

NETWORK OF SIKH ORGANISATIONS ANNUAL REPORT 2020-2021

NSO Education Report 2020-2021

Due to Coronavirus, no schools were inspected under s48. A s48 inspection is normally conducted every five years as a statutory requirement. The Department for Education (DfE) has advised that the s48 inspections should now resume as soon as possible, coronavirus permitting. Termly meetings with DfE and Ofsted regarding Sikh schools were conducted via zoom.

NSO provides support to schools when and where the need arises. A group of five specialists – three heads of schools and two inspectors has been formed to support schools. Ofsted found safeguarding ineffective in Atam Academy. With a change of management and support from the DfE and NSO, the Academy managed to put appropriate procedures in place and safeguarding was judged effective. Meetings are continued to be held with Khalsa Secondary Academy leadership team to monitor and assess improvements.

S Rajinder Singh Sandhu the Executive Principal of Guru Nanak Academy and Nanaksar Primary School retired after providing 28 years of sterling service. The NSO wishes him a happy retirement. S Rajinder Singh generously thanked Lord and Lady Singh and others in the NSO for the support given to him over many years. He also offered to assist the NSO in further school improvements.

The NSO also supported the work of Lambeth SACRE through attendance at Zoom meetings

Lady Kanwaljit Kaur OBE

Work with the Religious Education Council REC}

The role of the NSO is to ensure that Sikh theology and a Sikh view of the role of religion in education is taken into account in REC deliberations. In May 2018 I was elected to the board of directors for a term of one year. I attended all the board meetings and general meetings in London. I have also served on the Governance Committee of REC since then.

The Commission on Religious Education was established by the REC to review the legal, education and policy frameworks for Religious Education, by a wide-ranging, inclusive and evidence-based process designed to inform policy makers about these areas. The Commission released its final report, ***Religion and Worldviews: the way forward.*** It sets out a National Plan for RE comprising of **11 recommendations** and calls on the Government to consider and adopt it.

The commission proposed that the subject of Religious Education should be called Religion and Worldviews. The subject should explore the important role that religious and non-religious worldviews play in all human life. More information about the recommendations can be found on REC's website).

This year's AGM was held online in May. Elections to the board were held. Chair and the Vice-Chair both decided not to stand for re-election. Previous Chair Mr Trevor Cooling was succeeded by Sarah Lane Cawte. She is the Education Officer for the Free Churches Group. She is also chairs the Governance Committee. So far I have attended all the general meetings and the Governance Committee meetings.

Currently REC Strategic Review is taking place in order to influence high quality of education in Religion and Worldviews. The next general meeting (SRGM) is scheduled for 10th November 2021.

I have also been attending Ofsted's Schools with Religious Character meetings. Next meeting is scheduled to be held in October 2021.

Satnam Singh Poonian

The Sikh Prison Chaplaincy Service

The NSO Sikh Prison Chaplaincy Service (SCS) works with the Ministry of Justice to provide pastoral and rehabilitation support for all Sikh Prisoners in England and Wales. The team is headed by Hon. Director Lord Indarjit Singh and Deputy Directors Gagandeep Singh and Ajmer Singh.

The Pandemic led to the suspension of regular weekly faith services and faith and rehabilitation classes. Sikh Chaplains normally attend more than one prison as part of their employment. However, covering more than one prison a day was stopped to reduce the spread of Covid19. As an interim measure, in-cell phones were provided to assist in pastoral support to the prisoners.

Sikh chaplains, at some risk to themselves also periodically visited Sikh prisoners on the wings to provide them one to one pastoral care, prayer and history books and, where required, turbans or patkas. Written Weekly Sikh sermons were provided to every Sikh prisoner across the prison estates. As a Deputy Director, I have also been broadcasting Weekly Sikh Reflections on National Prison Radio.

Gurpurbs celebrations were not the same as in previous years. We are however hoping for a fuller celebration of Bandi Chor Diwas and Guru Nanak Prakash Utsav, in November 2021.

The Sikh Prison Chaplaincy Service UK would like to thank all the gurdwaras and other Sikhs who supported us and hope that you will

continue to do so in future. The full involvement of the Sikh community is important in resettlement of Sikh prisoners and reducing re-offending. It is important that the Sikh community rises to this challenge and helps overcome the taboo and stigma attached to prisons and Sikhs coming out of the prisons.

If you know any Sikh in prison in need of additional support, please do write to the NSO who will be happy to help.

Gagandeep Singh

Deputy Director Sikh Chaplaincy Service UK.

Armed Services Chaplaincy Report 20-21

The NSO is the MoD recognised Endorsing Authority for the Sikh Chaplaincy with Director Lord Singh of Wimbledon as Endorsing Officer. Madeep Kaur is Chaplain for all three Services.

Weekly Zoom sessions are provided for all Services. Since First Lockdown in March 2020, it was recognized that serving personnel would need more moral and spiritual support due to uncertainty around working patterns and massive pressure on Armed Forces to be deployed to support the countrywide crisis. It was challenging for them and their families. In order to give them consistent support with pro-active thinking, a regular weekly zoom call was set up where all were invited to connect with Sikh values and work on their spiritual resilience. During these calls and offline, consistent discussion of Gurmat (Sikh teachings) ongoing pastoral support has been offered.

Even during the government call to stay home – chaplains had to travel to provide support in some emergency events and that was also the case with Sikh Chaplaincy where some face-to-face visits were necessary to provide necessary support. All protocols were fully respected, but there was some attendant risk.

Services were provided during National Remembrance events but participation was considerably reduced in during the National Remembrance Week in November.

The Sikh Chaplain organised and led zoom meetings to commemorate and celebrate major Sikh festivals and gurburbs. Bandi Chodd Diwas was celebrated with invitations extended to guests to learn about Sikh history and teachings.

Advised on Dress Guide for uniformed personnel: The Defence Sikh Network has been working on the Dress Guide for Sikhs. The idea was to create booklets with pictures of Service personnel in different uniforms in order to advise new and serving personnel.

Ministry of Defence Gutka Project in process: There is a project where we are trying to create a Gutka (prayer book) for all Sikhs in a special field format. This is an ongoing project

Education to new Entry Chaplains about World Faiths: Sikh Chaplain delivered talks and workshops to the Christian Chaplains who join the services. This took place twice last year.

Provided teaching and training support at various Stations: Delivered workshops and talks at Army units and RAF stations throughout the year. In the role of commissioned RAF Chaplain – have provided support at various stations such as RAF Honington, RAF Cranwell, and RAF Cosford. Teaching was conducted on a Beliefs and Values programme, leadership skills and listening skills.

Mandeep Kaur MBE Sikh Chaplain Armed Services

Inter Faith Involvement

- 1) As the national faith community representative member body of the Inter Faith Network for the UK (IFN), NSO has continued to represent the Sikh community both on its Board of Trustees and the Faith Community Forum. The former largely deals with matters of governance, formulating policy and management of the work it carries out with the aim of building good relations between different faiths; whilst the latter provides an opportunity for the national faith communities representative bodies to discuss issues of common concern.

Some Salient Points

IFN's activities continued to be held on-line due to the Covid-19 pandemic - with regular updates on the situation by drawing attention to the faith related Government guidelines and its impact on the activities of the faith communities.

During one of the FCF meetings, NSO highlighted and brought to the attention of other faith communities, the tremendous contributions made by the Sikh community not only in the UK but also in various other parts of the world, whose volunteers were in the forefront, in providing langar, medical supplies, oxygen generators, etc to non-Sikhs wherever required.

- IFN ran a Facebook series highlighting the inter faith activities of the national faith community bodies in which NSO was featured.
- Faith leader messages on social media: During Inter Faith Week in November 2020 Lord Singh was invited to tweet a message in reflection of the occasion.
- On the FCF one of the topics discussed was the faith communities' perspective on climate change and the environment.

- As NSO trustee I serve on various IFN subcommittees among them the nomination panel for the interim IFN Co-Chair, membership sub-committee and Finance and General Purposes Sub-committee.
 - One of the Co-Chairs Bishop Jonathan will be stepping down at the end of 2021 since he is retiring as Bishop of Croydon and moving to Orkney.
- 2) Speaking on Sikh Religion and Culture: Again due to Covid-19 restrictions some of the associations postponed their meetings. However now two bookings have been scheduled to take place later this year – Women’s Institute and a Probus Club.
 - 3) As NSO representative on North Yorkshire SACRE:, I attended regular scheduled meetings online offering inputs as and when required.

Mohinder Singh Chana

NSO Media Report 2020-2021

A tribute to Manjit Singh Riyat - April 21st, 2020

The NSO is saddened by hearing about the death of Mr Manjeet Singh Riyat (52), Emergency Medicine Consultant at University Hospitals of Derby and Burton, who passed away yesterday (Monday 20 April) after contracting COVID-19.I.

NSO guidance on funeral arrangements during the pandemic - May 3rd, 2020

There is general guidance for Sikhs at a time of bereavement detailed in the Sikh Code of Practice (Sikh Reyat Maryada). This will need to be amended/adapted in view of the necessity of limited contact to ensure safety in the current pandemic. General Sikh practice is described first, followed by specific suggestions to meet the current emergency.

A welcome end to ‘flawed’ Sikh ethnic tick box campaign - May 14th 2020

Peers debated the contents of draft Census (England and Wales) Order 2020 in the Lords earlier this week. The flawed Sikh ‘ethnic’ tick box argument was raised following a debate in the Commons last week in which Labour party politicians briefed by the Sikh Federation UK (SFUK) cited questionable statistics.

Covid-19: Advice for reopening gurdwaras - June 4th 2020

Around 17th March 2020 many places of worship including churches, mosques and synagogues made the difficult decision to restrict or hold back services due to the Covid-19 pandemic. This followed direction from the Church of England (CoE), the Muslim Council of Britain, and the Office of the Chief Rabbi. The CoE recommended live stream sermons as an

alternative to worship in church. At the same time, the Network of Sikh Organisations (NSO) gave advice along similar lines to gurdwaras.

Sikh victims of hate crime offered new support - June 5th 2020

Why the flouting of the Rehat Maryada at Bangla Sahib Gurdwara should concern all Sikhs - 12th September 2020

There is one thing that unites all Sikhs around the world irrespective of the status of their personal spiritual journey or background – that is the primacy of the Sri Guru Granth Sahib (SGGS) – the eternal Guru of the Sikhs and Guru Gobind Singh's clear edict 'Guru Manyeo Granth', which recognises the Guru Granth Sahib as the only eternal Guru. But there are insidious forces at play – some with allegiance to Hindutva, who are looking to tarnish, distort and pervert the foundations of our great world religion.

The Sikh Messenger podcast series - 12th September 2020 We are delighted to have launched the Sikh Messenger podcast series last month. In the first of the series, we interviewed Harbakhsh Grewal about his roles at the UK Punjab Heritage Association (UKPHA) and publisher Kashi House. We ask him about the seminal volume Warrior Saints, by historians Parmjit Singh and Amandeep Singh Madra, and the popular exhibitions hosted by UKPHA at the SOAS Brunei gallery – including The Sikhs and World War 1 in 2014.

Tackling Hate Crime

The Network of Sikh Organisations (NSO) has produced a hate crime guide to help signpost members of the Sikh community to organisations who can support them, as well as encouraging victims to report incidents to the police. The NSO has additionally produced a second guide designed to support organisations supporting Sikh victims.

Network of Sikh Organisations briefing on the Hate Crime & Public Order (Scotland) Bill - 17th September 2020

What is good about the proposed legislation? To start on a positive note – the blasphemy law will be repealed. This is something that has not been used in Scotland for over 175 years. The second thing which is noteworthy is age will become a protected characteristic under these proposals – this in our view is indeed a positive step. The Bill will thus extend protective characteristics to the following:

Age, Disability, Race, colour, nationality (including citizenship), or ethnic or national origins, Religion, Sexual orientation, Transgender identity, Variations in sex characteristics.

Sikh hate crime guides published in Punjabi - 25th September 2020

Last month we reported that we had produced hate crime guide to help signpost members of the Sikh community to organisations who can support them, as well as encouraging victims to report incidents to the police. We additionally produced a second guide designed to support organisations supporting Sikh victims.

The APPG for British Sikhs and hate crime: 7th November 2020

At the AGM of the APPG for British Sikhs earlier this year, Chair Preet Gill MP, announced that the group would be looking to address the issue of hate crime against Sikhs. It was agreed that APPG would work with the NSO, given we had already done much work in this field.

Marking the martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahadur - November 24th 2020

Today we are commemorating the martyrdom of the 9th Guru, Guru Tegh Bahadur who on this day in 1675, courageously gave his life defending the right of freedom of belief of those of a different faith to his own

A Gurpurab message - 29th November 2020

Waheguru ji ka Khalsa Waheguru ji ki Fateh

Gurpurb vadhya on this anniversary of the birth of Guru Nanak the founder of Sikhism.

At the time of Guru Nanak's birth, religions both in the West and East were engulfed in bitter rivalry with each claiming a monopoly of truth and a special relationship with God. In his very first sermon Guru Nanak taught: Na koi Hindu, na koi Mussalman

Success in campaign against media's use of the word 'Asians' to describe grooming gangs - 11th December 2020

Over the last few years, we've been lobbying for change in the Editors' Code of Practice which sets out the rules that newspapers and magazines regulated by The Independent Press Standards Organisation (IPSO). Our issue has been in relation to the print media's regular and misleading use of the vague word 'Asian' to describe those convicted in grooming gang cases in towns like Rotherham, Rochdale, Telford, and Oxford. The perpetrators in such cases have been almost always men of Pakistani Muslim heritage. The use of the word Asian simply diffused responsibility and has now been amended to reflect NSO concerns .

Home Office report into 'grooming gangs' - 18th December 2020

The Home Office's research paper into 'Group-based Child Sexual Exploitation Characteristics of Offending' was published earlier this week, but it fails to acknowledge one of the well evidenced motivations behind grooming gangs like those in Rochdale and Rotherham - the religion and culture of the perpetrators.

The Birth Anniversary of Guru Gobind Singh Ji - the 10th Guru of the Sikhs - 4th January 2021

We at the Network of Sikh Organisations UK offer the Sikh community warmest greetings on the auspicious occasion of the birthday of Guru Gobind Singh ji, the tenth Guru of the Sikhs.

Joint faith group response: culturally motivated sexual grooming - 15th January 2021

As UK faith representatives, we support the persistent efforts of Home Secretary Priti Patel who has in the face of some considerable opposition decided to release the government report on, 'Group based child sexual exploitation characteristics of offending.' The Home Office report talks of 'othering' of victims by perpetrators, but remarkably failed to address one of the more obvious motivations behind street based sexual grooming gangs in the UK – that is culture linked to religion.

Indian farmers defenders of democracy - 3rd February 2021

Joint Press Release: Global Sikh Council & Network Of Sikh Organisations UK

We are writing to express our admiration and full support for hundreds of thousands of Indian farmers and their supporters from all walks of life. Despite the winter cold, and police oppression, they have been demonstrating for the months against unjust laws that threaten their livelihoods. Their courageous stand against injustice gives hope for an end to the systematic erosion of democracy in India.

NSO submission for the APPG for the Pakistani Minorities inquiry - 12th February 2021

Over the last few years, the NSO has followed cases of forced conversion and written about the forced marriage and abuse of religious minority girls and women in Pakistan. This is an issue that has an impact on all non-Muslim minority girls in Pakistan – predominantly Hindu and Christian girls, but it has also impacted the minority Sikh community too. One of the most high-profile cases in recent years has been the case of Jagjit Kaur. She was alleged to be kidnapped at gunpoint from her home in Nankana Sahib (Lahore), converted (given the Muslim name Ayesha) and married to a Muslim boy

Supplementary NSO submission: Hate Crime and Public Order (Scotland) Bill - 21st February 2021

This submission is supplementary to our original REF: J/S5/20/HC/1756 dated 17th September 2020 and our 2nd submission dated 16th November 2020 REF: J/S5/20/HC/1771, which followed the oral hearing on 10th November 2020 in which our Deputy-Director Hardeep Singh gave evidence to the Justice Committee alongside several other organisations. This 3rd submission is in response to consideration of options tabled for a new overarching free speech clause, which has been proposed by the Secretary for Justice.

The Press Freedom and Safety of Protestors: India Debate - 9th March 2021

Over the last few weeks, the NSO has worked tirelessly with Cllr. Gurch Singh who set up a UK government and Parliament petition (e-petition 563473) on the farmers' protest in India, which received over 115,000 signatories. The petition was debated in a Westminster Hall debate yesterday and we are pleased to see our efforts come to fruition. Of the 19 speakers, 17 spoke in favour of the farmers' and many of them had

been briefed by our Director, Lord Singh of Wimbledon, and other members of the NSO.

The Scottish Hate Crime Bill: Our Stand for Free Speech with Free to Disagree - 12th March 2021

The Scottish Parliament voted in favour of the controversial Hate Crime Bill yesterday despite a groundswell of opposition from civil society groups including the Network of Sikh Organisations (NSO). The NSO joined the efforts of the campaign group Free to Disagree last year, because we realised proposals in the Bill would have a significant impact on civil liberties and a 'chilling effect' on free speech. We worked with our allies in playing a major part in pushing back against controversial elements of the Bill, with some success, and gave both oral and written evidence to the Scottish Justice Committee.

Director's Vaisakhi message - 14th April 2021

Once again Sikhs throughout the world are celebrating the festival of Vaisakhi, one of the most important days in the Sikh calendar. Vaisakhi is a tale of brave martyrdom followed by the challenge of new beginnings.

NSO Schools Improvement Services - 23rd April 2021

The Sikh community with the support of the DfE have made tremendous efforts to establish their local faith schools over the last three decades. Most of the schools are thriving and outcomes are high however when a school seriously underperforms and is threatened for academisation or re-brokerage, the issues can rapidly become highly sensitive for the local community.

Human Rights

Question from Lord Singh (Director NSO) to Foreign and Commonwealth Office Asked 13 November 2017

Question: 'To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of India concerning the arrest of UK citizen Jagtar Singh Johal; and what response, if any, they have received.'

Answer: 'The British High Commission has raised this case with the Indian authorities. Following high level lobbying, consular staff visited Mr Johal on 16th November. The Rt Hon Field, the Minister for Asia and the Pacific met with Mr Johal's MP and brother on 27 November. We will continue to raise this case with the authorities to ensure we have regular and full consular access.'

Press coverage and highlights - 2020-2021

- Success in pushing back the Sikh Federation's flawed Sikh 'ethnic' tick box campaign for 2021 Census. The debate on the flawed idea of a Sikh 'ethnic' tick box raged on during the 2020-21 period. We succeeded in our campaign opposing the idea.
Coverage on the issue in some of the following publications: *The Times of India*, *The Hindu*, *The i-news* online and *Asian Voice*.
- Opposition to the Scottish Hate Crime Bill

There was significant press coverage of our involvement in the Free to Disagree campaign where we worked with a coalition of groups including the National Secular Society, The Adam Smith Institute, The Manifesto Club and Index on Censorship amongst others.

The following publications quoted our Deputy-Director, Hardeep Singh – *The Times*, *The National*, *The Scotsman* and *The Express*.

He wrote Opinion editorials about the Bill for the *Press and Journal* and the *Spectator*,

The NSO's opposition to the Bill was mentioned on the flagship BBC politics programme - Politics Live, and Liam Kerr MSP, quoted Hardeep in the Scottish parliament.

Letters/quotes in the *Times*

On 2nd of April 2021 our director, wrote a letter to the *Times* in response to the Sewell report.

On 22nd February 2021, our director wrote a letter to the *Times* on the Indian farmers' protest.

On 26th December 2020, our director was quoted in the *Times* following the Queen's speech.

Hardeep Singh

Deputy Director (Media) NSO

NETWORK OF SIKH ORGANISATIONS
43 DORSET ROAD, MERTON PARK
LONDON, SW19 3EZ

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

	2021	
	£	£
Bank interest receivable		190
Donations and affiliation fees		2,500
Prison Services		23,000
NHS Grant		20,000
		<hr/> 45,690
Administration expenses:		
Secretarial services	7,721	
Prison Chaplaincy	23,974	
NSO education services-Kanwaljit kaur	33,658	
Computer costs	899	
Brochure and Sikh Messenger	289	
Interfaith Network	375	
Depreciation	33	
		<hr/> 66,949
Total expenses		<hr/> 66,949
Net loss for the year	£	<hr/> (21,259) <hr/>

NETWORK OF SIKH ORGANISATIONS
43 DORSET ROAD, MERTON PARK
LONDON, SW19 3EZ

BALANCE SHEET AT 31 MARCH 2021

	Note	2021 £	£
Fixed assets:			
Tangible assets	1		186
Current assets:			
Trade debtors		43,000	
Cash at bank		125,344	
		<hr/> 168,344	
Current liabilities:			
Other creditors		523	
		<hr/> 523	
Net current assets			167,821
		<hr/> £	<hr/> 168,007
Capital:			
At 1 April 2020			189,266
Net loss		21,259	
		<hr/> 21,259	
		<hr/> £	<hr/> 168,007

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS AT 31 MARCH 2021

1. TANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS

	Equipment £	Total £
Cost		
At 1 April 2020	2,076	2,076
At 31 March 2021	2,076	2,076
Depreciation		
At 1 April 2020	1,857	1,857
For the year	33	33
At 31 March 2021	1,890	1,890
Net Book Amounts		
At 31 March 2021	£ 186	£ 186
At 31 March 2020	£ 219	£ 219

NETWORK OF SIKH ORGANISATIONS
43 DORSET ROAD, MERTON PARK
LONDON, SW19 3EZ

ACCOUNTANTS' REPORT

You have approved the accounts for the year ended 31 March 2021 set out on pages 2 to 4. In accordance with your instructions, we have prepared these unaudited accounts from the accounting records and information and explanations supplied to us.

26 October 2020

Haartwells
Chartered Certified Accountants
25 Park Street West
Luton
Beds LU1 3BE

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE'S CERTIFICATE

We certify that the books, vouchers and information produced to our accountants, from which the attached accounts have been prepared, contain a full and correct record of our business transactions to the best of our knowledge.

I. Singh Indarjit Singh

Director Network of Sikh Organisations (Wso)