

London Meeting of the Global Sikh Council July 31-August 2 1915 at Guru Singh Sabha, Hounslow

MINUTES

Present

S. Gulbarg Singh US
S. Gurdeep Singh Kundan, Switzerland
S. Gurdial Singh, France
S. Harcharan Singh, Malaysia
Lord Indarjit Singh, UK
S. Inder Singh Chawla, UK
S. Iqbal Singh, France
S. Jatinder Singh Uppal, Thailand and Australia
Lady Kanwaljit Kaur, UK
S. Tara Singh, Pakistan (via Telephone)
S. Kirpal Singh Nijher, US
S. Ramesh Singh, Pakistan (via telephone)
S. Santokh Singh Pelia, Spain
S. Surjit Singh Pahwa, Canada
Many other guests

Apologies

S. Ajmer Singh Gill, Australia,
S. Bawa Singh Jagdev, Australia,
S. Pritam Singh Aulakh, Canada
S. Jagir Singh, Malaysia

Friday 31 July

Members met at the Gurdwara Sahib on the evening of the 31 July with transport and accommodation being provided by the hosts, the Network of Sikh Organizations UK (NSO). They were warmly welcomed by the management of Sri Guru Singh Sabha Hounslow. The evening session was devoted to introductions and information exchange with langar being kindly provided at the Gurdwara Sahib.

Saturday 1st August

The morning session was devoted to discussions on the aims and objectives of the GSC and the preparation of the draft Constitution as detailed below:

Draft Constitution as updated and approved

1. Objectives:

- A. To globally promote the teachings of Sri Guru Nanak, lived and exemplified in the lives and sacrifices of the succeeding Gurus up to Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji

and follow the teachings of Sri Guru Granth Sahib and no other scriptures or individuals.

- B. To follow the Rehat Maryada (Sikh Code of Conduct) passed in 1945 by the SGPC and none other.
- C. To represent collective views of Sikhs on global issues developed through collaboration.
- D. To support, advocate and provide a platform to connect the global Sikhs
- E. To issue position statements on the issues concerning the community.

2. Goals:

To serve Sikhs worldwide through a global body of national level Sikh organizations with no interference in the internal functioning of member organizations.

3. Vision:

To be the voice of Sikhs across the world.

4. Mission:

To achieve the vision through collaboration of national level Sikh organizations.

5. Registered Offices:

- A. The Global Sikh Council (GSC) will have the registered office in the United States of America.
- B. Member countries shall established their own branch offices e.g. GSC Australia

6. Membership:

- A. Membership is open to all National level Sikh organizations registered in their own countries and are membership managed and whose membership satisfy the following:
 - a. All organizations and individuals associated with the Global Sikh Council should declare their loyalty exclusively to the teachings of the Gurus as contained in the Sri Guru Granth Sahib
 - b. Whose membership is open to all Sikhs Organizations satisfying their membership criteria,
 - c. Organization must be managed by their local membership.
 - d. Any organization managed or owned by an individual or a limited group of individuals shall be ineligible to become a member.
- B. In case there are more than one national level Sikh organizations in any one country that qualify, all can become members but can nominate only two representatives to the general body

- c. A National Sikh organization representing a significant percentage of Sikh Organizations in that country may apply for membership by submitting a completed application to the GSC executive committee (EC). The Board will decide on the application.
- D. Membership Fee:
 - a. Initial (Joining Fee):
 - i. For United States of America, Canada, and United Kingdom it would be the equivalent of US\$ 1000.00
 - ii. For all other National bodies it would be the equivalent of US\$ 200.00
 - b. Annual: US\$ 100 to be paid to the GSC by each individual organization
- E. The applicant organization shall become a member after their application is approved by the board of directors (BOD). The Board may reject any application which they feel does not meet the objectives and criteria without stating reasons. The decision of the BOD shall be final.
- F. Member responsibilities:
 - I. Keep a minimum balance, equal to their initial fee, in their account earmarked for GSC activities in their countries.
 - II. Pay for project expenses in their countries.
 - III. Contribute towards the GSC common expenses, their share of expenses as decided by the Executive Committee

7. **General Body (GB):**

- A. The general body shall consist of TWO (2) representatives per member country, nominated by the member organizations.
- B. All decisions should preferably be unanimous, or approved by at least 75% of voting members.
- C. General Body meetings:
 - I. The Annual General Body meeting shall be, face to face and held in March each year. Notice will be given 6 months in advance.
 - II. The annual meeting shall be held in a different country each year if possible.
 - III. The quorum for the face-to-face meeting shall be 30% of the total membership.
 - IV. A General Body (GB) meeting may also be held via other means of communication if everyone has the required technology to participate.
 - V. The host country shall bear the expenses of hosting the meeting.
 - VI. The representatives travelling to the meeting shall arrange for their own travel expenses possibly via their national organizations.
- D. The General Body shall select a Board of Directors as per the process described under the section Board of Directors.
- E. The general body has right to dismiss any Board member by the majority (greater than 80% vote).

8. Board of Directors (BOD):

- A. The Board of Directors (BOD) shall consist of a maximum of fifteen (15) members. Not more than one member of the BOD shall be from any one country.
- B. The term of service for each person selected to serve on the BOD shall be three years
- C. Once selected, a member shall normally complete his/her term of service as BOD member provided that they abide by the rules of constitution of GSC.
- D. No member may serve on the BOD for more than two consecutive terms
- E. Each year five (5) members who complete their term shall retire from the BOD and the same number shall be selected to replace them.
- F. The selection process shall be as follows.
 - I. The Secretary shall request for nominations to the Board for the upcoming year through each member representative of the General Body. A deadline shall be set for receiving the nomination of each member country. The nominee must be from a country not already represented on the Board for the upcoming year.
 - II. The complete list of nominations received shall be sent out to all members of the General Body with a set deadline to select five of the nominees for appointment to the BOD.
 - III. The BOD shall appoint the top five nominees selected by the majority of members. The remaining nominees shall be held in reserve, in their order of majority selection, to fill casual vacancies that may arise.
 - IV. Casual vacancies shall be filled by the Board by selecting the next person in the list above
- G. Responsibilities of the BOD:
 - I. Defining the policies, procedures, scope, constraints, timeframes, resources for the implementation of the General Body directives and ad-hoc projects.
 - II. BOD shall select five (5) individuals from among its membership to serve on the Executive Committee (EC) for the upcoming year. No member may serve for more than two consecutive years.
 - III. Selection Process: The Secretary shall request for nominations to the EC for the upcoming year through each member of the BOD. A deadline shall be set for receiving the nominations. The top five nominees selected by majority shall be appointed with the remaining being held in reserve for casual vacancies that may arise.
 - IV. Overseeing the Executive Committee with the right to dismiss any Executive Committee member for behavior and commitment contrary to GSC objectives.
 - V. Deciding on all issues not specifically covered by the By-laws/constitution.

9. Executive Committee:

- A. Executive Committee (EC) shall consist of five (5) members who will perform the duties of President, Vice President, Secretary, Media and Public Relations Officer and Treasurer.
- B. Assignment of duties shall be decided by the EC members themselves.
- C. Each member of the EC shall be selected to serve a one year term, No member may serve on EC for more than two consecutive years.
- D. Responsibilities of the Executive Committee:
 - I. Implement the policies and procedures developed by the Board.
 - II. Decide on all implementation matters keeping the activities within guidelines, scope, constraints, time frame, and budget as specified by the Board at the start of the activity.
 - III. Seek approval of the board for any changes to the scope, constraints, time frame, and/or Budgets.
 - IV. Hold at least one meeting (physically meeting or via a conference call etc.) a month and additional meetings as required. Presence of three members shall constitute a quorum. All decisions of the Executive Committee shall be by consensus (75% in favor). If consensus is not achieved at first, the parties with strongly opposing views be given a set time to develop a consensus and present it to the EC. In case a consensus is still not possible, at least three in favor will carry the decision. Any member absent from three consecutive Executive meetings without a valid reason shall be assumed to have resigned and replacement appointed by the rest of the Executive Committee members with approval of the Board.
 - V. Form any Special function Committees, Sub Committees, Task forces, or any other subgroups to accomplish ongoing activities / tasks not included in Executive Committee responsibility and beyond the ability of the Executive Committee to handle. All such Committees, Task Forces or any other subgroups shall be directly responsible to the Executive Committee.
 - VI. All individual activities / sub activities, their scope, constraints, and budget must be approved by the Executive Committee prior to action being taken by any of the EC Members, Committees / Task Forces or any other Subgroups. Individuals, Committees, Task Forces or any other subgroups carrying out the activity shall report the progress on a regular basis as defined at the time of assignment.
 - VII. Overall income and expense must be in accordance with the budget approved by the Board.
 - VIII. Any GSC member attending a non-GSC event must not express views or act in a manner that will bring the GSC into disrepute.
 - IX. Provide progress update to the Board via minutes of the EC meetings.
- E. The responsibilities for the members of the Executive are as follows:
 - I. President
 - a. Shall serve as Chief Executive Officer of the Global Sikh Council

- b. Preside over all Executive Committee meetings, Board Meetings, and General Body Meetings.
 - c. Serve as Ex-officio member of all the Committees / Sub Committees, Task forces and other groups.
- II. Vice President:
 - a. Take over the responsibilities of the President in case of inability or absence of the latter.
 - b. Perform activities as assigned by the Executive Committee.
- III. SECRETARY:
 - a. Keep Minutes of the Executive Committee and General Body meetings and provide copies of the same to the Board.
 - b. Handle all communications on behalf of the Executive Committee, and General Body.
 - c. Perform any duties assigned by the Executive Committee.
 - d. Keep all records of minutes and all correspondence safely for later reference and consultation.
- IV. ASSISTANT SECRETARY/MEDIA AND PUBLIC RELATIONS.
 - a. Stay in touch with media regarding organizational activities.
 - b. Be responsible to stay in touch with member organizations via E-news, telephone and all other means.
 - c. Maintain a register of members.
 - d. Help special function committees in implementing Global Sikh Council Programs.
 - e. Any press release must be approved by the President of GSC before release.
- V. TREASURER:
 - a. Keep all financial accounts of the Global Sikh Council
 - b. Solicit, Collect, and distribute funds on behalf of the corporation as authorized by the Executive Committee.
 - c. Report the status of the finances (Actual Vs Budget and Actual Vs Last Year) at every Executive Committee meeting or as required.
 - d. Perform any other duties as assigned by the Executive Committee.

10. Committees / Task Forces:

EC may appoint committees or task forces for various projects and tasks assigned by the Board. All committees and task forces shall report to the EC.

11. Communication:

In case the communication is by email and the response is requested by a specific dead line, only the responses received by that date will be accepted. Any member not responding by the requested date will be assumed that they are in agreement.

12. Disciplinary Action:

Vice president	Lady Kanwaljit Kaur Singh
Secretary	S. Gurdeep Singh Kundan
Treasure	S Harcharan Singh
Media and Public Relations	S Jatinder Singh Uppal

Advisors /Patrons

For advisory role the following names were suggested: Lord Indarjit Singh (UK) and S. Pritam Singh Aulakh (Canada), S Jasbir Singh Mann (USA), S Kirpal Singh Nijher (USA)

No decision was made whether the people in advisory role should be called Patrons or Advisors.

Representation from India: India can send 4 members. The SGPC could be one member.

GSC Logo. No final decision was taken but it was suggested that emphasis be placed on – One God, Ek Oankar, One Creator with the possible inclusion of the Khanda.

4. Discussion on Miscellaneous issues.

Nanakshahi Calendar - There was general agreement that the Nanakshahi Calendar should be accepted as it provides consistency and the Gurburabs are celebrated yearly. It is important to inform the authorities and Government institutions about Gurburabs so that the dates can be incorporated in official diaries well in advance. NSO policy has always been to accept Nanakshahi Calendar. GSC should promote this calendar, copies of calendar will be printed under the banner of GSC and made available worldwide. It was decided that Sri Guru Nanak Dev Ji's birthday, Holla Mahallaa, and Bandichor Divas, shall be fixed as per S. Purewal's advice.

Punjabi language and education should be actively promoted. Emphasis should be on Sikh ethics and values through these educational programs.

Promoting an understanding of Sikh teachings. Seminars to be organized to promote equality and unity especially where high caste/low caste issues can be tackled. Promotion of equality is paramount within Sikh teachings.

Halal being serve in schools.

Concern was expressed over the serving Halal meat in schools. The Rehat Maryada prohibits Sikhs from eating Kutha (halal) meat.

Contact with the Media.

There is a need for urgent response committee in order to issue press release/statements as required when Sikh related issues arise. Currently it was suggested that the above Sikhs in the suggested advisory role will fulfil this responsibility

5. **The Need for Role models and Publicity for good practices**

People in media and in public life in other capacity should be approached and encouraged to recognize themselves as Sikhs and promote Sikhi where ever possible in their professional life.

There are many Gurdwaras in many countries serving langar to general public providing awareness of Sikhi to the wider community.

It was suggested that we should have an open house where non-Sikhs should be invited in Gurdwaras or elsewhere on important occasions (Gurpurab).

Important messages on Sikh teachings should be sent to Gurdwaras and non-Sikh organizations to increase awareness. Letters should be written to other religious leaders (for example Pope, Archbishop.....) on their important celebrations (for example Christmas...) containing message from Sikh teaching appropriate for that occasion.

Lord Singh emphasizing the universality of Sikh teachings mentioned that on Millennium celebrations he was asked to prepare values important for the new millennium as the 20th century was bloodiest in the history of mankind. He wrote values from Sikhism and they were immediately accepted by all other religious leaders.

6. **Next Meeting** – Offers to hold meeting has come from USA, France. Agreed to hold next meeting in France on 18 to 20 March, 2016.