



Ethiopian Community in the West Midlands, UK (ECWM)

Constitution (April 2025)

1. Name of the association: Ethiopian Community in the West Midlands, UK (ECWM)

1.1 The association's official logo consists of three horizontal layouts of green, yellow, and red colours in a circle shape without an emblem.

2. Objectives

2.1 General/overarching objectives:

a. Provide comprehensive socio-economic and psychological support for members and the Ethiopian community for their overall well-being and create an environment of community and togetherness.

2.2 Specific objectives:

a. To provide necessary support and advice for the Ethiopian community relevant to their refugees, asylum seekers, and migration status

b. To provide services such as representation, translation, and interpretation for the Ethiopian community concerning issues such as welfare benefits, housing, health, education, training, and employment

c. To create a welcoming environment for new arrivals and to provide the necessary psycho-social support, and to advise how they can embed into the system in order to pass the early period economic challenges, to support their settlement and better integration into the wider community

d. To facilitate the hosting of cultural, educational, sporting and entertainment events that contribute to the cohesion, integration and strength of the Ethiopian communities in the West Midlands region and the active, productive and civic engagement of members in the wider UK community

e. To facilitate skills and professional development programs that contribute to the overall socio-economic well-being of members and their meaningful contribution to the wider UK public



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- f. To create a strong relationship and collaboration with other organised groups of Ethiopian communities in the West Midlands, across the UK and Europe
- g. To provide educational, skill-development, cultural awareness, sporting and entertainment activities for children and young people of Ethiopian heritage to help them become aware of the diversity and richness of their Ethiopian heritage
- h. To collectively address any social issues that may affect the Ethiopians and descendants of the Ethiopian community in the West Midlands region.

3. Membership

3.1 Criteria of Membership

- a. The main criteria for membership are being Ethiopian and of Ethiopian descent
- b. People of non-Ethiopian descent who support the objectives of the community can be associate members
- c. Every member will be registered in the association membership database with full information by paying £5. There is no any other monthly payment to remain as a member. Instead, members need to renew annually their membership by signing to continue as a community member.
- d. Members should be in good standing in their membership fees before electing or being elected during elections.
- e. The association can offer its members additional services. However, such services will be available only to members willing to pay the additional fees.

3.2 The conditions of membership

- a. Membership is voluntary.



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- b. Each adult member must fill out a membership form and receive a membership identification number.
- c. Children under the parental and/or pastoral care of members of the community and encouraged to become full members at the age of 21.

3.3 Rights, Responsibilities and Obligations of Members

- a. Members have the right to participate in the events and activities of the Ethiopian community
- b. Members have the right to elect and be elected in the various leadership positions and committee roles within the community
- c. Members have the right to benefit from all the services that the community provides
- d. Members have the responsibility to show and promote respectful behaviour and attitude towards their fellow members
- e. Members have the responsibility to contribute to the overall success of the in their capacity
- f. Members must avoid using the community for partisan political, religious and ethnical purposes that instigate hatred and division.
- g. Members must avoid using the community for illegal activities, committing targeted malicious attacks on individuals or groups of individuals for any reason

3.4 Condition ceasing membership

- a. Membership can be interrupted if members fail to conduct their responsibilities and obligations stated in section 3.3 and after a fair and thorough process by the Disciplinary and Audit Committee
- b. The Disciplinary and Audit Committee can recommend to the Executive Committee that members be suspended for three months on the first account of a serious breach of the constitution and a maximum of six months for repeated offences.
- c. Individuals can be reinstated only after serving the suspension period and submitting a letter of apology to the Disciplinary and Audit Committee.



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- d. If the Disciplinary and Audit Committee is satisfied with the apology letter, it can recommend to the Executive Committee for the reinstatement of the member
- e. After two rounds of the six-month suspensions, the Disciplinary and Audit Committee should present the case of an individual's membership to the General Assembly for a final decision on interruption.
- f. The General Assembly can terminate an individual's membership based on a report from the Disciplinary and Audit Committee, with a two-thirds vote of the quorum. The General Assembly is the only legal body to terminate membership.
- g. Individuals whose membership is interrupted by the General Assembly can be readmitted only after two years, after submitting a letter of apology to the General Assembly and if their request is accepted by a two-thirds vote of the quorum

3.5 Discipline and Audit Committee

- a. The community will establish a Discipline and Audit Committee independent from the Executive Committee to handle disciplinary issues among its members.
- b. Disputes among the Executive Committee are dealt with separately per Article 15 of this Constitution.
- c. The Discipline and Audit Committee will have three members elected at the Annual General Assembly for a tenure of three years, renewable only once.
- d. The Discipline and Audit Committee's role is to deal with cases referred to it by the Executive Committee.
- e. The Discipline and Audit Committee should facilitate a fair process of hearing cases before passing suspension decisions and recommendations of interruption to the General Assembly. The advisory committee also needs to participate before the cases are directed to the general assembly.

4. Leadership/Executive Committee

- a. The Executive Committee will have nine elected members.
- b. Each position has a tenure of three years.
- c. Executive committee members can stand for re-election.



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- d. Each executive committee member cannot serve over three consecutive terms (nine years).
- e. After a gap of one full election term (three years), a former executive committee member can be elected and serve no more than two consecutive terms.
- f. Positions in the Executive Committee shall be filled as they arise. A person appointed to replace an Executive Committee member due to health or other reasons before their term expires shall serve for the remainder of the predecessor's term.
- g. Every Executive Committee member is accountable to the General Assembly.
- h. Members of the Executive Committee are collectively responsible for the day-to-day functioning and operations of the community.
- i. The Executive Committee must hold at least a regular monthly meeting on a specific date of the month agreed upon by the Executive Committee members. Other meeting sessions can be organised as deemed necessary.
- j. If decisions at the Executive Committee require voting, the motion that receives majority wins.
- k. Members who disagree with the decision should register their dissent/difference in the minutes of the meeting in writing.

4.1 Chairperson

- a. The Chairperson is responsible for the overall activities and operations of the community
- b. The Chairperson leads Executive Committee/General Assembly meetings. The Secretary assumes the role whenever the Chairperson is unavailable to lead Executive Committee or General Assembly meetings. In a context where both the Chairperson and the Secretary are unavailable, the Chairperson must delegate the role to another member of the Executive Committee.
- c. The Chairperson represents the community and its members in external engagements
- d. The Chairperson is elected by vote among the Executive Committee members
- e. The Chairperson serves as one of the signatories on behalf of the community for financial transactions, including bank cheques.



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4.2 Secretary

- a. The Secretary is responsible for handling all the documentation of the community and the communication of information with the membership
- b. The Secretary takes minutes of executive meetings and General Assembly meetings and makes them available for all attendees of each meeting for approval
- c. The Secretary replaces the Chairperson to lead Executive Committee/General Assembly meetings in the absence of the Chairperson.
- d. The secretary is responsible for keeping an updated database of members with their full addresses and membership payment accounts.
- e. The secretary is responsible for facilitating the provision of services by the association to its members concerning support letters and relevant documentation.
- f. The secretary should ensure that membership fees are paid on time and provide evidence that members are in good standing if they are running for executive committee positions and also for other members who would like to vote.
- g. The secretary deals with membership requests in a timely manner and welcomes new members and advises on the rights and obligations of members.
- h. The secretary is responsible for keeping an updated database of members with their full addresses and membership payment accounts.
- i. The secretary is responsible for facilitating the provision of services by the association to its members concerning support letters and relevant documentation.
- j. The secretary should ensure that membership fees are paid on time and provide evidence that members are in good standing if they are running for executive committee positions and also for other members who would like to vote.



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- k. The secretary deals with membership requests in a timely manner and welcomes new members and advises on the rights and obligations of members.

4.3 Treasurer

- a. The Treasurer is responsible for handling the financial transactions (incoming and outgoing) and material assets of the community
- b. The Treasurer prepares the financial report of the association annually, for auditing and presents it to executive committee for approval
- c. The Treasurer pays all expenses after checking the approval of the request from the chairman, secretary and any one from the executive members.

4.4 Public Relations Officer

- a. The public relations officer is responsible for facilitating the flow of information between the association and the community members, other like-minded organisations, and governmental and non-governmental bodies.
- b. The public relations officer is responsible for organising, leading, facilitating and coordinating the association's presence on various virtual platforms (website, applications, social media platforms etc.) in line with all the required legal frameworks in the UK.
- c. The public relations officer is responsible for drafting official communications in consultation with the executive committee and sending out official messages of the association.
- d. The public relations officer is responsible for documenting and profiling the association's activities in hard and electronic copies.

4.5 Social Events and Fundraising Officer

- a. The social events and fundraising officer is responsible for organising and facilitating social events for members (during holidays, sporting and entertainment activities) in close consultation and collaboration with the executive committee.
- b. The social events and fundraising officer leads the community's efforts to raise funds in close consultation and collaboration with the executive committee.



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- c. The social events and fundraising officer can establish and coordinate sub-committees to facilitate the effective organisation of events.
- d. The social events and fundraising officer should prepare annual activity plans for approval by the executive committee.
- e. The social events and fundraising officer must prepare annual activity reports and seek approval from the executive committee before they are presented to the General Assembly.

4.6 Wellbeing and Welfare Officer

- a. The well-being and welfare officer leads the community's effort to ensure the overall welfare of especially vulnerable members of the community and their families (children, young people, the elderly and people with various kinds of special needs - mental, psychological, physical, etc)
- b. The well-being and welfare officer can establish sub-committees to facilitate its welfare activities.
- c. The well-being and welfare officer should prepare annual activities plan for approval by the executive committee.
- d. The well-being and welfare officer must prepare annual activity reports and seek approval from the executive committee before they are presented to the General Assembly.

4.7 Youth Development Officer

- a. The youth development officer leads the community's effort to ensure the overall development of young people who belong to the Ethiopian community in the West Midlands.
- b. The youth development officer may establish sub-committees to facilitate its activities.
- c. The youth development officer shall prepare annual activities plan for approval by the executive committee.
- d. The youth development officer shall prepare annual activity reports and seek approval from the executive committee before presenting them to the General Assembly.

5 Eligibility to become a committee member

- 5.1 All members are eligible to become Executive Committee members after two years of official membership.



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6 Nomination and election of committee members

6.1 Nomination

6.1.1 All active registered members who paid all their membership fees at the time of nomination can nominate candidates to the Executive Committee.

6.1.2 Nomination to Executive Committee election shall be submitted digitally or on paper to the Election Committee members.

6.2 Election of committee members

6.2.1 An independent election committee of three members organises elections. The General Assembly nominates the election committee members.

6.2.2 The General Assembly shall approve the nominated election committee members with a simple majority of publicly conducted voting on election day.

6.2.3 Election committee members shall decide among themselves who should chair the committee.

6.2.4 The life of an election committee ends after concluding the whole task of election/re-election of an Executive Committee and the handover of the new executive committee.

6.3 Election process

6.3.1 Elections shall be held at the Annual General Meeting or an Extraordinary General Meeting convened for this purpose.

6.3.2 Voting shall be by secret ballot unless the meeting agrees to a show of hands.

6.3.3 If there are more candidates than the number of vacant positions, the candidates with more votes should constitute the Executive Committee.



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6.3.4 In the event of a tie, a re-vote shall be held for the tied positions. If the tie persists, a random draw shall determine the winner.

6.3.5 The newly elected members of the Executive Committee should divide the roles among themselves by consensus or vote and report back to the General Assembly their roles within the committee.

7. Annual General Meeting (AGM)

- a. The AGM shall be convened in February of each year.
- b. The AGM's exact date, location and duration must be communicated to the entire membership through all available platforms at least four weeks before the meeting.
- c. The overall duration of the AGM can take between three to four hours.
- d. The Executive Committee should select and announce the appropriate venue for the AGM
- e. All paid-up members in good standing are eligible to attend the AGM.
- f. The following items shall be discussed at the AGM:
 - i. Approval of minutes of the previous AGM
 - ii. Chair's report - compiled from officers' reports
 - iii. Treasurer's financial report
 - iv. If it is an election year, the Election Committee will conduct an election
 - v. Any other business?
- g. The quorum for an AGM shall be at least 51 per cent of registered members. However, considering the society's (members') business, the executive members can lead a meeting with a smaller percentage of the members.

8. Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM)

8.1 The Executive Committee may call an EGM at any time by a majority vote of its members.

8.2 At least 30 days' notice must be given to all members, stating the date, time, location, and agenda of the meeting.

8.3 The quorum for an EGM shall be at least fifty per cent (50%) of registered members unless otherwise stated in this constitution. However, considering the society's (members') business, the executive members can lead a meeting with a smaller percentage of the members.



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9. Finances

- a. The community shall raise funds through membership fees, donations, grants, fundraising activities, and any other lawful means as determined by the Executive Committee and approved by the General Assembly.
- b. The community shall maintain a bank account in its name, and all funds of the Association shall be deposited into this account.
- c. The Chairperson, the Secretary and one of the executive committee members shall serve as joint signatories on the community's bank account and financial documents (such as a cheque), and the Treasurer shall verify the signatures before making any financial execution **account**.
- d. All expenses by the community need to be supported by the joint signature of the three signatories (the Chairperson, Secretary and one of the executive members).
- e. The Executive Committee shall prepare and present a budget for the upcoming financial year at the AGM for approval by the members. The budget must include estimates of income, proposed expenditures, and reserves.
- f. The financial accounts of the community shall be audited annually by an independent auditor or a financial expert appointed by the General Assembly. The audited financial report shall be presented at the AGM for approval.
- g. Any expenditure must be approved by the Executive Committee.

10. Amendment to the constitution

- a. Any Member of the Executive Committee may propose amendment to this Constitution.
- b. Any proposal to amend this Constitution must be supported in writing by at least four (4) members of the Executive Committee to be considered for discussion.
- c. Upon receiving the required written support, the proposal shall be placed on the agenda for the next scheduled Executive Committee meeting.
- d. A quorum of at least seven (out of nine) of the Nine Executive Committee Members must be present for the amendment discussion and vote to proceed to the General Assembly.
- e. An amendment will be adopted if it receives the approval of at least two-thirds of the General Assembly.
- f. Amendments take effect immediately following approval unless otherwise specified in the amendment text.

11. Entry into force of the constitution



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- a. This Constitution shall enter into force immediately upon its adoption by a majority vote of the General Assembly present at the inaugural meeting.

12. The Community's Engagement with the Ethiopian Government

- a. The Community will always remain impartial regarding political and religious issues. It will not take a political stand, either in favour of or against a political party in the UK or Ethiopia.

- b. The Community will respect its members' right to be part of a political party. However, the Community will not provide, facilitate or participate in an event organised by a political party.

- c. As an Ethiopian Community, the Community will establish a principle-based relationship with the Ethiopian Embassy to pursue its objectives and the benefits of its members without compromising the Community's political impartiality and independence.

- d. The Executive Committee must discuss and endorse every official communication between the Community, the Ethiopian Embassy, or the Ethiopian Government.

- e. In the case of controversial issues that divide the opinion of the Executive Committee and the Community's membership, the community's impartiality, independence, and integrity must be respected.

13. The Community's Engagement with Activities in Ethiopia

- a. The Executive Committee can decide to participate in various social, cultural, economic, humanitarian and sports activities in Ethiopia, provided that the Community's impartiality, independence and integrity are respected.

- b. Depending on the topic of the engagement, the Executive Committee can delegate one of the elected officers to facilitate the Community's engagement in Ethiopia

14. Advisory Board

- a. The Community can establish an advisory board that can provide general advice and moral support to the Executive Committee.

- b. Members of the advisory board should be respected members of the Ethiopian community in the West Midlands.

- c. Advisory Board members can be three or five. Elected with a hand raising at the annual general assembly with a raised hand.



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- d. The tenure of an Advisory Board member is three years and renewable only once.
- e. The Advisory Board meets at least twice a year to hear reports from the Executive Committee and provide moral support and guidance.

15. Dispute resolution within the Executive Committee

- a. The internal dispute resolution mechanism established under this provision is the exclusive means of settling any dispute between Executive Committee Members.
- b. In the event of a dispute between Executive Committee Members, the Executive Committee shall appoint a neutral mediator from within the Community or an external party agreed upon by all parties to the dispute. If all parties to the dispute do not agree, a two-thirds majority of the Executive Committee – excluding the parties to the dispute should appoint a neutral mediator.
- c. Mediation shall commence within 14 days of the dispute being formally raised in writing to the Chair or Secretary.
- d. If mediation does not resolve the dispute within 30 days, the matter shall be referred to an independent arbitration panel composed of three individuals.
- e. The panel members shall be nominated by any of the Executive Committee Members not directly involved in the dispute.
- f. The Panel members shall be approved by at least two-thirds of the Executive Committee.
- g. The arbitration shall commence within 14 days of the panel's appointment.
- h. At least one hearing session must be held, during which both parties will have the opportunity to present their case, provide evidence, and respond to questions from the panel. The hearing shall be scheduled within 21 days of the arbitration initiation.
- i. The panel's decision shall be final and binding.

16. Dissolution of the Association

- a. If the Executive Committee determines (by a two-thirds majority) that it is necessary or advisable to dissolve the Association, it shall call an Extraordinary General Meeting. Members must be notified of this meeting at least 30 days in advance.
- b. The notice for the Extraordinary General Meeting shall clearly state the proposed terms of dissolution.
- c. The Association shall be dissolved if at least two-thirds of the members present at the Extraordinary General Meeting vote in favour of its closure.



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- d. If, upon dissolution of the Community, there remains, after the satisfaction of all its debts and liabilities, any property whatsoever the same shall not be paid or distributed among Members of the Community but shall be given or transferred to some other charitable institution or institutions having objectives similar in whole or in part to the objectives of the Community, to be determined by the Members of the Community at or before the time of dissolution. Nothing in this constitution shall authorise an application of the property of the charity for purposes which are not charitable in accordance with section 7 of the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005.

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