

CONSTITUTION

1. NAME:

The charity's name is: **The Order of Amida Buddha (also known as The Amida Order)**

2. THE PURPOSES OF THE CHARITY ARE:

The mission of The Amida Order is to foster the Buddhist faith and its application for the spiritual, social, psychological and practical benefit of all sentient beings, individually and collectively, past, present and future, here and hereafter.

The aims of **The Amida Order** will be to advance Pure Land Buddhism for the public benefit (in accordance with the statement of beliefs and practices as attached in Appendix 6), across the United Kingdom or the world as the charity trustees may from time to time think fit, in particular by:

- (a) Encouraging Amida Order members and others to live ethical lives in accordance with the teachings of the Buddhas;
- (b) Supporting ordained members of the Amida Order, at the discretion of the management committee, for example in their ministry, inter-faith work, academic research and other charitable works.
- (c) Maintaining close communication with and working in cooperation with other groups with similar objects;
- (d) Using applications of the Buddha's teachings to promote the health and well-being of all.

3. TRUSTEES:

- (a) The charity shall be managed by a committee of trustees who are appointed at the Annual General Meeting (AGM) - also known as Conclave - of the charity.
- (b) The Management Committee (also known as Amida Gana) will consist of at least 3 elected members / officers plus the elected Head of the Amida Order who is appointed as an ex-officio member on a permanent basis, while they hold the office of the Head of the Order.
- (c) Elected Committee members / officers will be voting members of The Amida Order.
- (d) If any trustee spaces remain unfilled by election, the committee may co-opt members at their discretion.
- (e) Up to two Co-opted members can be appointed from outside the membership of The Order if there is a specific need identified, for example legal or financial

support to the Management Committee, or a specific project that requires extra capacity.

(f) External co-optees will be non-voting Associate Trustees.

(g) The officers' roles (Amida Gana) are as follows:

- **Chair** - who shall chair both general and committee meetings (this role will usually be held by the Head of the Order)
- **Secretary** - who shall be responsible for governance matters including the taking of minutes, the distribution of all papers and communications, including the website and newsletters.
- **Treasurer** - who shall be responsible for maintaining the accounts and for keeping records of all members

(h) The Management Committee will meet as necessary and not less than four times a year. They will also establish sub-committees / task groups as required for the certain functions, e.g. Education Courses.

(i) In the event of a committee member / officer standing down during the year a replacement will be elected by the next General Meeting of members.

(j) Any committee member not attending a meeting without apology for three months will be contacted by the committee and asked if they wish to resign.

4. CARRYING OUT THE PURPOSES:

In order to carry out the charitable purposes, the trustees have the power to:

- (a) raise funds, receive grants and donations
- (b) apply funds to carry out the work of the charity
- (c) cooperate with and support other charities with similar purposes
- (d) do anything which is lawful and necessary to achieve the purposes

5. MEMBERSHIP:

(a) Membership is open to anyone who:

- is aged over 18, and
- supports the aims of The Amida Order and
- has become ordained after being invited to do so.

(b) Membership will commence with the ordination of the individual into the community (and ratified by the Trustees) and all Ordained Members will be voting members.

(c) Once accepted by the trustees, membership is permanent unless terminated by the member or by the charity. The trustees will keep an up-to-date membership list.

- (d) The trustees may remove a person's membership if they believe it is in the best interests of the charity.
- (e) The member has the right to be heard by the trustees before the decision is made and can be accompanied by a friend.
- (f) There will also be an annual membership fee which will be agreed at the Annual General Meeting (AGM) and will be payable by all members.
- (g) Members may resign at any time in writing to the secretary.
- (h) Resignation takes effect from the date of receipt of such resignation and will be acknowledged in writing.
- (i) Any member who has not paid their membership fee for one year will be contacted by the committee, who will then decide whether that member is deemed to have resigned.

6. DIVERSITY & INCLUSION:

- (a) The Amida Order will not discriminate on the grounds of sex, race (including colour, ethnic or national origin), sexual orientation, disability, gender reassignment, religious or political belief, pregnancy or maternity, marital status or age.
- (b) Any offensive behaviour, including racist, homophobic, transphobic, sexist or inflammatory remarks, will not be permitted.
- (c) Anyone behaving in an offensive way or breaking the equal opportunities policy may be asked not to attend further meetings or to resign from the group if an apology is not given or the behaviour is repeated. The individual concerned shall have the right to be heard by the management committee, accompanied by a friend, before a final decision is made.

7. ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING (AGM):

The AGM must be held every year, with 14 days' notice given to all members telling them what is on the agenda.

- (a) Minutes must be kept of the AGM.
- (b) There must be at least 5 members or 10% of the membership (whichever is the greater) present at the AGM.
- (c) Every member has one vote.
- (d) The trustees shall present the annual report and accounts
- (e) Any member may stand for election as a trustee.
- (f) Members shall elect between 3 and 9 trustees to serve for the next year. They will retire at the next AGM but may stand for re-election.
- (g) The Head of the Order will be an ex-officio member of the Committee.

8. SPECIAL GENERAL MEETINGS:

- (a) The Secretary will call a Special General Meeting at the request of the majority of the committee or at least six other voting members giving a written request to the Chair or Secretary stating the reason for their request.
- (b) The meeting will take place within twenty-one days of the request.
- (c) All members will be given two weeks' notice of such a meeting, giving the venue, date, time and agenda, and notice may be by telephone, email or post.
- (d) The quorum for the Special General Meeting will be 5% of the voting membership or 5 members, whichever is the greater number.
- (e) The Special General Meetings will be open to any voting member of The Amida Order.

9. GENERAL MEETINGS:

- (a) General Meetings are open to all voting members and will be held at least once every 3 months or more often if necessary.
- (b) All members will be given two weeks' notice of such a meeting, giving the venue, date, time and agenda, and notice may be by telephone, email or post.
- (c) The quorum for a General Meeting shall be 5% of the voting membership or 5 voting members, whichever is the greater number.
- (d) The General Meetings will be open to any voting member of The Amida Order.

10. TRUSTEE / MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEETINGS (AMIDA GANA):

- (a) Trustees must hold at least 4 meetings each year. At their first meeting after the AGM they will elect a chair, treasurer and secretary. Trustees may act by majority decision.
- (b) At least 3 trustees must be present at the meeting to be able to make decisions.
- (c) Minutes shall be kept for every meeting.
- (d) If trustees have a conflict of interest they must declare it and leave the meeting while this matter is being discussed or decided.
- (e) During the year, the trustees may appoint up to 2 additional trustees. They will stand down at the next AGM.
- (f) The trustees may make reasonable additional rules to help run the charity. These rules must not conflict with this constitution or the law.
- (g) Committee meetings may be called by the Chair or Secretary. Committee members must receive notice of meetings at least 7 days before the meeting.
- (h) The quorum for Committee meetings is two Committee members.

11. RULES OF PROCEDURE FOR MEETINGS:

- (a) All questions that arise at any meeting will be discussed openly and the meeting will seek to find general agreement that everyone present can agree to.

- (b) If a consensus cannot be reached a vote will be taken and a decision will be made by a simple majority of members present.
- (c) If the number of votes cast on each side is equal, the chair of the meeting shall have an additional casting vote.

12. FINANCES AND PROPERTY:

- (a) Money and property must only be used for the charity's purposes - all money raised by or on behalf of ASPBC (including donations) is only to be used to further the aims of the group, as specified in item 2 of this constitution.
- (b) Trustees must keep accounts. The most recent annual accounts can be seen by anybody on request.
- (c) Trustees cannot receive any money or property from the charity, except to refund reasonable out of pocket expenses.
- (d) An account will be maintained on behalf of the Association at a bank agreed by the committee. Money must be held in the charity's bank account.
- (e) Three cheque signatories will be nominated by the Committee (one to be the Treasurer). The signatories must not be related nor members of the same household.
- (f) All expenditure transactions, such as cheque signatures and online banking authorisation, must be authorised by 2 trustees.
 - (i) For cheque payments, the signatories will sign the cheque.
 - (ii) For other payments (such as BACS payments, cash withdrawals, debit card payments or cash payments), a requisition note will be signed by two signatories, and held by the treasurer.
- (g) Records of income and expenditure will be maintained by the Treasurer and a financial statement given at each meeting.

13. AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION:

- (a) Amendments to the constitution may only be made at the Annual General Meeting or a Special General Meeting.
- (b) Any proposal to amend the constitution must be given to the Secretary in writing. The proposal must then be circulated with the notice of meeting.
- (c) Any proposal to amend the constitution will require a two thirds majority of those present and entitled to vote.
- (d) No change can be made that would make the organisation no longer a charity.

14. DISSOLUTION:

- (a) If a meeting, by simple majority, decides that it is necessary to close down the group it may call a Special General Meeting to do so. The sole business of this meeting will be to dissolve the group.

- (b) If it is agreed to dissolve the group, all remaining money and other assets, once outstanding debts have been paid, will be donated to a local charitable organisation. The organisation will be agreed at the meeting which agrees the dissolution.
- (c) Any money or property remaining after payment of debts must be given to a charity with similar purposes to this one.

15. INDEMNITY:

- (a) A small charity / unincorporated association cannot in its own name, enter into contracts, sue or be sued, take on a lease, own property, or employ staff. If a claim is made, it cannot be made against the charity, so it will almost certainly be against the individuals running it.
- (b) Therefore, the Management Committee will ensure that adequate insurance cover is in place, for example, public liability and or 'directors' and officers' cover.

12. SETTING UP THE CHARITY:

This constitution was adopted on **17th November 2022** by the people whose signatures appear below. They are the first members of the charity and will be the trustees until the AGM, which must be held within one year of this date.

Name and position in the group

Address.....

Signed

Date/...../.....

Name and position in the group

Address.....

Signed

Date/...../.....

Name and position in the group

Address.....

Signed

Date/...../.....

13. AGM APPROVAL:

This constitution was agreed at the Inaugural Annual General Meeting of the ASPBC on:-

Date/...../.....

Name and position in the group

Signed

Name and position in the group

Signed

Name and position in the group

Signed

14. APPENDICES:

- 1 - Byelaws and Provisions
- 2 - Conflicts of Interest Policy
- 3 - Complaints and Disputes
- 4 - Safeguarding Policy
- 5 - Membership, Charity Records & GDPR
- 6 - Statement of beliefs and practices
- 7 - Social and Religious Manifesto
- 8 - Doctrine, Ethics & Mission