

The President  
Sri Guru Singh Sabha  
2-8 Park Avenue  
Southall  
Middlesex UB1 3AG

Your Ref:  
Our Ref SC/SGSS/1/CNSTN/2017/01

19<sup>th</sup> April 2017

Dear Sir

**Re: Proposal to revise the Constitution of the Sri Guru Singh Sabha, Southall (Registered Charity No. 280707) – Politicisation of the Executive Committee (EC)**

I refer to the above and write with a particular concern that has been brought to your attention previously but which appears to have been overlooked. It was suggested that the Constitution should from hereon in include a clause which prohibits office bearers of political parties standing for the Sabha's EC, especially local government councillors and MP's. Yet I understand that though the current EC has considered this matter, it has been rejected, no doubt due to the fact that currently local authority councillors are in fact EC members. So, this is highly objectionable and wrong and I urge the EC to reconsider please.

Up until recent times, no member who was a local government elected councillor was ever '*permitted*' to stand for election to the Sabha's EC. This was of course never written into the Sabha's constitution, but it was an unwritten *rule* which the Sabha's membership always observed. Yet in recent times this rule has been overlooked which is very worrying. Previously, the Sabha's membership, trustees and leading activists always knew that once councillors (and after this it could be MP's) began joining the Sabha's EC, the case of political bias and balance would emerge. As the Sabha's membership is made up of Sikhs from all political persuasions, by having councillors who inevitably also then represent their particular political parties, those from opposing political parties will legitimately be able to argue for balanced representation and neutrality within the EC. Even more worrying, you will be well aware that even within a political party there will be rival factions and if a councillor is affiliated to one particular faction and is also a member of the Sabha's EC, then the rival faction of the same party might begin to cause trouble for the Sabha owing to personal gripes. If this happens the Sabha's progress will be stifled, which is wholly wrong and frankly the elementary tenets of our faith teach us to progress outside of political circles. We require politicians to help us, but if they can't, don't or won't then they should not meddle in our affairs and certainly we should not grant them a platform so to do.

We are already seeing the handicaps of having politicians from only one political party in the EC, as currently there are two Labour councillors in the EC. No doubt these councillors didn't support the subject legitimate clause to be included in the Sabha's constitution and furthermore, no doubt they lobbied their colleagues on the EC to also not support the said clause being included and hence it was rejected. The point being that the interests of the Sabha are no longer foremost; it is the personal interests of EC members that matter more and this is very wrong. Members of the Sabha do not want their religious charity to be a platform where politically ambitious people (who these days receive

significant pecuniary advantage for being councillors) use the Sabha to promote themselves for higher and higher political accolade. The Gurudwara has already suffered in this last period due to the unrestrained political meddling and factional baggage that the politicians inevitably bring with them. It is about time this all stopped. Now with the impending General election, will it not be the case that the politicians will fall over themselves inviting the prospective parliamentary candidates and sitting MP's to speak at the Gurudwara? Will they not be seeking favours for so doing? Do the politicians go to Churches seeking votes? No they don't so why Gurudwaras? Of course, because that is what politics is all about, but what about the Gurudwara, who will stand-up for the Sabha? Do the councillors bring thousands of pounds from their respective local authorities in grants to the Sabha, without return? No, they don't; so I suggest that if councillors become imbedded in the EC (which will happen if they are not prohibited from standing) then in the future there will be far too many problems and the EC will forever be embroiled in political angling and this can all be avoided now by amending the constitution to bar such candidates.

The fact is that the EC is not supreme; the EC is elected to manage the affairs of the Sabha with the consent of the membership. It is the membership that is supreme in the context of the constitution, otherwise of course the Sangat is supreme, who donate tremendous amounts of money and with God's grace truly believe in our faith, but if the Sangat starts to believe that the Gurudwara is more a place for the politicians to pursue their aims than a place of religious worship and teaching, then their faith may abate and without worshippers there will be no Gurudwara. The Sangat generally doesn't trust politicians and are annoyed when time and again politicians are presented to them, at Nagar Kirtans and other gatherings and the need for this escapes me.

I may also mention that in the context of the Sabha's constitution, I have been approached by many members to bring this matter to your notice as by allowing councillors and other political office bearers into the EC, this is laying the foundations for on-going litigation and I am sure you would not want this to be your legacy. Therefore, it is imperative in my view and the view of many of the Sabha's members with whom I speak, that political office bearers are prohibited from standing for the Sabha's EC.

Further, it should be noted, that even the Charity Commission frowns upon political interference in religious charities and certainly it is against Commission rules for religious charities to be used by politicians as platforms for their personal progress and gains, which is a blatant risk if councillors and other political office bearers are allowed to stand for the Sabha's EC.

So once again, I urge you and the EC to use the valuable opportunity presently before you to return to the old convention, but now with a particular clause prohibiting political office bearers (especially councillors and MP's) from being members of the Sabha's EC, from taking part in the Sabha's EC member's selection and election process.

I shall gladly be available to discuss this matter with your colleagues in the EC or any sub-committee, but it is crucial that this clause be added into the Sabha's constitution please.

I will of course be sending a copy of this letter to the Charity Commission.

**DELETED**  
**Life Member**

**M: DELETED**

**Encs:**