



ੴ ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ॥
ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ, ਸ੍ਰੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਸਿੰਘ ਸਭਾ, ਕਰੋਲੀ, ਸਸੈਕਸ॥

The Gurdwara and Sports Centre Siri Guru Singh Sabha,
Ifield Green, Crawley, Sussex, RH11 0NU (01293 530163)



Press Release – January 2022

This press release has been prepared to address misinformation and rumours that are being spread in relation to a dispute that has taken place relating to Siri Guru Singh Sabha, Crawley.. These rumours are damaging to the integrity of the of the Gurdwara and its Sabha and therefore, it is important that the community, at large, knows and understands what has happened.

The Gurdwara operated from a single site at Spencers Road for many years. In January 2012, because of the need for expansion and better parking facilities, the Charity acquired an 8-acre site nearby, at Ifield Green. Following a vote taken in accordance with the terms of the Constitution, the Charity moved from Spencers Road to Ifield Green in 2015, with the intention at that time of selling its former site to enable the development and growth of the Ifield Green site for the benefit of the Sabha.

Some members of the Sangat subsequently changed their mind and opposed that move and went to Court to prevent the sale of Spencers Road. Having obtained an injunction, they were ordered by a High Court Judge to progress the dispute, ie the argument as to whether the move to Ifield Green from Spencers Road was lawful. Despite the Court Order, Spencers Road Group (the Group) took no such action and abandoned those proceedings and started running Spencers Road as their own private gurdwara, claiming that they were in fact the true trustees for the charity. They also began collecting charitable donations purportedly on behalf of the Charity despite not being recognised to do so by the Charity Commission.

Due to this failure by the Group to resolve the dispute, the Trustees of the charity had no choice but to instruct solicitors to begin fresh proceedings. These were issued in the London High Court in 2019 and Judgement was handed down on 12 March 2021. The Judge found that the Group's arguments that they were the proper elected trustees of the charity claim were "hopeless" and that the procedure followed to move to Ifield Green was entirely lawful. He also declared that the Trustees of the Gurdwara at Ifield Green were validly elected.

The Group have asked the Court twice for permission to appeal the Judgement and both have been refused. Their final attempt to challenge the Judgement will take place in February.



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Whilst the Trustees are delighted that their views on this case from 2015 have been fully vindicated by the Court, they are also extremely saddened by the fact that the Charity has been required to fight a weak case pursued by a handful of individuals in the Spencers Road Group. They accept that the majority of the Spencers Road Sangat was not aware of nor actively involved in the pursuit of the litigation. Nevertheless, the decisions made by those individuals in the Group wasted hundreds of thousands of pounds of the Sabha and Sangat's money (for both sides) in legal costs and created deep divisions within the Crawley Sikh community.

Since the Defendants lost this case, we are aware that false rumours and misleading videos are being shared amongst members of the Sangat. These social media messages and videos make dishonest, and in some cases, defamatory allegations regarding the Charity. The spreading of false stories has led to verbal assaults and threats being made against the Trustees.

After a difficult dispute, the way forward should be for the community to come together and work towards a positive future based upon the truth, as we are taught. However, rather than believing in the principles of Chardi Kala, it is unfortunate that some still cannot accept the Court's very clear decision. A very simple solution has always been open to the Group for the past several years; to make a reasonable offer buy the Spencer Road site, but they have declined to take that forward. Nevertheless, we remain hopeful that they will now engage with us positively and we wish to explore all reasonable options with them.

Some people are portraying their own version of the Court dispute, which is unfortunately very different from what took place. Every point made above is supported by the Court papers. If anybody would like to see a copy of the Statements of Case, the Judgment, the Judgment Order or the Order refusing permission to appeal to corroborate the above, please email the committee at info@crawleygurdwara.org.uk.]

We would like to conclude this communication with some invaluable advice for all Gurdwaras in the UK; Siri Guru Singh Sabha, Crawley, has been successful in this case largely due to having a robust Charity Constitution and practices of record-keeping for all decisions made by the Sabha as part of the management of the Charity. We strongly urge all Gurdwaras to ensure that their respective Constitution is fit for purpose, aligned with UK Charity



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Law and that they have robust practices in place to ensure the Constitution and Charity Law is implemented and abided by respectively.

Jasvinder K Johal (President of SGSS, Crawley, Ifield Green, Charity No: 1063786)

13th January 2021