

quarterly

Responsible for monitoring progress and strategic direction of the Sikh Manifesto over the next five years

The Sikh Network presents its quarterly newsletter as a regular update on the activities, events and campaigns by the team on the Priorities and general progress on each of the 10-points in the Sikh Manifesto.

The Sikh Network launches the UK Sikh Survey - the largest & most comprehensive survey of Sikhs

The Sikh Network are delighted to launch the largest and most comprehensive survey of the UK Sikh community. The UK Sikh Survey will map out a much needed analysis of the views, as well as challenges, faced by the Sikh Community in contemporary British Society. The Survey will be based on

extensive outreach to gather the opinions of Sikhs across the length and breadth of the United Kingdom and will generate new empirical knowledge to current debates on what it means to be a British Sikh.

Specifically, this knowledge will provide the British Sikh community with the tools to effectively communicate its values and aspirations with government and public institutions. This is only made possible because of the survey's aim to conduct the largest poll of the Sikh community in the UK.

The UK Sikh Survey asks a range of questions covering areas such as Demographics, Identity, Discrimination, Education & Employment, Political Activism, Sikh Manifesto Issues and other key Sikh issues such as contributions to community and gurdwara seva, charitable donations and view on current Sikh media.

Sikhs across the spectrum and the UK have been encouraged to participate and share the views through the survey and it is open to all Sikhs over the age of 16. Although completion of the Survey is online at www.uksikhsurvey.com access has been made easier via phones, tablets or computers. In addition printed forms have been distributed to major UK Gurdwara's where stalls have been used to promote and increase participation. All the information is completely anonymous and will be kept confidential and secure.

The data collected, subsequent analysis and report will prove invaluable in discussions with Government departments, Public bodies and authorities and also to statisticians and academics around the world. There has been a real lack of reliable and relevant statistical data in the Sikh community and this survey will provide that across a wide range of topics and interest points.

The UK Sikh Survey is scheduled to close on 1st August 2016 after which an independent team of analysts and academics will review the findings and publish the results with the Sikh Network holding appropriate launch events planned for end of September/ October.

The Sikh Channel (sky829) have been very supportive of the Sikh Network and the UK Sikh Survey and are the media partners for this initiative.

Sikh Manifesto Follow up and One Year Review marked in Parliament

The Sikh Network held a Parliamentary event to mark the first anniversary of the Sikh Manifesto & General Election on 17th May 2016.



Politicians from various political parties talked about the Manifesto priorities:

1. separate Sikh ethnic tick box in the 2021 Census
2. securing a suitable site in central London for a permanent monument to highlight Sikh sacrifices in the First World War
3. need for more effective representation in Parliament

MPs or MEPs who spoke included; Kate Green MP - Shadow Minister for Women and Equalities, Rob Marris MP, Chair of the All Party Parliamentary Group for British Sikhs and Shadow Treasury Minister, Pat McFadden MP Wolverhampton South East, Stephen Pound MP Ealing North and Shadow Minister for Northern Ireland, Kirsten Oswald SNP MP for East Renfrewshire, Jean Lambert Green MEP for London, John Spellar MP Warley, Wes Streeting MP Ilford North, Ruth Cadbury MP, Brentford and Isleworth, Emma Reynolds MP Wolverhampton North East.

Other MPs who attended but did not speak included Helen Goodman MP Bishop Auckland, Jim Cunningham MP Coventry and Dr Alan Whitehead MP Southampton Test.

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) were also present to hear views of politicians as they realise there is an active campaign to ensure there is a separate ethnic tick box for Sikhs in the 2017 Test questionnaire and the 2021 Census.

Those present were told the new Mayor for London is supportive of a site in central London for a permanent monument to highlight Sikh sacrifices in the First World War. The Secretary of State at the Department for Media,

Culture and Sports had also said last month in Parliament he was open to a proposal.

Parmjit Singh Dhandra, the first Sikh Minister and someone who is currently standing for Labour's National Executive Council (NEC) spoke about the need for Sikh representation and Labour MPs agreed it was indefensible that Labour had no Sikh Lords. Recently it has been reported new Lords are likely to be appointed in July and there is considerable pressure to ensure one of the three new Labour Lords should be a Sikh.



The guest speaker from Punjab was Simranjeet Singh Mann, two time Member of Parliament. MPs were told he was a senior Indian police officer in Mumbai who resigned on 18 June 1984 in protest at the June 1984 Indian army assault on the Sri Harmandir Sahib Complex. It was explained he had been arrested on 30 different occasions and been tortured (he has had his toe nails removed), but had never been convicted.

Jas Singh spoke about the achievements in the last 12 months with Balvinder Kaur Saund, a former Labour councillor speaking about the Census 2021. Manvir Singh spoke about how the Sikh Network has inspired him to get more actively involved and also covered the need for an independent public inquiry looking at how the UK Government was put under pressure by the Indian authorities to take anti-Sikh measures in the 1980s and finally a word of congratulations from Tanmanjeet Singh who was a Labour candidate at the last General Election.

Challenges and opportunities following the referendum decision to leave the EU



The UK Sikh Survey of some 5,000 Sikhs that is nearing its completion shows that 61% of Sikhs voted to remain, while 39% voted to leave. Very early in the campaign the Sikh Federation (UK) put out arguments for the Sikh community to remain under eight different headings. However,

nationally 52% of the population that voted chose to leave the EU.

Sikhs in mainland Europe have expressed deep concerns at the UK leaving the EU and the impact this would have on Sikh rights in mainland Europe and the ability to effectively lobby at the European Parliament and make an impact at the European Commission on a wide range of issues without direct input and support from UK MEPs, the UK appointed Commissioner and Sikhs in the UK.

However, the referendum in the UK on 23 June has delivered an outcome that will mean organisations, like the Sikh Federation (UK) that has campaigned in the EU on Sikh issues for more than a decade will have to find different ways of directly supporting Sikhs in mainland Europe and working with the UK Government and embassies of EU countries to influence them where Sikhs experience discrimination, attacks or hate crime.

It will however now prove much harder for the UK Government to influence the likes of France and Belgium to honour decisions by the UNHCR with respect to discrimination against turban wearing Sikhs. Sikhs in mainland Europe will need to become more politically active themselves.

Labour Leader & Deputy visit Midlands Gurdwara during EU Referendum campaign

Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn and Deputy leader Tom Watson visited the West Midlands during the EU Referendum campaign, where they also attended and addressed Sikh at Guru Har Rai Gurdwara in West Bromwich. They both publicly acknowledged and thanked the Sikh community for the tremendous sewa and contribution made by Sikhs across the UK to British life and also acknowledged past contributions including sacrifices in the world wars. During speeches to the congregation Jeremy Corby and Tom Watson made the following commitments:



- Better Sikh representation in all legislatures ie. Commons, Lords, Scottish Parliament and Welsh Assembly from Labour
- A pledge to uncover the truth about the UK Government role in the 1984 Sikh Genocide
- recognised the Sikh struggle against discrimination and the importance of the Sikh identity and protecting it

The Sikh Network team who were present throughout this visit discussed the need to progress on the commitments outlined above and are working closely with the Labour leaders office to arrange appropriate follow up sessions and updates on the progress made.

A video of both Jeremy and Tom's statements can be viewed at;

<https://www.facebook.com/Thesikhnetwork/videos/1137326062990290/>

Changing political landscape



The political landscape has changed dramatically since the EU Referendum five weeks ago. Following the result we have seen the resignation of the Prime Minister, David Cameron and the appointment of Theresa May as his successor. She has also appointed a new team. A new Home Secretary

(Amber Rudd), Foreign Secretary (Boris Johnson) and Education Secretary (Justine Greening) are of particular interest to the Sikh community. Alok Sharma has become the Foreign Office Minister responsible for relations with India and has already taken the bold step in his first visit to India to state India had no legal case to claim the Kohinoor diamond.

The new Prime Minister Theresa May is the MP for Maidenhead and has close links with the local Sikh community and has been seen many times doing seva in the Langar Hall, not for photo opportunities, but because she believes in the concept of seva and the free food kitchen. As Home Secretary she has supported several Sikh causes and took the step earlier this year to remove the ban on the International Sikh Youth Federation (ISYF). In short the changes to senior positions in the UK Government present the British Sikh community with an opportunity for a fresh start to deliver parts of the Sikh Manifesto.

On the other hand the Labour opposition is in disarray. More than 80% of Labour MPs have backed a vote of no confidence in the Labour Leader, Jeremy Corbyn and many have resigned from the Shadow Cabinet and junior shadow minister positions. He now faces a leadership contest from Owen Smith that he is expected to easily win in September. There is already talk of a split in the party following the contest with the possibility that Labour rebels will elect their own leader and create an alternative opposition group.

Sikh Network Advisor Appointed as Mayor's Chaplain

In early May 2016, the newly elected Mayor for the London Borough of Redbridge, Councillor Gurdial Singh Bhamra appointed Mankamal Singh as his official Chaplain. The Mayor's Chaplain is chosen by the Mayor and is an honorary title. The role of the Chaplain is to offer spiritual guidance to the Mayor as and when required and lead the civic service and other civic occasions as well as lead sermons or suitable thoughts at the full council meetings.



The Sikh Network are delighted and proud that one of our key advisors has been selected for this prestigious role.

"I was humbled when Councillor Bhamra asked me to be his official Chaplain during his term as Mayor of Redbridge. I have so far had the opportunity to read a Sikh sermon at his first full council meeting, arrange his Civic Service at Gurdwara Singh Sabha Seven Kings and lead the prayers at the Armed Forces Day. It is the first time in the history of Redbridge that both the Mayor of the Borough and Leader of the Council (Cllr Jas Athwal) are Sikhs and to appoint a Sikh Chaplain just makes it a very prominent year for Sikhs in Redbridge." Mankamal Singh

Reviving Khalsa Ideals

In partnership with Singh Sabha London East, the Sikh Network organised a special lecture in May 2016 lead by Harinder Singh (Educator and Activist) titled "Reviving Khalsa Ideals in Today's Political World". The inspiring presentation was centred around the spiritual, social and political history of the Sikhs represented in Khalsa ideals and how they can be revived on today's hyper-political environment.

Lecturer Harinder Singh is a co-founder of the Sikh Research Institute, Punjab Digital Library and now the principal lead in the #freeakaltakht movement.

Forthcoming Events:

- **Art4Justice Exhibition** – Menier Gallery London (1-6 Aug)
- **Féile Festival Belfast** - SN presenting 1984 Massacre & UK Govt role (12 Aug)
- **National Substance Misuse Conference** – Birmingham REP (21 Sept)
- **UK Sikh Survey Report Launch** – (October)