

quarterly

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

The Sikh Network presents its fourth quarterly newsletter following the 2015 General Election. Priorities have been decided, a work programme agreed and progress is being monitored on each of the 10-points in the Sikh Manifesto.

Guidance on protocol for searching Dastaar at worldwide airports launched



The high profile incident involving Waris Ahluwalia, the US actor and designer, not being allowed to fly with AeroMexico because of his Dastaar, demonstrated the lack of awareness among airport and airline staff of the current agreed security protocol in performing security searches on Turbaned Sikhs.

Following this incident, the Sikh Network issued a document in

February to educate various stakeholders (transport departments, airport authorities and airlines) of the importance of the Sikh Dastaar and the standard security protocols that respect religious headwear without compromising security or time, these procedures have been implemented by the UK, EU and the US authorities.

The guidance document can be downloaded from www.thesikhnetwork.com

The Sikh Network continues to promote the principles of Sikhi and push for a Statutory Code of Practice for the 5K's and Dastaar, as section 3 in the Sikh Manifesto.

The Sikh Network team promoted mainstream media exposure for Sikh Women and the Dastaar, highlighting the importance of the Sikh Articles of Faith, a key section in the Sikh Manifesto.

The BBC News online ran the article with an estimated 60 million readers worldwide, originally produced by BBC presenter Nikki Bedi a documentary "ME AND MY TURBAN", followed by a discussion on the Nihal Show on BBC Asian Network.



There are very few Sikh women perspectives out there on the internet, particularly Amritdhari perspectives which have tended to be dominated by men. This was a great opportunity for confident Sikh Amritdhari Women to put their powerful perspectives forward.

Sikh Network meets with Tom Watson Deputy Labour leader

The Sikh Network met with Tom Watson deputy leader of the Labour party in his local office to discuss key issues raised within the Sikh Manifesto. We



discussed at length the demand for an independent public inquiry into the role of the UK Government in 1984. In January 2014 Tom Watson, broke the shocking revelations and complicity of the UK Government in the 1984 Amritsar massacre and has continually called for and supported an independent public inquiry to uncover the whole truth.

He is also on record in acknowledging the embarrassing lack of Sikhs in Parliament in the Commons and Lords, and especially within the Labour Party. He has committed to changing this and also to supporting female Sikh candidates as well as Labour Sikh Lords. Other issues discussed included the necessity of separate ethnic monitoring of Sikhs in the 2021 Census and the need for a monument in central London to mark the tremendous Sikh sacrifices in the First World War.

Sikh Network team visit Babu Surat Singh & present unique Art piece

Sikh Network representatives had the great honour last month of visiting inspirational Sikh activist, Babu Surat Singh at the DMC hospital in Ludhiana, Punjab.



He is now over 470 days into an indefinite hunger strike, aimed to shake the establishment in India in to releasing Sikh political prisoners who have not only served their full jail terms but had very questionable cases to begin with.

The representatives were in awe of meeting such an inspirational individual, who rose from his comforts in America and travelled to Punjab to begin his quest for equality and human rights. Babu Ji was comforted to hear that the Sikh Diaspora in the UK and elsewhere has fully supported his remarkable stance and will continue to back him and the cause to the end despite the false propaganda being spread to damage his spirit and support.

The Sikh Network has hosted various art exhibitions around the UK in honour of Babu Ji, where budding artists sympathetic to the cause have created pieces of art inspired by the sacrifice of Babu Ji. The exhibitions produced some wonderful pieces of art, so we decided it would be fitting to honour Babu Ji with one of these creations. He was truly touched by the gesture and even in his current physical condition would not let go of the painting for at 15 minutes and was visibly moved by the gesture.

Recently both Professor Devinderpal Singh Bhullar and Gurdeep Singh Khara are currently out of prison on parole for 21 & 28 days respectively. This should be changed to a full permanent release as soon as possible as Babu Ji will not stop his crusade based on false hope and political games.

Faith & Politics Event - Miri-Piri

In February, the Sikh Network in collaboration with Singh Sabha London East organised a special event titled 'Akal Takht - Faith & Politics' at Redbridge Central Library in East London.



In line with Section 10 of the Sikh Manifesto, 'The Application of Self Determination' and the Free Akal Takht Campaign, a 'Townhall' style event was arranged with special guests Harinder Singh (Activist/Educator, Texas, USA) and Jagmeet Singh (MPP Ontario, Canada) as well as Dabinderjit

Singh OBE and Jas Singh from the Sikh Network.

The event explored the Miri-Piri faculties of Sikh leadership and with the long term aim to engage Sikhs from across the globe in developing and following the Sarbat Khalsa model for collective decision making.

Sikh Network members mark Vaisakhi at No. 10 Downing Street & at City Hall



Members of the Sikh Network team were invited to a reception at 10 Downing Street to mark Vaisakhi with the Prime Minister, David Cameron.

Manjit K Kang, Sikh Network member said 'I was delighted to be invited to 10 Downing Street and meet the Prime Minister. This was a fantastic opportunity

to connect with other Sikh professionals, business leaders, councillors and Gurdwara Presidents from across the country and raise the profile of the Sikh Network. We have collaborated with more UK Sikhs and organisations to deliver on the outcomes of the widely supported and important Sikh Manifesto'.

The reception was also attended by Priti Patel, MP and representatives from Sikh organisations including the Sikh Federation (UK) and various Gurdwaras.

The Sikh Network team were also chosen as the main Sikh organisation at the official London Vaisakhi celebrations at City Hall, home of the Mayor.

Campaign for Justice Event in Parliament hears about Sikh experience

The Campaign for Justice Event took place in Parliament on 9 February and was hosted by Rt Hon Andy Burnham MP, the Shadow Home Secretary, Maria Eagle MP, Shadow Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport and Baroness Doreen Lawrence (the mother of Stephen Lawrence).

Many other prominent MPs and Peers also took part, including Tom Watson MP, the Deputy Leader of the Labour Party, John McDonnell MP, the Shadow Chancellor, Rt Hon Lord Falconer, the Shadow Lord Chancellor and Shadow Secretary of State for Justice and Shadow Home Office Ministers Lyn Brown And Jack Dromey.

Dabinderjit Singh, the principal adviser to the Sikh Federation (UK) and an advisor to the Sikh Network was the first to give evidence. His opening statement had a visible impact on the politicians listening and national media representatives that were present in large numbers. A number of politicians supported the call for an independent judge led inquiry to look into how trade with India has resulted in anti-Sikh measures and were interested to see evidence of how the Cabinet Secretary had misled Parliament in February 2014 about the 'Amritsar papers'.

He was followed by Eileen Turnbull representing the Shrewsbury 24 campaign and Barbara Jackson from the Orgreave campaign. Later politicians heard from Alastair Morgan, from the Justice for Daniel campaign and Jacqui Hames, from Hacked Off. All campaigns carried a similar message of the challenges in obtaining justice



Minister confirms will look at specific proposals for permanent monument for Sikh sacrifices in WW1

On 21 April Rob Marris MP, the Chair of the All Party Parliamentary Group for British Sikhs raised in Parliamentary debate the need for a permanent monument in central London to commemorate Sikh sacrifices. In response John Whittingdale, the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport

confirmed he had an open mind and will look at specific proposals. This is now being followed up after the election of the new Mayor for London.

Sikhs in Government Host British Deputy High Commissioner Chandigarh

Newly formed Sikhs in Government organised the first Cross-Whitehall networking session at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office with guest speaker, David Lelliott, British Deputy High Commissioner Chandigarh. Representatives of the Sikh Network attended and discussed the role of the Deputy High Commissioner in relation to Punjab politics and representing the views and issues of the UK Sikh Diaspora.



Women in Politics Event hosted at EY in the City

Women make up 51% of the UK population, yet only 29% of MPs in the House of Commons are women. Despite a record 41 BME MPs elected in the last General Election in May 2015, they make up only 6% of the Commons compared to 14% of the UK population. Disappointingly none of the 650 MPs are Sikh and the 5 Sikh MPs that have been elected in the past have all been men.



The Sikh Network in conjunction with EY Sikh Network organised a 'Women & Politics' Event, with a select special guest panel of

female politicians who shared their personal experiences and political journey with a full audience of city professionals many who were women. The event was a cross party non-political event with a focus on empowering and encouraging more women into politics as well as a discussion on gender equality which is very much aligned with Sikh principles.

Speakers included; Amanda Solloway Conservative MP, Fiona Mactaggart Labour MP, Baroness Lindsey Northover Lib Dem, Cllr Preet Kaur Gill Labour and Anilia Dhami from the Women's Equality Party and a special presentation on Princess Sophia Duleep Singh and her involvement in the Suffragette movement by Kate Willoughby of Emily Matters.

Over a 100 guests filled from EY, Deutsche Bank, HSBC, UBS, Morgan Stanley, Commonwealth Secretariat and the creative industries attended what was a very successful and enlightening evening. At the event the personal journeys of the panel of female politicians were explored, including how they entered into politics and the struggles and obstacles they faced. This was followed by an interactive Q&A session. The event was filmed by the Sikh Channel and is available on their YouTube channel.

The Sikh Manifesto . . . Follow up

One year after the General Election the Sikh Network has just released a follow up note for Sikhs to share with MPs asking politicians to explain what they have done with respect to some of the key issues in the Sikh Manifesto and asking for specific actions. Sikhs are being encouraged to meet MPs over the next three months to find out what they will do in the next twelve months.



Forthcoming Events:

- Sikh Manifesto: A year on event
Tuesday 17 May in the Attlee Suite, Portcullis House, Westminster 1-3pm.
- UK SIKH SURVEY – Coming Soon



Congratulations to all Sikh Cllrs who retained or won seats in local elections on 5th May