

## CONSTITUTION OF THE LIBERAL DEMOCRATS OVERSEAS LOCAL PARTY

(2025)

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### 1. Name and Area

1.1 The name of the body governed by this Constitution shall be “The Liberal Democrats Overseas Local Party”.

1.2 The area of the Local Party shall consist of all countries outside Europe. It will also exclude any Local Party agreed by the Federal Board that may be established in the future within the same geographic area as the Lib Dems Overseas Local Party.

### 2. Definitions

2.1 In this Constitution: “the Local Party” means the Liberal Democrats Overseas Local Party; “the Party Constitution” means the Constitutions of the Federal Party and of the Liberal Democrats in England; “the Party” means the Liberal Democrats of the United Kingdom or England; “Lib Dems Abroad” means the Sub-Committee of the Federal International Relations Committee (FIRC) of the Federal Board entitled “The Lib Dems Abroad Sub-Committee”; “Party’s Youth and Student Organisation” means the Specified Associated Organisation representing youth and students; “Majority” at any meeting means majority of those present and voting; “Executive Committee” means the executive committee of the Local Party.

### 3. Objectives

3.1 The Local Party shall: a) promote and support the values and objectives of the Party and its diversity of cultures, b) recruit new members actively to the Party, and encourage existing members to renew their memberships; c) participate in the formulation of the policy of the Party, particularly with regard to British residents overseas and their interests; d) play a full part in the campaigning activities of the Party whenever possible, especially for Votes for Life and Overseas Constituencies; e) help all Britons overseas in the area defined in Para 1.2, without regard to party or any other factor, to secure their rights and well-being as British citizens; f) build contact with current or potential liberal parties, groupings and individuals, linking into the activities of Liberal International, in those countries where it does not pose risks for members; g) create a strong profile for Liberal Democrats Overseas as part of Liberal Democrats Abroad within the Liberal Democrat Party and its Members in both Houses of Parliament.

### 4. Membership

4.1 The Local Party shall administer membership in accordance with the Membership Rules of the Liberal Democrats of England.

4.2 All persons shall be eligible to join the Local Party if they agree with the fundamental values and objectives of the Party; and (a) they live or have lived, worked or studied within the area of

the Local Party, or (b) if not eligible under Section 4.2 (a), they acquire membership with the consent of the Local Party Executive Committee.

4.3 Eligible persons shall become members of the Local Party: (a) on enrolment through the National Lib Dem Website; or (b) on enrolment through the Party's Youth and Student Organisation giving an address within the area defined in Para 1.2; or (c) if already members of the Party, on re-registration as a member of the Local Party. Members of the Local Party who are also members of the Party's Youth and Student Organisation may be restrained under the Party Constitution from exercising certain rights as members of the Local Party if they exercise equivalent rights as members of the Youth and Student Organisation.

4.4 (a) An applicant shall become a member on acceptance by the enrolling body, payment of the requisite subscription and registration on the register kept by the Party in England. (b) An application shall be deemed accepted if not rejected in accordance with the Membership Rules. (c) Initial membership shall run for one year from the quarter day (last day of March, June, September or December) following commencement. (d) Members whose subscriptions are due shall receive notices of meetings and elections for a further 3 months. (e) Members who do not renew their subscriptions before the end of the 3 months period must reapply for membership.

4.5 The Executive Committee may refuse membership to, or revoke the membership of, any person, on the grounds provided by the Party Constitution, using the procedure defined in the Membership Rules of the Liberal Democrats in England.

4.6 A member of the Local Party who ceases to be eligible under Section 4.2 (a) may retain membership of the Local Party or be co-opted onto the executive with the consent of the Executive Committee.

4.7 If another Local Party is formed in the Lib Dems Overseas area, after a decision by the Federal Board, all members of that new Local Party will automatically transfer out of Lib Dems Overseas Local Party, with the exception of those falling under 4.6.

4.8 For the purposes of disciplinary proceedings membership will sit within the English State Party and adhere to their disciplinary processes and procedures.

## **5. Officers and Executive Committee**

5.1 The Officers of the Local Party shall be the Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary, Data Officer, Membership Development Officer and Treasurer. Their duties shall include:

(a) The Chair - to chair all General and Executive Committee Meetings; in the event of a tied vote the Chair shall have an additional casting vote; to be jointly responsible with the Treasurer for the Local Party's compliance with the UK Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000; and to be a member of the Lib Dems Abroad Sub-Committee of the FIRC;

(b) The Vice-Chair - to chair General and Executive Committee Meetings if the Chair is unable to do so and deputise for the Chair as required;

(c) The Secretary - to handle the Local Party's correspondence; to maintain minutes of meetings and administer the Local Party's calendar of events; and notify the names and addresses of all Officers to the Regional Party and to the Chief Executive of the Federal Party no later than 2nd January each year and within seven days after any subsequent change.

(d) The Treasurer - to handle the Local Party's financial business and present financial reports to General Meetings; to be jointly responsible with the Chair for the Local Party's compliance with the UK Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000;

(e) The Data Officer - to: (i) receive all notices of application for membership and refer them to the Executive Committee for acceptance; (ii) maintain a membership register and provide Branch and Local Party Officers with lists of members as necessary under this Constitution and in accordance with data protection laws; (iii) hold and maintain the EARS/campaigning data of the local party; and (iv) ensure compliance with data protection legislation.

(f) The Membership Development Officer - to: (i) organise and run membership recruitment and renewal campaigns (ii) ensure that the Local Party has a wide a range of social and political activities to facilitate member retention.

5.2 The Annual General Meeting will appoint one or more Honorary Presidents to help fulfil certain specific tasks, who will be entitled to attend all meetings of the Executive. to be voted in on an annual basis at the AGM.

5.3 The general and financial business of the Local Party shall be controlled and carried on by the Executive Committee, subject to the decisions of General Meetings and in compliance with the UK Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000. The Executive Committee shall consist of: (a) The Officers; (b) eight Ordinary Members to be elected annually in the same manner as the Officers; (c) The Chair of each Branch within the Local Party if existing; (d) Additionally, Country Coordinators can be invited to attend Executive Committee meeting by the Chair without voting rights. Country Coordinators can be simultaneously voting members of the Executive Committee if so elected (See Section 11)

5.4 The Executive Committee may co-opt up to two additional members, for a term expiring not later than the next following AGM. The power of co-option shall be used, inter alia, to ensure if possible that no more than two-thirds of the Executive Committee are of the same sex, and that there is fair representation of underrepresented communities in the locality, taking into account race, religion, age, disability, gender or sexual orientation and that this would create a composition of the Executive that reflects the community the Local Party serves.

5.5 The Executive Committee may fill any vacancy occurring among the Officers or the Ordinary Members. Any vacancy in the Chair shall be filled from amongst the existing Executive Committee members. The Secretary shall within seven days notify any change of Officers to the FIRC and to the Chief Executive of the Federal Party.

5.6 The Executive Committee may assign special responsibilities to any of its members, including duties which would otherwise pertain to one of the Officers. The Executive shall designate an officer to deputise for the Chair if necessary if the Chair is ever unavailable.

5.7 The Officers shall convene a meeting of the Executive Committee within one month after taking office. The Executive Committee shall meet at least quarterly and not less than four times in a year.

The Secretary shall give at least 7 days' notice of meetings to all members of the Executive Committee. One-third of its members shall form a quorum. A meeting may continue without a quorum if no member present objects.

5.8 The Executive Committee may appoint sub-committees for any specified purpose. No sub-committee or Executive Committee member may take action on behalf of the Executive Committee beyond their terms of appointment. All sub-committees shall report on their activities to the Executive Committee and may include persons who are not members of the Executive Committee and may delegate authority to take actions on their behalf. The Executive Committee may also delegate authority to committees jointly constituted with other Local Parties for particular purposes; for instance, with the Lib Dems in Europe Local Party and other Local Parties within Europe.

5.9 In urgent circumstances, the Officers may act on behalf of the Executive Committee. They shall report on such actions to the next meeting of the Executive Committee

5.10 When Lib Dems Overseas membership grows and more local parties are formed originating from Lib Dems Overseas, a Lib Dems Overseas Coordinating Committee will be formed consisting of the Chair of each local party, to ensure good coordination and coherence of Lib Dem activities overseas outside Europe.

## **6. Elections of Officers and Ordinary Executive Committee Members**

6.1 Officers, Ordinary Executive Committee Members and Country Coordinators must be British citizens holding British passports.

6.2 The Officers and Ordinary Members shall be elected by and from members of the Local Party at the time of the Annual General Meeting, except that, with the prior agreement of the Lib Dems Abroad Sub-Committee of the FIRC, a member of the Party who is not a member of the Local Party can be elected to the office of Treasurer. In the case of Lib Dems Overseas, its Data Protection Officer can only be elected from countries designated by the Compliance Department of the Liberal Democrat Party to be in conformity with UK data protection laws. If an election is contested, there shall be a ballot.

6.3 The term of office of Officers and Ordinary Members shall be from the 1st January following their election until the following 31st December. They shall be eligible for re-election, save that the Chair shall not serve for more than three consecutive terms, and shall not be eligible for re-election as Chair for two terms after leaving Office.

6.4 Nominations for election shall be invited in the notice summoning the AGM, and shall close at the AGM, but not before the reception of the Chair's, Treasurer's and Conference Representatives' reports. They must be proposed and seconded, and except in the case of nominations made at the AGM shall be in writing signed by the proposer, seconder and candidate.

6.5 Where elections are contested, ballot forms shall be distributed to all members of the Local Party within 7 days of the AGM, and must be returned to the Returning Officer within 21 days after the AGM.

6.6 No person may be elected to hold more than one Office, or may be elected to be both an Officer and an Ordinary Member. Elections for Officers shall be counted in the order listed in Section 5.1 and for Ordinary Members after Officers. Any votes cast for candidates already elected to Office shall be transferred according to the voters' subsequent preferences.

6.7 An elected officer or ordinary member shall cease to hold office upon ceasing to be a member of the Local Party.

6.8 All contested elections under this constitution shall be by secret ballot by the Single Transferable Vote method in accordance with election rules made under the Party Constitution.

6.9 The Executive Committee shall appoint some disinterested and independent Party Member to act as Returning Officer. The Returning Officer shall be responsible for the receipt of nominations and for the preparation and distribution of ballot papers, their receipt and counting on return, and the declaration of the results.

6.10 Accidental failure to despatch notice of the AGM or a ballot paper in due time or at all to a person entitled to vote shall not invalidate an election or be treated as an irregularity, unless a substantial number of persons entitled to vote have not received notices or ballot papers at all or have received them too late to make it practicable to attend the meeting or return the ballot paper in due time by first-class post.

6.11 An unsuccessful candidate who alleges that there has been or may have been an irregularity in the election may within one calendar month after the declaration of the result ask for an investigation by the Lib Dems Abroad Sub Committee of the FIRC in accordance with the Party Constitution. Subject to any order made after such an investigation, no irregularity shall invalidate an election.

6.12 The Returning Officer may extend the time for distribution and return of ballot papers where there are special circumstances making it necessary to do so.

## **7. General Meetings**

7.1 The Annual General Meeting shall be on a day appointed by the Executive Committee between 1st October and 30th November. The Executive Committee may postpone the meeting

if it would conflict with a Parliamentary Election in the Constituency, or for other urgent or logistic reason until 15 December.

7.2 The business of the AGM shall include:

- (a) to receive a report from the Chair on the activities of the Local Party and the Executive Committee since the previous AGM;
- (b) to consider and, if thought fit, approve the accounts of the Local Party for the previous financial year together with an independent report on those accounts, and to receive a report from the Treasurer including an outline budget for the following year;
- (c) to appoint for the current Financial Year (i) Auditors if required by the UK Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 or (ii) a person(s) to produce an independent report on the accounts for a General Meeting;
- (d) to receive reports from Branches;
- (e) to receive reports from National Coordinators;
- (f) to transact any other business specified by the Constitution or directed by the Executive Committee;
- (g) to consider any motion which has been submitted by any member of the Local Party to the Secretary in time for circulation with the notice of the AGM;
- (h) to receive nominations for the election of Officers and Ordinary Members of the Executive Committee.

7.3 The Secretary shall give all members at least 21 days written notice of the time and place of the AGM. Such notice shall specify all business to be conducted at the meeting.

7.4 The AGM may by a two-thirds majority agree to consider urgent or important business which has arisen since notice of the AGM was given.

7.5 A special General Meeting may be convened by the Officers, or by the Executive Committee; and shall, on receipt of a requisition signed by at least twenty members of the Local Party (or one-fifth of the membership if less), be convened by the Secretary so as to be held within 28 days from the receipt of such requisition. At least 14 days written notice shall be given to all members. The meeting shall only consider business stated in the notice convening it. Failure to convene a validly requisitioned meeting within 14 days shall permit the meeting to be convened on behalf of (and at the expense of) the Local Party by any of the original requisitioners. In an emergency, the Officers may convene a meeting giving such notice as they consider sufficient in the circumstances.

7.6 Eight members, or one-fifth of the Local Party membership if less, shall form a quorum at any General Meeting. A quorum is not required to receive reports and accounts. A meeting may continue without a quorum if no member present objects except as provided for in Section 10.1.

7.7 Notice and minutes of all Annual and Special General Meetings shall be sent to the secretary of the FIRC.

7.8 Minutes shall be maintained of all proceedings of all General Meetings. Minutes shall also be kept of any meetings of the Executive Committee. In the absence of an Executive Committee member charged with the duty, the Meeting shall appoint a member to take minutes.

## **8. Local Branches**

8.1 The Executive Committee may authorise the setting up of Branches covering defined areas of the Local Party, provided that no branch shall be formed with less than ten members who can be deemed to be actively engaged in the local party. The objects of a Branch shall be to further the objects of the Local Party in the area covered by the Branch. The Branch shall be subject to the ultimate authority of the Local Party.

8.2 The members of the Branch shall be: (a) All members of the Local Party whose Registered Membership Address (as defined in the Membership Rules of the Liberal Democrats in England) is within the Branch area, unless they have opted to be a member of another Branch; (b) Other members of the Local Party who wish to be members, if the Branch's Committee and the Local Party Executive Committee agree. No person who is not a member of the Local Party may be a member of the Branch. No person may be a member of more than one Branch.

8.3 A Branch shall not be entitled to require a subscription from its members, but the Executive Committee of the Local Party may agree to remit part of its income from its overseas account to a Branch. A Branch shall not incur any debts for which the Local Party shall be responsible.

8.4 Each Branch shall be governed by a constitution, which shall provide for:

(a) a Committee which shall include Officers and Ordinary Members, and may include ex-officio and co-opted members;

(b) rules for election of Officers, Ordinary Members of the Branch Committee;

(c) rules for the calling and conduct of an Annual General Meeting and other General Meetings of the members;

(d) The names and addresses of the Officers, Ordinary Members and representatives to be notified to, and minutes of General and Committee Meetings to be supplied to the Secretary of the Local Party.

The Constitution shall be in the form of the Model Constitution for Branches appended to this Constitution. A branch may adopt a constitution which is not wholly in the model form but any

such constitution, or any changes to it, shall not take effect until the Executive Committee of the Local Party accepts its conformity with the Party Constitution and with this Constitution; (e) The Chair of a Branch will sit on the Executive Committee of the Local Party.

8.5 The finances of the Branch shall be held by the Treasurer of the Local Party as part of the funds of the Local Party and subject to section 9 of this constitution.

(a) The Officers of the Branch shall include a Treasurer. The Branch's accounting period shall be the same as that of the Local Party.

(b) The Branch Treasurer shall keep, maintain for six years and pass to his or her successor accounting records which shall be available for inspection in accordance with the UK Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000.

(c) The Branch Treasurer shall ensure that donations made directly to Lib Dem Party are made via the national website. Local donations can be made to Lib Dems Overseas Local Party but must be retained outside the United Kingdom.

(d) The Branch Treasurer shall annually produce accounts which shall be approved by the Branch Committee and shall be sent to the Treasurer of the Local Party by a date to be specified by the Treasurer of the Local Party.

(e) The Branch Treasurer shall submit the accounts of the Branch together with an independent report to the Annual General Meeting to be held not later than 30 November. The meeting can be postponed exceptionally for logistic reasons.

(f) The Branch shall maintain one or more bank or other appropriate accounts in the name of the Branch for which the mandate for withdrawal shall require the signature of at least two Officers who shall not come solely from members of any one family. The Branch may maintain further accounts for the deposit of money not required for the time being, requiring the same signatures.

8.6 The Branch may appoint a substitute representative to the Executive Committee to fill a casual vacancy, or if a representative is unable to attend a particular meeting.

8.7 A Branch may dissolve itself by a two-thirds majority at a General Meeting; or be dissolved or suspended by the Executive Committee on the grounds that:

(a) it is no longer functioning or able to hold such a meeting;

(b) there have been serious irregularities in the conduct of the affairs of the Branch;

(c) the affairs of the Branch have not been conducted in compliance with the UK Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 and with its Constitution, this Constitution and the Party Constitution;

(d) the membership of the Branch has fallen below 10;



(e) the affairs of the Branch are being conducted in a manner contrary to the interests of the Local Party as a whole. If a Branch is dissolved or suspended, any member of the Branch may request the Lib Dems Abroad Sub-Committee of the FIRC to conduct an investigation. The Local Party shall not dissolve a Branch until the Branch has been given an opportunity to hold its own General Meeting.

8.8 The funds of a Branch shall, upon dissolution, be applied in paying its debts, and any surplus shall be added to the funds of the Local Party.

## 9. Finance

9.1 The Local Party's accounting period shall be annual, ending on 31st December each year.

9.2 The Treasurer shall keep, maintain for six years and pass to his or her successor accounting records, which shall be available for inspection in accordance with the UK Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000.

9.3 The Treasurer shall ensure that donations are made via the National Website.

9.4 The Treasurer shall annually produce accounts, which shall be approved by the Executive Committee, and if required by the UK Political Parties, Elections & Referendums Act 2000 shall be audited and submitted to the Electoral Commission.

9.5 The Treasurer shall submit the accounts of the Local Party together with an independent report to a General Meeting, which shall be held not later than 15 December in each year.

9.6 A copy of the annual accounts shall be sent to the Treasurer of the Lib Dems Abroad Sub Committee of the FIRC and to the Chief Executive of the Federal Party.

9.7.1 The Local Party shall maintain one or more bank or other appropriate accounts in the name of the Local Party for which the mandate for withdrawal shall require the signature of at least two Officers who shall not come solely from members of any one family. The Local Party may maintain further accounts for the deposit of money not required for the time being, requiring the same signatures.

9.7.2 ~~The Federal party will ring-fence membership payments that the local party would normally receive from membership fees in a special bank account in the UK designated for the local party's use exclusively within the UK. The Local Party will receive a statement regarding the amount ring-fenced within their normal budget line and will direct where this should be spent, Such areas would include specific campaigns within the UK, hosting fringe events, a stand at UK Lib Dem conferences, staff time to help with digital campaigns or administrative support for Lib Dems Overseas. These monies cannot be sent abroad to be spent outside the UK.~~

9.7.3 Lib Dems Overseas will be able to carry out local fundraising events to raise funds for its activities exclusively outside of the UK. Its bank account outside the UK will be able to operate there without having to become an accounting unit or submit returns under UK PPERA, as long

**Deleted:** The Lib Dems Overseas Local Party will not be an accounting unit under UK PPERA and therefore will not have a UK bank account.

as its activities relate only to activities outside of the UK. Such areas would include drives to recruit new members overseas, political meetings outside the UK, or support to members who wish to attend Lib Dem events in the UK such as Conference, training or policy working groups.

9.8 If the Local Party fails by 15th January to notify the Chief Executive of the Federal Party of the appointment of a Chair and a Treasurer, the Local Party shall automatically be suspended.

## **10. Constitution and Interpretation**

10.1 Amendments may only be made by a two-thirds majority at a quorate General Meeting. No amendment shall be made which conflicts with the Constitution of the Party or of the Regional Party. Any amendment to this Constitution shall be subject to approval by the Lib Dems Abroad Sub Committee of the FIRC.

10.2 Details of any proposed amendment shall be sent to all members with the notice of the General Meeting.

10.3 If the Model Constitution for Local Parties (England) is amended, any provision of this constitution shall be deemed to be correspondingly amended, unless the Local Party resolves in accordance with 11.1 above at a quorate General Meeting held within 6 months of receiving notice of the amendment not to accept it.

10.4 One copy of the Constitution shall be deposited with the Secretary of the FIRC; and one shall be kept with the minute book of the Local Party. Any member shall be provided with a copy of the Constitution on request.

10.5 In the event of any question of interpretation arising or any question on which this Constitution is silent, the Executive Committee shall have power to act according to its interpretation of the Constitution, or at its discretion, subject to Article 8 of the Constitution of the Liberal Democrats in England and Article 14 of the Constitution of the Federal Party.

10.6 No word or construction in this Constitution shall be taken to imply any discrimination whatsoever with regard to sex, race, colour, creed, age, disability, sexual orientation or any other ground other than political belief or practice.

10.7 In the event of the dissolution or suspension of the Local Party, the assets of the Local Party shall vest in the FIRC on trust for the future reconstitution of the Local Party.

## **11. Country Coordinators**

11.1 Given the widespread geographic area covered by the Lib Dems Overseas Local Party combined with the uneven spread of membership, Country Coordinators can be appointed by the Executive Committee where Branches do not yet exist. They must be British citizens holding British Passports.

11.2 The chief objectives of the Country Coordinators shall be to:

a. Act as the main point of contact for the country's membership for Lib Dems Overseas Local Party.

b. Grow and also retain the membership in their geographic area, by assisting the Lib Dem Overseas Local Party Membership Development Officer and Data Protection Officer.

c. Engage actual and potential members, including holding events and fund-raising for the party in the UK, the local party as well as locally.

d. Initiate and grow the relationship with local Liberal International affiliated and other liberal and democratic parties in the country, where they exist, can be nurtured and where it does not pose risks for our members.

1. Be a voice for the British community in the country

