

Standing Orders for the Oxford and District Labour Party

1. Name

The Oxford and District Labour Party (hereinafter named “this party”) comprises the two parliamentary constituencies of Oxford East and Oxford West & Abingdon (hereinafter referred to as “the constituencies”).

2. Summary of Organisation

Monthly all-member meetings (AMMs) provide a forum for discussion of policy and campaigns, and determine the policy positions and general direction of this party. The general committee (GC), comprising delegates from branches and affiliates, is the ultimate decision-making body of this party on financial and constitutional matters, and in electing officers and delegates, with votes normally held within an AMM. The executive committee is responsible for constituency development, including organisation, finance, administration and membership, and for the selection of local council candidates and the direction of campaigns. It is accountable to the all-member meeting and to the general committee.

3. All-Member Meetings

The formal general committee comprises delegates from branches and affiliated organisations, and from the Oxford City Labour group and from other Labour groups with members within the constituencies, appointed according to the rules. They shall receive individual agendas and papers by post, by hand or by e-mail. Other party members within the constituencies are also entitled to attend all-member meetings, and notice of forthcoming business shall be publicised through branches and by e-mail to maximise attendance. To promote local government involvement, all Labour councillors within the constituencies shall receive individual agendas.

4. Right to Speak and Vote

Within all-member meetings, all members are entitled to speak on any matter, and to vote on policy issues, including resolutions. Only members elected as delegates to the general committee may vote on constitutional and financial matters, including donations, and in electing officers, executive committee members, and delegates to other bodies.

5. Annual Meetings

The annual general meeting (AGM) of this party shall be held each year in the month of March. A formal notice shall be sent by the secretary to all branches and organisations entitled to be represented, and to councillors within the constituencies, at least 28 days prior to the meeting. A notice detailing the business of the annual meeting shall be sent to all duly appointed delegates and to councillors at least seven days prior to the meeting. The meeting will also be advertised to all party members through branches, by e-mail and by post where requested.

6. Ordinary All-Member Meetings

Ordinary meetings shall normally be held on the second Friday of the following months: May, June, July, September, October, November, December, January, February. There shall be no meetings to transact ordinary business during the period of a national election campaign.

Formal notice of all meetings shall be sent out by the secretary to 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. Meetings shall also be advertised to all party members through branches and by e-mail.

A record of attendance at meetings shall be kept and those attending may be required to show a credential and/or proof of membership card to gain entry to the meeting room.

7. Agendas

The primary function of party meetings is to provide delegates and members with the opportunity to participate in party activities through social contact, political debate and policy discussion; and to establish objectives for the party in the area for campaigning, the development of party organisation and the promotion of links with sympathetic individuals and bodies within the wider community.

The agendas of all-member meetings may include, but are not limited to

- (a) speakers on issues of national or local importance
- (b) discussion of local policies, including those within the remit of any council wholly or partly within the constituencies, and national policies, including national policy forum documents

- (c) resolutions from branches or affiliated organisations
- (d) reports from elected representatives, including MPs and local district and county councillors
- (e) campaigning in local, national and European elections
- (f) decisions on matters referred by the executive committee, including finances, campaigning, organisation and constitutional issues, and the opportunity to raise any matter included in the minutes of the executive committee
- (g) election of officers and of delegates to other bodies, both at the annual meeting and in filling casual vacancies during the year.

8. Quorum

The quorum for matters determined by the general committee shall be 25 per cent of those members entitled to vote on all matters, that is, delegates appointed by branches, affiliated organisations and Labour groups to the general committee. Where separate votes within each constituency are called under clause 16, the quorum shall be 25 per cent of general committee delegates within each constituency. There is no quorum for policy decisions.

9. Meeting times

Meetings shall commence at 7:30 p.m. If a quorum is not present within 30 minutes of the appointed time, discussion of, and decisions on, policy matters may proceed as usual. Constitutional, financial and organisational decisions shall be deferred, 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.

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.

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 requiring a formal vote 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.

10. Chair

The elected Chair of this party shall preside at all meetings. In the absence of the Chair, one of the vice-chair shall preside. In their absence 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 Chairs shall take over the conduct of the meeting forthwith and proceed to the election of other officers and further business.

11. Notice of motion

Motions for all-member meetings shall be accepted only from branches and organisations entitled to appoint delegates, and must be received by the secretary in writing or by e-mail not less than 10 days prior to the meeting for which they are intended. Such motions shall be made available to those entitled to attend with the notice and agenda of the relevant meeting.

Motions shall be taken in the order that they are received and printed on the agenda. If a branch or affiliated organisation submits more than one motion, the second and subsequent motions shall be discussed after any motions from other branches or organisations, and subject to time and the consent of the meeting.

Emergency motions must be sent in writing to the secretary before the commencement of the meeting. Emergency business may be accepted by the majority of the meeting after a delegate from the submitting organisation has been allowed two minutes to explain why the motion is an emergency, and on the recommendation of the Chair, who shall interpret the term 'emergency' in a bona fide manner.

12. Discussion of motion

No motion shall be discussed at a meeting until it has been moved and seconded. Where a motion has been submitted by a branch or organisation it must be moved by a member from that branch or organisation.

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 normally be taken in order of submission, unless the meeting agrees on the advice of the Chair to vary the 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.

13. Chair speaking to a motion

The Chair of a meeting, if wishing to speak individually to any motion (excepting recommendations from the executive committee) shall request the permission of the meeting to leave the chair for that motion. One of the vice-chairs, or another member elected for the purpose, shall take the chair until the motion is disposed of.

14. Procedural motions

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 the same procedural motion again for a period of 20 minutes.

15. Motion to rescind resolution

A motion to rescind a resolution of this party shall normally not 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 11 above.

16. Voting on motions and other matters

Voting shall be by show of hands except where the constitution of the party provides for a ballot vote or where this party 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.

For votes on motions and other policy decisions a simple majority of all members present and voting is required. For votes on financial and constitutional matters, including rule changes, a two-thirds majority of general committee delegates present and voting is required. If requested by any member, separate votes shall be taken within each constituency, with a two-thirds majority required in both, for financial and constitutional decisions to be valid.

17. Election of officers and representatives

The election of officers and/or representatives of this body shall be by secret paper eliminating ballot in rounds, with only general committee delegates voting. The election of delegations shall be by secret paper ballot using a multiple vote where members may not cast more votes than the number of positions to be filled. Any quotas for women laid down in the party constitution which apply to this body shall be incorporated in the arrangements for the secret ballot.

Secret paper 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.

18. Chair's ruling

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 four 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.

19. Executive Committee

Executive committee meetings shall normally be held on the third or fourth Wednesdays of the month in May, June, July, September, October, November, January and February, where there is sufficient business to require a meeting. There shall be no meetings to transact ordinary business during the period of a national election campaign.

The executive committee shall be responsible for constituency development, for dealing with matters of organisation, finance, administration and membership, and for oversight of the selection of local council candidates and of campaigns, provided that all-member meetings shall have the opportunity to question any matter recorded in the executive committee minutes. These minutes shall be circulated with the papers for all-member meetings.

The following members may attend executive committee meetings with voting power:

- (a) the officers elected by general committee delegates at the annual all-member meeting, comprising the Chair, secretary, treasurer, two vice-chairs, membership secretary/vice-chair, women's officer, ethnic minorities officer, youth and student officer, disability officer, lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender officer, trade union liaison officer, assistant secretary and deputy treasurer. Where any post is job-shared, both partners may attend and speak, but shall be limited to one vote between them.
- (b) one member from each branch not otherwise represented on the executive committee;
- (c) elected representatives from trade union branches, the Co-Operative Party, the Oxford University Labour Club, Brookes University Labour Club, the leader and secretary (or other nominated officer) of Oxford City Labour Group, and a representative of Cherwell and Vale of White Horse Labour groups where residing in the constituencies;

The following members may attend executive committee meetings without voting powers:

- (d) the MP(s) and parliamentary candidates
- (e) the election agent, the campaign co-ordinator and the local organiser
- (f) other members with specific expertise such as information technology, or working on specific projects such as fund-raising events, by invitation
- (g) national or regional officers, by invitation

The quorum of the executive committee shall be one-third of the membership. Decisions shall be taken by a simple majority of those present and voting.

20. Miscellaneous

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 should be precluded from attendance because they cannot gain access to the meeting place for any reason. Harassment or intimidation of any member is unacceptable as is any form of discrimination on the basis of gender, sexuality, disability, race or religion. Smoking is not permitted at any Labour Party meeting.

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 members present and voting. Any member who has been removed from two meetings during a 12-month period, shall with the approval of the regional director be ineligible to attend meetings of this party for the next 12 months.

This 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.

The general provisions of the constitution and rules of the Labour party shall apply to this party. No alterations shall be made to the rules and standing orders of this organisation except at an annual or special meeting called for this purpose and carried with the support of two-thirds of the appointed delegates from branches and affiliated organisations present. No alteration shall be effective until it has received the approval of the appropriate officer of the National Executive Committee of the Labour Party.

Agreed by delegates to the general committee from Oxford East CLP and from Oxford West & Abingdon CLP at a meeting on 9 November 2012