

Guidance Document

Who we are - who we want to be

The Sapphic Community Association came into existence to create a welcoming, accessible, safer space for the community of women and gender diverse people who live in and visit Eressos.

By welcoming, we mean that we aim to make all women and gender diverse people, regardless of ability, sexuality, race, origin, language, age, education, or class to feel that the Sappho Community Centre belongs to them.

We adopt a feminist approach that is critical of colonialism, racism, classism, ageism, ableism, lesbo-trans- and homophobia. While this commitment and intention will not guarantee equality and equity, it is something we strive to make real in our practices, relations and projects.

We will make this place safer for each of us if we engage to learn from each other and interact with curiosity and care.

We recognize that the Sappho Community Centre is in Greece and on Lesbos - the home of Sappho. We are aware of the history and herstory of this place and strive to research and educate around it. While our language is English because of the international nature of our membership, we will endeavour to make the Centre also a place for Greeks and other people whose first language is not English.

We also aim to be accessible. This means financially accessible, but it also means accessible to people with disabilities. Collectively, we aim to prevent and address barriers to participation.

As Eressos is gentrifying and becoming less accessible to workers, to low income people and to many Greeks, we aim to contribute with others in the community to solutions that can keep or make Eressos accessible to all.

We are aware that we live in a fragile eco-system that is facing the effects of global warming, as well as the encroachment of humans on habitat and other ecological crises. We seek to develop practices of care for the water, the land, the plants and animals with whom we live. We aim to engage in eco-friendly practices in the running of the Sappho Community Centre.

As members, we strive to turn this commitment into reality.

Democratic values

We aim to uphold a non-hierarchical, transparent structure with clearly defined yet flexible roles and responsibilities. We recognise invisible labour and ensure that all contributions—logistical, intellectual, and emotional—are acknowledged. We ensure collaborative, consensus-driven decision-making that mitigates power imbalances.

Code of conduct

As members we commit to engaging in respectful and appreciative behaviour. We rely on fair, cooperative and non-violent communication which allows us to foster constructive dialogue.

Behaviour that undermines the aims and approach as noted above will not be tolerated. We aim to foster both accountability and compassion when dealing with conflict. Discrimination, however, is not conflict and will not be tolerated.

Grounds for exclusion

As a group, Sappho Community Centre reserves the right to exclude members from taking part in the activities it organises, or oversees, in the following circumstances:

- 1) in the case the behaviour of members constitutes harassment;
- 2) in the case public statement by members reproduces sexist, transphobic, homophobic, racist, ableist or classist stereotypes and ideas about any oppressed group;
- 3) In the case of members promoting far-right ideology;
- 4) in the case members are reasonably suspected of having been involved in committing or inciting to grave human rights violations, particularly war crimes, crimes against humanity, or genocide;
- 5) in the case members are official representatives of institutions/organisations that are implicated or complicit in grave human rights violations;
- 6) in the case of grave criminal behavior (assault, murder, stealing from SCO);
- 7) Disregard for the guidance document.

Meeting Rules

General Assembly Rules

- All members sign in before the meeting. This determines if a quorum has been reached and the number of votes required for a majority.
- Every General Assembly has an Agenda with issue items to be talked about.
- The first item on the agenda will always be the decision on who will chair the meeting and who will take the notes.
- The notes are an important legal document.
- The third person elected will be the time keeper/counter.
- There will be a brief space for announcements.
- Then the changes to the agenda will be decided. This can be a change of the order or the addition of issues that have been submitted within the prescribed deadline.
- No new items can be added during the assembly.
- Alternatively the agenda will be adopted as written.
- Some issues will only be discussed, others require a motion for a resolution to be adopted, others will be voted on per agenda.
- Unless it's the first meeting ever, there will be the notes (minutes) of the previous meeting that have to be approved by the assembly.
- The notes will have been sent out with the invitation/agenda. They should be read before the meeting.
- There will be space for corrections and discussion before the vote.

Motions

- To suggest something for the assembly to adopt, a motion needs to be spoken in the exact words of the proposed adoption.
- i.e.: "I move to adopt the minutes as provided"
- Every motion needs a Second (a supporting vote: "i second that motion",) to enter consideration.
- If nobody seconds, there is no interest in even discussing this idea and the motion gets thrown out.
- Sometimes someone may give a Second if they don't agree with the motion, so that it can be discussed.
- If a Second is entered, discussion ensues, only after a discussion, can a vote be called.

Discussion

- In a discussion, every person present can talk up to 3 minutes on the subject.
- The time keeper oversees the speaking time.
- The order is set by hand signal recorded and led by the chair.
- Only after everyone who wants to say something on the subject has spoken, are responses allowed.
- After the discussion, there can be a vote on the motion.
- If the agenda called only for a discussion, there does not need to be a resolution.
- If the idea of a resolution comes up, someone can make a motion.

Chair

- The role of the person chairing the meeting is to ensure that the assembly respects the agenda as well as the guidance and values of the organization.
- They are also charged with making the rules understandable and to facilitate the fair and equal participation of members.
- They also make sure that members speak in turn.
- The chair can also take the word away if the conduct or content of the speaker is not on point, not in line with our Articles of Association, or this Guidance Document.

Notes

- The person taking the notes documents key issues as written in the agenda or voiced in a motion as well as voting outcomes.
- Statements and votes do not have to be linked to the person who said it/voted.
- Motions and Seconds, for the record, do.

Votes

Votes will be recorded as numbers of Yes, No, Abstain.

Too many items, not enough time

A motion can be made to table (to postpone) an agenda item to the next meeting.

A motion can also be made to create a temporary committee to discuss the issue, come up with solutions and return these to the Assembly or - for speedier process - to the Board of Directors.

Committees

The General Assembly as well as the Board of Directors can initiate the formation of committees on certain issues and tasks.

Some committees will be ongoing, i.e. the maintenance committee.

They might have a budget.

Others may be temporary only to deal with a certain issue.

Every committee should have a chair elected by said committee who reports to both governing bodies and is the contact person.

The chair position can be shared given that a lot of members are only present at certain times.

It is the responsibility of the committee members to communicate with each other.

Members can also bring the idea of a committee they want to form to the Board of Directors. The Board may decline.