

## **CONSTITUTION**

### **1) NAME**

The name of the party shall be Left Unity.

### **2) AIMS**

The aims of Left Unity are:

- a) to unite the diverse strands of radical and socialist politics in the UK including workers' 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 ordinary 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 operates on the principle that each will contribute to society according to their ability to do so, and society will in return meet their needs.
- 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.
- d) to organise and campaign in ways that recognise and promote alternatives and new forms of popular political culture that are creative and educational, that can move and empower people through hope of a better and realisable future, and that delight, inspire and provoke thought.

### **3) MEMBERSHIP**

Membership of Left Unity shall be open to any individual without regard to perceived or actual impairment, ethnicity, gender or sexual orientation who:

- a) commits to further the aims of Left Unity
- b) agrees to abide by the democratically decided rules and constitution of Left Unity
- c) pays any membership subscription agreed by National Conference
- d) supports Left Unity candidates in elections
- e) is not a member of an organisation deemed incompatible with membership of Left Unity by National Conference or National Council

- f) abides by the principles and guidelines of behaviour set out in the Safer Spaces policy (Appendix 1)

#### **4) STRUCTURE AND GENERAL PRINCIPLES**

- a) The minutes of all meetings of branches, regional, national committees, the Executive Committee or other party bodies will be published and made available to members in a timely manner and in accessible forms.
- b) No member may hold a nationally elected post within the party for more than three consecutive years, following which s/he may not stand for election to that post for two years.
- c) The term of all elected posts within the party shall be one year, from Annual Conference to Annual Conference. All party bodies have the right to recall the elected delegates, officers and spokespersons accountable to them.
- d) As part of our overall commitment to gender equality, at least 50% of those elected to regional and national party bodies should be women.
- e) Care will be taken in when deciding the venue of all national meetings that they take place in geographic locations that are conveniently accessible and a London-centric approach is avoided.
- f) Members are expected to adhere to the principles and guidelines set out in the Safer Spaces policy (Appendix 1).

#### **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 and participating in National Conferences
- c) through electing representatives from the branch to regional bodies, elected regional members of national committees, national individual office-holders and the principal spokespeople for the party
- d) through standing for election for the above
- e) through participation in on-line forums and postal consultative exercises in e-democracy organised to strengthen the participation of Left Unity of members who, for a range of reasons, including geographical isolation, ill health or disabling barriers that can't be overcome by meeting organisers or caring responsibilities, may not be able to attend all meetings
- f) As members of sections and caucuses individuals can join together with other members to propose motions to regional and national bodies and nominate individuals for elected individual positions at a national level

- g) by submitting resolutions to conferences provided they are a) seconded and b) resubmitted to an appropriate delegate body between conferences if they are not reached at the conference

## **6) BRANCHES**

- a) Branches bring together members and supporters of Left Unity along area, 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) Regional committees or the National Council may create branches according to need or where none exist
- c) 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
- d) Members can only be a voting member of one branch
- e) A branch must contain at least 5 members - to be reviewed in the light of the development of Left Unity and no later than 18 months from the founding conference
- f) Branches will manage their affairs in accordance with the national rules of Left Unity. Branches should normally meet monthly
- g) Branches may elect representatives to regional bodies and nominate candidates for any of the elected national committees or positions
- h) Branches will operate their own accounts and can raise money to fund local activities as they see fit in addition to the monies received from national level
- i) 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 if agreed by the National Council (subject to confirmation at the next convenient Annual Conference) and caucuses.

### **a) Caucuses**

- i. Caucuses can be set up to encourage the self-organisation of party members who suffer from specific discrimination to enable them to have a collective voice within Left Unity, to take a lead in the party on these issues and to organise collectively in campaigns against oppression
- ii. The National Council will create caucus structures to represent the following oppressed groups:
  - LGBT members' caucus
  - Black and Ethnic Minority members' caucus
  - Disabled members' caucus
  - Women members' caucus

## **b) Sections**

- i. Sections can also be set up to bring together party members who have distinct interests (such as housing, ecology or education) or who are members of the same trade union. 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 feedback experience into the party.
- ii. Sections should submit their terms of reference 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 section, the activities it intends to undertake and how the internal democracy of the network will operate. Sections will submit written reports to National Council/Regional Councils on their activity at least twice a year

## **b) Tendencies**

- i. Members have the right to organise in political tendencies. 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 tendencies should be open – their meetings, aims and objectives should be should be available to all other party members.
- iii. Tendencies 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. If a member of a tendency stands for any elected position they will declare their membership in the interests of transparency and to promote informed choices

## **c) Youth Caucus 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 caucus shall be open to all members up to the age 26 and of its student section to all members who are full or part-time students in any educational establishment.
- ii. Members of local youth and student groups shall establish their own national caucus and section and determine their own Standing Orders, subject to approval by National Conference.
- iii. All members of the youth groups regardless of age should have the right to speak freely on any subject. The voice of young people is important and should be heard. They should have the power to vote on issues within Left Unity providing they are full paying members.

## **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) of the constitution and the Code of Conduct for elected representatives set out in Clauses 15 and 16, 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 ( at least one of whom must be 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 committees will be co-ordinating and prioritising campaigning and organisational activities, assisting in the creation and building of branches and encouraging political education.
- e) The role of Welsh and Scottish committees will be to develop and agree policy within the remit of the devolved powers of the Welsh Assembly and the Scottish Parliament so long as they do not contradict the aims of Left Unity as stated in the Constitution and as subsequently understood by National Conference. These two committees will also have the role of co-ordinating and prioritising campaigning and organisational activities, assisting in the creation and building of branches and encouraging political education.

## 9) NATIONAL CONFERENCES

- a) The national conferences of Left Unity are the supreme policy making body, other than where 8e) applies. Each National Conference shall take place within 13 months of the previous one. No conference is bound by the decisions of a previous conference.
- b) The National Council may call a Special National Conference on a vote of 2/3 present and voting at a quorate meeting, or if, over a three month period, 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.
- c) All members can attend and vote at National Conferences on the basis of One Member One Vote (OMOV), except that when Left Unity reaches 2,000 members the provisions in 7 (d) will come into force.
- d) National delegate conference
  - i. Conference shall be organised on a delegate basis from branches, with the size of delegations based on two delegates per ten members or part thereof, **at least one of whom must be a woman**, or on such other proportion of branch membership as shall be decided from time to time by Conference.
  - ii. The party's national youth caucus and student sections shall be entitled to send delegates to National Conference on a basis that shall be determined from time to time by Conference.
  - iii. All party members are entitled to attend National Conference as visitors. Party visitors can participate in debates but will not have voting rights.
- e) The National Council, branches and Regional and national 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 they are seconded.
- g) Sub-committees or working parties established by conference motion may be charged to submit proposals directly to National Conference.
- h) Caucuses and sections may send one motion and one amendment to National Conference.
- i) A Conference Arrangements Committee, which shall consist of four members elected at each National Conference, plus the National Secretary, will be responsible for all aspects of the organisation of the following National Conference except the organisation and timing of its agenda, which is the responsibility of the Standing Orders Committee.

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

- a) Left Unity is committed to using IT, and in particular the internet, to enhance its democratic processes. Therefore, the National Council, or such sub-committee that it may establish to deal with these issues, shall regularly review this area and present a report to Annual Conference, with proposals, on developing the use of IT.
- b) The National Council shall organise E-conferences on specific single issues or questions as it decides or when requested by 25% of branches in the course of a three month period. These shall take place on a forum to be organised by the NC with online debate and 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) All discussion and debate will be expected to be respectful and adhere to the standards of behaviour set out in the Safer Spaces policy (Appendix 1).

## 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
  - ii. Appeals Committee
  - iii. Standing Orders Committee
- 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). The National Council will comprise the following members, or such number as may be decided from time to time by National Conference:
  - i. 40 regional representatives
  - ii. 1 representative from each of the following Sections: Youth/students, LGBT, BME, disabled members, women
  - iii. 4 nationally elected principal speakers
  - iv. 6 nationally elected office holders
  - v. 15 nationally elected council members
- b) The National Council shall meet at least 4 times a year and one third of members must be present to form a quorum (not including unfilled positions or places in the calculation). Chairing to be rotational.

- c) All branches, regional committees, caucuses and sections shall have the right to send motions and amendments to National Council.
- d) 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
- e) All full members of the party are entitled to attend National Council meetings as observers.
- f) The National Council shall adopt its own standing orders, subject to approval by National Conference.
- g) The term of office for all members of the National Council will be 1 year.
- h) The National Council may create new National Officer posts, nominate spokespeople on particular issues and temporarily co-opt from within its own membership or the membership at large to fill them, subject to confirmation by National conference and thereafter elected by a national ballot of all members.
- i) In the event of a vacancy occurring for any position within the National Council the Executive Committee will take immediate steps to organise the election of a replacement

### **Regional representatives**

- j) A total of 40 regional and national representatives, or such number as may be decided from time to time by National Conference, will be members of National Council, representing the following regions and nations (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. National electoral region 10 - Scotland
  - xi. National 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 in England, Wales and Scotland, 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, or by the National Council if no Regional Committee exists.
- m) Nominations for regional representatives on the National Council may be made by branches within that region, or by individual members provided their nomination is seconded. Nominations for national office-holders may be made by branches, regional bodies, or individual members provided their nomination is seconded.
- 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.

### **Representatives of caucuses**

- o) Women, youth/students, LGBT, BME and disabled members may elect representatives to the National Council on such a basis as national Conference may from time to time determine.
- p) Representatives of caucuses on the National Council will provide written reports of NC meetings to their sections and a written report to Annual Conference detailing the work of the section for that year.

### **National Office holders and spokespeople**

- a) National officers will be elected annually by national ballot. National officers will be responsible for implementing the decisions of National/Special Conferences and the National Council. The national officers and spokespeople will be accountable to the National Council and National Conference, providing regular reports of their areas of responsibility
- b) The number and responsibilities of National Officers will be as follows, or as may be determined from time to time by the National Conference:
  - i. Principal Spokespeople - two male, two female, acting as leading spokespeople for the party at a national level
  - ii. National Secretary (with responsibility for party organisation, preparation of agenda's, dealing with external correspondence and communications, liaising with Regional Committees, minutes and records and any other duties decided by National Council from time to time)
  - iii. National Membership and Communications (with responsibility for membership, data protection and internal communications)
  - iv. Nominating Officer/Elections Co-ordinator; responsible for drawing up and implementing procedures for the democratic selection of party candidates for public office and other internal election processes, and for the overall co-ordination of national election campaigns. For the technical purpose of registration with the Electoral Commission only, this post holder will be designated party leader.
  - v. National Treasurer; responsible for keeping details of party income and expenditure, preparation of quarterly financial reports to be sent to all National Council members and Branch Secretaries, and presentation of audited accounts to National Conference and the Electoral Commission
  - vi. Media Officer; responsible for media strategy
  - vii. Trade Union Officer



- c) The positions of National Secretary, National Membership and Communications Officer, Nominating Officer/Elections Co-ordinator, Media Officer, Trade Union Officer and National Treasurer are all open for job-share. However, if a job share is operating, although both may attend, only one of the two sharing post-holders may act as a voting/speaking member at any one meeting of the National Council

### **13. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

- a) 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
- b) The composition of the Executive Committee will be the National Office holders/spokespeople, one representative from each region, the representatives of Sections and 10 representatives from the nationally elected National Council members.
- c) Minutes of Executive Committee meetings should be tabled at National Council meetings and be available to members in a timely manner and in accessible forms.
- d) The Executive Committee should meet at least monthly.
- e) The Executive Committee shall produce its own Standing Orders, subject to approval by National Conference.

### **14) NATIONAL ELECTIONS FOR INTERNAL POSITIONS WITHIN LU**

- a. Voting in elections for regional representatives on the NC, individual post-holders and spokespeople 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, or regional body, or individual members provided their nomination is seconded, or any number of members decided by Annual Conference from time to time.
- d. Every candidate will be entitled to supply a statement of no more than 500 words (or such limits as deemed practicable by the Nominating Officer) saying:
  - i. which positions in LU they do or have held
  - ii. whether they are members of a tendency and if so, which.

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 Nominating Officer (or members delegated by him/her as appropriate) will organise hustings opportunities, whether on-line or in person.

- d. On the ballot papers for all internal elections there will be a 'Re-Open Nominations option'
- e. If insufficient male or female candidates are nominated for positions requiring 50% gender representation, nominations will be re-opened once only, with an appeal for male or female candidates, as appropriate, to come forward. Pending the by-election, the female/male candidate, as appropriate, with the second highest vote will sit as an acting representative on the National Council. If no further male/female nominations, as appropriate, are received then the acting representative will be deemed to be elected for that year.

## **15) ACCOUNTABILITY OF INTERNAL REPRESENTATIVES & LEADERS**

The following safeguards to ensure transparency and accountability will apply to all members of the National Council and other party 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. A record of the votes cast by each delegate or official shall also be circulated internally
- c) If 25% of branches or 3 Regional Councils/National Committees, in the course of a three month period, request the recall of a national office holder, a member of the Executive Committee, a member of National Council or a member of a Standing committee or subcommittee, the member concerned shall step down and the National Council shall organise a new election. The previous incumbent may appeal to National Conference and/or stand again if s/he so wishes.
- d) A national office holder, national spokesperson or Executive Committee member may be recalled by the National Council. A recalled member has the right of appeal to National Conference.
- e) Regional officers can be recalled at a special aggregate meeting of all members in the region. A meeting to recall a regional officer must be called if requested in motions submitted by 25% of branches in the region in the course of a three month period.
- f) Branch officers and delegates can be recalled at a branch meeting specially called for the purpose.
- g) Employees of Left Unity shall be paid a minimum of the London Living Wage pro rata.
- h) Officials and representatives within Left Unity shall be paid a maximum of the national median wage pro rata (plus London Weighting where appropriate). Where they are employed part-time and have partial employment outside of Left Unity, their total pay should not exceed this amount, with the remaining surplus being donated to Left Unity.

## **16) ACCOUNTABILITY AND CONDUCT OF MEMBERS ELECTED TO PUBLIC OFFICE**

- a) All Left Unity members elected or serving in any form of public body (e.g, local councillor, Member of Parliament, Member of the European Parliament) 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, may incur suspension pending the deliberations of the Party disciplinary procedure.
- b) No member may stand as an official 'LU Candidate' without undergoing a democratic selection process at local, regional or national levels, as determined from time to time by the National Conference and supervised by the national Nominating Officer

- c) 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, including London Weighting) – donating 20% of the surplus to Left Unity and 80% returned to public funds.
  - ii. Where an elected position is a full time job Left Unity members will take on no other paid employment.
  - iii. 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
  - iv. After a gap of 1 term of office members may again seek nomination to stand as a candidate.
  - 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. No elected Left Unity member may take any payment from NGOs, lobbyists or the private sector either in cash or in the form of gifts.

## 17) 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 at least one other nominated member of the National Council.
  - iv. Accounts to be independently audited every year.
  - v. Left Unity will 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. An itemised report of all expenses shall be published quarterly.
  - vi. Notwithstanding any requirement by the Electoral Commission or other external authority for an independent external audit, the party's accounts will be independently audited, in conjunction with any finance standing committee National Conference may establish from time to time.
- 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) Any member who is more than three months in arrears without contacting their branch treasurer will be deemed to have resigned
- d) The rate of membership subscriptions will be determined by National Conference from time to time:
- e) Income will be divided between the national organisation and local/regional activities according to the following formula, subject to review and agreement of national conference from time to time:
  - i. national office = 75%
  - ii. region = 5%
  - iii. branch = 20%
- 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.

### **Party assets**

- i) 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.
- j) 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.

## **18) DISPUTES COMMITTEE**

- a) A Disputes Committee shall be elected annually by national ballot. This committee will consist of seven 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 on personal behaviour set out in Appendix 1 (Safer Spaces Policy), the first recourse will be to seek reconciliation and representation through the informal stage of the Safer Spaces Policy

- c) If after all informal attempts at reconciliation are exhausted, the relevant branch 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 decides that there is a case to answer, it will refer the matter to the Disputes Committee. Should the Regional Council decide not refer the matter to the Disputes Committee, the complainant may refer the matter in writing to the Executive Committee. If the Executive Committee decides that there is a case to answer, it will refer the matter to the Disputes Committee.
- d) The Disputes Committee may form a sub-committee of at least 3 members to consider any one case.
- e) The Disputes Committee shall adopt its own Procedures and Standing orders, subject to approval and amendment from time to time by National Conference
- f) 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.
- g) The individual concerned has a right to appeal to the Appeals Committee.

## **19) 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 seven people, but shall include no members of the National Council or Disputes Committee. 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.

## **20) 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.

## **21) 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 individual members, provided their motion is seconded or any number of members decided by Annual Conference from time to time. Any change must be agreed by a simple majority 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 secretary 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 following officers will be elected to manage the day-to-day business of the branch: Chair and vice-chair (unless a system of rotation is used within the branch; Secretary; Treasurer and any other positions deemed necessary by the branch
7. The elected chair of this body shall preside at all meetings (except where otherwise provided for in the standing orders of the branch 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.
8. 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.
9. 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. Amendments to motions may be proposed without notice as they arise in the course of discussion

10. 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.
11. 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.
12. 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.
13. 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.
14. The election of officers and/ or representatives of [*name of local party*] shall be by secret paper ballot using STV if necessary. Any gender quotas 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.
15. 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.
16. 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, bullying 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.

17. [*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.
  
18. 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

### **APPENDIX 3 - NATIONAL COUNCIL TRANSITIONAL ARRANGEMENTS**

- a) Upon the adoption of this constitution at the party's founding conference, the existing Left Unity National Coordinating Group shall take on the role of Transitional National Council of the new party. This body shall operate until the next National Conference, which shall take place within four months of the founding conference, when it shall dissolve and Clause 12 of the constitution will come fully into operation.
  
- b) The Transitional National Council will appoint, from its own number (or in the case of the Standing Orders Committee, from the membership at large), such acting national officers and temporary standing committees as are legally required by the Electoral Commission and as it may deem necessary for the efficient administration of the party. These will include Acting National Secretary, Acting Treasurer, and Acting Nominating Officer and members of Conference Arrangements and Standing Orders Committees, who shall remain in post only until the end of the next National Conference.
  
- c) The Transitional National Council will organise the election by regional ballot of 40 regional representatives to the incoming National Council, apportioned to the different nations and regions in a manner as proportional to the relative membership of the party as possible, and the election by national ballot of the National Officers and members of the Standing Orders, Disputes and Appeals Committees.