

Siri Guru Singh Sabha Croydon

176 ST. JAMES'S ROAD, CROYDON SURREY CR0 2BU
TEL: 020 8688 8155 EMAIL: INFO@CROYDONGURDWARA.CO.UK



ਸ੍ਰੀ ਅਕਾਲ ਪੁਰਖ ਜੀ ਸਹਾਇ ॥
ਧਨੁ ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਤੇਰੀ ਓਟ ॥

Guru Roop, Guru Pyari Saadh Sangat Ji,

ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ ਜੀ ਕਾ ਖਾਲਸਾ ॥ ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ ਜੀ ਕੀ ਫਤਹ ॥

In light of the recent events we have all faced during the last few months, the Committee wishes to update the Sangat on what has been happening in the background so that everyone can be assured that the committee are taking responsible steps in managing the Gurdwara during the current lock down.

In this Official Statement we will update the Sangat on:

- Covid-19 & what the committee has been doing
- What has been happening in the Gurdwara during lock down
- Vaisakhi 2020 plan
- NHS contribution update
- Elections & AGM update
- How we have been communicating to the Sangat
- What issues have we faced

1. Covid-19 Update

Prior to the lock down, the Gurdwara had taken several steps to safeguard the Sangat and the Gurdwara. The below list highlights what was done:

- all towels were removed
- paper dispensers and soap were ordered and placed around the Gurdwara
- announcements were made from the stage updating the Sangat
- the Gurdwara notice board was updated with the latest advice, and was made available for all to see at various parts of the Gurdwara in both Punjabi & English
- Our website and Instagram social media pages were updated with the latest guidance and advice
- We sent a guideline document in both English & Punjabi to Sangat via WhatsApp
- All school visits and house programmes were cancelled
- Children were updated and taught to wash their hands at the Saturday classes by the Sewadars
- only appointed Sewadars were given permission to make langar
- all Sewadars serving and making langar were requested to cover their mouths, wear gloves and to serve with a ladle

Sunday, 03 May 2020

Siri Guru Singh Sabha Croydon

176 ST. JAMES'S ROAD, CROYDON SURREY CR0 2BU
TEL: 020 8688 8155 EMAIL: INFO@CROYDONGURDWARA.CO.UK



Timelines of communication to the Sangat about Gurdwara plans around Covid-19:

Date	What was communicated	How was this communicated?	How was this decided?
12 th March	Advice and guidelines in both English and Punjabi about handling Covid-19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WhatsApp • Instagram • Website • Gurdwara Stage • Gurdwara Notice Board • Gurdwara TV Screen in the shoe area • Notices around the kitchen, langar hall and serving area 	Collective committee decision
13 th March	Provisions made by the Gurdwara	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WhatsApp • Instagram • Website • Gurdwara Stage • Gurdwara Notice Board • Gurdwara TV Screen in the shoe area • Notices around the kitchen, langar hall and serving area 	Collective committee decision
17 th March	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confirmation of cancellation of all Diwans but Gurdwara would remain open for Matha Thek, Langar and Parshad until Vaisakhi 13th April pending review and advice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WhatsApp • Instagram 	Meeting which took place on the 17 th March and <u>agreed by all members</u>

Sunday, 03 May 2020

Siri Guru Singh Sabha Croydon

176 ST. JAMES'S ROAD, CROYDON SURREY CR0 2BU
TEL: 020 8688 8155 EMAIL: INFO@CROYDONGURDWARA.CO.UK



CROYDON GURDWARA

	<p>from the Government.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Gurdwara had created a Corona Virus sub-committee		
22 nd March	Confirmation of Gurdwara closing for 1 week pending review	WhatsApp	Meeting which took place on the 22nd March by the Corona Virus sub-committee
12 th April	<p>Conference Call with committee members who agreed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Gurdwara is in lock down• Gurdwara premises will be temporarily closed and Sangat should remain at home• Giani Ji cannot leave to go to any funerals/people's homes at a risk of spreading the virus.• All activities are permanently on hold		This was a meeting were all Trustees and all committee members unanimously agreed this plan. This was met with <u>NO OBJECTION</u>

Following the week after the 12th April, it was agreed to keep the Gurdwara closed until further notice.

How has the committee been communicating with each other?

We have our own WhatsApp group but we also have had conference calls on:

- 17th March
- 22nd March
- 12th April
- 30th April

Sunday, 03 May 2020

Siri Guru Singh Sabha Croydon

176 ST. JAMES'S ROAD, CROYDON SURREY CR0 2BU
TEL: 020 8688 8155 EMAIL: INFO@CROYDONGURDWARA.CO.UK



What else did we do?

Once lock down had happened we communicated this to the Sangat via WhatsApp and Instagram on the below listed dates with the following updates:

- Food & Essentials Hub information from the Croydon Age UK Charity- 24th March
- Coronavirus support for vulnerable person guidelines- 24th March
- Nishkam SWAT Free mobile Langar information- 30th March
- Sikh2Inspire Quiz Night for families- 7th April
- Vaisakhi 2020 update- 9th April
- Link to over 100 free Vaisakhi activity sheets for families to do- 9th April
- Avtar Purab of Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji Maharaj with a link to their history and a PDF document - 12th April
- Our first ever Gurdwara Newsletter which contained a formal announcement of the current closure, links for Sangat to watch live stream diwans from Takhat Kesgarh Sri Anandpur Sahib, Takhat Sachkhand Sri Hazoor Sahib, and Sri Harminder Sahib Sri Amritsar Sahib .We also included links for families with activities they can do as a family to enjoy Vaisakhi, and links to Sikhi films to watch on YouTube.
- Vaisakhi 2020 History and PDF for all- 13th April
- Perakash of Sri Guru Arjan Dev Ji & PDF- 14th April
- 4k footage link of our main asthaans- 17th April
- Avtar Purab of Bhagat Dhanna Ji and links to watch- 20th April
- Coronavirus fund raiser for the NHS- 24th April
- Perakash Sri Guru Angad Dev Ji and PDF- 25th April

Cleaning Plans:

Before the lock down the Gurdwara had arranged meetings with 3 professional cleaning companies to discuss a professional grease deep clean of the kitchen, serving area, langar hall, and cleaning of all toilets. On the 20th March meetings took place with 2 companies; 981 Cleaning & ADN Cleaning Services. A 3rd meeting was booked for the 24th March with Clean Secure Watch, part of the Campbell Group, but was cancelled as the committee had agreed to a full lock down. These cleaning companies found via www.Bark.com which is a website to engage professional service companies.

Prior to the Gurdwara opening we will deploy a full professional deep clean from a cleaning company and work with a team of Sewadars to clean Sachkhand, the Darbar Hall and all rooms.

How are we supporting the local Sangat who are vulnerable?

On the 24th March we sent a message via WhatsApp to Sangat members asking for help to identify anyone over 65 who may be vulnerable and needs langar, help with shopping or picking up any medication. We also asked Sangat members to confirm who could help prepare the langar from their own homes, and who could help with deliveries.

Sunday, 03 May 2020

Siri Guru Singh Sabha Croydon

176 ST. JAMES'S ROAD, CROYDON SURREY CR0 2BU
TEL: 020 8688 8155 EMAIL: INFO@CROYDONGURDWARA.CO.UK



We have been contacting elderly Sangat members on a regular basis to ask if we can help them. If you are aware of anyone who needs support, please feel free to forward their contact details to us. We have been doing regular food drops to Sangat who requested langar and are happy to help anyone with this sewa.

2. What has been happening in the Gurdwara during lock down

Sewa of Guru Maharaj has never stopped since lock down and nor will it ever stop. The Giani Ji's employment contract includes a very detailed written description of their duties. The list below highlights what is happening daily:

- Maharaj' Parkash happens at 5:30am
- 5 white bastar of Maharaj are changed every day. These are then washed, ironed and used.
- The top rumale and 2 palkae are changed regularly by Giani Ji
- There are currently 2 Sehaj Path' taking place
- Rehraas Sahib & Sukhasan

What sewa is not being done?

For the past 10 years + a group of Sewadars come every Tuesday and clean the whole Darbar Hall, change the full rumala set including the Chandoa Sahib. Due to lock down this sewa has not been happening as some of the main Sewadars are elderly, and others have young children. Therefore, we are grateful for Giani Ji's assistance with carrying out as much of this sewa as possible for the interim.

When we deploy a full team to clean the Gurdwara for re-opening, we shall have all of this sewa done.

Is the Gurdwara being cleaned?

We are in regular communication with Giani Ji, and have specifically instructed him with his family to maintain cleanliness within the Gurdwara.

3. Vaisakhi 2020 Plan:

Whilst it was sad that for the first time we could not celebrate Vaisakhi, we want to ensure the Sangat that when lock down is lifted by the Government and we can assume normal operations, we will celebrate Vaisakhi in the same way we would have done in April.

We will do an Akhand Path, we will do Nishan Sahib Sewa with the Panj Pyare, and call a Jatha for a Kirtan Diwan.

Sunday, 03 May 2020

Siri Guru Singh Sabha Croydon

176 ST. JAMES'S ROAD, CROYDON SURREY CR0 2BU
TEL: 020 8688 8155 EMAIL: INFO@CROYDONGURDWARA.CO.UK



What did we plan for Vaisakhi 2020 if there was no lock-down:

For the month of April we had planned the following activities for the celebration of Vaisakhi:

- **4th April Vaisakhi Workshop:** Sewadars from Sikh2Inspire and Sahibzada Baba Ajit Singh Ji Gatka Akhara were going to do workshops for the Sangat in English covering the importance of 5 Takhat, 5 Baniya, 5 Kakkar, and 5 Pyare
 - **11th April 12 Hour Chaupai Sahib Akhand Jaap**
 - **13th April: Vaisakhi Evening Diwan**
 - **17th-19th April Akhand Path Sahib:** Nishan Sahib Sewa and Kirtan Darbar by Bhai Gurpartap Singh Ji, Hazoori Ragi Jatha from Takhat Sachkhand Sri Hazoor Sahib
 - **25th April: Amrit Sanchar:** this was the first time in history an Amrit Sanchar was due to take place in Croydon. **It is also important to note that certain members had strongly opposed to this and wanted it cancelled**
- 4. NHS contribution update:**

On the 22nd April Tooting & Southfields Gurdwara had approached Croydon Gurdwara as they were each donating £10,000.00 to the NHS and wanted to know if Croydon Gurdwara wished to also be part of this collective effort to support the NHS.

The Gurdwara had been in touch with the Communications Team at Croydon University Hospital and we were told by them they require funding to purchase supplies, and that they do not need any food as local restaurants and supermarkets were regularly supplying them.

Via our WhatsApp group that same day we had a discussion about supporting this. Our constitution states we can spend up to £3,000.00 and anything above that will require an AGM. Due to the nature of the current Covid-19, our constitution does not have anything to provide guidance or advice on a national crisis situation, and under the approval of the Chairman & Trustees it was agreed that the Gurdwara would donate £10,000.00 and also allow Sangat members to donate if they wish.

On the 23rd April communications were sent via WhatsApp & Instagram.

On the 24th April a payment link was created on the Gurdwaras website and was sent via WhatsApp and Instagram for anyone wishing to donate.

As of the 2nd May, we have the following amounts raised for the NHS:

- £10,000.00 from the Gurdwara
- £7,921.00 paid into the Gurdwara account marked "NHS"
- PayPal donations of £1,508.47
- **Total donation stands at £19,429.47**

Sunday, 03 May 2020

Siri Guru Singh Sabha Croydon

176 ST. JAMES'S ROAD, CROYDON SURREY CR0 2BU
TEL: 020 8688 8155 EMAIL: INFO@CROYDONGURDWARA.CO.UK



Next Steps:

We have left this donation open until the 7th May allowing everyone a chance to donate, and then the Trustees will present a Cheque formally to the NHS. Before this takes place, we are currently waiting for 1 Trustee to sign a document agreeing to the release of funds.

5. Elections & AGM update

Prior to Covid-19 we had agreed to hold the Elections & AGM on the 31st May. As we have been in lock down the Elections & AGM will take place at a later date and we can collectively agree a suitable timeframe to plan for and then hold these key events.

6. How we have been communicating to the Sangat

We have a broadcast list on WhatsApp of 81 people who we regularly send communications to. We also have an Instagram account, and have recently redesigned our Gurdwara website.

In addition, we have recently created an official Gurdwara Facebook page, SGSS Croydon which is live and a Twitter Account.

How can you talk to us?

Our website has all of our key contact information and we encourage you all to contact us for any queries.

7. What issues have we faced

Without committee permission or dialogue a member of the Sangat contacted the NHS committing to 100 meals a day 5 days a week. In addition, this member committed employment to students through the Gurdwara and payment of money with no discussion, authority or approval from the committee.

We want to remind everyone please keep the dialogue with the committee as we are responsible for anything that happens in the Gurdwara. If any problems arise, we are the legally responsible persons for the Gurdwara and its activities.

What actions have we taken?

We have reported this to the Charity Commission as we do not want any false employment allegations from anyone.

Siri Guru Singh Sabha Croydon

176 ST. JAMES'S ROAD, CROYDON SURREY CR0 2BU
TEL: 020 8688 8155 EMAIL: INFO@CROYDONGURDWARA.CO.UK



Nishan Sahib Sewa

Some Sangat members, through their passion, sharda, and love for the Gurdwara wished for the Nishan Sahib Sewa to be done during lockdown. The plan communicated to the Committee was that a few members would go into the car park and do the sewa.

Whilst this was agreed, it soon became apparent that in fact that larger Sangat numbers were invited do the sewa, that they would enter the Gurdwara to make Parshaad, Langar and start a Sehaj Path. Some of this information was sent out via a WhatsApp voice recording thereby misleading to Sangat. In addition, those Sangat members and committee members who were planning this event did so without formal approval and in the knowledge that this was contrary to the stance already adopted by Croydon Gurdwara to remain temporarily closed. When they did eventually communicate with us, the information presented was inconsistent with their proposals and they were unable to show that the number of attendees would be sufficiently limited.

We have followed the evolving government guidance on the coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic closely and are aware of guidelines being interpreted slightly more flexibly by other Sikh organisations in response to it. However, many gurdwaras, including ours, have completely stopped services.

Although it is not an easy decision to make, we have concluded that temporary closure of normal gatherings is necessary to prevent transmission of Covid-19 and that includes the proposed Nishan Sahib Sewa as put forward to us. We will review our decision in line with Government guidelines.

The Nishan Sahib Sewa happens once a year, and is enjoyed by all Sangat, young and old.

For clarification, Giani Ji did contact Sundeep Singh, his primary committee contact, to clarify the plan for the Nishan Sahib, as Sangat members continued to contact him.

Matters took a turn when inappropriate messages were posted on a WhatsApp group chat (including the voice note between Giani Ji and Sundeep Singh) and we then referred our decision to the Chairman. It was his opinion that such gatherings or programmes should be delayed until such time as the lockdown is lifted.

We take this opportunity to confirm that the committee has found no basis for the personal comments directed at Sundeep Singh and the General Secretary and the demands for resignation and written apologies. Our decision is based on the fact that the voice note was an internal committee matter, to Giani Ji, to reiterate a committee decision without mention of any specific names but translating clearly that the temporary closure was to continue regardless of the circumstances or persons requesting otherwise. The message is not offensive towards any particular person or persons.

We ask the Sangat to behave respectfully during these difficult times and to use social media platforms responsibly and in the spirit of our faith.

Sunday, 03 May 2020

Siri Guru Singh Sabha Croydon

176 ST. JAMES'S ROAD, CROYDON SURREY CR0 2BU
TEL: 020 8688 8155 EMAIL: INFO@CROYDONGURDWARA.CO.UK



Final notes from the committee

Sadh Sangat Ji, we are not perfect, we are full of mistakes, have made countless mistakes, and will continue to do so.

Like many of you, we have families, children, work and responsibilities and are doing this sewa as best as we can in our free time. We ask for your help, support, guidance, and pyaar in this task.

We have absolutely no desire to cause any offence to anyone, cause any friction or divide people- we are here to serve the Sangat and do our best to manage the Gurdwara.

If we make mistakes, please do not attack us, or instantly look to cast us out. Talk to us, point out our mistakes and guide us with the experience you have.

Everything needs to be done with open communication, respect, compassion, and pyaar. Every single one of us is capable of thousands of mistakes, so we humbly request to please treat us as your children and work with us rather than against.

We will adhere to the government guidelines, we will not risk anyone's health or wellbeing, and will do everything we can to communicate to you committee and the trustees' decisions that affect the entire Sabha.

With these words, we beg for forgiveness for all of our mistakes we have made, and anything written in this document. We pray for the chardi kala of every single Sangat member, and hope this lock down lifts soon so we can all join together in Sadh Sangat and do Maharaj's darshan and continue to grow in our Sikhi through gurmat parchar.

Nanak Naam Chardi Kala Tere Bhane Sarbat Da Bhalla

ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ ਜੀ ਕਾ ਖਾਲਸਾ ॥ ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ ਜੀ ਕੀ ਫਤਹ ॥

Croydon Gurdwara Management Committee

Sunday, 03 May 2020