**RULES GOVERNING CONTESTED ELECTIONS FOR POSITIONS ON THE WANDSWORTH LIB DEM EXECUTIVE**

INTRODUCTION

The aim of these rules is to give all local party members an opportunity to vote, with available to them concise information about the candidates, while keeping the proceedings speedy and simple, and minimising the scope for complaints. A level playing field should be maintained between contestants whatever their present position in the local party.

THE RULES

To this end each candidate may provide a prospectus about themselves and their candidature, of up to 250 words and one photograph, for distribution to the electorate with the ballot papers All other campaigning is forbidden. This implies but is not limited to the following:

1. Candidates are not permitted to contact members directly. They may however reply to an email or message received specifically and directly from a member. In this case copies of the email or message received and any replies must be retained and capable of being inspected.
2. Candidates may conduct their normal business as a Liberal Democrat during the selection, provided their activities are not calculated to have an influence on the selection process and are no more than is reasonably necessary for the purpose or function in question. Applicants with public facing (that is within the local party) leadership roles should step back from these to the greatest extent possible for the duration of the selection process. Where this is not feasible, the minimum requirement is not to display an unusually high profile.
3. Candidates must not suggest, encourage or procure others to message in ways calculated to influence the election
4. They must not use written endorsements of their candidature.
5. They must not defame or make offensive comments about others. Confidential information about complaints must not be disclosed.
6. In their prospectus, Candidates must not infringe copyright , and must obtain the permission of the subject(s) of a photograph

It is important that all concerned follow these rules and adhere to their spirit as well as their letter. The Returning Officer may suggest edits or stop distribution of a candidate’s prospectus if they feel it does not meet the election rules. If a candidate is uncertain about the rules, they should contact the Returning Officer for clarification. The Returning Officer is also available for contact if it is felt that there has been any breach of the rules.  The rules apply to candidates from the first time that they indicate their candidature to the Returning Officer or to a member of the local party.

CONDUCT OF THE ELECTION

After the AGM, and after the candidates for contested positions have been given a brief period to indicate whether they wish to proceed, the Returning office will refer contested elections with all speed to London Region for them to run an electronic ballot under their established procedures. Candidates shall have at least a week in which to prepare their prospectusesbefore the ballot papers are issued. In accordance with the Wandsworth Local Party’s constitution, members must return their ballot papers within 14 days of their issue by electronic means (or paper-based means for a minority not in receipt of email communication).

These rules have been designed to minimize the scope for complaints. If nevertheless a complaint does arise, it shall be considered on a basis independent from the Executive and the Local Party, backed by an independent appeals process.

If a complaint arises during the course of the election, it should be referred to the  Returning Officer with all speed, and in any event before the results of the election are announced. The Returning Officer shall have the authority to decide the case, as regards whether a breach of the rules has occurred, whether a remedy is required and if so what that remedy shall be, on an independent basis ( and subject to the possibility of an appeal). Any complaint made after the results of the election have been announced would be the subject of consultation with London Region in accordance with the article 6.10 of the Local Party’s constitution, a copy of which is annexed.

PROMULGATION OF THESE RULES

These rules will be published on the Wandsworth Lib Dems Website prior to the issuing of a specific invitation (separate from the notice of the agenda) to Wandsworth Lib Dem members to put themselves forward for positions on the Executive, so that attention can be drawn to them in that invitation.

ANNEX: ARTICLE 6.10 OF THE LOCAL PARTY’S CONSTITUTION

##  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 Regional Party in accordance with the Party Constitution. Subject to any order made after such an investigation, no irregularity shall invalidate an election.