

OPEN LABOUR CONSTITUTION

1. Name 1.1 The name of the organisation is 'Open Labour'.

2. Vision, Values and Objects

2.1. Vision

Open Labour understands that the Labour Party is a necessary part of positive social change for the common good in modern Britain. We believe that this means occupying, commanding and transforming mainstream opinion and institutions, engaging with and shifting the centre, persuading voters to ally with our party and programme.

2.2. Values

Open Labour seeks a new political settlement for Labour, worked out from first principles and in deliberate avoidance of the conflicts of past decades. Open Labour's key values are:

- Equality – wealth, power and opportunity are available to all, not the few
- Democracy – debate and accountability make us richer and build bridges between us.
- Solidarity – from local youth centres to supporting peace and democracy overseas.
- Emancipation – democratic socialism is about freeing us to be the people we want.

2.3 Objectives

Open Labour seeks a new political culture of mutual respect and collaborative practice inline with the ethos of the democratic left. And from this, we seek to build the power to make this real.

2.3. In support of this objective Open Labour shall have power to carry out any lawful activity whatsoever.

3. Membership

3.1. Membership shall be open to any individual who supports the objects and values of Open Labour set out in clause 2 and is a member of the Labour Party or is a registered or affiliate supporter of the Labour Party. Membership is not open to members of political parties who stand against the Labour Party or are on its list of proscribed organisation, or are a member of a successor or front organisation thereof, as the National committee deem to their satisfaction.

3.2. The National Committee may refuse membership to any person if they consider it in the interests of Open Labour to do so.

3.3. A member's membership shall end if they fail to pay their subscription by a date set by the National Committee.

3.4. The National Committee may end the membership of any person if they consider it in the interests of Open Labour to do so, provided that they state their reasons and allow the person concerned to make representations to them before making a final decision.

3.5 All members of the initial email list shall be eligible for a period of free membership for six months from the public launch date of the organisation. Membership shall initially be set at a price of ten pounds per member per annum after this period and shall thereafter be decided by the National committee.

4. General Meetings

4.1. The National Committee shall call an annual general meeting of members at least once in each calendar year, and may call additional general meetings. The first annual general meeting shall be called by the National Committee once the membership has reached a threshold set by the National Committee.

4.2. Members shall each have one vote at a general meeting

4.3. The following powers are reserved to the members in a general meeting:

4.3.1. The amendment of this constitution.

4.3.2. The merger or dissolution of Open Labour.

4.4. General meetings shall be governed by standing orders approved by the National Committee.

5. National Committee

5.1. Open Labour shall be managed by a National Committee. At least 50% of National Committee members, whether elected or co-opted to the committee, should be women. No co-opted committee members shall have voting rights. Any quota shortage shall first be addressed through the Ten Open Places by deeming the next eligible female candidate to be elected.

5.2. Elections shall be held for the following positions on the National Committee which shall have voting rights on the committee, at least 50% of whom shall be women:

5.2.1 LGBT, Disability, BAME, Women's Officers shall be elected by all members of Open Labour

5.2.2 Ten further Committee members shall be elected by and from all members of Open Labour

5.2.3 One member of the National Committee shall be elected by and from members resident in Scotland

5.2.4 One member of the National Committee shall be elected by and from members resident in Wales

5.2.5 A Parliamentary Spokesperson shall be elected by and from Open Labour members in the UK, European, Scottish Parliaments, and the Welsh and London Assemblies

5.3 The election of National Committee members shall take place annually

5.4 Elections shall be conducted as a single transferable vote election in each category

5.5 The election shall be conducted by a ballot issued to all members at their registered email addresses. Electronic means will be used for distribution and voting

5.6 The National Committee shall approve the detailed arrangements for the election

5.7 All Local Group Chairs will be invited to attend an annual away day with the National Committee

5.8. Where a National Committee position is not filled at the annual election, or falls vacant during the year, the National Committee may at its discretion hold a by-election, co-opt an additional member or leave the position vacant.

5.9. The National Committee may co-opt additional committee members in order to fulfil specific necessary functions or roles that are not covered by the existing committee. Members may be

co-opted on more than one occasion. The National Committee shall have regard to the need to secure diversity and geographic balance on the National Committee when making co-options.

5.10. Only members of Open Labour may be members of the National Committee.

5.11. The National Committee may exercise all powers and duties of Open Labour, other than those reserved by this constitution to the members in a general meeting. The National Committee shall exercise its powers in a manner consistent with any decision of members in a general meeting.

5.12. The National Committee may delegate any of its powers and duties to a sub-committee of two or more of its members and disband those same sub-committees on an ad-hoc basis as decided by the National Committee.

5.13. The National Committee shall, at its first meeting after the annual election of the National Committee, elect Co-Chairs, Secretary, Treasurer, Membership Officer, Editor/Press and other positions as created by the committee from among its members. The National Committee may from time to time elect such other officers as it may decide. Officer posts to be allocated by unanimous decision, failing this by majority consensus, failing this by order of election in the following level of seniority: Co-Chair, Secretary, Treasurer, Membership Officer, Editor/Press and other positions as created by the committee.

5.14. The National Committee shall regulate its own conduct, by adopting standing orders.

5.15. The National Committee may approve the creation of groups of Open Labour members. The constitutions of such groups shall be subject to the approval of the National Committee. Such groups may be dissolved by the National Committee, and any surplus funds shall become the property of Open Labour. For detailed guidance see Appendix 1 of this constitution.

5.17. The National Committee may hold ballots on party political issues of those individual Open Labour members who are, or who are eligible to be, individual members of the Labour Party.

5.18 The National committee has editorial responsibility for any statements or other communicative output from the organisation. It may delegate this authority to a member of the National committee or sub-committee.

5.19 All Committee members are expected to attend Committee meetings regularly whether in person or remotely. Committee members will be expected to attend 25% of Committee Meetings held and if attendance is below this over a year that committee member will be unable to restand for the Committee. Those members unable to stand for election can still be considered for co-option in the year following the election.

6. Finance

6.1. Members and associates shall pay a minimum annual subscription set by the National Committee.

6.2. The National Committee, normally acting through the Treasurer, shall ensure that proper controls are maintained over the funds of Open Labour, that proper accounting records are kept and that annual accounts giving a true and fair view of its financial affairs are submitted to a general meeting.

6.3. No distribution of any surplus shall be made to members of Open Labour.

7. Amendment

7.1 This constitution may be amended by a resolution of a general meeting carried with twice as many votes cast in favour as are cast against. This clause, clause 6.3 and clause 8 may not be amended.

8. Merger and dissolution

8.1. Open Labour may be merged with another organisation with similar objects, or dissolved, by a resolution of a general meeting carried with twice as many votes cast in favour as are cast against.

8.2. On dissolution of Open Labour, its assets shall not be distributed to its members, but shall be distributed to one or more organisations with compatible objects specified in the dissolution resolution. If this is not done for any reason any assets shall be given to the Labour Party.

Standing Orders for the AGM

1. The National Committee shall decide the time, date and place at which the AGM shall be held, and may determine the duration of the meeting subject to it being at least one hour.

Notices of meeting

2. The National Committee shall give to members: -

a. At least six weeks' notice of the date, approximate time and general location of the AGM.

b. At least four weeks' notice of the exact time and place of the AGM

3. All notices and papers for the AGM may be circulated electronically to members with a valid email address. Any member may request a paper copy of the papers.

4. The business of an AGM shall not be invalidated because of an accidental failure to send a notice or paper to a member, or their failure to receive it.

Documents for consideration by members

5. The National Committee shall send to members at least six weeks before the AGM: -

a. An Annual Report and Accounts relating to the previous year ended 31 March as approved by the National Committee

b. A draft paper of the general political positioning of Open Labour and its planned activities for the following twelve months ('the draft paper')

6. A date shall be set, not less than two weeks after the circulation of the draft statement, by which members may submit proposed amendments to it. Members may not propose amendments to the Annual Report and Accounts.

7. The National Committee shall consider the amendments submitted by members. They may accept into the paper any amendments they consider appropriate and uncontroversial. They shall edit and consolidate other amendments as they see fit into a form they consider suitable to be submitted to members to vote on.

8. A final draft version of the paper, together with the consolidated amendments shall be sent to members not less than two weeks before the AGM.

Other business of the AGM

9. The National Committee or any member may submit proposed amendments to the Constitution of Open Labour, which must be consistent with the requirements of the relevant clause of the Constitution.

Voting on business of the AGM

10. The National Committee may require: -

- a. A member to have become a member by a specified date; and
- b. A member to be paid up as at a specified date in order for them to be entitled to take part in the business of the AGM.

11. A member entitled to vote at the AGM may do so on every item to be considered by email or postal proxy, to be returned by a time specified by the National

Committee not more than 48 hours before the commencement of the AGM, or in person at the meeting. Every member shall have one vote.

12. A member shall be entitled to vote in favour or against: -

- a. Accepting the Annual Report and Accounts approved by the National Committee
- b. Accepting the paper proposed by the National Committee
- c. Each amendment to the paper as submitted to members by the National Committee
- d. Any proposed amendment to the Constitution

13. In the event of a tie on any vote the person in the chair at the AGM shall have a second casting vote.

Attendance at the AGM

14. Only members who are entitled to take part in the business of the AGM may attend in person.

15. The National Committee may invite or permit other persons to attend or to speak or both at the AGM at their discretion.

Chair of the AGM

16. The AGM shall be chaired by the first of the following who is present and willing to take the chair: the Chair of Open Labour, the Vice-Chair, a member of the National Committee selected by the members of the National Committee present at the meeting, any member elected from among the members present at the meeting.

Conduct of the meeting

17. The chair of the meeting shall have a general discretion to conduct the business of the meeting as he or she sees fit. The chair may take such steps as are necessary to keep order, including requiring anyone present who persistently disrupts the meeting after due warning to leave it.

18. Subject to the overriding authority of the chair, the meeting shall be conducted so as to permit members a reasonable opportunity to ask the National Committee questions on any of the items they propose to the meeting, to move any amendments they have proposed and to speak in favour or against each item to be voted on.

19. At the end of each discussion, each item shall be put to the vote of the meeting, which shall be counted and aggregated with the proxy votes cast, unless the chair declares, without dissent being immediately expressed, that a vote is clearly in favour or against the item.

20. If the time allotted for the meeting is shortly to expire, the Chair shall immediately put all remaining items to the vote without further discussion.

APPENDIX 1 OPEN LABOUR LOCAL GROUPS

Process for setting up a local Open Labour group

Open Labour groups can be set up by Open Labour members in a clearly defined, contiguous and organisationally viable geographic area. Before being accepted as an official Open Labour group the National Committee must receive from them:

- A democratic constitution which contains:
 - I. A clear definition of the area the group covers based on CLPs
 - II. A democratic structure for electing officers, including mechanisms to ensure access to liberation groups
 - III. A mechanism for calling and holding group AGMs
- The names of five Open Labour members registered in CLPs in the defined area of the group
- The names of the members of the local group's committee, all of who must be Open Labour members

The National Committee will then consider the application and accept or deny it.

Rights and responsibilities of a local Open Labour group

Once officially accepted, an Open Labour local group can expect to receive:

- I. The right to use Open Labour branding, including the name and logo
 - II. Access to contact information of members registered in their area
- Information from the National Committee about national campaigns and events
- III. Assistance from the National Committee in organising local events, including but not limited to speakers, funding and promotion
 - IV. Access to national officers and speedy responses to any queries

The National Committee will maintain the right to disband any local group that has not followed the principles laid out in this document.

Any election taking place at a local Open Labour group AGM will be subject to the final approval of the National Committee.

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