**Consitution**

**Sahelian (Friends)**

1. **Name**

The name of the group is **Sahelain.**

1. **Objects**

The objects of the group are:

To promote for the benefit of women of all ages, in particular women from minority ethnic communities in this country and abroad, although with particular preference to those living in the North east, especially in the Tyne & Wear Region, the following charitable purposes:-

1. The relief of poverty;
2. The preservation and protection of good physical and mental health;
3. The advancement of education through training, creative and participatory activities.
4. The promotion of equality and diversity; and

5. The provision of facilities in the interests of social welfare for recreation or other leisure time occupation of individuals who have need of such facilities by reason of their youth, age infirmity or disability, financial hardship or social circumstances with the object of improving their conditions of life.

**4** **Powers**

* In order to fulfil these objectives the group may raise funds, employ people, lawfully purchase or lease property.
* Levy an annual subscription fee to individuals and affiliated organisations as the Executive Committee may from time to time determine.
* Support any charitable trusts, associations or institutions formed for all or any of the organisation’s objects.
* Do all other such lawful things that shall further the charitable objects of the group.

**5 Membership**

* Membership of the group shall be open to individual women and women representatives of affiliated organisations which support the aims of Sahelain.
* Application for membership will be by simple application form, acceptance of membership will be by majority approval of the executive committee.
* Membership applications will be considered at all monthly Executive Committee meetings.
* Individual women members will be known as Full Members
* Organisations which wish to support the objects of Sahelian shall be known as affiliated groups and may appoint a woman representative to attend Sahelian on behalf of their organisation.
* Any member of the organisation or affiliated group may resign their membership by giving the Secretary of the organisation written notice to that effect.
* The Executive Committee may terminate or suspend the membership of any member or Affiliate group, by majority vote at a monthly meeting, if in it’s opinion the conduct of the individual or Affiliate group is prejudicial to the interests and objects of the Association. The individual or Affiliate group shall have the right to be heard by the Executive Committee before the final decision is made.

**6 Meetings**

Annual General Meeting

* Once in each calendar year an Annual General Meeting will be held at a time and place determined by the Executive Committee (minimum notice 21 days)
* A quorum for the Annual General Meeting will consist of one third of the members or 4 whichever is the smaller.
* The function of the Annual General Meeting will be to elect officers and other members of the Executive Committee, to receive the Annual Accounts, to appoint an auditor.

Special General Meetings

* The Executive Committee may call a Special General Meeting to consider any proposal to alter the constitution. Fourteen days notice shall be posted, and the meeting will address no other business. The Committee may also consider a written request by members to hold a Special General Meeting. The written request must be signed by a representative number of members entitled to vote, to be decided at the Annual General Meeting, and clear reasons given for the request.

General Meetings

* A programme of General Meetings will be devised each year by the incoming Executive Committee. Fourteen days notice will be given for these meetings.

**7 Executive Committee**

* The membership of the Executive Committee will be elected from the constituent membership of the group at the Annual General Meting.
* The minimum number of Committee members shall be four and the maximum number shall be twelve.
* The Executive Committee will meet for at least four business meetings in a calendar year.
* The Executive Committee will oversee the management and administration of Sahelian’s activities including strategic planning, operation and financial management, staffing, correspondence, liaison with other agencies/organisations, monitoring and evaluation.
* The Committee will have the power to enter into contracts for the purposes of the organisation on behalf of members of the organisation, and to set up subcommittees to deal with business when and where appropriate.
* In addition to the members so elected the Committee may co-opt up to four further members from the membership who shall serve until the next Annual general Meeting. Retiring members of the Executive Committee shall be eligible for co-option. Co-opted members shall be entitled to vote at the meetings of the Committee.
* The Executive Committee members shall remain in office until their successors are elected at the next Annual general meeting. Any vacancy occurring by resignation of otherwise may be filled by the Committee.
* A quorum for the Executive Committee shall be one third of the members or four whichever is smaller.
* The Executive Committee has the power to appoint a small working group which will normally be made up of Chair, Secretary, Treasurer and Vice Chair to take decisions on urgent business between Executive Committee meetings. These decisions will be subject to ratification at a full Committee meeting.

**8 Procedure at Meetings**

* The Chair, Vice Chair, or in her absence a member selected by the Committee, shall take the Chair. Each member present shall have one vote and resolutions shall be passed by a simple majority. In the event of an equality of Votes the Chair shall have an additional or casting vote.
* Minute books shall be kept by the organisation and all its committees. The secretary shall enter a record of all proceedings and resolutions.

**9 Support Groups**

The Executive Committee has the power to approve the forming of any group that supports the objects of the organisation. The Executive Committee reserves the right to define the terms of reference for any such groups, and overall control of the membership of said groups.

**10 Alteration of the Rules**

The constitution may be altered at an Annual General meeting or Special General Meeting by majority vote.

**11 Finance**

* All money payable to the group shall be received by the Treasurer and deposited in a bank account in the name of the group. No sum shall be drawn from the account except by cheque signed by two signatories who shall be the Chair, Treasurer and the Chief Officer. Any monies not required for immediate use may be invested as the Committee in their discretion think fit.
* The income and property of the group shall be applied only in the furtherance of the objects of the group and no part of thereof shall be paid by way of bonus, dividend or profit to any members of the group.
* The Executive Committee shall have the power to authorise the payment of remuneration and expenses to any officer, member or employee of the group and to any other person or persons for services rendered to the group.
* The payment of expenses will normally be approved in advance by the Executive Committee; retrospective payments can only be paid on approval by a majority vote by the executive committee.
* Expense incurred by representatives of Affiliated Organisations, will normally be paid by that Affiliated Organisation.
* The financial transactions of the group shall be recorded in a proper set of books kept by the treasurer.
1. **Dissolution**
* A resolution to dissolve the group shall only be proposed at a Special General Meeting and shall only be carried by a majority of at least two thirds of the membership.
* If Sahelian is disbanded, all existing debts will be paid (including refunds to funders of unspent allocations) any additional funds will be donated to a registered charity with similar aims.

**Approved by**

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 **Chair Date**