

Sikh Society

Kingston University | London



Annual Report 2011-2012

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

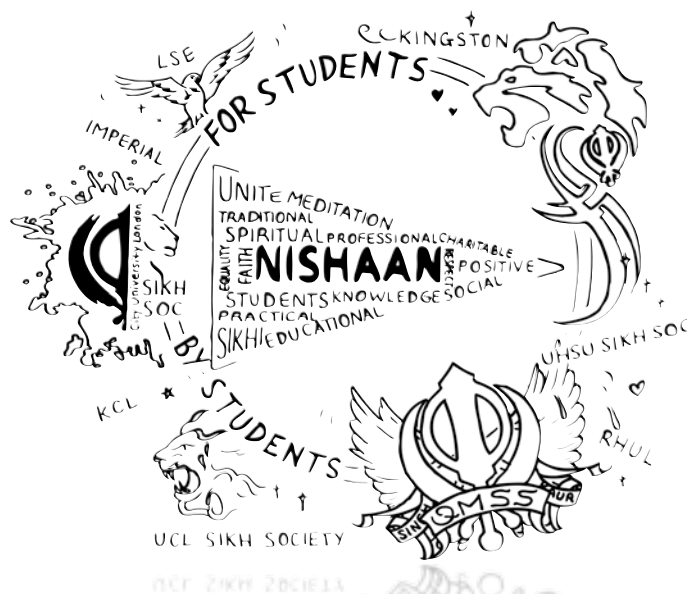
INTRODUCTION

For the 2011/2012 academic year, Sikh Society was looking to build upon the awareness that had been created during the previous year. This was awareness both within the university amongst fellow students and other university Sikh Societies.

The formation of a Sikh Society Network; Nishaan proved to be highly successful in coordinating events, sharing resources and moving University Sikh Societies forward in a more holistic manner.

The months leading to the start of the new year were spent preparing for the freshers fayre and coordinating events with other London Sikh Societies to ensure that there were no calendar clashes.

Kingston hosted a few events on behalf of other Sikh Societies in London such as Paintballing and a Kirtan Darbar. This year also saw the Langar on campus event that was introduced last year held again.



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

Sarnjeet Kaur - President

Asa Singh - Treasurer

Gurbir Singh - Secretary/Nishaan Rep

Pam Kaur - Events Coordinator

Note: The roles above were agreed with the Kingston University Student's Union on paper, and do not include the many helpers that attended regularly.

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

Back 2 Basics - This event was organised by Sikh Society in association with external speakers and looked at the revolutionary teachings of Guru Nanak Dev Ji. Students at Brunel University Sikh Society also helped in securing the guest speakers and also made up some of the attendees. The idea of the event was to look at the three principles laid down by the first Guru and engage discussion on how the principles are integrated into our lives today. The session ended in a Q&A about Sikh history.

Sikh Society did not hold any other lecture or workshop style events, but Nishaan events in which Kingston inputted can be found further in this report.

ASSISTANCE

Kingston University Students Union provided us with financial support as well as media and event coordination. The Nishaan network and the ability to share each universities' individual contacts proved to be most useful.

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 and Naujawani.com.

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. The Nishaan Sikh Society network organised for as many Cha & Samosa parties to be held on the same day. A samosa eating competition was held at each uni.

EXCURSIONS

- Bowling - held in Kingston town centre with an attendance of approximately 35 followed by a trip to Pizza Hut. This event was a huge success as there were many new faces and was a fantastic ice breaker for first and second year students.
- 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. This was in conjunction with Bandhi Chor.
- KCL Kirtan - students met and travelled together to enjoy the highly rated Nishaan Kirtan Darbar at Kings University
- UCL Langar - students met and travelled together to support our peers at UCL Sikh Society

CAMPAIGNS & EVENTS

MAJOR EVENT

Building on the success of our first Langar event last year, it was decided that this year would be an opportunity to increase its potential. The event was organised to coincide with the university's Global Festival Week and was one of the major events. The university was also eager to provide as much support as possible as it was a simple yet effective way of celebrating culture for all. The Student Union provided a marquee, funding for food and cutlery and advertised for us. The Langar itself was kept very simple, chowl (rice), chole (chick peas) and kheer (similar to rice pudding).



ACTIVISM

- **Seva Day** - in association with other Sikh Societies, Kingston uni students participated in a homeless run. Food prep was done at Central Gurdwara, Shepards Bush and then distributed in Holborn in the evening. Greeting cards were also made from scratch and sent to Great Ormond Street Hospital.
- **1984 Anti-Sikh Pogroms** - The Nishaan network secured Harinder Singh of Sikh Research Institute to deliver an talk focused on education as a fulcrum for social change and together we uncovered these horrific and unjust scenes of violence that followed the assassination of Indira

Gandhi. The event was attended by over 100 students at Kings College and was streamed online.

- **Drugs In Punjab** - Organised at Imperial Uni, Ranjeet Singh delivered a talk that looked into the realities of drug addiction in Punjab and focused on solutions. The academic of this talk was refreshing.

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 would like to wish Stan Brown the very best for the future as he leaves Kingston University this year.

NATIONAL BODY

We received freshers packs from BOSS at the beginning of the year. The remainder of the year, the Nishaan Sikh Society network proved to be very successful as it as by Sikh Society members themselves.

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 2011/2012.

ACCOUNTS

No accounts available at this time.

THE FUTURE

We feel Sikh Society has managed well this year, with the introduction of bi-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.

- 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 - Now that the Nishaan network of Sikh Societies has been established, there is opportunity for Sikh Societies to move in the same direction in a cohesive manner. As Kingston is based further than the Central London universities, it is important that we collaborate with local universities such as Roehampton too.

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