

2026 AMASE AGM paper

This is an internal document for discussion purposes for potential AMASE Committee members and other volunteers, as well as those with a general interest in AMASE's activities

AMASE has over 800 members (of which around 600 are Full Members and 210 Associate Members).

We welcome any comments from members about matters set out here or anything else. Please just get in touch with the Committee by emailing info@amase.org.uk.

In May 2025, AMASE set up a remote address and virtual office. The contact details are Third Floor 3 Hill Street, New Town, Edinburgh, EH2 3JP.

The contents of this paper are as follows:

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A. AMASE objectives

<https://amase.org.uk/about/constitution/> **The objectives of AMASE as set out in its constitution are threefold: supporting autistic community, political advocacy, and education.**

The Committee welcomes suggestions of and ideas for activities from members that support the furthering of these objectives.

Members can become involved with AMASE in various ways, be it as a volunteer, as a formal Committee Member, or to support the running of the organisation informally, e.g. by supporting a specific project or initiative.

Our individual capacities are often limited and fluctuate over time, despite our best efforts and willingness. We understand the need to work on a flexible basis.

The details of AMASE's objectives are as follows:

1. Supporting the Autistic Community

- a. Autistic community-building through promotion and organisation of autistic-led activities, peer support, and self-advocacy.
- b. The advancement and support of community developments that may benefit autistic people who live in Edinburgh and the surrounding area.
- c. Building positive alliances and links with other Autistic People's Organisations (APOs) and Disabled People's Organisations (DPOs).

2. Advocacy

- a. The promotion of equality and diversity in matters which affect autistic people, and awareness-raising about autism from an autistic perspective.

- b. Ensuring that the autistic voices are given prominence in decisions affecting autistic people.
- c. The promotion of equal access to all aspects of society for autistic people.

3. Education

- a. The advancement of the wellbeing of autistic people who live in Edinburgh and the surrounding area, through education and training of persons and agencies who work with autistic people.
- b. The promotion of understanding and acceptance of autistic people.

B. AMASE Activities - External

1. Social media

AMASE has accounts on Facebook, Mastodon, Bluesky and Youtube. These increase awareness of AMASE and its activities, build community, spread good information and highlight matters important to autistic community.

We would welcome any volunteer support from members to manage AMASE's social media accounts.

2. Government and politics

AMASE has participated in various consultations and government meetings over the last few years. Last year there was noticeably greater interest by different Scottish Parliament Committees in autism and other neurodivergences.

Following a member engagement session, back in 2024 we provided a written consultation response on the scope and content of the Learning Disabilities, Autism and Neurodivergence (LDAN)

Bill. Up until the end of the last session of Parliament, AMASE was on the Government's Stakeholder Panel to consult on the Bill's development. [On 1 September 2026, the Scottish Government announced that the LDAN Bill has been halted](#). Dismayed, Scottish APOs are writing to relevant Ministers to seek an urgent meeting.

In June 2025 following an extensive survey, AMASE, along with various Scottish APOs and Scottish Autism, published a [report on Experiences of Autism Assessment and Diagnosis in Scotland](#). We have been able to share the findings of this report as evidence in a number of consultation responses and advocacy efforts.

In June 2025, AMASE, along with some other APOs and autism charities, met with the Scottish Government's Vaccine Policy Unit and Public Health Scotland to talk about how to respond to the continued disinformation about autism and vaccines coming from the US.

In August 2025, AMASE submitted a [response to the Scottish Parliament's Health Social Care and Sport Committee call for views](#) looking at diagnosis pathways, treatment and support.

In January 2026, AMASE other APOs (AMASE, SEMA and ARGH Scotland) published results of our joint [members survey into experiences of employment, education and the criminal justice system](#). This helped inform evidence we gave to the Scottish Parliament's [Equalities, Human Rights and Civil Justice Committee's inquiry into Neurodivergence in Scotland](#).

In April 2026, ahead of Scotland's Parliamentary elections on 7 May, [AMASE and several other Scottish APOs published a joint manifesto](#). This manifesto set out a strong, values-driven agenda centering autistic people's human rights, access and co-production in the spirit of "Nothing about us, without us".

AMASE is also a long-standing member of the Scottish Parliament's Cross-Party Group (CPG) on Autism. For the last few years, AMASE and many of the other APOs have been represented on the CPG Secretariat by Marion McLaughlin (Aurora Autistic

Consulting). Last year meetings were themed “intersectionality” and we were able to ensure a good range of autistic speakers. Meetings are open to all interested members of the public.

In the future, we would like to continue improving how we engage with AMASE members to input into organisational responses.

3. Community building and autistic empowerment events

We hold events mostly online and also in person. During AMASE’s year to 31 March 2026 we held a variety of online social, creative and technical events.

We held two jointly with ARGH Scotland: Lightning Talks (short presentations of around eight minutes each on topics of particular interest), and a Collage event. We also hosted a Linguistics and Autistics event (presentations by autistic people working in or enthusiastic about linguistics); the 20th My Autism Story (always a popular event where a member shares their autism journey); and technical events on Wikipedia training, 'Access riders' as an accessibility tool, and an Into Work Income Maximisation event.

We have been holding monthly Body Doubling sessions since December 2025. A small group from AMASE have also been enjoying fortnightly Boulderling sessions, and all levels and experiences are welcome to join in.

In October we welcomed Jang Jiyong from the Korean Autistic-led organisation Estas. During this visit we hosted a hybrid cross-cultural exchange conference event which was well attended, and a meeting with other Scottish Autistic People’s Organisations. One thing that stood out is that there are common issues for autistic people where-ever we are.

In previous years, AMASE has held [Weird Pride Day](#) events in March in person and [online](#). This year the events were online and included a joint Weird Pride Lightning Talks event with Stimpunks

and a discussion with [neurodivergent writers/poets/performers Kate Fox and Robin Ince](#).

Each summer AMASE holds an [Autistic Pride picnic](#) in the Meadows. For the last two years these were on the first Saturday of the Edinburgh Fringe Festival and had a good turnout, with 40-50 people attending at some point in the afternoon. This included a number of Fringe performers with neurodivergent-themed shows, as well as locals and AMASE members and friends.

Fiona Clarke and Fergus Murray were interviewed by the European Council of Autistic People (EUCAP) at the end of 2025 about AMASE and the work that we do. [The EUCAP interview](#) was published on their website in May.

Since the year end, we have piloted a new online AMASE Book Club, which has got off to a good start covering two books so far.

Going forward we would like to re-establish a peer support group, and regularly hold established favourites such as My Autism Story and Lightning Talks.

AMASE welcomes ideas for different events from members for events, as well as interest from anyone who can help with organisation and facilitation.

4. Discord

The AMASE Discord is an online forum for members to connect, discuss topics of interest in dedicated channels, share information and organise formal and informal events.

Some of the channels are for Committee members only, and this is where the Committee does most of its coordination work, along with AMASE's shared Google drive. There are also Discord channels for admin and volunteers involved in running events.

During the year we held a “Welcome to Discord” event for members who may not be familiar with the platform.

5. Newsletters

AMASE sends out a newsletter around the start of each month.

Newsletter contents may be details of events run by AMASE or by other organisations, key developments in the social or political landscape impacting autistic people; and other matters which we think may be of interest to our members.

We have recently switched to secure email newsletter software (SendFox), to simplify procedures and reduce the risk of human error and GDPR breaches.

If any members have suggestions of things to be included in the newsletter, do let us know by emailing info@amase.org.uk. We are also looking for volunteers to help with the newsletter each month.

6. Website

Our website amase.org.uk would benefit from a general overhaul/upgrade, including design and content and regular maintenance to keep things running smoothly.

If these are things you might be interested in volunteering to help with, then please let us know.

7. Training and consultancy

AMASE has an ongoing drip of training requests and previous training has gone down well. AMASE typically charges commercial training fees rates, barring occasional case-by-case exceptions. Historically fees have been split 80% to the trainer and 20% to AMASE. This provides a source of income, as well as extending the reach and reputation of AMASE.

We would like to establish more training and consulting resources, and know that there are experienced quality trainers and speakers within AMASE.

8. AMASE representation at external meetings

AMASE attends various external meetings. This may be:

- as a member organisation. The main organisations we are members of are The Alliance, Inclusion Scotland, the Scottish Parliament's Cross Party Group on Autism and EUCAP (European Council of Autistic People). We are also a member of SCVO, which supports charitable and voluntary organisations.
- to represent AMASE at meetings on matters that are important to members and the wider autistic community, e.g. feeding into consultations, information gathering, focus groups, knowledge sharing by public bodies or third sector organisations.
- to attend meetings with other Autistic People's Organisations (APOs) to collaborate with advocacy and activism efforts and for knowledge sharing.
- To meet with government representatives on matters important for AMASE.

We are having more consistent AMASE representation at key meetings and wish to continue to do so in the future. We also have a close relationship with many other APOs and collaborated on a number of advocacy initiatives up to Minister level, e.g. around diagnosis and the LDAN Bill.

C. AMASE Activities - Internal

1. Membership

AMASE has two types of memberships: Full and Associate. Full Members are those aged 16 or older who are autistic and living in

the Lothians or Fife, or (at the Committee's discretion) other nearby areas. Associate Members are those who do not fit these criteria.

Members can join by email request or using the [form on our website](#) and contact details are then kept on a register of members as per our Constitution.

2. Committee meetings

The AMASE Management Committee meets every month to discuss upcoming plans and developments, financial affairs, risk and governance matters and prioritise key activities for the next period. Much discussion happens between meetings, in Committee admin Discord channels.

Later in the year we are planning to open up AMASE Management Committee meetings to all members, whether to just observe or join in discussions.

3. Members meetings

The AGM is the main formal meeting of members, which need to be held within 15 months of each other.

We are planning to have an Extraordinary General Meeting later this year to progress AMASE's incorporation as a CIC. (See item 5 below about incorporation.)

We intend to hold more members' meetings to provide opportunities to consider matters that are important to members and for AMASE's objectives, increase member engagement and have space for questions.

4. Treasury and finance activities

AMASE has online banking with the Bank of Scotland. There are two accounts: a current account and an instant access savings

account. The main finance activities involve making payments, keeping the financial position up to date, bank reconciliations, managing cash flow (mainly via monitoring levels of expenditures, commitments and transfers between the savings and current account) and fundraising.

AMASE receives a few donations each year, mainly via paypal. Thanks to one or two significant member donations AMASE has been able to cover its core costs (mainly IT, insurance and remote / virtual office costs). This has meant that reserves built up in previous years have been maintained to cover costs in the foreseeable future.

The three funding applications we made during the year were unsuccessful. One of these was to the National Lottery Community Fund, and following useful feedback, we will re-apply. Opportunities for Scottish Government funding we previously accessed are no longer available for unincorporated entities.

We would really appreciate any volunteers with experience of funding applications or other fund raising activities, e.g. Kilt Walk or running a skills event for a donation. Please do get in touch if this is something you may be able to help with.

5. Incorporation

Members have previously approved AMASE becoming incorporated as a Community Investment Company (CIC). There have been considerable delays due to capacity issues, although progress has been made and we are receiving advice on the new Constitution and structure.

The timeframe we are working to is for a members information meeting followed by an Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM) in December to approve the new Constitution.

Benefits of AMASE being incorporated include access to different funding sources, increased opportunities to partner with allies, and generally greater capacity to meet its objectives. As a legal entity

AMASE will also be able to directly enter into contracts, e.g. insurance, consultancy, employment, rather than this being done by individuals who are directly liable on behalf of AMASE, such as the Management Committee. Incorporating will require some additional admin work and costs: to get started and for each year.

There are various factors why we are seeking to move to a CIC, as opposed to a charity. The ethos of a charity is less aligned to ours, as charities traditionally are top down and about doing things for others (who are “less fortunate”), rather than mutual aid, and are more restricted in what they are allowed to do for their charitable objectives”. Whilst a CIC must have an “asset lock” to ensure all money is used for the benefit of its stated community interest, there is greater flexibility with the activities it can do (e.g. generate trading income through training or consultancy). The Board of a charity are unpaid Trustees, whereas there is an option for CIC Directors to be paid a fair rate for their role.

Charities are also more tightly regulated by the charity regulator OSCR, whereas a CIC needs to meet less onerous Companies House requirements. Setting up a CIC is also simpler and can be done such that it mirrors AMASE’s current membership structure. There is also flexibility for a CIC to become a charity in the future.

CICs are treated as any other company for tax, whereas charities, whilst more limited in what they can do, have tax benefits.

6. Correspondence

Almost all correspondence is via email. Items requiring action are discussed in committee meetings, on the Committee correspondence Discord channel or in ad-hoc working meetings by a few committee members.

Emails are on various different matters, mostly information from organisations we are members of, or requests for support and advice (which, with our current capacity, AMASE mainly responds to as a one-off with information or signposting). We also receive a few training enquiries and requests to collaborate on advocacy efforts.