



Constitution

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1. Introduction

Name

1.1 The Party shall be called the "English Democrats"
(Acceptable abbreviations - EngDem or ED)

Constitution

1.2 The Constitution of The English Democrats sets out how the Party will regulate its activities so that its actions and policies reflect the will of the members of the Party and are in accordance with regulatory requirements and general standards of propriety and regularity.

1.3 The members of the Party must approve, by ballot, the Constitution of the English Democrats and any amendments thereto. The National Council may make interim amendments to the constitution where the National Conference explicitly delegates authority for this; all such amendments must be subsequently approved by the members or lapse. Approval of amendments must be by at least a 50% majority of those voting.

Manifesto

1.4 The general principles, objectives and policies of The English Democrats are contained in its manifesto. The National Council is responsible for developing the manifesto and it is for the Conference to accept or reject it in its entirety.

Policy

1.5 The day-to-day adoption and amendment of Party policy shall be the responsibility of the National Council. All such policy shall conform with and give expression to the general principles and objectives of the Party as set out in its manifesto.

2. Objectives and Methods

Objectives

2.1 The English Democrats' principal objectives shall be:

- to build a more democratic and accountable society;
- to secure a parliament and executive (government) for England;
- to gain sufficient electoral support to form the executive (government) of England;
- to advocate and put into effect the aims and objectives set out in its manifesto.

Methods

2.2 The English Democrats shall pursue its aims by means of political activity, democratically organised by members of the Party freely associating together according to the provisions of the constitution.

3. Membership

3.1 Membership of the Party is open to all those, aged 16 years or over, who broadly agree with its aims, objectives, and policies.

3.2 Membership can be acquired by anyone, whatever their ethnicity, religion or culture, who:

- a) has affirmed in writing his or her intention to join the English Democrats;

- b) is willing to further the aims of the party;
- c) is not a member of any political party or body contesting elections in opposition to the English Democrats;
- d) agree to abide by the Constitution and Standing Orders of the party;
- e) has been accepted into membership by the National Council;
- f) has paid the annual membership fee in the amount and in the manner determined from time to time by the National Council.

3.3 The membership of the Party is divided into three parts:-

- i) Prime members
- ii) Ordinary members
- iii) Supporting members

Prime members consist of all those existing full members whose subscriptions are up to date as at the 23rd April 2009 and all those who join afterwards and pay the subscription by Direct Debit.

Ordinary members consist of all those full members whose subscriptions are up to date and are paid by any other means than by Direct Debit and who joined the Party after the 23rd April 2009.

Supporting members consist of all those members whose subscriptions are not fully paid up but who have contributed to the Party and who continue to support the Party.

3.4 The National Council shall have the right to expel from membership any person who no longer complies with the requirements of paragraph 3.1 and 3.2 above, or whose behaviour is otherwise damaging to the interests of the party. Any member so expelled shall have the right of appeal to the Appeals Panel.

3.4 Notwithstanding compliance with 3.1 and 3.2 above, membership may be refused or revoked if there is material disagreement, evidenced by conduct, with the fundamental values and objectives of the party or admission or continued membership would be likely to bring the party into disrepute.

3.5 Any person aggrieved by such a refusal or revocation shall, subject to having exhausted the internal procedures have a right of appeal to the Appeals Panel.

4. National Conference

4.1 The Conference shall be responsible for:

- a) approving the party's manifesto and constitution;
- b) electing the Party Chairman;
- c) electing ten members of the National Council; and
- d) approving the Treasurer's Report;

4.2 The Conference shall consist of:

- a) all Members of the National Council;
- b) representatives of Area Councils as established by the National Council;
- c) Prime members of the party

4.3 The conference shall be convened and conducted in accordance with the Conference Standing orders.

5. The National Council

5.1 The National Council shall be responsible for:

- a) developing the policies of the Party in depth;
- b) determining the Party's strategies and tactics;
- c) preparing the Party's election manifestos;
- d) electing from among its members the Treasurer and Secretary;
- e) ensuring that proper arrangements are made for the Party Conference;
- f) ensuring that proper arrangements are made for the election of the Party Leader;
- g) implementing any decisions which the Conference has directed to it
- h) appointing the members of the Appeals Panel.

5.2 The National Council shall cause to be drawn up and maintained, as and when required, the following sets of Standing Orders and Rules:

- a) Standing Orders for the National Council;
- b) Standing Orders for the National Council Executive;
- c) Standing Orders and rules for Branches and Area Councils;
- d) financial rules;
- e) rules for the selection of the National Council
- f) rules for the selection of Westminster Parliamentary candidates;
- g) rules for the selection of local government candidates;
- h) rules for the selection of European Parliamentary candidates; and
- i) rules for the selection of House of Lords candidates.

5.3 Meetings of the National Council shall be conducted in accordance with the Standing Orders of the Council.

5.4 Membership of the National Council (Between 11 & 21 in number) shall be:

- a) The National Party Chairman, elected at the Annual National Conference (2 Year Term)
- b) Ten National Council Members, elected at the Annual National Conference (2 Year Term)

c) Ten Area Chairman or their Appointed Deputy, elected by Postal Ballot by Membership in the defined area (2 Year Term)

English Democrats "Areas" being defined as follows:

i) North East - Northumberland & Durham - (including City of Newcastle)

ii) North West - Cumberland, Westmoreland, Lancashire, Cheshire, Isle of Man (including Cumbria, Manchester, Liverpool & Merseyside)

iii) Yorkshire - (including Leeds, Hull, Sheffield)

iv) West Midlands - Staffordshire, Shropshire, Warwickshire, Worcestershire, Herefordshire (Birmingham, West Midlands)

v) East Midlands - Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire, Lincolnshire, Leicestershire, Leicestershire, Rutland

vi) Eastern Counties - Norfolk, Suffolk, Cambridgeshire, Huntingdonshire, Bedfordshire, Hertfordshire, Essex

vii) South West - Cornwall, Devon, Somerset, Dorset Wiltshire, Gloucestershire, Monmouthshire, Isle of Scilly, Gibraltar (including Bristol, Avon)

viii) Southern Counties - Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire, Channel Islands

ix) South East - Kent, Surrey, Sussex (East Sussex & West Sussex)

x) London - Middlesex & London

5.5 Members elected to the National Council shall serve for a term of two years.

5.6 Members of the National Council have basic obligations to attend National Council meetings, to present a short report to the National Council on what they have been doing on behalf of the party since the last meeting and to take specified and agreed responsibilities and to ensure these are carried out as agreed.

5.7 A member may be removed from the National Council in the event of a Council Member missing 3 consecutive National Council Meetings without adequate explanation and/or failing to undertake agreed actions without acceptable explanation. Removal will be determined by a vote of the National Council.

5.8 The National Council can co-opt people onto the National Council in the event of a vacancy arising on the National Council. The position shall be subject to election in the normal way at the next general meeting of the Party.

5.9 The nomination of member(s) for election to membership of the National Council or Party Chairman shall be by a member of the Party and supported by a second Party member, neither of whom are the member nominated. The nomination shall also be supported by the member nominated.

5.10 Nomination for members of the National Council shall (excepting as noted in 5.12 below) be in writing and forwarded to the Secretary of the Party 21 days prior to the general meeting of the Party.

5.11 The election of members to the National Council will be by a ballot of members. Participation in the ballot will either be by personal attendance at the general meeting or by proxy.

5.12 In the event of a position not being filled through prior nomination (see 5.9 above) and election, vacant positions may be filled by nomination at a general meeting of the Party.

6. Executive officers and groups

6.1 The National Council may appoint, as it sees fit, such officers or working groups to further the objectives of the Party and this may include:

a) implementing the decisions of the Conference and the National Council;

b) organising and directing national campaigns;

c) managing the organisation and finance of the Party;

d) developing policies;

e) managing the Party's assets.

6.2 The roles of the Officers shall be as follows unless Standing Orders, or legal requirements, or a decision of the National Council, direct(s) otherwise:

a) The Party Chairman shall be responsible for chairing all meetings of the Party.

b) The Secretary: All official communications to and from the Party shall be through the Secretary who will keep copies of all correspondence and make it available to members of the National Council.

c) The Treasurer shall manage the Party's national finances and undertake such duties as required by the financial scheme agreed with the Electoral Commission.

7. Area Councils

7.1 The powers and roles of Area Councils shall be determined by the National Council.

8. Resolution of Conflicts

8.1 There shall be an Appeals Panel for the English Democrats, which shall consist of three members appointed by the National Council. Members of the Appeals Panel may be members of the National Council but not hold the positions of Party Leader, Party Chairman, Treasurer, Secretary or any executive position.

8.2 The Appeals Panel shall adjudicate on:

a) any dispute over the interpretation of any of the clauses of this constitution;

b) any claim that the rights under this constitution of a member or of a Party body have been infringed, provided

that no appeal may be brought under this paragraph where there is another appeal procedure;
c) any matter expressly so provided by this constitution or by rules made hereunder.

8.3 The Panel may make and publish rules for its own procedure.

8.4 Any decision of the Panel shall be binding on all parties concerned provided it is considered and supported by the National Council.

9. Standing orders of the National Council

9.1 A quorum shall be formed by 4 or more of the members of the National Council, as they are defined in the constitution of the English Democrats.

9.2 The Chair shall be taken by the Chairman or in his/her absence, the meeting shall elect an acting Chair from amongst those present.

10. Financial rules

10.1 All bank accounts of the English Democrats shall be subject to the authority of the National Council and shall only be opened or closed by resolution of the National Council. Bank mandates shall be approved at a meeting of the National Council. Authorised signatories on cheques, standing orders, direct debits etc. shall always include the person, normally the Treasurer, denoted at the time by the National Council to be responsible for keeping the Party's accounts.

10.2 The financial year of the English Democrats will be from 1 January to 31 December.

10.3 The National Council will cause financial accounts to be prepared within 4 months of the end of the financial year and those accounts to be audited.