

Meetings/Events

4th March 2017 Operations Team Meeting took place at SCUK Leamington Offices

25th March 2017 Executive Committee Meeting took place at Guru Tegh Bahadur Gurdwara Leicester.

11th March 2017 Representatives of Sikh Council UK attended the unveiling of a World War Memorial statue of Captain Ishar Singh Ji at Khalsa Science Academy Primary School Leeds. Captain Ishar Singh Ji fought in both the First World War and the Second World War, he was awarded the Victoria Cross by His Majesty the King for most conspicuous bravery and devotion to duty. In his speech at the event Jagtar Singh Secretary General Elect thanked the host and took the opportunity to pay homage to the Captain and all Sikh soldiers that fought front line in battles.

13th March 2017 Secretary General Elect attended a roundtable meeting with Lord Bourne in developing a integration strategy going forward as follow up of findings of the Casey review Dame Louise Casey's Independent Review of Integration and Opportunity, published in December last year.

Media/Public Statements

4th March 2017 Sikh Council UK hosted the ' Panth Di Awaz' show at SCUK Leamington offices with Dr Gurnam presenting. Discussions included SCUK current work streams and priorities.

6th March 2017 Representatives of Sikh Council UK participated in Panth Di Awaz Akaal Tv programme held in London on current issues.

22nd March 2017 Sikh Council UK issued a statement following the terrorist incident in London Westminster, offering condolences, thoughts and prayers to all those that have been killed strongly condemning against this cowardly terrorist attack, which targeted the public and attempted to attack at the heart our democracy. Furthermore, SCUK urged all Gurdwaras and other community organisations to review security arrangements including checking CCTV provision is in working order and that any suspicious behaviour or incident must be reported immediately on 999 otherwise call 101 for all non-urgent matters. Anti-terrorism hotline number is 0800 789 321 for all suspicious terrorism related matters.

- Request was made to all 3 Sikh channels for a scroll requesting community vigilance and reporting of any incidents immediately.

In a public statement Sikh Council UK criticised the case of an immigration racket reportedly involving Sikhs and criticised border control officials for their failure to spot it. According to reports' the individuals in question admitted running the scam in which they provided British passports of family members to refugees from Afghanistan who were then able to enter the UK using those passports. Border officials are said to have had difficulty spotting the refugees who were not the real passport holders due to the passport photos being of Sikhs wearing turbans.

29th March 2017 Sikh Council UK n a statement urged all Sikhs to remain engaged in the Brexit process following the triggering of Article 50 today (29/3) which has started the formal process for the UK to leave the EU within two years.

Community Issues

- Sikh Council UK facilitated a meeting between Gurdwaras in Coventry and the police in an attempt to resolve current issues that are causing community tensions. It was agreed from the meeting that representatives of SCUK would attempt internal community mediation to resolve matters and/or reach amicable solutions. This matter is still in progress.
- Secretary General of Sikh Council UK has led on liaisons between the Gurdwara Sahib and Police following a serious incident of beadbi at Woolwich Gurdwara Sahib. Subsequently SCUK also issued an update statement following the incident where the Met Police confirm an individual has been charged with additional charges following the arrest. The additional charges include racially and religiously motivated criminal damage which means this part of the case will be transferred from the Magistrates Court to the Crown Court i.e. from the lower to the higher criminal courts. The police engaged with the Sikh community on this matter and heard of the concerns on the gravity with which the community views any desecration of Sikh scriptures. the case continues.

Campaigns

- Sikh Council UK were approached by Sporting Equals on behalf of the national regulative body for cricket in its consideration SCUK has initiated discussions relating to the broader outcome to be established. Considerations by SCUK currently underway include: * consideration to options available to Sikh Council UK to deal with requests from national sports regulatory bodies and from within the community for a consistent approach to the requirement for Sikhs to wear safety helmets in some sports. Decisions Required; * Whether to pursue an umbrella legislative solution or a dialogue approach with individual sports regulatory bodies and leisure providers. * Whether to carry out a detailed information and consultation exercise within the Sikh community to create and determine a general consensus of the outcomes desired

- Sikh Council UK circulated a briefing paper on European Court of Justice Judgment on religious attire in the workplace on the Judgment handed down by the European Court of Justice on 14 March 2017 regarding the legality of employers prohibiting visible manifestations of religious belief in the workplace. The briefing provides a summary of the role of the European Court of Justice, the background to the cases, the Court's Judgment, the Sikh Council's response to the Judgment and the impact to Sikh communities across Europe.
- Sikh Council UK referred a campaign case received by Southall Black Sisters onto Sikh Women's Association to support in their demonstrations to be held outside Scotland yard for the death of a British national who died in India under suspicious circumstances, it is said that her children who are also British Nationals are kept in India by the father and not allowed to return to the Maternal family in UK. SCUUK are appreciative of the five members of Sikh women's Alliance supported the campaign by attending the demonstration on 29th March 2017.

Casework

- Sikh Council UK is currently assisting as expert witnesses on a complex case in Crown Court in the North where there were alleged 2 bogus Gurdwaras being run by a large network including at least 5 members of one family in which individuals from India were being sponsored to come to UK as religious workers under fraudulent circumstances. Expert witness statements have been provided to the police and a court appearance is expected to happen in the coming weeks. Limited information can only be shared about this case as a trial is still underway.
- A case was referred to SCUUK by an individual who was refused access onto a bus due to wearing of a Kirpan on two separate occasions. The individual had followed the complaint procedure of the transport, but was yet to hear back from them. While supporting the individual it also materialised that he was wearing a relatively large kirpan on the outside of his clothes which passengers and driver found intimidating. SCUUK wrote to the relevant transport company to address the concerns and raise awareness of the 5 kakkars'. Subsequently the company made a formal apology to the individual and are planning to take up diversity training to raise awareness to all staff. The individual was also approached by SCUUK in reminding them of the responsibility bestowed upon kirpan wearing sikhs when in public.
- Sikh Council UK have been approached by members of a Gurdwara in Preston in which there is a breakdown of relations amongst committee members and potential members of the committee. SCUUK has informed the persons of the policy position of the council not to get involved in internal matters unless requested to do so in a mediation role by both parties. awaiting response

- Sikh Council UK is currently assisting a parent where his twin sons are allegedly being bullied based on their distinctive appearance as Sikhs in a school in Birmingham. Representatives of the council have met with the parent and head of school separately in establishing the facts. The parent has been advised to follow formal complaint procedure which will formalise the process in which SCUUK can assist to address the responses.
- Sikh Council UK provided a verifying letter of the significance of Singh/Kaur to a person whose surname Singh was wrongly added at the end of his name instead of a middle name on his birth certificate. In his adult age he wishes to make the amendment and was advised to obtain confirmation by the registrar to verify it is a middle name where there is an additional surname present.
- Sikh Council UK were approached by a student due to sit her exam but just before entering the exam room was asked to remove her dastar for searches. On refusal to do so she was denied access. Sikh Council UK provided guidance notes of the significance of the dastar. Subsequently she was asked to keep a letter with her at all times confirming that she is exempt of having to remove her dastar. Instead thorough searches would be undertaken with clean hands/gloves and hand held device where necessary.
- Sikh Council UK was approached by an individual denied the right to work with patience as a psychologist assistant while wearing her kirpan. A agreement was reached with the employers in which the kirpan will be worn securely under garments. However; given the complex area of work a risk assessment will be carried out on a case by case basis.