6:05:11

3. What practical improvements would you most like to see made in the Irish yatra?

1. I would like, and I believe it is fundamental and necessary for the future of ISKCON, to be able to see full financial and managerial transparency, and a relationship between the community and the management.

There should be a statement on the role of the GBC in this country, as it very unclear. GBC/managers should connect with the community, hold regular istagosthis and invite feedback and involvement from ALL the devotees where they can speak openly and honestly without fear of retribution. The recent istagosthi, which was very positive and inspiring, was in fact held DESPITE the GBC, as Pragosa attempted to stop it from happening and made sure he was “unable” to attend. If he wishes to be a manager and a leader he needs to get over his mistrust of people and actually connect with them, if not we need a new representative who engages with all the community, not just the core subordinates.

All devotees should feel equally welcome in the temple, and that they have equal status as contributing members of the congregation. At the moment it feels like “you’re in you’re out”. I would like to see all visitors to temple, of any age, gender, race, ISKCON seniority or regularity of attendance be equally valued by the community and management and be invited to honestly contribute our thoughts feelings and actions towards developing the community in Krishna Consciousness in whatever way we are individually inclined or capable. If we are able to be honest with each other we will be able to form real friendships and be able to connect with each other in a meaningful way to create a strong and real sense of inclusiveness, warmth and community.

On a practical level, the publishing of weekly/monthly email newsletters, or even a proper website, to let everyone know about upcoming events, istagosthis or festivals would help everyone stay connected as not everyone is able to attend the temple regularly due to distance or commitments. Surveys like this one are an excellent idea, and they should be ongoing.

Home programs should also be encouraged – however not as an alternative to the temple because the devotees do not feel welcome. We should be making full use of the amazing temples that we have, which have been created and maintained by devotees for so long. We should see the temples as belonging to Krishna and all the devotees who want to get to know Krishna, rather than belonging to a manager or temple president.

We must take steps to unite all of the amazing devotees we have rather than neglect them to focus on making “new” devotees – as if we have inherent problems in our structure and community it will be only a matter of time until these “new” devotees will understand the situation and become disillusioned.

Sat, Oct 9, 2010 1:19 AM

2. Regular meetings and and more constructive, inclusive activities.

Thu, Oct 7, 2010 12:50 PM

3. when hardworking temple devotees are working twelve hour days, with no days off year after year, and no allowance, it is infringement of human rights and is abusive. This practise must be outlawed in ISKCON and should be opened up and discussed before the tabloids get it

Thu, Oct 7, 2010 9:25 AM

4. I would like to see a forum for open discussion made available on a regular basis, which I hope this Isthia Ghosti will provide. Through open, honest communication with no judgemental attitudes and a sense of inclusiveness rather than exclusiveness, I hope we can share our experiences on this spiritual journey and support each other along the way. I would like to see the walls of separation between different 'layers' of devotees melt down and disappear and a new ethos of openness, trust and transparency in every aspect attained. I would love if we could pool all our talents and make them available to each other and to our children. I would love to see the Dublin community flock to the beautiful new centre and be welcomed there. I would love to see more drama, dance, art etc. I would love to see home programs beginning again.

Wed, Oct 6, 2010 9:48 AM

5. I realise that there is a deficit in the caring for devotees, but there is also a lack of inspiring leadership preparing our next wave of ISKCON preachers which is vital. There is a need for clarity on the essence of Srila Prabhupada's teachings and a real understanding of what we are all doing here. It's not ISKCON or Krsna Consciousness by default it must be conscious everyday, so lots of KC based sanga, preaching and a shared responsibility to fulfil the sankirtana mission (to ourselves and to others)

Tue, Oct 5, 2010 3:25 PM

6. for devotees to start to be honest !!! HONESTY

Tue, Oct 5, 2010 1:51 PM

7. To abolish ALL disempowering sectarian concepts and beliefs.

Tue, Oct 5, 2010 1:08 PM

8. Rather than continually emphasising that we are a preaching movement, I would place a higher importance on the developing of a loving community of those already interested in and involved with Krsna consciousness. What is the point of introducing Krsna consciousness to 'new' people, then bringing them into such a highly politicised (and un-spiritual) environment?

In a mood of enhancing trust between each other, I think that a very important and highly desirable change would be absolute transparency of all the GBC's financial matters related to the Irish Yatra.

The Irish and UK political scenes have been rocked, in recent years, by revelations of financial scandals and outrageous financial arrangements. There is huge outrage among the general population that public representatives are able to decide their own inflated salaries (which come from public funds), and that there has been enormous exploitation of expenses claims, and employment of relatives, also paid from public funds. I am sorry to say that I see a potential parallel with ISKCON GBC financial arrangements, a perception which cannot at present be dispelled, due to the level of secrecy surrounding the subject.

Furthermore, I think there should be a requirement for ALL ISKCON personnel who receive money from ISKCON or Irish Yatra funds, or who receive money from ISKCON projects, to have their income details made available to the body of devotees.

If everything is fair and just, then there can be no problem with this information being made public. However until this is done, I, for one, remain deeply suspicious that this situation is being exploited for financial gain.

Tue, Oct 5, 2010 6:41 AM

9. It saddens me to say that the role of the GBC in this country actually stunts the growth of Krsna Consciousness so I would like to see either someone take on the role of GBC that is actually interested in having a relationship with the devotees, hosting gatherings and expressing an interest in the yatra or else that we simply self-manage ourselves through committee.

Tue, Oct 5, 2010 5:05 AM

10. To see the devotees take care of there own future by electing their own body with full transparency so that confidence and trust can flourish... We need advanced sadhakas like Mayaesvara and premarnava prabhus to foster a KC sharing loving culture...

Mon, Oct 4, 2010 10:52 AM

11. A congregation were people can be honest about where they are at and not feel judged. If these meetings provide a place where there is that, than they should continue on a regular basis. These kind of meetings can also be held on a smaller scale where people live close together.

Sun, Oct 3, 2010 1:22 PM

12. umm no big ideas -individually if everyone acts with sensitivity and honesty then the whole will improve

Sat, Oct 2, 2010 1:34 PM

13. A temple president on Inis Rath. A G.B.C representative who cares for us. The return of Uddhava prabhu.

Sat, Oct 2, 2010 12:16 PM

14. Less of a gap between positions of leadership and the ordinary devotee we are all servants just doing different services. More study and open discussions on the scriptures.

Sat, Oct 2, 2010 12:14 PM

15. A lot less politics involved. Discussions to try and solve issues with ALL the devotees

Fri, Oct 1, 2010 12:15 PM

16. Formation of a National council, coming together of devotees in an inclusive mood to associate together and plan preaching and other projects. A chance to help devotees to engage their natures and strengths in KC, and to encourage everyones contribution. Brain storming for ideas and then working together to implement them.

Fri, Oct 1, 2010 7:14 AM

17. For myself, I belive devotees should spend more time to gether on a hole, to get to no one another, in a more genuine and caring way, so we become less judge mental of each other, and out to support each other, not only in KC but as friends, and to show our offsprings there is genuine friendship's I feel devotee's should organize coach trips, football match, paintballing,do more to get to no each other, that way, we become more in tune with our fellow godbrother's & Sisters, so for the future we will show more of a caring attitude and support one another, and less critical of the superficail things, which in the long run will help us become more KC.

Thu, Sep 30, 2010 3:38 PM

18. id like to see a willingness from the leadership to listen. accounts from temples and restaurants should be available.there is some things which choke openness such as "committing offenses" against devotees this attitude should change i think

Wed, Sep 29, 2010 11:27 PM

19. More people visiting Belfast! We need more life in the place.

Wed, Sep 29, 2010 6:42 AM

20. we become like the bees and look for the good in anyone who chants Hare Krishna

Wed, Sep 29, 2010 4:24 AM

21. there is one simple ecstatic program which we have neglected for too long..... small festivals and public programs.....it will bring new devotees to the yatra as well as inspiring those already practicing. Small towns are the easiest to advertise.....Athlone.....Dundalk.....Waterford, Wexford..... Wicklow town or Arklow. Keep it simple.....book a small room in a hotel or somewhere.....put up posters in the shops.....maybe a harinama.....program : kirtana, philosophy from Gita, prasadam snack. Start small and try to build it up. If anyone is interested please contact me and we will do something...

Wed, Sep 29, 2010 2:53 AM

22. Executive Regional Council in place of current single head authority, strong involvement of the congregation in day to day and strategic decision making.

Tue, Sep 28, 2010 6:01 PM

23. 1. Empower the devotees! 2. let them find their voice. 3. let them deepen their friendships in a meaningful KC manner... 4. Encourage the devotees to depend on krsna to guide them. 5. let their be openness, transparency and love amongst the devotees. 6. Let the genuine sahakas for example like premarnava and mayesvara prabhuh flourish and play a more prominent role in KC guidance and teaching in Ireland. 7. Let the devotees be truly represented.

Tue, Sep 28, 2010 2:30 PM

24. proper leadership and cooperation together

Tue, Sep 28, 2010 1:48 PM

25. Firstly, I think that it is of the utmost importance that devotees are encourage to associate in an non judgemental, supportive, honest and progressive environment. The recently started National Isthagoshti has already shown great promise in providing this, Secondly, A body of devotees should be elected by all interested sections right across the devotee community. Inside and outside the temple confines. This body of devotees will have the responsibility of insuring standards and accountability among the managers and leaders are maintained and their collective descision will be abiding.

Tue, Sep 28, 2010 8:10 AM

26. 1.The restaurants, but particularly the temples, should be run by either one or more people who are open minded and willing to listen to the needs of the congregation and who are not power driven but driven by a sincere desire to improve the temple. Those in charge of making decisions should only act after consulting with the congregation and taking their needs + overall opinion into account.

2.I personally don't want to be involved with a Krsna consciousness community that is happy to allow sincere and dedicated individuals to put in so much work and austerity and then just push them away so easily. There needs to be a change in management and a lot more respect shown to all devotees. As I said in point 1, ideally temples should be run by more than one person and the congregation as a whole should be consulted more often when making decisions that will effect the temple.

3. Provide more youth friendly classes, which really explain the philosophy in a clear, easy to understand and interesting way. The use of storytelling, anecdotes and examples to explain a point.

4. The Istagoshtis are definitely a positive step towards solving this problem. And unsurprisingly, they were recently set up by sincere individuals (rather than those in power/ "high up") who actually care about the growth of our yatra. What is needed is a chance for all devotees (who attend and don't attend the temple) to be able to have their say in an open, caring and non-judgemental environment. In the regular temple atmosphere, this opportunity is not possible but through the Istagoshtis, hopefully people will feel comfortable to share their thoughts. The next step is for those who are in charge of the management/running of the temples to really listen and take on board what the devotees are saying and to take positive steps to ensuring a more inclusive temple environment, which focuses on the essence of Krsna consciousness and avoids all the politics.

5. It would be great, if there was enough parents/children interested, to have a set Sunday school for children which could include stories of Krsna as well as other arts and crafts to make the children feel that they have a place in the temple and something to look forward to. If space was available and enough children interested, I could teach dance and even drama to the children, which could then be performed for the devotees. Right now, I don't feel inclined to volunteer this due to my experience of how people are being treated in the temple. However, if this was to be resolved/improved I would definitely consider offering to take this on.

6. Some options to add more interest could include: dance/drama performances, Krsna conscious bands playing in the temple, Krsna conscious movies being shown in the temple, working on projects in groups, day trips out to natural settings (e.g. mountain trips, hikes, bonfires with storytelling, bhajans, kirtans, etc.)...

Received anonymously offline on Thursday 7th October 2010

27. More organisation, more communication, more engagement and involvement of young people (devotees)

Received anonymously offline on Friday 8th October 2010

28) Anyone in positions of authority, in charge of money, how its spent, should be accountable and accessible. No covert operations. There must be communication. If people are not happy with authority, etc, without going overboard, then there should be a democratic, realistic way of changing this. In other words the congregation, the collective devotees have the right to be represented by people they can trust and have faith that their best interests, and the interests of the movement are being cared for.

Saturday, October 9, 2010 6:05:11

4. If you have any other comments please feel free to leave them here

1. I feel very positively about the strength and future of the Irish yatra – if we all pull together, take responsibility for our community, and feel free to contribute honestly and sincerely we will have an amazingly strong, attractive, inclusive and supportive network. We have all the raw ingredients we need, it's just about bringing them together.

Sat, Oct 9, 2010 1:19 AM

2. Isthagostis are a great start!

Thu, Oct 7, 2010 12:50 PM

3. we could take a leaf out of the Christians' book (a 2,000year old society!) and practise being a caring society. Even tho ` we're not this body` we can get distressed in it and be in need of sympathy and help

Thu, Oct 7, 2010 9:25 AM

4. I feel the experiential aspects of spiritual life are often ignored compared to book knowledge. I would like more sharing and discussion at this level regarding the effect of the practices in cleaning our hearts. We need support for the very real pain that can arise as we face the deeper aspects of ourselves. Devotees tend to cover this up and isolate themselves when we need each other the most. We need to care for each other in difficult times if we are to make the spiritual breakthroughs we hope to make.

Wed, Oct 6, 2010 9:48 AM

5. I feel that the country has isolated itself and become entrenched in historic politics that has left a semblance of any other community group, everyone have an opinion on those they become disrespectfully over familiar with and those that feel that the laurels freely available are purely for sitting on. I do believe however that ISKCON has a distinct purpose and identity as set out by Srila Prabhupada. I don't believe that we have to be sectarian, but do believe that we are one path, a very distinct one, to developing bhakti. So we can have associates etc from where ever, and friends but we must maintain a strong as an identifiable ISKCON but must be in the mood of Lord Caitanya - everyone should be included in the harinama sankirtana movement

Tue, Oct 5, 2010 3:25 PM

6. Present leader has a typical Duryodana mentality and its so clear for everyone. REMOVE HIM NOW!!!!

Tue, Oct 5, 2010 1:08 PM

7. As one small fallible individual, it is a struggle to maintain ones faith in the hectic and sometimes bewildering 21st century.

The first stabilising factor should be the religious institution itself, represented by the area GBC, working for and with the community to help and inspire people in their enquiry into and practise of spiritual belief.

What is needed in the Irish Yatra is a bringing together of the congregation, and an openness within the hierarchy to embrace the many disparate individuals who have come into contact with Krsna consciousness over the years. Unfortunately, not only is there still a desire to control people and property, fostering a mood of divisiveness; there is also an unpleasant cloud of suspicion at present in the Irish Yatra over the GBC's financial situation, and these are issues which need to be urgently

and emphatically changed
Tue, Oct 5, 2010 6:41 AM

8. Krsna Consciousness is all about humility and good relationships and it is entirely inappropriate for one person to try to dictate to a whole group of people without the vaguest interest in them or any communication with them. It would be nice to see this happen but if it doesn't then the Irish yatra will split in two and you can be sure that the part without the GBC will be the more substantial of the two parts (unless a new GBC who is focused on the devotees comes along).
Tue, Oct 5, 2010 5:05 AM

9. our present culture is not great... it is a self serving one instead of a krsna serving culture... it needs to be worked on and the devotees input is essential for this to succeed
Mon, Oct 4, 2010 10:52 AM

10. whilst lots of changes are necessary on a management level I feel its not the only thing that needs worked on . Devotee relationships have long been neglected and it would be great to be unified in working on this .
Sat, Oct 2, 2010 12:14 PM

11. I dont think just talking will help us get anywhere. I know its a start but you can also talk all day without resolving a lot.
Fri, Oct 1, 2010 12:15 PM

12. I am so pleased and enthused, from the last meeting, that devotees are trying to build a bond with one another, as I felt I had better friends on the out side of KC which I am sad to say and known them fare lesser time.
For me I dont care what camp you are from, what amount of rounds you chant , we are sailing in the same boat, I just want a true realtionship that I can be enthused to call my fellow devotees, true friends.
Thu, Sep 30, 2010 3:38 PM

13. I'm aware that I can only talk about my own experiences of growing up in the movement and attitudes have changed dramatically over the years but I think its of the upmost importance that children in ISKCON are equiped to deal with the world outside of ISKCON. We have to avoid an attitude of "them and us" and avoid using negative terminology like "karmis". I would also discourage people from home schooling their children or from sending them to gurukulas abroad as they will have to join the rest of the world at some point or another. Making the transition to and integrating into mainstream society is more difficult the later you do it. As a result, don't be surprised if your children seem to opt for "maya" over Krsna conscious activities as ISKCON Ireland is a small yatra which lacks the resources present in London or Alachua and therefore has significantly less to offer the youth in terms of KC. Having said this, please remember that your children are individuals in their own right and may not choose the lifestyle and beliefs that you chose. In addition to this, we should not use our children as preaching vehicles as it may create resentment towards Krsna Consciousness.
Wed, Sep 29, 2010 6:42 AM

14. My point is a simple one, at present, devotees are dictated to and are constantly having issues imposed upon them ... this in my opinion is counter productive to the yatras health. It is not a progressive society but rather an infantile and underdeveloped society. how many other devotees have to become casualties and eventually leave because of of widening gap of credibility of their

sensibilities and narrow minded intolerance and exclusivity?

Tue, Sep 28, 2010 2:30 PM

15. I have one personal comment. I joined the Hare Krishna movement 30 years ago. In my experience everything was very straight forward in the beginning - that is until I started to question management and spiritual direction etc. Since then I have been very disappointed with the lack of empathy and understanding shown by leadership towards anyone not prepared to endorse them. Ever since I joined this movement I have had to accept a - take it or leave it - policy regarding who's leadership I should follow. The present 'leader' used to be a good friend of mine. I just think that is unreasonable in the extreme to expect anyone to switch from being a friend to becoming a devoted follower. Make no mistake that's the choice devotees are presented with by the absolute dictates employed by the ISKCON hierarchy

Tue, Sep 28, 2010 8:10 AM

16. As discussed at first istaghashti, more involvement of the young, more attractions, more personal contact by the seniors devotees to new and less outgoing members. In other words make them wanted (feel at home). Encourage and give them some of your time.

Received anonymously offline on Friday 8th October 2010

17. I don't know the full story of G3 but from what I know it is a prime example of devotees, with access to finances, making a rash decision without due process which has had a knock on effect on the community and its property. Any monkey knew that G3 was a disastrous idea and yet, as far as I know a small number of people just went ahead and did it anyway. As I said, I don't know the full story but these things should not happen in this day and age, they should not be allowed to happen, Accountability!

Saturday, October 9, 2010 6:05:11

End
