

A Constitution of the Welwyn Hatfield Ethnic Minority (WHEM) Group

1. Name

The name of the association is Welwyn Hatfield Ethnic Minority (WHEM) Group (hereinafter called "the Group").

2. Objects

The objects of the charity are for the benefit of ethnic minority individuals and communities in Welwyn Hatfield and the neighbouring areas, ("the area of benefit"), in particular, but not limited, to the foregoing:-

- a. Advancing education and relieving financial hardship;
- b. Advancing the education and training of ethnic minority individuals so as to advance them in life and assist them to adapt within a new community;
- c. Advancing the education of the public in general about the issues relating to ethnic minority groups;
- d. Developing the capacity and skills of ethnic minority individuals and communities in such a way that they are better able to identify and help meet their needs and to participate more fully in society;
- e. Providing facilities for recreation or other leisure time occupation with the object of improving the conditions of life for those persons who have need of such facilities by reason of their youth, age, infirmity or disablement, financial hardship, social or economic circumstances;
- f. Promoting knowledge and mutual understanding between different racial groups;
- g. Raising awareness about different racial groups to promote good relations between persons of different racial groups;
- h. Working towards the elimination of discrimination on the grounds of race;
- i. Advancing education and raising awareness in equality and diversity;
- j. Promoting activities to foster understanding between people from diverse backgrounds;
- k. Conducting or commissioning research on equality and diversity issues and publishing the results to the public;

3. Powers

In furtherance of the objects of the Group, but not otherwise, the Group's trustees, (the Executive Committee - EC), may exercise the following powers:

- a. Raise funds;
- b. Buy, take on lease or exchange or sell any property as necessary;
- c. Employ staff;
- d. Form sub-committees, involving ordinary members and others as necessary, for particular tasks and objectives;
- e. Make rules and regulations to assist the Group achieve its objects, provided such rules are not against this constitution;
- f. Provide a forum for the ethnic minority communities in the area of benefit;
- g. Work with others to advance the Group's objects to ethnic minority individuals and communities locally, regionally and nationally;

- h. Organise social and cultural activities for the benefit of its members and the community at large;
- i. Publicise the Group and its activities;
- j. Extend the activities and services of the Group to the community at large where appropriate;
- k. Develop, adhere and promote equality of opportunities to the members of the Group and the community at large within the guidelines of the law.

4. Membership

- a. Membership to the Group shall be open to any individual, groups or organisations interested in the furtherance of the objects of the Group regardless of their race, ethnicity, gender, ability, sexuality, religion or age;
- b. The Group shall have two types of memberships:
 - i. Ordinary members who will either be individual members of the community or representatives of other voluntary and community organisations or groups. Ordinary members shall have full voting rights, which shall be one vote for each individual member, voluntary or community group. Such members will also be eligible to be elected as trustees of the Group;
 - ii. Ex-officio members who shall be representatives of local statutory organisations. Such representatives will have an advisory role in the Group, with no rights to vote or stand for election to the EC;
 - iii. The EC shall determine and advise each member whether they are ordinary or ex-officio members when such members join the Group.
- c. All members of the Group, whether ordinary or ex-officio, shall at all times act in the best interests of the Group and shall not do anything which would defeat the objects of the Group or bring it into disrepute. The EC may enact rules to guide the conduct and membership to the Group;
- d. Except as provided in this constitution or any rules made under powers provided in this constitution, all members, irrespective of their designation, shall have equal rights and responsibilities in furthering the objects of the Group;
- e. The EC may enact rules to levy subscription from the members of the Group. Different levels of subscription may be levied between ordinary and ex-officio members.

5. The Group's Trustees (Executive Committee Members)

- a. The Group will be governed by an Executive Committee (EC) of not less than 5 or more than 9 ordinary members who will be elected at an Annual General Meeting (AGM), normally by an ordinary show of hands by members present. A ballot may be used, if necessary;
- b. Members of the EC will have a term in office of two years, after which they may be elected for a further one term. A member may not serve on the EC for more than two consecutive terms, (four years);
- c. If, due to clause 5 (b) above, the Group risks losing valuable skills and expertise of a trustee or the number of trustees falling below the minimum number, members of the Group may, by a resolution passed at an AGM, allow a serving trustee to continue on the EC until the otherwise vacant position is filled by another person;

- d. An ordinary member may be co-opted to the EC in order to fill a vacancy. An open recruitment process may be used to gain particular skills or close a gap of expertise on the EC. Any appointment under this clause must be ratified at the following annual general meeting (AGM);
- e. Any member of the Group, (ordinary or ex-officio), may be invited to sit on the EC in an advisory capacity. Advisory members of the EC shall not be eligible to vote on matters before the EC;
- f. The EC will have the following honorary officers: Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary and Treasurer;
- g. Honorary officers will be elected by the other trustees, initially at their first meeting immediately after the AGM and, subsequently, as any vacancies arise. Elections will ordinarily be by a show of hands. A ballot may be held if necessary;
- h. An honorary officer will have a term in office of two years after which they may be re-elected for a further one term. An honorary officer may not hold office for more than two consecutive terms, (four years);
- i. If, due to clause 5 (h) above, the Group risks losing valuable skills and expertise of an honorary officer, members of the Group may, by a resolution passed at an AGM, allow a serving honorary officer to continue serving until the otherwise vacant position is filled by another person;
- j. No member of the Executive Committee may claim money from the Group except for legitimate expenses;
- k. In exceptional circumstances, a trustee of the Group may be paid for professional services rendered to the Group, provided prior approval of the EC has been granted and recorded in one of its minutes. Prior written permission from the Charity Commission must also be obtained before commencing such services. Such payments will appear properly in the Group's accounts;
- l. No member of Executive Committee can be in paid employment of the Group. However a relative of member of the EC may apply for and be in paid employment of the Group through equal opportunities and fair employment procedures. In such a case, the payments will be properly shown under Family Relations Transactions in the account;
- m. Proceedings of EC meeting shall not be invalidated by a vacancy among members or by any failure to appoint or by defect in the appointment or qualification of a member;
- n. The quorum for EC meetings shall be four members. In case of voting, a simple majority by show of hands will be used. In case of a tie the Chair will have the casting vote;

6. Meetings

- a. The Group shall hold at least three meetings of all its members in the year, one of which must be the AGM.
- b. Members of the EC shall hold at least four meetings in a year;
- c. The Group shall hold an AGM every year, within 15 months of the previous one. The quorum for an AGM shall be a minimum of 9 ordinary members. The AGM shall be open to members of the public;
- d. Notice for an AGM, with the agenda items to be discussed, will be sent to all members of the Group at least three weeks in advance;
- e. An Extra-Ordinary General Meeting (EGM) of the Group may be called at the decision of the EC or at the written request of six ordinary members of the Group. It will be convened within four weeks of such a decision or request. A notice with

the specific agenda to be discussed will be sent at least two weeks in advance. The quorum for an EGM shall be the same as that of an AGM. The Group's AGM/EGM meetings shall be suitably publicised;

- f. The EC may make such rules and regulations as may be necessary for the smooth running and administration of all of the Group's meetings;
- g. Proper records of all the Group's meetings shall be kept and available for inspection by any member upon request. Minutes of the EC and the Group's meetings will be recorded and approved at subsequent meetings;
- h. Meetings of the Group and the EC shall be presided by the Chair or in their absence, the Vice-chair. If none of these are present, members at the meeting shall nominate someone from amongst themselves to act as the chair.

7. Finance

- a. The EC will arrange for the Group to have a Financial Management Policy. Professional help may be sought in devising one, including from the Charity Commission;
- b. Accounts will be maintained to meet the requirements of the Charities Act 1993, (or any statutory re-enactment or modification of the Act), and all other lawful requirements;
- c. The Group's financial year shall run from 1st April to 31st March of the following year.

8. Amendments of the Constitution

- a. This constitution may be altered by a resolution passed at an annual or extra general meeting. At least 9 ordinary members at such a meeting must vote in favour of altering the constitution. The notice of the annual/extra meeting must include notice of the resolution, setting out the terms of the alterations proposed;
- b. No amendment may be made to Clause 2 above, (the charitable objects of the Group), without prior written consent from the Charity Commission;
- c. No amendment may be made to the constitution which would have the effect of making the Group to cease to be a charity in law;
- d. The chair of the Group or their nominated person shall promptly advise the Charity Commission of any amendments to the constitution and provide a copy of the amended constitution;

9. Notice

- a. The Group's contact address shall be as advised from time to time;
- b. Any notice required to be served on a member of the Group shall be in writing and shall be served by the Chair of the Group or their nominated person, either personally, electronically or by sending it through the post in a prepaid letter addressed to such a member at their last known address;

10. Other Provisions

- a. The Group may not be used for or be involved in party-political activities. Members' political, religious or other affiliations shall be respected and considered private and personal and shall have no bearing on the Group's membership;

- b. The Group can only be dissolved at an annual/extra general meeting. Any resolution to dissolve the Group must be supported by a two-thirds majority of the ordinary members;
- c. Any assets remaining after the satisfaction of the Group's debts and liabilities shall be given or transferred to such other charitable institution or institutions having objects similar to the Group as the members at the dissolution meeting may determine, or failing that, shall be applied for some other charitable purposes.

Adopted on this.....day of.....2007

This constitution was adopted on the date stated above by the persons whose names and signatures appear below:

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