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1. Introduction / Background History

1.1 The Society shall be called the GURUNG SOCIETY KENT (GSK), UK.

1.2 The inception of this vibrant and beautiful community stemmed from the thoughts conceived after a locally held Lhosar party in January 2007. The enthusiastic participation of Gurung families residing across Kent prompted the establishment of our very own Gurung society, bearing a distinct identity, with the aim of unifying Gurung residents not only in Ashford but also in Folkestone, Dover, Canterbury, and Maidstone. With this vision in mind, on May 6, 2007, the Gurung Society of Kent (GSK) was formally established and inaugurated after extensive discussions and consultations involving Gurung individuals from all corners of Kent County.

1.3 The society shall remain an independent, non-affiliated and non-profit making organisation.

2. Aim

2.1 Promote and preserve Gurung language, culture, religious values, norms, traditional attire and sacraments with a view of passing on to the future generation.

3. Objectives

3.1 Build strong social relationship with Gurungs living in Kent.

3.2 Promote and develop friendly relationship with other ethnic groups including local communities.

3.3 Encourage and develop the awareness of equality and proportional participation of women and youths in every function of the society.

3.4 Plan and execute Lhosar and Summer Get-To-Gather as principle functions in a calendar year.

3.5 Provision of financial and moral support to the concerned members and their immediate families during difficult times for example; grave injury, illness and loss of life etc.

3.6 Encourage and assist any Gurung researchers, historians and intellectual bodies in finding, collecting and publishing Gurung scriptures, dictionaries and historical records.

3.7 Arrange and facilitate seminars, lectures, visits and other social activities to promote society's objectives.

3.8 Felicitation of awards in GCSE/A Level, professional, and best performance fields. The right of decision in selecting winners/award receivers shall remain with the Executive Committee.

3.9 Provision of humanitarian and charitable assistance within its capacity as deemed necessary by the Executive Committee.

3.10 All members are expected to align with the society's constitution at all times.

4. Executive Committee (EC)

4.1 EC shall be elected every 3 years after the Annual General Meeting (AGM).

4.2 EC shall comprise of the following core regulatory bodies; Chairman, Chief Vice-Chairman, Vice-Chairman, General Secretary, Treasurer, Food & Drinks Secretary, Sports Secretary, Cultural Secretary and other secretariat posts as deemed necessary.

4.3 Area Representative (AR). These are intermediary members of EC who shall help assist EC in day to day running of the society. They shall also be responsible for coordinating activities and passing information to general members within their area of responsibility (AOR).

4.4 Advisor. EC shall elect advisors as necessary by offering letters of request/acceptance to such members including Ex-Chairman who are deemed suitable. A chief advisor may be self-appointed from among the elected advisors. Advisors shall have no rights to vote for the election of EC. A sample of letter of request/acceptance for advisors is at Annex B.

4.5 Trustee. EC at their discretion shall appoint no less than three Trustees for the upkeeping and safekeeping of the society's fund if desired.

4.6 Brief personal profiles of the current members of EC are at Annex C.

5. EC Members' Responsibilities

5.1 Chairman (CM). The Chairman is the figurehead and ultimate authority of the society who shall;

- a. strive for the betterment of the society in his/her best ability.
- b. preside over all meetings and decision makings based on the society's constitution and objectives.
- c. have power to call an Extraordinary Meeting at any time as deemed absolutely necessary.

5.2 Chief Vice-Chairman (CVC). Deputise CM and presides over all meetings in CM's absence. During peace time, he/she shall be responsible for day-to-day administration of the society in conjunction with the General Secretary including helping to build internal and external relationship with wider organisations under the direction of CM.

5.3 Vice Chairman (VC). Deputise CVC and presides over all meetings in CM's and CVC's absence.

5.4 General Secretary (GSec). Focal and first Port-Of-Call (POC) for the society under the direction of CM. His/her responsibilities;

- a. Is responsible for the conduct of all meetings, social functions and ritual ceremonies.
- b. Shall implement society's Policies/Directives ensuring discipline in line with the constitution.
- c. Shall produce and present agenda during meetings and promulgate outcomes of meeting to all members.

5.5 Secretary. Shadow to GSec and deputise in his/her absence in liaison with CM. He/she shall also be responsible for maintaining contact list of members and promoting membership in conjunction with the Treasurer.

5.6 Treasurer. Responsible for all financial matters of the society and update/advise CM in the state and upkeep of the fund. He/she shall present a yearly budget at AGM and present fund state for annual audit conducted by an external auditor.

5.7 Assistant Treasurer. Shadow the Treasurer and deputise in his/her absence in liaison with the EC as directed by the CM. He/she shall also be responsible for maintaining and upkeeping of the Property Book if owned by the society.

5.8 Cultural Secretary. Organise and execute all social events in a calendar year in line with the society's objectives and CM's direction.

5.9 Food & Drink Secretary. Provision of food & drinks in support of the society's annual social events in a calendar year or any other events as directed by CM.

5.10 Sports Secretary. Prepare and organise youth or veteran team to partake in the Gurkha Cup competition including any sporting activities and fun games during social functions as directed by CM.

5.11 Area Representatives (Ashford, Canterbury, Maidstone, Folkestone, Dover). Responsible for maintaining up-to-date list of all members in his/her respective area in liaison with the Treasurer. He/she shall also maintain for timely communication between central and local area and assist CM/GSec in providing accurate attendance list prior to the society's annual events including meetings.

6. Membership

6.1 Full membership shall be open to all Gurungs residing either permanently or temporarily within Kent County, UK who are over the age of 18, possess residential status and commit to aligning with the society's constitution.

6.2 A fully up-to-date list of members shall be readily available through GSec.

6.3 All members shall subject to the Rules/Regulations as alluded in the society's constitution.

6.4 Categories of GSK membership:

a. Full/General Member. All Gurungs living within Kent shall have rights to join GSK and enjoy the full benefit that the society has to offer provided they have paid;^{1*}

(i) £120 in full as one-off membership fee on joining.

(ii) £10 annual subscription.

(iii) Sewora contribution in the last 2 consecutive Sewora call-out notices.

b. Life Member. Any member who can influence and support the society ethically and financially to exceptionally high degree shall be awarded a Life Member. The final decision to award life membership shall remain with EC.

c. Associate Member. Any member's spouse, children under the age of 18 and

¹ These new motions have approved after many deliberations during EC meeting and AGM 2023 agreed to effective from 01 May 2024.

visiting parents shall be known/considered as Associate Members at the discretion of EC. Children who complete 18 years are eligible to become general member.

d. Honorary Member. Any Gurung either Life or General, who despite inheriting a non Gurung status following marriage, for example, a Gurung woman marrying a non-Gurung, may apply for an honorary membership should she wish to do so provided she has been exemplary in promoting society's objectives including values & standard. It is to note that this is purely with a purpose to give her ethical value being Gurung and shall have no voting rights but are welcomed to all society's social functions. The decision to select such members shall rest on the EC.

e. Patron. Any person of Nepali origin who, by virtue of his/her status for example, a member of the local borough council, high profile individual etc, who has the potential to play a vital role in influencing the wider community with a view to safeguarding and promoting society's interest shall be offered a Patronship. The decision to select such individual shall be at the discretion of the EC.

7. Membership Fee and Subscription

7.1 As aforementioned, a one-off payment of £120 shall be paid on joining the society and thereafter £10 as annual subscription. The annual subscription shall be paid no later than 31 December of relevant financial year to continue showing commitment to the society and be eligible for full benefit that the society has to offer in the event of any unfortunate eventualities.

7.2 Any members failing to maintain annual subscription in time without valid reason may result in his/her membership being terminated.

8. Other Membership Conditions

8.1 Any member wishing to terminate membership due to being relocated outside Kent or UK permanently are requested to confirm to GSec in writing after which their details will be in Archive once acknowledged by CM however, if they wish to keep their memberships active, they are expected to fulfil the criteria as alluded at Para 6.4a.

8.2 In the event of death of a member, deceased membership shall be automatically transferred to his/her legitimate partner/spouse.

8.3 In the event of both wife and husband being passed away, their details will be kept in the archive.

8.4 EC has the sole right to refuse a renewal of an existing membership under exceptional circumstances subject to the member in question being issued with a notice of refusal within 28 days of the decision.

8.5 EC shall consider any written representations the member may make about its decision, but the committee's decision following such written representations shall be final.

9. Conduct of EC Meetings

9.1 EC meetings shall be held on a quarterly basis and oversee its procedures accordingly.

9.2 All EC members including advisors are expected to attend EC meetings. A verbal justification to CM is required well in advance if unable to attend the meetings. Any EC member

failing to attend three consecutive meetings is required to submit a letter reasoning why to CM. This may result in his/her name being removed from EC if found plausible.

9.3 Meetings shall be chaired by CM or CVC or VC. In the unlikely event of their absence, any member of EC as designated by those present shall chair the meeting should it be deemed necessary.

9.4 Any motion of important and difficult nature shall be resolved by open debate/discussion. In the event of no resolve is being found, it shall be decided by conducting a straightforward majority voting system involving raising hands. In case of an even votes, CM shall have the last say.

9.5 EC has the power to deal with all unlawful events/incidents swiftly and robustly as and when they occur in line with the society's constitution. If deemed necessary, EC may temporarily form a Sub-Committee to investigate the matters and make recommendations to EC.

10. AGM

10.1 All members have the rights and are expected to attend the AGM that normally falls in the month of April every year.

10.2 AGM shall be held once a year no less than 11 months and but not exceeding 15 months from the date of the previous AGM. GSec shall send call-out notice to all members via writing, email and through area representatives at least 4 weeks prior to the AGM.

10.3 GenSec shall present a yearly report followed by audited financial account report by the Treasurer for the year ending the previous 31 December. Any discrepancies/irregularities found in the report shall be subject to an independent investigation.

10.4 Motions as previously passed by EC shall be presented to the general members. If passed as agreed with a proposer(s) and seconder(s), they shall set precedence for future society's affairs and be enshrined into the constitution as amendments.

10.5 A record of AGM shall be kept for 3 years after which it will be archived.

11. Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM)

11.1 EGM may be convened within 8 weeks of receiving a written request from at least 10% of general members. GSec shall at the discretion of CM shall send call-out notice with agendas at least 7 clear days prior to EGM.

11.2 During EGM, strictly no other agendas than submitted to GSec shall be considered or discussed.

11.3 All members have the right to attend and cast their vote at EGM.

12. Quorum

12.1 The quorum of any meeting shall be 60%. Without a quorum no voting shall take place.

13. Finance

13.1 The society's financial year shall run from 01 January to 31 December.

13.2 The Treasurer shall be responsible for the administration of the society's fund. EC shall have the power to invest funds in saving account with a bank or building society and hold money in a deposit or current account with a bank.

13.3 All cheques shall be signed by two designated signatories of the EC, one being the Treasurer.

13.4 The income and assets of the society shall be applied solely for the purposes of the society.

13.5 Any authorized expenses on behalf of the society must be recorded and supported by the relevant invoices.

13.6 Any donation to the society may be accepted if it is agreed by both parties to invest the money in promoting the society's objectives only. The donation shall be recorded properly and such donor shall be honoured at the earliest opportunity.

13.7 The society's fund shall be audited once every year before AGM. CM shall have the power to appoint external auditors.

13.8 The auditing board shall be responsible to CM for reporting any irregularities found in the handling of the fund.

13.9 The society's CM has the authority to use maximum of £250 from the society's fund for any emergency at his discretion.

13.10 The Treasurer where possible shall identify such banks who provide their services at nil cost.²

13.11 EC shall decide on any expenditure of fund unless there is an emergency to release a fund where CM has the last say. Such emergency fund should not exceed 5% of the current liquidity. Under such circumstances, the use of fund must be justified at the next committee meeting.

14. Election

14.1 As aforementioned, the election to form a new committee shall be held every 3 years. This shall be conducted immediately after the AGM in the 3rd year marking the end of the current EC's tenure.

14.2 EC shall appoint the election commission comprising of at least a Chief Election Commissioner (CEC), and two Election Commissioners from within or outside GSK well in advance.

14.3 CEC shall have a the last say should there be any disagreement/dispute occurred during the election.

14.4 Eligibility Criteria. The following eligibility criteria should be met to become EC members;

- a. Have clean five years criminal history and not have any disciplinary action being taken against him/her by any EC in the past.
- b. Candidate, Proposer, Seconder and voting members must be full members.

² GSK account has now switched to Lloyds Bank WEF May 2023 with nil charges to their services provided. Previous bank was HSBC which would charge £5/account.

- c. For the post of CM, he/she must have at least three years working experience in the EC.

14.5 The fulfilment of five key posts (Chairman, Chief-vice Chairman, Vice-chairman, Gen Sec and Treasurer) shall be the absolute minimum requirement for the formation of a new EC.

14.6 Candidate(s) nominating himself/herself must have;

- a. a Secunder.
- b. Candidate's and Secunder's full addresses, contact details, full membership numbers and signatures in the candidacy form.

14.7 Proposer proposing a candidate must have;

- a. proposed candidate's consent/agreement in prior.
- b. a Secunder.
- c. Proposer's and Secunder's full addresses, contact details, full membership numbers and signatures in the candidacy form.

14.8 A Proposer shall be able to propose one candidate for one post only. Same rules apply to the Secunder. However, both Proposer and Secunder shall be able to cast votes in the general election should such situation arise.

14.9 Completed candidacy form must reach CEC by no later than 14 clear days prior to the date of election. Photographic copy or hard copy or by email with electronic signatures shall be accepted.

14.10 In the event of no candidacy being found by the deadline, CM of the current EC, upon request by CEC, shall exercise his/her executive power to call for an extraordinary meeting involving EC members only in order to select ideal candidates from within the current EC with the aim of achieving minimum requirement as stated in para 14.5.

14.11 If there is no candidate for any post is being found except for the post of CM until the date of the election, the newly elected CM shall appoint new committee members at his/her discretion on the day or as soon as possible after the election date.

14.12 In the extreme, if no candidate is being found for the post of the CM, the nominee who receives the majority of the general members' vote at the meeting shall be accepted.

14.13 There shall be no vote required if there is a sole candidate for a post, however if there are two or more candidates, first round of voting shall be conducted among present members with the majority of vote of 51% shall secure the post. No candidate shall have an automatic right to claim for any post of EC members without going through above process. No remote or postal voting system is not allowed.

14.14 Candidacy forms (English and Nepali version) can be found at Annex A along with samples.

15. Constitution Handbook

15.1 The original copy of the constitution handbook shall be held under GSec's custody which may be issued to members on request up to 2 weeks.

16. Amendment to Constitution

16.1 Proposals for the amendment/alteration of the constitution with a support of at least 10% of members specifying clause(s) must reach GSec in written form no less than 21 days before EC meeting/AGM.

16.2 Amendment/Alteration as passed at EC/AGM shall be tabled as Motion during AGM. If passed as agreed with a proposer(s) and seconder(s), they shall set precedence for future society's affairs and be enshrined into the constitution as amendments as alluded at Para 10.4.

17. Awards/Appreciation

17.1 The bright future award/appreciation granted to outstanding GCSE students in recognition of their academic excellent, and potential for future success. This award shall be given to encourage and celebrate students who demonstrate remarkable achievement and commitment to making a positive impact in their chosen fields. On behalf of the society, the chairperson shall award them with certificate and society Khata/flower.³

17.2 The society also shall felicitate other professionals such as Doctorates, Scientists, Doctors, Master Degree holders in any faculties, Pilots, Chartered Accountants, Nurses etc in accordance with the society's tradition.

17.3 Any member who has made outstanding contribution to the society over the years shall be awarded the Best Performance Award. The award is open to all members and decided by the majority vote and endorsed by EC.

18. Bereaved Family Support (SEWORA)

18.1 The word 'Sewora' originally derived from Gurung tribes residing in the hills of western Nepal as a prevailing practice to raise money in support of the bereaved family. Typically, the money raised is intended to aid the bereaved family financially during difficult time following the loss of a loved one.

18.2 Sewora is pronounced differently by villages as Syokra, Shyora, Sewora, etc. For uniformity, the current EC has decided to adopt 'Sewora' as the official word and as such be used in all future GSK communications.

18.3 In the unfortunate event of the husband or wife's death, no less or more than £10 as Sewora shall be raised among society members on a voluntary basis and handed over to the bereaved family. EC also shall release official condolence messages to the bereaved family as well as publish on the society's website and Viber forum while maintaining close liaison with them and be ready to provide all support possible in accordance with society's constitution. A generic ritual services procedures that the current EC has practised is given at Annex D.

³ Bright future award reviewed and approved on AGM 2024 to effective from Dec 24.

18.4 In the event of that the husband or wife's death occurs in Nepal or other countries, Sewora shall be raised and transferred to the bereaved family via remittance etc at the wish of close family members.

18.5 The EC wholeheartedly respect the wish of any eligible member who does not intend to claim Sewora benefit at the time of bereavement. In such stance, he/she or a close relative of the bereaved family is requested to notify the CM or General Secretary in writing of their intent.

18.6 An emergency fund of £1000² shall be released from the society's fund immediately upon request made by the bereaved family in need to support inevitable expenses incurred for funeral and cremation services etc. It is noted that the emergency fund shall be issued in the form of temporary loan basis only, to be reimbursed from the Sewora collection later. Any shortfall shall be borne by the society's account and surpluses be credited to the society's account.

18.7 It is to note that only entitled members who have fulfilled their membership criteria as alluded at Para 6.4a shall receive the Sewora benefit.⁴ *

18.8 Left intentionally blank.

⁴ Sewora benefits shall be collected if members paid full membership and annual subs, approved by the AGM 2023.