

Waheguru Ji Ka Khalsa, Waheguru Ji Ki Fateh

Meetings

7th May 2016 Executive Committee took place at Gurdwara Sri Guru Singh Sabha-Coventry

7th May 2016 General Assembly took place at Gurdwara Sri Guru Singh Sabha-Coventry

Representatives of Sikh Council UK attended an event at Guru Tegh Bahadur Gurdwara Leicester where amongst the guests was Simranjit Singh Mann president of the Sikh political party Shiromani Akali Dal during his visit to UK

Case work: the Council tried to get clarification as to whether or not Kirpan would be allowed into Euro 2016 Championship matches but to no avail.

Following the arrests of several protestors outside of the Indian Consulate the Sikh Council UK coordinated several meetings with the police and responded to various media and other enquiries. The final, meeting took place which Balvinder K Saund the Chair of the Community Safety attended. It was confirmed that : from the remaining people who were originally arrested 1 pleaded guilty to assaulting an officer; 3 are awaiting trial and 1 is awaiting plea hearing .Therefore out of 22 arrested, six were charged. A young lady was cautioned and let off due to her age.

In relation to the above the following letter was issued by the police:

Thank you for your ongoing support and to those who attended our most recent meeting on 3 May 2016. At this meeting we once again discussed the issue of a community impact assessment and as explained it was felt that this had become conflated with the issuing of the apology. I had previously explained how this may have occurred in my letter to you dated 25 November 2015. I would however like to reiterate that I immediately understood the offense caused by the breaking of the Nishan Sahib and hence felt it was right to issue a clear apology to the Sikh community at the earliest opportunity.

I understand the position that you have presented in that the breaking of the Nishan Sahib may have caused outrage amongst some of those present at the protest and that the context of this needed to be represented to the courts in any future judicial hearings. Whilst I am happy to acknowledge your views on this point I would also like to make it clear that neither you nor I have sought to excuse any criminal acts or condone any criminal behaviour.

The initial legal advice that I received was that it would not be appropriate for me to submit a community impact assessment however I have further sought to satisfy the fairness element for all parties concerned. To help me in my considerations I asked for a detailed review of the timeline of events of the protest on 22 October 2015 to be

undertaken. This has now been completed and shows that the criminal offences for which charges relate to all occurred before the snapping of the flag pole. This means that this incident could not have provoked the spontaneous reaction as first believed and cannot feature as an explanation within a community impact assessment.

I also would like to address your concerns about the policing of the protest as it has been suggested that a lack of police barriers and a lack of a significant police presence at the start of the demonstration caused many of the issues.

The MPS manages thousands of protests every year. The vast majority of these protests are un-policed and have no barriers deployed due to there being of no risk of crime and disorder.

The protest on 22nd October 2015 fell in to that category (i.e. we had no reason to suspect any form of disorder was likely). Peaceful protest is not an issue for the police as it is a basic human right for any citizen.

I would however always encourage anyone who is intending to protest in the future to contact us in advance to discuss the protest and intentions. In this way the protest can be assessed and our Police Liaison Officers can discuss plans with the organiser and avoid any misunderstandings.

I can also confirm that I have received your instruction to progress the breaking of flag as a criminal matter and can confirm that this is being progressed through the normal channels that cater for such allegations. I am aware that colleagues from our Directorate of Professional Standards have been in contact with you.

I appreciate that this has been a difficult and sensitive matter for all parties and we have gained organisational learning from this experience and your feedback. I would also like to thank you for your support during this and look forward to developing and strengthening our relationship for the future.