
The Constitutions of the Liberal Democrats



The Federal Party
The Liberal Democrats in England
The Scottish Liberal Democrats
The Welsh Liberal
Democrats/Democratiaid Rhyddfrydol
Cymru

Revisions

The Constitution was last amended as follows:

| | |
|----------|----------------|
| Federal | September 2011 |
| England | November 2011 |
| Scotland | October 2009 |
| Wales | October 2011 |

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PREAMBLE

The Liberal Democrats exist to build and safeguard a fair, free and open society, in which we seek to balance the fundamental values of liberty, equality and community, and in which no-one shall be enslaved by poverty, ignorance or conformity. We champion the freedom, dignity and well-being of individuals, we acknowledge and respect their right to freedom of conscience and their right to develop their talents to the full. We aim to disperse power, to foster diversity and to nurture creativity. We believe that the role of the state is to enable all citizens to attain these ideals, to contribute fully to their communities and to take part in the decisions which affect their lives.

We look forward to a world in which all people share the same basic rights, in which they live together in peace and in which their different cultures will be able to develop freely. We believe that each generation is responsible for the fate of our planet and, by safeguarding the balance of nature and the environment, for the long term continuity of life in all its forms.

Upholding these values of individual and social justice, we reject all prejudice and discrimination based upon race, colour, religion, age, disability, sex or sexual orientation and oppose all forms of entrenched privilege and inequality. Recognising that the quest for freedom and justice can never end, we promote human rights and open government, a sustainable economy which serves genuine need, public services of the highest quality, international action based on a recognition of the interdependence of all the world's peoples and responsible stewardship of the earth and its resources. We believe that people should be involved in running their communities. We are determined to strengthen the democratic process and ensure that there is a just and representative system of government with effective Parliamentary institutions, freedom of information, decisions taken at the lowest practicable level and a fair voting system for all elections. We will at all times defend the right to speak, write, worship, associate and vote freely, and we will protect the right of citizens to enjoy privacy in their own lives and homes. We believe that sovereignty rests with the people and that authority in a democracy derives from the people. We therefore acknowledge their right to determine the form of government best suited to their needs and commit ourselves to the promotion of a democratic federal framework within which as much power as feasible is exercised by the nations and regions of the United Kingdom. We similarly commit ourselves to the promotion of a flourishing system of democratic local government in which decisions are taken and services delivered at the most local level which is viable.

We will foster a strong and sustainable economy which encourages the necessary wealth creating processes, develops and uses the skills of the people and works to the benefit of all, with a just distribution of the rewards of success. We want to see democracy, participation and the co-operative principle in industry and commerce within a competitive environment in which the state allows the market to operate freely where possible but intervenes where necessary. We will promote scientific research and innovation and will harness technological change to human advantage.

We will work for a sense of partnership and community in all areas of life. We recognise that the independence of individuals is safeguarded by their personal ownership of property, but that the market alone does not distribute wealth or income fairly. We support the widest possible distribution of wealth and promote the rights of all citizens to social provision and cultural activity. We seek to make public services responsive to the people they serve, to encourage variety and innovation within them and to make them available on equal terms to all.

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Our responsibility for justice and liberty cannot be confined by national boundaries; we are committed to fight poverty, oppression, hunger, ignorance, disease and aggression wherever they occur and to promote the free movement of ideas, people, goods and services. Setting aside national sovereignty when necessary, we will work with other countries towards an equitable and peaceful international order and a durable system of common security. Within the European Community we affirm the values of federalism and integration and work for unity based on these principles. We will contribute to the process of peace and disarmament, the elimination of world poverty and the collective safeguarding of democracy by playing a full and constructive role in international organisations which share similar aims and objectives. These are the conditions of liberty and social justice which it is the responsibility of each citizen and the duty of the state to protect and enlarge. The Liberal Democrats consist of women and men working together for the achievement of these aims.

ARTICLE 1: Name, Objects and Succession

- 1.1 The name of the Party shall be the Liberal Democrats. It may be additionally known in Welsh as Democratiaid Rhyddfrydol. It is referred to in this Constitution as “the Party”.
 - 1.2 The objectives of the Party shall be:
 - (a) to be the successor to the Liberal Party and the Social Democratic Party (“the Former Parties”);
 - (b) to seek to achieve the objects set forth in the Preamble to this Constitution;
and
 - (c) in order to achieve such objects, to secure the election of Liberal Democrats as Members of Parliament, UK Members of the European Parliament and members of local and other elected public authorities.
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ARTICLE 2: Provisions Relating To The Constitution

2.1 The Party shall be a federation constituted by the Scottish Liberal Democrats, the Welsh Liberal Democrats/Democratiaid Rhyddfrydol Cymru and the Liberal Democrats in England (the State Parties).

Regional Parties in England may seek recognition as State Parties (any such recognition requiring a two-thirds majority of those present and voting at the Conference).

The Federal Conference may, upon the recommendation of the Federal Executive, resolve to establish and/or recognise a State Party in Northern Ireland.

The Party shall also include individual members and Local Parties outside the United Kingdom and, pending the establishment or recognition of a State Party there, in Northern Ireland.

2.2 The federal institutions of the Party are together referred to in this Constitution as “the Federal Party”. This Constitution and any rules made thereunder bind the Federal Party and the State Parties. In all other regards a State Party shall be sovereign and shall be entitled to exercise any power not reserved to the Federal Party.

2.3 The following functions are reserved to the Federal Party (subject to the rights of consultation afforded to State parties and others by this Constitution):

- (a) the determination of policy in the areas specified in Article 5;
- (b) the Party’s overall strategy;
- (c) overall preparations for Parliamentary and European Parliamentary Elections;
- (d) the overall presentation, image and media relations of the Party; and
- (e) international relationships.

The Federal Party shall also promote campaigning throughout the United Kingdom, and may raise funds and do anything else which is incidental to its functions.

2.4 The provisions of this Constitution shall be implemented with regard to the principle that men and women shall have an equal opportunity of participating at every level of the Party.

Whenever this Constitution provides for the election by the same electorate of three or more persons to any committee or other body, not less than one-third or, if one-third is not a whole number, the whole number nearest to but not exceeding one-third (“the Specified Number”) shall be men and women respectively, provided that there is at least twice the Specified Number of male and female candidates respectively validly nominated by the close of nominations. Such elections shall take place from a common list and in accordance with the election rules made by the Federal Executive as from time to time in force.

2.5 No elected representative in any body in the Party shall be mandated.

2.6 Any candidate for election to public office standing as a representative of the Party must be a current member of the Party.

2.7 This Constitution may only be altered:

- (a) by a two-thirds majority of representatives present and voting at the Federal Conference;
- (b) where any such alteration has been submitted in accordance with the Standing Orders of that Conference by the Federal Executive or any other persons or bodies entitled to submit motions or amendments under Article 5.6 and notified to Local Parties at least six weeks in advance; and
- (c) in the case of any alteration to the relative powers and functions of the Federal Party and the State Parties or to this paragraph (c), it is passed by the internal procedures of each State Party.

ARTICLE 3: Membership

- 3.1 Membership of the Party is open to all persons who agree with its fundamental values and objectives without discrimination as to age, ethnic origin, religion, disability, gender or sexual orientation.
- 3.2 Membership shall be acquired through an enrolling body, being:
- (a) a Local Party in the area of which the member lives, works or studies (or, with its consent, another Local Party);
 - (b) a Specified Associated Organisation representing youth and/or students; or
 - (c) a State Party in accordance with its internal procedures (and so that any overseas member in a location where there is no Local Party may become a member via a State Party designated by the Federal Executive to act as agent for the Federal Party).

An applicant shall become a member on acceptance by the enrolling body, payment of the requisite subscription and registration. However, a State Party may, by its internal procedures, determine that eligibility of a member to vote in Local Party elections (including Parliamentary and local government selections, but excluding the appointment of representatives to Federal Conference) may be subject to a minimum requirement as to age (not being more than 10 years) and/or length of continuous membership (not being more than 15 months); and the provisions of this constitution as to members' voting rights shall be construed accordingly.

- 3.3 Responsibility for renewal of membership shall lie with State Parties but these may, by their internal procedures, provide for this function to be fulfilled by any other body or bodies within the Party. Membership will be automatically terminated if the renewal subscription is not received within three months following the due date.
- 3.4 All other matters relating to the admission or refusal of admission to membership of any person, or for the revocation or cessation of membership of any member, including the basis on which Local Parties may be involved in the recruitment and renewal of members, shall be governed by the Constitutions of the State Parties or by membership rules made under them, except that:
- (i) where, in any part of the United Kingdom, provision is not made in any of these respects by the State Party concerned, Articles 3.5 to 3.7 shall apply;
 - (ii) a right of appeal pursuant to Article 14 of the Constitution, once any procedures internal to the State Party concerned have been exhausted, cannot be excluded in relation to the interpretation of Article 3.1 of the Constitution; and
 - (iii) each state party shall give notice to the other state parties of any revocation of membership.

Subject to the conditions set out in the Constitution of or in the rules made by the State Party concerned, a member shall be a member of:

- (a) where the enrolling body is a Local Party, that Local Party or, where the enrolling body is not a Local Party, an appropriate Local Party in terms of Article 3.2 (a); and
- (b) any applicable State Party and/or Regional Party; and
- (c) the Federal Party.

3.5 No person may simultaneously be a member of more than one Local Party. A member may re-register as of right in a different Local Party under the terms of Article 3.2 (a), or may, with the consent of the member's previous Local Party where that Local Party has ceased to be appropriate in terms of Article 3.2 (a), retain membership of that Local Party. A member who is an MP, MEP, prospective parliamentary or European parliamentary candidate or member of a local authority may re-register as of right in a relevant Local Party.

3.6 Membership may be refused by an enrolling body on one or more of the following grounds:

- (a) material disagreement, evidenced by conduct, with the fundamental values and objectives of the Party;
- (b) the admission of the applicant would be likely to bring the Party into disrepute; or
- (c) membership of another political party in Great Britain.

Any person aggrieved by such a refusal shall, subject to having exhausted the internal procedures of the relevant State Party, have a right of appeal pursuant to Article 14 on any matter relating to the interpretation of this Constitution.

3.7 Membership may be revoked by a Local Party (or, where appropriate, a Specified Associated Organisation which acted as the enrolling body) or a State Party on one or more of the following grounds:

- (a) material disagreement, evidenced by conduct, with the fundamental values and objectives of the Party;
- (b) conduct which has brought, or is likely to bring, the Party into disrepute;
- (c) standing against the candidate of the Party in any Parliamentary or European Parliamentary election;
- (d) standing against the candidate of the Party in any local authority election; and
- (e) membership of or support for another political party in Great Britain.

Membership shall not be revoked unless the member has been notified of the grounds on which revocation is to be considered and has been given a reasonable opportunity to reply. Where paragraph (c), (d) or (e) of this Article 3.7 applies, membership shall be automatically and immediately suspended, and in other cases of urgency the body with powers of revocation may suspend membership while revocation is being considered. Any person aggrieved by such a revocation shall, subject to having exhausted the internal procedures of the relevant State Party, have a right of appeal pursuant to article 14 on any question relating to the interpretation of this Constitution.

- 3.8 A register of members shall be maintained by each State Party. A register of members resident outside Great Britain shall be maintained by a State Party designated by the Federal Executive to act as agent for the Federal Party. Any body entitled to maintain a list of members may use the list for its own internal purposes. The Federal Party shall have direct access to such lists. Any body holding or having access to such lists shall ensure that the information contained in them is not disclosed to any person other than for the proper purposes of the Party. Party bodies shall comply with the directives of the Federal Executive in relation to the Party's Data Protection Act registration.
- 3.9 The Federal Executive shall each autumn, after consultation with all State Parties and SAOs, recommend to the Federal Conference, and the Federal Conference shall determine the outline budget for the Federal Party in the forthcoming year (including the financing of the SAOs) which shall include:
- (a) the minimum rate or rates of subscription for the ensuing year;
 - (b) the proportion of subscription income which each State Party and overseas Local Party shall remit to the Federal Party;
 - (c) a statement agreed by the Federal and all State Parties about the organisation of fund-raising activities for the forthcoming year; and
 - (d) a statement of the strategic and political priorities upon which the proposals are based.

A higher recommended rate or rates of subscription may also be determined by the same procedure. Nothing in this Constitution shall prevent a State Party from setting a recommended rate or rates of subscription by its internal procedures which is higher than that agreed by the Federal Conference under this Article.

- 3.10 There shall be a Joint State Membership Committee which shall consist of two representatives from each of the State Parties. The Committee shall co-ordinate the promotion of membership throughout the United Kingdom.

ARTICLE 4: Local Parties

- 4.1 There shall be Local Parties so far as possible throughout Great Britain. Local Parties may be formed in Northern Ireland or places outside the United Kingdom. Save as provided for in Articles 4.2, 4.3(b), 4.9, 4.10, 4.11, 4.12, 6.2 and 6.3, all matters relating to the formation, operation, suspension or dissolution of Local Parties shall be determined by the Constitutions of the State Parties or by rules made under them, except that where, anywhere in Great Britain, provision is not made in any of these respects by the State Party concerned the relevant parts of the following Articles 4.2 to 4.8 shall apply.
- 4.2 No Local Party shall be formed unless it will, on formation, have at least 30 members.
- 4.3 Save as hereinafter provided, each Local Party in Great Britain shall contain one parliamentary constituency. The members in each of two or more adjacent parliamentary constituencies may agree to combine into a single Local Party, in which case the combined Local Party shall be deemed for all the purposes of this Constitution to be a Local Party, save that:
- (a) the selection of a prospective parliamentary candidate and the adoption of a parliamentary candidate shall be made:
 - (i) where for any constituency in a Local Party there are 30 or more members, by those members; and
 - (ii) where for any constituency within a Local Party there are less than 30 members, the Local Party Constitution shall specify whether all the members of the Local Party shall participate or only those from the constituency concerned.
 - (b) the combined Local Party shall be entitled to send to the Federal Conference the higher of:
 - (i) the number of representatives which each component constituency with 30 members or more would be entitled to send if it formed a separate Local Party: and
 - (ii) the number of representatives which that Local Party would be entitled to send if it comprised a single constituency.
- 4.4 A Local Party containing two or more constituencies may divide into new Local Parties, provided that none of them will have less than 30 members.
- 4.5 The objects of a Local Party in Great Britain shall be to be the successor to the Former Parties in its area and to promote and support the values and objects of the Party in the constituency or constituencies which it contains and in particular, through its members:
- (a) to secure the election of Liberal Democrats as Members of Parliament, UK Members of the European Parliament and members of local and other elected public authorities;
 - (b) to admit and actively to recruit new members of the Party and encourage members to renew their membership;
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- (c) to participate in the formulation of the policy of the Party;
 - (d) to play a full part in the democratic processes of the Party;
 - (e) to play a full part in the campaigning activities of the Party at all levels;
 - (f) to campaign and work with local people to achieve the objectives set out in the Preamble to this Constitution; and
 - (g) to help all local people, without regard to party or any other factor, to secure their rights and to protect them against oppression.
- 4.6 Each Local Party shall have a constitution, which must comply with the following principles:
- (a) the objects shall include those set forth in Article 4.5 of this Constitution;
 - (b) it must give effect to the provisions of Article 3 of this Constitution;
 - (c) all elections shall be in accordance with the election rules made under Article 8.4 of this Constitution;
 - (d) there must be an annual general meeting, and provision for the calling of other general meetings by the executive committee and by requisition of the members;
 - (e) proper accounts and accounting records must be kept as required by the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 and must be audited and delivered to the Election Commission as required by the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000, and submitted with an independent report to the annual general meeting for approval; and
 - (f) it must ensure compliance with the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000.
- 4.7 The constitution of a Local Party is subject to this Constitution and to the constitution of the relevant State Party and, in the event of any conflict between them, this Constitution or as the case may be the constitution of the relevant State Party shall prevail.
- 4.8 A Local Party shall be suspended if its membership has remained below 30 for a continuous period of six months, and shall remain suspended until its membership reaches 30. A Local Party which has been suspended on this ground shall be dealt with by the relevant State Party in accordance with its internal procedures, and shall not while suspended have the rights conferred upon Local Parties by this Constitution.
- 4.9 The rights of a Local Party under this Constitution may be suspended by the relevant State Party in accordance with its internal procedures (or, in the case of a Local Party outside Great Britain, by the Federal Executive), if it is not adhering to the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000, this (or its own) Constitution or if events have taken place or are about to take place which are or may be seriously detrimental to the Local Party or to the Party as a whole. A Local Party shall not while its rights are suspended be entitled to representation at the Federal Conference.
- 4.10 The constitution of a Local Party outside Great Britain and any amendment thereto shall be subject to approval by the Federal Executive. Such approval may be withheld if the constitution or amendment:
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- (a) contravenes the principles set out in Article 4.6 or in the Preamble to this Constitution or is otherwise in conflict with any of the provisions of this Constitution; or
- (b) is unworkable or defective, or omits or deletes provisions necessary to the proper functioning of the Local Party.

4.11 Before suspending a Local Party outside Great Britain, the Federal Executive shall draw the attention of the Local Party to the grounds on which it is proposed to take this action, and shall give the Local Party a reasonable time to answer any allegations and/or take any necessary corrective action. A Local Party outside Great Britain which is suspended under Article 4.9 may appeal from that decision as provided by Article 14.

4.12 The suspension of a Local Party outside Great Britain may be lifted if the Federal Executive is satisfied that corrective action has been taken. During the period of its suspension the powers and functions of the Local Party and its organs shall be exercised subject to and in accordance with the directions of the Federal Executive.

ARTICLE 5: The Policy-Making Process

- 5.1 The Federal Party shall determine the policy of the Party in those areas which might reasonably be expected to fall within the remit of the federal institutions in the context of a federal United Kingdom.
- 5.2 The State Parties shall by their respective internal procedures determine the policy of the Party on all other issues, except that any State Party may confer upon the Federal Party power to determine policy in any specified area or areas. Policy determined in this way by the Federal Party will not override the policy of those State Parties which have not conferred policy-making power in this area on the Federal Party. Where a State Party has conferred this power upon the Federal Party it shall not itself engage in the determination of policy in the specified area or areas until such time as the power has been revoked by it.
- 5.3 Any body that is not entitled to make policy on any specific issue may discuss and express its views upon it on a consultative basis.
- 5.4 The Federal Policy Committee (FPC), at its own decision or at the instruction of the Federal Conference, may undertake the commissioning, preparation, publication, circulation, and submission to Conference of policy papers, including options in cases where consultation has shown there to be substantial disagreement within the Party. Policy papers shall normally be preceded by consultation papers which shall set out policy options.
- 5.5 In the course of developing policy the FPC shall:
- (a) consider policy proposals submitted to it by State Parties, Regional Parties in England, Local Parties, Associated Organisations and individual members of the Party; together with the responses to the consultations carried out according to Article 5.5 (b); and
 - (b) ensure consultation generally with, including circulating consultation papers to, Federal Conference representatives, State Parties, Regional Parties in England, Local Parties and Associated Organisations. Such consultations shall include responses to references under Article 5.7.
- 5.6 Policy motions and amendments (including emergency motions and amendments) may be submitted for debate by Federal Conference (in accordance with its Standing Orders) by the Federal Policy Committee, members of the Federal Conference, State Parties in accordance with their internal procedures, Regional Parties in England, Local Parties and Specified Associated Organisations. Amendments to motions accompanying policy papers may be submitted in the same way.
- 5.7 In order to ensure that all aspects of a proposed policy are fully considered, the FPC may request any motion before a Federal Conference to be referred to the next meeting of the Conference. The FPC shall, before such meeting, circulate its reasons for acting under this Article and its comments on the relevant motion and any amendments thereto accepted for debate.
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- 5.8 Subject to the foregoing procedure, all Federal policy papers and motions approved by the Federal Conference shall thereby become the policy of the Federal Party.
- 5.9 The FPC shall prepare (and from time to time revise) statements as to the policy of the Party as produced by the foregoing process together with the provisions of Article 7.1.

ARTICLE 6: The Federal Conference

6.1 The Conference shall consist of

- (a) representatives of Local Parties (and the Specified Associated Organisations representing youth and/or students as provided by Article 13.8);
- (b) the Parliamentary Parties as defined by Article 9;
- (c) Members of the Scottish Parliament and National Assembly for Wales in receipt of the party's whip;
- (d) the Officers specified in Article 12;
- (e) prospective parliamentary and European parliamentary candidates who shall continue as members of the Conference until the end of the calendar year in which they stood for election, unless a new prospective candidate is selected for the constituency;
- (f) Elected Mayors who are members of the Party;
- (g) Elected members of regional assemblies in receipt of the Party's whip; and
- (h) Leaders of council groups of the Part on principal councils.

6.2 Local Parties shall be represented on the following basis, modified where applicable by Article 4.3(b):

| Membership of Local Party | Number of Representatives |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| 30 to 50 | 4 |
| 51 to 75 | 5 |
| 76 to 100 | 6 |
| 101 to 150 | 7 |
| 151 to 200 | 8 |
| 201 to 250 | 9 |
| 251 to 300 | 10 |
| 301 to 350 | 11 |
| 351 to 400 | 12 |
| 401 to 450 | 13 |

together with a further representative for every 100 members (or part thereof) in excess of 450.

6.3 Representatives of Local Parties shall be elected by all members of the Local Party concerned in accordance with election rules made under Article 8.4 for a term of one calendar year subject to the following provisions:

- (a) a representative shall cease to hold office upon:
 - (i) resignation in writing;
 - (ii) cessation of membership of the Party; or
 - (iii) unless the Local Party concerned determines otherwise, on ceasing to be a member of that Local Party or on failing to attend any meeting of the Conference without giving notice (so far as practicable) of inability to attend or without reasonable cause;
- (b) if a vacancy shall arise (or a Local Party shall become entitled to additional representation between elections), the additional representative(s) shall be

- chosen by procedures determined and published by the Local Party Executive Committee.
- (c) if a representative shall indicate inability to attend a forthcoming meeting of the Conference, a substitute may be elected by the Executive Committee of the Local Party concerned; and
 - (d) if a Local Party is entitled to at least three representatives, and subject to there being sufficient nominations, at least one shall be a man and one a woman.
- 6.4 For the purpose of such elections:
- (a) each Local Party shall give reasonable notice of a closing date for nominations; and
 - (b) if there are not more nominations than vacancies, a general meeting shall be invited to confirm each nominee: if it shall not do so in any particular case, there shall be a second call for nominations.
- 6.5 The Standing Orders of the Conference shall provide for consultative sessions of the Conference at which any member of the Party may speak, and for members who are not representatives to address other sessions of the Conference, but such provisions shall not prejudice the right of the chair of a session to select speakers.
- 6.6 The Conference shall normally meet twice a year, for a week in the early autumn and a weekend in the early spring; additional meetings may be summoned upon the requisition of the Federal Executive or the Federal Policy Committee or the Conference itself or 200 representatives entitled to attend the Conference . A meeting may be cancelled by the Federal Executive in exceptional circumstances.
- 6.7 Subject to the provisions of this Constitution, the Conference shall be the sovereign representative body of the Party, and shall have power to determine the policy of the Party in accordance with and subject to the provisions of Article 5.
- 6.8 There shall be a business session at each Conference, to which the Parliamentary Party in the House of Commons, the Parliamentary party in the House of Lords, the Parliamentary Party in the European Parliament, the Federal Executive, the Federal Policy Committee and the Federal Conference Committee shall report. The business session at the autumn meeting shall constitute the Annual General Meeting of the Party, before which the Annual Report and Accounts shall additionally be laid. The Conference shall have the right to approve or reject each such report, or to refer it back with recommendations. Business motions may be submitted to the Federal Conference by the Federal Executive, the Federal Conference Committee or any other persons or bodies entitled to submit motions or amendments under Article 5.6.
- 6.9 The Standing Orders of the Federal Conference shall allow for meetings of Conference or Council of the State Party within whose boundaries the Federal Conference is being held, at the request of that Party, either immediately prior to, or immediately after, the Federal Conference and in the same place as the Federal Conference.
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- 6.10 The Conference shall be organised by the Federal Conference Committee, which shall be subject to the control of the Federal Executive in matters of financial and other resources. Standing Orders for the Conference shall be made by the Conference Committee subject to the approval of the Conference. The Conference Committee shall consist of:
- (a) the President;
 - (b) the Chief Whip (or nominee, who shall be a member of the Parliamentary Party as defined in Article 9.1);
 - (c) one representative of each State Party, elected by its internal procedures (State Parties may appoint a substitute member should the elected member be unable to attend a specific meeting of the FCC);
 - (d) two persons elected by the Federal Executive;
 - (e) two persons elected by the Federal Policy Committee;
 - (f) the Federal Chief Executive (who shall not be entitled to vote);
 - (g) a representative of the staff employed by the party at federal level or by or on behalf of either or both parliamentary parties in Westminster and elected by such staff (who shall not be entitled to vote); and
 - (h) 12 persons elected by the Federal Conference (casual vacancies shall be filled in accordance with the election regulations).

The persons elected in accordance with (d), (e), (g) and (h) above shall be elected in even-numbered years and shall serve for a term of two years from the date of election. The Conference Committee thus constituted may co-opt such persons and for such periods not exceeding two years as it thinks fit who shall be entitled to attend and speak but not vote (but so that there shall not be more than three persons co-opted at any time).

The Federal Conference Committee, in organising the Conference, shall have due regard to the balance of state and federal policy debates in the final agenda of the Conference and in particular shall as far as possible organise the Agenda so that all matters which relate to one or more state parties but not all state parties or the Federal Party shall be considered at either the beginning or the end of the Conference.

- 6.11 The Conference may resolve to conduct a ballot of all members of the Party on any fundamental question where, in its judgement, the values and objectives of the Party are in issue or it is otherwise in the essential interests of the Party, and shall at the same time as considering the related resolution consider also a statement from the Federal Executive as to the financial and administrative implications of such a ballot. Such a ballot shall be in a bilingual form for all members of the Welsh Liberal Democrats.
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ARTICLE 7: The Federal Policy Committee

- 7.1 There shall be a Federal Policy Committee (“FPC”), which shall be responsible to the Federal Conference and shall have the duty of researching and developing policy and of overseeing the policy-making process in accordance with and subject to the provisions of Article 5. It shall also be responsible for:
- (a) presenting the views of the Party to outside bodies, including political parties and groupings in the European Community and elsewhere;
 - (b) consulting outside bodies in relation to proposed policies of the Federal Party;
 - (c) approving official policy publications of the Federal Party;
 - (d) making interim policy on topical issues, subject always to this policy remaining the policy of the Federal Party only if it is approved by the first appropriate meeting of Conference on the basis of a motion to approve a report covering all such interim policy submitted to it by the FPC; and
 - (e) making detailed policy of the kind needed to implement the principles and broad policy outlines contained in a policy paper or motion that has already been adopted by Conference.

The FPC shall submit an annual report for approval or amendment to Conference at its autumn meeting on its programme of policy development.

- 7.2 The FPC shall consist of the following:
- (a) the Leader;
 - (b) one other MP elected by and from the Parliamentary Party in the House of Commons;
 - (c) one MP each elected by and from members of the Parliamentary Party in the House of Commons representing constituencies in England, Scotland and Wales respectively;
 - (d) one Peer elected by and from the Parliamentary Party in the House of Lords;
 - (e) one MEP elected by and from the Parliamentary Party in the European Parliament;
 - (f) the President;
 - (g) three principal local authority councillors, elected by principal local authority councillors of the Party from among their own number;
 - (h) one Representative of each State Party, elected by its internal procedures (State Parties may appoint a substitute member should the elected member be unable to attend a specific meeting of the FPC); and
 - (i) one more person than the total number elected or appointed under paragraphs (a) to (h) above elected by the Federal Conference (which shall be filled in accordance with electoral regulations) except that persons who, at the date of close of nominations for election under this paragraph, are MPs shall not be eligible to be candidates for election under this paragraph.

The persons elected in accordance with (b), (c) (d), (e), (g), and (i) above shall be elected in even-numbered years and shall serve for a term for two years from the date of election and its chair shall be elected every two years by the Parliamentary Party in the House of Commons from among those of its members who are members of the FPC by virtue of paragraphs (a) through (c) of this Article. The FPC thus constituted

may co-opt such persons and for such periods not exceeding two years as it thinks fit who shall be entitled to attend and speak but not vote (but so that there shall not be more than three persons co-opted at any time).

- 7.3 The FPC shall have the responsibility for preparing the Party's General Election manifesto for the UK and its manifesto for elections to the European Parliament in consultation with the Parliamentary Party in the House of Commons and with the Parliamentary Party in the European Parliament. It shall have the right to be consulted upon, and in the case of a conflict (but after consultation with the State Party concerned) to over-ride any proposal to be contained in the General Election manifesto of any State or Regional Party unless the proposal relates solely to an issue which is the specific concern of the State or Regional Party.
- 7.4 The FPC shall have the power from time to time to set up policy working groups (whose members need not be members of the FPC) of which it shall appoint a chair and, in consultation with that chair, the membership, with such terms of reference as it may think fit (which shall include the like obligations of consultation as those set forth in Article 5.5(b)). The FPC shall be under similar obligations of consultation in relation to the composition of a proposed group.

ARTICLE 8: The Federal Executive

- 8.1 There shall be a Federal Executive, which shall be responsible for directing, co-ordinating and implementing the work of the Federal Party. It shall consist of the following:
- (i) voting members:
 - (a) the President, who shall act as its chair;
 - (b) the Vice-Presidents;
 - (c) the Leader;
 - (d) two other MPs elected by and from the Parliamentary Party in the House of Commons;
 - (e) one Peer elected by and from the Parliamentary Party in the House of Lords;
 - (f) one MEP elected by and from the Parliamentary Party in the European Parliament;
 - (g) two principal local authority councillors elected by principal local authority councillors of the Party from among their own number;
 - (h) one representative of each State Party, elected by its internal procedures (State Parties may appoint a substitute member should the elected member be unable to attend a specific meeting of the Federal Executive);
 - (i) one more person than the total number of voting members elected or appointed under paragraphs (a) to (h) above elected by the Federal Conference (casual vacancies shall be filled in accordance with the electoral regulations) except that persons who, at the date of close of nominations for election under this paragraph, are MPs shall not be eligible to be candidates for election under this paragraph.
 - (ii) The persons elected in accordance with 8.1(i) (d), (e), (f), (g) and (i) above shall be elected in even-numbered years and shall serve for a term of two years from 1st January after the date of election
 - (iii) non voting members:
 - (a) the Chief Whip (or his substitute from within the Parliamentary Party as defined in Article 9.1);
 - (b) the Chair of the Finance and Administration Committee and the Treasurer in accordance with Articles 12.4 and 12.5;
 - (c) the Federal chief executive and a representative of the staff employed by the Party at federal level or by the Parliamentary Parties elected by such staff; and
 - (d) the chair of the Federal Policy Committee.

The Federal Executive shall elect at its first meeting in every odd-numbered year and who shall serve for two years a deputy chair from amongst its members who shall chair meetings in the absence or at the request of the President. The Federal Executive thus constituted may co-opt such persons and for such periods not exceeding two years as it thinks fit who shall be entitled to attend and speak but not vote (but so that there shall not be more than three persons co-opted at any time).

- 8.2 The Federal Executive shall have power from time to time to establish, appoint and remove members of, and vary committees and sub-committees, which shall be responsible to it and which shall report regularly.

In particular, it shall establish a Finance and Administration Committee (“FAC”) whose members shall serve for a term of two years and which will be responsible to the Federal Executive for:

- (a) planning and administering the budget and finances of the Federal Party;
- (b) directing the administration of the Federal Party including its chief executive, headquarters and other staff; and
- (c) overseeing the role of the Party as an equal opportunities employer and the maintenance of grievance and disciplinary procedures,
- (d) ensuring the compliance of the Party at all levels with the provisions of the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000

and shall consist of:

- (a) the Chair of the FAC;
- (b) the Treasurer;
- (c) the President;
- (d) one representative of each State elected by their internal procedures (State Parties may appoint a substitute member should the elected member be unable to attend a specific meeting of the FAC);
- (e) the Federal chief executive;
- (f) two representatives of the staff employed by the Federal Party or by the Parliamentary Parties and elected by such staff; and
- (g) five persons elected by the Federal Executive (casual vacancies shall be filled in accordance with the standing orders of the Federal Executive).

The FAC thus constituted may co-opt such persons and for such periods not exceeding two years as it thinks fit (but so that there shall not be more than three persons co-opted at any time) who shall be entitled to attend and speak but not vote. The FAC shall have the power to borrow money for the general purposes of the Federal Party and to secure any monies borrowed in such manner as it thinks fit upon the assets of the Federal Party: provided always that the total amount of monies borrowed shall not exceed such amount as may from time to time be determined by the Federal Executive and approved by the Federal Conference.

The Federal Executive shall also have regard to the desirability of establishing sub-committees responsible for publicity and broadcasting, campaigning and elections, and international relations. The members of such sub-committees shall be elected at the first meeting of the Federal Executive in every odd-numbered year and shall serve for a term of two years.

- 8.3 The Federal Executive shall have power to establish a company limited by guarantee to acquire, hold and dispose of such assets of the Federal Party as the Federal Executive may from time to time direct. The Federal Executive shall have power from time to time to appoint and remove the directors of such a company, who will include the Chair of the FAC ex-officio and will otherwise be appointed for a period of five years, provided always that the Federal Executive shall not so appoint any person
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holding any public office or office in the Party which may be incompatible therewith. The Directors shall present an Annual Report (including audited financial statements) to the Federal Conference.

- 8.4 The Federal Executive shall have power, after appropriate consultations and subject to ratification by the Federal Conference, to make and from time to time vary rules as to membership, criteria for Associated Organisation and Specified Associated Organisation status and for the regular review of bodies holding such status, elections and such other matters as it may consider necessary or desirable to give effect to or supplement the provisions of this Constitution or to ensure its compliance with the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000. Any election rules must provide for elections to be by STV and secret ballot.
- 8.5 There shall be a Joint Employment Council (“JEC”) which shall constitute a forum for discussions and negotiations between management and staff. It shall consist of equal numbers of representatives of staff and management respectively; the number of representatives of each shall be determined from time to time by the Federal Executive in the light of the number of employing bodies within the Party which join the JEC (and agree that it shall constitute a negotiating forum). The Federal Party shall join the JEC. The right of staff to join, or not to join, an appropriate Trades Union shall be recognised.
- 8.6 The Federal Executive may, at the request of the Federal Policy Committee or of its own accord, and having considered the financial and administrative implications, resolve to conduct a consultative ballot of all members of the Party on any fundamental question where, in its judgement, the values and objectives of the Party are in issue or it is otherwise in the essential interests of the Party. Such a consultative ballot shall be in a bilingual form for all members of the Welsh Liberal Democrats.
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ARTICLE 9: The Parliamentary Parties

- 9.1 The Parliamentary Party in the House of Commons shall consist of all Members of that House in receipt of the Party's whip. Its Leader shall be the Leader of the Party elected as provided in Article 10. It shall be entitled to make such regulations (not being inconsistent with this Constitution) as it thinks fit for the conduct of its own proceedings. In particular, these regulations shall make provision for a Chief Whip and, if thought fit, a Deputy Leader of such Parliamentary Party.
- 9.2 The Parliamentary Party in the House of Lords shall consist of all members of that House in receipt of the Party's whip. It shall be entitled to make such regulations (not being inconsistent with this Constitution) as it thinks fit for the conduct of its own proceedings, which shall make provision for a Leader and a Chief Whip of such Parliamentary Party.
- 9.3 The Parliamentary Party in the European Parliament shall consist of all members of the European Parliament elected from constituencies from within the United Kingdom and in receipt of the UK Liberal Democrat Whip. It shall be entitled to make such regulations (not being inconsistent with this Constitution) as it thinks fit for the conduct of its own proceedings.
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ARTICLE 10: The Leader

- 10.1 The Leader of the Party shall be elected by the members of the Party in accordance with election rules made pursuant to Article 8.4.
- 10.2 An election for the Leader shall be called upon:
- (a) the Leader asking for an election;
 - (b) the death or incapacity of the Leader;
 - (c) the Leader ceasing to be a Member of the House of Commons (other than a temporary cessation by reason of a dissolution);
 - (d) the receipt by the President of the resignation of the Leader or of a declaration of intent to resign upon the election of a new Leader;
 - (e) a vote of no confidence in the Leader being passed by a majority of all Members of the Parliamentary Party in the House of Commons;
 - (f) the receipt by the President of a requisition submitted by at least 75 Local Parties (including for this purpose, the Specified Associated Organisation or Organisations representing youth and/or students) following the decision of a quorate general meeting; or
 - (g) the first anniversary of the preceding general election being reached without an election being called under any of paragraphs (a) through (f), provided that:
 - (i) the Federal Executive may postpone such an election for no more than one year by a two-thirds majority of those present and voting; and
 - (ii) this paragraph (g) shall not apply if the Leader is a member of the Government.
- 10.3 Upon election, the Leader shall hold office until death, incapacity or resignation or the completion of an election called under this Article.
- 10.4 Upon the calling of an election, the Federal Executive shall publish a timetable for nominations, withdrawals, despatch and receipt of ballot papers and the holding of ballots and shall appoint a disinterested person or body to receive and count the ballot papers.
- 10.5 Nominations must be of a Member of the Parliamentary Party in the House of Commons, who must be proposed by at least ten percent of other members of the Parliamentary Party in the House of Commons and supported by 200 members in aggregate in not less than 20 Local Parties (including, for this purpose, the Specified Associated Organisations representing youth and students as provided by Article 13.8) and must indicate acceptance of nomination.
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ARTICLE 11: Parliamentary Candidates

- 11.1 Each State Party shall establish a Candidates Committee or provide for some or all of its functions to be discharged by another unit or units (and every such unit shall be deemed to be a State Candidates Committee for the purposes of this Article 11). The functions of a State Candidates Committee shall be:
- (a) to make provision for there to be lists of approved candidates for Parliamentary and for European Parliamentary elections;
 - (b) to co-ordinate and regulate the procedure for the selection and adoption of candidates;
 - (c) to identify and publish criteria for the assessment of candidates in the course of the approval and selection processes and to ensure, so far as possible, their consistent application;
 - (d) to provide training for candidates; and
 - (e) to make and from time to time to vary rules for the selection and adoption of prospective Parliamentary and European Parliamentary candidates.
- 11.2 There shall be a Joint Candidates Committee, which shall consist of one representative, with a power of substitution, from each of the State Candidates Committees and shall be chaired by the Chief Whip or nominee from the Parliamentary Party as defined in Article 9.1. The Joint Candidates Committee shall co-ordinate the maintenance of standards and the performance of the functions specified in Article 11.1 and it shall meet at least once a year.
- 11.3 In deciding whether to enter an applicant on a list, each State Candidates Committee shall take into account:
- (a) the support shown by the applicant for the fundamental values and objectives of the Party;
 - (b) the previous participation by the applicant in the work of the Party or a former Party, both generally and within the relevant State;
 - (c) the need to ensure that the list contains a reasonable balance between both sexes and different age groups, and includes representatives of different social and economic groups and of ethnic minorities; and
 - (d) such other considerations as may be relevant in the circumstances.
- 11.4 The name of any person may be removed from a list by the relevant State Candidates Committee if:
- (a) the Committee has reason to believe that such person:
 - (i) no longer supports the fundamental values or objectives of the Party;
 - (ii) has behaved (whether personally or in connection with the affairs of the Party) in such a way as to be unsuitable to serve as an MP or MEP;or
 - (iii) is unfit, through ill health or otherwise, to conduct an election campaign or to serve as an MP or MEP; or
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- (b) the Committee is satisfied that it would for any other sufficient reason be contrary to the interests of the Party for that person to remain on the list.

11.5 The rules for the selection of Westminster candidates shall comply with the following requirements:

- (a) they shall provide for the appointment of a returning officer;
- (b) only persons whose names are on the list of approved candidates of that State Party can be selected;
- (c) adequate notice of the commencement of the selection process in each constituency must be given;
- (d) there must be a procedure for the short-listing of applicants;
- (e) short-listing shall be carried out by the executive committee of the Local Party or by a short listing sub-committee appointed by it;
- (f) except where a special reselection process is permitted for a sitting MP or the previous candidate, all short-lists must include a specified minimum number of candidates;
- (g) subject to there being a sufficient number of applicants of each sex, short lists of two to four must include at least one member of each sex and short lists of five or more must include at least two members of each sex; there must also be due regard for the representation of ethnic minorities;
- (h) the Local Party shall arrange one or more (having regard to the geography of the constituency) hustings meetings at which all short-listed applicants shall be invited to speak and answer questions;
- (i) the electorate for selection (“the eligible voters”) shall subject to the provisions of Article 4.3(a) be the members of the Local Party at a specified date not later than the closing date for submission of applications;
- (j) there shall be sent to each such member by a specified time (which must not be less than seven days) before the first hustings meeting:
 - i) the names of the short-listed applicants and such information about themselves as may be authorised by the rules;
 - ii) notice of the time and place of the hustings meetings;
 - iii) notice that ballot papers will be distributed to eligible voters present at hustings meetings and will also be delivered to eligible voters who submit a request, subject to such eligible voters being responsible for their return before or at the last hustings meeting, provided that a State Party by its internal procedures may direct that the provisions in this sub-paragraph iii) shall not apply and that instead ballot papers shall be sent to each eligible voter for return before or at the last hustings meeting.
- (k) a procedure shall be provided for the removal of a candidate who has lost the confidence of the Local Party concerned.

11.6 If, following the selection of a prospective Parliamentary candidate, there is an actual or prospective vacancy in the seat, such selection shall cease to have effect and a new selection process shall take place to select a prospective candidate for the by-election.

11.7 The rules shall provide that, if a sitting MP indicates a wish to stand at the next General Election:

- (a) a general meeting of the Local Party shall be called and, if the MP is endorsed at the meeting by a majority of those members present and voting by secret ballot, the MP shall thereby be reselected; and
- (b) if the resolution is defeated, the MP may request a ballot of all members of the Local Party, and shall be reselected if the proposition is supported by a majority of those voting.

The Chair of the Local Party may (but not within the first two years of a Parliament unless there is a serious possibility of an early election) require the MP to indicate within one month whether or not the MP wishes to stand at the next General Election.

11.8 The requirements of Article 11.5 may be modified so far as necessary to accelerate selection if a general or by-election has been called or appears likely to be called in the immediate future.

11.9 The rules for selecting the lists of candidates for European Parliamentary Electoral Regions shall comply with the following requirements:

- (a) they shall provide for the appointment of a returning officer.
 - (b) only persons whose names are on the list of approved candidates of that State Party can be selected.
 - (c) adequate notice of the commencement of the selection process in each region must be given.
 - (d) there must be a procedure for the short-listing of applicants.
 - (e) short-listing shall be carried out by a sub-committee approved by the Regional / State (in Wales & Scotland) Executive(s) of the Euro Region(s), known as the Selection Committee.
 - (f) all short-lists must include more than enough applicants to fill all the vacancies on the list.
 - (g) subject to there being a sufficient number of applicants of each sex, at least one third of all applicants on each short-list shall be male and at least one third shall be female; there must also be due regard for the representation of ethnic minorities.
 - (h) the Selection Committee shall arrange one or more (having regard to the geography of the region(s)) hustings meetings at which all short-listed applicants shall be invited to speak and answer questions.
 - (i) the electorate for the selection (“the eligible voters”) shall be members of the Local Parties which make up the European Parliamentary Electoral Region at a specified date not later than the closing date for submission of applications.
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- (j) the candidates to be included on each list will be determined using STV, as provided in the current edition of “How to conduct an election by the Single Transferable Vote”, published by the Electoral Reform Society. The order in which the candidates will appear on the list will be determined by selection rules which supplement the Electoral Reform Society’s STV rules. The makeup and ordering of the list may be constrained to accommodate gender balance requirements specified by the selection rules of the State Party.

 - (k) a provision shall be provided for the removal of a candidate who has lost the confidence of the Regional/State Party/Parties concerned and also the replacement of a candidate who has withdrawn, after the list has been announced.
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ARTICLE 12: Officers

- 12.1 The President shall be the principal public representative of the Party and shall chair the Federal Executive. The President shall be elected by the members of the Party for a term of two years starting from 1st January in the year immediately following the election and shall hold office until death, incapacity, resignation or the election of a successor; the President shall be eligible for re-election once only. A candidate for the office of President shall require the nomination of not less than 200 representatives entitled to attend the Federal Conference in not less than 20 Local Parties (including, for this purpose, the Specified Associated Organisations representing youth and students as provided by Article 13.8). The President shall report to the annual meeting of the Conference and may make reports to any other meetings of Conference. The Federal Executive shall have the power, in the event of a casual vacancy, to elect an Acting President from any of the Vice-Presidents and to determine a convenient date for a ballot to elect a successor who shall serve for the remainder of the term, except that if the remainder of the term is less than twelve months, the successor shall serve for the remainder of the term plus a period of two years thereafter.
- 12.2 Each of the State Parties shall, by its internal procedures, designate one of its officers to be a Federal Vice-President.
- 12.3 The Chair of the FAC, who shall be responsible for the overall budget and finances of the Party, shall be its treasurer for the purposes of the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 and shall be responsible for its compliance with the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000, shall be elected for a term of two years by the Federal Executive and shall, upon election, become (if not already a member) a non-voting member of the Federal Executive and a member of any fund-raising committee established by the Federal Executive.
- 12.4 The Treasurer, who shall be responsible for fund-raising, shall be elected by the Federal Executive at its first meeting in every odd-numbered year and shall serve for a term of two years and shall, upon election, become (if not already a member) a non-voting member of the Federal Executive, a member of the FAC and chair of any fund-raising committee established by the Federal Executive.
- 12.5 The Federal Executive shall appoint a salaried chief executive.
- 12.6 The Federal Executive shall appoint a nominating officer for the purposes of the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000.
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ARTICLE 13: Associated Organisations

13.1 Any organisation of persons having a common link of interest which satisfies the following criteria:

- (a) its membership is limited to members of the Party or non-members who support the fundamental values and objectives of the Party;
- (b) its objects are consistent with those fundamental values and objectives;
- (c) its internal procedures conform with the basic democratic principles set forth in Article 4.6;

may, subject to any criteria established pursuant to Article 8.4, be recognised as an Associated Organisation (“AO”) at federal level by the Federal Executive or at state level by the internal procedures of a State Party.

13.2 Any such organisation which, in addition to satisfying the criteria set forth in Article 13.1, consists solely (except in the case of youth and/or students) of members of the Party and is listed in the Annexe to this Constitution shall be recognised as a Specified Associated Organisation (“SAO”) at federal level by the Federal Executive or at state level by the internal procedures of a State Party. Other organisations may, subject to any criteria established pursuant to Article 8.4, qualify for status as a Specified Associated Organisation following a proposal from the Federal Executive and a two-thirds majority of Conference. Once so approved, an SAO shall be subject to the provisions of this constitution in the same way as those SAOs which are specified herein. A list of such added SAOs shall be appended to the constitution. The Annexe shall expire at the end of every fourth autumn conference from 2006 (although the Federal Executive shall have the power to delay this each time by a further twelve months on a two-thirds majority) and must be renewed by means of an amendable motion from the Federal Executive to the Federal Conference.

13.3 An AO shall have the rights conferred upon AOs by this Constitution, and an SAO shall have the rights so conferred upon AOs and SAOs. The Federal Executive shall from time to time review the operation of AOs and SAOs in the light of the principles and practices established by and pursuant to this Constitution and shall report to the Conference on such reviews.

13.4 If an AO or an SAO is in breach of the criteria set forth in Article 13 or established pursuant to Article 8.4, it may be suspended from the exercise of its rights under this Constitution by the Federal Party or (as the case may be) the relevant State Party in accordance with its internal procedures. Before exercising any powers under this Article, the body proposing to suspend or recommend the suspension of the rights of the AO or SAO shall draw the attention of the AO or SAO concerned to the grounds on which it is proposed to take this action, and the AO or SAO shall be given a reasonable time to answer any allegations and/or take any necessary corrective action.

13.5 The suspension of an AO or an SAO at federal level may be effected by the Federal Executive and shall be reported to the next meeting of the Federal Conference, which may revoke such suspension or, by a two-thirds majority, remove from an

organisation the status of an AO or SAO.

- 13.6 Any suspension of an AO or SAO may be lifted by the suspending body if it is satisfied that corrective action has been taken.
- 13.7 For the purposes of exercising the rights conferred on SAOs by this Constitution, an SAO representing youth and/or students shall have the same rights as a Local Party.
- 13.8 A member of an SAO shall not be counted as a member for the purpose of Article 6.2 or participate in exercising the rights of the SAO under Articles 6 and 10 of this Constitution:
- (a) if such member is not a member of the Party;
 - (b) in the case of the Youth and/ or Student Organisation, if such member has reached the age of 26 and is not a student;
 - (c) if such member, having been originally enrolled by an SAO, has elected to exercise the related constitutional rights through a Local Party; or
 - (d) if such member, having been originally enrolled by a Local Party, has not elected to exercise the related constitutional rights through an SAO: no person may exercise the related constitutional rights concurrently as a member of more than one SAO or as a member of both an SAO and a Local Party.
- 13.9 The recognition by the Party of Associated Organisations, and the conferring by this Constitution of rights upon Specified Associated Organisations, shall not prejudice the independence of such organisations.
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ARTICLE 14: Resolution of Conflicts

14.1 There shall be a Federal Appeals Panel, which shall consist of 18 members elected as follows:

- (a) Nine (of whom at least three shall be men and at least three shall be women) elected by the Federal Executive subject to confirmation by the Federal Conference. Each name shall be presented individually to Conference for confirmation. If any name is rejected by Conference, that name may not be re-presented to Conference for confirmation until at least eighteen months have elapsed; and
- (b) three elected by each State Party according to its internal procedures.

The Chair of the Federal Appeals Panel shall be elected by the Panel from amongst the members elected to it by the Federal Executive. The Chair upon ceasing to be a member of the Panel shall also cease to be Chair of the Panel but if re-appointed as a member of the Panel shall be eligible for re-election as the Chair.

14.2 Each member of the Panel shall hold office for five years, and shall be eligible for re-appointment provided that no person shall be entitled to hold office for more than ten years in aggregate. No person shall be eligible for appointment if (and any member shall forthwith vacate office upon becoming) an MP, MEP or prospective parliamentary candidate (save that the Chief Whip may be a federal appointee) or a member of the Federal Executive or the Federal Policy Committee. The body making the original appointment may terminate the appointment because the appointee is no longer able to carry out his or her duties as a member of the Panel on account of ill health or for other good cause. Any casual vacancy on the Panel may be filled by the body making the original appointment for the residue of the term of that appointment.

14.3 The Panel shall adjudicate upon:

- (a) any dispute over the interpretation of this Constitution;
- (b) any claim that the rights under this Constitution of a member or of an organ of the Federal Party or of an AO or SAO recognised by the Federal Party have been infringed;
- (c) any dispute, except one as to policy jurisdiction, between the Federal Party and a State Party;
- (d) any matter expressly so provided by this Constitution or by rules made thereunder;
- (e) any appeal from a like body in a State Party relating to an issue under this Constitution, except that no adjudication under this Article shall take place until any appropriate appeals procedures established within a relevant State Party have been exhausted; and
- (f) any dispute or issue which shall be referred to it by a State Appeals Panel for adjudication.

14.4 The members of the Panel to hear a particular case shall be selected by the Chair, who shall if appropriate consult with the applicant, subject to the following provisos:

THE CONSTITUTIONS OF THE LIBERAL DEMOCRATS

- (a) any dispute between a State Party and the Federal Party or between State Parties shall be heard by the Chair of the Federal Appeals Panel, three State appointees (one of whom, other than the Chair, being from the State or each of the States concerned) and three Federal appointees;
 - (b) at least three members shall be appointed to hear any other case (and an applicant may refuse to proceed unless at least three members are present), of whom at least one shall be an appointee of the State Party of which the applicant is a member and at least one shall be a Federal appointee;
 - (c) so far as practicable these members shall include at least one man and at least one woman;
 - (d) the members hearing any dispute relating to the composition of the Approved Candidates list shall if practicable include a former parliamentary candidate;
 - (e) the members shall not include any member of the Executive of a State Party in any case where the dispute is one in which the State Party is involved; and
 - (f) no member who heard the case at first instance shall hear the appeal therefrom.
- 14.5 The Panel shall decide whether or not a dispute or matter for adjudication falls within the jurisdiction conferred on it by Article 14.
- 14.6 The Panel shall determine and publish its own procedures (provided that the same are not inconsistent with this Constitution and subject to confirmation by conference). The Panel shall publish once a year, at the time of the party's autumn conference, a report containing its procedures, all of its decisions on its interpretation of this Constitution since the previous report, a summary of each of its other rulings since the previous report and any other matters the Panel shall see fit to include.
- 14.7 Any decision of the Panel shall be final and binding upon all those concerned.
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ANNEXE¹: Specified Associated Organisations

The organisations recognised as SAOs in accordance with Article 13 are:

- a) Agents & Organisers Association.
- b) ALDC (Association of Liberal Democrat Councillors).
- c) ALDES (Association of Liberal Democrat Engineers & Scientists).
- d) Liberal Youth.
- e) PCA (Parliamentary Candidates Association).
- f) WLD (Women Liberal Democrats).

¹ Annexe agreed at Federal Conference, Birmingham, September 2011– in force until 2015.

FEDERAL CONFERENCE STANDING ORDERS²

Glossary of terms

Business motion

A proposal to conduct the affairs of the Party in a particular way or to express an opinion on the way affairs have been conducted.

Business amendment

A proposal to change a business motion. *Any such proposal should be significant, should be within the scope of the original motion and must not be a direct negative.*

Committee

Throughout these standing orders, Committee means the Federal Conference Committee unless otherwise qualified.

Constitutional amendment

A proposal to change the constitution of the Party.

Secondary constitutional amendment

An amendment to a constitutional amendment. *This must not introduce new material.*

Consultative session

A meeting where selected areas of policy or strategy are considered in greater depth than is possible in full debates.

Day visitor

Someone who has paid the appropriate day visitor fee. Day visitors are not entitled to speak or vote in full sessions of conference.

Elected representative

A person elected by a local party or an SAO to represent them at conference. This term does not include substitutes appointed to replace an elected representative at a particular meeting of conference. It does include elected representatives who have not registered for a particular meeting of conference.

Emergency motion

A proposal which relates to a *specific recent development which occurred after the deadline for submission of motions. **Emergency motions must be brief.***

² As amended September 2010

Emergency amendment

An amendment to a motion which relates to a specific event which occurred after the deadline for the submission of amendments. *It must be brief and uncontentious.*

Full session

Any part of the conference agenda during which debates, topical issue discussions or discussion of business, including formal reports, takes place. This specifically excludes formal speeches such as those by the Leader or Party Officers.

Non-voting member

A party member who has paid the appropriate registration fee, but, because they are not an elected representative, is not entitled to vote at conference. A non-voting member is, however, entitled to submit a speaker's card for any item on which voting members may submit a speaker's card.

Point of order

A suggestion to the chair of a debate that the conduct of the debate, as laid down in the standing orders, has not been followed correctly.

Policy motion

A proposal to adopt a new policy or reaffirm an existing one. This includes motions accompanying policy papers.

Policy amendment

A proposal to change a policy motion. *Any proposal should be of significant importance, should be within the scope of the original motion and must not be a direct negative.*

Policy paper

A paper prepared by the Federal Policy Committee and submitted to conference for debate under the terms of Article 5.4 of the Federal Party constitution.

Procedural motion

A proposal that the conduct of a debate should be changed in a specific way.
Procedural motions are:

Move to next business

A proposal that the conference should cease to consider an item of business and immediately move to the next item on the agenda.

Reference back

A proposal to refer a motion or amendment to a named body of the Party for further consideration.

Request for a count

A request to the chair that a specific vote be counted and recorded rather than decided on the chair's assessment of a show of voting cards.

Separate vote

A request to the chair of a debate that a part or parts of a motion or amendment should be voted on separately.

Suspension of standing orders

A proposal to relax specific standing orders for a stated purpose.

Special conference

An additional meeting of the conference requisitioned by the Federal Executive, Federal Policy Committee, conference itself or 200 conference representatives under the provisions of Article 6.6 of the Federal constitution.

Standing order amendment

A proposal to change these standing orders.

Secondary standing order amendment

An amendment to a standing order amendment. This must not introduce new material.

Topical issue discussion

A discussion on a policy issue of significant and topical relevance, conducted without a vote

Voting member

A person who is entitled to vote at conference. This term includes substitutes replacing conference representatives for a particular meeting of conference. It does not include conference representatives who have not paid any registration fee that may be in force nor does it include day visitors or observers who are not conference representatives.

Standing Orders for the Federal Conference

1. The Conference Agenda

1.1 What is on the agenda

The agenda for each meeting of conference, other than a special conference, shall include time for:

- a) One or more consultative sessions; save that the Committee may decide not to hold any consultative sessions at a spring conference.
- b) A business session or sessions for the consideration of reports from the Parliamentary Party in the House of Commons, the Parliamentary Party in the House of Lords, the Parliamentary Party in the European Parliament, the Federal Executive, the Federal Finance and Administration Committee, the Federal Policy Committee and the Federal Conference Committee together with, when appropriate, reports from any other body the Committee considers appropriate, accounts, the annual report, business motions, constitutional amendments and standing order amendments.
- c) Policy motions (including motions accompanying policy papers).
- d) Emergency motions.
- e) Topical issue discussions.
- f) Any other business which the Committee thinks appropriate.

The time to be allocated to each type of business and the order of that business shall be decided by the Committee provided that conference may decide not to take any particular item on the agenda.

1.2 Conference or council of state parties

In addition, time before or after any meeting may be agreed with the relevant state party for a meeting of the conference or council of that party.

1.3 Right to submit agenda items

- a) Reports to conference may be submitted only by the bodies listed in paragraph 1.1(b).
 - b) Business motions (including amendments and emergency business motions and amendments), constitutional amendments and secondary constitutional amendments, standing order amendments and secondary standing order amendments may be submitted by the Federal Executive, Federal Policy Committee, state parties, regional parties in England, local parties, Specified Associated Organisations and 10 conference representatives. Business motions, standing order amendments and secondary standing order amendments may also be submitted by the Federal Conference Committee.
 - c) Motions accompanying policy papers may only be submitted by the Federal Policy Committee.
 - d) Policy motions (including amendments, emergency policy motions and amendments) may be submitted by the Federal Policy Committee, state parties,
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regional parties in England, local parties, Specified Associated Organisations and 10 conference representatives.

e) Proposals for topical issue discussions may be submitted by any voting member.

1.4 How motions and amendments are submitted

All motions and amendments must be submitted to the Committee. They must be typed clearly and accompanied by the name, address and telephone number(s) of a person authorised to agree to their being composited or redrafted. Motions submitted by conference representatives must be accompanied by all their signatures, names and addresses.

1.5 The deadlines by which motions, amendments, reports and questions to reports must be submitted

The Committee shall specify:

- a) The closing date for the receipt of policy motions (including motions accompanying policy papers), business motions, constitutional amendments and amendments to standing orders, which shall be at least eight weeks before the start of conference.
- b) The closing date for the receipt of amendments to motions published in the Agenda and emergency motions, which shall be at least two days before the start of conference.
- c) The closing date for the submission of written reports from the bodies listed in paragraph 1.1(b), which will be set so as to enable their distribution with the Agenda. Any supplementary report submitted later than this deadline may only be tabled at conference with the permission of the Committee.
- d) The closing date for the submission of questions to any of the reports listed in the Agenda, which shall be at least two days before the start of conference except for questions to the reports of the Parliamentary Parties in the House of Commons, House of Lords and European Parliament, where the closing date shall be at least one hour before the start of the business session at which the report is due to be considered.
- e) Notwithstanding 1.5(d), questions may always be submitted to any of the reports listed in the Agenda arising from events occurring after the deadline specified in 1.5(d). The deadline for these questions shall be one hour before the start of the business session at which the report is due to be considered.
- f) The closing date for proposals for topical issue discussions, which shall be at least two days before the start of conference

1.6 Notification of deadlines

All dates specified under Standing Order 1.5 shall be notified to conference representatives and bodies entitled to submit motions. Publication in the party newspaper may be treated as notice for this purpose.

1.7 Later deadlines in special circumstances

In special circumstances the Committee may specify later dates than those indicated above. In particular, where developments which, in the opinion of the Committee, are of great importance have taken place after the closing date for emergency motions and

questions to reports, the Committee may make time available for an additional emergency motion or for a statement to be made on behalf of the Party or for additional questions to be submitted to reports.

2. Consultative Sessions

2.1 The subjects for consultative sessions

The subjects for debate at consultative sessions shall be chosen by the Committee on the advice of the Federal Policy Committee and, where appropriate, the Federal Executive, and published in the Agenda. Two or more such sessions may be held simultaneously.

2.2 Speaking at consultative sessions

Any member of the Party may be called to speak at a consultative session and, with the approval of the chair, non-members with relevant expertise may also be called.

2.3 Voting at consultative sessions

At the discretion of the chair a vote by show of hands may be taken to indicate the weight of opinion among members present on any issue that has been debated.

3. The Agenda

3.1 The shortlisting of motions

The Committee shall draw up the Agenda and shall decide which of the motions duly submitted shall be included in it. The Committee may allocate time for one or more policy or business motions to be selected by ballot. Copies of motions not selected shall be available for inspection and will be supplied to any conference representative on payment of a copying charge and postage.

3.2 Motions for the amendment of the constitution or standing orders

Save as detailed below in Standing Order 4.3, all proposed amendments to the constitution or standing orders must be either selected for debate or included in a ballot to allow conference representatives to determine an order of priority for allocating time.

3.3 Balance between State and Federal policy debates

The Committee shall, in drawing up the Agenda, have due regard to the balance of State and Federal policy debates and in particular shall as far as possible organise the agenda so that all matters which relate solely to one or more state parties but not all State Parties or the Federal Party shall be considered at either the beginning or the end of the conference.

4. Selection of Motions and Amendments

4.1 Compositing or otherwise altering motions

In drawing up the Agenda the Committee shall seek to reflect the range of views in the Party as indicated by the motions and amendments submitted. The Committee may:

- a) Treat any severable part of a motion or amendment as a separate motion or amendment.
- b) Redraft a motion or amendment so as to improve expression, remove inaccuracy or superfluity or take account of new developments.
- c) Composite similar motions or amendments.

4.2 Selection of amendments

The Committee shall decide which of the amendments duly submitted to each motion shall be selected. No amendment shall be selected if, in the opinion of the Committee it is insubstantial, outside the scope of the motion, or tantamount to a direct negative of the motion.

4.3 Motions for the amendment of the constitution or standing orders

The Committee may refuse to select a motion for amendment of the constitution or standing orders if, in their opinion, it is:

- a) Similar in effect to another motion which has been selected for debate or ballot at the same meeting of conference.
- b) Similar in effect to a motion that has been rejected at either of the last two meetings of conference.
- c) In the case of amendments to the constitution, incomplete in that it leaves unamended some other part of the constitution which contradicts the meaning of the amendment.
- d) In the case of amendments to standing orders, incomplete in that it leaves unamended some other part of standing orders which contradicts the meaning of the amendment.
- e) Ambiguous.

4.4 Emergency motions

The Committee may reject an emergency motion if:

- a) It is similar in effect to another motion that has been selected for debate or ballot.
- b) It is similar in effect to a subject chosen for a topical issue discussion.
- c) It is unclear as to its meaning or intent or is, in the opinion of the Committee, too poorly drafted to provide a sensible basis for debate.
- d) It falls outside the definition of emergency motions.

No amendment shall be taken to any motion selected under this Standing Order.

4.5 Ballots for emergency motions

All emergency motions, except those rejected under Standing Order 4.4, must be placed either on the agenda for debate or in a ballot for selection by Conference. The Committee may hold separate ballots to select which of a range of emergency policy motions and which of a range of emergency business motions to debate. If one or

more ballots is held the Committee shall circulate the text of all balloted motions to the Representatives attending Conference as soon as practicable and shall specify a closing time for the ballot. Following the counting of any ballots the Committee shall decide how many motions shall be debated in the time available.

4.6 Emergency amendments

The Committee shall have complete discretion whether to select emergency amendments for debate.

4.7 Topical issue discussions

The choice of subjects for topical issue discussions shall be made by the Officers of the Committee in consultation with the Officers of the Federal Policy Committee. In choosing the subjects, the Officers shall have regard to the significance and topicality of the subjects proposed and whether they are likely to provoke a lively discussion.

5. Special Meetings

5.1 Timetabling of special meetings

The Committee shall, as soon as practicable after the requisitioning of a special meeting of the conference, fix a date for the meeting, draw up the Agenda and, if appropriate, specify a date for the submission of amendments. The meeting shall deal only with the business stated in the notice of requisition save that the Committee may allow time for emergency motions and for business which is formal or, in its opinion, uncontentious.

5.2 Preferred timescales for special meetings

In setting dates for the submission of motions and amendments and giving notice thereof and of the conference itself the Committee shall endeavour to follow the timescales laid down elsewhere in these standing orders but, where this is not practicable, the Committee shall set such dates as it sees fit.

6. Appeals

6.1 Appeals against rejection of motions

The Committee shall provide written reasoning to the nominee of the proposers for the rejection of any motion or amendment. The proposers may appeal, in writing, to the next meeting of the Committee. Any such appeal shall provide reasons why, in the opinion of the proposers, the expressed reasons for rejection are not valid. If the appeal is allowed, the motion or amendment shall be treated as an emergency motion or amendment according to the stage of the agenda-setting process at which the appeal has been allowed.

6.2 Appeals against exclusion from conference

Any person excluded from conference by a decision of the Chief Steward shall have the right of appeal to the Committee at the next of its regular meetings. The exclusion shall remain in force pending the appeal. If the person who is excluded is a voting member of conference, their local party or SAO shall be contacted immediately and invited to appoint a substitute for the remainder of the conference.

7. The Chair

7.1 Who chairs conference

The President, if present, shall normally take the chair at the formal opening and closing of conference and when the Party Leader is making a formal speech from the platform. At all other sessions the chair shall be appointed by the Committee. Normally no person shall chair more than one session at any meeting.

7.2 The chair's aide

The Committee may appoint an aide or aides to assist the chair of each session.

8. Conduct of Debate

8.1 Variation in the order of business

The Committee may propose to the conference a variation in the order of business as set out in the Agenda. Such variation shall be put to the vote and shall take effect if approved by a majority of those voting.

8.2 Withdrawal of motions and amendments

Once the Committee has included a motion or amendment, or part of a motion or amendment, in the Agenda, may not be withdrawn except by leave of conference.

8.3 The order of debate

The Committee shall direct the order of debate. Generally, however, a motion will be moved and immediately thereafter the amendments and options will be moved in the order directed by the Committee. There will then be a general debate. The movers of amendments and options (or their nominees) shall have the right of reply in the same order (except that where an amendment or option has not been opposed during the debate, the chair of the session shall have the right to direct that its movers shall not exercise their right of reply), after which the mover of the motion (or the mover's nominee) shall have the right of reply. Votes shall then be taken on the amendments and options in the order in which they have been moved and, finally, on the substantive motion. The Committee may direct that part of any motion or amendment or groups or amendments may be the subject of a separate debate.

8.4 Topical issue discussions

The Committee shall direct the order of the discussion. Normally the proposer of the subject shall speak first, and a representative of the Federal Policy Committee shall speak last.

8.5 Who may speak

Only voting or non-voting members may speak at a full session of conference, save that other persons may speak in the following circumstances:

- a) As a member of the Federal Policy Committee representing that committee in a policy debate.
- b) As a member of the Federal Conference Committee representing that committee in debates on standing orders and matters of conference procedure.
- c) As a member of the Federal Executive representing that committee on matters of party business.
- d) If called by the chair of the session, after the Committee has given permission. Such permission shall only be given exceptionally.

Additionally the Committee may invite any person to address the conference as a guest.

8.6 The special rights of the Federal Committees

Provided that the Federal Policy Committee is not proposing the motion or any of the amendments to be taken in a debate on a policy motion or on motions relating to the policy-making processes of the Party it shall have the right to nominate a person to report its views on the subject before the conference. The Federal Executive shall have similar rights on business motions or motions to amend the constitution, as shall the Federal Conference Committee on motions relating to the proceeding and procedures of the conference and to amend standing orders. Such a person shall be called to speak for the same length of time as the person replying on behalf of the mover of the motion.

8.7 The selection of speakers

Voting and non-voting members wishing to speak in any debate shall submit a speaker's card, prior to the commencement of the debate in which they wish to speak, stating whether they wish to speak for or against an amendment, the motion or part of the motion. The chair shall be responsible for the choice of the speakers and shall attempt to provide a balanced debate between the different viewpoints in the conference, but may announce a departure from this rule if there is an overwhelming preponderance of members wishing to speak on the same side. The chair shall have the discretion to accept speakers' cards after the start of the debate. Save as provided for in these standing orders, no person may speak more than once in any debate.

8.8 The length of speeches

The Committee shall set out in the Agenda time limits for speeches.

9. Voting at Conference

9.1 The method of voting

Voting cards shall be issued at each meeting to voting members. (The Committee may direct that voting on any issue be by ballot.) Subject thereto all votes at full sessions shall be taken by show of voting cards.

9.2 Counting of votes

A vote by show of voting cards shall be counted:

- a) If the Committee has so directed.
- b) If the chair so directs.
- c) As the result of a procedural motion under Standing Order 11.5 below.

A recount will only be held if the chair is not satisfied that the first count was accurate.

9.3 Separate votes

A separate vote may be taken on a part of a motion or amendment:

- a) On the direction of the Committee.
- b) At the discretion of the chair.
- c) As a result of a procedural motion under Standing Order 11.4 below.

10. Points of Order

10.1 Making a point of order

Any voting member may rise on a point of order which shall be taken immediately except that, during a vote, no point of order shall be taken that does not refer to the conduct of the vote. The chair's decision on all points of order shall be final.

11. Procedural Motions

11.1 Next business

a) A voting member may, during any full conference session, submit, in writing, a request that conference move to next business, giving the reasons to do so. The submission shall not exceed 75 words.

b) The chair may either take the request immediately upon receipt, or at the end of any speech currently being made. If more than one request is received the chair shall decide which to take. No more than one request may be taken in respect to any motion or report.

c) When the request is to be taken, the chair shall read the statement of reasons and ask conference whether it wishes to consider the request to move to next business. If conference decides, by a simple majority of those voting, to do so, the person who made the request may speak. The chair may allow other speakers. All speeches under this standing order shall be limited to two minutes. If conference decides not to debate the proposal, it falls.

d) The proposal shall require a two-thirds majority of those voting being to be passed. If it is carried the current agenda item shall be abandoned without any further debate or vote and, at the discretion of the chair, either the next agenda item shall be taken or there shall be an adjournment until the time at which the next agenda item was due to be taken.

11.2 Reference back (moved by a representative)

a) A voting member, who has not already spoken in the debate, may, at any time before the chair has asked the first speaker in reply to stand by, submit, in writing, a request to refer back the motion under debate. The submission shall state to whom the motion is to be referred and shall include a statement of the reasons, including reasons why voting against the motion would not achieve a similar result, not exceeding 75 words.

b) The chair may take the request to refer back at whatever stage of the debate they consider appropriate. If more than one request is received, the chair shall decide which to take. No more than one request may be taken with respect to any motion.

c) When the request is to be taken, the chair shall read the statement of reasons and ask conference whether it wishes to consider the request to refer. If conference decides, by a simple majority of those voting, to do so, the person who made the request may speak and the mover of the substantive motion, or their nominee, may reply. The chair may allow other speakers. All speeches under this standing order shall be limited to two minutes. If conference decides not to debate the reference back, it falls.

d) The reference back shall require a simple majority of those voting to be passed. If it is carried the current agenda item shall be abandoned without any further debate or vote and, at the discretion of the chair, either the next agenda item shall be taken or there shall be an adjournment until the time at which the next agenda item was due to be taken.

e) If the substantive motion is referred to the Federal Executive, the Federal Policy Committee or the Federal Conference Committee that body shall, in its report to the next meeting of the conference, state what action it has taken on the reference.

11.3 Reference back (moved by the Federal Policy Committee)

a) The Federal Policy Committee may, at any time before the beginning of the debate on a motion, submit, in writing, a request to refer that motion to the next meeting of the conference. The chair shall announce the existence of such a request at the start of the debate.

b) The chair may take the request to refer back at whatever stage of the debate they consider appropriate. A nominee of the Federal Policy Committee will speak and the mover of the substantive motion, or their nominee, may reply. The chair shall have discretion whether to allow other speakers on the request.

c) The reference back shall require a simple majority of those voting to be passed. If it is carried the current agenda item shall be abandoned without any further debate or vote and, at the discretion of the chair, either the next agenda item shall be taken or there shall be an adjournment until the time at which the next agenda item was due to be taken.

d) If passed, the Federal Policy Committee shall, before the next meeting of the conference, circulate its reasons for acting under this section and its comments on the motion and any amendments thereto accepted for debate.

11.4 Separate vote

A voting member of conference may request that the chair take a separate vote on a part of a motion or amendment provided that such a request is in writing and received by the commencement of the first conference session on the day before the debate is scheduled. If the debate is scheduled for the first day of conference, the request must be received in writing by the same deadline as that for emergency motions. The Committee shall have complete discretion whether to take a separate vote. In exceptional circumstances, the Chair of the debate shall have discretion to accept a request for a separate vote if it is received in writing after this deadline.

11.5 Counted vote

Any voting member may ask for a counted vote, which shall be taken if the request is supported by 50 members rising in their places and showing their voting cards.

11.6 Suspension of standing orders

a) A voting conference member may, during any full conference session, move a motion for the suspension of standing orders. The mover shall submit the motion together with a written statement of its purpose, not exceeding 75 words, to the chair, who shall read them to the meeting. The chair may either take the request immediately upon receipt, or at the end of the speech currently being made.

b) No motion to suspend standing orders may suspend any requirement of the constitution, nor any part of these standing orders which govern:

i) The rights of, or timetable for, submission of motions and amendments.

ii) Consultative sessions.

iii) Procedural motions for next business or suspension of standing orders.

c) No motion to suspend standing orders to introduce a motion or amendment on to the agenda can be taken unless the motion or amendment has been submitted to the Committee in accordance with the published timetable and, where a right of appeal against non-selection exists, the right has been exercised.

d) The chair shall read the statement of purpose and, if the suspension is allowable in the terms of this standing order, ask the conference whether it wishes to debate the request for suspension. If the conference decides not to debate the request, it falls. If the conference decides, by a majority of those present and voting, to hear the request the mover may speak and a representative of the Committee may reply. The chair shall have the discretion to allow other speakers. All speeches on the motion to suspend standing orders will be limited to two minutes.

e) A motion to suspend standing orders shall only be carried if supported by at least two-thirds of the conference members voting. If the procedural motion is carried all standing orders shall remain in force except only for the purposes set out in the motion.

11.7 No procedural motions during votes

No procedural motion can be moved during a vote.

12. Reports

12.1 Which reports are tabled

The business session or sessions of the conference must include consideration of reports from the bodies listed in Standing Order 1.1(b).

12.2 Submission and selection of questions

A voting member may submit questions to any report tabled for consideration, by the deadlines set under Standing Orders 1.5 (d) and (e). The Committee shall publish in advance of the report session all the questions submitted under Standing Order 1.5 (d) which are in order, compositing similar questions where appropriate.

12.3 Whether questions are in order or not

A question shall be ruled out of order if it asks the body submitting the report about issues which are outside its duties and responsibilities. If the question could be answered by another body reporting to the same conference, the Committee may transfer the question to that body.

12.4 How questions and supplementary questions are put and answered

After the report is moved, the mover, or their nominee, shall answer the questions in turn. After each question has been answered, the voting member who submitted the question will be given the opportunity to put a supplementary question, speaking for a maximum of two minutes, and the mover, or their nominee, will be given an opportunity to respond. The chair shall determine the time given to the mover in moving the report and replying to questions. The chair shall also determine how many of the published questions, and how many of the questions submitted under Standing Order 1.5 (e), can be taken. After the conference the Committee shall publish the answers to all questions submitted under Standing Orders 1.5 (d) and (e) which are in order, and to all supplementary questions asked.

12.5 Approval or rejection of reports from Federal Party committees or sub-committees

Any report tabled by a Federal Party committee or sub-committee must be submitted for approval by the conference and must be voted upon accordingly. A voting member may move the rejection of any part of the report or of the report as a whole. A voting member wishing to move a rejection shall submit a speaker's card prior to the commencement of the consideration of the report, stating the section(s) which they wish to have rejected. All moves to reject a report must be debated (except that the chair shall have discretion to choose between moves to reject the same part of the report), at the conclusion of the question session. The person who made the request shall speak and the mover of the report, or their nominee, shall reply. The chair may allow other speakers, and shall determine the time given to all speakers.

12.6 Receipt of reports from other bodies

Any report tabled by a body other than a Federal Party committee or sub-committee must be submitted for receipt by the conference and must be voted upon accordingly.

A voting member may move not to receive the report, by submitting a speaker's card prior to the commencement of the consideration of the report. A move not to receive a report must be debated (except that the chair shall have discretion to choose between more than one move not to receive the same report), at the conclusion of the question session. The person who made the request shall speak and the mover of the report, or their nominee, shall reply. The chair may allow other speakers, and shall determine the time given to all speakers.

13. Amendment of Standing Orders

13.1 Amendment of standing orders

These standing orders may be amended by a two-thirds majority of members of conference voting on a motion duly submitted and selected in accordance with standing orders. Subject to any amendment they shall remain in force from meeting to meeting.

14. The Chair and Vice Chairs of the Committee

14.1 Chair and Vice Chairs

At its first meeting after a new election the Committee shall elect a Chair, who must be a member of the Committee directly elected by conference, and at least one Vice Chair, who must be members of the Committee either directly elected by conference or elected by one of the State Parties.

COMMITTEE ELECTION REGULATIONS³

1. The Chair of the Federal Appeals Panel shall be the Returning Officer. The rules of the Federal appeals panel shall make provision for a process to replace the Chair in this role if necessary. The Chief Executive shall be the Acting Returning Officer. The Deputy Acting Returning Officer will be the Head of Compliance and Constitutional Support. Other Deputy Acting Returning Officers may be appointed if required.
2. The Federal Executive shall draw up a timetable for each year's receipts of nominations, dispatch and return of ballot papers and the counting of the votes for each election covered by these regulations. The Returning Officer may make provision for voters who wish to do so to cast their ballots electronically, and to view the candidates' election addresses electronically. The Returning Officer may carry out electronic communications with the electorate to facilitate the election.
3. Nominations may be submitted by:
 - a) Any Local Party;
 - b) Any Regional Party;
 - c) Any State Party;
 - d) Any Specified Associated Organisations; or
 - e) Any two Voting Conference Representatives with valid membership.

and **must** be accompanied by the written consent of the candidate. For the election of Councillor Reps see rule 15(b).

4. (a) Each candidate shall be entitled to include in the mailing of ballot papers for each election in which he or she is a candidate a personal election address covering up to one side of A5 paper, printed by and at the expense of the Federal Party. Election address artwork in camera ready form as a high resolution PDF or text-only Word document must reach the Acting Returning Officer at an address and by a date to be notified.

(b) The Returning Officer may make provision for voters to view the candidates' election addresses electronically as well as, or instead of, through the postal mailing.

(c) Each candidate shall be responsible for supplying material that verifies, to the satisfaction of the Acting Returning Officer, any statement in his or her personal election address claiming that he or she is endorsed by any individual or organisation. Such material must accompany the candidate's personal election address artwork.

(d) Candidates or their supporters must not use e-mail, e-groups, cix conferencing or websites during these elections to promote their candidacy,

(e) Candidates must not carry out any activities during the election period, which may be viewed as treating.
5. The Returning Officer may make provision for voters who wish to do so to cast their ballots electronically.

³ As amended September 2011. A separate set of regulations apply for Interim Peer Elections.

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6. The names and addresses of conference representatives are confidential and shall not be released for the purposes of the election.
 7. (a) No party publication, including the Conference Gazette, may accept advertisements in support of or in opposition to candidates.

(b) Candidates may not use Liberal Democrat News to specifically promote their candidacy but all other articles are permissible.
 8. No material published or circulated by or on behalf of a candidate shall defame by name or implication any other candidate and no candidate shall so defame any other candidate in the course of personal canvassing.
 9. The Returning Officer shall have the power to disqualify before declaration of the result, or unseat if declared elected, any candidate who is found to be in breach of regulations 4 or 8, but shall not exercise such power without first offering any such candidate the right to make representation, and having regard thereto.
 10. All contested elections shall be conducted by secret ballot and the single transferable vote. Counts shall be conducted in accordance with the current edition of the Electoral Reform Society's publication *How to Conduct an Election by the Single Transferable Vote*. If the Specified Proportions of men and women are not elected by the operation of the above rules, the Returning Officer shall conduct such further counts as he or she considers necessary and declare elected those members of the under-represented sex and declare not elected those members of the over-represented sex who would or would not have been elected to committees with such larger and smaller numbers of members as would cause the correct number of that sex to be elected.
 11. Casual vacancies occurring shall be filled by recounting the original ballot papers in the election, passing over any preferences for any candidate causing a vacancy. If necessary, further counts shall be conducted using the principles set out in regulation 10 to ensure that all candidates originally elected so remain and that the Specified Proportions of men and women are maintained.
 12. Any Party member may lodge, in writing, a formal complaint of infringement of election regulations forthwith upon becoming aware of any alleged infringement and not more than 21 days after the declaration. The written complaint should be addressed to the Acting Returning Officer and specify in detail the nature of the infringement. The Returning Officer shall then decide, in full consultation with the Acting Returning Officer, whether there is sufficient evidence and grounds to uphold the complaint, but shall not do so without offering any candidate concerned the right to make representations, and having regard thereto.
 13. Appeals against decisions of the Returning Officer must be referred to the Federal Appeals Panel within 14 days of the decision. For the purposes of appeals under these regulations the Chair of the Federal Appeals Panel shall not act as a member of the Federal Appeals Panel, and other Panel members shall appoint one of their number as Acting Chair.
 14. If a complaint is made prior to the declaration of the result, the Returning Officer shall have the power to postpone such declaration until the determination of such complaint or, where an appeal is made against his decision, until the determination of such appeal.
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15. (a) These Regulations shall be used for the biennial elections to the Federal Executive, Federal Conference Committee, Federal Policy Committee, International Relations Committee and ELDR Delegation.

(b) They shall also be used for the election of Principal Councilor Representatives on the Federal Executive and the Federal Policy Committee except section three shall read: Nominations shall be submitted by any two Principal Councillors with valid membership and must be accompanied by the written consent of the candidate

LEADERSHIP ELECTION REGULATIONS⁴

1. The Chair of the Federal Appeals Panel shall be the Returning Officer. The Chief Executive shall be Acting Returning Officer.
2. The electorate for the purpose of the election shall be those members with current membership of the Liberal Democrats on the closing date for nominations, including those members whose subscriptions were due not more than three months before the closing date.
3. The sections of the membership register containing the names, addresses and telephone numbers of members will be released in electronic version to each candidate subject to the candidate signing a data protection statement.
4. The timetable for the election shall be no shorter than 8 weeks and no longer than 13 weeks. It shall contain a minimum of 15 days for nominations to be collected which must be on the official forms provided by the Acting Returning Officer for the specific election and available from the day following the setting of the timetable by the Federal Executive. It shall provide for at least 21 days between the close of nominations and the despatch of ballot papers and at least 21 days for the return of ballot papers.
5. (a) The Acting Returning Officer shall co-ordinate arrangements for official party member hustings events via the states and regions with a view to balancing the competing demands for media coverage of the campaign, parliamentary and other duties. Other party bodies may only hold hustings-type events if they invite all candidates to attend, but they do not require the agreement of all candidates to attend or send a representative in order to proceed. Events designated as official hustings by the Acting Returning Officer shall take precedence over any other arrangements a candidate may have made.

(b) Official party communications channels may only be used to promote hustings events approved by the Acting Returning Officer. Responsibility for organising and paying for any hustings event shall lie with the hosting organisation, but the Acting Returning Officer will assist in publicising official hustings events via the party's website, e-mail communications, *Liberal Democrat News*, etc.
6. After acquiring the necessary nominations for candidacy, each candidate may nominate an agent for his or her campaign. A candidate who fails to nominate an agent will be deemed his or her own agent.
7. Nominations from the Parliamentary Party shall not include the candidate themselves and no member of the Parliamentary Party may sign more than one nomination paper. A nomination will be rejected if it depends upon the signature of an MP who has signed a previously submitted nomination form for another candidate standing in the election.
8. Federal Party employees shall maintain strict neutrality from the opening date for declaration of candidacy. It is recommended that employees of state parties, SAO's and any other relevant employing bodies shall also maintain such neutrality.

⁴ As amended September 2009

9. Party Officers, acting in their capacity as officers at federal, state, regional and local level, are expected, as far as possible, to give equal opportunities and fair balance to all candidates.
 10. The provision of food, drink or entertainment by or on behalf of the candidates, and any other form of treating, will not be allowed.
 11. The Federal Executive shall set a spending limit for election expenses, not including travel or subsistence, for each leadership candidate, when they set the timetable for the election. No candidate, or his agent, shall exceed this limit in the production of publicity material and all other expenditures connected with the campaign. All donations above £200 must comply with the provisions of Schedule 7 of the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000.
 12.
 - (a) All publicity material produced in paper or electronic form for or on behalf of a candidate shall bear his or her agent's imprint including a full postal address. Any email messages sent out for or on behalf of a candidate for the purposes of publicising their candidacy shall also include a standard form of words provided by the Returning Officer specifying how the recipient of the message may opt out of future messages.
 - (b) Each candidate shall be responsible for supplying material that verifies, to the satisfaction of the Acting Returning Officer, any statement in his or her personal election address claiming that he or she is endorsed by any individual or organisation. Such material must accompany the candidate's personal election address artwork.
 - (c) Each candidate shall be entitled to include in the mailing of ballot papers a personal election address covering up to two sides of A4 paper, or A5 in the event of there being more than three candidates, printed by and at the expense of the Federal Party. Election address artwork in camera ready form must reach the Acting Returning Officer at an address and by a date to be notified.
 - (d) The Returning Officer may make provision for voters to view the candidates' election addresses electronically as well as, or instead of, through the postal mailing.
 - (e) The published personal election address may be reproduced in whatever format is decided by the Returning Officer so long as the minimum coverage provided for in regulation 12(b) is met.
 - (f) The Returning Officer may carry out electronic communications to facilitate the election and send out e-mail communications on behalf of the candidates in the election.
 13. No material published or circulated in paper or electronic form under regulations 10, 11 or 12 shall defame by name or implication any other candidate and no candidate shall so defame any other candidate in the course of personal canvassing.
 14. The Returning Officer may make provision for voters who wish to do so to cast their ballots electronically.
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15. Any party publication whether in paper or electronic form shall give, as far as possible, equal coverage and a fair balance to all candidates.
 16. The election shall be conducted by secret ballot and the single transferable vote. Counts shall be conducted in accordance with the current edition of the Electoral Reform Society's publication 'How to conduct an election by the single transferable vote'. The election count may be scrutinised by the candidate, their agents and one other personal representative and shall be open to any party member, subject to capacity of the venue.
 17. Each candidate and their agent shall complete and lodge with the Acting Returning Officer an election expenses return form. The form must have attached receipts or invoices for all expenditure and must be lodged with the Acting Returning Officer by midday on the 35th day after the declaration of the election result. The Acting Returning Officer will hold the expenses returns of each candidate on file and these may be examined by any party member. The expenses form shall also contain the necessary information to prove compliance with schedule 7 of the PPERA 2000.
 18. At the completion of the Election any candidate who needs to make a report to the Electoral Commission shall do so in consultation with the Party's PPERA Compliance Officer.
 19. The Returning Officer shall have the power to disqualify before declaration of the result, or unseat if declared elected, any candidate who:
 - (a) has brought the party into disrepute during the campaign or where the Returning Officer has clear evidence (e.g. from bankruptcy or financial embarrassment) of this happening in the near future; or
 - (b) is found to be in breach of regulations 3, 10, 11, 13 or 17.
 18. Any party member may lodge, in writing, a formal complaint of infringement of election regulations at any time up to 21 days after the declaration. The written complaint should be addressed to the Acting Returning Officer and specify in detail the nature of the infringement. The Returning Officer shall then decide, in full consultation with the Acting Returning Officer, whether there is sufficient evidence and grounds to uphold the complaint.
 19. Appeals against decisions of the Returning Officer must be referred to the Federal Appeals Panel within 14 days of the decision. For the purposes of Appeals under these regulations the Chair of the Federal Appeals Panel shall not act as a member of the Federal Appeals Panel, and the other Panel members shall appoint one of their number as Acting Chair.
 20. These regulations will be reviewed by the Federal Executive no later than six months after any Leadership Election.
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PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS REGULATIONS⁵

1. The Chair of the Federal Appeals Panel shall be the Returning Officer. The Chief Executive shall be Acting Returning Officer.
2. The electorate for the purpose of the election shall be those members with current membership of the Liberal Democrats on the closing date for nominations, including those members whose subscriptions were due not more than three months before the closing date.
3. The membership registers, locally and nationally, are confidential and will not be released for the purposes of the election.
4. The timetable for the election shall be no shorter than 7 weeks and no longer than 12 weeks. It shall contain a minimum of 15 days for nominations to be collected and at least 14 days between the close of nominations and the despatch of ballot papers.
5. (a) The Acting Returning Officer shall co-ordinate arrangements for official party member hustings events via the states and regions with a view to balancing the competing demands for media coverage of the campaign, parliamentary and other duties. Other party bodies may only hold hustings-type events if they invite all candidates to attend, but they do not require the agreement of all candidates to attend or send a representative in order to proceed. Events designated as official hustings by the Acting Returning Officer shall take precedence over any other arrangements a candidate may have made.

(b) Official party communications channels may only be used to promote hustings events approved by the Acting Returning Officer. Responsibility for organising and paying for any hustings event shall lie with the hosting organisation, but the Acting Returning Officer will assist in publicising official hustings events via the party's website, e-mail communications, *Liberal Democrat News*, etc.
6. After acquiring the necessary nominations for candidacy, each candidate may nominate an agent for his or her campaign. A candidate who fails to nominate an agent will be deemed his or her own agent.
7. Federal Party employees shall maintain strict neutrality from the opening date for declaration of candidacy. It is recommended that employees of state parties, SAOs and any other relevant employing bodies shall also maintain such neutrality.
8. Party Officers, acting in their capacity as officers at federal, state, regional and local level, are expected, as far as possible, to give equal opportunities and fair balance to all candidates.
9. The provision of food, drink or entertainment by or on behalf of the candidates, and any other form of treating, will not be allowed.
10. The Federal Executive shall agree a spending limit for election expenses, not including travel or subsistence expenses, when setting the timetable for the election for each presidential candidate. No candidate, or his agent, shall exceed this limit in the production of publicity material and all other expenditures connected with the campaign. This shall include

⁵ As amended September 2009

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any expenditure (or the relevant proportion of any expenditure) incurred before an individual becomes a candidate if the property, services or facilities are used for the purposes of the candidate's election. All donations above £200 must comply with the provisions of Schedule 7 of the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000.

11. (a) All publicity material produced in paper or electronic form for or on behalf of a candidate shall bear his or her agent's imprint including a full postal address. Any email messages sent out for or on behalf of a candidate for the purposes of publicising their candidacy shall also include a standard form of words provided by the Returning Officer specifying how the recipient of the message may opt out of future messages.

(b) Each candidate shall be responsible for supplying material that verifies, to the satisfaction of the Acting Returning Officer, any statement in his or her personal election address claiming that he or she is endorsed by any individual or organisation. Such material must accompany the candidate's personal election address artwork.

(c) Each candidate shall be entitled to include in the mailing of ballot papers a personal election address covering up to two sides of A4 paper, or A5 in the event of there being more than three candidates, printed by and at the expense of the Federal Party. Election address artwork in camera ready form must reach the Acting Returning Officer at an address and by a date to be notified.

(d) The Returning Officer may make provision for voters to view the candidates' election addresses electronically as well as, or instead of, through the postal mailing.

(e) The published personal election address may be reproduced in whatever format is decided by the Returning Officer so long as the minimum coverage provided in regulation 11(c) is met.

(f) The Returning Officer may carry out electronic communications to facilitate the election and send out electronic communications on behalf of the candidates in the election.
 12. No material published or circulated in paper or electronic form under regulations 8 or 9 shall defame by name or implication any other candidate and no candidate shall so defame any other candidate in the course of personal canvassing.
 13. Any party publication whether in paper or electronic form shall give, as far as possible, equal coverage and a fair balance to all candidates.
 14. The election shall be conducted by secret ballot and the single transferable vote. Counts shall be conducted in accordance with the current edition of the Electoral Reform Society's publication 'How to conduct an election by the single transferable vote'. The election count may be scrutinised by the candidate, their agents and one other personal representative and shall be open to any party member, subject to capacity of the venue.
 15. The Returning Officer may make provision for voters who wish to do so to cast their ballots electronically.
 16. Each candidate and their agent shall complete and lodge with the Acting Returning Officer an election expenses return form. The form must have attached receipts or invoices for all
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expenditure and must be lodged with the Acting Returning Officer by midday on the 35th day after the declaration of the election result. The Acting Returning Officer will hold the expenses returns of each candidate on file and these may be examined by any party member. The expenses form shall also containing the necessary information to prove compliance with schedule 7 of the PPERA 2000.

17. At the Completion of the Election any candidate who needs to make a report to the Electoral Commission shall do so in consultation with the Party's PPERA Compliance Officer
 18. The Returning Officer shall have the power to disqualify before declaration of the result, or unseat if declared elected, any candidate who:
 - (a) has brought the party into disrepute during the campaign or where the Returning Officer has clear evidence (e.g. from bankruptcy or financial embarrassment) of this happening in the near future; or
 - (b) is found to be in breach of regulations 3, 8, 9, 12 or 16.
 19. Any party member may lodge, in writing, a formal complaint of infringement of election regulations at any time up to 21 days after the declaration. The written complaint should be addressed to the Acting Returning Officer and specify in detail the nature of the infringement. The Returning Officer shall then decide, in full consultation with the Acting Returning Officer, whether there is sufficient evidence and grounds to uphold the complaint.
 20. Appeals against decisions of the Returning Officer must be referred to the Federal Appeals Panel within 14 days of the decision. For the purposes of Appeals under these regulations the Chair of the Federal Appeals Panel shall not act as a member of the Federal Appeals Panel, and the other Panel members shall appoint one of their number as Acting Chair.
 21. These regulations will be reviewed by the Federal Executive no later than six months after any Presidential Election.
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The Constitution of the Liberal Democrats in England

As amended, English Council, 26 November 2011

The Constitution of the Liberal Democrats in England

1. Nature and Objects
 2. Membership
 3. Local Parties
 4. Regional Parties
 5. The English Council and the English Council Executive
 6. Functions of the English Council and the English Council Executive
 7. Parliamentary Candidates
 8. Councillors and Recognised Council Groups
 9. Resolution of Conflicts
- English Council Standing Orders
- Membership Rules
- Model Constitution for Local Parties
- Model Constitution for Branches
- Rules for the Selection of Parliamentary Candidates
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ARTICLE 1: Nature and Objects

- 1.1 The Liberal Democrats in England are part of the federal structure of the Liberal Democrats as set forth in Article 2 of the Party's Constitution ("the Federal Constitution"). The Liberal Democrats in England shall be a federation of the Regional Parties in England and shall be governed both by these Articles and by the Federal Constitution.
 - 1.2 The objects of the Liberal Democrats in England shall be:
 - (a) to seek to achieve the objects set forth in the Preamble to the Federal Constitution; and
 - (b) for that purpose, to secure the election of Members of Parliament and the European Parliament from constituencies in England and of members of local and other elected public authorities in England.
 - 1.3 The functions of the Liberal Democrats in England shall be:
 - (a) to exercise and perform the specific powers and duties conferred upon them by these Articles;
 - (b) to act as a co-ordinating and representative body on behalf of the Regional Parties in England; and
 - (c) to do such other things as may help to achieve their objects.
 - 1.4 These Articles may only be altered, and consent may only be given to any alteration to the relative powers and functions of the federal institutions of the Party and the State Parties, by a two-thirds majority of members present and voting at a meeting of the English Council and any such alteration must have been submitted in accordance with the Standing Orders of the Council and notified to Regional and Local Parties at least eight weeks in advance. Alterations to these Articles may be proposed by the English Council Executive and by any other body or persons authorised by Standing Orders to propose motions for debate at meetings of the English Council.
 - 1.5 Subject to Article 1.6 the Liberal Democrats in England shall determine the policy of the Party on matters affecting England which fall outside the remit of the Federal Party under the Federal Constitution and are not of merely local or regional concern.
 - 1.6 The English Council may, by amendment to these Articles, establish a structure for the determination of policy. Until such a structure is established the Liberal Democrats in England shall confer their powers under Article 1.5 on the Federal Party.
 - 1.7 The provisions of Articles 2.4 and 2.5 of the Federal Constitution and the election rules made under that Constitution shall apply to all elections within the English Party.
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ARTICLE 2: Membership

2.1 Membership of the Liberal Democrats in England shall be acquired through an enrolling body, being:

- (a) an English Local Party in the place in which the applicant lives, works or studies (or, with its consent, another Local Party); or
- (b) a Specified Associated Organisation representing youth and/or students in England.

An applicant shall become a member on acceptance by the enrolling body, payment of the requisite subscription and registration.

2.2 A member shall, in addition to being a member of the Liberal Democrats in England,

- (a) if enrolled under Article 2.1 (a), be a member of the enrolling Local Party;
- (b) if enrolled under Article 2.1 (b), be entitled to join the Local Party in a place in England in which the member lives, works or studies (or, with its consent, another Local Party);
- (c) be a member of the Regional Party of the region in which the relevant Local Party is situated;
- (d) subject to the Federal Constitution, be a member of the Federal Party.

2.3 No person may simultaneously be a member of more than one Local Party. A member may re-register as of right in a different Local Party which would be an appropriate enrolling body under Article 2.1 (a). A member who ceases to live, work or study within the area of a Local Party may retain membership of that Local Party with its consent. A member who is an MP, MEP, prospective Westminster or European parliamentary candidate or member of a local authority may re-register as of right in a relevant Local Party.

2.4 A person who is a member of another State Party or is on the register of members resident outside Great Britain maintained by the Federal Party may re-register as of right under Article 2.3 on surrendering membership of any State or Local Party outside England.

2.5 Membership may be refused by an enrolling body in accordance with the procedure laid out in the Membership Rules on one or more of the following grounds:

- (a) material disagreement, evidenced by conduct, with the fundamental values and objectives of the Party;
- (b) the admission of the applicant would be likely to bring the Party into disrepute;
- (c) membership of another political party in Great Britain.

2.6 Membership may be revoked in accordance with the procedure laid out in the Membership Rules by the Liberal Democrats in England or a Regional Party or Local Party (or, where appropriate, a Specified Associated Organisation which acted as the enrolling body) on one or more of the following grounds:

- (a) material disagreement, evidenced by conduct, with the fundamental values and objectives of the Party;
- (b) conduct which has brought, or is likely to bring, the Party into disrepute;
- (c) standing against the candidate of the Party in any election to public office;
- (d) membership of or support for another political party in Great Britain.

The member shall be notified of the reasons why revocation is to be considered.

- 2.7 In the event that one or more of the grounds for membership revocation are established under Article 2.6 above, the Liberal Democrats in England or a Regional Party or Local Party (or where appropriate, the Specified Associated Organisation through which the member holds his or her membership of the Party) may, in accordance with the procedure laid out in the Membership Rules, impose any one or more of the following sanctions,
- (i) Barring the individual concerned from holding or standing for election to any specified Party office or role either permanently, for a specified period, or until satisfactory training has been undertaken by the individual concerned,
 - (ii) Barring the individual concerned from holding or seeking to be elected to any or any specified public office on behalf of the Party either permanently, for a specified period, or until satisfactory training has been undertaken by the individual concerned,
 - (iii) Barring the individual concerned from having access to data from Membership Services either permanently, for a specified period, or until satisfactory training has been undertaken by the individual concerned,
 - (iv) Reprimanding the individual concerned.
- 2.8 Where revocation of membership is being considered, the body considering it may in accordance with the procedure laid out in the Membership Rules suspend membership if there are urgent reasons for doing so or if Article 2.6 (c) applies.
- 2.9 A person whose membership has been refused or revoked under these Articles or under the Federal Constitution or the constitution of another State Party shall not be admitted or readmitted to membership without the consent of the Regional Party and Local Party of which that person would then become a member.
- 2.10 The Membership Rules shall provide that there shall be a right of appeal against any decision to refuse or revoke membership to the English Appeals Panel.
- 2.11 The Liberal Democrats in England shall maintain a register of its members and shall be responsible for the renewal of membership, but the English Council may make arrangements with the Federal Party for the performance of these functions by the Federal Party. Subject to any such arrangements, membership subscriptions shall be remitted to the Liberal Democrats in England and shall be divided in accordance with Article 6. Membership will automatically lapse if the renewal subscription is three months in arrears.
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- 2.12 The Liberal Democrats in England shall make available to the Federal Party all information on its register of members. The Liberal Democrats in England shall make available to Regional and Local Parties and the Specified Associated Organisation representing youth and/or students all information on its register relating to persons who appear to be members of that Regional or Local Party or the Specified Associated Organisation representing youth and/or students (including lapsed members) and may make further information available to them. The Liberal Democrats in England may make any information on its register available to any other body for the proper purposes of the Party. The Liberal Democrats in England and Regional and Local Parties and the Specified Associated Organisation representing youth and/or students shall not use any such information except for the proper purposes of the Party.
- 2.13 The English Council may make and vary Membership Rules to give effect to or supplement the provisions of this Article.

ARTICLE 3: Local Parties

- 3.1 The Regional Parties shall ensure that Local Parties are formed throughout England.
 - 3.2 The minimum membership of a Local Party shall be 30. If the membership remains below that level for a continuous period of six months, the Local Party shall be suspended and Article 4.9 shall apply until its membership reaches 30.
 - 3.3 Each Local Party shall contain one parliamentary constituency, save that the Local Parties or (where there is no Local Party or the Local Party is suspended) the members in two or more adjacent parliamentary constituencies within the area of the same Regional Party or the members in a London borough may combine to form a single Local Party. Such a combination requires the consent of general meetings of the existing Local Parties or (where there is no Local Party or the Local Party is suspended) a general meeting of the registered members in the relevant constituency summoned by the Regional Party.
 - 3.4 All members of a Local Party which contains more than one constituency may vote on the selection of a prospective candidate for any constituency within the Local Party, except that the Constitution of a Local Party containing more than one parliamentary constituency all of which have more than 30 members may provide for the selection of prospective parliamentary candidates to be by the members registered in each individual constituency.
 - 3.5 A Local Party containing more than one constituencies may divide into new Local Parties, provided that none of them will have less than 30 members. Such division shall require the consent of separate general meetings of the members registered in the area of each proposed new Local Party.
 - 3.6 Regional Parties shall ensure that new Local Parties are formed whenever it is necessary to replace the existing structure of Local Parties in consequence of changes to the boundaries of parliamentary constituencies and shall decide on any consequential disputes.
 - 3.7 A Regional Party may direct that a proposal to form a combined Local Party under Article 3.3 or to divide one under Article 3.5 shall take effect despite the failure of one of the general meetings to approve it if in the opinion of the Regional Party this is necessary in the interests of the Party as a whole. There shall be a right of appeal to the English Council against any such direction.
 - 3.8 For the purpose of (a) Parliamentary elections in a parliamentary constituency divided between Local Parties and (b) elections for a local authority divided between more than one Local Party, the Local Parties concerned shall form appropriate joint arrangements to co-ordinate candidate approval and selection, campaigning and publicity and to be responsible for the formulation of policy on local issues for that election. In the case of Parliamentary elections the joint committee shall have the power to raise a levy from the relevant Local Parties. Where the Local Parties fail to
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form appropriate joint arrangements, the Regional Party or the English State Party shall have the power to investigate and impose any arrangements that it sees fit.

- 3.9 Each Local Party or Local Parties making joint arrangements under 3.8 above shall adopt a procedure for the approval of candidates for local authority elections. That procedure shall be uniform across the area of the local authority. It shall apply to those seeking election and re-election to the authority concerned. It shall apply to every election to every authority save for any parish or town council election that the relevant Regional Party agrees to exempt. It shall be also open to a Region to agree a blanket exemption for all parish and/or town councils or to stipulate the approvals process shall apply to one or more of them specifically. It shall comply with the following principles:
- (a) No candidate may be sanctioned by a Liberal Democrat Delegated Nominating Officer unless they s/he has been approved by a panel of Party members appointed for the purpose. The panel shall consist both of Liberal Democrat Party members who are not members of the local authority concerned, one of whom shall take the chair, and Liberal Democrat members of the local authority concerned, if any. The panel need not always comprise the same people,
 - (b) No person may be approved as a Liberal Democrat candidate unless they are a member of the Liberal Democrats,
 - (c) Approval shall be specific to each authority and shall last for a maximum of four years from the date of approval,
 - (d) As a condition precedent of approval, prospective candidates shall be required to agree to make a financial contribution towards Liberal Democrat Party activities in the event of their election to the relevant authority. The level of contribution shall be calculated in the same manner across the area of the authority concerned. No candidate shall be required to make a contribution where doing so would cause hardship and, for these purposes, hardship shall be widely construed. The procedure shall contain a mechanism by which cases of hardship are to be identified.

Where it appears to the relevant Regional Party or the English State Party that such a procedure has not been adopted or, having been adopted, is not being followed, then a procedure may be imposed and/or a Party member appointed to administer the procedure and ensure that it is followed.

- 3.10 Each Local Party or Local Parties making joint arrangements under 3.8 above shall adopt a procedure for the selection of candidates for local authority elections. The procedure shall comply with the following principles:
- (a) No person may be selected as a Liberal Democrat candidate for the purposes of any election to an authority to which the provisions at 3.9 above applies unless they have satisfied the procedure agreed under that clause,
 - (b) All selections carried out under the procedure shall be carried out in a fair, impartial, and democratic manner,
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- (c) Except where it is impossible because of there being insufficient time in the case of a by-election, the selection shall be by secret ballot in which all eligible members may vote.

Where it appears to the relevant Regional Party or the English State Party that such a procedure has not been adopted or, having been adopted, is not being followed, then a procedure may be imposed and/or a Party member appointed to administer the procedure and ensure that it is followed.

- 3.11 Each Local Party shall take all reasonable and practicable steps to support the activities of Council Groups covering any or all of its geographical area and which have been recognised under Article 8.
- 3.12 The objects of a Local Party shall include to be the successor to the Former Parties (as defined by the Federal Constitution) in its area and to promote and support the values and objects of the Party in the constituency or constituencies which it contains and in particular, through its members:
 - (a) to secure the election of Liberal Democrats as Members of Parliament, UK Members of the European Parliament and members of local and other elected public authorities;
 - (b) to admit and actively recruit new members of the Party and encourage members to renew their membership;
 - (c) to participate in the formulation of the policy of the Party;
 - (d) to play a full part in the democratic processes of the Party;
 - (e) to play a full part in the campaigning activities of the Party at all levels;
 - (f) to campaign and work with local people to achieve the objectives set out in the Preamble to the Federal Constitution; and
 - (g) to help all local people, without regard to party or any other factor, to secure their rights and to protect them against oppression.

Local Parties may adopt additional objects which are not inconsistent with the Federal Constitution or these Articles.

- 3.13 Each Local Party shall have a Constitution. The English Council shall publish and may from time to time vary a Model Constitution for Local Parties.
 - 3.14 The Constitution of a Local Party must comply with the following principles:
 - (a) all elections shall be in accordance with election rules made under the Federal Constitution;
 - (b) there must be an annual general meeting, and provision for the calling of other general meetings by the Executive Committee and by requisition of the members;
 - (c) proper accounts and accounting records must be kept as required by the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000, and must be audited and delivered to the Election Commission as required by the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 and submitted with an independent report to the annual general meeting for approval;
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- (d) there must be an executive committee, which should include both men and women and at least one person under the age of 26, and which must report to the annual general meeting on its activities;
- (e) there must be a democratic process for the selection of candidates for local authority elections;
- (f) the Constitution of the Local Party may be amended only by a properly convened and quorate general meeting by the vote of at least two-thirds of those present and voting;
- (g) it must ensure compliance with the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000.

3.15 A Local Party may adopt a Constitution which is not in the model form, or is in the model form subject to variations. Any Constitution not wholly in the model form and any amendment to a Constitution shall be subject to approval by the relevant Regional Party. Such approval shall be withheld if, in the opinion of the Regional Party, any provision of the Constitution or amendment conflicts with the Federal Constitution or these Articles or rules made thereunder, or is unworkable or defective, or omits or deletes provisions necessary to the proper functioning of the Local Party. There shall be a right of appeal to the English Appeals Panel against the withholding of approval on the ground that it was unreasonably withheld.

3.16 Any person who is employed by or provides services to a Local Party for payment shall be appointed only by the executive committee of the Local Party and paid only through the Local party's funds or out of funds provided for that purpose by the Liberal Democrats in England, a Regional Party or the Federal Party.

ARTICLE 4: Regional Parties

- 4.1 Regional Parties shall be constituted throughout England.
- 4.2 No principal local authority and no Local Party shall be divided between Regional Parties.
- 4.3 Subject to Article 4.2, Regional Parties may be divided or merged or the areas of Regional Parties may be altered with the consent of the relevant Regional Conferences.

The English Council may direct that a proposal to divide, merge or alter the areas of Regional Parties shall take effect despite the failure of one of the Regional Conferences to approve it if in the opinion of the English Council this is necessary in the interests of the Party as a whole. There shall be a right of appeal to the Appeals Panel for England against any such direction.

- 4.4 The objects of Regional Parties shall include:
- (a) to seek to achieve the objects set forth in the Preamble to the Federal Constitution;
 - (b) for that purpose, to secure the election of Members of Parliament and the European Parliament from constituencies in the Region and of members of local and other elected public authorities in the Region;
 - (c) to participate in the formulation of party policy and to play a full part in the democratic processes of the Party;
 - (d) to play a full part in the campaigning activity of the Party at all levels; and
 - (e) to assist Local Parties within the Region.
- 4.5 Regional Parties shall have the power and the duty:
- (a) to make policy on issues which relate exclusively to the Region at meetings of the Regional Conference;
 - (b) to discuss other policy issues on a consultative basis at such conference;
 - (c) if thought fit, to prepare and publish a regional manifesto for General Elections, provided that the contents of that manifesto are consistent with the manifesto of the Federal Party;
 - (d) to work with other relevant bodies in the Party, including the SAOs, to encourage Local Parties to co-ordinate campaigning, publicity and policy-making for elections to local authorities and the Westminster and European Parliaments and between elections;
 - (e) to promote the political image of the Party within the Region;
 - (f) to stimulate and co-ordinate Party activities within the Region and to undertake regional campaigns;
 - (g) to be responsible for European Parliamentary elections within the Region;
 - (h) to develop, maintain and implement a strategic plan for the Region; and
 - (i) to undertake such other functions as may be appropriate or the Local Parties in the Region may vest in the Regional Party.
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4.6 Regional Parties shall have the following powers and duties in relation to Local Parties within the Region:

- (a) to ensure the adherence of Local Parties to the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000, these Articles and the Federal Constitution, and to their own respective constitutions;
- (b) to review any proposed new constitution for a Local Party or any proposed amendment to its existing constitution to ensure that they comply with the requirements of the Federal Constitution and these Articles;
- (c) to investigate the affairs of a Local Party if there is reason to believe that the Local Party is not adhering to the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000, these Articles or the Federal (or its own) Constitution or that events in connection with the affairs of the Local Party which are or may be seriously detrimental to the Party have taken place or are likely to take place or if the Regional Party is requested by the Local Party itself to carry out such an investigation;
- (d) to implement so far as may be thought fit any recommendations resulting from the investigation and for such purpose to act on behalf and in the name of any Local Party (or any organ thereof);
- (e) to suspend a Local Party if the Regional Party is satisfied that the Local Party is not adhering to these Articles or the Federal (or its own) Constitution or that events in connection with the affairs of the Local Party which are or may be seriously detrimental to the Party have taken place or are likely to take place if preventive action is not taken; and
- (f) to order that a specified Local Party officer vacate his or her post if it is satisfied that the officer concerned is not adhering to the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000, these Articles, the Federal Constitution or to their own respective constitution, or that by their actions, events are occurring or about to occur in connection with the affairs of the Local Party which are or may be seriously detrimental to the Party. The Regional Party may direct either that there is to be a by-election for that post, in which case the previous incumbent would be ineligible to stand and the Region must nominate a Returning Officer, or it may appoint a suitably qualified member of the Party (but not necessarily the Local Party) to the role. Such power shall not be exercised without the Local Party and the affected Local Party officer being informed of what is proposed and offered a reasonable opportunity to reply or to take corrective action.

4.7 For the purpose of any investigation under Article 4.6:

- (a) the Regional Party may appoint one or more persons to act as investigators, provided that at least one of such persons shall be a member of the Regional Executive Committee (who shall not take part in any subsequent proceedings of the Committee relating to action to be taken in consequence of the investigation) and none shall be a member of the Local Party concerned;
 - (b) the Regional Party shall have such access as it requires to the books and records of the Local Party concerned; and
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- (c) the Local Party concerned shall be informed of any allegations against it and given a reasonable opportunity to reply or to take corrective action.
- 4.8 There shall be a right of appeal to the English Appeals Panel against the suspension of a Local Party or the ordering of a Local Party Officer to vacate his or her post on the ground that the suspension was unreasonable. The suspension or order to vacate post shall take effect pending the appeal.
- 4.9 During the suspension of a Local Party, the Regional Party shall:
- (a) ensure, in consultation with local members, that a prospective candidate is in place for any parliamentary election, unless the Regional Party is satisfied that this is not appropriate for the time being;
 - (b) take such steps as may be appropriate, in consultation with local members, to organise the contesting of local authority elections;
 - (c) exercise the functions of the Local Party under Article 3;
 - (d) summon and supervise meetings of members to form a new Local Party or reconstitute the Local Party as soon as possible; and
 - (e) hold and manage the assets of the Local Party for the benefit of the members of the Local Party.
- 4.10 A Regional Party shall be financed by the share of subscription income to which it is entitled under Article 6 and any other funds which it raises for its own purposes.
- 4.11 A Regional Conference shall be held in each Region at least once in each year, subject to postponement in the event of conflict with a General Election.
- 4.12 The constitution of a Regional Party shall provide, in relation to their Regional Conference:
- (a) for the composition of the Conference to be representative;
 - (b) for representatives of Local Parties to be elected simultaneously with and by the same method as their representatives at the Federal Conference, and to be not less in number;
 - (c) for the election of representatives of the Specified Associated Organisations representing youth and/or students, on a basis comparable with that of the Federal Conference;
 - (d) for provision to be made for the representation of both sexes on the same basis as the Federal Conference;
 - (e) for the representation of members of Liberal Democrat Groups on principal local authorities in the Region;
 - (f) that all members in the Region who are not representatives shall be encouraged to attend as observers and, subject to a power for the Regional Conference Committee to impose restrictions, shall be entitled to speak;
 - (g) for the election by the representatives of a Chair, other Officers and members of the Executive of the Region, a Candidates Committee, which shall include persons who have contested a Parliamentary or European Parliamentary election on behalf of the Party within the previous ten years, and a Chair of the
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- Region's Candidates Committee (who shall be one of the Officers of the Region);
- (h) for the election of representatives of the Region on the English Council by the representatives; and
 - (i) for the Region to be represented on the English Council Executive by one of its Officers or Executive Committee members or by a person elected by the Regional Conference representatives (who must be a member of the English Council).
- 4.13 The Regional Conference shall determine the division of subscription income remitted by the Liberal Democrats in England (as determined under Article 6) between Local Parties and the Regional Party.
- 4.14 Each Regional Party shall adopt and may from time to time amend a constitution. Such constitution shall comply with the requirements of the Federal Constitution and these Articles.
- 4.15 The constitution of a Regional Party shall comply with the following rules:
- (a) the Party shall have an Executive Committee, of which the Chair of the Region shall be chair ex-officio;
 - (b) proper accounts and accounting records must be kept as required by the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000, and must be audited and delivered to the Election Commission as required by the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 and submitted with an independent report to the annual general meeting for approval;
 - (c) the Constitution may be amended only by the vote of at least two-thirds of those voting on a motion for amendment at a Regional Conference; and
 - (d) it must ensure compliance with the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000.
- 4.16 A Regional Executive Committee shall be responsible, subject to the authority of the Regional Conference, for directing, co-ordinating and implementing the work of the Regional Party. A Regional Executive Committee may express the initial views of the Regional Party on topical issues but such views shall not constitute the policy of the Regional Party.
- 4.17 A Regional Party may seek recognition as a State Party for the purposes of the Federal Constitution. Such process shall be treated as an alteration to the constitution of the Regional Party and to these Articles.
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ARTICLE 5: The English Council and the English Council Executive

- 5.1 The English Council (EC) shall consist of:
- (a) the Chair of each Regional Party and the Specified Associated Organisation representing youth and/or students in England; and
 - (b) members elected annually by each Region and by the Specified Associated Organisations representing youth and/or students in England on the basis of one member of the EC for each 500 members or part thereof of the relevant Region or Organisation.
- 5.2 Subject to the provision of these Articles and the Federal Constitution, the EC shall be the sovereign body of the Liberal Democrats in England.
- 5.3 The EC shall normally meet at least twice a year. One such meeting shall constitute the Annual General Meeting of the Liberal Democrats in England to which an annual report and the accounts of the Liberal Democrats in England shall be presented. Meetings may be summoned on the requisition of the English Council Executive, the Council itself or 30 members of the EC. A meeting may be cancelled by the English Council Executive in exceptional circumstances.
- 5.4 The EC shall elect its Chair annually from its members. The Chair shall be the English Vice-President of the Federal Party and the Liberal Democrats in England's representative on the Finance and Administration Committee of the Federal Executive. The Chair shall be eligible for re-election, save that the Chair shall not serve for more three terms in any five-year period.
- 5.5 The EC shall make standing orders for its proceedings.
- 5.6 There shall be an English Council Executive (ECE), which shall consist of:
- (a) the Chair of the EC, who shall be the Chair of the ECE;
 - (b) one representative of each Region and each Specified Associated Organisation representing youth and/or students in England to be elected or appointed by each Region or organisation in accordance with its constitution;
 - (c) members elected annually by and from the EC, the number of whom shall be equal to the number elected under (b) above;
 - (d) the Treasurer of the EC, who shall be appointed by the ECE (and need not be a member of the EC);
 - (e) the Chair of the English Candidates Committee elected by the EC (but who need not be a member of the EC);
 - (f) one representative of the staff employed by the Liberal Democrats in England elected from time to time by such staff (who shall be entitled to vote only on financial and administrative matters);
 - (g) not more than three further non-voting members as the ECE may co-opt on an annual basis.
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ARTICLE 6: Functions of the English Council and the English Council Executive

6.1 Subject to Article 6.2 (b), the functions of the EC shall be:

- (a) to co-ordinate the activities of the Regional Parties;
- (b) with the agreement of a Regional Party to exercise or provide for the exercise of any of the functions of that Regional Party;
- (c) to act as a mediator in disputes between Regional Parties or between a Local Party and a Regional Party;
- (d) to manage the finances of the Liberal Democrats in England and, as part of that function,
 - i) to negotiate financial arrangements with the Federal Party;
 - ii) to determine the amount of membership income to be remitted to the Regional Parties;
 - iii) to determine service fees to be paid to Local Parties for recruitment and collection of renewal subscriptions;
 - iv) to determine the level of grants to SAOs and other bodies in the Party to carry out work in England;
 - v) if thought fit, to borrow money for the purposes of the Liberal Democrats in England and give security for borrowings;
 - vi) if thought fit, to guarantee and give security for borrowings by any Regional or Local Party in England;
 - vii) to raise funds by such means as may be thought fit, but so that no funds may be raised in ways which may conflict with fund-raising by the Federal Party without consultation with the Federal Treasurer;
- (e) to elect the representatives of the Liberal Democrats in England to any committee or other body established by or under the Federal Constitution which includes such representatives or to any Joint State Committee;
- (f) to receive reports from the Federal Executive and any other such bodies as are appropriate;
- (g) to receive reports from the English Candidates Committee, which shall include any revisions to the rules for selection and adoption of candidates;
- (h) to discharge other functions of the EC or the Liberal Democrats in England under these Articles;
- (i) to do anything else which may enable the EC to discharge its functions more effectively.

6.2 The functions of the ECE shall be:

- (a) to organise meetings of the EC;
 - (b) subject to Article 6.3, to discharge the functions of the EC between meetings of the EC;
 - (c) to make proposals to the EC for the discharge of functions of the EC;
 - (d) to discharge any functions of the EC which the EC has directed or authorised the ECE to carry out;
 - (e) to keep proper accounts and accounting records of the Liberal Democrats in England in accordance with the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums
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Act 2000, to audit and deliver them to the Election Commission as required by the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Acts 2000 and to present them to the EC;

- (f) to be responsible for the employment of staff to carry out the functions of the EC and the ECE;
- (g) to report on its activities to each meeting of the EC.

6.3 The ECE shall not, without the express authority of the EC, at any time:

- (a) make a determination under Article 6.1 (d) (ii) or (iii);
- (b) elect representatives under Article 6.1 (e) except on an interim basis until the next meeting of the EC;
- (c) adopt membership rules under Article 2.12;
- (d) give any direction under Article 4.3;
- (e) express views on policy on behalf of the EC;
- (f) borrow or guarantee money in excess of a limit determined by the EC;
- (g) make standing orders for the EC;
- (h) exercise the powers of the EC under Article 6.4.

6.4 The ECE may, if it is satisfied that a Regional Party is not adhering to the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Acts 2000, these Articles or the Federal (or its own Constitution) or that events in connection with the affairs of the Regional Party which are or may be seriously detrimental to the Party have taken place or are likely to take place if the power under this Article is not exercised, direct that all the Officers and members of the Executive Committee of that Regional Party shall forthwith vacate office. This power may only be exercised by a two-thirds majority of those present and voting at a meeting of the EC on the proposal of the ECE. The ECE shall not make any such proposal without informing the Regional Party concerned that it is considering doing so and giving the Regional Party concerned a reasonable opportunity to reply or to take corrective action.

6.5 Where the EC exercises its power under Article 6.4:

- (a) the ECE shall forthwith convene a meeting of the Regional Conference of the Region concerned for the purpose of electing Officers and an Executive Committee;
 - (b) the ECE shall appoint a Returning Officer for such elections;
 - (c) subject to paragraph (b), such elections shall be conducted in accordance with the Constitution of the Regional Party;
 - (d) the Officers and members of the Executive Committee who have been directed to vacate office shall be eligible for re-election;
 - (e) the ECE shall exercise or provide for the exercise of the functions of the Regional Party pending the election of new Officers and Executive Committee members, and in particular shall hold and manage the assets of the Regional Party pending such elections.
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ARTICLE 7: Parliamentary Candidates

7.1 Each Regional Party shall have a Candidates Committee elected by the Regional Party by its internal procedures, which shall include persons who have contested a Parliamentary or European Parliamentary election on behalf of the Party within the previous ten years. Two or more Regional Parties may form a single Regional Candidates Committee.

7.2 There shall be an English Candidates Committee consisting of

- (a) the Chair, who shall be elected annually by the English Council;
- (b) the Chair of each Region's Candidates Committee;
- (c) five ordinary members, who shall be elected by and from the English Council;
- (d) the Chief Whip or one person appointed by the Chief Whip, being a Member of Parliament for a Constituency in England;
- (e) one person appointed by the Parliamentary Candidates Association.

The English Candidates Committee shall, subject to ratification by the English Council, make Standing Orders for the conduct of its business.

7.3 The English Candidates Committee and Regional Candidates Committees shall have the functions set out in Article 11.1 of the Federal Constitution, which they shall exercise under the co-ordination of the Joint States Candidates Committee established under Article 11.2 of the Federal Constitution.

7.4 The Chair of the English Candidates Committee shall be Liberal Democrats in England's representative on the Joint States Candidates Committee but he or she shall have the power to make a substitution if he or she cannot attend a particular meeting of the Joint States Candidates Committee.

7.5 There shall be separate Lists of Approved Candidates in England for Parliamentary and European Parliamentary elections. Applications for inclusion in the Lists shall normally be determined by English Candidates Committee but may be delegated by English Candidates Committee to Regions.

7.6 An applicant whose application is refused may request to be reassessed by the English Candidates Committee and may thereafter appeal to the Appeals Panel pursuant to Article 8, but such an appeal may only be on the grounds that the proper procedures have not been applied correctly and reasonably. On an appeal under Article 8 the reasonable and proper exercise of discretion within the powers of the English Candidates Committee shall not be open to review.

7.7 The English Candidates Committee or a Regional Candidates Committee may remove any person from a List on any of the grounds specified in Article 11 of the Federal Constitution subject to the appeal procedure set out in Article 7.6.

7.8 No person shall be removed from a List without being notified of the grounds upon which the Committee is considering such removal and being given:

(a) a reasonable time within which to reply and make representations in writing;
and

(b) a right upon request to a personal hearing before the Committee;

and such person may thereafter appeal to the Appeals Panel pursuant to Article 8.

- 7.9 There shall be rules for the selection and adoption of prospective Parliamentary and European Parliamentary candidates, candidates for directly elected mayors and candidates for election to other directly elected public posts where the electorate comprises more than a single parliamentary constituency which shall be made and may from time to time be varied by the English Candidates Committee, subject to ratification by the English Council.
- 7.10 If, after the selection of a prospective parliamentary candidate, boundary changes substantially affecting the related constituency come into force, a new selection shall be held if the Regional Candidates Committee so directs.
- 7.11 Each Regional Party shall be responsible for ensuring the selection of candidates for elections to the European Parliament from constituencies within its area. If a European Parliamentary constituency covers more than one Region, the Regional Parties concerned shall agree appropriate arrangements to co-ordinate candidate selection, campaigning and publicity.
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ARTICLE 8: Councillors and Recognised Council Groups

8.1 Each Regional Party shall be responsible for the recognition of Council Groups subject to the provisions of this Article and according to its own internal procedures. A Regional Party may resolve, through its own internal procedures that this Article, or specific sections of it, shall not apply to any parish or town council or shall apply only to designated ones.

8.2 A Council Group of an authority;

- (a) wholly comprising members of the Liberal Democrats who are elected to the authority after having been sanctioned as Liberal Democrat candidates by a Delegated Nominating Officer and properly approved as such under Article 3 or admitted to membership in accordance with 8.13, and
- (b) operating according to written Standing Orders which are in conformity with the constitutions of the Liberal Democrats, and which include the requirement that all group offices shall be filled by open and democratic election by the members of the group,

shall be deemed to be recognised by the relevant Regional Party subject to the provisions of clause 8.12 below. The Regional Party shall maintain a register of such groups and satisfy itself as soon as practicable and in any event no later than 31st July of each year, that each group appearing on the register continues to conform to the definition in this clause.

8.3 Where a Council Group has been recognised under clause 8.2 above, but it becomes apparent to the Regional Party that it no longer meets the relevant definition and has not done so for a period of ten weeks, then the procedure in clause 8.4 below shall be followed.

8.4 Where it appears to a Regional Party that there is a Council Group that fails to meet the definition in clause 8.2 above but which contains one or more members of the Liberal Democrats, the following procedure shall be engaged. The Regional Party, by its internal procedures, shall ascertain the nature of the membership and administration of the relevant Council Group and shall recognise the Council Group if, in the light of those matters and all the circumstances, the Regional Party considers that the Liberal Democrats would not be brought into disrepute thereby. A Region recognising such a group may prohibit it from using solely, as its title, any one or more of the Party's registered names. The position of any Council Group recognised under this clause shall be reviewed by the Region no later than 31st July of each year. The Regional Party shall maintain a register of its decisions made under this clause.

8.5 Any Local Party covered by an authority or any Liberal Democrat member of an authority aggrieved by a decision of the Regional Party to recognise or not to recognise a Council Group (or the failure to reach a decision in respect of a Council Group comprising one or more members of the Liberal Democrats) may refer the matter to the English Appeals Panel for a decision on recognition. The English

Appeals Panel shall adopt the same test for recognition as that to be applied by a Regional Party under this Article.

- 8.6 The Regional Party shall maintain up-to-date copies of the Standing Orders of all recognised Council Groups which fall within its geographical area. The Regional Party, by its internal procedures, shall ensure that those Standing Orders,
- (a) are fair and democratic,
 - (b) include a mechanism whereby significant disputes which are likely to bring the Liberal Democrats into disrepute if they remain unresolved can be resolved either by the Regional Party or by its appointed delegated body in the first instance.
- 8.7 The English State Party or the relevant Regional Party may decide, by its internal procedures, to de-recognise a formerly recognised Council Group if;
- (a) There is persistent or serious non-adherence on the part of the Council Group either to the Liberal Democrat Federal Party Constitution, the constitution of the Liberal Democrats in England, or its own Standing Orders, or
 - (b) By the actions of the Council Group, events are occurring or about to occur in connection with the affairs of the Council Group which are, or may be, seriously detrimental to the Liberal Democrats.

Such power shall not be exercised without the Council Group being informed of what is proposed and offered a reasonable opportunity to reply or take corrective action. Any member of the Council Group concerned or any Local Party covered by the authority concerned may appeal to the English Appeals Panel against a decision to de-recognise.

- 8.8 Where a member of the Liberal Democrats suspects that matters are occurring that might justify the de-recognition of a Council Group under clause 8.7 above, that member shall report the matter to the relevant Regional Party. The Regional Party, through its own internal procedures, may then take the following action:
- (a) Appoint an investigator, who shall be impartial and neither a member of the authority concerned nor any Local Party within the area covered by the authority, to ascertain the circumstances, take statements from all relevant people, and make out a report to the Regional Party on whether there are grounds for de-recognising the Council Group concerned; and/or
 - (b) Where there appears to be conflict between members of the Council Group or between Liberal Democrat Party members on the authority, appoint a conciliator, who shall be impartial and neither a member of the authority concerned nor any Local Party within the area covered by the authority, to seek to mediate and resolve the conflict and/or,
 - (c) Consider whether to de-recognise the Council Group in accordance with clause 8.7 above.
- 8.9 Where a Council Group is de-recognised under 8.7 above and the relevant Regional Party, by its internal procedures, concludes that the actions of the Council Group have
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brought the Party into disrepute, then it may specify a time period after which the membership revocation procedure may be initiated against any member of the Liberal Democrats who remains a member of the de-recognised Council Group, in accordance with the procedure in the Membership Rules. For the purposes of the membership revocation procedure, there shall be a rebuttable presumption that the member concerned has brought the Party into disrepute.

- 8.10 Where a Liberal Democrat Party member joins a Council Group that exists in opposition to a recognised Liberal Democrat Council Group, or a Council Group that has been refused recognition under this Article or serves on an authority without being a member of a recognised Liberal Democrat Council Group where one exists, then the Regional Party or the English State Party shall have the power, through its own internal procedures, to set a time period after which the individual concerned shall be liable to the membership revocation procedure in accordance with the Membership Rules. For the purposes of that procedure, there shall be a rebuttable presumption that the individual concerned has brought the Party into disrepute. The power to set a time limit shall not be exercised without the member concerned being informed of what is proposed and offered a reasonable opportunity to reply.
- 8.11 Where it appears that there is or has been a conflict within a recognised Council Group as a result of which one or more members of that Council Group have resigned membership of the Group, whether or not they have formed another Council Group, then the relevant Regional Party or the English State Party may take the following action:
- (a) Appoint an investigator in accordance with clause 8.8(a) above, and/or,
 - (b) Appoint a conciliator in accordance with clause 8.8(b) above, and/or,
 - (c) Consider whether the recognised Council Group ought to continue to enjoy recognition subject to clause 8.7 above, and/or
 - (d) Consider whether any Council Group formed as a consequence of the dispute meets the definition in clause 8.2 above or ought to be recognised under 8.4 above.
- 8.12 In the event that there are two or more Council Groups of an authority which appear to meet the definition in clause 8.2 above, or which may justify recognition under clause 8.4 above, then the relevant Regional Party or the English State Party, shall have a discretion to recognise one of those Council Groups and not any of the others or, where there are exceptional circumstances, any or all of them. This power shall not be exercised without an investigator having been appointed in accordance with clause 8.8(a) above.
- 8.13 Any member of an authority who joins or seeks to join a recognised Council Group without having been elected with the sanction of a Liberal Democrat Delegated Nominating Officer shall subject themselves to the approval procedure established under Article 3 either before their admission to the relevant Council Group or within a period of ten weeks after it. Should they fail to be approved within that time period, then the relevant Regional Party or the English State Party may take the following action:
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- (a) Require the individual to undertake training, or
- (b) Direct that the individual concerned is not eligible to be a member of the Council Group concerned and set a time period during which their membership of the Council Group must cease. If that membership is continued beyond the end of that time period, it shall amount to a breach of the Constitution and action may be taken under clause 8.7 above.

8.14 All recognised Council Groups shall, where practicable and reasonable,

- (a) Provide regular oral or written reports to those Local Parties and Regions covered by the authority concerned as appropriate and work to support their activities,
 - (b) Work to support the activities of any Liberal Democrat Member of Parliament or selected Parliamentary Candidate, Member of the European Parliament or selected European Parliamentary Candidate(s) or any other recognised Council Group on a different authority covering the same or a similar geographical area, through liaison, co-ordination and the exchange of information.
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ARTICLE 9: Resolution of Conflicts

- 9.1 There shall be an Appeals Panel for England, which shall consist of:
- (a) the current members of the Federal Appeals Panel elected by the English Council under Article 14.1 of the Federal Constitution, one of whom shall be designated as the Chair of the Appeals Panel for England by the English Council; and
 - (b) one person appointed by each Regional Party according to its internal procedures.
- 9.2 Each member of the Panel shall hold office for five years, and shall be eligible for re-appointment: provided that no person shall be entitled to hold office for more than ten years in aggregate. No person shall be eligible for appointment if (and any member shall forthwith vacate office upon becoming) an MP, MEP or prospective parliamentary candidate or a member of the English Council Executive or the English Candidates Committee or an employee of the Party. The body making the original appointment may terminate the appointment because the appointee is no longer able to carry out his or her duties as a member of the Panel on account of ill health or for other good cause. Any casual vacancy on the Panel may be filled by the body making the original appointment for the residue of the term of that appointment.
- 9.3 The Appeals Panel for England shall adjudicate on:
- (a) any dispute over the interpretation of these Articles;
 - (b) any claim that the rights under these Articles of a member or of a Party body have been infringed, provided that no appeal may be brought under this paragraph where there is another appropriate appeal procedure;
 - (c) any dispute between the Liberal Democrats in England and a Regional or Local Party, or between Regional Parties or between Local Parties in different Regions; and
 - (d) any matter expressly so provided by these Articles or by rules made hereunder.
- 9.4 The members of the Panel to hear a particular case shall be selected by the Chair, who shall if appropriate consult with the applicant, subject to the following provisos:
- (a) the Chair alone may determine any dispute over the interpretation of these Articles (other than a dispute over the respective powers of the Liberal Democrats in England and a Regional Party);
 - (b) the Chair shall select a chair for each Panel, who shall (other than in exceptional circumstances) be one of those holding office under Article 8.1(a);
 - (c) at least three members (at least one of whom shall be a man and at least one a woman) shall hear any other case;
 - (d) the members hearing a dispute under Article 7 shall if practicable include a former parliamentary or European parliamentary candidate; and
 - (e) no member shall be from the same Region as the appellant or have any direct knowledge of the matters in dispute.
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9.5 The Panel may make and publish rules for its own procedures, which shall include:

- (a) the initial processing of an appeal, including:
 - (i) a power to the Chair to determine whether or not an appeal is valid;
 - (ii) a power to the Chair to order a mediation process:
 - (iii) an indicative timetable, and a power to the Chair to impose deadlines (and so that any appeal must, unless the Chair extends this deadline in exceptional circumstances, be concluded within three months of being lodged, and may be dismissed if the appellant does not co-operate with the related timetable); and
 - (iv) an obligation on the EAP to identify the parties to an appeal hearing, and to notify all of them sufficiently in advance to enable them to submit documentary evidence and provide witnesses; and
- (b) the conduct of an appeal.

9.6 Any decision of the Panel shall, subject to any right of appeal under the Federal Constitution, be final and binding on all concerned. The Panel shall publish any decisions which, in the opinion of the Chair, are likely to be of value as a precedent.

English Council Standing Orders

1. Meetings

1.1 The Council shall hold two Ordinary Meetings a year. One meeting, the Annual General Meeting of the Party in England, shall be held in October or November. Both shall be held at a date and place agreed by the Council.

1.2 A Special Meeting of the Council shall be held if the Council or the Executive so decides or if requested by any 30 members of the Council.

1.3 A meeting may be cancelled by the Executive in exceptional circumstances.

2. Agendas, Motions and Amendments

2.1 The Agenda of every Ordinary Meeting shall include:

- (a) a report by the Chair on the activities of the Executive and of the Party in England's representatives on the Federal Executive and other Federal and Joint State Committees since the last Ordinary Meeting
- (b) any Motions duly submitted on matters falling within the functions of the Council

2.2 The Agenda of the Annual General Meeting shall also include:

- (a) a financial report by the Treasurer and the presentation of the audited accounts of the Party in England for the preceding year
- (b) the appointment of the auditors
- (c) the presentation of a budget for the following year
- (d) the determination of the amount of membership income to be remitted to the Regional Parties
- (e) the determination of service fees to be paid to Local Parties for recruitment and collection of renewal subscriptions

2.3 The Agenda for a Special Meeting of the Council shall be limited to the business specified in the resolution or request convening the meeting.

2.4 Motions (including Constitutional Amendments) and amendments may be submitted to the Council by the Executive, the English Candidates Committee, any Local Party, any Region, or any 3 Council members.

2.5 Motions shall be submitted not later than 6 weeks before the meeting but Constitutional Amendments shall be submitted not later than 9 weeks before the meeting.

2.6 Amendments, Motions on matters arising since the Deadline in 2.5 and Motions on matters arising from Reports circulated with the Preliminary Agenda shall be submitted not later than 3 weeks before the meeting.

2.7 Emergency Motions shall be submitted not later than 24 hours before the meeting. They must relate to a specific recent development which occurred after the deadline in 2.6, and they must be brief.

2.8 The Executive may composite similar motions or amendments and may treat any severable part of a motion or amendment as a separate motion or amendment. They shall exercise these powers only after consultation with a representative of the movers of the motion/amendment.

2.9 If time does not permit the debate of all motions/amendments, the Executive shall determine an order of priority for allocating time.

3. Notices

3.1 A calling notice with the minutes of the preceding meeting shall be circulated not less than 12 weeks before the meeting, informing members of its date, venue and deadline.

3.2 A Preliminary Agenda and any motions submitted shall be sent to all Council members and Regions not less than 5 weeks before the meeting.

3.3 A Final Agenda with written reports and all motions and amendments shall be sent to all Council members and all Regions not less than 2 weeks before the meeting.

4. Membership and attendance at Council Meetings

4.1 Membership of the Council shall be determined in accordance with Article 5.1 of the Constitution according to membership of the Party as at the preceding 30th September.

4.2 Subject to the availability of space, any member of the Party in England may attend any meeting of the Council and, at the discretion of the Chair, speak. Where the Council meets at a Federal Conference, details of its meeting and of this provision shall be published in the Final Agenda of the Federal Conference.

5. Amendments to the Constitution

5.1 Before any amendment to the Constitution, or any proposal that the Party in England agrees to an alteration to the relative powers and functions of the Federal Party and the State Parties, is debated it must have been notified to all Local and Regional Parties at least 8 weeks in advance and it shall only take effect if adopted by at least a two-thirds majority of those present and voting at a meeting of the Council.

6. Suspension of Standing Orders

6.1 A motion to suspend standing orders shall be debated forthwith if five members of the Council rise from their seats and so request. One speech supporting the suspension and one against shall be taken before a vote which will require only a simple majority of those present and voting to suspend standing orders for the duration of that item of business only.

7. Amendments of Standing Orders

7.1 These Standing Orders may be amended by a two-thirds majority at any meeting of the Council, but no such amendments shall come into force until immediately after the meeting at which it was passed.

8. Elections

8.1 The elections of the Chair, members of the Executive elected by and from the Council and the representatives of the Party in England to any committee or other body established by or under the Federal Constitution including any Joint State Committee, shall take place annually in the autumn. The persons thus elected shall hold office from 1st January after election for the ensuing calendar year. The Party in England's representatives on G8 shall be elected annually in the mailings for the summer meeting of the Council. The persons thus elected shall hold office from the date of their election until the election of their successors.

8.2 The Committee Election Regulations made by the Federal Executive and approved by the Federal Conference shall apply to such elections save that the Returning Officer shall be the Chair of the Appeals Panel for England. Nominations for election may be submitted by any Local Party, any Regional Party, or any two Council members. The Returning Officer shall draw up and publish the timetable for the elections. The timetable for the autumn elections shall follow as closely as possible the timetable for the Federal Committee elections.

9. Youth and Student SAO

9.1 Where these Standing Orders refer to a Region, they include the Specified Associated Organisation representing Youth and Students in England, which Organisation shall be treated for all purposes under these Standing Orders as if it were a Region.

10. Interpretation

10.1 Subject to the Constitution, the Executive shall be responsible for organising meetings of the Council, and they may give directions on any matter on which the Constitution and these Standing Orders are silent. During meetings of the Council, such discretion shall be vested in the Chair.

11. Council membership list

11.1 The English Council shall publish, electronically, a list of all members of the Council with contact details, but this list shall not include the details of any member who has asked for their details to be omitted.

Membership Rules

(as revised by English Council, 21 June 2008)

1 Recruitment, Registration and Acceptance

- 1.1 All members of the Party are encouraged to recruit new members. Upon receipt of an individual's subscription of not less than the minimum, for which a receipt shall be issued, the individual's application shall be sent by the enrolling body without delay to Membership Services for registration.
- 1.2 New membership applicants shall be advised that their application is subject to acceptance by their Local Party. All applicants shall be registered and lists of new members shall be sent to Local Parties as regularly as possible and not less than every two months.
- 1.3 (i) New membership applicants shall give an address ("Registered Membership Address") which shall be the address where the applicant lives, works or studies. For this purpose:
- (a) "Lives" means is ordinarily resident;
 - (b) "Works" shall be defined in the same terms as for qualification for nomination as a candidate for a principal local authority election; and
 - (c) "Studies" means either the student's term time residential address as defined in Rule 1.3(i)(a) or the address of the Institution where the student studies.
- (ii) Subject to registration and approval the applicant shall become a member of the Local Party covering this Registered Membership Address.
- 1.4 A member with an overseas address may maintain membership of a UK Local Party as long as that member qualifies to register as an overseas elector for that area and is on the electoral roll.
- 1.5 A member who wishes to be a member of a Local Party other than that covering the Registered Membership Address may do so:
- (a) by completing the Prescribed Form available from Membership Services; and
 - (b) with the consent of the Executives of the proposed transferee Local Party and of the Regional Party.

If such consent is not granted, the process of refusal must be initiated within six weeks of notification of registration and must be completed within 14 weeks of initiation, and the procedure set out in Rules 6.3(ii) to 6.3(viii) shall be followed. If the process is not initiated or completed within these periods, the Local and Regional Parties shall be deemed to have consented and the member shall be a member of that Local Party. If there is any dispute about any such request Membership Services shall be able to request the minutes of the relevant Executive meeting as well as the Prescribed Form.

- 1.6 Where a person whose membership has previously been revoked or refused applies to join the Party again, his/her membership cannot be registered until this has been expressly agreed by resolution of the Executive Committee of the Local Party and by the Regional Party (acting by its Executive Committee unless its Constitution provides otherwise). Accordingly, if any application for membership is received from a person whose membership has previously been revoked or refused, the Membership Secretary shall immediately inform the Regional Party and Membership Services.
- 1.7 Local Parties may initiate refusal of membership in accordance with the Constitution of the Liberal Democrats in England (Article 2.5) within 6 weeks of receipt of the notification of registration. After that period, if membership is not refused the applicant shall be deemed to have been accepted and shall be a member of that Local Party.
- 1.8 Until membership has been registered the applicant shall not be a member of the Party and able to participate in the functions of membership, including voting in internal Federal, State and Regional elections. In internal Local Party elections all registered members must be accepted before they may participate.

2 Re-registration of Membership

- 2.1 A member who changes Registered Membership Address shall automatically be re-registered as a member of the Local Party covering the new Registered Membership Address, unless the member requests on the Prescribed Form to retain membership of the old Local Party in which case Rule 2.3 shall apply.
- 2.2 Subject to Rule 2.3, a member may re-register from one Local Party to another by applying to Membership Services on the Prescribed Form; but a member who is an MP, MEP, prospective Westminster or European parliamentary candidate or member of a local authority may re-register as of right in a relevant Local Party. However no person may simultaneously be a member of more than one Local Party.
- 2.3 A transferring member must, in relation to the transferee Local Party, satisfy one of the criteria listed in Rule 1.3(i). Rule 1.5 shall apply to any such transfer.

3 Issue of Membership Cards

- 3.1 Members shall receive a party membership card from Membership Services within five weeks of when the appropriate part of their subscription is received by Membership Services and their membership registered.
- 3.2 (i) Members who are recruited by the Youth and Student SAO shall receive a party membership card and also become members of that SAO. Their names shall also be included as members of the Local Party in whose area they live or study.
- (ii) Such members shall not vote in internal Local Party elections for Federal and Regional Conference representatives if they vote for these representatives through their SAO.
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- (iii) The Youth and Student SAO shall receive a service fee of a percentage of the subscription paid as agreed with the English Council on the recruitment and/or renewal of these members. The minimum subscription of the Party shall be as specified by resolution of Federal Conference or English Council.

4 Start Date for Membership and Dates for Renewal

- 4.1 Membership shall commence for new members on the date of receipt of the subscription and application by the enrolling body or Membership Services, whichever is the earlier, subject to acceptance by their Local Party.
- 4.2 Membership will be due for renewal:
 - (a) for new members on the quarter day (March 31, June 30, September 30 or December 31) one year after the quarter day immediately following the date of their first joining;
 - (b) for renewing members of the Party, annually on their quarter day.
- 4.3 Membership for lapsed members who rejoin shall commence on the date of receipt of their subscription and application by the enrolling body or Membership Services, whichever is the earlier.

5 Renewals and Lapsing of Membership

- 5.1 Members shall be sent renewal reminders by Membership Services not later than the end of the month before their subscriptions fall due. At least two reminders shall be sent and the Local Party shall be notified of non-renewers.
- 5.2 Resignations shall not be acted upon unless received in writing by Membership Services from the member resigning.
- 5.3 Members who do not renew their subscriptions shall retain their rights (other than their voting rights, to which Rule 7 shall apply) as members for three months beyond their renewal date after which time, if no subscription has been received, their membership rights shall be deemed to have lapsed.

6 Membership Admission and Refusal

- 6.1 All Local Parties shall operate a system agreed by the Local Party Executive Committee for the approval of prospective new members of the Party in the event that the Executive Committee is unable to meet within a reasonable time to do so. That system shall involve no fewer than three officers of the Local Party.
 - 6.2 The Local Party, either through that procedure or by resolution of its Executive Committee may only refuse membership of the Party on one or more of the grounds listed in Article 2.5 of the Constitution of the Liberal Democrats in England. If the membership of any individual is so refused, then the Local Party concerned shall
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cause the reasons for so refusing membership to be reduced to writing. The individual concerned shall be informed and provided with those reasons within two weeks of the decision being taken.

- 6.3 A meeting of the Local Party Executive Committee shall be convened within five weeks of the decision being taken to consider the issue. The individual concerned shall be notified of the meeting, their right to be represented, their right to speak and their right of appeal.
- 6.4 The Local Party Executive meeting shall be conducted as per the provisions of 7.9 (vi) below with appropriate modifications. At its conclusion, the members of the Executive Committee shall vote by secret ballot on whether the individual concerned should become a member of the Party or not.
- 6.5 A person who is refused membership has the right of appeal to the Appeals Panel for England. If no such appeal is received in writing by the Secretary of the Local Party concerned, the Region, the Liberal Democrats in England or the Appeals Panel within one calendar month from the date of the meeting when refusal was decided, then that appeal right shall cease.

7 Disciplinary Procedure

- 7.1 Where there is a suspicion that any of the grounds set out in the Constitution of the Federal Party or the Constitution of the Liberal Democrats in England for the revocation of membership are made out, the following Disciplinary Procedure shall be applied.
- 7.2 For the purposes of this Disciplinary Procedure, there shall be a rebuttable presumption that a person has brought the Party into disrepute when;
- (i) they have been convicted of an offence of dishonesty, violence or a sexual offence of any description, that is not spent under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974,
 - (ii) they have acted in breach of any Postal Vote Code of Conduct agreed by the Liberal Democrats with the Electoral Commission or any other external body
 - (iii) they have acted in a manner that would have brought the Party into disrepute were it to be known about outside the Party but which did not become known either by chance or by agreement with the member concerned.
- 7.3 The Disciplinary Procedure may be initiated by any of the following Party bodies, either on receipt of a valid complaint about a Party member from a complainant, or of its own motion:
- (i) the relevant Local Party,
 - (ii) the relevant Regional Party,
 - (iii) the Youth and Student S.A.O. (where the individual is a member of the Party through that S.A.O.),
 - (iv) the English Party.
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- 7.4 Before the procedure can be initiated, the following matters shall be reduced to writing either by the complainant or, where the Party body is acting of its own motion, by an appropriate member of that body:
- (i) the grounds for commencing the procedure (which must be one or more of those set out in the Constitution of the Liberal Democrats in England at Articles 2.6),
 - (ii) details of why the ground(s) cited is or are made out,
 - (iii) a summary of the facts giving rise to the complaint,
 - (iv) details of persons who can substantiate the complaint,
 - (v) details of the remedy that is sought (which must be either membership revocation or any of the sanctions prescribed below).

The resulting document shall be forwarded to the individual being complained against, copied to Membership Services and, where the Party body undertaking the procedure is a Local Party, to the relevant Regional Party. The individual being complained against shall also be provided with a copy of the Disciplinary Procedure (section 7 of the Membership Rules).

- 7.5 During the course of the Disciplinary Procedure, the person being complained against may be suspended from membership of the Party in accordance with Article 2.8 of the Constitution of the Liberal Democrats in England. Such suspension may not last for in excess of the full period provided in these Rules for the procedure to be completed. If the procedure is not completed within that time, then the suspension shall automatically cease unless an extension of time is granted by the English Appeals Panel in accordance with its procedures. The person being complained against shall be notified of the suspension and the reasons for it. Such notification shall be copied to Membership Services and, where the Party body undertaking the procedure is a Local Party, to the relevant Regional Party.

- 7.6 The relevant Party body may appoint an investigator to investigate the complaint in accordance with its internal procedures. That investigator must be independent and must not be a member of the same Local Party as the person being complained against,
- (i) The investigator shall be responsible for gathering written statements from all of those who are able to substantiate or undermine the complaint,
 - (ii) The investigator shall also be responsible for seeking to conciliate between the parties where possible and appropriate,
 - (iii) The investigator shall then evaluate the strength of the evidence in support of the complaint,
 - (iv) Within four weeks of their appointment, the investigator shall send a report to the Chair of the Party body pursuing the Disciplinary Procedure.
 - (v) That report shall either comprise a charge or list of charges against the individual concerned, together with a list of persons who can substantiate them and a copy of all of the written statements gathered during the course of the investigation, or it shall indicate that, in the view of the investigator, there is insufficient evidence to proceed.
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- (vi) Where the investigator reports that there is sufficient evidence to proceed, s/he shall be responsible for presenting the complaint at any subsequent Disciplinary Meeting and for ensuring the attendance of all witnesses who can substantiate it. Except as provided for in this paragraph and in 7.9, the investigator shall play no further part in the procedure.
- 7.7 Should no investigator be appointed, the Party body concerned may proceed with the procedure in any event and an officer of the body concerned shall formulate the charge and act in the role of investigator for the purposes of the Disciplinary Procedure.
- 7.8 When the grounds cited in the charge include those specified under Article 2.6 (c) or (d), and the particulars are that the member concerned has stood against a candidate of the Party in any election to public office, has publicly declared his or her support for another political party of Great Britain in the public media, or whilst holding public office, has joined the group of another political party, the Disciplinary Procedure may proceed as follows:
- (i) the individual concerned shall be notified that membership revocation is being considered and shall be provided with a copy of the original complaint, the charge, and copies of any written statements obtained. The individual shall also be informed that, in order to avoid automatic revocation, s/he must provide written reasons why their membership should not be revoked within seven days of the receipt of the notice. The papers shall be copied to Membership Services and, where the procedure is being conducted by a Local Party, to the relevant Regional Party,
 - (ii) if an objection to membership revocation is received by the Party body concerned within the time limit, then the procedure shall continue as set out in 7.9 below,
 - (iii) if no objection to membership revocation is received, then after the expiry of the time limit, and following the agreement of the Party body concerned arrived at through its internal procedures, the membership of that individual shall be deemed to have been revoked. The individual concerned and Membership Services shall be advised accordingly.
- 7.9 When the grounds cited in the charge are those specified under Article 2.6 (a), (b) or (d), the Disciplinary Procedure may proceed as follows:
- (i) A date shall be set for a Disciplinary Hearing which shall be not more than fourteen weeks from the receipt of the original complaint or original decision of the Party body concerned to proceed of its own motion, unless the Appeals Panel for England grants an extension of time in accordance with its procedures. Should the time expire, then no further action may be taken,
 - (ii) The Disciplinary Meeting shall be a meeting of the Local Party Executive, where the procedure is being conducted by a Local Party, the relevant Regional Executive or Regional Local Parties Committee (or other body prescribed by the constitution of the Region concerned providing that it consists of at least five people none of whom have a conflict of interest) where the procedure is being conducted by a Region, or the English Finance and Administration Committee, where the procedure is being conducted by the English State Party,
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- (iii) The original complaint, the charge, copies of any written statements obtained and details of the Disciplinary Meeting shall be provided to the person being complained against and to all members of the Disciplinary Meeting not later than four weeks before the date of that meeting. The person being complained against shall also be informed of their right to representation, right to speak, and right of appeal. The papers shall be copied to Membership Services and, where the procedure is being conducted by a Local Party, to the relevant Regional Party,
- (iv) No substantial evidence of which the person being complained against has not been given notice shall be introduced at the meeting unless it be by agreement,
- (v) The meeting may proceed notwithstanding the absence of the person being complained against providing that the requisite notice of the meeting and the required information under these Rules has been given,
- (vi) The meeting shall be conducted as follows:
 - (a) The charge shall be introduced by the investigator,
 - (b) The investigator shall then ask each witness to give their account following which the person being complained against, or their representative, may ask questions along with members of the Disciplinary Meeting,
 - (c) The person being complained against may then give their account and be asked questions by the investigator and/or members of the Disciplinary Meeting,
 - (d) The person being complained against may then call any witness that they wish. The witnesses may be questioned by the investigator and/or members of the Disciplinary Meeting,
 - (e) The investigator and person being complained against may then make any closing statement that they wish,
 - (f) The person being complained against shall leave the room and the members of the Disciplinary Meeting shall discuss the matter,
 - (g) At no stage of the meeting shall there shall be any comment made that is not relevant to the charges in issue,
 - (h) The members of the meeting shall then, by secret ballot, vote on whether the charges have been made out beyond a reasonable doubt. Each charge shall be voted upon separately,
 - (i) The individual concerned and Membership Services shall be informed of the outcome of the meeting.

7.10 In the event that any of the charges are made out, the Disciplinary Meeting may impose any one or more of the following sanctions,

- (i) Revoke the membership of the individual concerned,
 - (ii) Barring the individual concerned from holding or standing for election to any specified Party office or role either permanently, for a specified period, or until satisfactory training has been undertaken by the individual concerned,
 - (iii) Barring the individual concerned from holding or seeking to be elected to any or any specified public office on behalf of the Party either permanently, for a specified period, or until satisfactory training has been undertaken by the individual concerned,
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- (iv) Barring the individual concerned from having access to data from Membership Services either permanently, for a specified period, or until satisfactory training has been undertaken by the individual concerned,
- (v) Reprimanding the individual concerned.

The individual concerned, and Membership Services, shall be advised accordingly.

- 7.11 A person who is made subject to any of the sanctions above has the right of appeal to the Appeals Panel for England. If no such appeal is received in writing by the Secretary of the Local Party concerned, the Region, the Liberal Democrats in England or the Appeals Panel within one calendar month from the date of the meeting when refusal was decided, then that appeal right shall cease.

8 Record-Keeping

- 8.1 All members of the Party in England shall be under a duty to inform Membership Services upon conviction of any offence which might lead to action being taken under the Disciplinary Procedure. Any doubt should be resolved in favour of disclosure.
- 8.2 There shall be a record retained in Membership Services, as far as is practicable, of all disciplinary decisions under the Disciplinary Procedure

9 Rights of Members to Participate in Local Party Elections

- 9.1 For all Local Party elections, including Parliamentary and local government candidate selection and General Meetings, the Executive Committee shall determine and agree the date for the closure of nominations before which members not both registered and accepted by the Local Party, and qualifying in accordance with Rule 9.2, shall not be eligible to participate in the elections; provided that, in the event of any conflict, Rules for the Selection of Parliamentary Candidates duly made by the English Party shall prevail.
- 9.2 Members joining after 26 November 2005 shall only be eligible to vote in any such election if their membership is in at least its second continuous year, they have paid their membership renewal and have reached the age of at least 10 years. Eligible Members whose subscriptions are no more than three months overdue shall be entitled to attend the meetings specified in Rule 9.1 but shall only be eligible to vote if they pay their overdue subscription.

10 Changes to these Rules

- 10.1 These Rules have been agreed by the English Council under Article 2 of the Constitution of the Liberal Democrats in England. The English Council may amend these Rules by a simple majority of those present and voting at any Council Meeting.
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11 General

- 11.1 Where these Rules provide for anything to be done in writing then, except where these Rules require a prescribed form to be used, it may also be done by e-mail.

Model Constitution for Local Parties

CONSTITUTION OF THE (...) LIBERAL DEMOCRATS

1. Name and Area

- 1.1 The name of the body governed by this Constitution shall be “The (...) Liberal Democrats”.
- 1.2 The area of the Local Party shall be the (...) Parliamentary Constituency(ies).

2. Definitions

- 2.1 In this Constitution:

“the Local Party” means the (...) Liberal Democrats;
“the Party Constitution” means the Constitutions of the Federal Party and of the Liberal Democrats in England;
“the Party” means the Liberal Democrats;
“the Regional Party” means the (...) Region Liberal Democrats;
“the Constituency/(ies)” means the Parliamentary Constituency/(ies) of (...);
“Conference Representatives” means members of the Local Party elected to be its representatives at Federal and/or Regional Conferences;
“Party’s Youth and Student Organisation” means the Specified Associated Organisation representing youth and students;
“Majority” at any meeting means majority of those present and voting; and
“Executive Committee” means the executive committee of the Local Party.

3. Objects

- 3.1 The objects of the Local Party shall be:
 - (a) be the successor within its area to the (...) Liberal Association and to the (...) SDP Area Party; and
 - (b) to promote and support the values and objects of the Party in the Constituency and in particular through its members:
 - (i) to secure the election of Liberal Democrats as Members of Parliament, UK Members of the European Parliament, members of regional, local and other elected public authorities and other public office;
 - (ii) to admit and actively recruit new members to the Party, and encourage existing members to renew their membership;
 - (iii) to participate in the formulation of the policy of the Party;
 - (iv) to be recognised as a Local Party; to play a full role in the democratic processes of the Party; and to send representatives, in accordance with the constitutions of the bodies concerned, to Party bodies;
 - (v) to play a full part in the campaigning activities of the Party at all levels;

- (vi) to campaign and work with local people to achieve the objectives set out in the Preamble to the Party Constitution;
- (vii) to help all local people, without regard to party or any other factor, to secure their rights and to protect them against oppression; and
- (viii) to promote diversity of cultures within the Party and to represent the interests of under-represented groups in the locality.

4. Membership

- 4.1 The Local Party shall administer membership in accordance with the Membership Rules of the Liberal Democrats in England.
- 4.2 All persons shall be eligible to join the Local Party if they agree with the fundamental values and objectives of the Party; and
- (a) they live, work or study within the area of the Local Party, or
 - (b) if not eligible under Section 4.2 (a) they acquire membership with the consent of the Local Party Executive Committee, or
 - (c) they are an MP, MEP, prospective Westminster or European parliamentary candidate or member of a local authority for a seat wholly or partly within the area of the Local Party.
- 4.3 Eligible persons shall become members of the Local Party:
- (a) on enrolment through the Local Party; or
 - (b) on enrolment through the Party's Youth and Student Organisation giving an address within the Constituency; or
 - (c) if already members of the Party, on re-registration as a member of the Local Party.

Members of the Local Party who are also members of the Party's Youth and Student Organisation may be restrained under the Party Constitution from exercising certain rights as members of the Local Party if they exercise equivalent rights as members of the Youth and Student Organisation.

- 4.4
- (a) An applicant shall become a member on acceptance by the enrolling body, payment of the requisite subscription and registration on the register kept by the Party in England.
 - (b) An application shall be deemed accepted if not rejected in accordance with the Membership Rules.
 - (c) Initial membership shall run for one year from the quarter day (last day of March, June, September or December) following commencement.
 - (d) Members whose subscriptions are due shall receive notices of meetings and elections for a further 3 months.
 - (e) Members who do not renew their subscriptions before the end of the 3 months period must reapply for membership.
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- 4.5 The Executive Committee may refuse membership to, or revoke the membership of, any person, on the grounds provided by the Party Constitution, using the procedure defined in the Membership Rules of the Liberal Democrats in England.
- 4.6 A member of the Local Party who ceases to be eligible under Section 4.2 (a) may retain membership of the Local Party with the consent of the Executive Committee.

5. Officers and Executive Committee

- 5.1 The Officers of the Local Party shall be the Chair, [Vice-Chair,] Secretary, Data Officer, Membership Development Officer and Treasurer. Their duties shall include:
- (a) The Chair - to chair all General and Executive Committee Meetings [;in the event of a tied vote the Chair shall have an additional casting vote]; to be jointly responsible with the Treasurer for the Local Party's compliance with the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000;
 - (b) The Vice-Chair - to chair General and Executive Committee Meetings if the Chair is unable to do so;
 - (c) The Secretary - to handle the Local Party's correspondence; to maintain minutes of meetings;
 - (d) The Treasurer - to handle the Local Party's financial business and present financial reports to General Meetings; to be jointly responsible with the Chair for the Local Party's compliance with the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000;
 - (e) The Data Officer - to:
 - (i) receive all notices of application for membership and refer them to the Executive Committee for acceptance;
 - (ii) maintain a membership register and provide Branch and Local Party Officers with lists of members as necessary under this Constitution;
 - (iii) hold and maintain the EARS/campaigning data of the local party; and
 - (iv) ensure compliance with data protection legislation.
 - (f) The Membership Development Officer - to:
 - (i) organise and run membership recruitment and renewal campaigns
 - (ii) ensure that the Local Party has a wide a range of social and political activities to facilitate member retention

The Secretary shall not later than 2nd January and within seven days after any subsequent change notify the names and addresses of all Officers to the Regional Party and to the Chief Executive of the Federal Party

- 5.2 There may be an Honorary President to be elected by the Annual General Meeting.
- 5.3 The general and financial business of the Local Party shall be controlled and carried on by the Executive Committee, subject to the decisions of General Meetings and in compliance with the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000. The Executive Committee shall consist of:
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- (a) The Officers;
 - [(b) (...) Ordinary Members to be elected annually in the same manner as the Officers;]
 - [(c) Representatives from each Branch within the Constituency, on a scale of (...) per Ward contained within the Branch, and (...) representatives of members in parts of the Constituency without Branches;]
 - (d) The Party's Member of Parliament for the Constituency, and the prospective Parliamentary Candidate;
 - (e) (...) representatives of the Party's members from the (...) County Council representing electoral divisions within the Constituency, elected by and from such members;
 - (f) (...) representatives of the Party's members from the (...) [District]/[Borough] /[Unitary] Council(s) representing wards within the Constituency, elected by and from such members;
 - (g) (...) representatives elected by and from each local Branch of the Party's Youth and Student Organisation;
 - [(h) The Local Party's Agent or Organiser.]
- 5.4 The Executive Committee may co-opt up to (...) additional members, for a term expiring not later than the next following AGM. The power of co-option shall be used, inter alia, to ensure if possible that no more than two-thirds of the Executive Committee (other than under Sections 5.3 (d) - (h)), are of the same sex, and that there is fair representation of under represented communities in the locality, taking into account race, religion, age, disability, gender or sexual orientation and that this would create a composition of the Executive that reflects the community the local Party serves.
- 5.5 [The Honorary President is entitled to attend all meetings of the Executive Committee.] Conference Representatives who are not members of the Executive Committee shall be entitled to attend any meeting of the Committee at which business relating to the Conferences is discussed. Meetings of the Executive Committee shall be open to members of the Local Party as space permits.
- 5.6 The Executive Committee may fill any vacancy occurring among the Officers or the Ordinary Members. Any vacancy in the Chair shall be filled from amongst the existing Executive Committee members. The Secretary shall within seven days notify any change of Officers to the Regional Party and to the Chief Executive of the Federal Party.
- [5.7 The Executive Committee may assign special responsibilities to any of its members, including duties which would otherwise pertain to one of the Officers.] [The Executive shall designate an officer to deputise for the Chair if necessary if the Chair is ever unavailable.]
- 5.8 The Officers shall convene a meeting of the Executive Committee within one month after taking office. The Executive Committee shall meet at least quarterly and not less than four times in a year. The Secretary shall give at least 7 days notice of meetings to all members of the Executive Committee. One-third of its members shall form a quorum. [A meeting may continue without a quorum if no member present objects.]
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- 5.9 The Executive Committee may appoint sub-committees for any specified purpose. No sub-committee or Executive Committee member may take action on behalf of the Executive Committee beyond their terms of appointment. All sub-committees shall report on their activities to the Executive Committee and may include persons who are not members of the Executive Committee and may delegate authority to take actions on their behalf. [The Executive Committee may also delegate authority to committees jointly constituted with other local parties for particular purposes.]
- 5.10 In urgent circumstances the Officers may act on behalf of the Executive Committee. They shall report on such actions to the next meeting of the Executive Committee.

6. Election of Officers, Executive Committee and Conference Representatives

- 6.1 The Officers, Ordinary Members and Conference Representatives shall be elected by and from members of the Local Party at the time of the Annual General Meeting, provided that, with the prior agreement of the Regional Party, a member of the Party who is not a member of the Local Party may be elected to the office of Treasurer. If an election is contested, there shall be a ballot [in which all Local Party members are sent ballot papers].
- 6.2 The term of office of Officers, Ordinary Members and Conference Representatives shall be from the 1st January following their election until the following 31st December. They shall be eligible for re-election, save that the Chair shall not serve for more than three consecutive terms, and shall not be eligible for re-election as Chair for two terms after leaving Office.
- 6.3 Nominations for election shall be invited in the notice summoning the AGM, and shall close at the AGM, but not before the reception of the Chair's, Treasurer's and Conference Representatives' reports. They must be proposed and seconded, and except in the case of nominations made at the AGM shall be in writing signed by the proposer, seconder and candidate.
- 6.4 Where elections are contested, ballot papers shall be distributed [to all members of the Local Party within 7 days]/[at the AGM], and must be returned to the Returning Officer [within 21 days after]/[at] the AGM.
- 6.5 No person may be elected to hold more than one Office, or may be elected to be both an Officer and an Ordinary Member. Elections for Officers shall be counted in the order listed in Section 5.1 and for Ordinary Members after Officers. Any votes cast for candidates already elected to Office shall be transferred according to the voters' subsequent preferences.
- 6.6 The Local Party's Federal and Regional Conference Representatives shall be elected as provided by the Party's Constitution. A representative shall cease to hold office upon ceasing to be a member of the Local Party or on failing to attend any meeting of the Conference without giving notice (so far as practicable) of inability to attend or without reasonable cause, unless the Executive Committee determines otherwise.
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- 6.7 All contested elections under this constitution shall be by secret ballot by the Single Transferable Vote method in accordance with election rules made under the Party Constitution.
- 6.8 The Executive Committee shall appoint some disinterested person to act as Returning Officer. The Returning Officer shall be responsible for the receipt of nominations and for the preparation and distribution of ballot papers, their receipt and counting on return, and the declaration of the results.
- 6.9 Accidental failure to despatch notice of the AGM or a ballot paper in due time or at all to a person entitled to vote shall not invalidate an election or be treated as an irregularity, unless a substantial number of persons entitled to vote have not received notices or ballot papers at all or have received them too late to make it practicable to attend the meeting or return the ballot paper in due time by first-class post.
- 6.10 An unsuccessful candidate who alleges that there has been or may have been an irregularity in the election may within one calendar month after the declaration of the result ask for an investigation by the Regional Party in accordance with the Party Constitution. Subject to any order made after such an investigation, no irregularity shall invalidate an election.
- 6.11 The Returning Officer may extend the time for distribution and return of ballot papers where there are special circumstances making it necessary to do so.

7. General Meetings

- 7.1 The Annual General Meeting shall be on a day appointed by the Executive Committee, between 1st October and 30th November. The Executive Committee may postpone the AGM if it would conflict with a Parliamentary Election in the Constituency, or for other urgent reason.
- 7.2 The business of the AGM shall include:
- (a) to receive a report from the Chair on the activities of the Local Party and the Executive Committee since the previous AGM;
 - (b) to consider and, if thought fit, approve the accounts of the Local Party for the previous financial year together with an independent report on those accounts, and to receive a report from the Treasurer including an outline budget for the following year;
 - (c) to appoint for the current Financial Year (i) Auditors if required by the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 or (ii) a person(s) to produce an independent report on the accounts for a General Meeting;
 - (d) to receive reports from the Conference Representatives on the proceedings of the Federal and Regional Conferences since the previous AGM;
 - (e) to receive reports from each Liberal Democrat Council group on which Local Party members serve;
 - (f) to transact any other business specified by the Constitution, or directed by the Executive Committee;
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- (g) to consider any motion which has been submitted by any member of the Local Party to the Secretary in time for circulation with the notice of the AGM;
 - (h) [to receive nominations for the election of]/[to elect] Officers, Ordinary Members of the Executive Committee and Conference Representatives.
- 7.3 The Secretary shall give all members at least 21 days written notice of the time and place of the AGM. Such notice shall specify all business to be conducted at the meeting.
- 7.4 The AGM may by a two-thirds majority agree to consider urgent or important business which has arisen since notice of the AGM was given.
- 7.5 A special General Meeting may be convened by the Officers, or by the Executive Committee; and shall, on receipt of a requisition signed by at least twenty members of the Local Party (or one-fifth of the membership if less), be convened by the Secretary so as to be held within 28 days from the receipt of such requisition. At least 14 days written notice shall be given to all members. The meeting shall only consider business stated in the notice convening it. Failure to convene a validly requisitioned meeting within 14 days shall permit the meeting to be convened on behalf of (and at the expense of) the Local Party by any of the original requisitioners. In an emergency, the Officers may convene a meeting giving such notice as they consider sufficient in the circumstances.
- 7.6 20 members (or one-fifth of the membership if less), shall form a quorum at any General Meeting. A quorum is not required to receive reports and accounts. [A meeting may continue without a quorum if no member present objects except as provided for in Section 11.1.]
- 7.7 Notice and minutes of all Annual and Special General Meetings shall be sent to the secretary of the Regional Party.
- 7.8 Minutes shall be maintained of all proceedings of all General Meetings. Minutes shall also be kept of any meetings of the Executive Committee. In the absence of an Executive Committee member charged with the duty, the Meeting shall appoint a member to take minutes.

[8. Local Branches

- 8.1 The Executive Committee may authorise the setting up of Branches covering defined areas of the Local Party, provided that no branch shall be formed with less than 10 members. The objects of a Branch shall be to further the objects of the Local Party in the area covered by the Branch. The Branch shall be subject to the ultimate authority of the Local Party.
- 8.2 The members of the Branch shall be:
- (a) All members of the Local Party whose Registered Membership Address (as defined in the Membership Rules of the Liberal Democrats in England) is within the Branch area, unless they have opted to be a member of another Branch;
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- (b) Any councillor who represents a ward or division falling wholly or partially within the Branch area and who opts to be a member of the Branch;
- (c) Other members of the Local Party who wish to be members, if the Branch's Committee and the Local Party Executive Committee agree.

No person who is not a member of the Local Party may be a member of the Branch.
No person may be a member of more than one Branch.

8.3 A Branch shall not be entitled to require a subscription from its members, but the Executive Committee of the Local Party may agree to remit part of its subscription income to a Branch. A Branch shall not incur any debts for which the Local Party shall be responsible.

8.4 Each Branch shall be governed by a constitution which shall provide for:

- (a) a Committee which shall include Officers and Ordinary Members, and may include ex-officio and co-opted members;
- (b) rules for election of Officers, Ordinary Members of the Branch Committee and representatives to the Local Party Executive Committee;
- (c) rules for the calling and conduct of an Annual General Meeting and other General Meetings of the members;
- (d) the names and addresses of the Officers, Ordinary Members and representatives to be notified to, and minutes of General and Committee Meetings to be supplied to the Secretary of the Local Party.

The Constitution shall be in the form of the Model Constitution for Branches appended to this Constitution. A branch may adopt a constitution which is not wholly in the model form but any such constitution, or any changes to it, shall not take effect until the Executive Committee of the Local Party accepts its conformity with the Party Constitution and with this Constitution.

[8.5 The finances of the Branch shall be held by the Treasurer of the Local Party [as part of the funds of the Local Party] and subject to section 10 of the constitution.]

- [8.5
- (a) The Officers of the Branch shall include a Treasurer. The Branch's accounting period shall be the same as that of the Local Party.
 - (b) The Branch Treasurer shall keep, maintain for six years, and pass to his or her successor accounting records which shall be available for inspection in accordance with the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000.
 - (c) The Branch Treasurer shall ensure that no donation of over £200 is accepted except from a permissible donor and shall keep records and submit donations reports to the Treasurer of the Local Party.
 - (d) The Branch Treasurer shall annually produce accounts which shall be approved by the Branch Committee and shall be sent to the Treasurer of the Local Party by a date to be specified by the Treasurer of the Local Party.
 - (e) The Branch Treasurer shall submit the accounts of the Branch together with an independent report to [the Annual General Meeting]/[a General Meeting to be held not later than (...)].

- (f) The Branch shall maintain one or more bank or other appropriate accounts in the name of the Branch for which the mandate for withdrawal shall require the signature of at least two Officers who shall not come solely from members of any one family. The Branch may maintain further accounts for the deposit of money not required for the time being, requiring the same signatures.]
- 8.6 The Branch may appoint a substitute representative to the Executive Committee to fill a casual vacancy, or if a representative is unable to attend a particular meeting.
- 8.7 A Branch may dissolve itself by a two-thirds majority at a General Meeting; or be dissolved or suspended by the Executive Committee on the grounds that:
- (a) it is no longer functioning or able to hold such a meeting;
 - (b) there have been serious irregularities in the conduct of the affairs of the Branch;
 - (c) the affairs of the Branch have not been conducted in compliance with the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 and with its Constitution, this Constitution and the Party Constitution;
 - (d) the membership of the Branch has fallen below 10; or
 - (e) the affairs of the Branch are being conducted in a manner contrary to the interests of the Local Party as a whole.

If a Branch is dissolved or suspended, any member of the Branch may request the Regional Party to conduct an investigation. The Local Party shall not dissolve a Branch until the Branch has been given an opportunity to hold its own General Meeting.

- 8.8 The funds of a Branch shall, upon dissolution, be applied in paying its debts, and any surplus shall be added to the funds of the Local Party.]

9. Candidates for and Elections to Public Office

- 9.1 When it is necessary to select a Prospective Parliamentary Candidate, the procedure shall be as provided by the Party Constitution. The Executive Committee may appoint a sub-committee to carry out its duties under this procedure. [The electoral college shall comprise [members within the relevant constituency only]/[all Local Party members].]
- 9.2 The Executive Committee shall seek to ensure that, so far as practicable, all seats within the Constituency on Principal Local Authorities are contested by members of the Party, unless the Executive Committee is satisfied that it is in the best interests of the Party in any case not to do so.
- 9.3 When it is necessary to select one or more local government candidates for an electoral area, the [Local Party]/[Branch or if there is no Branch, the Local Party] shall hold a [General Meeting at]/[postal ballot in] which all members [who are resident in the electoral area concerned]/[of the Local Party]/[of the Branch] may vote, and may select any member from a list of approved candidates maintained by the Executive Committee, or may select any other member conditionally upon subsequent approval
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by the Executive Committee. The timetable and procedure for selection shall be agreed by the Branch Committee and the Executive Committee, or where there is no Branch by the Executive Committee.

- [9.4 In any electoral area, in which the eligible electorate for voting in the selection does not exceed 10, the electorate shall be expanded to constitute the members living in the electoral area plus the Branch Committee or, if there is no Branch, the Executive Committee.]
- 9.5 In any case in which time does not permit the holding of a [General Meeting]/[postal ballot] the [Branch Committee, or if there is no Branch the Executive Committee]/[the Executive Committee] may select the candidate.
- 9.6 Where a Principal Local Authority covers more than one constituency the Executive Committees of the Local Parties concerned may agree to form appropriate joint arrangements to co-ordinate candidate approval and selection, campaigning and publicity and be responsible for the formulation of policy on that Authority.
- [9.7 In any parish or town council elections, the committee of the relevant Branch, or if there is no Branch the Executive Committee shall vary the provisions of Sections 9.2 to 9.5 above as appropriate.]
- 9.8 A Delegated Nominating Officer will be appointed by the Party's Nominating Officer. The Delegated Nominating Officer shall act in accordance with the Rules made by the Party for Delegated Nominating Officers.
- 9.9 When a Parliamentary Election takes place, the activities of the Local Party shall be suspended except as necessary to comply with the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 and such power vested in an Agent to act on its behalf as necessary for the conduct of the Election.
- 9.10 The membership of any member of the Local Party who stands at any public election as candidate or agent in opposition to a properly nominated candidate of the Party shall automatically and immediately be suspended and, subject to any appeal, shall be revoked.
- 9.11 Any candidate for election to public office standing as a representative of the Party must be a current member of the Party.

10. Finance

- 10.1 The Local party's accounting period shall be annual, ending on 31st December each year.
- 10.2 The Treasurer shall keep, maintain for six years, and pass to his or her successor accounting records which shall be available for inspection in accordance with the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000.
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- 10.3 The Treasurer shall ensure that no donation of over £200 is accepted except from a permissible donor and shall keep records and submit donations reports to the Executive Committee and to Chief Executive of the Federal Party.
- 10.4 The Treasurer shall annually produce accounts which shall be approved by the Executive Committee and if required by the Political Parties, Elections & Referendums Act 2000 shall be audited and submitted to the Electoral Commission.
- 10.5 The Treasurer shall submit the accounts of the Local Party together with an independent report to a General Meeting [which shall be held not later than (...) in each year].
- 10.6 A copy of the annual accounts shall be sent to the Treasurer of the Regional Party and to the Chief Executive of the Federal Party.
- 10.7 The Local Party shall maintain one or more bank or other appropriate accounts in the name of the Local Party for which the mandate for withdrawal shall require the signature of at least two Officers who shall not come solely from members of any one family. The Local Party may maintain further accounts for the deposit of money not required for the time being, requiring the same signatures.
- 10.8 If the Local Party fails by 15th January to notify the Chief Executive of the Federal Party of the appointment of a Chair and a Treasurer the Local Party shall automatically be suspended.

11. Constitution and Interpretation

- 11.1 Amendments may only be made by a two-thirds majority at a quorate General Meeting. No amendment shall be made which conflicts with the Constitution of the Party or of the Regional Party. Any amendment to this Constitution shall be subject to approval by the Regional Party.
- 11.2 Details of any proposed amendment shall be sent to all members with the notice of the General Meeting.
- 11.3 If the Model Constitution for Local Parties (England) is amended, any provision of this constitution shall be deemed to be correspondingly amended, unless the Local Party resolves in accordance with 11.1 above at a quorate General Meeting held within 6 months of receiving notice of the amendment not to accept it.
- 11.4 One copy of the Constitution shall be deposited with the Secretary of the Regional Party; and one shall be kept with the minute book of the Local Party. Any member shall be provided with a copy of the Constitution on request.
- 11.5 In the event of any question of interpretation arising, or any question on which this Constitution is silent, the Executive Committee shall have power to act according to its interpretation of the Constitution, or at its discretion, subject to Article 8 of the Constitution of the Liberal Democrats in England and Article 14 of the Constitution of the Federal Party.
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- 11.6 No word or construction in this Constitution shall be taken to imply any discrimination whatsoever with regard to sex, race, colour, creed, age, disability, sexual orientation or any other ground other than political belief or practice.
- 11.7 In the event of the dissolution or suspension of the Local Party, the assets of the Local Party shall vest in the Regional Party on trust for the future reconstitution of the Local Party, unless explicitly provided otherwise by a General Meeting in the event of dissolution pursuant upon boundary changes and subject to the agreement of the Regional Party.

Notes on this Model Constitution

This model constitution is recommended to Local Parties in England, to be adapted as necessary to suit local circumstances.

The symbol (...) indicates a suitable value to be fixed by the Local Party. Defaults are defined below.

Words and sections in square brackets [...] are optional and Local Parties may choose to include or omit them, subject to the requirements detailed below. By default they are all included (with the first alternatives in Sections 6.4, 7.2(h), 8.5, 8.5(e), 9.1, 9.3 and 9.5), except the words in square brackets in 10.5 are not included).

If amended, the document adopted should be forwarded to the Regional Party to confirm that it conforms with the Party Constitution. There are some sections, indicated below, where variation is likely to conflict with the Party Constitution.

1,2. Name and Definitions

The name should be taken from the constituency, and may optionally include the word “Constituency” or “Local”.

A Local Party covering more than one constituency will wish to choose a suitable form for its name, to define the several constituencies. Changes throughout this constitution are necessary to reflect such a Local Party’s multi-constituency structure.

Otherwise the definitions should not be changed.

3. Objects

Should not be subtracted from, but Local Parties might wish to add additional objects, for instance the provision of social facilities for members.

4. Membership

Should not generally be changed. The powers of the Executive Committee might be reduced or transferred to General Meetings.

5. Officers and Executive Committee

Every Local Party must have a Chair and a Treasurer, which is a legal requirement under the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act. The same person cannot combine the offices of Chair and Treasurer. Each Local Party must also have a Data Officer, in order to operate the Party's membership system satisfactorily. This Model Constitution does not allow for the same person to be elected to more than one office, but small Local Parties (e.g. with less than 100 members) wishing to combine offices may with the agreement of their Region amend the Model. If a Local Party finds it impossible to elect five separate people to fill the offices, it may co-opt one of the officers to do a second job, except that the Chair and Treasurer must be separate people at all times

Local Parties might decide to:

- (a) elect extra officers, e.g. Social Secretary, Press Officer, Equal Opportunities Officer;
- (b) remove the casting vote of the Chair, or to give the Chair a casting vote only;
- (c) dispense with the Honorary Office of President.

Local Parties should fix the scale of Branch, direct, Councillor and Youth/Student representation on the Executive Committee on an equitable basis and to accord with local circumstances. Either the number of direct representatives (b), or representatives per Branch (c) must be sufficient to enable fair representation of opinions within the Local Party. A minimum of 6 is recommended in one class. Unless the Local Party has a small number of large wards/branches the larger number would be in class (b).

The default numbers in Section 5.3 are 10 in (b), 1 and 2 in (c), 1 each in (e) and (g) and 3 in (f). The relevant County and District/Borough/Unitary Council names should be inserted in (e) and (f). If the Local Party area covers more than one District/Borough, each Council group may be represented separately or jointly, depending on local circumstances. Section 5.3 (e) may be dispensed with where there is no County Council.

The list of categories of Executive Committee members should not be subtracted from, but may be increased in special circumstances.

If there are Ordinary Members the number of co-opted Members in 5.4 may not be more than the number of Ordinary Members. If there are no Ordinary Members then the Local Party must determine the maximum number of co-opted Members. The default number is ten.

The Executive Committee is required to meet at least quarterly. More frequent (e.g. monthly) meetings may be appropriate. If the Executive Committee only meets quarterly, it might be appropriate to provide for a "Finance and General Purposes Committee", by whatever name is preferred, with specific make-up and powers, to meet more often.

6. Elections

Most changes to the provisions for election and holding office would conflict with the Federal Constitution. Elections can be by postal ballot of all members or by the members present at the AGM. The same method of election should be used for Officers, Ordinary Members and Conference Representatives.

Local Parties should appoint a person who is a not candidate, a close relative of a candidate or the proposer or seconder of a candidate (“a disinterested person”) as Returning Officer. Local Parties anticipating contested elections may wish to ask their Region to nominate a person from outside the Local Party to act as Returning Officer.

7. General Meetings

Most changes would conflict with the Federal Constitution. Provisions could be added, notice periods could be lengthened or a large Local Party might decide to raise the required quorum.

8. Local Branches

It is for the Local Party to decide whether it wishes to have any Branch structure. If it does not then the whole of Section 8 together with the references to Branches in Section 9 should be deleted.

If the Local Party wishes to have a Branch structure then the provisions in 8.1 to 8.8 set out the necessary constitutional provisions. A Model Constitution for Branches is appended and should be followed, but may be varied by Branches with the agreement of the Local Party Executive.

8.5 contains a number of options for the financial arrangements of Branches. Local Parties should decide which they want to adopt. A Local Party could provide for one version to apply to some branches and another version to others. Either the Local Party may provide for Branch funds to be held by the Local Party Treasurer (first option 8.5) or to be held separately (second option 8.5) in which case the Branch must have a Treasurer and produce accounts. Where the Local Party Treasurer holds Branch funds, they may be held as part of the funds of the Local Party (in which case the words in square brackets are retained). The Branch then has no financial autonomy. Alternatively, the Branch funds may be held by the Local Party Treasurer as a separate account (in which case the words in square brackets in the first version of 8.5 should be deleted). In default the first option applies with the words in square brackets retained.

9. Candidates and Elections

Most changes would conflict with the Federal Constitution. The Party Constitution and rules made by the Joint States Candidates Committee cover Parliamentary Candidate selection. Regional Parties will make rules for the selection of candidates for Regional Government. City/Borough/District Mayors are Local Government elections and Local Party Constitutions should make appropriate provision for the selection of Mayoral Candidates. 9.6 will apply where the Local Government area covers more than one Local Party.

The last sentence of 9.1 only applies to a Local Party covering more than one Constituency. Only one of the electoral college options, before or after the “/”, should then be included.

A Local Party should determine which method to use for local election candidate selection - a General Meeting or a postal ballot and whether the selection is to be done by only the members in the relevant electoral area, by all members of the Branch or by all members of the Local Party. 9.3 and 9.4 should then be adapted accordingly. It is automatically provided that the Local Party undertakes the selection where there is no branch. 9.4 provides a minimum number of members for selections by electoral areas. This provision is not needed when selection is by all members of the Local Party or all members of the Branch, when the relevant minimum numbers are specified in other provisions.

9.5 provides for the selection procedure when a selection has to be conducted at short notice, as is often the case for by-elections. The Local Party should decide whether emergency selections are to be by the Branch Committee (where there is one) or by the Local Party Executive.

Section 9.7 should only be deleted if Local Parties find them inappropriate in local circumstances.

10. Finance

Most changes would conflict with the Federal Constitution and with the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000.

In 10.5 the Local Party may wish to provide for a Special General Meeting to be held reasonably soon after the financial year-end on 31st December to consider the annual accounts. In that event at the end of this paragraph a date should be inserted, for example 28th February or 31st March. The reference to the accounts being approved by the AGM in 7.2(b) should then be deleted, but not the references to a Treasurer's report and budget. Where Local Party accounts are required to be submitted to the Electoral Commission and published, where the Local Party's gross income or total expenditure is over £25,000, early approval of the Accounts by a Special General Meeting is recommended.

The officers whose signatures are required to draw money might be specified more precisely in 10.7, especially if extra officers have been created. No bank account should be operated on a single signature or by two members of the same family.

11. Constitution and Interpretation

None of the points in this section should be omitted. Most changes would conflict with the Federal Constitution and rules made to ensure the Party's compliance with the Political Parties, Elections & Referendums Act 2000.

Model Constitution for Branches

Constitution of the “... Branch of the ... Liberal Democrats”

1. Name

1.1 The name of the Branch shall be “... Branch Liberal Democrats.”

2. Objectives

2.1 The objects of the Branch shall be to further the objects of the ... Liberal Democrats (the “Local Party”) within the area covered by the Branch.

3. Branch area

3.1 The ... Branch area will be that part of the area of the ... Local Party in ... wards of the ... wards.

4. Members

4.1 The members of the Branch shall be:

- (a) All members of the Local Party whose Registered Membership Address (as defined in the English Party Membership Rules) is within the Branch area, unless they have opted to be a member of another Branch;
- (b) Any councillor who represents a ward or division falling wholly or partially within the Branch area and who opts to be a member of the Branch;
- (c) Other members of the Local Party who wish to be members, if the Branch’s Executive and the Local Party Executive Committee agree.

4.2 No person who is not a member of the Local Party may be a member of the Branch.

4.3 No person may be a member of more than one Branch.

4.4 The Branch may not levy a membership fee on its members.

5. Officers and Executive

5.1 The Officers of the Branch shall be Chair, Secretary, [Treasurer] and Membership Development Officer, who shall be elected annually.

5.2 The general and financial business of the Branch shall be conducted by a committee (the “Executive”), subject to the decisions of General Meetings. The Executive shall consist of:

- (a) The Officers;
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- (b) ... Ordinary Members, elected annually;
- (c) ... representatives elected annually by and from the Branch's members on County/District/Borough/Unitary/Parish/Town Council representing wards/divisions falling wholly or partially within the Branch area;
- (d) ... representatives elected annually by and from members of the Party's Youth and Student Organisation who are also members of the Branch.

5.3 The Executive may co-opt up to ... additional members, for a term expiring not later than that of the next AGM.

Note: the number should not exceed the number of ordinary members.

5.4 The Executive may fill any vacancy occurring among the Officers or Ordinary Members. Any vacancy amongst the Officers shall, if possible, be filled from amongst the other members of the Executive.

5.5 In urgent circumstances, the Officers may act on behalf of the Executive They shall report on all such actions to the next meeting of the Executive.

6. Elections of Executive Members and others

- 6.1 The Officers and Ordinary Members and any representatives to the Local Party's Executive Committee, as provided for in the Local Party's constitution, shall be elected by and from the members of the Branch at the time of the Annual General Meeting by the single transferable vote (STV) and secret ballot [in which all branch members are sent ballot papers].
 - 6.2 The term of office for Officers and Ordinary Members shall be from 1st January following their election until the following 31st December.
 - 6.3 The [Executive][Local Party] shall appoint a Returning Officer for the election of Officers and Ordinary Members before the issue of notice of the AGM under 7.3. The Returning Officer will make any supplementary rules as they feel fit and are consistent with the Federal and English Party constitutions, the English Party's membership rules and any rules made by the local party.
 - 6.4 Representatives from the party's councillors and the Youth and Student organisation shall be elected according to rules set by the relevant Council Group(s) and the Youth and Student organisation.
 - 6.5 The names and addresses of all Executive members shall be kept by the Secretary and provided to the Secretary of the Local Party within 7 days of their election or of any change in any Officer.
 - 6.6 The Executive may appoint substitute representatives to the Local Party's Executive Committee if there is a casual vacancy or an elected representative is not able to be present at a meeting.
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Note: This should only be included if the Local Party's constitution permits (see 8.4 of the model Local Party Constitution).

7. General meetings

- 7.1 The Annual General Meeting (AGM) shall be on a day and at a time and place decided by the Executive, not before 1st September and not later than 30th November. The Executive may postpone an AGM if it would conflict with any public election involving the Branch's area. The Local Party may require the AGM to be held before the AGM of the Local Party or before some other particular date.
- 7.2 The business of the AGM shall be:
- (a) To receive reports from all the Officers on their activities in the last year;
 - (b) To receive reports from councillors representing wards or divisions falling wholly or partially within the Branch area (if such people exist);
 - [(c) To receive a financial report;]
 - [(c) To consider, and if thought fit adopt, the accounts for the previous financial year together with an independent report on those accounts and the budget for the current financial year;]
 - (d) [To appoint a person(s) to produce an independent report on the accounts for the current financial year][To confirm or reject the appointment recommended by the Local Party of a person(s) to produce an independent report on the accounts];]
 - (e) To consider any motion which has been submitted by any two members of the Branch to the Secretary in time for circulation with the notice of the AGM;
 - (f) Any other business specified by the constitution, or directed by the Executive.
- 7.3 The Secretary shall give all members at least 14 days written notice of the time and place of the AGM.
- 7.4 A Special General Meeting may be convened by the Officers, the Executive or on receipt of a requisition signed by at least one fifth of the Branch's membership. Such a meeting shall be convened within 28 days of being requested, and with members being given at least 14 days written notice of its time and place. It shall only conduct business stated in the notice calling it.
- 7.5 Five members shall form the quorum at any General Meeting.
- 7.6 Notice and minutes of all General Meetings and Executive Meetings shall be kept by the Secretary and copies shall be sent to the Secretary of the Local Party.

8. Candidates for public office

- 8.1 The Branch shall perform the tasks prescribed by the constitution of the Local Party in connection with the selection of local government candidates for any electoral area within its area, and in conjunction with the appropriate adjoining Branch(es) or the Local Party for any electoral areas lying only partially within the Branch's area.
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- 8.2 The Executive shall seek to ensure, as far as is practicable, that all seats within its area on Principal Local Authorities are contested by members of the Party.
- 8.3 Where it is necessary to select one or more local government candidates, for either Principal Local Authorities or parish or town councils:
- (a) The Executive shall ensure that any candidate approval process specified by the Local Party is followed;
 - (b) The timetable for the selection shall be agreed by the Executive, in consultation with the Executive of the Local Party;
 - (c) The Branch shall hold a [General Meeting][postal ballot], in which all members who are resident in the electoral area concerned [or of the Branch] may vote. If the eligible electorate does not exceed 10, the electorate shall be expanded to include members of the Branch Executive;
 - (d) The election shall be held by Single Transferable Vote (STV) and secret ballot;
 - (e) The [Executive][Local Party] shall appoint a Returning Officer for the election. The Returning Officer will make any supplementary rules as they feel fit and are consistent with the Local Party constitution, Federal and English Party constitutions, the English Party's Membership rules and any rules made by the Local Party.
 - (f) In any case in which time does not permit the holding of a [meeting]/[postal ballot] the Executive may select the candidate;
 - (g) Any candidate for election to public office standing as a representative of the Party must be a current member of the Party.
- 8.4 For the period of a local government election within its area, the Executive will resolve to suspend the activities of the Branch and to invest an Agent or Agents with the authority to act on its behalf in the conduct of the election campaign.
- 8.5 The suspension of the Local Party due to the holding of an election shall have the effect of also suspending the Branch's activities for the same period.
- 8.6 During the selection of [Mayor, Greater London Authority,] Parliamentary and European candidates, the Branch and its members shall comply with the relevant selection rules.

9. FINANCE

- [9.1 The finances of the Branch shall be held by the Treasurer of the Local Party [as part of the funds of the Local Party] and subject to the constitution of the Local Party.]
- [9.1 The Branch's accounting period shall be the same as that of the Local Party.
- 9.2 The Treasurer shall keep, maintain for six years, and pass to his or her successor accounting records which shall be available for inspection in accordance with the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000.
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- 9.3 The Treasurer shall ensure that no donation of over £200 is accepted except from a permissible donor and shall keep records and submit donations reports to the Treasurer of the Local Party.
- 9.4 The Treasurer shall annually produce accounts which shall be approved by the Branch Committee and shall be sent to the Treasurer of the Local Party by a date to be specified by the Treasurer of the Local Party.
- 9.5 The Treasurer shall submit the accounts of the Branch together with an independent report to [the Annual General Meeting][a General Meeting to be held not later than (...)]
- 9.6 The authorised signatories on any branch bank account shall be at least two in number, and shall not come solely from members of any one family.]

Note: The Local Party Constitution will specify whether the finances of the Branch are to be held as part of the funds of the Local party or separately. If the finances of the Branch are held as part of the funds of the Local Party then no Branch Treasurer is needed (delete in 5.1), the AGM will receive a financial report but not accounts (first option 7.2(c) and delete 7.2(d) and only the first option 9.1 is required (delete second option 9.2 through to 9.6). If the branch holds its own funds independently it must have a Branch Treasurer, the AGM will receive accounts (second option 7.2(c) and 7.2(d)) and second option 9.1 through to 9.6 are required

10. Constitution and interpretation

- 10.1 Amendments to this constitution may only be made by a two-third majority at a General Meeting. Details of any proposed change shall be sent to all members with the notice of the General Meeting.
- 10.2 Any changes to this constitution shall only come into force after being approved by the Executive Committee of the Local Party. No amendment may be made or approved which would conflict with the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 or with the constitutions of the Local Party, English Party, Federal Party or English Party's Membership Rules.
- 10.3 A copy of this constitution shall be kept by the Secretary and sent to the Local Party Secretary.
- 10.4 In the event of any question on which this Constitution is silent, the Constitution of the Local Party shall be followed. In the event of any question of interpretation arising the Executive shall have the power to act according to its interpretation of the constitution, or, if it does not cover the issue, at its discretion, subject to the duty of the Local Party to ensure the Branch's compliance with the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 and with its Constitution, the Local Party Constitution and the English and Federal Party Constitutions and subject to Article 8 of the Constitution of the Liberal Democrats in England and Article 14 of the Constitution of the Federal Party.
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- 10.5 The Branch may choose to dissolve itself by a two-thirds majority at a General Meeting, or may be dissolved following the procedure laid out in the Local Party's constitution. The funds of the Branch shall, if dissolved, be applied first to paying its debts, with any surplus being added to the funds of the Local Party.
- 10.6 The Executive shall perform the same functions as that of a "Branch Committee" under the Local Party's constitution.
- 10.7 The Branch shall be subject to the ultimate authority of the Local Party.

Rules for the selection of Westminster parliamentary candidates in England⁶

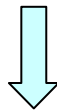
Introduction

Overview of the process

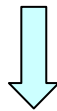
In order to ensure that all constituencies have an appropriately approved and democratically selected candidate for a General Election Article 11 of the Federal Constitution specifies that all states shall agree a fair selection process. These rules govern that process and must be used by all local parties in England for the purpose of selecting parliamentary candidates.

Constituencies starting the process of selection must ask their Regional Candidates' Chair (RCC) to appoint an independent Returning Officer (RO) from outside the constituency. The local party executive will agree the appointment of a shortlisting committee with the Returning Officer. The Returning Officer will then work with the shortlisting committee to ensure that the selection process is completed satisfactorily in accordance with these rules.

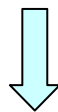
Phase 1: The shortlisting committee and Returning Officer work together to prepare an application pack and advertise the seat.



Phase 2: The shortlisting committee scrutinise applications and shortlist applicants for the selection.



Phase 3: The candidates' campaign: members' mailing, leaflets and personal contact. Postal votes applied for and sent out by the Returning Officer.



Phase 4: The hustings meeting, vote and count. The result is declared.

⁶ These rules apply to the selection of candidates for Westminster Parliamentary constituencies. A separate set of rules apply to the selection of candidates for large single posts.

The principles underlying these rules

These rules shall be used for the selection of prospective parliamentary candidates in all constituencies in England, with the following exceptions: by-elections, the re-selection of sitting MPs, and constituencies in local parties suspended by the region, where separate processes shall apply (appendix C). In the event of an imminent General Election, the ECC may vary these rules to ensure that all constituencies have an approved candidate in place.

The selection process shall be conducted in accordance with the principles of Liberal Democracy. Everyone involved in the selection must act in such a way as to ensure that the party is not brought into disrepute. In particular, selections must be conducted in a manner that is:

- Democratic
- Accountable
- Inclusive
- Fair
- Robust
- Manageable

Within this one set of rules, there are two tracks: one for potential target seats and one for all other seats. More is expected of potential target seats at all stages of the process but it is accepted that non-target seats can 'opt up' to the more complex rules at any point.

Candidates for selection must make sure that they abide by the candidates' Code of Conduct, the party's data protection rules and PPERA. Where these rules are silent, the Returning Officer will proceed using these principles as a guide. In addition, the ECC may from time to time issue guidance and clarifications to these rules, which must also be derived from these principles.

In these rules, the words, 'must', 'shall' and 'will' refer to mandatory actions.

The words 'may', 'could' and 'should' refer to optional actions.

Phase 1

From the decision to select to the close of applications

After deciding to start the selection process, the local party executive asks the region to appoint a Returning Officer. The Returning Officer oversees the appointment of the shortlisting committee, agrees selection criteria and the preparation of an application form and a constituency information pack. The seat is advertised in Liberal Democrat News and elsewhere.

Interested potential applicants will be able to contact a nominated member of the constituency for more information.

In order for their application to be considered by the shortlisting committee applicants must apply to the Returning Officer by the closing date advertised.

Key Principles: the Returning Officer and shortlisting committee should ensure that both the selection criteria and the application process are **inclusive, fair and transparent**.

A. Getting started

Returning Officers

1. A local party deciding to start the selection process must resolve to do so at a meeting of the local party executive. They must then ask their Regional Candidates' Chair (RCC) for permission to proceed and for an independent, accredited Returning Officer to be appointed. They must provide the name of a contact from the local party with whom the RCC can liaise.
 2. The RCC will appoint a Returning Officer from the list of accredited Returning Officers held by the English Candidates' Committee (ECC). The Returning Officer shall not be a member of the local party to which they are to be appointed, nor shall they have any personal interest in the selection.
 3. The Returning Officer will:
 - Support the shortlisting committee through the selection process
 - Protect the interests of members
 - Ensure the fair and equal treatment of applicants
 - Ensure that the selection rules are followed
 4. Returning Officers may claim reasonable expenses incurred while carrying out their duties. They must claim these as soon as possible after the selection. Claims should be in line with the expense rules in Returning Officers' Guidance.
 5. The Returning Officer must brief the local party executive on the selection process before the appointment of the shortlisting committee.
-

6. The Regional Candidates Chair (RCC) may appoint a replacement Returning Officer, or a substitute Returning Officer, or deputy Returning Officer(s) for any part of the selection, if this becomes necessary at any time.

Shortlisting committees

7. The shortlisting committee is responsible for managing the selection process in an unbiased way, with support from the Returning Officer. Shortlisting committees will:
 - Agree the criteria for selection
 - Scrutinise applications and shortlist if necessary
 - Arrange and send out the members' mailing
 - Organise and run the members' meeting(s)

Potential target seats will have shortlisting committees comprising five to seven members, all of whom shall be trained.

Non-target seats will have shortlisting committees comprising three to seven members, at least two of whom shall be trained.

8. The composition of the shortlisting committee will be agreed by the Returning Officer who will ensure that:
 - All members of the shortlisting committee are in at least their second continuous year of membership
 - No-one on the shortlisting committee has an interest in the selection beyond that of an ordinary member
 - The committee is representative of the local membership;
 - Where possible, the committee includes members of different ages, ethnicities, genders, faiths, sexual orientations, and social backgrounds
 - Where possible, the committee includes councillors and non-councillors
 9. A number of members of the shortlisting committees will be trained in the selection process, either by the Returning Officer, or by an accredited shortlisting committee trainer. Members of the shortlisting committee must not campaign for or against any applicant. They must keep the details of the applications and assessments of applicants confidential and must behave in a fair and unbiased way towards all applicants.
 10. The shortlisting committee, and not the local party executive, is responsible for managing the selection. If the local party executive is concerned that the shortlisting committee is failing in its duties then it should raise the matter with the Returning Officer. Decisions of the shortlisting committee must not be altered other than by the RO.
 11. The shortlisting committee will elect its own Chair (from among its members) who must have received shortlisting committee training.
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B. Preparing to advertise

What kind of candidate are you looking for?

12. The local party executive must provide the shortlisting committee with details of the priorities for the campaign and what they expect the candidate's role will be in achieving these. They may be supported in this by Department of Elections and Skills staff and/or their Regional Campaigns Chair or Officer. They may also be supported in this by the candidate for the last General Election, but he or she must play no further part in the selection process except to help put together the application pack if asked by the selection committee and as an ordinary member of the Local Party.

The shortlisting committee will use these priorities to identify criteria for the selection. These selection criteria will form the basis of the application form and questions at any shortlisting interview, and the shortlisting committee shall decide the minimum acceptable standard for each criteria. The selection criteria will also be included in the members' mailing to assist members in making their decision.

Shortlisting committees in potential target seats will draw up a list of criteria for candidate selection with guidance from the Returning Officer. These should be based on the competency framework used in the candidate assessment centres. Shortlisting committees may use the suggested criteria (see Returning Officers' Guidance) for potential target seats to assist them.

Shortlisting committees in non-target seats will either adopt the suggested selection criteria for non-target seats (see Returning Officers' Guidance), or, with guidance from the Returning Officer may draw up selection criteria in the same manner as target seats.

13. Shortlisting committees, with support from the Returning Officer, will draw up an application form and information pack about the constituency. The information pack must include:

- The current political position, number of members and level of activity of the local party
- The name and contact details for at least one impartial member who can provide applicants with further details
- A copy of the selection criteria
- A draft timetable for the selection
- A copy of the selection rules

Shortlisting committees in potential target seats must ensure that their application form asks questions that test applicants' competency against the selection criteria. They may use the pro forma application form (see Returning Officers' Guidance) for potential target seats to assist them.

Shortlisting committees in non-target seats will adopt the pro forma application form for non-target seats (see Returning Officers' Guidance), or, with guidance from the Returning Officer, may draw up an application form in the same manner as potential target seats.

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14. Members of the local party, the candidate for the last General Election and local and regional employees of the party may, at the shortlisting committee's request, assist the shortlisting committee in putting together the application pack, but the shortlisting committee must remain responsible for deciding its final composition. The Returning Officer will send the final application pack to all applicants promptly.
15. The shortlisting committee must advertise the selection in Liberal Democrat News and on the Party website, including required standard wording (see Returning Officers' Guidance) and should also advertise more widely. Members of the committee, or their nominee(s), may contact approved candidates and invite them to apply. This must be done using a list of approved candidates issued for this purpose by the Candidates' Office to the Returning Officer, who must ensure that invitations to apply are made without undue bias. All shortlisting committees must actively seek applications from as diverse a range of candidates as possible, with the help and guidance of the appropriate diversity bodies within the Party (guidance on who these bodies are is available from the Candidates' Office).

Potential target seats must advertise on the Party website and place a box advertisement in Liberal Democrat News, including extensive information about the seat in addition to the standard wording.

Non-target seats must advertise on the Party website and place a classified advertisement in Liberal Democrat News, including the standard wording, but may follow the procedure for potential target seats if they choose.

16. The advertisement in Liberal Democrat News will be placed by the Returning Officer, but paid for by the local party. The closing date for applications shall not be less than two weeks from the date of the advertisement, but may be longer if the shortlisting committee decide. Applications must be returned to the Returning Officer, who will forward them to the shortlisting committee at the close of applications.
17. The shortlisting committee shall decide whether or not they wish to consider applicants who are not on the Party's approved list but who have submitted an application for approval to the Candidates' Office. If they do wish to consider unapproved applicants, they may wait for applicants to gain approval, but no applicant can proceed to shortlisting unless they are approved.
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Deciding who can vote in the selection

Membership Services produce a selection register of members at the request of the Returning Officer. This is used to identify members who can vote in the selection and is passed to applicants to enable them to contact members during the campaign. The Returning Officer is responsible for checking its accuracy in conjunction with the local party data officer and for passing it to applicants when the shortlist is published.

18. The Returning Officer will obtain a list of members, which will be available before the date of publication of the shortlist, from Membership Services. This selection register will contain (where available) each member's name, address, telephone number, email and date of expiry of membership. The use of data in the selection register is subject to the Party's data protection policy. Returning Officers will use the data to identify those eligible to vote in the selection. The cut off date for inclusion on the selection register shall be the date of publication of the advertisement in Lib Dem News, unless there is a delay in selection of more than 6 months, when the Returning Officer shall determine and publish a new cut off date.
 19. Members shall only be eligible to vote in a selection if their membership is in at least its second continuous year, they have paid their membership renewal and have reached the age of at least 10 years. Members who have been members continuously since before 26 November 2005 and who are under 10 years of age may also vote in a selection. Eligible Members whose subscriptions are no more than three months overdue shall be entitled to attend any members' meeting but shall only be eligible to vote if they pay their overdue subscription before the date on which applications close.
 20. In the case of a local party containing more than one constituency, then the local party constitution must be consulted to determine whether the whole local party or only members in the relevant constituency shall vote in the selection. If the local party constitution is silent then only members in the relevant constituency may vote as long as there are at least 30 members in the constituency.
 21. The Returning Officer will provide the selection register to the relevant local party data officer(s) to identify any errors or omissions in the selection register. These should be resolved by the date of publication of the shortlist, so that the register can be passed to applicants promptly at this date. Any further changes should be notified promptly to applicants and the shortlisting committee. Membership Services will warn Data Officers that they must advise Membership Services of any discrepancies in their Local Party's list and encourage their members to pay any over-due subscriptions before the date of close of applications, as the list at that date will be used to decide who will be eligible to vote in the selection
 22. The selection register must be used for:
 - Deciding who can vote in the selection
 - Issuing ballot papers
 - Sending out the mailing to members
 - Any campaigning by applicants or their supporters, who must not use it for any purpose other than the selection.
-

Phase 2

Deciding on a shortlist for the selection

When the deadline for applications has passed, the Returning Officer sends all applications to the shortlisting committee, who will assess them against the selection criteria. The shortlisting committee must assure themselves that all shortlisted applicants are suitable to put before the members; it is not the shortlisting committee's job to choose the candidate. In line with the principles, there is a two-track approach to shortlisting, with more stringent requirements placed on potential target seats.

Key principles: in shortlisting, the Returning Officer and shortlisting committee should ensure that the process is **fair, transparent and robust**; all candidates should be dealt with in the same way according to an agreed process.

Deciding if the selection can go ahead

23. At the close of applications the Returning Officer will pass all applications to the shortlisting committee who will sift applications and reject any that do not meet the selection criteria or reach the minimum standard previously agreed by the shortlisting committee. The Returning Officer must satisfy her or himself that the decisions have been arrived at robustly, fairly and on the basis of evidence in the applications.

Potential target seats must have a final short-list of at least three applicants to proceed. If there are fewer than 3 applicants the Returning Officer will consult the RCC, who shall only allow the selection to proceed if selection is urgent.

Non-target seats may normally proceed to selection with only one applicant (where there was only one applicant who met the selection criteria) but the Returning Officer must be satisfied that the application process was open and fair. If there is any doubt, the RCC should be consulted.

24. The shortlisting committee shall then consider gender balance and diversity. In the event that the appropriate criteria (below) are not met, the shortlisting committee shall extend the application deadline in order to meet the criteria. The vacancy must be publicised widely within the party and may be re-advertised in Liberal Democrat News.

Potential target seats must ensure that the list of suitable applicants can meet gender balance requirements for the final shortlist:

- For shortlists of three at least one of each gender
- For shortlists of four and five at least two of each gender
- For larger shortlists at least 1/3 of the shortlist must be of each gender.

Non-target seats are exempted from the requirement to have a balanced shortlist unless they have more than two applicants when the rules for target seats shall apply.

25. Subject to there being a sufficient number of applicants of each gender shortlists of two to four must include at least one member of each gender and shortlists of five must include at least two members of each gender.
26. Before proceeding to shortlisting, potential target seats must ensure that there are sufficient applications from eligible candidates to meet the above gender balance requirements on the final shortlist.
27. Subject to there being a sufficient number of applicants from the Leadership Programme, shortlists for potential target seats must include at least two applicants who are members of the Leadership Programme.
28. Where seats are shortlisting if the shortlist diverges significantly from the diversity of the original applicants shortlisting committees must demonstrate to the Returning Officer how the unsuccessful applicants did not meet the minimum selection criteria.

Shortlisting Interviews

Potential target seats must interview all applicants who meet the minimum selection criteria.

They must agree the details of the interviews, including scoring procedure and any tasks, with the Returning Officer in advance.

Non-target seats do not have to hold shortlisting interviews and can publish the list of applicants and proceed to campaign and hustings meetings.

Such seats may hold shortlisting interviews in accordance with the rules for potential target seats if they choose.

29. For potential target seats, and for non-target seats which are holding shortlisting interviews, the following rules shall apply:
 - a) Questions and tasks (which should adhere to the principles underlying these rules (page 2) must be agreed in advance with the Returning Officer and be based on the selection criteria
 - b) Marking schemes must be agreed in advance with the Returning Officer and shared with applicants
 - c) Applicants cannot be asked if they will contribute financially to the campaign and must not offer to do so
 - d) Shortlisting committees must not ask applicants for references nor may applicants offer any references or endorsements of their candidature
 - e) Final shortlists must comply with gender balance requirements (clause 25). If they do not the Returning Officer shall seek advice from the Regional Candidates Chair (RCC). The RCC may require re-advertisement, an extension to the application deadline, or may allow the seat to proceed with a non-standard shortlist
 - f) Final shortlists must include at least two members of the Leadership Programme where sufficient applications have been received (clause 27). If they do not then the shortlist shall be enlarged in order to meet this requirement by the addition of applicant(s) who are part of the Leadership Programme. In making these additions the shortlisting committee shall take into account both their responsibility under clause 11.5 g of the Federal Constitution to show due regard for the representation of ethnic minorities and the applicants' relative scores.
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30. On agreeing the shortlist:

- Applicants will be notified of the outcome by the Returning Officer, if possible within the same 24 hour period
- Applicants will be entitled to feedback on their performance from a member of the shortlisting committee
- Details of shortlisting decisions will be confidential to the shortlisting committee, the Returning Officer, the RCC, the ECC Chair and the English Candidates' Office
- The composition of the shortlist shall remain confidential until the deadline for appeals has passed. Any appeal must be made within seven days of the despatch of notification to the applicants of the shortlist
- Shortlisted applicants will be told the location, date and time at which the count will take place

Phase 3

The candidates' campaign and mailing to members

Once the deadline for appeals against the short-list is past, the local party prepares and sends a members' mailing to all members entitled to vote in the selection. This contains:

- The candidates' manifestos
- The selection criteria
- A postal vote application form
- Details of the hustings meeting

Candidates in the selection will be given a copy of the selection register by the Returning Officer and may then contact members in order to promote their candidature. Rules (below) govern how candidates may do this. Local party members eligible to vote may apply to the Returning Officer for a postal vote, in the event that they are not likely to be at the hustings meeting(s).

Key principles: the shortlisting committee and Returning Officer should ensure that the campaign is **democratic, fair, and manageable.**

The members' mailing

31. A members' mailing shall be produced by the shortlisting committee and approved by the Returning Officer. It must be sent to all members entitled to vote in the selection, all candidates in the selection and the Returning Officer. Shortlisting committees may also decide to send the members' mailing to non-voting members.
 32. All candidates must be given the opportunity to include a personal manifesto with the members' mailing. The specification (e.g. paper size, colour etc) for this must be agreed in advance by the shortlisting committee and approved by the Returning Officer. It must be the same for all candidates.
 33. The Returning Officer shall notify candidates of the deadline for the mailing in good time in order to allow them to send manifestos for inclusion. Manifestos not received by the deadline will not be included in the members' mailing.
 34. The mailing should contain:
 - a) A copy of the selection criteria and a description of the candidate's role (but not necessarily the priorities for the seat if they are politically sensitive)
 - b) A postal vote application form for each voting member
 - c) Details of the members' meeting(s) and how to get there
 - d) Details of how members may gain access to a copy of these rules
 - e) A copy of the manifestos provided by the candidates
 35. The mailing is produced and paid for by the local party.
 - The mailing shall be posted to members at least 14 days before the date of the (first) members' meeting
 - Each member must have their own mailing posted to them separately
-

The candidates' campaign

36. In addition to the members' mailing candidates may use any means to communicate with members or publicise the campaign except that they (and their supporters) may not comment to the press on what is an internal party selection. All such communications must comply with these rules. Candidates will provide copy or electronic links to the Returning Officer so that all material can be scrutinised if necessary.
37. The amount of money that candidates can spend on their campaign will be limited by an expenditure cap agreed in advance by the shortlisting committee, who will use the suggested limits contained in Returning Officers' Guidance to assist them. Candidates must keep a record of all expenses and receipts, and submit this to the Returning Officer at the conclusion of the selection process. These records must be available for inspection by the other candidates, who can ask the Returning Officer to investigate if they think the limit has been exceeded.
38. The number of direct communications with members (emails, messages or delivered materials) shall be restricted to a manageable (and affordable) number agreed in advance by the shortlisting committee.

Potential target seats should agree extensive limits for direct communication with members to allow candidates to demonstrate their campaigning skills.

Non-target seats may choose to restrict additional communications to one additional piece of paper in addition to limited messages and emails.

Such seats may 'opt up' to the rules for potential target seats if they choose.

39. Candidates and anyone acting on their behalf:
- Must comply with data protection laws, the Party's data protection policy and with PPERA legislation at all times (e.g. candidates must not send group emails which reveal the email addresses of the recipients)
 - Must not use their campaign to denigrate others
 - May use photographs as they wish as long as they comply with these rules and both the copyright holder and the subject(s) of the photograph have given permission
 - Must not use written endorsements of their candidature
 - May allow any supporters to campaign on their behalf but must ensure that all such people comply with these rules
 - Must ensure that their actions, and those of their supporters, comply with the Candidates' Code of Conduct
 - May continue with their normal Party activities and campaigning during the selection
 - Must preserve all campaign material and communication until the selection is complete and the result formally announced and accepted

Postal Votes

40. All voting members who want one may apply for a postal vote. They should apply to the Returning Officer and may use the form supplied with the members' mailing for this purpose. Applications not on the supplied form are acceptable as long as the Returning Officer is satisfied that these are genuine.
-

41. The Returning Officer will produce and issue ballot papers for postal votes in accordance with these rules (see Returning Officers' Guidance). He/she shall state clearly the last time at which ballot papers can arrive before the members' meeting. Ballot papers not sent in advance may be delivered by hand to the members' meeting.

Phase 4

The members' meeting(s), vote and count

The shortlisting committee is responsible for organising and running the hustings meeting(s) with the guidance of the Returning Officer, who attends the meeting and conducts the count.

The Returning Officer (or his/her aides) issue ballot papers to all voting members who have not been sent a postal vote. Voting takes place at the hustings meeting(s) and the count immediately follows voting.

Candidates will be asked by the Returning Officer to sign to say that they accept the result. If the result is not disputed then the Returning Officer will declare the result. In the event that the result is disputed then the declaration will take place later after the conclusion of any appeal.

Key principles: members meetings must be organised in a way that ensures they are **inclusive** (for members and candidates), **democratic and fair**.

The members' meeting

42. The shortlisting committee must arrange at least one members' meeting. All details will be agreed in advance and approved by the Returning Officer who will ensure these are available to applicants in advance of the meeting. At the members' meeting(s) all shortlisted applicants will be invited to:

- Meet members
- Speak
- Answer questions

43. The members' meeting(s) shall be chaired by an impartial member and attended by the Returning Officer.

44. At the members' meeting, candidates:

- a) Must remain in a candidates' waiting room whilst other candidates are speaking [or answering individual questions].
- b) May bring a nominated supporter to the members' meeting(s) who must remain with the candidate at all times. All other supporters must remain in the hall throughout the meeting(s). Mobile phones must be switched off for the duration of the members' meeting(s).
- c) Should at all times abide by these rules and by the Candidates' Code of Conduct.
- d) Should not bring postal ballot papers (other than their own) to the meeting.

45. Following the candidates' speeches the Returning Officer may give permission for the candidates to be questioned by the members in other ways (e.g. a "Question Time" panel or informal mingling) as long as the principles underlying these rules are maintained.

46. The Returning Officer is responsible for overseeing the proper conduct of the meeting(s) and may intervene if he/she considers it necessary. He/she may appoint aides to assist at the meeting(s).
47. Non-voting members of the local party may attend the members' meeting(s) as observers.

The vote and count

48. The vote will be conducted by the alternative vote method (i.e. STV for single candidate elections) according to the instructions in appendix B.
 49. The ballot paper will require voting members to rank candidates according to preference (sample ballot paper in Returning Officers' Guidance) and will include the option to re-open nominations (RON) where there are fewer than three candidates.
 50. Ballot papers (including all postal ballot papers) will be numbered and the numbers recorded on the selection register.
 51. The Returning Officer must be satisfied when issuing ballot papers that members are eligible to vote. If there is any doubt a tendered ballot paper (marked T) will be issued.
 52. Eligible members may request a ballot paper, and vote, at any time during the members' meeting.
 53. The votes will be counted by the Returning Officer (according to the alternative vote system outlined in appendix B) at the end of the meeting. A representative of the Local Party, all candidates and their nominated supporter may attend.
 54. Tendered ballot papers shall be considered at the end of each stage to determine if their inclusion would alter the result. If this is the case the count shall be suspended and will not proceed until it has been decided, by the returning officer, whether the tendered papers are eligible.
 55. At the end of the count the Returning Officer will notify all candidates of the result and ask them to sign a copy of the results sheet to say they accept the result.
 56. In the event that one or more candidates do not accept the result, the result will not be declared immediately. Candidates will have 7 days to submit an appeal in accordance with the current appeals protocol (appendix A). The result will be declared once the deadline for receipt of appeals has passed or once any appeal has been decided.
 57. In the event that all candidates accept the result, the Returning Officer will immediately declare it.
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Trouble-shooting

This section explains what will happen in the event of difficulties:

- If an applicant or candidate withdraws
- If it is alleged that a rule has been breached
- If an applicant or candidate has acted in a way that is contrary to the candidates' code of conduct
- If an appeal is lodged against any decision of the returning officer at any stage of the selection

At all times the principles that guide these rules should be referred to when resolving difficulties.

Applicant or candidate withdrawal

Before the announcement of the shortlist:

Potential target seats may only proceed if more than three applicants remain and if the gender balance requirements (rules 24-26) are met.

In other cases the Returning Officer should consult the RCC to consider whether the selection should go ahead with a non-standard shortlist.

For non-target seats no action is required as long as one applicant remains.

However, shortlisting committees may decide not to proceed if fewer than two applicants remain.

58. If a candidate withdraws at any time between announcement of the shortlist and the members' meeting, all other candidates must be notified:

- If the gender balance requirements for potential target seats are not maintained the RCC should be consulted
- If the members' mailing has not yet been sent then it should be altered to reflect the new shortlist
- If the members' mailing has been sent and no ballot papers issued then no action need be taken
- If some ballot papers have been issued then new ballot papers should be drawn up (including RON if necessary). At the count, for ballot papers reflecting the original shortlist, preferences for withdrawn candidate(s) shall be transferred when counting.

59. If a candidate withdraws at the members' meeting existing ballot papers will be used and an explanation given to the members with instructions to delete the withdrawn candidate.

60. If a winning candidate withdraws before they have signed their acceptance of the result then there will be a recount.

Breaches of the rules

61. If applicants/candidates or members of the local party believe a selection rule has been breached they should:

- Put their concerns in writing to the Returning Officer
- Identify the rule they believe has been breached
- Provide details of the circumstances of the breach
- Explain the effect of the breach

62. Once they have been notified of alleged breaches of the rules (rule 62, above) the Returning Officer will:

- Investigate the situation
- Make a formal ruling, notifying the complainant, all applicants/candidates and the shortlisting committee of the details of this.

63. If it is alleged that any candidate has behaved in a way that is contrary to the Candidates' Code of Conduct the Returning Officer shall consult the RCC who shall investigate the allegation.

64. Anyone wishing to appeal a Returning Officer's ruling shall do so using the process laid down in Rules for the Conduct of Appeals (appendix A)

65. If an appeal is lodged, the Returning Officer shall immediately suspend the selection and inform the RCC, all applicants/candidates, the shortlisting committee and the English Candidates' Office.

Jargon Buster

| | |
|------------------------|--|
| Applicants | Those who return applications to the Returning Officer |
| Candidates | Those applicants who are shortlisted |
| ECC | English Candidates' Committee |
| Members' meeting | A meeting of members in a constituency, where candidates speak and are asked questions, and voting may take place. |
| PPC | Prospective Parliamentary Candidate |
| PPERA | Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act |
| Publications | Includes electronic as well as printed media being offered to members |
| RCC | Regional Candidates' Chair |
| RO | Returning Officer |
| RON | Re-open nominations – an option available on a ballot paper in the case of non-standard shortlists |
| Selection register | List of members eligible to vote in a selection |
| The Party | Liberal Democrat Party |
| Written | Post, fax, e-mail, or hand delivered unless specifically stated otherwise. |
| Strategic Seats Team | The team within the Elections & Skills department responsible for the Party's Strategic Seats programme (formerly known as Priority or Target Seats programme) |
| Potential Target Seat* | A seat that has been identified by the Strategic Seats Team as being potentially eligible for inclusion in the Strategic Seats programme |
| Non-Target Seat* | Any seat which is not a potential target seat |

* (Please note that none of these seat categories are fixed; all are based upon performance and the category of a seat may change within an electoral cycle)

Appendices to the rules for selection of Westminster parliamentary candidates in England

Appendix A: Rules for the conduct of appeals to panels of the English Candidates' Committee

Appendix B: method for counting votes and drawing lots

Electing one person by means of Single Transferable Vote (based upon the Electoral Reform Society regulations)

Appendix C – special selection protocols agreed by English Candidates' Committee

The Constitution of the Scottish Liberal Democrats

As amended, Dunfermline, October 2009

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PREAMBLE

The Scottish Liberal Democrats exist to build and safeguard a fair, free and open society, in which we seek to balance the fundamental values of liberty, equality and community and in which no-one shall be enslaved by poverty, ignorance or conformity. We champion the freedom, dignity and well-being of individuals, we acknowledge and respect their right to freedom of conscience and their right to develop their talents to the full. We aim to disperse power, to foster diversity and to nurture creativity. We believe that the role of the state is to enable all citizens to attain these ideals, to contribute fully to their communities and to take part in the decisions which affect their lives.

We look forward to a world in which all people share the same basic rights, in which they live together in peace and in which their different cultures will be able to develop freely. We believe that each generation is responsible for the fate of our planet and, by safeguarding the balance of nature and the environment, for the long term continuity of life in all its forms.

Upholding these values of individual and social justice, we reject all prejudice and discrimination based upon race, colour, religion, age, disability, sex or sexual orientation and oppose all forms of entrenched privilege and inequality. Recognising that the quest for freedom and justice can never end, we promote human rights and open government, a sustainable economy which serves genuine need, public services of the highest quality, international action based on a recognition of the interdependence of all the world's peoples and responsible stewardship of the earth and its resources.

We believe that people should be involved in running their communities. We are determined to strengthen the democratic process and ensure that there is a just and representative system of government with effective Parliamentary institutions, freedom of information, decisions taken at the lowest practicable level and a fair voting system for all elections.

We will at all times defend the right to speak, write, worship, associate and vote freely, and we will protect the right of citizens to enjoy privacy in their own lives and homes. We believe that sovereignty rests with the people and that authority in a democracy derives from them. We therefore acknowledge their right to determine the form of government best suited to their needs. We commit ourselves to the promotion of these aims and beliefs in the Scottish and United Kingdom Parliaments. We similarly commit ourselves to the promotion of a flourishing system of democratic local government in which decisions are taken and services delivered at the most local level which is viable.

We will foster a strong and sustainable economy which encourages the necessary wealth-creating processes, develops and uses the skills of the people and works to the benefit of all, with a just distribution of the rewards of success. We want to see democracy, participation and the co-operative principle in industry and commerce within a competitive environment in which the state allows the market to operate freely where possible but intervenes where necessary. We will promote scientific research and innovation and will harness technological change to human advantage.

THE CONSTITUTIONS OF THE LIBERAL DEMOCRATS

We will work for a sense of partnership and community in all areas of life. We recognise that the independence of individuals is safeguarded by their personal ownership of property, but that the market alone does not distribute wealth or income fairly. We support the widest possible distribution of wealth and promote the rights of all citizens to social provision and cultural activity. We seek to make public services responsive to the people they serve, to encourage variety and innovation within them and to make them available on equal terms to all.

Our responsibility for justice and liberty cannot be confined by national boundaries; we are committed to fight poverty, oppression, hunger, ignorance, disease and aggression wherever they occur and to promote the free movement of ideas, people, goods and services. Setting aside national sovereignty when necessary, we will work with other countries towards an equitable and peaceful international order and a durable system of common security. Within the European Community we affirm the values of federalism and integration and work for unity based on these principles. We will contribute to the process of peace and disarmament, the elimination of world poverty and the collective safeguarding of democracy by playing a full and constructive role in furtherance of these ends within the framework of the Community, the United Nations, the Commonwealth and other appropriate international organisations.

These are the conditions of liberty and social justice which it is the responsibility of each citizen and the duty of the state to protect and enlarge. The Scottish Liberal Democrats consist of women and men working together for the achievement of these aims.

A. The Party

A1. The name of the Party shall be the Scottish Liberal Democrats (hereinafter called "the Party").

A2. The Party shall be an independent constituent part of a federation consisting of the Party, the Welsh Liberal Democrats, and the English Liberal Democrats. The provisions of the Federal Party's constitution shall apply in Scotland in the manner therein specified.

A3. The Party shall be the successor in title to the Scottish Liberal Party and to the Social Democratic Party in Scotland.

A4. The objects of the Party shall be:

- a. to promote the values and principles enshrined in the preamble of this Constitution;
- b. to develop and promote policies that lead to the realisation of those values and principles;
and
- c. to seek the return of members of the Scottish Parliament, the United Kingdom Parliament, the European Parliament and local councillors at all levels of local government in Scotland and the appointment of members to public bodies, who support the above objects and who are members of the Party.

B. Functions of the Party

The functions of the Party shall be:

B1. To provide the organisation, administrative and campaigning support for Local Parties and Associated Organisations within Scotland.

B2. To provide support for Party Members of the Scottish Parliament, both Houses of Parliament of the United Kingdom, the European Parliament and of local councils and other public bodies;

- a. to be responsible for maintaining a definitive list of members of the Party;
- b. to liaise with Local Parties regarding the maintenance and expansion of that list;
- and
- c. to administer the division of membership income between Local Parties, the Party and the Federal Party;

B3. To play a full part in the work of the Federal Party and to encourage Local Parties and members to do likewise.

B4. To develop and formulate the policies of the Party, to place the policies of the Federal Party in a Scottish context and to promote such policies.

B5. To promote public awareness within Scotland and elsewhere of the philosophy, policies and work of the Party.

B6. To promote and encourage the selection of effective candidates for public office; and

B7. To raise the finance required to carry out the functions described in this Constitution and to maintain such an organisation, including staff, to do so.

C. Membership

C1. All individuals shall be eligible for membership of the Party if:

- a. they support the values and principles of the Party;
- b. they are not members or supporters of any organisation whose purposes are incompatible with those of the Party; and
- c. they are not members of any other political party within Great Britain.

C2. Any eligible person shall be admitted to membership on payment of a subscription and acceptance of a membership application:

- a. by the Executive or by a person authorised to act on the Executive's behalf; or
- b. by a Local Party in accordance with its own rules;
- c. by an Associated Organisation; or
- d. in such other manner as the Executive may approve.

C3. The Executive may determine whether the purposes of any organisation in Scotland are to be treated as incompatible with those of the Party.

C4. All members shall be guaranteed the following rights under this Constitution:

- a. the right to elect Party Office Bearers in Scotland;
- b. the right to participate in the policy making bodies of the Party;
- c. the right to have a say in the operation and amendment of the Party's Constitution;
- d. the right to participate in Local Party meetings and Party Conferences; and
- e. the right to stand for election to office within the Party.

C5. The names and addresses of current members of the Party shall be entered on the membership list, which shall be the definitive list of members. Members' addresses shall be either their residence or their place of work or study.

C6. Members whose membership address is in Scotland shall be members of the Local Party for that address or any other Local Party which is prepared to accept that person as a member. Any member whose membership address is outside Scotland shall be a member of any Local Party which is prepared to accept that person as a member. No person shall be a member of more than one Local Party.

C7. The Membership list shall be confidential and the Executive shall take all reasonable steps to ensure that information contained on the membership list is used solely for Party purposes and is not disclosed to any person other than persons authorised by this Constitution or by the Executive.

C8. All members of the Party shall be required to pay an annual subscription to be determined from time to time by the Conference. The minimum subscription shall not be less than that fixed by the Federal Conference. The proportions paid to or retained by the Party and the Local Party or Associated Organisation shall be determined by the Conference on the recommendation of the Executive. The Executive shall also negotiate with the Federal Executive on the proportion of subscription income to be remitted to the Federal Party prior to its determination by the Federal Conference.

C9. Membership of the Party shall be terminated if:

- a. a member ceases to be eligible for membership under Clause C1; or
- b. a member sends written notice of resignation to such address as may from time to time be specified for communications relating to the membership list; or
- c. a member's subscription has expired and has not been renewed within three months (provided that membership shall be restored if the arrears are paid during the period to which the subscription relates); or
- d. a member is expelled from membership under Clause C10.

C10.

A member shall be expelled from membership of the Party if the Executive is of the opinion that his or her continued membership would be seriously detrimental to the interests of the Party, provided that:

- a. a motion to consider expulsion of a member shall only be competent at a meeting of the Executive of which due notice has been given and intention to propose the motion has been circulated in advance; and
- b. such motion shall require a simple majority of Executive members present and voting; and
- c. the member shall, subsequent to such vote, be notified in writing of the grounds on which the Executive is considering the termination of his or her membership and given a fair opportunity to comment in writing thereon; and
- d. the member shall be expelled only if the Executive, after consideration of the relevant material, shall so decide by a two thirds majority of votes cast in a secret ballot of its members.

C11. In case of urgency, the Executive may, by a two thirds majority of members present and voting at a properly called meeting, suspend any member from the rights and privileges of membership for a period not exceeding three months while the question of termination of his or her membership is under consideration. A member may be suspended by a unanimous decision of the Office Bearers for a period not exceeding one calendar month to allow for a meeting of the Executive to be called.

C12. No person who has been expelled from membership of the Party shall be eligible for readmission without the prior approval of the Executive.

C13. Any person whose application to become a member has been refused, or any member who has been suspended or expelled from membership or who is otherwise aggrieved in a matter pertaining to this Section C may appeal to the Appeals Tribunal as provided in Section K. Any appeal by any person to the Federal Appeals Panel in terms of Article 14 of the Federal constitution in relation to membership of the Party may only be made if the procedure under Section K of this Constitution has been exhausted.

D. Local Parties

D1. There shall be Local Parties in all parts of Scotland. A Local Party shall only be recognised as such and entitled to the rights granted by this Constitution if it has at least twenty members and has adopted a constitution which satisfies the principles contained in this Constitution and the Federal constitution.

D2. A Local Party's boundaries shall be determined and may be revised by the Executive. In exercising this power the Executive shall:

- a. Consult pre-existing Local Parties and members in the area, including in particular those elected to public office at any level;
- b. Give effect, as far as practicable, to any local agreement reached;
- c. Take into account the ability of the Local Party to be able to play its part in pursuing the objects of the Party set out in Section A, Clause 4 and the need for it to be an effective campaigning unit, and
- d. Take into account the democratic right of members to participate in the affairs of the Party and the Local Party.

D3. Except where a local agreement acceptable to the Executive and satisfying the requirements of Clause D2 has been reached, a Local Party shall be formed of the members –

- a. in a single Council area or,
- b. in the combined areas of two or more Councils, or
- c. in a subdivision of a Council area, taking into account Scottish or United Kingdom Parliamentary boundaries.

D4. When the membership of a Local Party falls below twenty for a continuous period of six months, the terms of Clauses D1 to D3 shall be applied in redrawing the boundaries of Local Parties in that area.

D5. The boundaries of Local Parties may be reviewed from time to time, either on the initiative of the Local Parties or the Executive, and in any such review the terms of Clauses D1 to D3 shall apply.

D6. In any Council area where there are less than twenty members and it is not practicable to include those members in a neighbouring Local Party, the Executive shall approve such form of local organisation within the area as commands local support, provided that

- a. the selection of a candidate to contest any election on behalf of the Party shall be subject to the Executive's approval;
- b. the appointment of office-bearers shall be subject to the Executive's approval;
- c. the affairs of the group shall be conducted in a manner which is to the Executive's satisfaction.

D7. In the event of a dispute about the boundaries or composition of a Local Party, any affected Local Party or an aggrieved member of it may appeal to the Appeals Tribunal.

D8. This clause provides for a proper system of co-ordination between Local Parties –

- a. within Scottish Parliamentary Regions, and in any instance where
 - i) a Council,
 - ii) a Scottish Parliamentary constituency, or
-

iii) a United Kingdom Parliamentary constituency comprises an area covered by the whole or part of more than one Local Party.

b. In each case, the relevant Local Parties shall have a duty to establish a coordinating body or campaign committee, which in the case of a Parliamentary Region may be known as a Regional Party. The purpose of any such body shall be to ensure

- i) the participation of members in the Party's and the Local Parties' affairs within each Region, Constituency and Council area, and
- ii) effective campaigning for elections at each level.

The Local Parties may agree, in any instance, that one of them shall be the body with the responsibility for fulfilling this function, provided that affected members who are not members of that Local Party are included in its affairs.

Where a Regional Party or any other body is independently constituted under the terms of this Clause D8, its rules shall be subject to the Executive's approval. Any such body shall not itself be an accounting unit in terms of the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 or any subsequent legislation, but shall arrange, with the Executive's approval, that a Local Party shall be responsible for administering its funds and compliance with the Acts.

D9. Each Local Party shall adopt a constitution and shall make a copy of it available to the Executive and to any member of the Local Party on request. Each Local Party constitution shall conform with the principles of this Constitution and the Federal constitution, shall include its objects and shall also provide:

- a. for the holding of an annual general meeting at which audited accounts (to be made available to the Executive) are provided;
 - b. for the election of a committee to manage the affairs of the Local Party and for the election of a convener, secretary and treasurer (who shall be the registered treasurer of the Local Party in terms of the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 and any subsequent legislation) and such other office-bearers as the Local Party sees fit;
 - c. that the term of office of the treasurer of the Local Party and the treasurer of any branch thereof should commence on 1 January and end on 31 December for each year that they hold office, and that the financial year of the Local Party and its branches (if any) should end on 31 December ;
 - d. that members should be advised timeously of the procedure for nominating members as officers of the Local Party and Federal Conference representatives;
 - e. that all members should receive not less than fourteen days notice of all general meetings at which the Party's business is to be transacted, which notice should include the date, time and place of the meeting;
 - f. that all contested elections for party officers and representatives should be by single transferable vote in a secret ballot and that all such ballots should either be postal ballots of all members or ballots of members at the annual general meeting (provided that members unable to attend may vote by post or proxy);
 - g. that members of the Party holding elective office in a principal local authority in the area of the Local Party should, if not elected to the Local Party committee, be entitled to attend its meetings but not to vote;
 - h. for quorum for general meetings;
 - i. for procedures for the election and adoption of candidates for all Party, local and national elections;
-

- j. for the keeping of the membership list, the procedure for notifying the appropriate person appointed by the Executive of its details, and for keeping its details confidential;
- k. for amendment of the constitution by a two-thirds majority of members voting, and
- l. that the Local Party must ensure its own compliance and that of its branches with the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 and any subsequent legislation.

D10. A Local Party may provide for the establishment of branches thereof which shall be bound by the terms of its own constitution.

D11. Each Local Party shall advise the Executive of any amendment which it makes to its constitution. If the Executive considers that a Local Party constitution is in conflict with the requirements of this Constitution or that the Local Party is in breach of its own constitution, it may appeal to the Appeals Tribunal for a ruling on the matter. Any member of a Local Party who believes that its constitution is in conflict with the requirements of the Constitution, or that it is in breach of its own constitution or that it is being improperly administered may appeal to the Appeals Tribunal.

D12. The Executive may, by a two thirds majority of all its members suspend from office any or all of the office-bearers and committee members of a Local Party if, but only if, any of the following obtains:

- a. the committee or any of its office-bearers or members has acted in persistent or serious breach of the terms of this Constitution or the Federal constitution or its own constitution;
- b. the committee or any of its office-bearers or members has failed to give effect to a ruling of the Appeals Tribunal under Section K hereof, or the Federal Appeals Panel under Article 14 of the Federal constitution;
- c. the committee has acted or is proposing to act in a manner which is seriously detrimental to the interests of the Party.

The committee shall be advised in each case in writing of the grounds on which the Executive is considering suspension and given a fair opportunity to comment in writing thereon. Any member of a Local Party aggrieved by the suspension or proposed suspension of office-bearers or committee members of the Local Party may appeal to the Appeals Tribunal and, if the appeal is allowed, the suspension shall be cancelled.

Following the suspension from office of a Local Party committee or any of its office-bearers or members, the Executive shall make such arrangements as may be necessary to restore authority as soon as possible to a committee elected by members.

D13.

- a. Except as provided in this Section D, a Local Party shall be an accounting unit in terms of the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 and any subsequent legislation.
 - b. If, at any time, a Local Party is in breach of the terms of the Act, or the Executive has reason to believe it is about to be in breach of the terms of the Act, the Executive shall consult with the office-bearers of the Local Party to seek agreement on a means of securing its compliance with the Act.
 - c. If, but only if, the procedure in Paragraph D13(b) above fails, the Executive may, not less than 14 days after giving notice of its intention to the Local Party Committee,
 - i) remove from office the Treasurer of the Local Party and arrange for the election of a replacement Treasurer or, if necessary to ensure compliance, itself appoint a person to be acting Treasurer (who need not be a member of a Local Party); or
-

ii) suspend from office for a specified period any office-bearer or committee members of the Local Party, but only on the ground that this is essential for the purposes of compliance with the Act but may in so doing specify that the action taken is deemed to have effect from the point in time at which the Local Party began to be in breach of the Act.

d. Either with the agreement of the Local Party Committee or if the procedure in Paragraph D10(b) above fails, the Executive may, not less than 14 days after giving notice of its intention to all the affected parties, combine the Local Party with one or more other Local Parties to form a single accounting unit in terms of the Act. The Executive may in so doing specify that such combination is deemed to have effect from the point in time at which the Local Party began to be in breach of the Act. The Executive shall take all reasonable steps to ensure that

the new accounting unit is able to comply with the terms of the Act.

e. In the event that the procedures in Paragraph D10(c) or D10(d) above are followed, the rights and duties of the Local Party and members thereof shall not be affected in any way except as far as necessary to secure compliance with the Act. No Local Party shall cease to be a Local Party solely by virtue of having ceased to be an accounting unit. In particular, the procedures in Paragraph D10(c) and D10(d) shall not infringe:

i) the rights of members contained in Section C, Clause 5;

ii) the rights and duties of Local Parties contained in Section D (other than as specified in those paragraphs);

iii) the right of Local Party members to attend and vote at Conference;

iv) the rights and duties of Local Parties and members thereof in the selection of candidates contained in Section H.

f. Except with the agreement of the Local Party committee, the Executive shall take steps to ensure that a Local Party which has ceased to be an accounting unit is re-established as such as soon as practicable, subject only to their being satisfied that the terms of the Act will be complied with.

g. Any member of a Local Party may appeal to the Appeals Tribunal against any action taken under this clause and, if the appeal is upheld, the action shall be annulled..

E. Conference

E1. The Party shall meet in conference at least once in each year. The Conference shall be the governing body of the Party and all other organs of the Party shall be accountable to it, subject only to the terms of this Constitution.

E2. Unless otherwise specified, all elections to office provided for in sections E, F and G shall be arranged according to a timetable to be set by the Executive. The Executive shall appoint a returning officer for the conduct of elections.

E3. In the event of a tied vote in any election provided for in this Constitution, a decision between the candidates tying shall be reached by drawing lots.

E4. An Annual Report and the audited accounts of the Party for the previous calendar year shall be presented to Conference.

E5. All members of the Party whose subscriptions have been paid and are registered, shall be entitled to attend Conference and vote at its proceedings. Members of the Federal Party who are not members of the Party but have been adopted as a Parliamentary candidate anywhere in Scotland shall be entitled to attend and vote at Conference as if they were members of the Party.

E6. The Conference shall have the power to determine the policy of the Party in the manner prescribed in Section G of this Constitution. The Party shall be entitled to make policy on all matters relevant to Scotland except those which might reasonably be expected to fall within the remit of the federal institutions in the context of a federal United Kingdom.

E7. The Conference may also debate and express opinions upon matters on which the Federal Party has the right to make policy, but the opinions expressed shall not constitute the policy of the Party.

E8. The Conference may also debate and express opinions upon any other matters.

E9. Motions for debate and amendments thereto or proposals relating to the business of the Party may be proposed by the Executive, the Policy Committee, the Conference Committee, any Local Party, any Associated Organisation or not less than twenty-five members. In addition amendments to published motions may be proposed by not less than five members.

E10. The Conference shall be organised by a Conference Committee which shall consist of:

- a. the Conference Convener who shall chair the Committee
 - b. the Convener;
 - c. six members elected by members of the Party who are registered to attend Conference, and to serve for two years;
 - d. one member elected annually by the Executive;
 - e. one member elected annually by the Policy Committee;
 - f. one member (who may send a substitute who is a Member of a Parliamentary Party), chosen by and from the Parliamentary Party in the House of Commons who are members of the Party representing a Scottish constituency;
-

- g. one member (who may send a substitute who is a Member of a Parliamentary Party), chosen by and from the Parliamentary Party in the Scottish Parliament who are members of the Party;
- h. one member (who may send a substitute who is a Member of a Parliamentary Party), chosen by and from the Parliamentary Party in the European Parliament who are members of the Party representing Scotland or any part thereof;
- i. one councillor who is a member of a Liberal Democrat Group on any Scottish Local Authority, to be elected by councillors who are members of a Liberal Democrat Council Group, to serve for two years.
- j. the Party's Representative on the Federal Conference Committee if not already a member;
- k. one member appointed by Liberal Youth Scotland;
- l. one member appointed by the Scottish Women Liberal Democrats.

E11. The Conference Committee may co-opt additional members up to one quarter of their membership. Co-opted members may not vote.

E12. The Conference Committee shall, for each ordinary Conference, prepare and circulate to Local Parties and every organisation specified in Clause E10, a timetable for the receipt of motions, amendments and other notices of business for the Conference.

E13. The Conference Committee shall be responsible for setting the agenda for ordinary Conferences, which shall include motions for public debate (and amendments thereto) and time for the transaction of Party business. It may, at its discretion, redraft a motion or amendment submitted to it so as to improve expression, treat any severable part of a motion or amendment as a separate motion or amendment or composite similar motions or amendments, all so far as practicable in consultation with the proposers of the motions or amendments. The Conference Committee shall provide assistance and guidance on matters relating to the agenda to members and Local Parties. The agenda shall be circulated to Conference representatives registered for that Conference as soon as practicable after publication and in any event not less than seven days before the Conference. The Conference Committee shall have the discretion to allow (or itself propose) emergency motions which have not been placed on the agenda.

E14. The Conference Committee shall draft and, from time to time review, standing orders for the conduct of business at the Conference, which shall be subject to the approval of the Conference.

E15. A quorum of the Conference shall be one quarter of the members registered to attend at the start of that Conference, but it shall be competent for debate on any matter to continue in the presence of less than one quarter provided that no vote is taken until a quorum is present.

E16. A special Conference of the Party shall be called either by the Executive or at the request of ten Local Parties. The request shall be submitted along with the purposes for which the Conference is called to the principal officer of the Party who shall within seven days serve notice on every member of the Party who would normally be notified of the details of any meeting of Conference. The Conference shall be held not less than twenty-one nor more than twenty-eight days after the date of the notice, or on a later date agreed by those requisitioning the special Conference and by the Executive. This timetable shall not apply to a special Conference called in terms of Section L, Clause 1 of this Constitution.

E17. Subject to the agreement of the Executive, the Conference Committee shall determine the date and place of a Conference.

E18. The Conference Committee shall report regularly to the Executive and be subject to its authority.

F. Office Bearers and Executive Committee

F1.

The Office Bearers of the Party shall be the

- a. Leader;
- b. Deputy Leader;
- c. President;
- d. Convener;
- e. Policy Convener;
- f. Conference Convener;
- g. Campaigns and Candidates Convener; and
- h. Treasurer.

F2. The Leader shall be a member of the Scottish Parliament. The Deputy Leader shall be a Member of the House of Commons representing a Scottish Constituency.

F3. The Leader and the Deputy Leader shall hold office from the declaration of the result of their election until a date, to be fixed by the Executive, between 1st July and 1st January immediately following a four-yearly Scottish General Election;

F4. Office Bearers other than the Leader and Deputy Leader shall hold office for two years from the 1st January immediately following their election.

F5. All Office Bearers of the Party shall be elected by the single transferable vote in a secret postal ballot of all members.

F6. Nominations for any of the Office Bearer posts shall be by not less than thirty members of the Party of whom not more than five shall be members of the same Local Party.

F7. Nominations for the Leader must be supported by another Member of the Scottish Parliament. Nominations for the Deputy Leader must be supported by another member of the House of Commons representing a Scottish Constituency.

F8. The Leader shall be responsible for the political direction of the Party and for promoting its cause in Scotland.

F9. The Deputy Leader shall deputise for the Leader within the Party and shall be responsible for co-ordinating the work of the Party and the Members of the Parliamentary Parties in the Scottish Parliament, United Kingdom Parliament and the European Parliament representing Scottish Constituencies.

F10. In the event of the death or resignation of the Leader, Deputy Leader or Convener a successor shall be elected to complete the unexpired term of office. Save if the term has less than six months to run, the Executive may appoint an acting Leader or Deputy Leader or Convener.

F11. In the event of the death or resignation of an Office Bearer other than the Leader, Deputy Leader or Convener or any member of the Executive elected under Clause F23(b), the Executive shall take such action with regard to the vacancy as it shall think fit, save that any

member appointed to hold such office shall only do so to complete the unexpired term of office.

F12. The President shall be the guardian of the Constitution and shall have a duty to report to the Conference, independently of the other office bearers if, in his or her opinion, the Executive's activities or plans are constitutionally unsound. The Conference shall have the right to take such action on the President's report as it thinks fit. The President shall be entitled to attend and speak at meetings of the Executive but not to vote. The President may preside at the Conference on formal occasions.

F13. The Convener shall be responsible for the day-to-day direction of the Party and shall be entitled to chair meetings of the Executive and Conference. He or she shall be a Vice President of the Federal Party.

F14. The Policy Convener shall convene the Policy Committee.

F15. The Treasurer shall convene the Finance and Membership Committee

F16. The Conference Convener shall convene the Conference Committee.

F17. The Campaigns and Candidates Convener shall convene the meetings of the Campaigns and Candidates Committee.

F18. The Policy Convener, Conference Convener and Campaigns and Candidates Convener shall be Vice-Conveners of the Party and shall assist the Convener in such activities as he or she and the Executive shall agree, and shall deputise for him or her when absent.

F19. The Treasurer shall receive and disburse monies on behalf of the Party according to a policy directed by the Executive. The Treasurer shall be the registered treasurer of the Party in terms of the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 and any subsequent legislation.

F20. An Office Bearer of the Party who is unable, or persistently fails, to carry out his or her duties may be removed from office by a two thirds majority of all the members of the Executive in a secret ballot. Before such a proposal may be voted on, the Office Bearer shall be given in writing the reason for it and an opportunity to respond. An Office Bearer may appeal against his or her removal to the Appeals Tribunal, who shall have the right to reinstate the Office Bearer. When this clause is invoked and it is necessary to do so, the Executive may appoint another person to act temporarily in his or her place.

F21. The Office Bearers shall be responsible for the appointment and management of staff and for agreeing their terms and conditions according to a policy determined by the Executive, and for the Party's compliance with employment law.

F22. The Officer Bearers shall also be responsible for ensuring the co-ordination of the political and other work of the party and for this purpose will meet regularly and may make recommendations to the Executive and its Standing Committees and subcommittees.

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F23. There shall be an Executive Committee, referred to in this Constitution as the Executive, which shall consist of:

- a. the Office Bearers, and
- b. twelve other members of the Party elected in a postal ballot of all members of the Party.
- c. When unable to attend a meeting of the Executive, the Leader and Deputy Leader may appoint another Member of the Scottish, United Kingdom or European Parliaments to attend in their place as voting members.

F24. Nominations for members of the Executive, other than the Office Bearers, shall be subscribed by ten members of the Party. They shall be elected by the single transferable vote in a secret postal ballot of all members of the Party and shall hold office for two years from 1st January following their election.

F25. A representative of each Associated Organisation shall be entitled to attend and speak at meetings of the Executive but not to vote.

F26. The Executive shall be responsible for the management and conduct of the Party and ensuring compliance of the Party with the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 and any subsequent legislation, and shall be accountable to the Conference.

F27. The quorum at any meeting of the Executive shall be one-third of its members.

F28. The Executive shall have the power to appoint sub-committees. In particular, the Executive shall work through the following Standing Committees, all of which are responsible and accountable to the Executive:

- a. Conference Committee
- b. Policy Committee
- c. Finance and Membership Committee
- d. Campaigns and Candidates Committee

F29. The Convener shall be a member of all Standing Committees and sub-committees.

F30. The quorum of each of the Standing Committees shall be set by the Executive..

F31.

The Executive and the Standing Committees may co-opt up to four additional members. Co-opted members may not vote.

F32. In the event of the death or resignation of a member of a Standing Committee who was elected by members of the Party, or of the Party's representatives on Federal Party Committees, or in the event of there being insufficient nominations to fill these positions, the Executive shall take such action with regard to the vacancy as it shall think fit.

F33. The Executive shall have the power to borrow money and to grant indemnities for the general purposes of the Party and to secure any monies borrowed, or grants of indemnity given, in such a manner as it thinks fit upon the assets of the Party; provided always that the total amount of the monies borrowed, or the terms of the indemnities, shall not exceed such amount as may from time to time be determined by the Executive and approved by the Conference.

F34. The Office Bearers of the Party and other members of the Executive shall not be liable for any loss arising from the negligence or fraud of any person employed by them or the Party (even if the employment of any such person was not necessary or expedient), or by reason of any mistake or omission made in good faith by any of them or by reason of any other matter or thing except wilful fraud or wrongdoing on the part of the Office Bearer or Executive member who is sought to be made liable. They shall be entitled to an indemnity out of the assets of the Party (including future assets) against all costs, damages and expenses incurred by them, in respect of any liability from which they are relieved by the foregoing provisions of this clause and for all liability costs and expenses properly incurred by them in the execution of their powers and duties

Finance and Membership Committee

F35. The members of the Finance and Membership Committee shall be:

- a. the Treasurer;
- b. two members of the Executive appointed by the Executive;
- c. a member of the Conference Committee appointed by the Conference Committee;
- d. a member of the Campaigns and Candidates Committee appointed by the Campaigns and Candidates Committee.

F36. The Finance and Membership Committee shall be responsible and accountable to the Executive for:

- a. managing all financial activity of the Party;
- b. managing the recruitment and retention of members;
- c. management and commercial aspects of Conference and shall act for the Executive in its supervision of the Conference Committee in terms of Clause E18;
- d. management of all commercial activities.

Campaigns and Candidates Committee

F37. The members of the Campaigns and Candidates Committee shall be:

- a. the Campaigns and Candidates Convener, who shall be Chair of the committee;
- b. three members of the Executive appointed by the Executive to assist with the delivery of the committee responsibilities;
- c. one member of the Policy Committee appointed by the Policy Committee;
- d. one member chosen by and from the Liberal Democrat Group on the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities;
- e. one member appointed by the Scottish Women Liberal Democrats;
- f. one member appointed by Liberal Youth Scotland, and
- g. a representative from each of the Scottish, United Kingdom and European Parliamentary Parties.
- h. At any time the Campaigns and Candidates Convener may co-opt a non-voting member to the committee to assist in delivery of the committee's responsibilities.

F38. The Campaigns and Candidates Committee shall be responsible and accountable to

the Executive for:

- a. delivering the functions set out in Article 11.1 of the Federal Constitution, which they shall exercise under the co-ordination of the Joint States Candidates Committee established under Article 11.2 of the Federal Constitution;
- b. supporting and co-ordinating campaigning activity, including elections, in Scotland;
- c. organising training for members to ensure capability of the Party in the areas responsible to the committee;
- d. monitoring the procedures used by local parties relating to council candidate selections.

F39. The Campaigns and Candidates Convener shall be the Party's representative on the Joint States Candidates Committee but he or she shall have the power to make a substitution if he or she cannot attend a particular meeting of the Joint States Candidates Committee.

G. Policy Committee

G1. There shall be a Policy Committee which shall have the duty of researching, developing and formulating policy, and managing and overseeing the policy-making process. It shall have the powers and responsibilities contained in this Section.

G2. The Policy Committee shall consist of:

- a. The Policy Convener who shall normally chair the Committee;
- b. the Leader;
- c. the Convener;
- d. one Member, whom failing one alternate member, chosen by and from the Parliamentary Party in the House of Commons who are members of the Party representing a Scottish constituency;
- e. one Member, whom failing one alternate member, chosen by and from the Parliamentary Party in the Scottish Parliament who are members of the Party;
- f. one member chosen by and from the Parliamentary Party in the European Parliament representing Scotland or any part thereof;
- g. one member nominated by the Association of Scottish Liberal Democrat Councillors who is a member of the Party and belongs to a to a Liberal Democrat Group on a Scottish Local Authority
- h. two other members of the Executive elected by the Executive;
- i. five members of the Party elected in a ballot of all members of the Party to serve for two years;
- j. the Scottish Party's representative on the Federal Policy Committee if not otherwise a member, and
- k. one member appointed by Liberal Youth Scotland.

G3. The Conference shall have the power to make the policy of the Party. This power shall be exercised in accordance with the provisions of this Section of the Constitution.

G4. The Leader and spokespeople, in exercising their duty to promote the cause of the Party, shall have the power to express and update the Party's policy in order to respond to day to day political developments. Any material change in policy made in this manner shall only remain the policy of the Party if it is approved by the first appropriate meeting of Conference.

G5. The Policy Committee shall commission, publish and submit to the Conference policy motions or proposals, either on its own initiative or at the request of the Conference. In discharging this duty, the Policy Committee shall ensure proper consideration of varying viewpoints within the Party and, where appropriate, offer options for consideration. When approved by the Conference, a policy proposal shall, subject to any amendment or qualification the Conference makes, become the policy of the Party.

G6. The Policy Committee shall submit an annual report for approval or amendment to Conference on its programme of policy development.

G7. The Policy Committee may request that any proposal, whether by motion or amendment or otherwise to be considered by any Conference which would, if approved, state, amend or otherwise affect the policy of the Party, should first be remitted to itself for further

consideration. The Conference shall not be bound to accede to the Policy Committee's request, or may accede to it subject to qualifications.

G8. The Policy Committee shall have power:

- a. to make interim policy on topical issues, but such policy will remain the policy of the Party only if it is approved by the first appropriate meeting of Conference;
- b. to make detailed policy of the kind needed to implement the principles and thrust of a policy proposal or motion that has already been adopted by Conference, and
- c. take such other action as appears to them expedient, taking into account their constitutional responsibility to Conference.

G9. The Policy Committee shall be responsible for the preparation and approval of the Party's election manifesto for any General Election to the Scottish Parliament, and for the Scottish version of, or supplement to, the manifesto for any General Election to the United Kingdom Parliament or the European Parliament. They shall do so in consultation with the Leader and the relevant Parliamentary Party.

G10. When practicable, and always in the case of an ordinary election to the Scottish Parliament, the Policy Committee shall prepare a pre-manifesto document to be presented to Conference for approval. An election manifesto shall be based upon the pre-manifesto document as approved, and policy adopted by, the Conference. If no policy has been adopted on some issue which in the view of the Policy Committee needs to be referred to, the Policy Committee shall have power to pronounce a policy on that issue for inclusion in the manifesto.

G11. If the Scottish Parliamentary Party proposes to enter into an agreement for Government, the terms of the agreement (including, if applicable, the Government programme) shall be subject to approval by a Special Convention, widely representative of the Party and established in terms of arrangements approved by Executive or, in emergency, the office-bearers.

G12. The Policy Committee shall also be responsible for:

- a. presenting the policies and opinions of the Party to the Federal Party;
 - b. placing the policies of the Federal Party in a Scottish context and promoting them within Scotland;
 - c. presenting the policies and opinions of the Party to outside bodies in Scotland and elsewhere;
 - d. consulting outside bodies and people with relevant expertise in relation to proposed policies of the Party;
 - e. approving official policy publications of the Party;
 - f. supporting the development of policy seminars, and
 - g. assisting Local Parties and other relevant bodies to formulate motions for Conference.
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H. Candidates for Election

Application and Approval for Parliamentary Elections

H1. The Executive shall maintain lists of approved candidates in Scotland for Scottish, United Kingdom and European Parliamentary elections, and may adopt rules for admission to the lists.

H2. Any member of the Party or of the Federal Party may apply for inclusion on an approved list. Applications shall be determined by the Executive or by a subcommittee acting on its behalf and successful applicants shall be added to the relevant list or lists.

H3. An applicant whose application is refused may request to have the reasons reviewed by the Executive. If, on review, the Executive approves the application, the applicant shall be added to the relevant list or lists. If the Executive does not approve the application, the applicant may then appeal to the Appeals Tribunal in terms of Section K.

H4. Subject to Clause H5, any person on the approved lists shall remain so until:

- a. he or she ceases to be a member of the Party;
- b. he or she resigns from an approved list by giving notice in writing;
- c. the Executive has reason to believe that he or she no longer supports the principles of the Party, or
- d. the Executive has reason to believe that conduct (whether personally or in connection with the affairs of the Party) has been such as to make him or her unsuitable to be a candidate for the Party

H5. The Executive shall review the relevant approved list after each Scottish, United Kingdom or European election as the case may be and may require any person wishing to remain on a list to submit a fresh application. The approval of any candidate who has not applied to be a candidate in any parliamentary election for five years shall lapse unless a fresh application is made.

H6. No person shall be removed from a list without being notified of the grounds on which the Executive is considering such removal and being given:

- a. a reasonable time within which to reply and make representations in writing;
- b. the right to a hearing by the Executive (or representatives thereof), and
- c. the right to appeal to the Appeals Tribunal in terms of Section K.

The Executive may not remove from a list any Member of the Scottish or United Kingdom Parliamentary Parties who has neither resigned the Party whip, nor had it withdrawn. In considering whether or not to remove from a list any Member or former Member of either Parliamentary Party who has resigned the Party whip or had it withdrawn, the Executive may take into account the reasons for the resignation or withdrawal.

General Provisions for the Selection of Candidates

H7. Candidates for election at any level shall be selected by the single transferable vote in a secret postal ballot of eligible members. Eligibility shall be determined in terms of Clauses

H11, H12, H21, H24 and H26. No member may vote who became a member of the Party after a specified date not later than the closing date for applications.

a. In a multi-member division, the number of candidates to be chosen shall be announced before applications are invited, though it shall be acceptable at a later date, if circumstances require, for the number to be increased, and an additional candidate or candidates to be selected.

b. In a party list in which candidates are to be ranked in order:

i)

The number of candidates to be chosen shall be announced before applications are invited.

ii)

Where there are more applicants than places to be filled, the votes shall first be counted to establish which applicants are to be candidates on the list.

iii)

To determine the order in which the candidates are to be placed, the votes shall then be counted to select a group numbering one less than the remaining number. The candidate thus eliminated shall be placed in the lowest position. The process shall be repeated, each time placing the eliminated candidate in the lowest remaining position until all candidates are placed in order.

Selection of Constituency Candidates for the Scottish Parliament

H8. The Local Party shall appoint a returning officer. If there is more than one Local Party in the constituency, the returning officer shall be appointed by the coordinating body (as provided in Section D Clause 8).

H9. The Local Party shall appoint a short-listing committee from among its members. If there is more than one Local Party in the constituency, the short-listing committee shall include at least one member from each of them.

H10. The short-listing committee shall prepare a short-list from among the applicants or, at their discretion, submit the names of all the applicants to the membership for consideration, but they shall not include on the short-list (or submit to the membership) any person who is not on the Scottish approved list without having first secured the approval of the Executive. The short-listing committee shall take account of any rules approved by Conference in relation to the balance to be required on a short list. If they consider it appropriate, but only with the approval of the Executive, they may submit a sole nominee for acceptance or rejection by the eligible members.

H11. Where there are at least twenty members with membership addresses in any constituency, the selection of a parliamentary candidate shall be made by those members

H12. In any constituency with less than twenty members, all the members of the Local Party that includes that constituency may vote in the selection of a candidate. With the approval of the Executive a Local Party may limit the vote to a sub-division of its membership only, provided that there are at least twenty members eligible to vote and they include all the members with membership addresses in that constituency.

H13. In any constituency in which it is not possible to apply Clauses H11 and H12, the Executive may select a candidate for the constituency, provided that there is a process of consultation with members who have membership addresses in the constituency.

H14. The Local Party shall arrange hustings meetings, the distribution of literature and the preparation and distribution of ballot papers according to a timetable and in a manner consistent with any rules approved by the Executive. The Executive may also make regulations about the conduct of candidates in the selection process to ensure a fair and proper contest.

H15. A Member of the Scottish Parliamentary Party who is a Constituency Member and wishes to be re-selected as candidate for that constituency (or for a revised constituency containing any part of it) shall, if not the sole nominee, be included in the short list.

H16. The Executive may, in any particular case, modify the procedure for selection of a prospective candidate

- a. by agreement with the relevant Local Parties; or
- b. for the purpose of expediting the selection process, if the circumstances so require.

H17. In the event of a by-election in any constituency, a previous selection may be set aside at the discretion of either the Executive or the Local Party and a fresh selection, in that event, shall be held as far as practicable in accordance with the foregoing clauses.

H18. If, after the selection of a prospective parliamentary candidate, boundary changes substantially affecting the related constituency come into force, a new selection shall be held. The Executive shall in case of disagreement decide whether a constituency has been substantially affected.

Selection of Regional Candidates for the Scottish Parliament

H19. The Regional Party, or co-ordinating body as defined in Section D Clause 8, shall appoint a returning officer and a short-listing committee, which shall have representation from every Local Party in the Region. The short-listing committee shall proceed as provided in Clause H10 (except for the reference to sole nominees). The short-listing committee shall not short-list fewer candidates than there are to be names on the list without the agreement of the Executive.

H20. The selection of candidates shall be made by all members with membership addresses in the Region.

H21. The Regional Party or co-ordinating body shall carry out the same duties as set out in Clause H14 for Local Parties in a constituency selection.

H22. A Member of the Scottish Parliamentary Party who is a Regional Member and wishes to be re-selected as a candidate on the list for that region (or for a revised region containing any part of it) shall be included in the short list.

Selection of United Kingdom and European Parliamentary Candidates

H23. Candidates for the United Kingdom and European Parliaments shall be selected in a manner consistent with the requirements of Article 11 of the Federal Constitution. Subject to that provision, candidates for the United Kingdom Parliament shall be selected in accordance with the same procedure as is set out for Scottish Parliament constituency selections in Clauses H8-H18 and candidates for the European Parliament shall be selected in accordance with the same procedure as is set out for Scottish Regional List selections in Clauses H19-H22, except that for European Parliament selections the returning officer and short-listing committee shall be appointed by the Executive and the selection shall be made by the whole membership of the Party.

Selection of Candidates for Council Elections

H24. In any Council area the Local Party or, if there is more than one Local Party, the coordinating body established in terms of Section D Clause 8 shall maintain a list of approved candidates for that Council. The procedure by which members of the Party who are eligible to be Councillors on that Council apply and are approved shall be agreed by the Local Party or coordinating body and be subject to the Executive's approval. The procedure shall provide that any panel of members appointed to assess applicants shall have a majority who are not Councillors seeking re-election and shall not all be members of the same Local Party. The criteria for approval shall be that the applicant –

- a. is committed to the principles and values of the Party;
- b. is of good repute and has no impediment to holding public office, and
- c. has the ability and is willing to give the necessary commitment to being a Councillor.

The Local Party or co-ordinating body may also take into account the applicant's length of membership of the Party, previous commitment to the Local Party's activities and willingness, if elected, to abide by standing orders and to support the work and funding of the Local Party.

H25. A Local Party or co-ordinating body may only remove a candidate from the approved list for any of the grounds in Clause H4 that would disqualify a person from being on the list of approved parliamentary candidates.

H26. The selection of Council candidates shall be made in accordance with the rules of the Local Party or co-ordinating body, provided that wherever practicable there shall be a ballot of members, and that all members with membership addresses in the relevant Council ward shall be included among those eligible to vote.

H27. After any general Council elections, candidates who wish to remain on the approved list shall be required to re-apply. A Councillor who is a member of the Liberal Democrat Group and seeks re-approval may only be rejected if any of the criteria in subclauses (a), (b) or (c) of Clause H24 has ceased to apply, or for breach of the Code of Conduct in terms of Clause H32.

H28. A Councillor seeking re-selection who is a member of the Liberal Democrat Group shall be entitled to be included in the shortlist for the ward he or she represents (or, when boundaries have changed, for a new ward that contains any part of it), but shall have no precedence in a ballot of members over any other short-listed applicant seeking a candidacy in the same ward.

H29. Any Councillor, candidate, applicant, Local Party or other affected member aggrieved by any action or proposed action under Clauses H24-28 may appeal to the Appeals Tribunal in terms of Section K.

Selected Candidates

H30. A candidate for any public office shall cease to be the selected candidate

- a. on the conclusion of the election for which he or she was selected; or
- b. if he or she is removed as a candidate by a two thirds majority of those voting in a secret postal ballot of all the members eligible to vote in the selection of that candidate. The candidate shall be given not less than fourteen days notice of the intention to hold a ballot and an opportunity to respond.

H31. A candidate who is removed under Clause H30(b) shall have the same right of appeal to the Appeals Tribunal as if the removal were a selection in which he or she had been an unsuccessful candidate.

Code of Conduct

H32. The Executive may propose, for the approval of Conference, a Code of Conduct, which members of the Party holding public office should be expected to observe. Serious or persistent breaches of the code may be taken into account in any application of the provisions of Section C Clauses 11 and 12, Section H Clause 4 or Section I Clauses 7 and 9.

I. Council Groups

I1. In any Council where two or more candidates of the Party have been elected to the Council, the Liberal Democrat Council Group shall consist of those members.

I2. All Liberal Democrat Council Groups shall adopt standing orders, which shall be subject to the approval of the Executive.

I3. A Liberal Democrat Council Group shall meet before any ordinary Council meeting (and otherwise as required) and no other Councillors shall attend such meetings. A Liberal Democrat Council Group may also meet jointly with other Councillors or Groups of Councillors when it is acting in coalition with them or for any other purpose that facilitates the work of the Council, but such meetings shall not be meetings of the Liberal Democrat Council Group.

I4. Any member of a Liberal Democrat Council Group who ceases to be a member of the Party for any reason shall cease to be a member of the Council Group. A member whose subscription is in arrears may remain a member of the Council Group provided that the subscription is paid within three months of the due date.

I5. A Councillor who is not a member of the Liberal Democrat Council Group and wishes to join it, may be admitted by a majority of members voting at a properly called meeting of the Group, provided that the following conditions are all met:

- a. An application to join the Party has been accepted and a subscription received by a person authorised to do so;
- b. The Councillor has resigned from any other political party in Great Britain and from any organisation whose purposes are incompatible with membership of the Party and
- c. The Councillor has resigned from any other Council Group and agrees to be known publicly as a Liberal Democrat Councillor.

I6. A Councillor who is a member of the Party and was not elected as a candidate of the Party, and has not applied to join the Liberal Democrat Council Group, shall not be entitled to attend meetings of the Council Group. But it need not be incompatible with membership of the Party for that person to sit as an Independent Councillor.

I7. A member of a Liberal Democrat Council Group may be suspended from attending meetings of the Group for a period not exceeding three months for any of the following reasons:

- a. Serious or persistent breach of standing orders;
- b. Behaviour likely to bring the Party or the Council Group into disrepute;
- c. Joining any other recognised Council Group (whether of members of another political party or not) or participating in and seeking recognition of a separate group of Councillors, or
- d. Behaviour that demeans public office.

The member may only be suspended by a two thirds majority of Group members voting in a secret ballot at a properly called meeting of the Group, and after being given written reasons for the suspension and an opportunity to be heard at the meeting at which the proposal to suspend is considered. The Group Secretary shall advise the Executive of the Party as soon as practicable of the suspension and the reasons for it, so that the Executive may consider

whether grounds for suspension or expulsion from the Party exist and to allow for the process to be set in hand.

I8. A Liberal Democrat Council Group may not seek to suspend any of its members solely for the reason that the member declines to attend meetings of the Council Group.

I9. The Executive may withdraw recognition from a Liberal Democrat Council Group for a period not exceeding three months for any of the following reasons:

- a. The Council Group, or a majority of its members, are in serious or persistent breach of its standing orders or of the terms of this Constitution
- b. Its actions are bringing the Party into disrepute, or
- c. Its actions are incompatible with the values of the Party. Recognition may only be withdrawn by a two-thirds majority of members of the Executive present and voting at a properly called meeting. The Council Group shall be given written notice of the proposal to suspend and an opportunity to respond before the meeting of the Executive.

When recognition of a Council Group has been withdrawn, the Executive shall consider whether to exercise its powers in Section C, Clauses 10 and 11 to suspend or expel any or all of the members of the Council Group from membership of the Party. If it does not decide to take any such action, the suspension of the Council Group shall be lifted. In any case, the Executive shall, as soon as practicable, recognise a Council Group comprising those Councillors who remain members of the Party. If no Councillors remain members of the Party, the Executive shall advise the Council's Chief Executive that no Councillor or Council Group is entitled to use the description "Liberal Democrat" or claim any connection with the Party.

I10. Any Liberal Democrat Council Group, Local Party, or Councillor, or any other member of the Party affected by a decision made in terms of this Section of the Constitution shall have the right to appeal to the Appeals Tribunal.

I11. Nothing in this Constitution shall affect the statutory rights or duties of a Councillor in his or her role as a public representative of the electors.

I12. In any Council where there is a sole Liberal Democrat Councillor the Executive shall have a duty to arrange such support for that Councillor as may be practicable and desirable, and to ensure that there are opportunities for him or her to work in partnership with Liberal Democrat Councillors on other Councils.

J. Associated Organisations

J1. The Executive may recognise as an Associated Organisation any organisation of persons having some common link of interest, which;

- a. has a membership the majority of whom are members of the Party, from at least 15 different Local Parties, and all of whom support the fundamental values and objects of the Party;
- b. has objects consistent with the Party's fundamental aims and objects; and
- c. has internal procedures that conform to the basic democratic values contained in Section D of this Constitution.

J2. An Associated Organisation shall have the following rights:

- a. to propose motions and amendments thereto, or proposals relating to the business of the Party at Conference;
- b. to representation on the Executive as specified in Section F, Clause 25;
- c. to enrol members of the Party as specified in Section C, Clause 2(c);
- d. to be consulted on policy matters of special interest to it or on which it has special knowledge or expertise; and
- e. to submit proposals for membership of any relevant policy working group.

An Associated Organisation or a group of members refused recognition as such may appeal against a ruling of the Executive under Section K of this Constitution.

J3. An Associated Organisation which is a constituent part of a Specified Associated Organisation recognised under Article 13 of the Federal Constitution shall not have rights under this Constitution additional to those of other Associated Organisations.

J4. The Executive may require of an Associated Organisation a copy of its rules or constitution and such other information as shall enable it to decide on recognition or the withholding or withdrawal of recognition as an Associated Organisation.

J5. The Executive may withdraw recognition of an Associated Organisation if, in the Executive's opinion, the Associated Organisation is not complying with the requirements of the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 and any subsequent legislation. In such event the Associated Organisation shall have the right of appeal against such withdrawal to the Appeals Tribunal.

K. The Appeals Tribunal

K1. The function of the Appeals Tribunal shall be to hear and determine appeals on any matters on which a member or a Local Party or any other body provided for in this Constitution has a grievance under this Constitution as well as on all matters in respect of which it is provided by this Constitution or by the rules of a Local Party that an appeal may be made to the Appeals Tribunal. The Appeals Tribunal may, at their discretion, also hear and determine appeals on any other dispute between members or organisations within the Party where all parties to the dispute so agree.

K2. Any dispute over the interpretation of this Constitution may be referred to the Appeals Tribunal for a ruling.

K3. The Appeals Tribunal shall consist of the President and five members of the Party who shall be appointed by the Conference. One member shall be elected annually and shall serve for five years. Members shall be eligible for reappointment. Nominations for members of the Tribunal shall be subscribed by two members registered to attend Conference.

K4. No person shall be eligible for appointment as a member of the Tribunal who is a member of the Executive and a member of the Tribunal shall cease to be so if elected to the Executive.

K5. Three members of the Tribunal (selected by the President) shall sit to hear each appeal. If none of the three is a qualified lawyer, the Tribunal shall appoint such a person (who may be another member of the Tribunal) to attend the appeal hearing as an assessor. The assessor shall advise the Tribunal on points of law and equitable procedure.

K6. A vacancy, however arising, in the membership of the Appeals Tribunal shall be filled at the first practicable opportunity, using the procedure in Clause K3, the new member being elected to serve for the balance of the term of office of the previous member. In the event that a reduction in number of members of the Appeals Tribunal makes it impossible for the Tribunal to hear an appeal, the President shall appoint a member of the Party to be a temporary member of the Tribunal.

K7. No member of the Tribunal shall sit to hear an appeal which concerns the Local Party of which he or she is a member or any member of that Local Party.

K8. All appeals shall be heard in private except where both parties to the appeal shall agree otherwise.

K9. The Tribunal shall give reasons for its decision, but shall have discretion whether to give publicity to a decision. A record of decisions and reasons shall be kept in the Party's principal office.

K10. The Tribunal shall have power to adopt and publish Rules of Procedure (consistent with the provisions of this Constitution) to govern its own affairs, subject to confirmation by the Conference. Such rules may, subject to confirmation by the Conference, be varied from time to time.

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K11. An appellant must give notice of appeal in writing to the President and shall give a copy of that notice to the secretary of the body with which the appellant is aggrieved. Such a body shall act as respondent in the appeal, The Tribunal may refuse to hear an appeal if, in its opinion, there has been undue delay on the part of the appellant in giving notice of appeal in terms of this clause.

K12. Except with the agreement of all parties, an appeal will be heard within two months of the receipt of notice of the appeal by the President, and the agreement of the appellant that all relevant evidence on the part of the appellant available at that time has been submitted.

K13. There shall be no appeal from the Appeals Tribunal to the Federal Appeals Panel save on a matter pertaining to provisions of the Federal constitution.

L. Amendment

L1. This Constitution may be amended by a two-thirds majority of those present and voting at the Annual General Meeting of the Party or at a special Conference called for the purpose. Amendments may be proposed by the Executive or by the Conference Committee or by any Local Party or by any Associated Organisation or by twenty-five members of the Party and must be received by the Party's principal officer not less than three calendar months before the date of the Conference at which they are to be considered, provided that it shall be in order for the wording of a proposed amendment to be subsequently adjusted by the proposer of it to allow for clarification, or for the submission of consequential amendments. The Convener of the Conference Committee shall send the proposed amendments to the Executive and to all Local Parties and all Associated Organisations not less than one month before the date of the Conference and to all members of the Party registered to attend and vote at the Conference not less than seven days before the date of the Conference (or immediately on registration if later).

L2. Any amendment whose effect would be to infringe the rights of individual members contained in Section C clause 4 of this Constitution or to restrict the matters for which a ballot of members is required pursuant to this Constitution shall not take effect unless it is passed by Conference in accordance with this Constitution and ratified by a majority of the members voting in a secret postal ballot.

L3. Any amendment to secede from the Federal Party shall not take effect unless it is passed by Conference in accordance with this Constitution and ratified by a majority of the members voting in a secret postal ballot.

L4. Any proposed amendment to the Federal constitution referred to the Party in terms of Article 2.7(c) of the Federal constitution shall require a two thirds majority of those present and voting at Conference to be effective.

The Constitution of the Welsh Liberal Democrats/ Democratiaid Rhyddfrydol Cymru

*As Amended at the Autumn Conference 2011
(With un-ratified changes made by the
Constitutional Review Panel to 19 October 2011)*
