

# **Sakhya: Cambridge Friends of India**



## **\*Constitution\***

### **1. Name:**

The name of the Society shall be Sakhya : Cambridge Friends of India

### **2. Aims:**

The Society's principal aim shall be: To benefit disadvantaged individuals and social groups/institutions in India either directly or with the help of other organisations. This shall be done by various means including contributing funds to welfare projects in India. Funds will be raised through donations and from various types of events as the Society may hold from time to time.

### **3. Membership:**

- a) Membership of the Society shall be extended to all members and ex-members of Cambridge University. The Society may consider granting membership to non-members of the University who are not ex-members if they apply for it.
- b) The membership fee shall be £ 5.00 (five pounds only) per annum.
- c) The Society shall not refuse an application for membership on the grounds of race, place of origin, sex, sexual orientation, caste, religion, or political views or on any other grounds that it may deem discriminatory in the future.
- d) However, the Society may expel any member for behaviour likely to bring the Society into disrepute.
- e) All members shall have full voting rights at the Society's General Body meetings.

### **4. The General Body:**

The General Body shall comprise of all members of the Society. It will have full voting rights in the election of Working Body at the Annual General Body Meeting, and also at General meetings called for the purpose of electing candidates if vacancies arise. If any member of the General body has any concern pertaining to the functioning of the Society or constitutional amendments, the issue should be put forward to the Secretary in writing. The Secretary will discuss the issue in a meeting of the working group, within a reasonable time. If the decision of the working group is not to the satisfaction of the member a General Body Meeting may be demanded if: at least 10% of the members or 5 people who have been members for one year or more (before the date when the decision was communicated to the member), also share the concern. The secretary shall not refuse to assist the member in communicating with the other members, if needed. The issue may be put to vote in the General Body Meeting.

## 5. The Working Groups and Office Bearers:

1. The Working Groups shall be elected by the General Body during Society's Annual General Body Meeting. It shall constitute the three working groups, Fund-Raising Group, the Publicity Group and the Projects Group, whose responsibilities shall be as follows:

**Fund-Raising Group** - responsible for the fund-raising efforts of the Society.

**Publicity Group** - responsible for the publicity of the Society and of various events organised by the Society throughout the year.

**Projects Group** - responsible for all issues related to the potential beneficiaries of the Society's funds.

2. The General Body shall also appoint the following principal office bearers who shall together form an Executive Committee:

a) **Secretary:** (i) shall maintain the Societies official correspondences with the University of Cambridge and the Charities Commission, UK (ii) shall liaise with the working groups towards maintaining other official correspondences of the Society (iii) shall be held responsible by the University of Cambridge for the welfare of the Society. (iv) shall maintain the minutes of General Meetings, those of the Joint Meetings of the Working Groups, and any other documents that the Society may ask him/her to maintain.

b) **Junior Treasurer:** (i) is responsible for maintaining the accounts of the society, liaise with the Society's bank and issuing all payments (ii) shall be held responsible by the University of Cambridge for providing an annual statement of accounts and be answerable to the University for queries regarding the financial state of the Society (iii) shall be a Signatory along with any other members of the Working Groups for monetary transactions (vide section 6).

c) **President(s) of the Working groups:** who (i) shall be responsible for the overall functioning of the group(s). (ii) shall arrange the meetings of the groups (iii) maintain minutes and documents within the groups. (iv) provide a framework for efficient working of the groups (v) allocate specific responsibilities to group members.

3. All Working Groups shall carry out tasks assigned to them by the General Body and make recommendations to the latter regarding these tasks.
4. Each Working Group shall have no less than three and no more than eight members. Any member of University of Cambridge can be a Working Group Member. When applicable, the President(s) (of each working group) may, at his/her discretion, increase the numerical strength of their respective Working Group where such a need is perceived, subject to approval by the Working Body.
5. In addition to its elected members, the Fund-Raising Group shall invite the Junior Treasurer of the Society to serve on it in an ex-officio capacity.

#### **6. Other Office-Bearers:**

There shall be at least one other signatories apart from the Junior Treasurer, who shall be a member of the Working Groups. The cheques shall be signed by any two of the signatories where possible, one of whom shall be the Junior Treasurer.

#### **7. Meetings of the Society:**

- a) The Annual General Meeting of the Society shall be held each year in the second half of the Easter Term. The time and venue of this meeting shall be determined in the Joint Meeting of the Working Groups and publicised at least fourteen days in advance. A quorum of a quarter of the Society's membership shall be necessary for the meeting to take place.
- b) At least one General Meeting shall be held in the first half of the Michaelmas Term. The time and venue of this meeting shall be determined in the Joint Meeting of the Working Groups and publicised at least fourteen days in advance. A quorum of a quarter of the Society's membership shall be necessary for the meeting to take place.
- c) All other General Meetings shall be held as and when the Working Groups jointly deem necessary. The time and venue of these meetings shall be publicised at least three working days in advance. A quorum of a quarter of the Society's membership shall be necessary for the meeting to take place.
- d) The Working Groups shall hold Joint Meetings as and when they deem necessary. The time and venue of these meetings shall be duly publicised. A quorum of half the membership of all Working Groups put together shall be necessary for the meeting to take place.
- e) Each Working Group shall conduct its own meetings as and when it

deems necessary after duly publicising the time and venue of these meetings. A quorum of three members of the Working Group shall be necessary for the meeting to take place.

- f) Whenever the quorum of a meeting is incomplete it shall be postponed to a different date at least once. The new time and venue should be duly publicised but there shall be no obligation to adhere to the original notice period. If the quorum of a meeting is incomplete on the second consecutive occasion, it shall, nevertheless, be held. However, the Society's office-bearers and the Working Groups shall investigate the reasons for the lack of quorum and take necessary action so as to ensure the active participation of Members.

## **8. Elections:**

- a) Members of Working Groups and the Treasurers shall be elected at the Annual General Meeting, and if vacancies arise in mid-year, at a General Meeting.
- b) Nominations for these positions shall be submitted to the Chair either at the commencement of the election meeting or during it.
- c) There may be hustings at the election meeting.
- d) As far as possible the Society shall strive to elect office-bearers unanimously. If this is not possible, votes shall be counted by two persons chosen at the election meeting and who are not candidates for any of the posts. The election and count shall be conducted using the 'First Past the Post' system. This system envisages that the candidate polling the highest number of votes shall be declared the winner.

## **9. Senior Treasurer:**

There shall be a Senior Treasurer, who shall be a member of the Regent House, or other person approved by the Junior Proctor. The Senior Treasurer shall be appointed by the elected members of the Executive Committee and shall be ex officio a member of the Executive Committee. The Senior Treasurer shall not be liable for any financial debt or other obligation of the Society unless he or she has personally authorised such a debt in writing

## **10. Disciplinary Processes:**

The Society's only disciplinary sanctions are to expel or to suspend a member whose actions are felt to be such as to bring the Society into disrepute, or to adversely affect the smooth running of the Society in a major way. Such expulsion or suspension can only be effected by a majority vote of all Executive Committee members, excluding the Senior Treasurer. In the event of an expulsion, the excluded member is required to return all equipment, documents and finances belonging to the Society within 7 days.

He/she will not be entitled to any full or partial refund of annual subscriptions;

If the excluded or suspended member wishes to appeal the decision, that appeal should be made to the Senior Treasurer, who will consider all the facts, and whose decision will be final. An appeal as to the process of exclusion, but not a further investigation into the facts, may be lodged with the Junior Proctor.

#### **11. Amendments to this Constitution:**

Amendments to this Constitution may be proposed by any member of the General Body, and must be submitted to the Secretary in writing. This Constitution may only be amended at an Annual General Meeting, or a General Meeting specially called for that purpose. No vote on a constitutional amendment shall be valid unless at least one quarter of the Society's members are present at the meeting. Procedures as outlined under section 4 shall also apply.

No amendment to this Constitution intended to remove the position of Senior Treasurer, to alter its prerogatives and duties, or to change the criteria and procedure for the appointment of a Senior Treasurer can be put to a vote without the prior written agreement of the Junior Proctor of the University of Cambridge.

#### **12. Dissolution of the Society:**

The Society may be dissolved at a General Meeting provided that at least Twenty-one days written notice of the intention to dissolve the Society has been given to the members. At least two thirds of those present and voting at the General Meeting must vote in favour of the motion for Dissolution for it to be effective.

Any motion for Dissolution of the Society shall provide that assets remaining after disbursing funds ring-fenced for designated beneficiaries and after all liabilities have been met shall be transferred either to another Registered University Society or to the Societies Syndicate.