

CONSTITUTION OF TAKING THE INITIATIVE PARTY

1. Name and Area

- 1.1 The name of the body governed by this Constitution shall be “Taking The Initiative Party”.
- 1.2 The area of the Party shall be National in as much as it will primarily operate in England and Wales.

2. Definitions

- 2.1 In this Constitution:

“the Local Party” means Taking the Initiative Party generally
“the Party Constitution” means Taking the Initiative Party in England and Wales;
“the Party” means Taking the Initiative Party;
“Majority” at any meeting means majority of those present and voting; and
“Executive Committee” means the Executive Committee of the Party.

3. Objects

- 3.1 The objects of the Party shall be:
- (a) to promote a fair and modern democracy that empowers people regardless of their situation and background;
 - (b) to promote and support the values and objects of the Party primarily in England and Wales and in particular through its members:
 - (i) to secure the election of Initiative Party candidates 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 National 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;
 - (vii) to campaign and work with local people to achieve the objectives set out in the Preamble to the Party Constitution;
 - (viii) to help all local people, without regard to party or any other factor, to secure their rights and to protect them against oppression; and
 - (ix) 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 Party shall administer membership in accordance with the Membership Rules of the Initiative Party in England and Wales.

4.2 All persons shall be eligible to join the 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 Party, or
- (b) if not eligible under Section 4.2 (a) they acquire membership with the consent of the 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 Party.

4.3 Eligible persons shall become members of the Party:

- (a) on enrolment through the Taking the Initiative 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 Party generally or through a local Branch where such has been established.

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.

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 Initiative Party 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.

5.10 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. 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.

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;
- (g) to consider any motion which has been submitted by any member of the 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 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 Party in the area covered by the Branch. The Branch shall be subject to the ultimate authority of the 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;**
- (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 Party who wish to be members, if the Branch's Committee and the Party Executive Committee agree.**

No person who is not a member of the 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 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 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.

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. Any amendment to this Constitution shall be subject to approval by the Initiative 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 Party; and one shall be kept with the minute book of the 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 of the Initiative Party.

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 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.

Conduct of meetings

12.1 The Taking the Initiative Party shall meet at least six times a year. Meetings shall be chaired by a by a member of the Party appointed by the Party for that meeting only, which appointment shall be duly minuted.

12.2 Any two or more voting members of the Party may requisition an Emergency Meeting of the committee by notifying the Party Secretary in writing signed by each of them to summon one as soon as practicable. The document calling for such a meeting shall set out the business to be discussed and any motions to be put at that meeting. The agenda for the emergency meeting shall comprise this business and matters arising and no other.

Suspension/expulsion from the Taking the Initiative Party

12.3 The Taking the Initiative Party may expel a member of the Party. A member of the Party may only be so expelled if a resolution to that effect is proposed and duly seconded and passed by no less than two core party members.

12.4 The following shall be grounds for expulsion/suspension from the Party:

- a) Conduct which in the opinion of the Party has caused or is likely to cause the Party or its leadership to be brought into disrepute.
- b) Seriously breaching Party confidentiality.
- c) Persistent failure to attend Party meetings without good cause.
- d) Conduct which is deemed to be unbecoming in the meetings or otherwise and/or any public forum including social media.
- e) Failing to adhere to instructions, Party policy and acts of insubordination
- e) Conduct which in the opinion of the Party amounts to the abuse or harassment or bullying of a fellow member of the Party or an employee of the party whether paid or unpaid.

12.5 The member against whom such a motion is proposed shall be given no less than seven days' notice in writing of the meeting. He shall be entitled to attend, to address and vote at the meeting. He may make written representations to the meeting. He may also question any member or other witness whose evidence is considered by the Party as being relevant to the issue on the same basis as any other party and may call witnesses on his own behalf on the same basis as obtained during the case against him.

12.6 If the member against whom such a motion is proposed cannot attend the meeting, the decision will be made in his absence.

Authorised groups

12.7 The Party may authorise the establishment of groups of members or groups of constituency associations or branches in furtherance of the aims of the Party. These groups shall have responsibility for administering their own financial and other affairs in accordance with the procedures set down in the rules for the said groups.

12.8 The Party may from time to time permit the formation of groups within the Party known as Special Interest Groups and may, as it deems appropriate, make rules concerning such groups; subject always to the requirement that no such group may exist or operate within the Party save with the express written consent of the Party.

SEPARATION OF OFFICE

13.1 The offices of Party Leader, Party Treasurer, Party Secretary, Party Chairman, Data Officer and General Secretary shall each be held by a different individual.