CONSTITUTION OF THE GUILDFORD LIBERAL DEMOCRATS

Adopted at AGM November 2013

1. Name and Area

1.1 The name of the body governed by this Constitution shall be "The Guildford Liberal Democrats".

1.2 The area of the Local Party shall be the Borough of Guildford.

2. Definitions

2.1 In this Constitution:

"the Local Party" means the Guildford Liberal Democrats;
"the Party Constitution" means the Constitutions of the Federal Party and of the Liberal Democrats in England;
"the Party" means the Liberal Democrats;
"the Regional Party" means the South East Region Liberal Democrats;
"the Borough" means the Borough of Guildford;
"Conference Representatives" means members of the Local Party elected to be its representatives at Federal and/or Regional Conferences;
"Party's Youth and Student Organisation" means the Specified Associated Organisation representing youth and students;
"Majority" at any meeting means majority of those present and voting; and
"Executive Committee" means the executive committee of the Local Party.

3. Objects

3.1 The objects of the Local Party shall be:

(a) be the successor within its area to the Guildford Division Liberal Association and to the Guildford SDP Area Party; and

(b) to promote and support the values and objects of the Party in the Borough and in particular through its members:

(i) to secure the election of Liberal Democrats as Members of Parliament, UK Members of the European Parliament, members of regional, local and other elected public authorities and other public office;

(ii) to admit and actively recruit new members to the Party, and encourage existing members to renew their membership;

(iii) to participate in the formulation of the policy of the Party;

(iv) to be recognised as a Local Party; to play a full role in the democratic processes of the Party; and to send representatives, in accordance with the constitutions of the bodies concerned, to Party bodies;

(v) to play a full part in the campaigning activities of the Party at all levels;

(vi) to campaign and work with local people to achieve the objectives set out in the Preamble to the Party Constitution;

(vii) to help all local people, without regard to party or any other factor, to secure their rights and to protect them against oppression; and

(viii) to promote diversity of cultures within the Party and to represent the interests of under-represented groups in the locality.

4. Membership

4.1 The Local Party shall administer membership in accordance with the Membership Rules of the Liberal Democrats in England.

4.2 All persons shall be eligible to join the Local Party if they agree with the fundamental values and objectives of the Party; and

(a) they live, work or study within the area of the Local Party, or

(b) if not eligible under Section 4.2 (a) they acquire membership with the consent of the Local Party Executive Committee, or

(c) they are an MP, MEP, prospective Westminster or European parliamentary candidate or member of a local authority for a seat wholly or partly within the area of the Local Party.

4.3 Eligible persons shall become members of the Local Party:

(a) on enrolment through the Local Party; or

(b) on enrolment through the Party's Youth and Student Organisation giving an address within the Borough; or

(c) if already members of the Party, on re-registration as a member of the Local Party.

Members of the Local Party who are also members of the Party's Youth and Student Organisation may be restrained under the Party Constitution from exercising certain rights as members of the Local Party if they exercise equivalent rights as members of the Youth and Student Organisation.

4.4

(a) An applicant shall become a member on acceptance by the enrolling body, payment of the requisite subscription and registration on the register kept by the Party in England.

(b) An application shall be deemed accepted if not rejected in accordance with the Membership Rules.

(c) Initial membership shall run for one year from the quarter day (last day of March, June, September or December) following commencement.

(d) Members whose subscriptions are due shall receive notices of meetings and elections for a further 3 months.

(e) Members who do not renew their subscriptions before the end of the 3 months period must reapply for membership.

4.5 The Executive Committee may refuse membership to, or revoke the membership of, any person, on the grounds provided by the Party Constitution, using the procedure defined in the Membership Rules of the Liberal Democrats in England.

4.6 A member of the Local Party who ceases to be eligible under Section 4.2 (a) may retain membership of the Local Party with the consent of the Executive Committee.

5. Officers and Executive Committee

5.1 The Officers of the Local Party shall be the Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary, Data Officer, Membership Development Officer and Treasurer. Their duties shall include:

(a) The Chair - to chair all General and Executive Committee Meetings ; in the event of a tied vote the Chair shall have an additional casting vote; to be jointly responsible with the Treasurer for the Local Party's compliance with the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000;
(b) The Vice-Chair - to chair General and Executive Committee Meetings if the Chair is unable to do so;
(c) The Secretary - to handle the Local Party's correspondence; to maintain minutes of meetings;
(d) The Treasurer - to handle the Local Party's financial business and present financial reports to General Meetings; to be jointly responsible with the Chair for the Local Party's compliance with the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000;
(e) The Data Officer - to:
    (i) receive all notices of application for membership and refer them to the Executive Committee for acceptance;
    (ii) maintain a membership register and provide Branch and Local Party Officers with lists of members as necessary under this Constitution;
    (iii) hold and maintain the campaigning data of the local party; and
    (iv) ensure compliance with data protection legislation.
(f) The Membership Development Officer - to:
    (i) organise and run membership recruitment and renewal campaigns
    (ii) ensure that the Local Party has a wide a range of social and political activities to facilitate member retention

The Secretary shall not later than 2nd January and within seven days after any subsequent change notify the names and addresses of all Officers to the Regional Party and to the Chief Executive of the Federal Party

5.2 There may be an Honorary President to be elected by the Annual General Meeting.

5.3 The general and financial business of the Local Party shall be controlled and carried on by the Executive Committee, subject to the decisions of General Meetings and in compliance with the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000. The Executive Committee shall consist of:

(a) The Officers;
(b) Five Ordinary Members to be elected annually in the same manner as the Officers;
(c) Representatives from each Branch within the Borough, on a scale of one per Ward contained within the Branch, and two representatives of members in parts of the Borough without Branches;
(d) The Party's Members of Parliament for the Borough, and the prospective Parliamentary Candidates;
(e) One representative of the Party's members from the Surrey County Council representing electoral divisions within the Borough, elected by and from such members;
(f) Two representatives of the Party's members from the Guildford Borough Council, elected by and from such members;
(g) One representative elected by and from each local Branch of the Party's Youth and Student Organisation;
(h) The Local Party's Agent or Organiser.

5.4 The Executive Committee may co-opt up to four additional members, for a term expiring not later than the next following AGM. The power of co-option shall be used, inter alia, to ensure if possible that no more than two-thirds of the Executive Committee (other than under Sections 5.3 (d) - (h)), are of the same sex, and that there is fair representation of underrepresented communities in the locality, taking into account race, religion, age, disability, gender or sexual orientation and that this would create a composition of the Executive that reflects the community the local Party serves.

5.5 The Honorary President is entitled to attend all meetings of the Executive Committee but shall not have a vote. Conference Representatives who are not members of the Executive Committee shall be entitled to attend any meeting of the Committee at which business relating to the Conferences is discussed. Meetings of the Executive Committee shall be open to members of the Local Party as space permits.

5.6 The Executive Committee may fill any vacancy occurring among the Officers or the Ordinary Members. Any vacancy in the Chair shall be filled from amongst the existing Executive Committee members. The Secretary shall within seven days notify any change of Officers to the Regional Party and to the Chief Executive of the Federal Party.

5.7 The Executive Committee may assign special responsibilities to any of its members, including duties which would otherwise pertain to one of the Officers.

5.8 The Officers shall convene a meeting of the Executive Committee within one month after taking office. The Executive Committee shall meet at least quarterly and not less than four times in a year. The Secretary shall give at least 7 days notice of meetings to all members of the Executive Committee. One-third of its members shall form a quorum. A meeting may continue without a quorum if no member present objects.

5.9 The Executive Committee may appoint sub-committees for any specified purpose. No sub-committee or Executive Committee member may take action on behalf of the

Executive Committee beyond their terms of appointment. All sub-committees shall report on their activities to the Executive Committee and may include persons who are not members of the Executive Committee and may delegate authority to take actions on their behalf. The Executive Committee may also delegate authority to committees jointly constituted with other local parties for particular purposes.

5.10 In urgent circumstances the Officers may act on behalf of the Executive Committee. They shall report on such actions to the next meeting of the Executive Committee.

6. Election of Officers, Executive Committee and Conference Representatives

6.1 The Officers, Ordinary Members and Conference Representatives shall be elected by and from members of the Local Party at the time of the Annual General Meeting. If an election is contested, there shall be a ballot.

6.2 The term of office of Officers, Ordinary Members and Conference Representatives shall be from the 1st January following their election until the following 31st December. They shall be eligible for re-election, save that the Chair shall not serve for more than three consecutive terms, and shall not be eligible for re-election as Chair for two terms after leaving Office.

6.3 Nominations for election shall be invited in the notice summoning the AGM, and shall close at the AGM, but not before the reception of the Chair's, Treasurer's and Conference Representatives' reports. They must be proposed and seconded, and except in the case of nominations made at the AGM shall be in writing signed by the proposer, seconder and candidate.

6.4 Where elections are contested, ballot papers shall be distributed at the AGM, and must be returned to the Returning Officer at the AGM.

6.5 No person may be elected to hold more than one Office, or may be elected to be both an Officer and an Ordinary Member. Elections for Officers shall be counted in the order listed in Section 5.1 and for Ordinary Members after Officers. Any votes cast for candidates already elected to Office shall be transferred according to the voters' subsequent preferences.

6.6 The Local Party's Federal and Regional Conference Representatives shall be elected as provided by the Party's Constitution. A representative shall cease to hold office upon ceasing to be a member of the Local Party or on failing to attend any meeting of the Conference without giving notice (so far as practicable) of inability to attend or without reasonable cause, unless the Executive Committee determines otherwise.

6.7 All contested elections under this constitution shall be by secret ballot by the Single Transferable Vote method in accordance with election rules made under the Party Constitution.

6.8 The Executive Committee shall appoint some disinterested person to act as Returning Officer. The Returning Officer shall be responsible for the receipt of nominations and for the preparation and distribution of ballot papers, their receipt and counting on return, and the declaration of the results.

6.9 Accidental failure to despatch notice of the AGM or a ballot paper in due time or at all to a person entitled to vote shall not invalidate an election or be treated as an irregularity, unless a substantial number of persons entitled to vote have not received notices or ballot papers at all or have received them too late to make it practicable to attend the meeting or return the ballot paper in due time by first-class post.

6.10 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.

6.11 The Returning Officer may extend the time for distribution and return of ballot papers where there are special circumstances making it necessary to do so.

7. General Meetings

7.1 The Annual General Meeting shall be on a day appointed by the Executive Committee, between 1st October and 30th November. The Executive Committee may postpone the AGM if it would conflict with a Parliamentary Election in the Borough, or for other urgent reason.

7.2 The business of the AGM shall include:

(a) to receive a report from the Chair on the activities of the Local Party and the Executive Committee since the previous AGM;
(b) to consider and, if thought fit, approve the accounts of the Local Party for the previous financial year together with an independent report on those accounts, and to receive a report from the Treasurer including an outline budget for the following year;
(c) to appoint for the current Financial Year (i) Auditors if required by the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 or (ii) a person(s) to produce an independent report on the accounts for a General Meeting;
(d) to receive reports from the Conference Representatives on the proceedings of the Federal and Regional Conferences since the previous AGM;
(e) to receive reports from each Liberal Democrat Council group on which Local Party members serve;
(f) to transact any other business specified by the Constitution, or directed by the Executive Committee;
(g) to consider any motion which has been submitted by any member of the Local Party to the Secretary in time for circulation with the notice of the AGM;
(h) to elect Officers, Ordinary Members of the Executive Committee and Conference Representatives.

7.3 The Secretary shall give all members at least 21 days written notice of the time and place of the AGM. Such notice shall specify all business to be conducted at the meeting.

7.4 The AGM may by a two-thirds majority agree to consider urgent or important business which has arisen since notice of the AGM was given.

7.5 A special General Meeting may be convened by the Officers, or by the Executive Committee; and shall, on receipt of a requisition signed by at least twenty members of the Local Party (or one-fifth of the membership if less), be convened by the Secretary so as to be held within 28 days from the receipt of such requisition. At least 14 days written notice shall be given to all members. The meeting shall only consider business stated in the notice convening it. Failure to convene a validly requisitioned meeting within 14 days shall permit the meeting to be convened on behalf of (and at the expense of) the Local Party by any of the original requisitioners. In an emergency, the Officers may convene a meeting giving such notice as they consider sufficient in the circumstances.

7.6 20 members (or one-fifth of the membership if less), shall form a quorum at any General Meeting. A quorum is not required to receive reports and accounts. A meeting may continue without a quorum if no member present objects except as provided for in Section 11.1.

7.7 Notice and minutes of all Annual and Special General Meetings shall be sent to the secretary of the Regional Party.

7.8 Minutes shall be maintained of all proceedings of all General Meetings. Minutes shall also be kept of any meetings of the Executive Committee. In the absence of an Executive Committee member charged with the duty, the Meeting shall appoint a member to take minutes.

8. Local Branches

8.1 The Executive Committee may authorise the setting up of Branches covering defined areas of the Local Party, provided that no branch shall be formed with less than 10 members. The objects of a Branch shall be to further the objects of the Local Party in the area covered by the Branch. The Branch shall be subject to the ultimate authority of the Local Party.

8.2 The members of the Branch shall be:

(a) All members of the Local Party whose Registered Membership Address (as defined in the Membership Rules of the Liberal Democrats in England) is within the Branch area, unless they have opted to be a member of another Branch;
(b) Any councillor who represents a ward or division falling wholly or partially within the Branch area and who opts to be a member of the Branch;

(c) Other members of the Local Party who wish to be members, if the Branch's Committee and the Local Party Executive Committee agree.

No person who is not a member of the Local Party may be a member of the Branch. No person may be a member of more than one Branch.

8.3 A Branch shall not be entitled to require a subscription from its members, but the Executive Committee of the Local Party may agree to remit part of its subscription income to a Branch. A Branch shall not incur any debts for which the Local Party shall be responsible.

8.4 Each Branch shall be governed by a constitution which shall provide for:

(a) a Committee which shall include Officers and Ordinary Members, and may include ex-officio and co-opted members;
(b) rules for election of Officers, Ordinary Members of the Branch Committee and representatives to the Local Party Executive Committee;
(c) rules for the calling and conduct of an Annual General Meeting and other General Meetings of the members;
(d) the names and addresses of the Officers, Ordinary Members and representatives to be notified to, and minutes of General and Committee Meetings to be supplied to the Secretary of the Local Party.

The Constitution shall be in the form of the Model Constitution for Branches appended to this Constitution. A branch may adopt a constitution which is not wholly in the model form but any such constitution, or any changes to it, shall not take effect until the Executive Committee of the Local Party accepts its conformity with the Party Constitution and with this Constitution.

8.5

(a) The Officers of the Branch shall include a Treasurer. The Branch's accounting period shall be the same as that of the Local Party.
(b) The Branch Treasurer shall keep, maintain for six years, and pass to his or her successor accounting records which shall be available for inspection in accordance with the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000.
(c) The Branch Treasurer shall ensure that no donation of over £200 is accepted except from a permissible donor and shall keep records and submit donations reports to the Treasurer of the Local Party.
(d) The Branch Treasurer shall annually produce accounts which shall be approved by the Branch Committee and shall be sent to the Treasurer of the Local Party by a date to be specified by the Treasurer of the Local Party.
(e) The Branch Treasurer shall submit the accounts of the Branch together with an independent report to a General Meeting to be held not later than end of January.
(f) The Branch shall maintain one or more bank or other appropriate accounts in the name of the Branch for which the mandate for withdrawal shall require the signature of at least two Officers who shall not come solely from members of any one family. The Branch may maintain further accounts for the deposit of money not required for the time being, requiring the same signatures.

8.6 The Branch may appoint a substitute representative to the Executive Committee to fill a casual vacancy, or if a representative is unable to attend a particular meeting.

8.7 A Branch may dissolve itself by a two-thirds majority at a General Meeting; or be dissolved or suspended by the Executive Committee on the grounds that:

(a) it is no longer functioning or able to hold such a meeting;
(b) there have been serious irregularities in the conduct of the affairs of the Branch;
(c) the affairs of the Branch have not been conducted in compliance with the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 and with its Constitution, this Constitution and the Party Constitution;
(d) the membership of the Branch has fallen below 10; or
(e) the affairs of the Branch are being conducted in a manner contrary to the interests of the Local Party as a whole.

If a Branch is dissolved or suspended, any member of the Branch may request the Regional Party to conduct an investigation. The Local Party shall not dissolve a Branch until the Branch has been given an opportunity to hold its own General Meeting.

8.8 The funds of a Branch shall, upon dissolution, be applied in paying its debts, and any surplus shall be added to the funds of the Local Party.

9. Candidates for and Elections to Public Office

9.1 When it is necessary to select a Prospective Parliamentary Candidate, the procedure shall be as provided by the Party Constitution. The Executive Committee may appoint a sub-committee to carry out its duties under this procedure. The electoral college shall comprise all Local Party members.

9.2 The Executive Committee shall seek to ensure that, so far as practicable, all seats within the Borough on Principal Local Authorities are contested by members of the Party, unless the Executive Committee is satisfied that it is in the best interests of the Party in any case not to do so.

9.3 When it is necessary to select one or more local government candidates for an electoral area, the Branch or if there is no Branch, the Local Party shall hold a General Meeting at which all members who are resident in the electoral area concerned of the Local Party or of the Branch may vote, and may select any member from a list of approved candidates maintained by the Executive Committee, or may select any other member conditionally upon subsequent approval by the Executive Committee. The timetable and procedure for selection shall be agreed by the Branch Committee and the Executive Committee, or where there is no Branch by the Executive Committee.

9.4 In any electoral area, in which the eligible electorate for voting in the selection does not exceed 10, the electorate shall be expanded to constitute the members living in the

electoral area plus the Branch Committee or, if there is no Branch, the Executive Committee.

9.5 In any case in which time does not permit the holding of a General Meeting the Branch Committee, or if there is no Branch the Executive Committee may select the candidate.

9.6 Where a Principal Local Authority covers more than one constituency the Executive Committees of the Local Parties concerned may agree to form appropriate joint arrangements to co-ordinate candidate approval and selection, campaigning and publicity and be responsible for the formulation of policy on that Authority.

9.7 In any parish or town council elections, the committee of the relevant Branch, or if there is no Branch the Executive Committee shall vary the provisions of Sections 9.2 to 9.5 above as appropriate.

9.8 A Delegated Nominating Officer will be appointed by the Party's Nominating Officer. The Delegated Nominating Officer shall act in accordance with the Rules made by the Party for Delegated Nominating Officers.

9.9 When a Parliamentary Election takes place, the activities of the Local Party shall be suspended except as necessary to comply with the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 and such power vested in an Agent to act on its behalf as necessary for the conduct of the Election.

9.10 The membership of any member of the Local Party who stands at any public election as candidate or agent in opposition to a properly nominated candidate of the Party shall automatically and immediately be suspended and, subject to any appeal, shall be revoked.

9.11 Any candidate for election to public office standing as a representative of the Party must be a current member of the Party.

10. Finance

10.1 The Local party's accounting period shall be annual, ending on 31st December each year.

10.2 The Treasurer shall keep, maintain for six years, and pass to his or her successor accounting records which shall be available for inspection in accordance with the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000.

10.3 The Treasurer shall ensure that no donation of over £200 is accepted except from a permissible donor and shall keep records and submit donations reports to the Executive Committee and to Chief Executive of the Federal Party.

10.4 The Treasurer shall annually produce accounts which shall be approved by the Executive Committee and if required by the Political Parties, Elections & Referendums Act 2000 shall be audited and submitted to the Electoral Commission.

10.5 The Treasurer shall submit the accounts of the Local Party together with an independent report to a General Meeting.

10.6 A copy of the annual accounts shall be sent to the Treasurer of the Regional Party and to the Chief Executive of the Federal Party.

10.7 The Local Party shall maintain one or more bank or other appropriate accounts in the name of the Local Party for which the mandate for withdrawal shall require the signature of at least two Officers who shall not come solely from members of any one family. The Local Party may maintain further accounts for the deposit of money not required for the time being, requiring the same signatures.

10.8 If the Local Party fails by 15th January to notify the Chief Executive of the Federal Party of the appointment of a Chair and a Treasurer the Local Party shall automatically be suspended.

11. Constitution and Interpretation

11.1 Amendments may only be made by a two-thirds majority at a quorate General Meeting. No amendment shall be made which conflicts with the Constitution of the Party or of the Regional Party. Any amendment to this Constitution shall be subject to approval by the Regional Party.

11.2 Details of any proposed amendment shall be sent to all members with the notice of the General Meeting.

11.3 If the Model Constitution for Local Parties (England) is amended, any provision of this constitution shall be deemed to be correspondingly amended, unless the Local Party resolves in accordance with 11.1 above at a quorate General Meeting held within 6 months of receiving notice of the amendment not to accept it.

11.4 One copy of the Constitution shall be deposited with the Secretary of the Regional Party; and one shall be kept with the minute book of the Local Party. Any member shall be provided with a copy of the Constitution on request.

11.5 In the event of any question of interpretation arising, or any question on which this Constitution is silent, the Executive Committee shall have power to act according to its interpretation of the Constitution, or at its discretion, subject to Article 8 of the Constitution of the Liberal Democrats in England and Article 14 of the Constitution of the Federal Party.

11.6 No word or construction in this Constitution shall be taken to imply any discrimination whatsoever with regard to sex, race, colour, creed, age, disability, sexual orientation or any other ground other than political belief or practice.

11.7 In the event of the dissolution or suspension of the Local Party, the assets of the Local Party shall vest in the Regional Party on trust for the future reconstitution of the Local Party, unless explicitly provided otherwise by a General Meeting in the event of dissolution pursuant upon boundary changes and subject to the agreement of the Regional Party.