

The Constitution of
Gurdwara Sahib Woolwich
Greenwich Sikh Association

Registered Charity No. 280961



As passed by the founder life members

On

November 25 1979

After that amended on August 30, 1980

On 17th April, 1982, on 24th September 2000, on 10th October 2007

And on

16 November 2025

Constitution of Gurdwara Sahib Woolwich (Greenwich Sikh Association)

1. Name and Address

GURDWARA SAHIB WOOLWICH

Registered Charity No: 280961

Greenwich Sikh Association

1 Calderwood Street, Woolwich, London SE18 6QW

Tel: 020 8854 4233

2. Aims and Objectives

2.1 To advance the Sikh religion and provide facilities for religious worship and ceremonies.

2.2 To provide facilities in the interest of social welfare for recreation and leisure-time occupation with the object of improving the conditions of life of the beneficiaries.

2.3 To serve the community through charitable activities and outreach programs.

2.4 To advance education:

(a) by the provision of a library with books on Sikh religion, Sikh history, Punjabi culture, and social education in Punjabi, Hindi, and English languages.

(b) by the provision of facilities for teaching English and Punjabi.

(c) by the provision of online information and services (website, YouTube, and other social media).

3. Legal & Regulatory

3.1 Gurdwara Sahib Woolwich is a registered charity with the Charity Commission, registration no. 280961 (29 September 1980). This constitution is the prime governing document for the charity. Trustees are responsible and accountable for making timely annual returns and ensuring compliance with UK law and Charity Commission requirements.

The Gurdwara will maintain and regularly review the following policies:

1. Financial management and reserves
 2. Safeguarding
 3. Complaints and whistleblowing
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4. Serious incident reporting
5. Risk management
6. Trustee expenses
7. Trustee conflicts of interest
8. Investment of funds
9. Bullying and harassment
10. Code of conduct
11. Campaigning guidelines
12. Data Protection Policy

3.2 Data Protection

3.3 Data protection legislation controls how personal information is used by organisations, including businesses and government departments.

3.4 In the UK, data protection is governed by the [UK General Data Protection Regulation \(UK GDPR\)](#) and the [Data Protection Act 2018](#).

3.5 Everyone responsible for using personal data has to follow strict rules called 'data protection principles' unless an exemption applies.

3.6 The Association complies with the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018. Personal data will be:

- Used fairly, lawfully, and transparently
 - Used only for specified purposes
 - Adequate, relevant, and limited
 - Accurate and kept up to date
 - Retained no longer than necessary
 - Kept secure against loss, misuse, or unauthorised access
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4. Membership and Subscriptions

4.1 Membership is open to any person irrespective of caste, colour, creed, or sex who has firm faith in the Sri Guru Granth Sahib and

a) resides within the Borough of Greenwich

AND

b) Must be a permanent resident of UK exempt from immigration control and therefore entitled to reside indefinitely in the UK (and is not resident in the UK on a temporary or time limited visa. Must be lawfully resident in the UK with no time-limited visa restrictions).

c) Membership applications must be made in person with proof of ID and address ((proof of address and British passport and/or evidence of entitlement to reside indefinitely in the UK).

4.2 Family members (spouses, children, and descendants) may also apply, subject to provision of identification and proof of address

4.3 Life membership fee is £101.

4.4 All applications are subject to approval by the Executive Committee.

4.5 False information will result in termination of membership with no refund.

4.6 Members must comply with the Association's rules and policies.

4.7 A membership register shall be maintained, and membership cards with photos issued.

5. Right to Vote

5.1 Only life members who have been a member for Gurdwara Sahib Woolwich Sikh Association for at least one year shall have the right to attend General Meetings or vote in Gurdwara elections.

5.2 Voting eligibility will be confirmed by membership register and proof of identification (membership card, passport, driving licence, or Freedom Pass).

6. Management

6.1 Governance is vested in the Executive Committee of 21 trustees, including:

- President and Vice President(s)

Constitution of Gurdwara Sahib Woolwich

- Secretary and Joint Secretary(s)
- Treasurer and Joint Treasurer(s)
- Head of Darbar & Events
- Head of Langar & Provisions
- Stage Secretary
- Head of Buildings
- Safeguarding Officer

6.2 All trustees must sign a declaration of eligibility and office bearers must submit to DBS checks in addition.

6.3 The specific roles and responsibilities (see Executive Committee Roles and Responsibilities) under each role will be reviewed and amended by the Committee as appropriate. The committee may choose to co-opt (non-voting) others and change Executive Committee roles as needs arise.

6.4 The Trustees will undertake training and follow the Charity Commission CC3 Guidance (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-essential-trustee-what-you-need-to-know-cc3>).

6.5 The Executive Committee serves a 3-year term. Election shall be held every three years.

6.6 No member of the Executive Committee shall:

- Receive any benefit in money or in kind from the Association.
- Have a financial interest in the supply of goods or services to the Association.
- Acquire or hold any interest in property of the Gurdwara Sahib Woolwich.
- Be allowed to use the Association's address without the permission of the Executive Committee and no office bearer shall use his/her personal address to receive Association's correspondence.

7. Elections

7.1 The full membership of the Gurdwara will elect the President every three years.

7.2 The election date shall be fixed by the Executive Committee, with at least 6 weeks notice and announced from the gurdwara stage and posted on the gurdwara notice boards. At the time the election date is announced, the committee will share the full election process.

7.3 An Election Commission, comprising an Election Commissioner and four other independent persons from the membership, shall be appointed by the Executive Committee and announced at the same time as the election date.

7.4 The voters shall elect the President only.

7.5 The President shall form the Executive Committee giving full consideration to a wider spread of the membership including age and gender in line with the Equality Act 2000.

7.6 The President shall preferably be a *Kesa Dhari* Sikh. The Election Commission shall call for nominations duly proposed, seconded and finally signed by the candidates.

7.7 In keeping with the GDPR and Data protections rules and regulations no lists or contact details of members will be shared with any candidate or other person.

7.8 The election will be complete once the election commissioner has signed the election result sheet and announced the results at the end of the election day, in the presence of the new President and other candidates.

7.9 The Gurdwara election process will be operated according to the “Gurdwara Sahib Woolwich Election Procedure” document abiding by the following principles:

- The election commission will take steps to ensure a fair and unbiased election, upholding the confidentiality of all gurdwara and members records in compliance with GDPR legislation.
- The executive committee will provide a list of all members (active, deceased, other) to the election commission for inspection in the gurdwara office 4 weeks prior to the election date.
- Records **MUST NOT** be removed from the office or copied.
- The executive committee will provide the list of eligible voters to the election commission seven days before the election date for examination in the gurdwara office and approval by the commissioner.
- The executive committee will provide three copies of the final list of eligible voters to the election commissioner one day before the election, to be secured by the election commissioner in the gurdwara office.
- Each candidate will have equal access through gurdwara social media and stage time to address the sangat.
- Voting will be done by secret ballot, ensuring that every eligible voter can express their choice confidentially.
- Voting will be in person and only open to eligible members as per section 5 Right To Vote.

7.10 Elections must follow principles of fairness, confidentiality, GDPR compliance, and equal access for candidates.

7.11 Candidate requirements:

- At least 1 year of membership
- Enhanced DBS check
- Each candidate must pay £250 as a nonrefundable donation to the Association. The fee must be paid at the time of registration
- Registration during a 2-week nomination period which will start when the election date is announced (starts 6 weeks before election and ends 4 weeks before the election).
- Withdrawal period ends one week before election date.
- Candidates must submit their application, fees and DBS certificate in person to the election commissioner

7.12 Voting is by secret ballot.

8. Code of Conduct during elections

8.1 Respect for the Electoral Process: All participants, including candidates, election officials, and voters, should respect the integrity of the election process. Any form of electoral fraud or manipulation will not be acceptable.

8.2 Non-Violence and Non-Intimidation: Violence, threats, or intimidation to influence voting decisions are prohibited. Everyone should be able to vote freely without fear.

8.3 Equal Access and Opportunity: All eligible voters should have equal access to vote and be able to participate in the election without discrimination based on race, gender, religion, or other factors.

8.4 Respect for Voter Privacy: Voters' choices should remain confidential. Campaigners should respect voters' privacy and should not disclose personal voting information.

8.5 Prohibition of Hate Speech: Election campaigns should avoid hate speech, divisive rhetoric, or any form of discriminatory language that could harm social harmony.

8.6 Truthful Campaigning: Candidates and parties must refrain from spreading misinformation or false claims about opponents or the electoral process.

8.7 Fairness in Campaigning: Campaigns should be conducted with honesty, and political opponents should be treated with respect. Negative campaigning, such as character assassination, should be avoided.

8.8 Compliance with Electoral Laws and Regulations: All participants must follow the election laws, rules, and guidelines set by the electoral commission, including those regarding advertising, funding, and campaigning methods.

- 8.9 Transparency in Campaign Financing:** Political parties and candidates must disclose their campaign finances to the election commission to prevent corruption and undue influence.
- 8.10 Campaigning** – All candidates will be allowed the same space and time on Gurdwara social media and stage to present their views to members.
- 8.11 On election day** – no groups of more than 5 people must congregate within the Gurdwara car park and outside the Gurdwara on Calderwood Street.
- 8.12 Alcohol** – There will be no consumption of alcohol near the Gurdwara – Calderwood Street.
- 8.13 Misconduct** - Each candidate is responsible for their supporters and misconduct may result in the election commission warning or disqualifying irresponsible candidates.
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9. Executive Committee Handover

- 9.1 Following elections, a 28-day transition period ensures continuity. Outgoing trustees support the incoming committee in a phased handover, including financial approvals, access to accounts, and transfer of digital/online services.
- 9.2 Many online services and accounts will need to be transferred or in some cases new accounts opened, taking up to 28 days to achieve. There will be a phased handover from the out-going committee to the new committee as detailed in the “Gurdwara Sahib Woolwich Committee Transition” document.
- 9.3 This will adhere to the following principles:
- The in-coming president must announce his/her key office holders, as listed in section 6 within one week after the election
 - Handover of each function will be completed as rapidly as reasonably possible
 - The out-going executive committee remain in office for 7 days while the new president forms his/her full committee
 - All financial transactions will require written financial approval by the incoming and outgoing president with immediate effect following an election for the duration of the transition period
 - All handover actions, as detailed in the Transition document are signed by out-going and in-coming presidents or appropriate office holders
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10. Executive Committee Meetings

10.1 An urgent meeting of the executive committee can be convened at a short notice of at least 7 days by the President or at the written request of at least four executive committee members, giving proper reasons for such a meeting.

10.2 Quorum - 2/3 members of the Executive Committee shall form a proper quorum to take decisions. It is expected that almost all the decisions of the Executive Committee shall be by simple majority and once a decision has been made, the members of the Executive Committee shall follow the principle of collective responsibility.

10.3 The Committee shall meet at least once a month.

10.4 Questions arising at any meeting of the committee shall be decided by a majority of votes.

10.5 The President or, in his absence the Vice-President, shall preside at all meetings of the Committee; in the absence of both the President and the Vice-President the Committee shall elect one of their number to preside at that meeting. In case of equality of votes the person presiding shall have a second or casting vote.

10.6 No member of the Committee shall engage himself directly or indirectly in any business dealing with the Gurdwara.

10.7 A resolution in writing signed by all the members of the Committee shall be as valid and effectual as if it had been passed at a meeting of the Committee duly convened and held.

10.8 The Committee shall keep minutes records the dates of their meetings, the members present, the business transacted at such meetings and the solutions passed thereat.

10.9 Decisions shall be made by a simple majority vote of the Committee members present.

10.10 It will be obligatory for the Committee members to attend all meetings. If a member fails to attend three consecutive meetings without a good reason, shall automatically cease to be member of the Committee and the vacant position shall be filled by co-option.

11. General Meetings

11.1 Annual General Meeting held once per year within 12 months of the previous AGM.

11.2 Special General Meetings may be called by 100 members with valid reasons.

11.3 Quorum: one-tenth of members or 120, whichever is smaller.

12. Code of Conduct

12.1 All members and trustees must act in alignment with the aims of the Association and Sikh Rehat Maryada.

12.2 Misconduct or antisocial behaviour will result in suspension or expulsion after a disciplinary procedure.

12.3 Code of Conduct and Behaviour Policy will be published in the Gurdwara and online.

13. Finance & Assets

13.1 Bankers, Solicitors and Accountants shall be appointed by the Executive Committee. Bank withdrawals shall require at least two signatures from the following:

(a) President/Vice President

(b) Secretary/Joint Secretary

(c) Treasurer/Joint Treasurer

13.2 As far as possible payments shall be made via electronic means.

13.3 No land or property may be sold, leased, or mortgaged without two-thirds approval of life members at a General Meeting, supported by an independent valuation and Charity Commission consent where required.

13.4 All the assets shall be registered in the name of the Greenwich Sikh Association. The Executive Committee shall have the power to purchase or acquire land, buildings and premises in the name of the Association, and to appoint holding trustees thereof. The Executive Committee shall also have powers to improve, alter or develop any buildings to meet the requirement of Greenwich Sikh Association for its members.

14. Holding Trustees

14.1 The Executive Committee shall appoint four Holding Trustees. The Holding Trustees shall not interfere in the day-to-day management of the Association. The term of the Holding Trustees shall run concurrently with the Executive Committee.

14.2 Holding Trustees are explicitly non-beneficiaries.

14.3 All assets safeguarded in accordance to the *Trustee Act 2000*.

15. Arbitration

15.1 Unresolved disputes may be referred to a Board of Arbitration (5 independent members).

15.2 Proceedings will follow the Arbitration Act 1996 or subsequent legislation.

16. Amendments

16.1 This constitution may be amended by two-thirds approval of trustees and two-thirds of members present at an AGM.

16.2 Amendments to charitable objects require prior approval from the Charity Commission.

17. Employees

17.1 Granthis and other staff shall be appointed under written contracts compliant with UK employment law.

17.2 No trustee may be a paid employee.

17.3 Employment policies shall cover grievance, disciplinary, leave, sick pay, and pensions.

18. Dissolution

18.1 The Association may be dissolved by a two-thirds majority of members present at a Special General Meeting.

18.2 After liabilities are met, remaining assets must be transferred to one or more charities with similar objects, chosen by the membership and approved by the Charity Commission.
