Monumental Women of Wellington (WOW) Constitution

1. Name

The name of the organisation shall be:

Monumental Women of Wellington (WOW)

2. Purpose

The purpose of WOW is to create a women-centred community where women can connect, socialise, learn, and support one another through shared activities and events.

To support this, the group will:

- provide opportunities for friendship and social connection
- organise talks, activities and events of interest to members
- encourage creativity, education, wellbeing and personal development
- support member-led subgroups and activities
- promote community involvement and engagement
- raise funds for local charities and community causes

3. Membership

Membership is open to women (including trans women) aged 18 and over. WOW operates as a women-centred community group. As a private, voluntary membership organisation, WOW has discretion over its membership in accordance with the general law applicable to private associations. This membership policy reflects WOW's purpose of creating a welcoming, women-centred community and is applied proportionately and consistently.

Members are expected to treat one another with respect and help maintain a welcoming and supportive environment.

Membership:

- is primarily digitally based (including online communication and organisation)
- requires payment of an annual membership fee, due at the start of the membership year (May)
- may be offered on a pro rata basis during the year
- may be capped at the discretion of the organising team

The annual membership fee covers access to WOW meetings, activities and subgroups. Some events, outings, workshops or social activities may incur an additional charge to cover specific costs, and this will be communicated in advance.

The organising team reserves the right to refuse or terminate membership where behaviour is:

- seriously disruptive
- harmful to other members
- not in keeping with the values of the group

Prospective members may attend up to two meetings as visitors before joining. A visitor fee of £5 per visit applies, which is non-refundable.

4. Values

WOW is committed to:

- creating a welcoming, respectful and supportive environment
- encouraging connection, inclusion and community spirit
- supporting diverse interests and activities
- promoting positive relationships and mutual respect
- contributing to local community and charitable causes as decided by members

Bullying, harassment or abusive behaviour will not be tolerated.

5. Structure and Governance

5.1 Unincorporated Association and Liability

WOW operates as an **unincorporated association**.

This means:

- The group does not have a separate legal identity
- It cannot enter into contracts in its own name
- Liability may rest with individual organising team members

Organising team members may be personally liable for:

- contracts or agreements entered into on behalf of WOW
- debts or financial obligations
- claims arising from events or activities where negligence is established or alleged
- data protection breaches
- health and safety issues arising from organised activities

Individuals may be personally liable where they act on behalf of WOW, including where they:

- enter into contracts or agreements
- authorise or make decisions involving financial or legal commitments
- organise or lead activities

This may include organising team members and any other individual who represents themselves as acting for WOW or who enters into an agreement in its name, whether or not they have formal authority.

Only those authorised in accordance with this constitution may enter into agreements on behalf of WOW.

Volunteers acting in good faith and with reasonable care, and within the scope of their role and authority under this constitution, will be supported by the association and its insurance arrangements where applicable.

WOW activities are social and peer-led and do not constitute the provision of care, supervision or professional services.

5.2 Limiting Risk

To reduce risk, WOW will:

- ensure agreements are authorised by the organising team in advance
- avoid significant financial commitments without agreement
- keep clear records of decisions
- maintain appropriate insurance (e.g. public liability insurance and committee liability insurance)

- take reasonable steps to support safe activities
- handle personal data in line with UK GDPR principles
- take a proportionate and common-sense approach to identifying and managing reasonably foreseeable risks in activities and events
- recognise that insurance provides protection in many situations but does not remove all personal liability, particularly in relation to contractual commitments
- all financial transactions must be authorised by at least two members of the organising team. No single person may approve and process a payment

5.3 Authority to Act

- Decisions must be made collectively by a majority of the organising team
- Any contract, booking or financial commitment must be approved by the organising team in advance
- Only authorised members of the organising team may enter into agreements on behalf of WOW

5.4 Organising Team (Committee)

The group will be run by an organising team. Roles, which can be shared, include:

Officers:

- Group Coordinator
- Secretary & Member Comms
- Treasurer

Committee Members:

- Membership Secretary
- Speakers Coordinator
- Communications Secretary
- Community Involvement Secretary
- Committee Minutes Secretary

The organising team:

- will usually meet monthly, either in-person or online (approximately 12 evening meetings per year)
- is responsible for decision-making and overall management

Members of the organising team serve voluntarily and may step down at any time.

Organising team members are appointed by agreement of existing members at an annual or extraordinary meeting. Members may serve for a term of three years and may stand for re-appointment. Vacancies may be filled by co-option at any time.

The organising team may review roles periodically and make changes as needed to support the effective running of the group.

Subgroup Coordinators members of the organising team and do not hold decision-making responsibility unless they also hold a separate organising team role.

The quorum for organising team meetings is five members. No binding decisions may be made at a meeting where fewer than five members are present. In urgent circumstances where a quorum cannot be convened, decisions may be taken by email or other written communication and ratified at the next quorate meeting.

5.5 Conflicts of Interest

If any organising team member has a personal financial or other material interest in a matter being decided, they must declare it, withdraw from the discussion, and take no part in the vote.

5.6 Think Tank

WOW may have a wider group of members forming an online Think Tank who:

- contribute ideas
- support the development of activities and direction of the group

6. Meetings and Activities

The format and frequency of meetings and activities will be determined by the organising team, with input from members.

WOW will organise regular meetings, activities and events for members, which may include:

- guest speakers
- social gatherings
- workshops or educational sessions
- outings or trips

In addition, members may participate in a range of **informal, member-led activities and subgroups**, such as:

- walking groups
- craft groups
- gardening groups
- supper clubs
- breakfast clubs

7. Subgroups

WOW supports a range of member-led subgroups (e.g. craft groups, walking groups, book clubs) which form part of the wider WOW community. Subgroups are peer-led social activities, not structured programmes, professional services or instruction, and they are one of the things that make WOW such a great community to be part of.

Each subgroup may have a Subgroup Coordinator who helps organise and coordinate activities and acts as a point of contact. We are enormously grateful to anyone who takes on this role.

Subgroup Coordinators:

- are volunteers and may or may not be part of the organising team
- must not enter into contracts, bookings or financial commitments on behalf of WOW
- do not act as professional leaders or instructors, they are simply a friendly organiser keeping things running smoothly

A note on risk assessments — please don't be put off by this!

We ask all subgroup coordinators to complete a brief written risk assessment before each activity. We know that sounds formal; in practice, it usually takes five minutes and mostly involves common sense, thinking about whether the space is safe, whether people can get in and out easily, and what you'd do if something went wrong.

This is important: **a completed written risk assessment is a condition of WOW's insurance.** Without one, neither WOW nor the subgroup coordinator has any insurance protection if something goes wrong at an activity. It protects you as much as it protects the group.

WOW provides simple, easy-to-use templates for exactly this purpose, one for venue-based activities and one for home meetings. There is no specialist knowledge required and no right or wrong answers. We just need it written down and kept on file so that everyone is protected. The good news is that once you have a risk assessment for a regular activity, you don't need to start from scratch each time; just review it before the next meeting, note whether anything has changed, and sign it off. For most regular subgroups, it becomes a two-minute check rather than a new document every time.

- The assessment should be proportionate to the activity. A craft group at someone's kitchen table needs only a brief, straightforward check. A larger event needs a little more thought. Use your judgement, and ask the organising team if you're ever unsure.
- Where an activity takes place in a hired venue, the venue's own health and safety arrangements can be taken into account, and we still need our own brief written record alongside.
- For activities in private homes, please also consider whether the space is suitable for the number of people coming, and let participants know in advance of anything relevant, for example, steps, pets, or parking.

Participation in subgroup activities is voluntary and at members' own discretion and personal responsibility.

WOW takes safeguarding seriously and maintains a Safeguarding Policy as a standing document. All subgroup coordinators are asked to read it; it's a short document that tells you what to do if a concern ever arises. Any safeguarding concern can be reported to any member of the organising team at any time.

8. Finances

The group may collect membership subscriptions or event fees to cover the costs of running WOW, including meetings, activities and administration.

WOW will hold funds in a dedicated bank account in the name of WOW or its nominated signatories. The Treasurer and at least one other organising team member will be named as account signatories.

All financial transactions must be authorised by at least two members of the organising team. No single person may approve and process a payment.

All funds will be used for the purposes of running the group.

WOW will support local charities and community causes. This may include organising fundraising activities, with funds raised for charitable purposes used accordingly.

The Treasurer will maintain a record of income and expenditure and provide a financial update to members at least once each year.

9. Legal Position

WOW is a private community group, not a charity or public body. WOW defines its membership as women, including trans women who are applying to join a women-centred community in keeping with WOW's values. WOW exercises the discretion applicable to private associations in making individual membership decisions. This policy is not based on a claimed Equality Act single-sex service exemption, but on WOW's general right as a voluntary, private membership organisation to determine its own membership criteria in pursuit of its stated purpose.

10. Safeguarding

WOW adopts and maintains a written Safeguarding Policy. The organising team collectively act as designated safeguarding practitioners. All committee members and subgroup coordinators must familiarise themselves with the policy. The policy will be reviewed annually.

11. Data Protection

WOW will maintain Information Commissioner's Office, ICO, registration and a Privacy Notice and Policy, and will handle all personal data in accordance with the UK General Data Protection Regulation, GDPR, 2018. Members' data will not be shared without consent except where required by law.

12. Complaints

Any member with a complaint about WOW, its activities, or the conduct of any organising team member or volunteer should raise it in writing with the Group Coordinator, or if the complaint concerns the Group Coordinator, with any other member of the organising team. The organising team will acknowledge the complaint within 10 working days and endeavour to resolve it within 28 days. Where a complaint cannot be resolved internally, the member may refer it to the full organising team for a final decision. A record of all formal complaints and their outcomes will be retained for a minimum of three years.

13. Changes to the Constitution

This constitution may be amended by agreement of the organising team following consultation with members.

14. Dissolution

If the group ceases to operate, any remaining funds after settling outstanding expenses will be donated to a local charity or community organisation agreed by the organising team.