

## **CONSTITUTION OF POLISH ABROAD**

### **1. NAME**

The name of the organisation is Polish Abroad.

### **2. AIMS**

The aims of the POLISH ABROAD are to:

2.1. Contribute to the advancement of citizenship and community development through social, cultural and educational projects undertaken either independently or together with organisations sharing the same objectives.

2.2. Work in partnership with other community and charity organisations, their representatives and officials as well as other relevant organisations and agencies to formulate and implement constructive strategies to encourage the promotion of the Polish Community in Northern Ireland.

2.3. Raise awareness among the wider community of the needs and rights and the contribution of the Polish Community in the interest of community relations in the North West.

2.4. Bring together members of the Polish community to develop and advance their arts, culture and heritage.

2.5. Advance the education of the Polish Community in the North West by providing educational opportunities.

2.6. Advance the amateur sport among the Polish Community in the North West and its environs.

### **3. OBJECTIVES**

3.1 To establish and maintain Polish Abroad Saturday School for the promotion of arts, culture, heritage and language of the Polish Community in the North West.

3.2 To foster the development of active citizenship by organising cultural events, information days, attendance at local government and community relations activities.

3.3 To develop a programme of active engagement with other organisations in the North West with the view to improve and advance community and race relations, equality and respect for diversity in the local area.

3.4 To promote the Polish community through a programme of displays, exhibitions, workshops, performances, publicity and public relations.

3.5 To establish and maintain an angling club for the advancement of amateur sport and to deliver the knowledge about local angling regulations and to promote the sport of angling by organising workshops and angling events.

#### 4. CARRYING OUT THE PURPOSES

In order to carry out the objectives members of Polish Abroad have the power to:

4.1. Raise funds, receive grants and donations.

4.2. Apply funds to carry out the work of Polish Abroad.

4.3. Co-operate with and support other groups, associations and charities with similar purposes.

4.4. Do anything which is lawful and necessary to achieve the purposes.

#### 5. MEMBERSHIP

5.1. Membership is open to all Polish nationals who live or work in the North West and its environs and share the aforementioned aims and objectives.

5.2. Qualification to full membership, i.e. with voting rights, is open to members of the Polish community who are over 18 years old provided that they have completed an application form accompanied by proof of identity.

5.3. Honorary membership which is open to non-Polish nationals may be conferred by members at the Annual General Meeting but honorary members will not hold voting rights.

5.4. Membership will be terminated should an individual transgress the aims and objectives of Polish Abroad provided that the person shall have the right to be heard by the Committee before the final decision is made.

5.5. In any dispute over individual membership, there shall be a right of appeal to an independent arbitrator appointed by mutual agreement.

## 6. COMMITTEE

- 6.1. The Committee will consist of a minimum of four and a maximum of eight members.
- 6.2. Elections to the post of Chairperson, Vice-Chair, Secretary, and Treasurer will be held every two years at the Annual General Meeting or Extraordinary General Meeting by a simple majority of the voting membership (51%) present at the meeting.
- 6.3. No person should hold the same post for more than four years.
- 6.4. All elections will be held by secret ballot.
- 6.5. All members should have the right to vote, nominate and be eligible for election.
- 6.6. Other members and officers may be elected.
- 6.7. Motions of censure may be proposed by at least two Committee members in order to institute disciplinary or dismissal procedures.
- 6.8. Vacancies may be filled by election at the next General or Special Meeting.
- 6.9. Officers and Members of the Committee may receive reimbursement of agreed expenses when accompanied by relevant receipts.
- 6.10. Committee members who do not attend for more than three consecutive meetings without due cause may be deemed by the Committee to have resigned.
- 6.11. The Committee may set up sub-committees, when necessary, to deal with specific issues.
- 6.12. The committee has the power to choose and appoint a Coordinator of the organisation who takes part in the meetings but has no right to vote.

## 7. UNILATERAL ACTION

No member of Polish Abroad shall act unilaterally on behalf of the organisation. When an Officer is presented with urgent action to be taken they should consult the Chair or Secretary and at least one other officer, when practicable, and report the action at the next Committee or General meeting for endorsement.

## 8. FINANCES

- 8.1. The Treasurer is required to administer a bank account and keep proper accounts to be presented at the Annual General Meeting.
- 8.2. Cheques must be signed by the Treasurer and one of the other two signatures.
- 8.3. The Committee will have the right to inspect the accounts at any reasonable time.
- 8.4. All money raised by or on behalf of Polish Abroad shall be applied to further the objectives of the organisation and for no other purpose. The repayment of any out-of-

pocket expenses must be authorised by the Committee in advance and will only be paid against relevant receipts.

8.5. If deemed necessary, competent auditors will be elected at the AGM and given the power to see all the accounts, the minutes of meetings and bank statements. Auditors may not be appointed if they are Committee members, employees, trustees or relatives of the above.

8.6. Any payment above £500 must be authorised by the Committee in advance in accordance with any financial procedures policies adopted by the group at a quorate meeting.

## 9. GENERAL AND ANNUAL GENERAL MEETINGS

9.1. There will be a minimum of six Committee meetings per annum.

9.2. Motions and resolutions must be received by the Secretary at least 14 days before the next meeting.

9.3. At least 14 days' notice of the business of the meeting must be given by the Secretary. The date is to be displayed publicly at least 14 days in advance.

9.4. The AGM will be held annually and will be called by the Secretary giving 14 days' notice of the business. The date will be displayed publicly at least 14 days in advance.

9.5. A Special or Extraordinary Meeting may be called to discuss items of particular concern. Such a meeting must only deal with the issue at hand.

## 10. RULES OF PROCEDURES AT ALL MEETINGS

10.1. Voting - any question arising at a meeting of the organisation or one of its committees shall be decided by a simple majority of those present and voting.

10.2. No member shall exercise more than one vote. The Chair has the casting vote.

10.3. The coordinator has no voting rights.

10.4. The quorum is 60% of Committee members.

10.5. Minute books shall be kept by the organisation, the Committee and all other committees and the appropriate Secretary shall enter therein a record of all proceedings and resolutions. Minutes should be available to all members for inspection.

## 11. AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION

Only at the AGM, or at a special meeting operating under the same rules as the AGM, can a decision be taken to change the constitution. To make an amendment or change to the constitution, notice of the Motion must be given as in 6.2 above, the vote being passed by a two-thirds majority.

## 12. DISSOLUTION

12.1. The power to dissolve the organisation resides with the members and must be taken at a Special or AGM by a two-thirds majority of members present and voting.

12.2. If a decision to dissolve Polish Abroad is taken, according to the rules of procedure above, the Committee shall have the power to dispose of any assets held by or in the name of the organisation.

12.3. Any assets remaining after the satisfaction of any proper debts and liabilities shall be transferred to a group existing within the North West which shares similar objective to those of the organisation.

## 13. POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

13.1. The Committee shall have power to adopt and issue policies and procedures for the conduct of the organisation.

13.2. This constitution was adopted as the Constitution of Polish Abroad at an Annual General Meeting held at the offices of NICEM North West on the 06.12.2014.