



# LGBT+ LIBERAL DEMOCRATS CONSTITUTION



as most recently amended by the 2020 LGBT+ Liberal Democrats AGM

## 1. TITLE

1.1 The Group shall be known as LGBT+ Liberal Democrats, hereinafter referred to as "the Group".

## 2. AIMS

2.1 To ensure that the policies of the party and the actions of its members are compatible with the needs of sexual and gender identity minorities, including (but not limited to) gay people, lesbians, bisexuals, trans and non-binary people, intersex people and asexuals ('LGBT+ people').

2.2 To act as a forum for LGBT+ people within the party.

2.3 To promote the party amongst LGBT+ people.

2.4 To support members of the party in dealing with issues relating to the needs of LGBT+ people.

2.5 To provide support and development opportunities to LGBT+ party members seeking internal or external election.

## 3. MEMBERSHIP

3.1 Membership shall be open to any current member of the Party, provided that they subscribe to the Group's stated aims, on payment of the prescribed annual subscription.

3.2 If a Member does not renew their annual subscription within 3 months of the subscription becoming due, or if they cease to be a member of the Party, their Membership shall cease.

3.3 Members must treat others with respect and must not bully, harass or intimidate any Party member, member of Party staff, member of Parliamentary staff, Party volunteer or member of the public. Such behaviour will be considered to be bringing the Group into disrepute.

## 4. DIVERSITY

4.1 The Group rejects all prejudice and discrimination based upon race, colour, religion or belief, age, disability, gender identity or sexual orientation and opposes all forms of entrenched privilege and inequality.

4.2 The Group welcomes and encourages diversity within its Membership and in its governing bodies, and seeks to be inclusive in all its activities.

4.3 The Group shall also seek to increase diversity within the Liberal Democrats as a whole and, to this end, shall maintain and administer a fund for the use of its members in need of assistance with meeting the costs of accessing party conferences and other training and development opportunities within the party.

4.3.1 This fund shall be primarily administered by a panel consisting of the Treasurer, Membership Development Officer and an Executive Member.

4.3.2 This shall be budgeted for out of general group funds as each executive believes appropriate.

4.3.3 The group may also fundraise and solicit or accept donations specifically for the access fund.

## 5. AFFILIATIONS

5.1 The Group shall seek and maintain the status of a Specified Associated Organisation within the Party.

5.2 The Group may also affiliate to other organisations within the Party, and to external organisations that further the aims of the Group.

## 6. GOVERNANCE

6.1 The governance of the Group shall lie with its Membership through General Meetings; between General Meetings, and subject to the decisions of those meetings, the general and financial business of the Group shall be controlled and carried on by the Executive Committee.

6.2 Only Members who are current Members at the date when a General Meeting is called shall be eligible to vote, or to stand for election, at that General Meeting.

6.3 The Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Group shall be held each year between 1st September and 30th November at a date and venue determined by the Executive Committee.

6.4 The AGM shall also be called if a written requisition, signed by at least one current Member, is received by the Chair or Secretary and an AGM has not been held during or since the preceding calendar year.

6.5 The business of the AGM shall include

6.5.1 The receipt of reports from the Executive Committee, Honorary President and Vice-Presidents;

6.5.2 Consideration for approval of the examined annual accounts for the preceding year;

6.5.3 Determination of the annual subscription for the following year;

6.5.4 Acceptance and close of nominations for the election of Officers and Executive Members of the Executive Committee;

6.5.5 The appointment of an examiner of the Group's accounts for the following year;

6.5.6 Discussion of the activities of the Group.

6.6 Notice of the AGM, together with copies of the proposed agenda, minutes of the previous AGM, examined accounts for the preceding year and requests for nominations for all Executive Committee places, shall be sent to all Members,

including any Members who cannot be reached electronically, at least twenty-one days before the date of the meeting.

6.7 An Extraordinary General Meeting (GM) may be called by the Executive Committee, and shall be called if a written requisition, signed by at least twenty Members or one quarter of the current Membership (whichever is less), is received by the Chair or Secretary.

6.8 Notice of the EGM shall be sent to all Members, including any Members who cannot be reached electronically, at least twenty-one days in advance of the meeting, and shall specify the reason or reasons for which the meeting is being called and the precise business to be transacted, which shall be the only business of that meeting. Members unable to attend shall be encouraged to advise the Secretary of their views on the matter to be considered.

6.9 Voting at an AGM or EGM shall be by a simple majority of those Members present and voting, except where otherwise stated by this Constitution. In the event of a tie on a simple majority vote, the Chair shall have a second, casting vote.

## 7. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

7.1 The Executive Committee (the Committee) shall comprise the following elected Officers: Chair, Vice-chair, Secretary, Treasurer, Membership Development Officer; together with up to seven additional elected Executive Members.

7.1.1 'Representatives shall be sought from the following liberation organisations:

- Young Liberals
- Liberal Democrat Women
- Liberal Democrat Disability Association
- Liberal Democrat Campaign for Racial Equality
- State LGBT+ Specified or Associate Organisations

or identifiable successor organisations of any of the above existing at the beginning of each executive term.

7.1.2 These representatives shall be selected by those organisations according to their own rules and preferences. Only representatives who are directly elected by members of the relevant liberation organisation to act as representatives to the Group (as all or part of their role) AND self-define as LGBT+ shall have the right to vote on the Executive.

7.2 Any Member of the Group in good standing at the close of nominations may be nominated for election as an Officer or Executive Member of the Committee. Each nomination must be submitted to the Secretary or to another Officer nominated by the Committee, in advance of the AGM, or to the AGM, by two Members after obtaining the nominee's consent.

7.2.1 For this purpose 'in good standing' shall be defined as a candidate who:

- i. Has no active debts to the Group.

- ii. Is not barred from standing in internal or external elections by the party.
- iii. Has not had any complaint upheld against them that may make them unsuitable to represent the Group.
- iv. Any other reason that is brought to the RO or committee's attention that may bring the Group into disrepute.

7.2.2 The decision on whether a candidate is in good standing shall rest with the RO.

7.2.3 A member may appeal the RO's decision with the Federal Appeals Panel of the party under the normal processes and guidance at the time.

7.3 A Member may stand for election to more than one position on the Committee, but may not be elected to more than one position unless the elections to all of these positions are uncontested and the AGM consents by a two-thirds majority of those present.

7.4 If there are any uncontested elections, the nominations for each uncontested election shall be subject to approval by a simple majority of those present and voting at the AGM, immediately after close of nominations for the relevant position.

7.5 Prior to the opening of nominations for elections the Committee shall appoint a Returning Officer, who shall not be a candidate in any of the contested elections, and who shall be responsible for the receipt of nominations, the preparation and distribution of ballot papers, their receipt and counting on return and the declaration of the results.

7.6 In the case of contested Elections:

7.6.1 the contested elections shall be decided by a secret ballot of all Members, using the Single Transferable Vote method;

7.6.2 each candidate for a contested election shall be invited by the Returning Officer to provide a statement in support of their candidacy;

7.6.3 ballot papers or links to an online voting facility, together with candidate statements, shall be circulated to all Members including any Members who cannot be reached electronically, between fourteen and twenty-one days after the date of the AGM;

7.6.4 the deadline for online voting or return of ballot papers shall be between fourteen and twenty-one days after circulation of voting materials, and the Returning Officer shall conduct the count and declare the results within three days after that deadline;

7.6.5 when the result of each election has been declared, the successful candidates shall have their nominations for any remaining elections declared void by the Returning Officer.

7.7 The Chair shall be eligible for election to that position no more than three times consecutively.

7.8 More than two thirds of the executive should not be of the same gender, as self-defined on the date of their nomination or co-option. In the event that the election of the executive committee fails to meet this requirement the executive committee shall seek to meet it by co-option.

7.9 The Committee may co-opt a Member of the Group to fill any vacancy occurring among its Officers or Executive Members between AGMs.

7.10 The Committee may also, by a two-thirds majority vote, co-opt up to three Members of the Group to join the Committee as Executive Members, but must ensure that article 7.7 is not contravened following any co-option.

7.11 The terms of office of Officers and Executive Members (whether elected or co-opted) shall be from the 1st January in the year following election until 31st December in the same year, or until they resign from the Committee, or until their membership of the Group ceases, whichever is earliest.

## **8. PRESIDENT**

8.1 The Committee may nominate a Patron, Honorary President and/or Honorary Vice-Presidents to be approved individually on an annual basis at the AGM, by at least two thirds of those present and voting.

8.2 The Honorary President and/or Vice-Presidents are entitled to attend (but not to vote at) all meetings of the Committee.

## **9. REFUSAL, SUSPENSION OR TERMINATION OF MEMBERSHIP**

9.1 The Committee may, by a two-thirds majority vote, refuse, suspend or terminate a person's Membership of the Group on the grounds that their activities or conduct are likely to bring the Group into disrepute or are not compatible with the Group's Aims or with the Party's fundamental values and objectives.

9.2 Before any meeting at which such a vote is to be taken, the Committee's Officers and Executive Members must be notified and the person must be given a reasonable opportunity to make a written statement in their defence to the Committee.

9.3 Any Party member who believes that their rights as a Party member have been infringed by such a decision may appeal against the decision to the Federal Appeals Panel of the Party. Such an appeal may only be made if they believe the process has not been correctly followed and not just because they do not agree with the outcome.

9.4 If the appeal is successful, the person's Membership shall be restored; the Committee may also restore the person's Membership by a simple majority of those present and voting.

## **10. FINANCE**

10.1 The finances of the Group shall be managed by the Treasurer subject to regular reports to, and guidance by, the Committee

10.2 It shall be the duty of the Treasurer and the Committee to ensure that the funds of the Group are used solely in accordance with the Group's stated aims and that the Group never has debts beyond its available resources.

10.3 Group funds may be used to reimburse reasonable out-of-pocket expenses incurred by Officers and Executive Members in carrying out their duties for the Committee.

10.4 The Group's financial year shall be 1<sup>st</sup> January to 31<sup>st</sup> December.

10.5 Following the end of each financial year, the Treasurer shall prepare financial accounts for that year, and shall arrange an independent examination of the accounts, by a person who is not a Member, for consideration at the following AGM.

10.6 It shall be the responsibility of the Treasurer and the Committee to ensure that the Group complies fully with any requirements that apply to the Group under the Political Parties Elections and Referendums Act 2000 or any successor Act.

## **11. WINDING UP**

11.1 The Group may only be dissolved by a two-thirds majority vote of Members present and voting at an AGM or EGM. Notice of the proposed dissolution must have been given in the notice calling the meeting. Upon dissolution, the Group's funds shall be applied to paying the Group's debts, and any remaining funds and other assets shall then be passed to the Party or its successor body.

11.2 If the Group ceases to function, and is no longer capable of holding an AGM or EGM, the Group's assets, including any bank accounts, shall become the property of the Party or its successor body.

## **12. AMENDMENT AND VALIDITY OF THIS CONSTITUTION**

12.1 Nothing in this Constitution shall conflict with the Federal Constitution of the Party.

12.2 This constitution may only be amended by a two-thirds majority vote of Members present and voting at an AGM or EGM. Notice of the proposed amendment, including its precise wording, must have been given in the notice calling the meeting.