

20th August 2014

Gurdwara Sahib-Leamington and Warwick

There are growing number of cases which involve disputes relating to the management of Gurdwaras being referred to the Charities Commission, local Police and the Law Courts. These disputes are causing untold damage to cohesion of the Sangat and detract from the primary purpose of Gurdwaras which includes development of Sikhi practice and Gurmat qualities such as tolerance, forgiveness, selfless sewa, sharing and eradication of ego.

The Sikh Council UK is also being increasingly asked to get involved with disputes involving the management of Gurdwaras. As a matter of policy the Sikh Council UK does not get involved in the internal matters of Gurdwaras and consistently urges all parties to resolve differences at a local level through discussion and debate. The Sikh Council UK is able to provide objective mediation subject to all parties involved in the dispute being in agreement.

The Sikh Council UK has also been requested by Sri Akal Takhat Sahib to investigate some matters in the UK that are referred to them. The Sikh Council UK approach in such circumstances is to gather the facts and provide an objective report to Sri Akal Takhat Sahib for their consideration.

The Sikh Council UK has previously been asked by Sri Akal Takhat Sahib to investigate allegations of a proposal to build a community centre containing a bar on land owned by Leamington and Warwick Gurdwara Sahib and an article written by its key member. Thus far we have not been able to complete the investigation due to having not been able to meet with the management of the Gurdwara.

More recently the Sikh Council UK has been made aware of a meeting apparently due to take place on Sunday 24th August 2014 at which proposals to amend the constitution governing the Gurdwara are scheduled to be tabled. The Sikh Council UK understands the proposed changes apparently include removal of reference to Sri Akal Takhat Sahib, introducing culture as an objective of the charity, introducing rights to vote by proxy, introduction of a power by which the management could ban a member without providing a reason, alteration to quorums and limitation of members rights to challenge.

Without being in possession of the full facts including the rationale or the context of any proposed constitutional changes, the Sikh Council UK is not in a position to pass any comment. However, we are aware of tensions within the community both within Leamington and Warwick and further afield that are directly related to apparent changes proposed to the constitution of Leamington and Warwick Gurdwara Sahib. We would urge the management of Gurdwara Sahib Leamington and Warwick to take note of these tensions and to do everything in their power to allay the concerns that have been raised. A reasonable first step that could go some way to allaying concerns would be to suspend the process of constitutional change to allow dialogue to attempt to resolve differences.

The Sikh Council UK would invite the management of the Gurdwara to meet with Sikh Council UK representatives at their earliest convenience to allow completion of the investigation as per request by Sri Akal Takhat Sahib.

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Press Release.....

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Notes for Editors

The Sikh Council UK (SCUK) is the largest representative body of Sikhs in the UK. We are recognised as the national advocate for British Sikhs in the United Kingdom and at the European Union.

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