

Sikh Society

Kingston University | London

Annual Report
2010-2011

**Kingston University Sikh Society
promotes activities that appreciate the
culture, history and ideology
of the Sikh way of life.**

OUR VISION

Kingston Sikh Society is a group of students with a common interest, to learn and share knowledge about Sikhi. The society is open to anyone interested in Sikhi and looks to provide members with the chance to discuss any issues of interest and importance.

OUR AIMS

- To create a chilled out environment where students have the opportunity to meet new people and to get involved in discussions/activities affecting young Sikhs in the UK
- Provide a platform for learning and development in the Sikh way of life, culture and heritage
- To build strong relations within the local community so as to raise awareness of Sikh values and principles

INTRODUCTION

Kingston University Sikh Society has seen some very successful years recently, with a steady growth in memberships and attendance. As a growing society situated slightly away from some of the larger Sikh Societies in London, we feel Kingston plays an important part in raising awareness of the Sikh way of life.

Sikh Society 2009/2010 saw a great balance of spiritual and practical events, similar to the concept of living a spiritual and temporal life in Sikhi. Sikh Society was able to provide an environment for students as well as learned academics to participate in lectures and events.



Dr. Indarjit Singh [right] gives a talk on Sikhism Today, organised by Kingston University Chaplaincy, attended by students and members of local religious communities

The 2009/2010 academic year also saw the introduction of the Society's first Sikhi Week - 'Sikhi Unleashed'. This was five days of different events in March and was a great success. Events included a Kirtan Jam, lectures and a special guest appearance by Magic Singh, which recorded an attendance of over 60 guests. The more spiritual events were held at university and Kingston Gurdwara Sahib. The society built a strong relationship with the local Gurdwara Sahib in order to hold Kirtan Darbars. The Gurdwara Sahib committee was incredibly supportive. Social events included paint-balling and collaborative events with other Sikh Societies in London. In general, we were looking to build on the successful year.

One of the key elements for success was the emergence of first and second year students wanting to participate and get involved in running Sikh Society. We are hoping the 2010/2011 year will see many new faces at the forefront of Sikh Society.

MEMBERSHIP & OFFICERS

Selection Process

It is important that the opportunity of running for a position within the committee is open to all members. Those wishing to do so were asked to complete an application stating their reasons for applying and desired position. The current committee then reviewed applications and elected the new officers

SOCIETY OFFICERS

Amritpal Singh - President
Sarnjeet Kaur - President
Tajinderpal Singh - Treasurer
Asa Singh - Social
Manny Singh - Social
Pam Kaur - Events Coordinator

SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP

Number of paid members: 44
Average Attendances: 15-20
Cost of membership: £2 (set by Kingston Societies Union)

STUDENT SERVICES

ACADEMIC STUDIES

Kingston Sikh Society did not organise or offer any academic studies for members this year.

WORKSHOPS

- 'Punjabi Blood' - A talk given by an external speaker recommended by another Sikh Society. Punjabi Blood focused on the heritage of Punjab and the troubles that young Punjabis face in India, specifically referring to the issue of drug and alcohol abuse. The event had a large turnout and some of the feedback from members was positive. Attendees enjoyed discussing issues faced by the young generation nowadays and how we can help those affected.

ASSISTANCE

Kingston University Students Union provided us with financial support as well as media and event coordination

SOCIAL LIFE

FRESHERS WEEK

As per every year, Sikh Society was present at the Freshers Fayre, whereby new and existing students were able to sign up and become member of the society. Resources such as posters, freshers packs and literature on Sikhi were provided by BOSS.

The annual Cha & Samosa party was held within two weeks of the freshers fayre, and had a turnout of approximately 40 people. This event included ice breakers, introduction videos and the chance to order the newly designed hoodies.

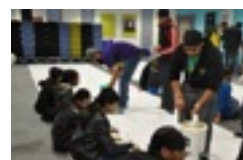
EXCURSIONS

- Ice skating - this was one of the first events in the year and was held at Hampton Court Palace ice rink. It was a great way to get together before Christmas break and give members a chance to get away from studies and meet new people
- Bowling - held in Kingston town centre with an attendance of 20
- Kingston gurdwara - A trip to the local Gurdwara Sahib, situated 10 minutes walk behind the main campus. We used this trip to engage with the Gurdwara Sahib and maintain an ongoing relationship with the committee who have been ever supportive of the society.
- KCL Kirtan - students met and travelled together to enjoy the highly rated Kirtan Darbar at Kings University
- UCL Langar - students met and travelled together to support our peers at UCL Sikh Society

CAMPAIGNS & EVENTS

MAJOR EVENT

Instead of hosting a Sikhi Week this year, it was decided that the Sikh Society would host one large scale event. Inspired by UCL Sikh Society, we hosted our first Langar event. The main campus, Penrhyn Road was chosen as an ideal location due to its high footfall. The number of attendees were approximately between 200-300.



There are several areas the we as a society need to improve on if this event is to take place again. Firstly, the logistics need to be simplified. The langar was supplied by several Gurdwara Sahibs, so narrowing the number of different areas sevadars having to travel to would have made logistics more efficient. The projected turnout was over estimated and this was due to two main reasons: marketing and location. The room given was not easily accessible by the congregation. There was no heavy marketing campaign to promote the event and most importantly the concept of Langar in Sikhi.

In general, the event was a success but the points mentioned above will need to be reviewed for future reference in order improve.

ACTIVISM

- Homeless Shelter Donation - The Langar that was not used during the event, Sikh Society was able to donate the remainder to a homeless shelter in London.

COMMUNICATING WITH STUDENTS

MODES

- Emails sent out fortnightly updating members on news and events
- Facebook messages and status updates
- Posters put up on two campuses

The Facebook route was very effective in organising events due to its high level of usage amongst members. It was easy to keep in contact with members and keep them informed of news and events within a relatively small timeframe. One area that we could have exploited more was text messages.

PARTNERSHIPS

WITHIN KINGSTON UNIVERSITY

Chaplaincy - Sikh Society has a very strong working relationship with the University Chaplain. Mr. Stan Brown has attended many Sikh Society events and often has great feedback for us. Furthermore, Mr. Brown gives the society many opportunities to get involved in interfaith events and has even organised events in coordination to Sikh Society. We aim to maintain this relationship we have with Mr. Brown

NATIONAL BODY

We received freshers packs from BOSS at the beginning of the year.

FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE

SUMMARY

The society has seen a drastic fall in the number of paid members this year. It is important that the process of paying for membership is made easier for potential members. During recent years at freshers fayre, students sign up at the Sikh Society stall but then must visit another stall to actually pay for their membership. For the future, we must package the membership as an incentive which may include membership pricing for events etc.

The students union also provides Sikh Society with funding at the beginning of the academic year, which amounted to £570 for 2010/2011.

ACCOUNTS

No accounts available at this time.

THE FUTURE

We feel Sikh Society has managed well this year, with the continuation of weekly events, as well as the introduction of larger scale events. The points below are areas that the next committee may want to consider to ensure that Sikh Society continues to move in the right direction.

- Structure - implement and maintain a structure within a committee whereby everyone has individual roles and can work collectively to achieve our aims and objectives. There needs to be clear consistency for regular events to take place.
- Organisation - organisation of events that allows Sikh Society to maintain working relationships with the wider community for example other societies at the university and other Sikh Societies in London
- Events - We feel Sikh Society has built a solid foundation and can now begin to explore different areas. For example academic classes on Sikhi, punjabi classes, kirtan classes, etc.
- Collaboration - make more effort in joining forces with other Sikh Societies in London. Working together can only benefit us all in having a presence at our universities and helping us all meet our aims and objectives

We look forward to the following year, and ensuring Sikh Society has a lot to offer every student that becomes a member.