

Rules of The Socialist Party (as amended up to Conference 2009)

MEMBERSHIP

1. Any person desiring membership shall sign the application form signifying acceptance of the object and principles of the Party. Such application shall be lodged with the Branch Secretary, whose duty it shall be to place same before the next business meeting (to which the applicant shall be invited) for consideration. After examination of the applicant, a majority shall decide, subject to ratification by the Executive Committee. Upon acceptance by the EC an applicant shall be deemed a member as from the date of enrolment by the Branch. The EC shall every five years issue to each member a combined rules and membership card, showing the name, address, the registered number, date of enrolment and name of Branch. Any application rejected by the Branch shall be forwarded to the EC together with the reasons for the rejection.
2. Each member shall pay £5 per calendar month towards the Branch funds, the Branch Treasurer to acknowledge by issuing a receipt. The payment of dues shall be waived in the case of members out of employment, or for any other reason that may be deemed satisfactory by the Branch. Under the same circumstances the Branch may decide to accept part payment of dues. A member becoming 26 weeks in arrears shall be immediately notified by the Branch Secretary and, if after the expiration of 28 days from the sending of such notice no satisfactory explanation is received, may be lapsed by the Branch subject to EC ratification. A member more than a year in arrears shall be lapsed by the Branch without further notice, subject to EC ratification. Such a member shall not be allowed to join any Branch while these arrears remain. Should the address of a member in arrears be unknown, such a member may also be lapsed. Should a long-standing member become, in the judgment of his or her Branch or of the Executive Committee, incapacitated for reasons of ill health, then he or she shall be considered a honorary member. An honorary member shall not be included in branch membership counts for the purpose of determining the number of delegates to Conference, Delegate Meetings, etc. Should an honorary member recover from his or her incapacity, or believe that he or she has been wrongly judged incapacitated, he or she may appeal to the Executive Committee to have the judgment reconsidered.
3. A member shall not belong to more than one Branch at the same time. A member may transfer to another Branch, including Central Branch where deemed appropriate by the EC, and provided a clear record be furnished by their last Branch. A member leaving Great Britain will only be permitted to retain his/her membership if there is not a Companion Party or Group in the country in which he/she is taking up residence. An Overseas group be established for members joining from other countries until they can form Companion Parties of their own.
4. A Central Branch shall be constituted for members who do not live within commuting distance of a Branch. The Central Branch membership shall elect their Branch Officers. Where no Branch Officers are elected, the EC shall appoint them annually. These Officers shall report to the EC each half-year the numerical strength of the Branch and the financial standing of each member.
5. Members have the right to attend at meetings of Branches other than their own, and speak with the permission of the Branch, but shall not have the right to vote thereat. Central Branch members, however, shall be informed of a party vote and forwarded a voting paper and shall be allowed to vote through the post or at any one Branch meeting on production of membership card. All members may attend the meetings of the Executive Committee, Delegate Meetings, or Conferences, and with permission may contribute to the discussion.

6. A member shall not belong to any other political organisation or write or speak for any other political party except in opposition, or otherwise assist any other political party.

BRANCHES

7. The Branch shall be the unit of organisation. A Branch may be formed by not less than six members making written application on the prescribed form to the Executive Committee and receiving their sanction. Where two or more Branches exist in any single Parliamentary or Local Government area, the Branches shall federate for the purposes jointly concerning them.

8. Branches shall conduct their branch meetings in accordance with a uniform set of Standing Orders. Branches shall elect their own officers and may draw up such bye-laws as they may deem necessary for their internal management, provided they do not conflict with the Principles, Rules, and Standing Orders of the Party.

9. Each Branch shall report its numerical and financial condition annually to the Executive Committee, for the twelve months ending 31st December. Such reports to be audited and sent to Head Office before the end of February. If a Branch fails to send in its report within the time specified, the Executive Committee shall ask the Branch for an explanation and report the matter to the next following Delegate Meeting or Annual Conference or Special Conference and the delegates from the Branch concerned be allowed to sit only with the permission of the Delegate Meeting or Conference.

10. The Branch Treasurer shall return to Head Office 80% of the amount of dues collected each calendar quarter. All Branch monies are Party funds.

11. Branches, Groups and members shall neither publish, sell or distribute any political literature in the name of the Party, excepting handbills and leaflets, which has not been approved by the Executive Committee or the New Pamphlets Committee. Election Statements and Election Manifestos, being Official Party Statements, must be approved by the Executive Committee.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

12. The Executive Committee shall consist of ten members, elected annually by vote of the Party. Nominations shall be made by the Branches. Vacancies on the Executive Committee shall be filled only by seeking further nominations. If the number of nominations exceeds the number of vacancies, a ballot shall be held. Vacancies occurring after 1st October shall not be filled.

13. The Executive Committee shall meet at least once a month. Five members shall be a quorum. Any member shall lapse from the EC if absent from two out of three consecutive meetings unless granted leave of absence by the EC for Party business, holidays, sickness or other reasons acceptable to the EC.

14. The Executive Committee shall send a report of each meeting to the Branches, such reports to contain the names of the EC members and how they vote on matters of policy and principle. They shall report to the Delegate Meetings and Annual Conference, including the activities of all their Officers and sub-Committees.

15. The Executive Committee shall submit a Financial Statement to the Branches each half-year. They shall submit to the Branches a report of the year's work and a Balance Sheet, signed by the

Auditors, at least one month prior to the Annual Conference. They shall also bank all Party funds not required for immediate use in a current or deposit account, arranging all matters relating thereto with the Secretary, Treasurer and Trustees. In the event of financial urgency the EC shall submit a full financial statement to the Branches and call a Special Conference which shall have all powers to decide any necessary action thereon. The Executive Committee shall make all arrangements for the Delegate Meetings and Conferences, give effect to the resolutions of the Conference and those adopted by Party Poll or referendum.

16. The members of the EC shall not be eligible to act as chair to the Delegate Meetings or Conferences, nor shall any member act as chair who has been on the EC whose work is under review. Such members shall have the right to speak thereat.

17. The Executive Committee shall publish and control the Party literature. Election Statements and Election Manifestos must be approved by the Executive Committee before printing excepting handbills and leaflets. They shall establish a literature agency, from which all Branches shall be supplied, establish and maintain communications with Socialist Parties abroad and otherwise generally administer the work of the Party in accordance with Party polls, Party rules and Conference decisions, and to this end may appoint sub-committees. Names shall be called for, subject to the Executive Committee being authorised to appoint members directly to these sub-Committees if no nominations are received.

18. The Executive Committee, on receipt of a written detailed complaint by a Branch against a speaker, shall immediately send copies to the speaker referred to and the Propaganda Committee and shall require from them, within one month, a written reply and a report respectively. The EC then may call upon such speaker to undergo an examination by a committee appointed by the EC. Such speaker shall not be allowed to speak for the Party until examined. Should the EC be dissatisfied with such speaker they shall not be allowed to speak on behalf of the Party until they can satisfy examiners at a subsequent date. A rejected member shall have the right of appeal to a Delegate Meeting or Conference.

PARTY OFFICERS

19. The Party Officers shall consist of a General Secretary, Assistant Secretary, Treasurer, Assistant Treasurer, Central Organiser, two Auditors and two Trustees to be elected in the same manner as the Executive Committee, subject to the Executive Committee being authorised to appoint the Assistant Secretary, Assistant Treasurer, Central Organiser, Auditors and Trustees, if no nominations are received when the annual call is made for nominations for Party Officers. The General Secretary, Treasurer and Central Organiser shall report to the Annual Conference and Delegate Meeting.

CONFERENCE

20. A Conference of the Party shall be held annually in the Spring.

21. The Executive Committee shall ensure that at least seventeen weeks prior to Annual Conference, Branches are asked for resolutions and amendments to Rule which shall be embodied in a Preliminary Agenda and submitted to Branches at least eleven weeks before the Conference. All amendments to the resolutions received within five weeks thereafter shall appear on the Final Agenda which shall be issued to the Branches at least five weeks before the Conference. Resolutions, amendments to Rule and amendments to Resolutions may be proposed by at least six members of Central Branch as well as by Branches. Within five (5) weeks after Conference Branches shall hold at least one specially summoned meeting at which voting shall take place on the Final Agenda. The actual number of votes for and against each Amendment to Rule and Resolution

as cast either in person or in writing by branch members shall be the vote recorded and sent to the Standing Orders Committee within six (6) weeks after the Conference. Similarly, Central Branch members' actual votes for and against shall be recorded as cast.

Addendum: Floor resolutions of Conference and ADM shall be recommendations only, though where the EC fails to implement such recommendations it will set out its reasons for not doing so in writing.

22. Each Branch shall be entitled to send two delegates for the first ten members or under, and one additional delegate for every further ten members. Central Branch shall be entitled to send two for the first ten members and one additional delegate for every subsequent ten members to return their ballots for the vote on the Final Agenda. Delegates of Branches formed within the previous six months shall sit and vote only with the consent of the Conference. Where Branches are unable to send their full number of delegates, the votes of their delegates upon all questions where definite written instructions have been given (signed by the Branch Secretary and Chair) shall count according to the representation to which the Branch is entitled.

23. A Special Conference shall be called on a requisition signed by six Branches in good standing being sent to the Executive Committee.

DELEGATE MEETINGS

24. A Delegate Meetings shall be held in October to discuss the report of the Executive Committee and items submitted by Branches. The EC's Report shall have been previously submitted to the Branches and shall include a Financial Statement for the half-year. Each Branch shall be entitled to send two delegates. The Delegate Meetings shall have power to call upon the EC to summon a Special Conference, or take a poll of the Party upon any business arising from the EC's report.

PARTY MEETINGS

25. When matters of political or economic importance arise, either nationally or internationally, the EC shall call a meeting of Party Members to discuss the question, in order that members shall have the fullest available information on the particular subject.

PARTY POLLS

26. A poll of the Party shall be taken at any time by the Executive Committee; it shall also be taken at the request of a Delegate Meeting, or Conference, or by four or more Branches sending in a requisition stating the matter upon which the poll is desired. The Executive Committee shall call a specially summoned Party Meeting before the issue of Ballot Papers. At such meetings only motions concerned with procedures shall be tabled. Branches shall hold at least one specially summoned meeting to discuss each Party Poll. The returning date of voting papers to be twenty-eight days from the date of issue. A Party Poll shall be interpreted to mean that every Party member shall receive a separate ballot paper and vote individually, i.e., as in the method adopted for the election of Party Officers. The result of a Party Poll shall overrule all other decisions (i.e., EC, Conference or previous Party Poll decisions). (N.B. For Party Poll on Executive Committee and Party Officers' vacancies, see Rule 12.)

Addendum: Branch polls may be called by the EC or any Branch, suggesting a wording for a resolution. If an absolute majority of Branches pass the resolution, the EC shall consider it as if it were a floor resolution.

ELECTORAL ACTION - National and Local

27. Candidates elected to a Political office shall be pledged to act on the instructions of their Branches locally, and by the Executive Committee nationally. Candidates for Political office in a single-member constituency shall have passed the Party Speaker's Test. In multi-member constituencies at least one of the candidates shall have passed the Speakers' Test. Members of the Party shall not stand for any Political office except as official candidates of the Party.

28. Any Branch proposing to contest elections, National, European or Local, shall first obtain permission from the Executive Committee. The EC shall only grant permission to those branches who have carried out Conference decisions appertaining to electoral activity. Any constituent may sign the nomination paper.

DISCIPLINE

29. Charges against any member shall be submitted in writing to the Branch and a copy supplied to the member accused who shall be allowed 14 days to enter the defence. The Branch shall consider the matter at a specially summoned Meeting, and a majority of those voting shall have power to expel any member, subject to ratification by the Executive Committee. An expelled member shall have the right of appeal to Delegate Meeting or the Annual Conference.

30. Disputes between Branches shall be submitted to the Executive Committee, all statements being reduced to writing; copies of all documents in connection therewith shall be forwarded to the Branches concerned. The decision of the Executive Committee shall be binding with a right of appeal to the next Delegate Meeting or Annual Conference.

31. A Branch or member acting in a manner deemed by the EC to be an infringement of the Principles or Rules, or detrimental to the interests of the Party shall be immediately suspended by the EC from all Party business except the matter in dispute. The EC shall forthwith submit particulars of the charge to all Branches and at the same time communicate the charges in writing to the accused and enclose a copy of this rule. Branches shall hold at least one specially summoned meeting to discuss the charge. The Delegates at the next Delegate Meeting or Annual Conference shall hear the case of the EC and of the accused; after which no further circulation of arguments for or against the charge may take place. The Delegates shall submit their findings to a Party Poll and the result of the Party Poll shall apply as from the date of suspension. No parties to the charge or dispute shall be allowed to sit as Delegates or Chair at Conference, ADM or any EC meeting where the case is being reviewed.