

DRAFT CONSTITUTION (WORKING DOCUMENT 5)

1) NAME.

The name of the party shall be (TO BE DECIDED BUT THIS DRAFT WILL PROVISIONALLY CALL IT LEFT UNITY LU)

2) AIMS

The aims of Left Unity are:

- a) to unite the diverse strands of radical and socialist politics in the UK including worker's organisations and trade unions; ordinary people, grass root organisations and co-operatives rooted in our neighbourhoods and communities; individuals and communities facing poverty, discrimination and social oppression because of gender, ethnicity, age, disability, sexuality, unemployment or under-employment; environmental and green campaigners; campaigners for freedom and democracy; all those who seek to authentically voice and represent the interests of working people
- b) to win a mandate to govern and introduce radical and fundamental changes in British society based on our belief in the benefits of cooperation and community ownership instead of the chaotic competition of capitalism; universal human rights, internationalism and peace; social, political and economic equality for all in the fullest sense, without which true democracy and mutual respect cannot flourish; a democratically planned economy that is environmentally sustainable, within which all enterprises, whether privately owned, cooperatives or under public ownership operate in ways that promote the needs of the people and wider society; an inclusive welfare state which meets the needs of all and within which each contributes according to their ability
- c) to above all promote grass roots democracy in the understanding that fundamental and radical change can only come with the support and active involvement of the majority of people and that the way we organise today is a pointer to the kind of society we want to see in the future

3) MEMBERSHIP

a) Membership of Left Unity shall be open to any individual who:

- i. commits to further the aims of Left Unity
- ii. abides by the democratically decided rules and constitution of Left Unity
- iii. pay any subscription agreed by the Annual Conference

- iv. support Left Unity candidates in elections
- v. is not a member of an organisation deemed incompatible with membership of Left Unity by the National Conference.
- vi. is at least fourteen years old

b) There shall be two types of membership of LU

- i. Full membership as set out in 3 (a)
- ii. Associate membership for 'Friends of LU' open to individuals and trade union members who in return for a one-off donation, the minimum amount to be set by Annual Conference, shall receive national and local mailings, are invited to attend meetings, have the right to speak at meetings, but shall enjoy no voting rights or be eligible to stand for any elected position.

4. STRUCTURE AND GENERAL PRINCIPLES

a) The structure of Left Unity is based on the following principles:

- i. Decision making flows from the grass-roots upwards according to easily understood and democratic processes
- ii. National committees and individuals holders of responsible positions exist to carry out the wishes of the membership
- iii. Transparency - all minutes and reports of meetings and decisions of branches, regional and national committees or structures will be published and made available to members, unless there are confidentiality issues relating to individual complaints regarding conduct of members
- iv. Safeguards are put in place to ensure that individual post-holders and national committees are regularly elected, representative, accountable and are not able to concentrate power in a few hands. Left Unity will therefore operate a system of rotation of internal positions, with terms of office for any national elected position limited to a maximum of 3 years, with a minimum 2 year break from office, with the right to again seek office thereafter. Ideally this principle will apply to all local and regional elected positions but regions and branches will have the right to alter these arrangements according to their circumstances
- v. A right of recall will apply to all positions at all levels
- vi. Meetings to be chaired in rotation
- vii. At least 50% of those elected to national committees will be women
- viii. If groups of members wish to organise sections or caucuses based on identity or as a political platform to better develop policies, ideas and campaigns that reflect their needs or ideas they have the right to do so. They can then put this in the form of proposals and motions. But the members of sections and platforms will have no other special privileges in decision making. The principle of One Member One Vote will consistently apply
- ix. Care will be taken in when deciding the venue of all national meetings that they are geographically convenient and not London-centric

- x. Members are expected to adhere to the principles and guidelines set out in Appendix 1 - Safer Spaces Policy

b) The basic tiers of the decision making and management structure of Left Unity seeks to enact these principles and is set out below:



5) INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS

Individual members will have the following opportunities to participate in decision making in Left Unity:

- a) as a member of a branch that can propose resolutions to regional bodies, National Conference and national committees
- b) through attending, participating in National Conferences
- c) through electing representatives from the branch to regional bodies, elected regional members of National Committees, national individual post-holders and the principal speakers for the party
- d) through standing for election for the above
- e) through participation in on-line forums and consultative exercises in e-democracy organised to involve those who cannot attend National Conferences in person
- f) individuals can join together with like-minded individual members to propose motions to regional and national bodies and nominate individuals for elected individual positions at a national level in Sections and Caucuses

6) BRANCHES

- a) Branches bring together members and supporters of Left Unity, ideally along constituency and ward lines. Decisions to split or merge branches will be made by the groups themselves, subject to approval by the National Council
- b) Individual members will normally be part of the branch based on the geographical area in which they live. In some cases however, an individual member may find it more appropriate to be part of a branch based on where s/he works or studies – but this should be agreed with the branch covering the area where the member lives and that which s/he wishes to join
- c) A branch must contain at least 10 members
- d) Branches will manage their affairs as they see fit, excepting that the conduct of the groups will be democratic and in accordance with the national rules of Left Unity. Basic democratic standards will be expected to apply: meetings to be accessible, all members informed of meetings and agendas circulated in good time, discussions conducted respectfully, group officers to be annually elected and subject to recall
- e) Branches should meet monthly
- f) Branches may elect representatives to regional bodies and nominate candidates for any of the elected national committees
- g) Branches will operate their own accounts and can raise money to fund local activities as they see fit
- h) Branches shall produce their own Standing Orders, reflecting their specific method of operation and local circumstances; however, local arrangements must not conflict with the provisions of the Model Standing Orders in Appendix 2.

7. SECTIONS AND CAUCUSES

Members of LU have the right to form and organise in Sections and caucuses if agreed by the National Council (subject to confirmation at the next convenient Annual Conference). Caucuses and sections will reapply for confirmation after 5 years.

a) Sections

- i. Sections can be set up to encourage the self-organisation of party members who suffer from specific discrimination or have distinct interests and to enable them to organise collectively in campaigns against oppression and to take a lead in the party on these issues.
- ii. Sections can also be set up to bring together party members interested in campaigning on a specific issue. Such sections can help to bring together members who are active in campaigns in order to intervene more effectively, co-ordinate activity, promote the party's policies and feed- back experience into the party
- iii. should submit their constitutions to the National Council (or regional committee if regionally based) for approval prior to their formal launch. These should state who is eligible to join the network, the activities it intends to

undertake and how the internal democracy of the network will operate. Networks are encouraged to submit written reports to National Council/Regional Council on their activity at least twice a year

b) Caucuses

- i. Members have the right to organise in political caucuses. As a pluralist party, we recognise that a range of political points of view is a healthy source of debate and new ideas.
- ii. All caucuses should be open – their meetings, aims and objectives should be available to all other party members. The guiding assumption and principle for the activities and existence of caucuses in LU is that they will not be permanent factions and exist to promote certain specific concepts, ideas or policies
- iii. Caucuses have a right to be heard, to organise meetings, to produce literature, to distribute materials at LU meetings and, in general, to try to influence and/or change party policy, but must not do so in the name of LU or any of its constituent bodies
- iv. Caucuses may not, however, organise public campaigns against the overall aims or policy of the party.
- v. If a member of a caucus stands for any elected position they will declare their membership in the interests of transparency and to promote informed choices

c) Youth and Student sections

- i. Subject to the approval of National Conference, [Left Unity] shall establish youth and student groups in local constituencies, in schools and in colleges and universities. Membership of the party's youth section shall be open to all members between the ages of 14 and 26 and of its student section to all members who are full time students in any educational establishment.
- ii. Members of local youth and student groups shall establish their own national sections and determine their own Standing Orders, subject to approval by National Conference.

8) ENGLISH, REGIONAL, SCOTTISH AND WELSH STRUCTURES

- a) National committees will be created for Scotland and Wales, comprised of elected representatives of the branches in those nations
- b) In recognition of the different political contexts and to better deal with issues specific to these countries, members in Scotland and Wales have the right to draw up their own constitutional rules and organisational structures that adhere to the principles set out in 4 (a) of the constitution and the Code of Conduct for elected representatives set out in Clause 15, subject to approval by National Conference/National Council
- c) In England, regional committees of representatives from branches will be organised for the following English regions London, South East, North East,

North West, Yorkshire and Humber, East Midlands, West Midlands, Eastern , South West. Each branch will be entitled to send two delegates with speaking and voting rights (one male and one female) and as many observers as wish to come. Expenses of delegates to be met from regional funds, local observers from branch funds.

- d) The role of English regional, Welsh and Scottish committees will be co-ordinating and prioritising campaigning and organisational activities, assisting in the creation and building of branches and encouraging political education.
- e) If 50 individuals from Northern Ireland apply to join LU the NC will bring appropriate proposals for organisational and constitutional changes to Annual Conference
- f) Regional committees of branches will not necessarily be coterminous with the electoral regions for Regional Representatives on the National Council

9) NATIONAL CONFERENCES

- a) The national conferences of Left Unity are the supreme policy making body. No conference is bound by the decisions of a previous conference
- b) There will be at least one National Conference each year. The National Council may call special national conferences if 2/3rds of those present desire
- c) More than one national conference may be called each year in extraordinary circumstances and if 25 % of branches pass a resolution or 25 % of members sign a petition calling for a special conference. In this event the NC will organise it as quickly as practically possible but with a minimum of one months notice
- d) All members can attend and vote at National Conferences on the basis of One Member One Vote (OMOV). However, when Left Unity reaches 2,000 paid members the National Council will draw up proposals to move towards a delegate structure of decision making to be considered by the next scheduled Annual Conference
- e) The National Council, branches and Regional/Scottish/Welsh committees have the right to propose motions that if passed by the National Conference will become policy.
- f) Individual members of LU will have the right to submit motions, so long as 20 full members have signed their support. NOTE: the figure of a minimum of 20 members will be reviewed and if necessary increased as the national membership increases
- g) Sub-committees or working parties established by conference motion may be charged to submit proposals directly to National Conference
- h) Sections may send one motion and one amendment to National Conference.

- i) National conferences will be organised by the Standing Orders Committee
- j) As OMOV consistently applies, the location of conferences will effect attendance and the Standing Orders Committee will seek a venue that is most easily geographically accessible and pooled fairs will apply

10) DIRECT DEMOCRATIC PARTICIPATION, THE INTERNET AND E-CONFERENCES

- a) Left Unity is committed to using social media and internet forums and voting in order to encourage free debate, respectful discussion and direct decision making within the party. The nationally elected Secretary, Communications and Returning Officers, along with specialist sub-committees of the NC, shall therefore regularly review this area and present a report to Annual Conference, with proposals, on developing the use of IT
- b) As a first step the NC shall organise **E-conferences** on specific single issues or questions when requested by 25% of branches. These shall take place of a forum to be organised by the NC with online debate and binding voting, restricted via password protection to subs-paying LU members
- c) Provision will be made for voting in all elections to be conducted by internet voting, but members may choose to receive postal votes instead
- d) However, LU recognises that many members and supporters may not have the financial resources or wish to participate in this way. All publicity material and membership application forms will ask what is the preferred method of contact – while encouraging people to give us their email addresses if at all possible.

11) STANDING COMMITTEES

- a) All members of specialist national committees will be nominated by branches and directly elected by the members in national elections
- b) The following national committees of Left Unity with specialist roles will exist:
 - i. Disputes Committee (see 17)
 - ii. Finance and Audit Committee (see 16)
 - iii. Standing Orders Committee (see 18)
- c) The National Council will form *ad hoc* sub-committees and working groups as it sees fit to deal with specialist areas of work. These will be advertised and members encouraged to get involved and contribute as far as possible and open to participation by the wider membership. All agendas and minutes to be published

- d) The quorum for all national committees will be 55% of the elected members. All standing committees will meet at least 3 times per year

12) NATIONAL COUNCIL

- a) Left Unity will be led and organisational/financial issues managed in between national conferences by the National Council (NC).
- b) The National Council shall meet at least 8 times a year and 55% of members must be present to form a quorum. Chairing to be rotational.
- c) All heritable and moveable property of the party shall be vested in Trustees so authorised by the National Council, ("the Trustees") representing and acting for the whole of the members of the party. No personal liability shall attach to any Trustee except to the extent of such funds of the party as may be actually received by him or her.
- d) The National Council shall have power to authorise the Trustees and the Trustees, when so authorised, may a) hold, purchase or take on lease any land or buildings, sell, exchange, borrow on the security of, lease or build upon the land and alter and pull down buildings and again rebuild; and b) grant security over the heritable property of the party and obtain advances of money for the purposes of the party and upon such terms as to interest and repayment of principal as the committee may determine.
- e) All branches and regional committees shall have the right to send motions and amendments to National Council.
- f) The National Council may establish sub-committees and working parties as necessary to look in detail at specific areas of policy development, to develop campaign proposals and to organise events. Sub-committees and working parties do not have to consist of members of the National Council, but are accountable to it. Sub-committees and working parties should report to the National Council. The minutes of sub-committee and working group meetings should be forwarded to the National Council for information and available upon request to any full party member
- g) All full members of the party are entitled to attend National Council meetings as observers.
- h) The National Council shall adopt its own standing orders, subject to approval by National Conference.
- i) The term of office for all members of the National Council will be 1 year. The rights, duties and responsibilities of members of the National Council vary according to their position, as set out below. The National Council will comprise of:

- i. 30 regional representatives
- ii. 14 nationally elected policy spokespeople
- iii. 5 nationally elected post-holder members of the Executive Committee

Regional representatives

j) A total of 30 regional representatives will be full members of National Council, representing the following regions (coterminous with regions for elections for the European Parliament):

- i. Electoral region 1 - London
- ii. Electoral region 2 - North East
- iii. Electoral region 3 - North West
- iv. Electoral region 4 - Yorkshire and Humber
- v. Electoral region 5 - East Midlands
- vi. Electoral region 6 - West Midlands
- vii. Electoral region 7 - Eastern
- viii. Electoral region 8 - South West
- ix. Electoral region 9 - South East
- x. Electoral Region 10 - Scotland
- xi. Electoral region 11 - Wales

k) It is the responsibility of the National Council, subject to the approval of each Annual Conference, to ensure the distribution of the number of representatives on the National Council for each region will be, as far as possible, proportional to the distribution of membership of LU across the UK, excepting that:

- i. each region shall have a minimum of two representatives
- ii. the calculation of distribution of regional seats will be based on the previous year's membership figures

l) individual Regional Members of the National Council shall be elected by a postal or e-ballot of all members in each region, organised by the respective Regional Committee, in liaison with the national Nominating Officer

m) Nominations for regional representatives on the National Council to be made by branches within that region. Nominations for individual post-holders to be made by branches, regional bodies or by 20 full members, who have signed a nomination form. (NOTE: the figure of a minimum of 20 members will be reviewed by national conference from time to time and if necessary increased as the national membership increases)

n) Regional representative members of the National Council will provide written reports of NC meetings, report back regularly to their Regional Committee and as far as reasonably practicable, be available to report

personally to each branch in their region on at least an annual basis, or at the request of any of those branches.

Individual policy spokespeople

- o) Fourteen individual policy spokespeople, annually elected by the national membership, will be full members of the National Council with national responsibilities to lead on the formation and presentation of party policies
- p) The National Council may also nominate other individuals, whether members of the National Council or other members, to act as spokespeople on issues outside the remit of the designated policy spokespeople, as listed as in (q), subject to confirmation by the next Annual Conference.
- q) There will be a male and female policy spokesperson for the following areas of responsibility (or any others, as determined by National Conference from time to time).
 - a.i. Principal speakers
 - a.ii. Economy
 - a.iii. Environment and transport
 - a.iv. Equality
 - a.v. Health and welfare
 - a.vi. Peace and international affairs
 - a.vii. Education
- r) Policy spokespeople will be accountable to the National Council and National Conference, providing regular reports of their areas of responsibility

Executive committee

- s) The Executive Committee is responsible for the day to day running of the party. The Executive Committee is accountable for all its actions to National Council and National Conference. The Executive Committee should refer all major decisions to National Council. This does not preclude the Executive Committee reaching interim decisions on urgent matters and seeking the ratification of National Council at the earliest opportunity
- t) The composition of the Executive Committee will be
 - i. National secretary (with responsibility for party organisation and minutes)
 - ii. National Communications officer (with responsibility for membership, data protection and internal communications)
 - iii. Elections Agent (with responsibility for external elections and with the power of nominating officer)

- iv. National Nominating Officer (with responsibility for internal elections and liaison with the Standing Orders Committee)
 - v. National treasurer
 - vi. The two Principal speakers
 - vii. Seven regional representatives of the National Council chosen by the other regional representatives
- u) In order to promote efficiency, accountability and prevent the build up of unhealthy concentrations of bureaucratic power the National Secretary, National Communications Officer, Elections Agent, Returning Officer and National Treasurer will:
- i. be annually elected by a ballot all members
 - ii. be members of the National Council with full speaking and proposing rights, but not voting rights
 - iii. be eligible for job-shares
- v) The two principal speakers and seven regional representative members of the Executive will enjoy full voting rights on the National Council
- w) All national spokespersons and National Council members are entitled to take part in discussions of the Executive Committee related to their field of responsibility. All members of the party are entitled to attend Executive Committee meetings as non speaking observers
- x) Minutes of Executive Committee meetings should be tabled at National Council meetings and be available to any member upon request. The Executive Committee should meet at least monthly. The Executive Committee shall produce its own Standing Orders, subject to approval by National Conference.
- y) The Executive Committee shall oversee expense payments and wages to members who are regular volunteers and staff

13) NATIONAL ELECTIONS FOR INTERNAL POSITIONS WITHIN LU

- a. Voting in elections for regional representatives on the NC, individual post-holders and spokes-people on the NC and members of national committees with specialist roles will be conducted using electronic voting systems via the internet, except that all members will have the right to opt out of this system and will instead receive a postal ballot
- b. Only members residing in the relevant region/Scotland/Wales will have the right to vote for regional representatives on the NC. All other positions will be elected in national elections
- c. All candidates must be either nominated by a branch, regional body or 20 members signing a nomination form

- d. Every candidate will write a statement of no more than 500 words saying which branch they belong to, which positions in LU they do or have held, their experience and the political principles they would seek to apply if elected. If members of a caucus they are obliged to say so. These statements will accompany printed ballot papers and in the event of online voting be prominently available. All candidates will be expected to also provide contact details so that members may ask them questions prior to voting. The National Returning Officer (or regional as appropriate) will organise a hustings opportunity, whether on-line or in person.
- e. On the ballot papers for principal speakers there will be a 'Re-Open Nominations option'
- f. There is equal representation of both men and women for all regional representatives and post-holders/spokes people. If no women candidates are nominated, renominations will be opened. If this occurs a second time two male candidates will be elected for that year.

14) ACCOUNTABILITY FOR INTERNAL REPRESENTATIVES

The following safeguards to ensure transparency and accountability will apply to all members of the NC (and other national bodies):

- a) Any member of Left Unity has the right to observe meetings of any national committee or sub-committee/working group the NC but not speaking or voting rights. The dates and agendas of all meetings will therefore be made available in good time prior to any meetings
- b) All minutes of national committees and working groups will be published within a week
- c) If 25 % of branches or members in a region request the recall any regional representative on the NC or 25% of local groups request the recall a national officer, they will step down and the NC will organise a re-election. The previous incumbent can stand again if he/she so wishes

15) ACCOUNTABILITY AND CONDUCT OF MEMBERS ELECTED TO EXTERNAL POSITIONS

- a) All Left Unity members elected to external positions on any form of public body (eg, local councillor, Member of Parliament, Member of the European Parliament, holder of an elected trades union position etc) will adhere to the nationally agreed policies, priorities and principles of LU. Failure to abide by these principles and rules , or to engage in any behaviour which brings the Party into disrepute ,will incur suspension pending the deliberations of the Party disciplinary procedure.
- b) Candidates for LU will agree to abide by the following Code of Conduct:

- i. In cases where an elected position require the post is carried out on a full time basis, Left Unity members will only draw a maximum of the median national wage (plus legitimate expenses) – donating 20% of the surplus to Left Unity and 80% returned to public funds. Where an elected position is a full time job Left Unity members will take on no other paid employment.
- ii. No Left Unity member will be allowed to continue in any single externally elected position for limited terms as follows:
 - MPs and MEPs - 2 terms/maximum of 10 years
 - Local councillor, MWA, MSP - 3 terms/maximum 12 years
- iii. After a gap of 1 term of office members may again seek nomination to stand as a candidate.
- iv. No Left Unity member can stand as an official “Left Unity Candidate” without undergoing the Left Unity selection process at local, regional, or national levels , appropriate to that candidature under Left Unity rules
- v. All Left Unity members serving in elected positions must provide regular report backs at the agreed appropriate, local, regional, or national level, to Left Unity.
- vi. All Left Unity members holding elected positions won as Left Unity candidates are expected to resign their elected position immediately that they either resign from Left Unity or are expelled from left Unity.
- vii. People already in place in elected positions when they apply to join Left Unity will only be allowed to join the Party on the understanding that they will abide by the nationally agreed policies, priorities , tactics and principles, and Code Of Conduct, of Left Unity

16) FINANCE

- a) The following general principles regarding finance will apply:
 - i. All monies received by or on behalf of Left Unity shall be applied to further the aim of Left Unity and for no other purpose.
 - ii. Any bank accounts opened for Left Unity shall be in the name of the Left Unity
 - iii. Any cheques issued shall be signed by the Treasurer and other nominated members of the National Council
 - iv. Accounts to be independently audited every year
 - v. Left Unity may pay reasonable out of pocket expenses including travel, childcare and meal costs to members or members of national committees. The payments must be recorded and paid on presentation of receipts that justify the expense
- b) The following principles regarding **subscriptions** will apply:
 - i. No-one will be excluded through lack of money.
 - ii. Subscriptions will be fair and equitable.
 - iii. Subscriptions will be set at a level that will enable all members to participate in activities.
 - iv. The level of subscription set will enable the national organisation to

carry out its functions efficiently, as determined by the National Conference.

- c) The rate of subscriptions for [insert year] will be as follows:
- d) UNWAGED: £X per month
LOW WAGED: £X per month
STANDARD RATE: £X per month
HIGH WAGED: £X per month
- e) Income will be divided between the national organisation and local/regional activities according to the following formula to enable branches to fund all legitimate expenses, including travelling expenses, publicity, etc. Branches will also have the right to raise funds separately to fund local activities as they see fit.
 - i. national office = 70%
 - ii. region = 5%
 - iii. branch = 25%
- f) In the case of members not attached to a particular branch will be divided between the national organisation and local/regional activities according to the following formula:
 - i. national office = 90%
 - ii. region = 10%

Finance and Audit Committee

- g) The finances of LU will be overseen by the Finance and Audit Committee which shall be comprised of the National Treasurer, three members nominated by the National Council and three members chosen by national conference.
- h) The Finance and Audit Committee will present a written report to Annual Conference alongside and the accounts.

17. DISPUTES COMMITTEE

- a) A Disputes Committee shall be elected annually by national ballot. This committee will consist of five people, but shall include no members of the National Council. Its role will be to investigate disputes and complaints about the behaviour of individual party members referred to it by Regional Councils or the National Council, who will be expected to have endeavoured to resolve the specific disputes or complaints before referring them on.
- b) If an individual member, or group of members, have a complaint against

another member, involving an alleged failure to abide by an aspect of the constitution or the guidelines set out in Appendix 1 (Safer Spaces Policy), the first recourse should be to the relevant branch, which should attempt to resolve the issue. Should a branch fail to resolve the issue or consider disciplinary action necessary, it should refer the matter in writing to the Regional Committee for consideration. If the Regional Committee cannot resolve the dispute it will refer it to the national Disputes Committee

- c) The Disputes Committee may form a sub-committee of at least 3 members to consider any one case.
- d) The Disputes Committee shall adopt its own Procedures and Standing orders, subject to approval and amendment from time to time by National Conference
- e) The National Council may refuse anyone membership (or decide an existing member no longer meets the criteria for membership listed in (3) or take other disciplinary action against an individual member. Such action may only be taken as a result of an investigation by, and recommendation from, the Disputes Committee, which must be explained in writing to the member (or potential member) concerned.
- f) The individual concerned has a right to appeal to the Appeals Committee.

18. APPEALS COMMITTEE

- a) An Appeals Committee shall be elected annually by national ballot. This committee is the last stage in any disputes resolution procedure and its decisions are final.
- b) The Appeal Committee will consist of six people, but shall include no members of the National Council. Its role will be to hear appeals from members against disciplinary action taken against them by a Regional Council or the National Council as a result of an investigation by, and recommendation from the Disputes Committee. The Appeals Committee may form a sub-committee of at least 3 members to consider any one case.
- c) The Appeals Committee shall adopt its own Procedures and Standing orders, subject to approval and amendment from time to time by National Conference.

19. STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE

- a) A Standing Orders Committee will be elected each year by the national membership. This committee will deal with the organisation and arrangements of the Annual Conference and the timing and running of conference agenda, including sending out a prioritised motion or resolution

ballot form to each local group, and facilitating the compositing of motions where appropriate

- b) The Standing orders Committee shall be made up of 10 people but including no members of the NC
- c) The minutes of all meetings shall be published and any member may attend as an observer without speaking rights
- d) The Standing Orders Committee will maintain a set of Procedures & Standing Orders for conducting the business of National Conference that may be amended from time to time by National Conference.
- e) Between National Conferences, the Standing Orders Committee shall be the final authority on the interpretation and application of the party's constitution and procedures.

20) ALTERATIONS TO THE CONSTITUTION

Any changes to this Constitution must be proposed to a National Conference by the NC, branches or a motion signed by no less than 20 members. Any change must be agreed by at least two-thirds of those members present and voting. The proposed changes must be made public and included in the notice posted announcing the Conference in good time to allow proper consultation

APPENDICES TO THE RULES

APPENDIX 1 - SAFER SPACES POLICY

STILL IN PROCESS OF DRAFTING?

APPENDIX 2 - MODEL STANDING ORDERS

These model standing orders are designed to provide a framework for well-ordered party meetings. Party branches may want to adopt local standing orders to reflect their specific method of operation; however, local arrangements must not conflict with the provisions of these model rules.

1. The Annual General Meeting of [*name of local party*] shall be held each year in [*month*]. A formal notice of the annual meeting shall be sent by the secret-

ary to all party members entitled to attend at least 14 days prior to the meeting.

2. Ordinary meetings shall be held on the following regular basis [*i.e. the first Tuesday of each month*]. Formal notice of all meetings shall be sent out by the secretary to all those entitled to attend at least seven days prior to the meeting. Such notice shall as far as possible include an indication of the business to be transacted at the meeting.
3. Meetings shall commence at [*time*]. Business meetings shall not be held if a quorum is not present within 30 minutes of the appointed time; always provided that in special circumstances members present may agree to transact pressing business subject to the ratification of the proceedings by the next quorate meeting. Meetings shall close two hours from the notified starting time, except that a particular meeting may be temporarily extended for a specified period with the support of two-thirds of the members present.
4. The quorum for business meetings of [*name of local party*] shall be 25% of those members entitled to vote in attendance, or a fixed number agreed with the Regional Committee. The proceedings and resolutions of any quorate meeting shall not be held to be invalid simply through the accidental failure to give notice of the meeting to, or the non receipt of such notice by, any person entitled to attend.
5. All members of [*name of local party*] living or registered as electors within the area covered by it shall be entitled to attend meetings and to vote, as well as any members living elsewhere whose membership of the local party has been agreed with the Regional Committee. Other members, potential members and supporters, may attend but shall not vote. When an annual or special meeting is not held for any reason or is abandoned without completing the business on the agenda, such meeting must be reconvened in order for any necessary outstanding business to be transacted. Only those eligible to participate in the meeting as first convened, whether or not held, shall be entitled to participate in any further reconvened meeting.
6. The elected chair of this body shall preside at all meetings (except where otherwise provided for in the rules in the form of a system of 'rotating' chairs). In the absence of the chair the vice-chair shall preside, but in the absence of both the secretary or other officer shall call on those present to elect a member to take the chair of the meeting. Should the office holder arrive once a member has been elected to preside in her or his place then she or he may claim, if they wish, the right to preside at the meeting once the current item of business has been disposed of. At the annual meeting the chair shall preside until a successor is elected. The new chair shall take over the conduct of the meeting forthwith and proceed to the election of other officers and further business.

7. The prime function of party meetings is to provide members, delegates and supporters with the opportunity to participate in party activities through social contact, political debate and policy discussion; to assist in the political self education of members and to further for the party's objectives in the area through campaigning and the promotion of links with sympathetic individuals and bodies within the wider community. Party meetings shall be drawn up to give due priority not only to organisational matters, but to the introduction of new members and/ or delegates, the discussion of resolutions, party policy items and other matters of interest to party members and the receipt of reports from public representatives.
8. Original motions for the general meetings of [*name of local party*] must be received by the secretary in writing not less than 7 days prior to the meeting for which they are intended. Motions for discussion shall be made available to those entitled to attend with the notice and agenda of the relevant meeting, except for emergency motions which must be sent in writing to the secretary as soon as the nature of the emergency allows before the commencement of the meeting. Emergency business may be accepted by the majority of the meeting on the recommendation of the chair who shall interpret the term 'emergency' in a bona fide manner.
9. No motion shall be discussed at a meeting until it has been moved and seconded. Speakers shall address the chair and shall only speak once on any motion except by permission of the chair, providing that the mover of a motion or an amendment may reply to the discussion without introducing new matter for debate; such reply shall close the discussion. No speaker shall be allowed more than five minutes, unless agreed by the meeting to be 'further heard' for a specified period. Amendments to any motion may be moved and seconded from the floor of the meeting but shall be handed to the secretary in writing. Amendments shall be taken in order with one amendment being disposed of before another is moved. If an amendment is carried, the amended resolution becomes a motion to which further amendments may be moved.
10. A motion of 'next business' shall not be taken until the mover and seconder of a motion have been heard. Any motion 'of next business', 'that the vote be taken', 'to adjourn', 'of no-confidence in the chair' shall be moved, seconded and put to the vote without discussion; after such a vote the chair need not accept a further procedural motion for a period of 20 minutes.
11. No motion to rescind a resolution of this body shall be valid within three months from the date on which the resolution was carried. Notice of rescinding motion must be given in writing and made available to those entitled to attend the relevant meeting in line with rule 8 above.
12. Voting shall be by show of hands except where the constitution of the party provides for a ballot vote or where this body decides otherwise. In the event of there being an equality of votes on any matter decided by a show of

hands, the chair may give a casting vote provided that s/he has not used an ordinary vote. If the chair does not wish to give a casting vote, the motion is not carried.

13. The election of officers and/ or representatives of [*name of local party*] shall be by secret paper ballot using STV if necessary. Any quotas for women laid down in the party constitution which apply to this body shall be incorporated in the arrangements for the secret ballot. Ballot votes shall be held at meetings to select candidates and where otherwise provided for in the party constitution; and where requested by any member supported by at least two others. In the event of a tie on a secret paper ballot the chair shall not have a casting vote. Where appropriate, the ballot shall be retaken and in the event of a continual tie lots may be drawn. In a preferential ballot the tie shall be broken by establishing which candidate had the highest number of first preference votes or took the earliest lead on transfers.
14. Any breach of or question to the rules or standing orders may be raised by a member rising to a point of order. The chair's ruling on any point arising from the rules or standing orders is final unless challenged by not less than three members; such a challenge shall be put to the meeting without discussion and shall only be carried with the support of two-thirds of the members present.
15. Party meetings and events shall be conducted in a friendly and orderly manner and organised in such a way as to maximise participation from members. No member shall be precluded from attendance because they cannot gain access to the meeting place for any reason. Physical or verbal harassment or intimidation of any member is unacceptable as is any form of discrimination on the basis of gender, sexuality, disability or race. Smoking is not permitted at [*name of local party*] meetings. Any member acting in an unruly or disruptive manner, in contravention of the standing orders, may be removed from the meeting by action of the chair. The chair shall put such a motion to the meeting, which to be carried shall require the support of two-thirds of those present and voting.
16. [*Name of local party*] accepts the principle of minimum quotas for women at all levels of representation within the party and shall take steps to ensure that 50 per cent of any delegation shall be women and, where only one delegate is appointed, a woman shall hold the position at least every other year.
17. No alterations shall be made to the rules and standing orders of [*name of local party*] except at an annual or special meeting called for this purpose and carried with the support of two-thirds of the members present and the general provisions of the constitution and rules of [*Left Unity*] shall apply to it