THE BOOK OF LIFE

Founding Declaration & Membership Charter

20 November 2026

PART I — THE BOOK OF LIFE DECLARATION

FOUNDING DECLARATION AND STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

Preamble

We recognise that the modern world can often be disconnected, divided and indifferent to the suffering of others. Many people who care deeply about humanity, animals and the natural environment find themselves working independently, without a wider community of like-minded individuals with whom they can share their values and put their convictions into practice.

We believe that compassion should be more than an individual sentiment. It should be a principle that brings people together, inspires cooperation and produces meaningful action.

We therefore establish the Book of Life as an independent community and register of individuals who voluntarily share a common worldview founded upon compassion, kindness, integrity, environmental responsibility and positive community participation.

The Book of Life shall provide a framework through which these individuals can establish meaningful relationships, support one another and work collectively towards a more humane, peaceful and environmentally responsible world.

Article 1 — Establishment and Identity

1. The Book of Life is an independent community founded upon shared philosophical principles, values and commitments.

2. Its central institution is the Book of Life Register, containing the names of individuals who have successfully completed the prescribed membership process.
3. Membership is voluntary and based upon an individual's genuine alignment with the Book of Life's worldview.
4. The Book of Life is neither a religious institution nor a declaration of spiritual righteousness.
5. It does not claim that registered members are morally superior to individuals outside the community.

Article 2 — Founding Purpose

The Book of Life exists to:

1. Create a safe and trusted environment in which like-minded individuals can meet and interact.
2. Bring together compassionate individuals who might otherwise be working independently.
3. Encourage mutual assistance, friendship and solidarity.
4. Organise practical activities that benefit people, animals and the environment.
5. Develop a positive micro-community that demonstrates the benefits of mutual respect, peaceful coexistence and collective responsibility.

Article 3 — The Five Core Values

All institutional activities and membership expectations shall be guided by five core values:

1. **Compassion for One Another:** Treating every person with dignity, empathy and patience, and supporting fellow members in times of need.
2. **Kindness and Protection for Animals:** Respecting living creatures, opposing cruelty and promoting ethical, humane treatment.
3. **Stewardship of the Planet:** Protecting nature, reducing environmental harm and encouraging sustainable practices.
4. **Integrity and Safety:** Upholding honesty, personal accountability, lawful conduct and appropriate safeguarding standards.

5. **Active Community Building:** Contributing positively to shared spaces, local initiatives and peaceful coexistence.

Article 4 — A Community of Action

The Book of Life shall encourage members to translate shared values into practical activities, including:

- Community volunteering and charitable assistance.
- Support for vulnerable individuals.
- Animal rescue, welfare and protection.
- Environmental conservation and restoration.
- Community gardening and local improvement projects.
- Educational activities promoting compassion and environmental awareness.
- Mutual assistance and community support networks.

Membership does not require participation in every activity. However, members are encouraged to contribute positively according to their abilities, circumstances and willingness.

Article 5 — Equality and Human Dignity

1. Every person shall be treated with dignity and respect, irrespective of background, wealth, occupation or personal circumstances.
2. Members shall not use their registration to claim superiority over non-members.
3. Discrimination, harassment, intimidation, exploitation and deliberate harm are incompatible with the founding values.
4. Membership screening shall be conducted fairly and proportionately.

Article 6 — Institutional Independence

The Book of Life shall maintain its own identity, founding principles, membership arrangements and internal governance.

It shall not be subordinate to, or automatically incorporated into, any political party, government, religious organisation or other independent institution.

Membership of the Book of Life shall neither require nor automatically confer membership of another organisation.

Article 7 — Founding Vision

Our vision is to build a growing network of compassionate and responsible individuals who demonstrate that a better way of living together is possible.

We believe that meaningful change begins with individual responsibility, grows through collective action and becomes sustainable through cooperation.

The Book of Life exists to make kindness organised, compassion practical and positive change achievable.

PART II — THE BOOK OF LIFE MEMBERSHIP CHARTER

CONSTITUTIONAL RULES FOR REGISTRATION AND MEMBERSHIP

Article 1 — Establishment of the Register

1. The Book of Life Register shall be the official record of individuals accepted into the Book of Life community.
2. Every registered member shall have voluntarily applied and completed the prescribed membership process.
3. The Register shall be administered by an appointed Membership and Registration Authority.
4. No individual shall be included without their knowledge and consent.
5. Membership shall be a privilege of voluntary association, not a qualification for basic human rights or public services.

Article 2 — Eligibility for Membership

An applicant must:

1. Demonstrate a genuine understanding of the Book of Life's founding declaration and five core values.
2. Express a willingness to uphold the Member's Pledge.
3. Complete the official membership application.
4. Satisfy the applicable criminal-record screening requirements.
5. Attend an interview if requested by the Membership and Registration Authority.
6. Agree to abide by the Membership Charter and safeguarding policies.

The Authority shall assess applicants individually and fairly.

Article 3 — Application Procedure

The membership process shall follow these stages:

1. **Submission of application**
   The applicant completes and submits the official Book of Life membership application.
2. **Initial eligibility assessment**
   The Authority reviews the application for completeness and confirms that the applicant understands the purpose and values of the organisation.
3. **Criminal-record screening**
   The appropriate criminal-record screening procedure is initiated, subject to applicable law and the applicant's informed participation.
4. **Membership interview**
   An interview may be arranged to discuss the applicant's understanding of the founding declaration, values and expectations.
5. **Membership assessment**
   The Authority considers the application, screening outcome, interview (if conducted) and any relevant safeguarding concerns.
6. **Membership decision**
   The applicant receives written notification of acceptance, refusal or a request for further information.
7. **Registration**
   Following acceptance, the applicant's name is entered into the confidential Book of Life Register, and they formally become a member.

Article 4 — Criminal-Record Screening and DBS Requirements

4.1 General principle

The Book of Life seeks to establish a community where members can interact with confidence and where safeguarding is taken seriously.

Applicants shall therefore be subject to an appropriate criminal-record screening process.

4.2 DBS screening

For applicants in England and Wales, the organisation may require a Basic Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check, where appropriate.

A Basic DBS check discloses unspent convictions and conditional cautions. Standard and Enhanced DBS checks are available only for legally eligible roles and activities. The Book of Life must not request a higher-level check simply because it prefers more information.

4.3 Serious offences

The Book of Life may refuse membership where an applicant has a relevant history of serious criminal offending that creates an unacceptable safeguarding risk or is fundamentally incompatible with the community's peaceful and protective purpose.

Relevant considerations may include:

- Serious violence against another person.
- Sexual offences.
- Serious offences involving children or vulnerable adults.
- Serious animal cruelty.
- Stalking, harassment or serious intimidation.
- Other serious offences involving exploitation, abuse or deliberate harm.

This list is illustrative and must be applied consistently with applicable disclosure and rehabilitation laws.

4.4 Individual assessment

A criminal record shall not automatically establish that an applicant is unsuitable.

The Authority should consider:

1. The nature and seriousness of the offence.
2. Its relevance to the risks associated with membership and activities.
3. How long ago it occurred.
4. Whether the applicant has demonstrated rehabilitation.
5. Any evidence of changed behaviour.
6. The safeguarding risks that may reasonably arise.

Protected or filtered convictions and cautions must not be sought or considered where the law prohibits this.

4.5 Transparency

Applicants must be informed about screening requirements before they apply. They must also be told how their information will be used, who can access it and how long it will be retained.

Article 5 — Membership Interviews

1. The Membership and Registration Authority may require an applicant to attend an interview.
2. Interviews shall establish whether the applicant understands and genuinely identifies with the Book of Life's worldview.
3. Interviews may explore:
    - Compassion and mutual assistance.
    - Animal welfare and protection.
    - Environmental stewardship.
    - Integrity and personal accountability.
    - Community participation and peaceful coexistence.
4. Interviews shall not require applicants to demonstrate identical political, religious or personal opinions.
5. Disagreement on matters outside the five core values shall not, by itself, constitute grounds for refusal.
6. Applicants shall be treated respectfully and given an opportunity to explain their views.

Article 6 — Acceptance and Registration

An application may be accepted when the Authority is satisfied that:

1. The applicant understands the Book of Life's founding purpose.
2. The applicant demonstrates reasonable alignment with its five core values.
3. The required screening has been completed satisfactorily.
4. Any required interview has been completed.
5. No unresolved safeguarding concern provides a reasonable basis for refusal.

Upon acceptance:

- The applicant shall be notified in writing.
- The applicant shall confirm their agreement to the Member's Pledge.
- Their name shall be entered into the Book of Life Register.
- They shall receive confirmation of membership.

Article 7 — Rights of Registered Members

Every registered member shall have the right to:

1. Be treated with dignity and respect.
2. Participate in Book of Life community activities.
3. Receive reasonable support and assistance from the organisation.
4. Express opinions and raise concerns without intimidation.
5. Be protected by fair and transparent membership procedures.
6. Have their personal information handled confidentially.
7. Resign from membership voluntarily.
8. Challenge disciplinary decisions through an established appeals procedure.

Membership does not confer immunity from the law or guarantee that every other member is safe.

Article 8 — Responsibilities of Registered Members

Members are expected to:

1. Uphold the Five Core Values.
2. Treat fellow members and non-members respectfully.
3. Avoid violence, harassment, intimidation and exploitation.
4. Refrain from animal cruelty and deliberate environmental harm.
5. Act honestly and responsibly.
6. Respect the confidentiality and personal boundaries of fellow members.
7. Cooperate with reasonable safeguarding procedures.
8. Avoid misrepresenting the Book of Life or claiming authority on its behalf without permission.

Article 9 — Suspension of Membership

Membership may be suspended where:

1. A credible safeguarding concern requires immediate precautionary action.
2. A member is reasonably suspected of serious misconduct.
3. A member's continued participation could create a significant risk to others.
4. An investigation into a potential breach of the Charter is necessary.

Suspension shall be a precautionary measure, not a declaration of guilt.

Where reasonably possible, the member shall be informed of the reasons for suspension and given an opportunity to respond.

The Authority shall review suspensions periodically and avoid unnecessary or indefinite restrictions.

Article 10 — Removal from the Register

Membership may be terminated where an investigation establishes that a member:

1. Has committed serious misconduct incompatible with the Book of Life's values.
2. Has engaged in violence, abuse, exploitation or deliberate intimidation.
3. Has committed serious animal cruelty.
4. Has deliberately endangered fellow members.
5. Has knowingly provided materially false information during the membership application.
6. Has repeatedly or seriously violated the Membership Charter.
7. Has otherwise demonstrated conduct that makes continued membership incompatible with the organisation's founding purpose.

A decision to remove a member shall:

- Be based on relevant evidence.
- Be proportionate to the misconduct.
- Be made through a fair decision-making process.
- Be communicated in writing.
- Explain the grounds for removal.

- Provide information about the right of appeal.

A criminal allegation alone shall not automatically be treated as proof of wrongdoing.

Article 11 — Appeals Procedure

1. An applicant whose membership is refused may request a review.
2. A suspended or removed member may appeal the decision.
3. Appeals should be considered by an independent person or panel not involved in the original decision.
4. The appellant shall have an opportunity to present relevant information.
5. The appeal decision shall be communicated in writing with reasons.
6. The appeal process shall be confidential and conducted fairly.

Article 12 — Privacy and Protection of the Register

1. The Book of Life Register shall be treated as confidential membership information.
2. Members' names and personal information shall not be published or disclosed without an appropriate lawful basis.
3. Criminal-record information shall be kept separately from the ordinary membership list wherever practicable.
4. Access to screening information shall be restricted to specifically authorised personnel.
5. Information shall be retained only for as long as necessary and in accordance with applicable data-protection requirements.
6. The organisation shall maintain an appropriate privacy notice, data-handling policy and safeguarding framework.

Article 13 — Voluntary Withdrawal

Any member may voluntarily resign from the Book of Life.

Upon resignation, the individual's active membership status shall be ended and their entry removed from the active Register. Necessary records may be retained where a lawful and justified retention requirement applies.

Article 14 — Constitutional Independence

The Membership Charter shall govern the Book of Life independently of other organisations.

No political organisation, external institution or unrelated membership body shall automatically determine who may be accepted into or removed from the Book of Life.

Article 15 — Interpretation and Amendment

1. The Charter shall be interpreted in accordance with the Founding Declaration and Five Core Values.
2. Amendments shall be made through the Book of Life's established constitutional decision-making procedure.
3. No amendment shall undermine the fundamental principles of human dignity, animal protection, environmental stewardship, integrity or peaceful coexistence.
4. Members shall be informed of constitutional amendments.