

Waheguru Ji Ka Khalsa, Waheguru Ji Ki Fateh

Development of the political influence and the Sikh vote:

The Council is developing a strategy and programme of activities to increase the engagement of the Sikh community in the political and civic life of Britain. Planned activities include events with major political parties and student bodies. The first event will be hosted by the Conservative Party (June 6th 2013), with subsequent events planned with Labour (Summer 2013) and the Liberal Democrats (TBC)

Events:

23rd April 2013 a member of the Executive Committee attended a Faith and Policing Conference, Organised by Faith Forum for London and Metropolitan Police. There were approx 100 multi-faith attendees, Met police reps and third parties. The following areas were covered:

- Q&A with Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe Commissioner Metropolitan Police. Main issues raised around challenges of policing in London and the part faith groups can play. More focus on strategic partnerships with faith groups with focus on reducing youth crime, rehabilitation, cost reduction and BME recruitment.
- Workshop "Preparing for the worst - Major incidents". Discussion around identifying ways in which the faith sector, London Resilience, MPS and partners can work together most effectively to detect, prevent and if necessary withstand, handle and recover from disruptive challenges to London. Main focus was on strategic partnerships, training for faith groups and MPS, communication. How can faith groups provide support through resource, space and counselling. Other Workshops included 1) Gangs, 2) Hate Crimes, 3) Protests and 4) Developing relationships. There was a Sikh rep in each workshop
- Recruitment. Aim was to identify options to increase applications to Met amongst all faith communities. Discussion around what Met can do to attract applications, what communities could do, selection process.

Professor Bhullar -Death Penalty Campaign:

Contact was made by Sikhs in Austria for assistance with preparing a Memorandum against the death penalty to be presented to the German Ambassador in Austria and also to the United Nations Office Austria

Sikh Council has been in liaison with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office India Desk by letter and via telephone to urge their intervention and request for an urgent meeting in addressing the matter regarding Professor Bhullar and to abolish death penalty in India by dialogue with Indian Government.

Sikh Council UK fully supported the Mass protest organised by the Federation of Sikh Organisations on 15th April 2013 by way of wide publicity and raising awareness of the event. Members of Sikh Council also attended and lobbied their MP's at the Houses of Parliament during the event.

6th April 2013 Members of the Council attended "Save a Life"- Vaisakhi Vigil - Unite Against "India's Death Penalty" event organised by Kesri Leher and spoke during the event in support of the campaign against the death penalty

Equality Act 2010 Inclusion of 'Caste' Campaign:

Representatives of the Council held a number of meetings with Ministers and MPs' to ensure that the Sikh position was stated and that unintended consequences of the legislation were properly considered.

Vaisakhi:

- Representatives of the Council attended vaisakhi event at Downing Street on 18th April 2013, this created an opportunity for Sikh Council to personally present the Prime Minister with a letter requesting their intervention to Indian Government regarding Professor Bhullar case and in stopping the use of the death penalty.
- Representatives of Sikh Council attended Vaisakhi event at Houses of Parliament on 22nd April 2013 organised by British Sikh Consultative Forum. This offered a good opportunity to network.
- Sikh Council representatives attended a Vaisakhi Dinner and networking evening Friday 19th April organised by Accenture Sikhs attendees included PwC Sikhs, E&Y Sikhs, UBS Sikh and other individuals as well as some representatives from Nishaan. It was a good informal networking event in which the APPG Liaison also took the opportunity to engage young professional Sikhs in considering roles within the political field.
- Sikh Council Representatives attended Sandwell and West Birmingham NHS Trust Vaisakhi Event in the Chapel of City Hospital on 16th April 2013 and Queen Elizabeth Hospital Birmingham Vaisakhi celebration event on 23rd April 2013 and took the opportunity to address the guests and inform them of the work of the Council at both events.
- Secretary General attended Vaisakhi event at Singh Sabha Gurdwara, Derby where MP's were also invited this created an opportunity to raise further awareness of the concerns of the death penalty.

Others:

- Sikh Council have been regularly circulating updates on the Leicester cases information provided by Chief Superintendent Leicestershire Constabulary
- 4th April 2013 Sikh Council representatives attended a meeting at the Home Office relating to the Bill of The Marriage (Same Sex Couples) which had finished the Commons Committee stage in its passage through Parliament. The meeting was to update Organisations with progress.
- 4th April 2013 Sikh Council circulated the Chelsea Football club initiative supported by Sporting Equals, the first scheme of its kind ever undertaken by a professional football club, designed to boost Asian participation at all levels of the game.
- A representative of Sikh Council attended the 6th Event of the Fundamental Rights Platform in Austria 24th-26th April and met with Sikhs living in Austria.
- Letter of support provided to Slough Sikhs re: school site for free Sikh School