

*It behoves the devotee to engage the selfless service for it is through selfless service that He is exalted.*

## **CONSTITUTION OF THE SIKH MISSIONARY SOCIETY (U.K.) REGD.**

### **1. Name and Address:**

The name of the Society shall be The Sikh Missionary Society, UK, hereinafter called the Society. Its Registered Office shall be at 8-10 Featherstone Road, Southall, Middlesex UB2 5AA.

### **2. AIM AND OBJECTIVES**

The aim of the Society shall be the advancement of the Sikh faith, tradition and culture in the United Kingdom and abroad. This shall be achieved by meeting the following objectives.

- 2.1 To produce, procure and distribute books and other material, including multi-media, in English, Panjabi and other languages to enlighten the people about the Sikh faith.
- 2.2 To arrange lectures, seminars, conferences and Gurmat camps and celebrations of Sikh occasions.
- 2.3 To award prizes to the children on the basis of their achievement and interest in the field of Sikh faith and Panjabi language.
- 2.4 To distribute literature on Sikh faith, free as far as possible.
- 2.5 To promote the learning of Panjabi, Gurbani and Keertan.
- 2.6 To help other charities and seek help from them.

### **3. CODE OF CONDUCT**

The Society will follow the code of conduct as laid down by REHAT MARYADA approved and published by Shromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee, Amritsar and Sri Akal Takhat Sahib.

### **4. MEMBERSHIP**

The membership of the Society shall be open to persons over 18 (except under 18 student members) and organisations who are sympathetic to the cause of Sikh faith and agree with aim and objectives of the Society by completing the prescribed membership form.

- 4.1 There will be three categories of the members:

- (a) Life Member (b) Ordinary Member (c) Student Member under 18. The subscription for a life member, an ordinary member and a student member will be as laid down (and amended) by the members at the Annual General Body Meeting (AGM) or Extra Ordinary General Body Meeting (EGM).

#### 4.2 Termination of Membership

- (a) The membership of an ordinary member will be terminated unless renewed within 14 days of its expiry.
- (b) The membership of a member may be terminated on disciplinary grounds (see clause 18).

4.3 Separate registers for membership shall be maintained by the Society.

### 5. GENERAL BODY

- (a) The General Body shall consist of all members whose subscriptions are up-to-date.
- (b) Only those members will be eligible to vote at a General Body Meeting who have continued to be members for at least one year before that meeting.
- (c) Student members shall not have the right of vote.

### 6. MANAGEMENT

- 6.1 The Management of the Society shall be vested in a Managing Committee consisting of 11 members, 5 of whom will hold offices i.e. Honorary General Secretary, Assistant General Secretary, Treasurer, Resources Secretary and Education Secretary.
- 6.2 The Managing Committee may co-opt additional members not exceeding 4 who have rendered very significant services for the good of the Sikh Community.
- 6.3 All members of the Managing Committee shall be answerable to the Honorary General Secretary.
- 6.4 A person holding any office in another religious or political organisation shall not be eligible to be a member of the Managing Committee of the Society.

6.5 If and when necessary, the Managing Committee may invite suitable persons from the Society's membership to serve on any Sub-Committee or an assigned responsibility in a non-executive position.

## **7. PUBLICATION BOARD**

7.1 The Managing Committee may appoint a Publication Board comprising of two or three members. The Board's membership may include non Managing Committee members. The Publication Board will be responsible for reviewing all material to be published and make recommendations to the Managing Committee.

## **8. QUALIFICATIONS OF MANAGING COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

8.1 Whilst the five office holders are the main functionaries, the Executive Committee is responsible for acts of omission and commission and for upholding the prestige of the Society amongst the Sikh Sangat, Sikh Associations, Governmental and non-Governmental bodies. Each member of the Managing Committee must have the following qualifications:

- (a) be Amritdhari Sikh as defined in *REHAT MARYADA* vide clause 3 above.
- (b) have good knowledge of Gurmat i.e. the Sikh religious teachings, and be able to present Sikh points of view effectively to Governmental and non-Governmental bodies.
- (c) have a good command of English and Panjabi languages.
- (d) have a working knowledge of office administration, accounting and budgeting.
- (e) have been a life member of the Society for at least 2 years and have no criminal conviction (except for parking), bankruptcy or mental disorder for the past five years continuously.

## **9 RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

### **9.1 Honorary General Secretary**

- (a) Honorary General Secretary shall endeavour to propagate the teaching of the Sikh gurus and work towards the enhancement of the Society.
- (b) Convene and chair the meetings of the Managing Committee, make arrangements for recording minutes, implement decisions taken and co-ordinate the work of the Sub-Committee members.

- (c) Deal with all correspondence; keep a record of any statements to be made to the press or any such contributions during public engagements.
- (d) Respond to the request for advice and information and send out newsletter as necessary.
- (e) Ensure that up-to-date records of membership are maintained.
- (f) Assign duties and tasks to other members of the Committee or any other volunteers and supervise such assigned duties and tasks.
- (g) Submit a written report to the General Body about the work and progress of the Society during his/her tenure of office. This report shall include separate reports from other office holders with specific responsibilities and be sent to all members of the General Body at least three weeks before the date of the General Body meeting.

## **9.2 Assistant General Secretary**

- (a) The Assistant General Secretary shall perform all tasks assigned to him/her by the Honorary General Secretary and work closely and assist him/her in the workings of the Society.
- (b) Chair the meetings in the absence of the Honorary General Secretary.
- (c) Take over the duties of the Honorary General Secretary if he/she had to be away for more than two weeks.
- (d) Maintain inventory register of the Society's movable and immoveable assets as well as membership registers.
- (e) Take minutes at the Executive Committee meetings and make appropriate entries onto the minutes register.

## **9.3 Treasurer**

- (a) The treasurer will make sure that proper receipts are issued for all monies, and cheques received.
- (b) Maintain correct records of all receipts and payments in cashbook and prepare summaries, signed by the Honorary General Secretary and the Treasurer at the end of each month.

- (c) Ensure that cash in hand does not normally exceed £500.
- (d) Keep records of all invoices, payments and receipts and claim tax rebates on the donations received where appropriate..
- (e)
  - (i) Have the annual accounts audited and presented to the General Body meeting and give reasons for any significant deviation from the budget estimates.
  - (ii) Prepare accounts of the Income and Expenditure and Balance Sheet for inclusion in the annual report to be made to the members at the General Body meeting.
  - (iii) Present the budget estimate for the next year to the General Body.
- (f) If the treasurer resigns before the end of his/her term, the Honorary General Secretary or his/her nominee shall take over his/her duties after proper scrutiny.

#### **9.4 Resources Secretary**

The Resource Secretary will be responsible for maintaining and running the Society's resource centre efficiently. His/Her responsibilities include:

- (a) Procurement of books and artefacts.
- (b) Maintenance of an up to date stock register, including the Society's own publications.
- (c) Promotion of Society's own publications wider a field and raising funds and/or sponsorships for the same.
- (d) Any other relevant duties such as maintaining a separate Reference Library and preparing the yearly report for the AGM.
- (e) Prepare a report of his/her activities during the year, in consultation with the Assistant General Secretary, Treasurer and Education Secretary, for inclusion in the main annual report to be made to the members at the General Body meeting.

#### **9.5 Education Secretary**

- (a) He/she will be responsible for organising seminars, lectures and Gurmat camps as well as supervising any other educational activities at the Society's premises.

- (b) He/she will establish contacts with the educational institutions. Authorities, especially SACRE and Examination Boards with a view to provide appropriate information about Sikhism..
- (c) He/she will assist the General Secretary in representing the Society at Interfaith meetings or conferences e.g. Religious Education Council of England and Wales, the British Sikh Education Council and other religious organisations.
- (d) He/she will keep the Society updated regarding the promotion of the Punjabi language and other educational activities with a yearly report to the AGM.

## **10. ELECTION COMMISSION**

- 10.1 The trustees elected vide clause 12.1 shall act as the Election Commission for holding the election of the office holders for the next term.
- 10.2 If it becomes necessary for the Honorary General Secretary to resign, the Election Commission is empowered to either promote the Assistant General Secretary for the remainder period of the term or call new election.
- 10.3 While considering the promotion of the Assistant General Secretary the trustees will fully consider his/her qualifications, experience and capability to hold the Honorary General Secretary's post.

## **11 ELECTION OF OFFICE HOLDERS**

- 11.1 The election of the five Office Holders shall be held after every two years on a Sunday in September in the presence of the Sri Guru Granth Sahib after Ardas.
- 11.2 The office holder/s who have served for two consecutive terms, in any of the five positions shall not be eligible to contest for the next term.
- 11.3 The outgoing Managing Committee will hand over the full charge to the new Committee within two weeks of the election.
- 11.4 (1) **Election Procedure**
  - (a) The election of the Society's office holders of the Society shall be conducted by the Election Commission, constituting a chairperson of the Trustees of the Society assisted by at least two other Trustees.

- (b) A nomination form stating the qualifications required, as outlined in clause 8 of the constitution, will be sent with notice of the General Body meeting.
- (c) A member may propose (or second) the name of only one candidate for any one office.
- (d) The nomination form should be returned to the Election Commission two weeks before the General Body meeting.
- (e) The Election Commission will scrutinise the nominations and ensure each candidate's eligibility for the office, bearing in mind the qualifications as laid down in clause 8 one week before the election in the presence of the candidates.
- (f) A candidate may withdraw his/her candidature in writing a day before or in person during the election meeting.
- (g) The election for the each office shall be held separately.
- (h) Every candidate must give a presentation lasting no more than 3 minutes, both in Punjabi and English at the election AGM.
- (i) In case there are more than one candidates for a position, the selection will be made by method for parchhi (draw) in front of the Guru Granth Sahib Ji.

11.4 (2) The remaining six members of the Managing Committee will be nominated by the Honorary General Secretary in consultation with the other elected office holders within two weeks of election meeting.

11.4 (3) The Honorary General Secretary shall not have the authority to remove any member from the managing Committee except under clause 18.

11.4 (4) If any office holder resigns the Honorary General Secretary may fill the vacancy for the remaining period of the term from amongst the other members of the Committee.

## **12. TRUSTEES**

- 12.1 (a) The General Body shall elect five trustees of the Society for a term of two years at the election AGM to be held in the alternative year to the election of the office holders.

- (b) 4 additional trustees will be elected by the members who live some significant distance away from Southall, where the membership of the area exceeds 25.
- (c) A third of the trustees will retire every two years, in the beginning in first name alphabetical order and once the list is exhausted in seniority order (first in first out).

### **13. QUALIFICATIONS OF TRUSTEES**

- 13.1 In addition to fulfilling qualifications for managing Committee members, only faithful, life members and free from any restrictions, as imposed by the Charity Commission and/or the Trust Law can offer themselves to become the trustee of the Society.

### **14. ELECTION OF TRUSTEES**

- (a) The election of the Society's Trustees shall be conducted by the Election Commission, constituting the General Secretary of the Society assisted by at least two other members of the Executive Committee.
- (b) A nomination form stating the qualifications required, as outlined in clause 13.1 of the constitution, will be sent with notice of the General Body meeting.
- (c) A member may propose (or second) the name of only one trustee.
- (d) The nomination form should be returned to the General Secretary two weeks before the General Body meeting.
- (e) The General Secretary and two of his/her colleagues will scrutinise the nominations and ensure each candidate's eligibility for the trusteeship, bearing in mind the qualifications as laid down in clause 13.1 one week before the election in the presence of the candidates.
- (f) A candidate may withdraw his/her candidature in writing a day before or in person during the election meeting.

### **15. POWERS AND DUTIES OF TRUSTEES**

- 15.1 After specific approval from the General Body and subject to such consent as may be required by law, the trustee will be empowered to:
- (a) Acquire functional property/land as necessary for the Society.



- (b) Sell or mortgage such property in furtherance of the Society objectives after approval to do so is granted by two thirds of the members at an AGM/EGM.

15.2 The trustees will act as a body and their decisions should preferably be unanimous.

15.3 The trustees will have the duty of protecting the Society's investment and property. They must satisfy themselves that the Society's investments are sound and immoveable property is well maintained and put to best use.

15.4 The trustees shall, under no circumstances, dispose off whole or part of Society's assets without getting prior approval of the General Body.

15.5 The trustees will ensure with the General Secretary that important records of the Society, such as Property papers, Financial statements and minute books are safely retained for a period of at least 10 years.

## **16 AUDITORS**

16.1 The General Body will elect two internal auditors at the time of elections of office holders for the term of two years.

16.2 The auditors shall be independent of the Executive Committee.

16.3 The auditors shall have the right to audit the Society's accounts at any time by giving to the Honorary General Secretary and/or Treasurer at least two weeks notice in writing.

16.4 The auditors shall bring to the notice of the General Body any discrepancies found in accounts or records whereby no reasonable action has been taken by the Honorary General Secretary.

16.5 The auditors shall complete an annual audit one month before the next annual General Body meeting and send copy of the report to the trustees.

## **17. ACCOUNTS**

17.1 The Society shall maintain accounts with a scheduled bank or building society.

17.2 The Honorary General Secretary, Treasurer and Assistant General Secretary will operate the Bank/Building Society accounts. All payment cheque/vouchers shall be signed by any two signatories.

17.3 The General Body shall determine the maximum amount, which the Honorary General Secretary, Treasurer and the Executive Committee may spend.

17.4 Quotations for the purchases/printing for any item over £500 must be obtained.

## **18. FINANCE**

18.1 The Society may raise funds to meet its objectives.

- (a) By appeal to its members, Sikh Sangat and other institutions or associations.
- (b) By subscription from its members.
- (c) By seeking grants from local authorities, Government and non/Government bodies for providing service to the community at large.
- (d) By raising loan only after approval of General Body for specific purpose and also after taking into account the Society capacity to repay the loan.

18.2 (a) The Executive Committee or the Trustees shall, in no circumstances, invest funds in stocks and shares. The funds may be invested in fixed deposits or bonds of scheduled banks/building societies.

- (b) No one, not even the General Body, is empowered to lend money to any individual or offer Society's assets as security for any individual or organisation's interest.

## **19. MEETINGS**

### **19.1 Meeting of the General Body:**

- (a) 20 days written notice to the members will be required to call a General Body Meeting.
- (b) Normally a General Body meeting will be held once every year on a Sunday in September.
- (c) The biennial election meeting must be held within two years of the last General meeting.
- (d) An extra-ordinary General Body meeting may be called in addition to the Annual General Meeting to consider urgent matters.

- (e) An extra-ordinary General Body meeting may be held if at least 25 members submit a written request giving reasons for such a meeting.
- (f) The quorum for the General Body meeting will require the presence of at least 30 members. If the quorum is not complete the meeting will be postponed and will be held next week at the same time and place.
- (g) The minutes of the General Body meetings will be presented at the next meeting for approval by the members.

### **19.2 Meeting of the Executive Committee**

- (a) Meetings of the Executive Committee shall be held every two months or sooner if required after giving one week's notice to members.
- (b) The quorum will be complete if at least 7 (seven) members are present.
- (c) A member of the Committee who fails to attend three consecutive meetings shall cease to be the member of the Committee unless he/she can give written satisfactory reasons for such absence. In addition any member who fails to attend half the number of total meetings shall not be eligible to serve on the next Committee.

## **20 BRANCHES**

- 20.1 The Society may open its branches in an area of sizeable Sikh population where at least 25 life members have joined the Society.
- 20.2 The branch shall function under the guidance and direction of the Honorary General Secretary.
- 20.3 The branch will be allowed to receive subscription/donations/grants locally and remit the collected amount to head office.
- 20.4 The head office will allocate at least 25% of funds collected locally and may provide more funds if required to further the objectives of the Society.
- 20.5 The Honorary General Secretary will appoint the Branch Secretary and the Branch Secretary will nominate Assistant Secretary and Treasurer, under the guidance of the Honorary General Secretary. All branch office holders will hold office for two years and may be re-elected/selected.

- 20.6 The branch shall keep the Head Office informed of their activities regularly.
- 20.7 The branch shall maintain proper accounts and supply a copy of the accounts to the Honorary General Secretary before the General Body meeting.
- 20.8 If a branch fails to act in accordance with the provisions outlined above, the Hon General Secretary may recommend to the Executive Committee for the branch's dissolution or taking of alternative measures by the Executive Committee.

## **21. AMENDMENTS TO THE CONTITUTION**

- 21.1 An amendment can only be made by the General Body. The proposed amendment must be stated in the notice for the General Body meeting. Any amendments shall require two-third majority of the members present at the meeting.
- 21.2 No amendment shall be made that shall have the effect of causing the Society to cease to be a charity in law.
- 21.3 The amendments passed by a General Body shall be adopted at the next General Body meeting after receiving the approval of the Charity Commission.

## **22. PUBLICATIONS**

- 22.1 The Society will publish and distribute literature in pursuance of the objectives in clause 2.1 and 2.4.
- 22.2 The Society may have further editions/reprints of its publication as necessary.
- 22.3 If permission has been granted once by the writer for publication of his/her writing the Society shall not ask for further permission for subsequent reprinting or reproduction.
- 22.4 The author shall be responsible for the accuracy of the information in the publication and any act of plagiarism.
- 22.5 The Society should normally accept material for publication without payment. If it becomes necessary to offer some honorarium to an author or publisher, the Honorary General Secretary shall obtain the approval of the General Body before agreeing to any payment exceeding £1,000.

22.6 The Society shall allocate and maintain a separate fund for its own publications and the Resource Centre. No monies from this fund shall be used for any other purpose, except when authorised by the members at a General Body meeting.

### **23. THE RESOURCE CENTRE**

The Society shall:

- (i) Establish and maintain a comprehensive Resource Centre, which will also have a separate section of books on Sikh culture, religion and history.
- (ii) Keep the resource centre updated with new publications and materials from reputable sources e.g. SGPC (Amritsar) other religious bodies and universities.
- (iii) Make rules to run the resource centre efficiently and effectively.

### **24. DISCIPLINE**

24.1 If a member of the Society, including any member of the Executive Committee, brings the Society into disrepute by his/her word or action the Executive Committee may suspend his/her membership. The suspended member will have a right to appeal to the Trustees. The decision to disqualify a person from the membership can only be taken by the General Body at an AGM.

24.2 No member of the Executive Committee, other than the General Secretary, shall issue any public statement on behalf of the Society unless authorised by the Executive Committee.

24.3 Members, Executive Committee members and the Trustees are always expected to act in the interest of the Society and are expected to resolve any dispute amicably. Assistance of the Dispute Resolution Committee, outlined in Section 25 below, should be sought to sort out any matters of dispute.

### **25. DISPUTE RESOLUTION COMMITTEE**

25.1 A Dispute Resolution Committee, to resolve any dispute within the Society, will be formed at the AGM comprising of five members who are neither members of the Executive Committee nor Trustees.

25.2 Election of the Dispute Resolution Committee will be conducted by the same Election Commission and in the same manner and at the same time as the election of the Executive Committee office holders.

25.3 In case the Dispute Resolution Committee is unable to resolve a dispute, the matter will be referred to Sri Akal Takhat for a binding decision.

## **26 DISAGREEMENT**

26.1 If a serious disagreement arises within the Executive Committee the Dispute Resolution Committee will hold a joint meeting of trustees and Committee members to find a workable solution, failing which the trustees may call fresh election.

## **27 CLOSURE OF THE SOCIETY**

27.1 In case of extreme emergencies like that of political upheaval or any grave situation that necessitates the closure of the Society, the trustees and the Executive Committee, in joint consultation shall call an emergency meeting of the General Body to take a decision.

27.2 If the General Body decides to wind up the Society the trustees and the Executive Committee shall be jointly empowered to sell its entire property and assets. The proceeds will be donated to the Dharam Parchar Committee of the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee, Amritsar, Punjab, India.