

CONSTITUTION

of the

GREEN LIBERAL DEMOCRATS



Note: Proposed amendments are additions in italics at 4d) and 6c)

- 1) **The name** of the organisation shall be the 'Green Liberal Democrats'.
- 2) **The mission** of the Green Liberal Democrats shall be to raise awareness of environmental issues among Liberal Democrats and encourage them to embed these issues into all Liberal Democrat social and economic policies in a distinctive and electable way.
- 3) **The key objectives** of the Green Liberal Democrats shall be:
 - a) to promote a green approach to policy formation within the Liberal Democrats.
 - b) to provide information and political education from a green perspective to Party activists and elected representatives.
 - c) to establish and develop links with the wider green movement.
 - d) to welcome those that share our aims into the Green Liberal Democrats, to encourage participation in its activities and to ensure equality of opportunity for all members.
- 4) **Membership**
 - a) There are 4 levels of membership within the Green Liberal Democrats.
 - i) **Full membership** - this is open to any person who supports our aims, has paid the membership fee, and is a member of the Liberal Democrats.
 - ii) **Associate Membership** - this carries the right to participate in discussions and debates but excludes voting rights or eligibility to hold office. It is open to individuals who support our aims and are not members of the Liberal Democrats. On applying, potential Associate Members must declare their membership of any other political party and acceptance of membership is subject to approval by the Executive Committee.
 - iii) **Honorary Membership** - this comprises the Honorary President and up to three Honorary Vice Presidents. Honorary Members are not eligible to hold any other office nor to take an executive role in the Green Liberal Democrats operations (except where detailed herein). Honorary Members are nominated by the Executive and elected by the Annual General Meeting (AGM). Honorary Members may only nominate and vote if they are also Full Members.
 - iv) **Honorary Life Membership** - this covers those elected by the AGM under rule 8. Honorary Life Members have all the rights of Full or Associate of Members, without the payment of a subscription, according to their membership, or not, of the Liberal Democrats.
 - b) The Executive Committee must draw up rules governing payment of subscriptions and membership procedures. These are subject to approval by the AGM. Any rights, benefits or discounts given to members are only available to those whose membership is current according to this constitution.
 - c) Membership shall start from the date forms are received, provided payment is received on processing.

d) *The Green Liberal Democrats welcomes and encourages diversity within our membership. Our aim is that our membership will be truly representative of all sections of society and each member feels able to contribute and participate in whatever way they wish to. We are therefore committed to being inclusive in all aspects of the work that we do. The Membership Officer will ensure that the executive consider barriers to engagement in all our activities so that they are identified and eliminated or reduced.*

5) Annual General Meeting

- a) There shall be an Annual General Meeting of the Green Liberal Democrats within nine months of the end of the financial year. Members should receive at least 90 days notice of the intended date and location of the AGM. The AGM shall:
- i) receive executive reports, copies of which shall be available to members.
 - ii) receive the Annual Accounts, copies of which shall be available to members.
 - iii) elect the officers and elected members of the Executive Committee and the Honorary President and Vice Presidents for the forthcoming GLD year.
 - iv) conduct any other appropriate business notified to the Chair or Vice Chair-Organisation in advance of the meeting.
 - v) determine the overall policy of the Green Liberal Democrats and act as the final authority over the organisation.
- b) Members shall be given at least fourteen days prior written notice of the business to be conducted at any Annual General Meeting or Extraordinary General Meeting. Changes to the Constitution, Standing Orders, Financial and Electoral Regulations may be made by a two thirds majority at an AGM, or at an Extraordinary General meeting called with the same notice conditions as an AGM. Standing orders and Regulations may also be provisionally amended at Emergency or Extraordinary General Meetings called at shorter notice, but such changes will not take effect until ratified by a General Meeting called with full notice, unless the meeting and at least two of the President and Vice Presidents agree the need for emergency action.

6) Executive Committee

- a) Membership of the Executive Committee shall consist of five elected officers [Chair, Vice Chair-Political, Vice Chair-Organisation, Membership Secretary and Honorary Treasurer]; seven elected ordinary members; and up to four additional co-opted ordinary members, in addition to those co-opted to fill any vacancies. Any vacancies occurring on the Executive Committee through resignation shall be filled by recounting the election in which the candidate was elected, redistributing his / her votes to their second preferences at the first stage. Any vacancies occurring through a lack of candidates may be filled by the Executive Committee by co-option.
- b) Executive Committee members, including co-opted ones, shall have full speaking and voting rights, and each will be required to take on at least one clearly defined role, agreed with by majority vote of the Committee.
- c) No individual may hold the office of Chair for more than three years consecutively. The Honorary President, or a Vice President delegated by the President shall take the chair at the AGM and any EGM. If this is not possible, GLD Chair shall preside. Up to three Honorary Vice Presidents may also be elected at the AGM. All elected *and co-opted* roles shall be from the time of election *or co-option* to the following AGM. Co-opted positions are subject to review by the executive.
- d) Not less than 90 days before the date of the AGM, the Executive Committee shall appoint a person who is not a member of, or a candidate for, the Executive Committee, to act as a Returning Officer. This person shall be a recognised Liberal Democrat Returning Officer and will

administer all aspects of the annual elections for the Executive Committee and Honorary President and Vice Presidents. The elections shall be conducted in accordance with the Election Regulations [appended hereto].

- e) Required documents are deemed to have been sent to members, if they are sent by post (separately or in Challenge) or by e-mail, in either case to the latest postal or e-address notified to the membership secretary, unless "postal only" or "e-mail only", or "special" arrangements have been made (such arrangements may include Large print or audio). Documentation, other than ballot papers, required by this constitution to be sent to members, shall also be posted on the GLD website.
 - f) The Executive Committee shall meet at least five times each year between the Annual General Meetings. Any Executive members who fail to attend 3 executive meetings consecutively, regardless of sending apologies, will have deemed to have resigned, unless their special circumstances have been agreed, by the Executive, at the fourth meeting, to excuse the absences.
- 7) **The financial year** shall run from January 1st to December 31st each year. An annual membership fee shall be charged for Members and Associate Members. The fee, any concessions, and the date from which they apply, is to be recommended by the Executive Committee and approved by the Annual General Meeting.
- 8) The Annual General Meeting may confer Honorary Life Membership of the Green Liberal Democrats for some special contribution to green politics.
- 9) An Extraordinary General Meeting may be called by the Executive Committee or by twenty-five paid up members, who shall specify the purpose of the business to be conducted at the meeting.
- 10)The quorum for the AGM and EGM shall be twenty-five paid up members.
- 11)The Executive Committee shall have the power to affiliate the Green Liberal Democrats to such bodies as it sees fit, providing their aims and conduct are consistent with the aims and objectives of the Green Liberal Democrats. Such affiliations shall be subject to ratification by the next AGM.
- 12)The Honorary President shall be the guardian of this Constitution and shall be charged with its interpretation in any matters of dispute, subject to procedures agreed by the AGM. These are also to cover disputes under the Election Regulations 1 e).

[This Constitution was amended at the July 1998 AGM in Winchester when Articles 5, 6 and 9 were rewritten in order to improve the effectiveness of election procedures. That AGM also adopted the Election Regulations as a Standing Order. Subsequently it was amended at the June 2000 AGM in Cheltenham, when the financial year was changed in order to comply with Federal Party regulations to bring the Party into line with the provisions of the Political Parties and Referendums Act 2000. It was also amended was at the September 2009 AGM where the changes were made in relation the executive committee and standing for of ice Article 4,5,7,8 & 11. At the EGM March 2011 changes were made to amend typographical errors and update current arrangements regarding co-options. The amendment at the September 2011 AGM made changes on the GLD mission. Substantial changes to clarify membership made June 2013 EGM. Amended Sept 2015 AGM. Amended March 2017 AGM.] [ends]

STANDING ORDERS

- 1) Conduct of Business at General Meetings Procedures at Annual and Extraordinary General Meetings shall be determined by the Chair of the meeting, (see section 8 of the Constitution), and his or her decision shall be final, subject only to a vote under section 5 of the Constitution to amend or suspend Standing Orders.
- 2) Duties of Officers
 - a) The Chair shall have overall responsibility for the administration, organisation and activities of the Green Liberal Democrats, and be accountable to the Honorary President, the Executive Committee and the General Meetings of the membership.
 - b) The Chair may delegate any responsibilities to other Officers or Committee Members by agreement, subject to the provisions of other Standing Orders approved by the Annual General Meeting.
 - c) Unless otherwise directed by the Chair, the Vice Chair-Organisation shall be responsible for ensuring that Minutes of all meetings of the Green Liberal Democrats are taken and copied for appropriate distribution, together with advance notice of and agendas and other papers as necessary for General Meetings and meetings of the Executive and other Committees in accordance with the Constitution and Standing Orders.
 - d) Notice for Executive Committee meetings shall be given not less than ten days in advance. The minutes of the Executive Committee meetings shall be circulated to Committee members not more than ten days after the meeting.
 - e) The duties of other officers shall be as directed by the Chair or the Vice Chair- Organisation, subject to the approval of the Executive Committee, and the provisions of other approved Standing Orders.
- 3) Appointment of Sub Committees - The Executive Committee shall appoint such Sub-Committees as it thinks fit. The powers and duties of the Organisation, Political or any other Sub-Committees, once established by the Executive Committee, shall continue from one year to the next unless altered or terminated by formal resolution of the Executive Committee.

[Proposed by Executive Committee at their meeting of 23 April 1995 and adopted by AGM, 11 Lidne 1995. Amended March 2011 EGM. Amended June 2013 EGM. Amended March 2017 AGM.] [ends]

ELECTION REGULATIONS

1) Responsibilities and Authority

- a) The Returning Officer (RO) shall be responsible for the receipt of nominations, issuing of ballot papers and the counting of votes for each election covered by these regulations.
- b) The Membership Secretary shall be responsible for providing up to date membership information to the RO.
- c) The Vice Chair Organisation shall be responsible for sending out nomination forms and the AGM paperwork.
- d) Any participant in the election may appeal against a decision of the RO as described within section 4 "Timeline" below.
- e) The Honorary President shall be responsible for ruling on appeals relating to the RO's interpretation of these regulations.
- f) The AGM retains the ultimate authority to overrule any decision. These regulations may be amended by the AGM in the same way as the Constitution.

2) Methodology

- a) All contested elections will be held by secret ballot using the single transferable vote.
- b) Candidates must have a Nominator and a Secunder.
- c) Each Candidate must provide his or her written commitment to serve if elected, and may provide a personal statement of no more than 150 words for circulation in the event of a contested election.
- d) No allowance will be made for postal, individual or local internet failures, but in the event of widespread internet or postal problems the RO may extend the deadline for the return of forms at their discretion.
- e) At the AGM ballot papers shall be issued to qualifying members who have not been sent ballot papers. The count shall be conducted at the AGM, giving equal weight to paper and electronic votes.

3) Eligibility

- a) Only Full Members of the Green Liberal Democrats for the entire 60 days leading up to the AGM are eligible to vote. NB Anyone becoming a Full Member after the nomination forms are issued is not eligible to vote.
- b) Each Executive Candidate, Nominator and Secunder must be an eligible voter. It is recommended that each of these check with the RO who shall then confirm their eligibility before nominations are submitted.
- c) To be eligible for a postal/email vote, an eligible voter must either ensure that their email address is up to date by the Nomination deadline (ie they have 30 days after the nomination forms are issued to notify the Membership Secretary) or send an SSAE to the RO by the nomination deadline, requesting a ballot paper.
- d) Members who have been issued with a ballot paper, whether used or not, will not be eligible to receive a ballot paper at the AGM for the same election.

4) Timeline

- a) The Executive will determine the target date of the AGM (subject to room booking) at least 90 days in advance and appoint an RO.
- b) Nomination forms for all posts must be circulated to all Full Members not less than 60 days before the date of the AGM.
- c) The Membership Secretary shall provide the RO with the names, email addresses and Liberal Democrat Membership numbers of all eligible members to whom the nomination forms are to be sent.
- d) The deadline for the receipt of nominations shall be 30 days before the date of the AGM.
- e) A second membership list will be produced on nomination deadline day containing those on the list who are still eligible.
- f) The RO shall validate the nominations within five days and then notify all approved and rejected candidates privately.
- g) Rejected candidates have 5 days to appeal the rejection to the Honorary President, copying in the RO to ensure ballot papers are not issued while an appeal is being considered. The Honorary President must then rule on the appeal not less than 18 days before the AGM. Should they not do so, the RO's decision shall stand.
- h) Finalised ballot papers are to be emailed or posted to all eligible postal voters between 18 and 20 days before the AGM, to coincide with the publication of the agenda and reports. A list of all candidates, the posts for which they are standing, and then nominators and seconders and personal statement shall be posted on the Green Liberal Democrats website.
- i) Completed ballot papers must EITHER be sent back to the RO to arrive no later than 3 days before the date of the AGM, or, if the AGM is at a national Lib Dem Conference, 3 days before the first day of Conference, whichever is the earlier, OR they may be brought to the AGM. If a member's postal or e-mail ballot paper has been received, the member cannot subsequently vote in person on the elections contested on the ballot paper.
- j) A third eligible voter list will be given to the RO on the date of the election containing those on the second who are still eligible. Only people on this list will have their votes counted.
- k) At the AGM all completed ballot papers will be validated against the third list and all those that appear on the list will be counted and the results announced.

Amendment record:

This Constitution was substantially amended at the July 1998 AGM in Winchester when Articles 5, 6 and 9 were rewritten in order to improve the effectiveness of election procedures. That AGM also adopted the Election Regulations as a Standing Order.

Subsequently it was amended at the June 2000 AGM in Cheltenham, when the financial year was changed in order to comply with Federal Party regulations to bring the Party into line with the provisions of the Political Parties and Referendums Act 2000.

Amended at Sep 2009 AGM in relation to the executive committee and standing for of ice Article 4,5,7,8 & 11.

At EGM March 2011 changes made to amend typographical errors & update current arrangements regarding co-options.

Amendment at September 2011 AGM made changes on the GLD mission and on balloting of members.

Substantial changes to clarify membership etc at June 2013 EGM.

Amended Sept 2015 AGM.

Amended March 2017 AGM to meet new LibDem Associated Organisation requirements.

Amended at 2017 Sep17 AGM with clarification of co-optee term and addition of diversity statement.

[ends]