

Sikh Soc

*St. George's,
University of London*

**Annual Report
2011-2012**

**The St. George's Sikh Society
promotes activities that appreciate the
culture, history and ideology
of the Sikh way of life.**

OUR VISION

To create a Sikh Society that is well known amongst the student body and which plays an active role in providing students with academic, social, and spiritual support.

OUR VALUES

The Sikh Society aims to champion the ideals of equality and constant self-improvement. We respect all other faith societies and are committed to seeing members of different faiths working and learning together. We do not condone the covert conversion techniques used by some faith societies on vulnerable students, and are prepared to highlight and speak up against this vile practice when required.

OUR AIMS

To create awareness and spread the message of Sikhi amongst the student body whilst providing services which are conducive to the improved spiritual learning of our members.

INTRODUCTION

We have compiled a report on our activities during the year 2011-2012. Unfortunately, the society wasn't very active this year, and with only 4 active committee members, 2 of which who were also involved in other societies, we only managed a freshers' fayre and a welcome/intro talk.

Many of those who could have been involved were on placement off-site throughout the year and this was the main contributing factor as to why not much was organised.

MEMBERSHIP & OFFICERS

SELECTION PROCESS

Application forms were sent out to all potential candidates and those who showed interest in a position in the committee. These included a number of questions such as the role the candidate would like in the committee, the contribution they could provide, and the direction they would like the society to move in.

SOCIETY OFFICERS

Pavandeep Singh Sandhu – President
Amardeep Singh Basra – Vice President
Hardeep Chumber – Events Officer
Kivraj Sabarwal – Events Officer

SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP

Approximate member number (judging by fresher's fayre sign-ups): 40

All memberships were free.

Approximately 20 attended our intro talk.

ACADEMIC STUDIES

None

WORKSHOPS

Meet and greet/ Intro talk: "What is Sikhism?"

Free pizza and soft drinks were provided for all those who attended. We decided to put some purpose into the meet and greet, rather than have members stand around and talk for an hour. So we distributed the food and drinks, allowed everyone to meet and say hello, and then started the talk/discussion which was interactive and involved the members of the audience.

ASSISTANCE

Snappy Tomato Pizza in Tooting offer special offers to the Sikh Soc. They are run by Panjabis so are a handy source of food for events/gatherings.

SPORT

None

ARTS

None

WELL-BEING

Regular Simran sessions were planned but didn't actually happen. Members were encouraged to attempt 5 minutes a day during the first talk.

FRESHERS WEEK

Materials were obtained from Naujawani.com and from BOSS. We applied in good time for a stall and also had a powerpoint presentation which was displayed, alongside others, in the main lobby area. The idea of this was to highlight the presence of each society to those attending the Freshers' Fayre.

The Freshers' Fayre was quite successful as we had a large range of material and obtained approximately 30 new members that showed interest in what we could provide over the year. We informed new members of our intro talk as they joined up.

CELEBRATIONS

None

EXCURSIONS

None.

MAJOR EVENT

Our one and only event was our meet and greet/intro talk titled: "What is Sikhism?"

The entire event, including the food and multimedia was organised by the President. Fortunately, the other members did help out in picking up the multimedia equipment (borrowed from SGUL AV services), and the food when it was delivered. Drinks were supplied kindly by Kivraj Sabarwal (Events Officer).

Unfortunately, many members didn't arrive on time, and the pizza was also late, so the event started a little later than expected. Nevertheless, we managed to fit everything in to the allotted time.

The idea was to have an informal discussion based on the title of the event, and stimulate the audience to think and question their ideas/beliefs. The main discussion was based around the Mool Mantar and Naam, and videos from Sikhnet.com were shown to widen the discussion and to break up the talk. We arranged tables either side of the central seating area so that members could top up their plates as they wished. Committee members from previous years were on hand to help with the distribution.

On a whole, the event went well, with great interest shown from all members of the audience. It is unfortunate that we were unable to follow up on the success of this event by organising more throughout the year.

ACTIVISM

None

COMMUNICATING WITH STUDENTS

MODES

We used email to welcome all new members to the Society and posters were produced and displayed around the University to advertise our meet and greet/intro talk.

PARTNERSHIPS

WITHIN SGUL

All faith societies have regular meetings with the Equalities and Diversity officers and the Chaplains too. This was the only time when we ever had any dealing with other societies.

There was a question whether the Sikh Society would like to be involved with the Diwali Society – a large successful society based solely around Diwali and the organisation of a Diwali show – and although two of our committee members were heavily involved with this society anyway, the President decided it would be inappropriate as the Diwali society was promoting a post-show party where alcohol and meat would be consumed, and where other activities, not fitting the Sikh way of life, would take place. Furthermore, it was the President's opinion that associating with an event where the Sikh story would not even be mentioned would further dilute Sikh values in the minds of the impressionable young students.

We were also involved in the set-up of a Multi Faith room which could be used by all student for praying etc. The President made sure that the rules of the room were kept as equal as possible and that no unnecessary restrictions were placed on the few Sikh students that may have used it. This was necessary as the Islamic Society are very eager users of such facilities, and although we didn't begrudge their use of the room, we had to make sure that they didn't take over everything either.

NATIONAL BODY

None

EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS

None officially. Though Snappy Tomato Pizza, Tooting mentioned that they would be happy to provide us with special offers throughout the year. Unfortunately, we were unable to take advantage of this as we only had one event.

SUMMARY

The total cost of the food and drinks for the main event was £79.90. This total was to be split between 11 people – current committee members and previous committee members. Committee members all payed their share but the President was unable to obtain the funds from some of the previous committee members even though they had agreed before the event and despite two emails being sent out after the event with the receipt and account details. Approximately £30 was then given by the President.

ACCOUNTS

THE FUTURE

The Sikh society at St. George's is in dire need of committed individuals who are able to run events during the academic year. Ideally, committee members should be from different years so that absence from the campus (due to placements) doesn't have a negative impact on organising events and the running of the society. Each member should be equally as committed so that they can organise and run events even if senior members are not present.

If internal speakers are not available, then external speakers (of which there are many in the community) can be brought in, as long as the university's external speaker protocol is followed.

Although the number of Sikh students at SGUL is small, it is still possible to have a successful society.

Applications for committee places should be opened up possibly during May to allow adequate time for a new committee to be in place by September.

Sikh principles should always be adhered to and should never be compromised when events are organised or affiliations created.

Outgoing senior students have remained contactable and are available for support and advice if required.