

HUMANIST AND SECULARIST LIBERAL DEMOCRATS – CONSTITUTION

As amended by a resolution of the Annual General Meeting held on Sunday 18th September 2016

1 TITLE

1.1 The Group shall be known as Humanist and Secularist Liberal Democrats, hereinafter referred to as "the Group".

2 AIMS

- 2.1 To act as a forum for humanists and secularists within the Liberal Democrats (the "Party").
- 2.2 To promote humanism and secularism within the Party and to contribute towards party policy.
- 2.3 To promote the Party within the humanist and secularist movements.

3 MEMBERSHIP

- 3.1 Membership shall be open to any current member of the Party, regardless of their religious belief, 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, their membership shall be terminated.
- 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.

5. AFFILIATIONS

- 5.1 The Group shall seek and maintain the status of an Associated Organisation within the Party.
- 5.2 The Group may also affiliate to other organisations within the Party, and to external organisations that pursue humanist or secularist aims such as the British Humanist Association and the National Secular Society.

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 of the Group 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 the 1st September and 30th November at a date and venue determined by the Executive Committee.

- 6.4 The AGM may also be called by a written requisition received by the Secretary, signed by at least one current member, if 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;
 - 6.5.2 consideration for approval of the examined annual accounts together with the determination of the annual subscription for the ensuing year;
 - 6.5.3 acceptance and close of nominations for the election of Officers and Ordinary Members of the Executive Committee;
 - 6.5.4 the appointment of an examiner of the Group's accounts for the ensuing year;
 - 6.5.5 discussion of the activities of the Group.
- 6.6 Notice of the AGM shall be sent to all members at least twenty-one days in advance together with copies of the proposed agenda, examined accounts, and requests for nominations for all Executive Committee places.
- 6.7 An Additional General Meeting may be called, with not less than fourteen days' notice, either by the Executive Committee or by a written requisition received by the Secretary signed by at least 20 members or one quarter of the current membership. Any summons to an Additional General Meeting shall specify the reason(s) for which it 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 appraise the Secretary of their views on the matter to be considered.

7 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

- 7.1 The Executive Committee shall comprise the following Officers: Chair, Vice-chair, Secretary, Treasurer, Membership Secretary; together with four Ordinary Members of the committee.
- 7.2 These Officers and Ordinary Members of the committee shall be elected by the general membership of the Group. Each nomination for election to the Executive Committee must be submitted to the Secretary in advance of the AGM, or to the AGM, by two members after obtaining the nominee's consent.
- 7.3 In the case of non-contested elections:
- 7.3.1 the nominee or nominees shall each be subject to election by a simple majority of those present and voting at the AGM, immediately after close of nominations for the relevant position;
 - 7.3.2 the elections shall take effect at the start of the seventh day after the AGM.
- 7.4 In the case of contested elections:
- 7.4.1 the Executive 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 preparation and distribution of ballot papers, their receipt and counting on return and the declaration of the results;
 - 7.4.2 the elections shall be decided by a secret postal ballot of all Group members, by the Single Transferable Vote method, to take place within six weeks of the date of the AGM;
 - 7.4.3 each election shall take effect from the declaration of the relevant result by the Returning Officer.
- 7.5 The terms of office of Officers and Ordinary Members shall run until the relevant elections at the following AGM take effect, or until they resign from the Executive Committee, or until their membership of the Group is terminated, whichever is earliest.
- 7.6 The Chair shall be eligible for election to that position no more than three times consecutively.

- 7.7 The Executive Committee may fill any vacancy occurring among its Officers or Ordinary Members.
- 7.8 The elected Officers and Ordinary Members may also annually invite up to three additional, Co-opted Members to join the Committee, as voting members. Co-options must be approved by a two-thirds majority vote of the elected Executive, and are effective until the election of Ordinary Members at the following AGM takes effect.

8 PRESIDENT

- 8.1 The Executive Committee may nominate an Honorary President or Honorary Co-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 Co-President or Co-Presidents are entitled to attend (but not to vote at) all meetings of the Executive Committee.

9 EXPULSION OF MEMBER

- 9.1 A member shall be expelled from membership of the Group if the Executive Committee determines that the member has acted in a way which brings the Group into disrepute if:
- 9.1.1 a motion to consider expulsion of a member shall only be competent at a meeting of the Executive Committee of which due notice has been given and intention to propose the motion has been circulated in advance;
- 9.1.2 such motion shall require a simple majority of Executive Committee members present and voting;
- 9.1.3 the member shall, subsequent to such vote, be notified in writing of the grounds on which the Executive Committee is considering the termination of their membership and given a fair opportunity to comment thereon in writing or on person;
- 9.1.4 the member shall be expelled only if the Executive Committee, after consideration of the relevant material, shall so decide by a two thirds majority of those present and voting.
- 9.2 In case of urgency, the Executive Committee may, by a two thirds majority of members present and voting at a properly called meeting, suspend any member from the rights and privileges of membership for a period not exceeding three months while the question of termination of their membership is under consideration. A member may be suspended by a majority decision of the Officers for a period not exceeding one calendar month to allow for a meeting of the Executive Committee to be called.
- 9.3 The member may then appeal to the Party President, or their nominee, for their membership to be reinstated. Membership may be reinstated either by a decision of the Party President or their nominee, or by a simple majority vote of the Executive Committee.

10 FINANCE

- 10.1 The finances of the Group shall be managed by the Treasurer subject to regular reports to, and guidance by, the Executive Committee.
- 10.2 It shall be the duty of the Treasurer and the Committee to ensure that the funds of the Group are utilised solely in accordance with the Group's stated aims and that the Group never has debts beyond its available resources.
- 10.3 A legitimate use of the Group's funds shall be to reimburse reasonable out-of pocket expenses incurred by Officers, Ordinary and Co-opted Members, in carrying out duties laid on them by the Committee.
- 10.4 The group's financial year shall be the calendar year.

11 WINDING UP

11.1 In the event of it being considered by the Executive Committee that the Group is no longer viable a Special General Meeting shall be called to consider a proposal that the Group shall be wound up and its remaining assets would pass to **the Party**. Such a proposal must receive the support of at least two thirds of those present to be passed.

12 AMENDMENT OF THIS CONSTITUTION

12.1 This constitution may only be amended by a decision of a General Meeting after details of the proposed change have been given in the notice calling the meeting and an opportunity afforded to any members unable to attend to submit their views to the Secretary for report to the meeting. Any change must then be agreed by a vote of at least two thirds of those present and voting.