

Being an effective CLP Chair

Local parties depend on leadership from the CLP Chair. Other officers look to the Chair to provide support and direction, and members would look to them to provide leadership and openness, plus the ability to organise and inspire them in effective campaigns.

Effective Chairs facilitate meetings, decisions and ensure the CLP operates fairly. The role requires impartiality, co-ordination, diligence and excellent communication and leadership skills.

Key Responsibilities

- Leadership and strategic direction of CLP
- Building, supporting and encouraging an effective officer team. The Chair should ensure all officers keep in regular contact with each other
- Ensuring all members feel welcome, involved and have a stake in the direction of the CLP
- Chairing CLP meetings in a fair and open way in accordance with the Labour Party rules
- As the Chair, you will need to have an overview of all roles within the CLP.

Two key tasks for your term of office

1. Work with other officers- especially the CLP Secretary, to lead a review of CLP structures and operation. This will help you focus on what you need to achieve over the year.
2. With fellow officers and agreement of members, produce a plan for what the CLP would like to achieve over the year. Organise follow up meetings and actions to ensure you are sticking to plan.

Meetings

Work with your CLP Secretary to organise the dates of meetings at least three months in advance and make sure the dates are communicated to members, with a reminder closer to the time.

Set an interesting and relevant agenda which will need to be circulated and agreed with the Secretary and other officers prior to the meeting. It would be beneficial to set a time limit for each agenda topic. If you have any hand-outs, get them ready in good time. Meetings in general should not last any longer than two hours. Where practical organise a campaigning or social event after the meeting.

Don't forget to make your meetings as open as possible, for example, invite all members to General Committee Meetings.

Introduce the meeting with a clear outline of the main objectives. It is important to have political discussions and lively debates at meetings. Remember to be impartial even if you do not agree with what is being discussed – allow for the widest possible participation, ensuring the debate is friendly and welcoming.

You may wish to open by asking any new comers to introduce themselves.

It is the Chair's responsibility to ensure that meetings relate to the following key functions:

1. Campaigning – connecting with the local community and getting candidates elected.
2. Membership work – welcoming new members, recruiting and retaining members and supporters.
3. Fundraising – a programme of social events and other fundraising activity. You will need to work closely with the CLP Secretary and Treasurer to do this. Ensure that your CLP has a Fundraising Officer or social event team that can help.
4. Policy discussion – make it interesting and engaging.
5. A report from your MP or Candidate – access to politicians is one of the benefits of membership; make sure that your meetings take full advantage of this.

At the end of each item review what has been decided and who will be responsible for taking the task forward.

A huge number of members have joined us since the last General Election. Bearing this in mind, try to avoid using too much jargon or focusing your meeting on internal structural issues and matters from the past. Members will come along to meetings because they want to connect with the party and share their values, as Chair it is your job to make sure they can take part as much as possible.

Know the rule book

As Chair, members and officers will look to you for leadership when constitutional matters arise. Issues of this nature often occur around the time of selection procedures; local, devolved or parliamentary.

These can often be contentious matters so it is imperative that you show leadership and knowledge of the procedures. Remember, you can always refer an issue to your Regional Office or contact the Labour Party Compliance Unit on 0207 783 1498 or visit [members.labour.org.uk/legal and compliance downloads](https://members.labour.org.uk/legal_and_compliance_downloads).

For further advice and training visit:

The Labour Party has a huge range of training and best practice examples available. So if you would like to know more about being a CLP Chair, community organising, reaching out to new members or campaign planning go to

members.labour.org.uk/training-listings