

December 2014 Bulletin 48

Waheguru Ji Ka Khalsa, Waheguru Ji Ki Fateh

Meetings/Events

7th December 2014 Board of Jathedar meeting took place, during this meeting the Board of Jathedars were requested to approve representations intended by Younger Sikhs UK for relevant Sikh authorities in India regarding the arson attack on Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji in Village Jodhpur. The decision was urgent due to the imminence of a large Panthic gathering on 12th December 2014 in Village Jodhpur to discuss ways forward. The Board of Jathedars were required to consider whether the representations could be sent to key Sikh individuals and bodies in India via Sikh Council UK. Due to time restraints the decision was to forward the representation as it is without consideration to the contents by the Board of Jathedars

7th December 2014 the Community Safety Committee meeting took place this was well attended and consisted of a range of viable discussions on ways forward on many issues.

14th December 2014 South region Meeting took place in London, this meeting was very well attended in which the team discussed issues locally, regionally and those seen as priorities of the Council including fundraising.

22nd December 2014 Sikh Council UK representatives attended the a meeting organised by the Home Office lead office for security and counter terrorism in connection with a piece of work they are doing in tackling extremism. The meeting went very well in which issues relating to the Sikh Community were listened to at an attentive level. This helped further develop a working relationship with the Home Office in addressing issues relating to the Sikh Community including grooming and mistaken identity.

Sikh Council UK was approached by a vicar of a parish in Brentwood in Essex, requesting a speaker from the Sikh Community for an event in March 2015 at which they would like speakers from different faiths to explain something of their belief and practice. Their objective is to help increase understanding between faiths and thereby help in a small way to increase peace in our world. Mankamal Singh Executive Member of the Council agreed to assist.

Sikh Council UK has circulated widely information about a forthcoming Sikh Leadership programme in Warwick on 17th January 2015.

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<https://twitter.com/SikhCouncilUK>

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<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Sikh-Council-UK-SCUK>

Campaigns

Sikh Council UK supported the campaign for change in Article 25(b) of the Indian Constitution for independent identity of Sikhs separate to Hindus by widely circulating the link and encouraging people to complete this: In 3 simple clicks, Petition Obama to Question PM Modi "WHY Indian Constitution Labels Sikhs as Hindus?"

Chair of European and International Affairs Committee took up matters in objecting to the closure of a Gurdwara Sahib in Vilvoorde Belgium by the Mayor, where it was alleged there was to have illegal immigrants' activity taking place there. Having taken this up with officials and key Sikh leaders the Mayor later agreed to allow for the Gurdwara Sahib to reopen but with a number of restrictions including opening times.

Sikh Council representatives have written to Leamington Gurdwara Sahib in requesting confirmations in writing the outcome of discussions that have taken place with the representatives

Sikh Council UK was contacted by a former Police sergeant working with diversity and citizen focus directorate at Metropolitan Police Service currently undertaking some research on diversity issues. His query was in relation to headwear as some officers have been allowed to wear a turban (dastar) in place of uniform headwear such as the beat duty helmet, the question was is a style of headwear described as a 'patka' which he understood is a style most often associated with young people and boys is in fact a turban and therefore one of the '5 ks' and a symbol of Sikhism.

The answer is need to decide whether an officer can continue to wear this style of headwear on duty instead of a beat duty helmet. In responding Sikh Council has offered a meeting so that the issue and a response can be clarified. Awaiting Meeting date

Sikh Council has received many concerns on behalf of some Sikhs in various prisons across UK who are experiencing difficulties in relation to their dietary requirements particularly in relation to Bibekhi Sikh diets. Unfortunately it appears that the Prison Chaplaincy services are objecting to meeting the requirements of the diets despite being Sikhs themselves.

Sikh Council UK further reminded members about the Food allergens legislation that has come into force 13th December 2014 by widely circulating guidelines for this.

Sikh Council UK has written to David Cameron Prime Minister in supporting the request for approval of further Sikh Schools during the current conservative government.

Peaceful demonstration took place outside of the Consulate in Birmingham on Tuesday 30th December 2014 in expressing the Panths concern at lack of progress as Bhai Gurbaksh Singh's hunger strike reaches a critical phase. Sikh Council UK fully support this demonstration. Furthermore; In parallel Singh Sabha Gurdwara Sahib in Southall presented a memorandum to the Indian consulate in London accompanied by three representatives of the Sikh Council UK.

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A Sikh Council UK delegate has been sent to India with a view to supporting the campaign and to galvanise activity. He has undertaken several high level meetings already in also meeting with Delhi Sikh Gurdwara Management Committee, SGPC, Bhai Gurbaksh Singh, Jathedar Sri Takhat Sahib Ji, Jathedar Sri Keshgar Sahib Ji and was part of the team that met with the Indian Home Minister. Plans are underway for some other meetings to take place and progress updates will be shared with members as briefings are received. Sikh Council UK has submitted a Memorandum to Home Minister and Prime Minister of India Narendra Modi in supporting the hunger strike campaign in demanding the release of the Sikh prisoners who have completed their mandatory sentences

Sikh Council UK continues to urge calm in the community following protest incident in London at the Dera in Harlington

Sikh Council UK has been campaigning tirelessly on the issue of Jodhpur Gurdwara Sahib beadbi of Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji in doing so we have written to senior officials at government level urging them to take action on the perpetrators and a strategy to be put into place to stop these reoccurrences, as such a list of the different incidents that have happened was shared. Further challenges continue with officials as the Jodhpur report of investigation is rejected by the Sikh community whereby the police have referred to the incident as accidental.

Sikh Council UK has re-approached the Home Office due to a number of religious worker sponsorship cases that have failed. Particular attention has been drawn to the issue of a question that does not appear on the electronic form relating to the labour market test, however, cases are being rejected for not answering the question. This is a technical fault by India officials thus does not appear on the screen for response. This is an ongoing matter being looked into by the Home Office.

Sikh Council UK had a query from a partially blind guide-dog users' relative asking about access into a Gurdwara Sahib with the guide-dog. The matter was referred to the relevant gurdwara Sahib to communicate directly.