

# CONSTITUTION

## OF THE OXFORD UNIVERSITY LIBERAL DEMOCRATS

**Last major edit: 8<sup>th</sup> week Trinity 2019 – Lauren Evans, Secretary, Pembroke College**  
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### SECTION 1: NAME AND OBJECTS

1. The Club is called the Oxford University Liberal Democrats (hereafter referred to as “the Club”).
2. The Club’s objects are the support, development, improvement and promotion of the policies and candidates of the Liberal Democrats in the city and the University of Oxford insofar as such objects are charitable; and the income and property of the Club shall be applied solely to those objects.

### SECTION 2: UNIVERSITY COMPLIANCE

1.
  - (a) The Club shall be administered in accordance with the University’s Regulations for the Activities and Conduct of Student Members.
  - (b) The activities of the Club will at all times be conducted in accordance with the University’s procedures, codes of practice and policies in force from time to time on equality, harassment, freedom of speech and safeguarding (which are available via the University Student Handbook on the University’s webpages).
  - (c) If there is a national governing body for the Club’s activities with which the Club is eligible to register, the Club shall effect and maintain such registration: purchase any insurance cover which the national body makes available (unless the Insurance Section of University Administration and Services agrees to or prescribes other arrangements) and make every effort to comply with all safety procedures which the national body prescribes, or recommends as good practice.
  - (d) The Club shall observe the Code of Conduct on Safety Matters which is set out in the Schedule to this Constitution, ensure compliance with the Code by the members of the Club, and follow an appropriate procedure for risk assessment. Both the Code of Conduct and the procedure for risk assessment must be acceptable to and approved by the University’s Safety Officer.
  - (e) No member of the Club shall participate in any activity overseas organised by the Club, whether during term time or vacation, unless the plans for such activity have been notified at least one calendar month in advance of the date of departure from the United Kingdom to the University Marshal and approved by the Proctors. Each member participating in such activities overseas shall observe any conditions imposed by the Proctors on the recommendation of the University Marshal e.g. relating to the deposit of

contact addresses, fulfilment of health, safety and insurance requirements, and stipulation of coaches, trainers or Senior Members to accompany the trip.

- (f) The Club shall maintain a dedicated website and shall supply details of its web address to the Club Office for listing on the University's clubs and societies webpage. The Club may apply to the University's IT Services to use information technology ('IT') facilities in the name of the Club. Where relevant facilities are allocated by IT Services it is the responsibility of the Club to:
- (i) to designate a member of the Club entitled to a University e-mail account (as defined by IT Services rules) to act as its IT Officer, whose duties shall include liaising with IT Services about the use of facilities allocated and passing on to the successor in office all records relating to the use of the facilities allocated;
  - (ii) to designate one of its members (who may be, but need not necessarily be, the same as its IT Officer) or, exceptionally, a member of Congregation, to act as its principal Webmaster, whose duties shall include maintaining an awareness of the University guidelines on web and social media publishing, and co-ordinating and regulating access to the web facilities used by the Club;
  - (iii) to comply with regulations and guidelines relating to the use of IT facilities published from time to time by IT Services;
  - (iv) to ensure that everyone responsible under (i)-(iii) is competent to deal with the requirements, where necessary undertaking training under the guidance of IT Services.

### **SECTION 3: MEMBERSHIP**

1. The members of the Club shall be those who are eligible and apply for membership of the Club, who are admitted to and maintained in membership by the Committee, and who have paid the relevant Club subscription.
2. Subject to Section 3(3), all student members of the University, and all persons whose names are on the University's Register of Visiting Students, shall be eligible to become members of the Club. A member shall continue to be eligible until given permission to supplicate for degree, diploma or certificate, regardless of any continuing liability to pay fees to the University.
3. If the Club's objects relate directly to a protected characteristic as defined in section 4 of the Equality Act 2010, the Club may be entitled to restrict membership to members sharing that protected characteristic, provided that the Proctors shall first approve any such restriction.
4. The Committee may also, at its discretion, admit to membership:
  - (a) students registered to read for diplomas and certificates in the University;
  - (b) student members of Permanent Private Halls who are not student members of the University;
  - (c) members of Ruskin College and Ripon College, Cuddesdon;

- (d) members of Oxford Brookes University, provided that such members shall not constitute more than one-fifth of the total membership; and
  - (e) other persons not falling within paragraph 2 above or paragraphs 4(a) to (d) above, provided that such members shall not constitute more than one-fifth of the total membership.
5. Members shall have the following rights:
- (a) Right to vote in Society meetings, pursuant to Section 4
  - (b) Right to vote in Society elections, pursuant to Section 10
  - (c) Right to ballot for such Society events as are restricted only to members
  - (d) Right to due process under a Disciplinary Committee, pursuant to Section 11
6. Members who also members of the federal Liberal Democrats or international sister parties shall have the following rights:
- (a) Right to nominate in Society elections, pursuant to Section 10

#### **SECTION 4: MEETINGS OF THE MEMBERS**

1. There shall be a Termly General Meeting for all the Members of the Club in every Full Term, convened by the Secretary on not less than fourteen days' notice. The President shall have the discretionary authority to designate an Extraordinary General Meeting as that term's Termly General Meeting.
2. The Termly General Meeting will:
  - (a) receive and approve the report of the Committee for the previous term and the accounts of the Club for the previous term, beginning Sunday of 9<sup>th</sup> Week two terms previous and concluding with Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> Week of the previous term;
  - (b) receive a report from the Committee on the Club's compliance with Section 2;
  - (c) consider any motions, whether political, general, or constitutional amendments, of which due notice has been given to the Secretary, and any other relevant business.
3. An Extraordinary General Meeting may be called in any Full Term; by the President, the Secretary or the Treasurer on not less than seven days' notice; or on a written requisition by seven or more members, stating the reason for which the meeting is to be called, and delivered to the Secretary not less than fourteen days before the date of the Meeting.
4. Prior to all General Meetings notice of the agenda shall be sent out with the notice of the Meeting by the Secretary.

5. The quorum for a General Meeting shall be ten members present in person or by proxy, of whom three must be members of the Committee. When any financial business is to be transacted there must be present the Treasurer, or a member of the Committee deputed by the Treasurer to represent the Treasurer's views to the Meeting (provided that where it is a case of a deputy, the only financial business transacted shall be that which was set out in the agenda accompanying the notice of the meeting).
6. Every matter, except where this Constitution provides otherwise, shall be determined by a majority of Members present and voting. In the case of equal votes the President shall have a casting vote.
7. Termly General Meetings shall be conducted according to the following regulations:
  - (a) The chair shall be the President, unless they themselves have proposed a motion, in which case the chair shall be the President-elect for the duration of that motion only, with the President taking back the chair after their motion is complete. If the President-elect is absent, the chair shall be taken by the next most senior elected member of Committee present.
  - (b) The Secretary shall take minutes of the proceedings, unless proposing a motion, in which case the next most senior member of committee shall take minutes for the duration of that motion
  - (c) The Secretary shall read out any proposed motion, or summary thereof. The proposer shall then have the right to give a short speech in proposition. The chair shall then seek additional speakers, until such a time as no member remains wishing to speak, and shall then put the motion to a vote.
  - (d) Any member may suggest amendments to a motion. If a suggested amendment is taken as "friendly" by the original proposer of the motion, it shall immediately be incorporated into the original motion. If it is deemed "unfriendly", a debate shall ensue on the amendment, subject to the regulations on debate in (c) above. The chair shall have the right to reject amendments if such an amendment would change the motion's meaning beyond what a member of the Society could reasonably have expected the original motion's meaning to have been from having read the original agenda.
  - (e) The following procedural motions may be made:
    - (i) "I move to vote". The chair shall put this motion immediately, without debate, and if passed, shall put the current item of business to a vote.
    - (ii) "I move to overturn the ruling of the chair". This motion must be brought immediately after the chair makes a ruling. The chair shall put this motion immediately, without debate, and if passed, the ruling in question shall be overturned.
    - (iii) "I move to take the motion in parts". The proposer of this motion shall then divide the motion into two separate motions they propose to vote on separately. If such a motion be passed, the chair shall treat the original motion as if divided as the proposer of this procedural motion specified.

- (f) Any motion passed by a Termly General Meeting shall come into effect at the end of that meeting, unless otherwise specified.
8. Minutes of all meetings, including Committee meetings, shall be kept and formally adopted. Copies of the minutes shall be made available to members and, upon request, to the Proctors.
  9. The Committee may choose to move *in camera*, by a majority vote of Committee, and exclude observers in the event of discussion of business which concerns any of the following: sensitive personal information, disciplinary proceedings, and sensitive financial contracts.
  10. Committee may not vote to make past discussions *in camera* after the fact. Committee must vote to cease to be *in camera*.
  11. Minutes taken while the Committee is *in camera* may only be circulated to sitting members of the Committee, and may not be circulated to or discussed with anybody else, with the exception of the proceedings of a disciplinary committee. In the event of an alleged breach of this rule, the Returning Officer is obligated to bring disciplinary proceedings against the alleged perpetrator following the proceedings set out under Section 11.

## **SECTION 5: THE COMMITTEE**

1. The affairs of the Society shall be administered by an elected Committee which shall determine the subscriptions payable by the members of the Society, and have ultimate responsibility for the activities of the Society. The elected Committee shall be advised and assisted by further appointed roles, but hereafter all references to “Committee” refer to the elected offices (including General Committee).
2. No member of the Committee (or the Society) shall enter into or purport to enter into any arrangement, contract or transaction on behalf of the Club with a value exceeding £100, with the exception of Spirited Discussions (whose budget is set according to Section 7(6)), unless the Committee has resolved to approve the relevant arrangement, contract or transaction at a Committee meeting.
3. The quorum for a Committee meeting shall be four members present in person. When any financial business is to be transacted, there must be present either the Treasurer or a member of the Committee deputed by the Treasurer to represent the Treasurer’s views to the meeting.
4. The Committee shall be made up of the President, the President-elect, the Secretary, the Treasurer, the Spirits Officer, the Campaigns Officer, the Social Secretary, and the Communications Officer, four other persons, and the Senior Member. The President, the Secretary and the Treasurer shall each be either a member of the Club whose eligibility stems from section 3(2) above or section 3(4)(a) to (d) above, or (with the approval of the Proctors) a member of Congregation. If their eligibility stems from section 3(4)(a) to (d) above, on election to office they must sign an undertaking to abide by relevant provisions of the University Student Handbook and other relevant University policies, and to accept the authority of the Proctors on Club matters.
5. The Committee shall be assisted by the LGBT+ Officer, the Women’s Officer, the Social Backgrounds Officer, the Ethnic Minorities Officer, the Disabilities Officer, the Returning Officer (including any of their Deputy Returning Officers), the IT Officer, the Charities Officer,

the Editor, and the Alumni Relations Officer (together, the “Appointed Officers”; and their offices are referred to as “the Appointed Offices”). Appointed Officers are eligible to be members of the extended Committee with attending and speaking rights at meetings of the Committee. They shall not have the power to vote in such meetings, though they shall still be considered representatives of the Society and Committee.

6. The members of the Committee shall be elected by the members of the Club termly and shall be eligible for re-election. The members of the Club shall not appoint several individuals jointly to hold any of the Offices, nor allow any individual to hold more than one Office at a time. All members of Committee must be members of the federal Liberal Democrats or an international sister party while members of committee. The members of the Club shall appoint a member of Congregation as the Senior Member when electing other members of the Committee each year provided that a Senior Member who has previously held office as Senior Member for more than five consecutive years shall not be eligible for re-appointment. The Senior Member shall be a member of the Committee *ex officio*.
7. If during the period between the termly elections to offices any vacancies occur amongst the members of Committee, the Committee shall have the power of filling the vacancy or vacancies up to the next election by co-option, following the procedures set out in 11(10).
8. Each Office Holder must, and shall procure that other Office Holders shall, at the end of any term of Office, promptly hand to the relevant successor in Office (or to another member of the Club nominated by the Committee) all official documents and records belonging to the Club, together with (on request from the Committee) any other property of the Club which may be in the outgoing Office Holder’s possession; and must complete any requirements to transfer authority relating to control of the Club’s bank accounts, building society accounts, or other financial affairs.
9. Without derogating from its primary responsibility, the Committee may delegate its functions to finance and general purposes and other subcommittees which are made up exclusively of members of the Committee.
10. The Committee shall have power to make regulations and by-laws in order to implement the paragraphs of this Constitution, and to settle any disputed points not otherwise provided for in this Constitution.
11. No member of the Committee shall be removed from office except by the approving votes of two-thirds of those present in person or by proxy at a General Meeting, or by guilty verdict of a Disciplinary Committee.
12. The Committee shall meet at least once a fortnight at a time and place designated not less than 48 hours in advance by the President.
13. Ex-Presidents are eligible to be members of the Committee with attending and speaking rights at meetings of the Committee. They shall not have the power to vote in such meetings. These rights last as long as the ex-President remains *in statu pupillari*.
14. The new Committee and Officers shall take their roles at midnight on Sunday of 9th Week.

## **SECTION 6: THE SENIOR MEMBER**

1. The Senior Member shall:
  - (a) keep abreast of the actions and activities of the Club;
  - (b) provide information relating to the Club to the Proctors on request;
  - (c) seek to settle any preliminary disputes between the Committee and the members;
  - (d) following Section 7(4), consider whether the accounts of the Club are in order, and if so, sign them;
  - (e) ensure that adequate advice and assistance is available to the Secretary and the Treasurer in the performance of their responsibilities under Sections 7 and 9; and
  - (f) be available to represent and speak for the Club in the public forum, and before the University authorities.

## **SECTION 7: OFFICERS**

1. There shall be eight Officers: the President, the President-Elect, the Treasurer, the Secretary, the Spirits Officer, the Campaigns Officer, the Social Secretary, and the Communications Officer.
2. The President shall:
  - (a) have the right to preside at all meetings of the members of the Club and at all meetings of the Committee. Should the President be absent, or decline to take the chair, the Committee shall elect another member of the Committee to chair the meeting.
  - (b) be responsible for the overall activities of the society, and shall make decisions in consultation with the Committee regarding all events, in particular the invitation of external speakers to address meetings of the Society.
  - (c) inform both local parties the composition of the new Committee, with particular emphasis on the Campaigns Officer, as soon as possible after their taking office.
3. The President-elect shall:
  - (a) assist the President in the carrying out of their role.
  - (b) begin preparations for their own term as President.
  - (c) The President-elect shall act as a liaison to the local parties, sitting on both the Oxford East and Oxford West & Abingdon local Liberal Democrat constituency executives and their successors as their Student Representative.
4. The Treasurer shall:
  - (a) keep proper records of the Club's financial transactions in accordance with current accepted accounting rules and practices;

- (b) develop and implement control procedures to minimise the risk of financial exposure and protect the financial health of the Club;
- (c) ensure that bills are paid and cash is banked in accordance with the procedures developed under (b);
- (d) prepare an annual budget for the Club, and regularly inform the Committee of progress against that budget;
- (e) ensure that all statutory returns are made including VAT, income tax and corporation tax if appropriate;
- (f) seek advice as necessary on tax matters from the University's Finance Division;
- (g) develop and maintain a manual of written procedures for all aspects of the Treasurer's responsibilities;
- (h) make all records, procedures and accounts available on request to the Senior Member, the Proctors and Internal Audit;
- (i) forward to the Proctors (through the Clubs Office) by the end of the second week of each Full Term a copy of the accounts for the preceding term (the format of which the Proctors may prescribe) signed by the Senior Member, for retention on the Proctors' files; and
- (j) if the Club has a turnover in excess of £25,000 in the preceding year, or if owing to a change in the nature or scale of its activities, it may confidently be expected to have such a turnover in the current year, submit its accounts (the format of which the Proctors may prescribe) for independent professional inspection and report by a reporting accountant approved in advance by the Proctors. Accounts are to be ready for inspection within four months of the end of the Club's financial year and the costs of the inspection and report shall be borne by the Club. If requested by the reporting accountant, the Club shall submit accounts and related material as a basis for a review of accounting procedures, the cost likewise to be borne by the Club.

5. The Secretary shall:

- (a) maintain a register of the members of the Club, which shall be available for inspection by the Proctors, the Clubs Office and the Proctors' Office on request;
- (b) give notice of meetings of the members and the Committee;
- (c) draw up the agendas for and minutes of those meetings;
- (d) notify the Proctors (through the Clubs Office) promptly following the appointment and resignation or removal of Office Holders and other members of the Committee;
- (e) provide the Insurance Section with full details of any insurance cover purchased from or through a national governing body pursuant to paragraph 2(c) above;



- (f) inform the Proctors through the Clubs Office if the Club ceases to operate, or is to be dissolved, and in doing so present a final statement of accounts (the format of which the Proctors may prescribe);
- (g) Keep a record of all past speakers and the date of their visit for the Society's records.
- (h) Maintain the constitution, produce an amended version of the constitution following the passing of any amendment or any interpretation from the President or Returning Officer. Pass on the amended version to the IT officer so that they can display it on the website. This shall be done with the highest priority following any change to the constitution.
- (i) Maintain a document of standing orders and regulations which records relevant items of precedent, for the purpose of institutional memory, with the express recognition that such a policy book is not in itself enforceable.

6. The Spirits Officer shall:

- (a) Organise, with the President, weekly meetings entitled "Spirited Discussions", which will:
  - (i) Take place every Wednesday in Full Term at a time to be decided by the Committee;
  - (ii) Involve debate of at least two motions;
  - (iii) Observe the following Procedural Motions:
    - (1) Points of Information, subject to the rulings of the chair;
    - (2) Points of order, which will draw the chair's attention to a breach of any of their regulations or rulings, or of any offence under Section 11. Points of order must be heard by the chair immediately.
- (b) Decide the motions to debate at Spirited Discussions by 7pm the preceding Sunday, through a vote of Committee;
- (c) Chair Spirited Discussions each week. In the absence of the Spirits Officer, the right to preside over the event devolves to the President as in section 7(2)(a).
- (d) Ensure the purchase, transportation and storage of any drinks or food purchased by the Society for the purpose of Spirited Discussions, abiding by a budget set by the Treasurer in consultation with Committee.
- (e) Ensure there is sufficient food and drink provision for those who do not wish to drink alcohol.
- (f) Have the power to oblige any member of Committee to assist in the preparation for Spirited Discussions and to attend Spirited Discussions, unless that member has been

exempted from an obligation relating to Spirited Discussions by the President. Any Committee member that refuses or fails to meet such an obligation may be referred by the Spirits Officer to the Returning Officer for dereliction of duty.

- (g) Coordinate with the Welfare Officers to ensure an inclusive and welcoming atmosphere at all social events they organise, and be vigilant against any attendee at Spirited Discussions committing any formal offence outlined under Section 11(5).
- (h) Discourage guests, with the assistance of Committee, at Spirited Discussions, from drinking excessively to the point where they are a danger to themselves, to others, to property or to the Club's reputation.

7. The Campaigns Officer shall be responsible for all campaigning activity of the Society, and shall:

- (a) Keep in good contact with the relevant officials in the Oxford East and Oxford West and Abingdon local Liberal Democrat constituency parties and their successors;
- (b) Organise campaigning events for the society during Full Term;
- (c) Keep a register of all those who attend campaigning events, to be submitted to the Returning Officer on the day of the close of nominations for any election the society holds. For the purpose of this subsection and Section 10, "attend" shall mean "be present for more than 50% of".

8. The Communications Officer shall:

- (a) Be in charge of any social media accounts. This may include live-tweeting Spirited Discussions and other events, except at the discretion of the President. This includes the day-to-day maintenance of the accounts, including responding to queries and the sharing of content produced by the national party and the Young Liberals.
- (b) Publish all Facebook events, including those advertising Spirited Discussions, and respond to messages and comments.
- (c) Handle communications with the student press by issuing press releases and offering opinions on ongoing issues in Oxford. Any such comments to the press must be approved by Committee, except where there is not sufficient time for a Committee vote, whereupon comments must be approved by the President alone.

9. The Social Secretary shall:

- (d) Be responsible for the organisation of social meetings for the members of the Society, including social meetings with the members of other Societies, with the exception of Spirited Discussions.
- (e) In consultation with the Committee decide the date, venue and other particulars of any social event.

- (f) Ensure a range of events is available, particularly to those who do not wish to consume alcohol.
- (g) Maintain full sobriety at events they have organised unless an exemption for ‘alcohol focussed’ events is granted. This exemption shall be granted solely at the discretion of the sitting President and apply only to such events. All other duties under section 8(4) shall still apply fully.
- (h) Discourage guests at social events, with the assistance of Committee, from drinking excessively to the point where they are a danger to themselves, to others, to property or to the Club’s reputation.
- (i) Coordinate with the Welfare Officers to ensure an inclusive and welcoming atmosphere at all social events they organise.
- (j) Assist the Welfare Officers in running socials for the groups they represent
- (k) Ensure attendees are sufficiently aware of any ‘alcohol-focussed’ events prior to sign-up.
- (l) Ensure attendees have clear provision to contact Committee members and Officers of the society to report any behaviour they feel has been inappropriate at social events.

## **SECTION 8: THE GENERAL COMMITTEE**

1. General Committee shall contribute to and assist with the Society’s events, projects and other portfolios.

## **SECTION 9: THE APPOINTED OFFICERS**

1. There shall be eight appointed Officers: the LGBT+ Officer, the Women’s Officer, the Social Backgrounds Officer, the Ethnic Minorities Officer, the Disabilities Officer, the Returning Officer (including their Deputy Returning Officers), the IT Officer, the Charities Officer, the Editor, and the Alumni Relations Officer. Collectively, the LGBT+ Officer, the Women’s Officer, the Social Background Officer, the Ethnic Minorities Officer, and the Disabilities Officer shall be known as the Welfare Officers. This Section shall govern all matters relating to the Appointed Officers with the exception of the Returning Officer and their Deputy Returning Officers.
2. The Appointed Offices shall be appointed at the discretion of the President with a vote of Committee. The President is obliged to appoint only candidates with suitable experience, knowledge and skills for these offices. The President may appoint members of the Society to the Welfare Offices who are not members of the federal Liberal Democrats, but all other Offices may only be filled by Society members who are also members of the federal Liberal Democrats. The Alumni Relations Officer shall be appointed in Michaelmas and shall hold their post for the next three terms, subject to ratification by the President and Committee at the start of each term. If a vacancy arises in the meantime, the President and Committee shall appoint a new Alumni Relations Officer who is to hold the post until the next Michaelmas.
3. The Appointed Offices shall assist the Committee in formulating policy and constitutional amendments, advise the Committee on all matters relating to their Office, and attend Society

events. They shall make every effort to engage with the membership, and non-member attendees of Society events where appropriate. They shall also have rights of attendance and speaking at Committee meetings, but may not vote at Committee meetings. They shall be considered to be representatives of the Society alongside the elected Officers as long as they hold office.

4. The Welfare Officers shall:

- (a) Encourage attendees of Society events from the groups they represent to become members of the Society and to attend more Society events.
- (b) Encourage members from the groups they represent to seek positions on Committee.
- (c) Promote the inclusion of marginalised and historically oppressed groups in the Society's events, motions and frameworks.
- (d) Do their utmost to safeguard the welfare of all members of the Society and create a welcoming and inclusive atmosphere at Society events, but with particular regard to the groups they represent.
- (e) Offer information and assistance about the Club, Committee and Constitution to any member or non-member event attendee, and to that end make themselves generally available at Society events.
- (f) Regularly liaise with the President about the operation of Society events.
- (g) Advise Committee on matters relating to their Office, on the welfare and safeguarding of the membership and non-member attendees at Society events, on the inclusion of the groups they represent, and on the equal access and representation of all members to and in the Society. This may include the drafting of constitutional amendments to achieve and promote these aims and the others listed in this section at the Termly General Meeting of the Club.
- (h) Immediately report any misbehaviour that may reasonably be thought to constitute a formal offence under Section 11(5) towards any member or non-member attendee at Society events they observe to the President. They shall also be obliged to file a complaint with the Returning Officer to initiate disciplinary proceedings as outlined by Section 11. They shall be especially vigilant about misbehaviour towards members of the groups they represent, and in particular, discrimination or harassment towards those groups.

5. The IT Officer shall:

- (a) Be responsible for the operation and updating of a suitable club webpage displaying (at a minimum) current club contacts and the constitution.
- (b) Ensure the Society is compliant with the Party's and University's data protection rules.

6. The Charities Officer shall:

- (a) Be responsible for organising and coordinating the Society's charity work.
7. The Editor shall:
- (a) Edit and publish a termly journal of articles relating to liberalism, liberal policy or the Liberal Democrats.
  - (b) Actively seek out prospective writers and work written by the membership in order to facilitate a wide range of content.
8. The Alumni Relations Officer shall:
- (a) Maintain an up-to-date mailing list of all alumni of the society, making sure to add graduating members to this list in Trinity Term.
  - (b) Be responsible for organising and coordinating the Society's alumni events, which shall include an annual 'alumni dinner' as well as other social events. These events need not take place in term time or in Oxford.
  - (c) Coordinate with the Treasurer to organise fundraising schemes with alumni of the Club.
  - (d) Prepare a termly email to be sent, by Saturday of 9th Week of term, to alumni of the Club, informing them of activities undertaken by members in the previous term in coordination with the President and President-elect.

## **SECTION 10: ELECTIONS**

2. A Returning Officer shall be appointed by the Committee to oversee the elections.
- (a) Any member of the Club not running for any Committee position in that term's elections may be appointed Returning Officer.
  - (b) The Returning Officer is appointed by a simple vote of the Committee, not later than fourteen days before the elections take place.
  - (c) A Returning Officer shall remain in their role until such time as a new Returning Officer is appointed, or they resign their role by writing to the President.
  - (d) The Returning Officer, and their Deputy or Deputies, may not be an elected member of Committee, and must be a member of the federal Liberal Democrats or international sister party.
3. The Returning Officer shall:
- (a) Apply, clarify and interpret the regulations contained in this Section regarding Committee elections. The Returning Officer shall have sole interpretative power over Section 10.

- (b) Keep a record of any interpretations they make, to be submitted to the Secretary for appending in the Schedule of Interpretations.
- (c) Announce the date of the election to the members and invite nominations not less than seven days prior to the election. They shall, as part of the opening of nominations, make available information to all prospective candidates detailing any requirements of style and length for manifestos, subject to the regulations under Section 10(4).
- (d) Certify that nominations are valid according to Section 10(3);
- (e) Distribute to members a list of candidates and their manifestos, including their names, colleges, and their current position within the Society (or the most senior position formerly held by a candidate), not less than 24 hours before the time of the election.
- (f) Ensure that such manifestos comply with Section 10(4);
- (g) Arrange for ballot papers for both in-person and online proxy voting;
- (h) Make all reasonable efforts to keep the ballot secret;
- (i) Appoint at least one and up to three Deputy Returning Officers to assist in the running of the election and the discharge of the RO's duties;
- (j) Actively promote and encourage turnout at hustings and in elections.

3. Regarding nominations:

- (a) A valid nominee must be a Member of the Club whose eligibility stems from Section 3 paragraph 2 or Section 3 paragraphs 4(a)-(d) above, or, with the approval of the Proctors, a member of Congregation.
- (b) A valid nominee must in addition be a member of the federal Liberal Democrats or international sister party.
- (c) No-one may nominate for more than one position in the election.
- (d) Should someone nominate to hold a position in a term for which they're already guaranteed to hold a position (for example, if they are in the first term of a multi-term position, or their position grants them the right to succeed to a different position in the following term) this does not invalidate their nomination. However, should their nomination be accepted, it will also be understood to constitute their resignation, effective from the handover date for that term, regardless of whether or not they are thereby elected.
- (e) For a nomination to be valid, it must be sent from the member's University email address to the Returning Officer's University email address by the deadline announced by the Returning Officer, also copying in any Deputy Returning Officers appointed by the Committee. In cases where the member's eligibility does not stem from Section 3 Paragraph 2, the Returning Officer shall determine the proper means for nomination.

- (f) A nomination for Officer will only be valid if the candidate has attended either at least 25% or two campaigning events or in the term of their nomination, up to the close of nominations, as detailed in Section 8(2)(c). A nomination for the office of President-elect or President will only be valid if the candidate has attended either at least 50% of or four campaigning events in the term of their nomination, up to the close of nominations, as detailed in Section 8(2)(c). The Returning Officer may accept a nomination not meeting this threshold at their discretion, if they are satisfied that the nominee has been unable to meet the requirement due to exceptional circumstances.
4. Regarding manifestos:
- (a) Each candidate for the General Committee may submit a manifesto of up to 150 words; each candidate for one of the Offices may submit a manifesto of up to 250 words.
  - (b) Manifestos may not make untruthful or misleading statements.
  - (c) Manifestos may not mention another candidate by name or implication.
  - (d) Whatever is submitted as a manifesto, only the text, bullet points and numbering contained therein shall constitute the manifesto.
5. Positions to be elected are as follows:
- (a) Each term, a President-elect shall be elected. They shall serve as President-elect for the immediately following term, and then as President in the next term, unless they are removed from office as a result of resignation or finding of the Disciplinary Committee.
  - (b) The post of Treasurer is held for two terms; in the second term, elections will be held for the Treasurer for the next two terms.
  - (c) Each term, there shall also be elections for the Secretary, Spirits Officer, Campaigns Officer, Communications Officer, Social Secretary, and the four General Committee positions.
  - (d) In Michaelmas term of each year, the members of the Club shall appoint a member of the Congregation as Senior Member. The Senior Member will hold this position for the following year.
6. Elections shall be administered according to the following provisions:
- (a) Elections will be held no later than Saturday of 7th Week.
  - (b) The proceedings will be chaired by the Returning Officer.
  - (c) The Returning Officer shall distribute ballot papers and collect completed ballot papers.
  - (d) An option to Re-Open Nominations shall be present for all Officer and Committee positions on the ballot paper.

- (e) The Returning Officer shall count the votes using the Single Transferable Vote. In the case of doubt, the regulations provided by the Electoral Reform Society should be used. Quotas and transfer values shall be calculated to no more than three decimal places.
  - (f) The Returning Officer shall announce the full results at the earliest opportunity, listing, for each election, each candidate's name, college, the number of votes they received, and the number of votes deemed spoilt, blank or void.
  - (g) A person commits electoral malpractice if they:
    - (i) Solicit votes using any University mailing list;
    - (ii) Spend any money for the purpose of soliciting votes;
    - (iii) Lie – whether knowingly or unknowingly – about another candidate in the election;
    - (iv) Extort, blackmail or intimidate in connection with the election;
    - (v) Impersonate another member in order to gain access to a ballot, or to solicit votes for the election;
    - (vi) Breach the secrecy of the count or the election by announcing any real or pretended result after the close of the ballot and before the official declaration by the Returning Officer;
    - (vii) Act in any manner deemed by the Returning Officer to be in bad faith and breaching the spirit of the electoral rules.
7. Eligible voters shall be all Members of the Society, pursuant to Section 3(5)(a), prior to the close of nominations. After this point, no new Members shall be permitted to vote in that set of elections.
8. Online proxy ballots must be specifically requested from the Returning Officer by email and should only be granted if the Returning Officer is satisfied that the person requesting the ballot would be genuinely prevented from voting if otherwise.
9. Any member believing that the rules regarding elections have not been correctly observed, or that a candidate or the Returning Officer or another member has obtained an unfair advantage for a candidate or candidates, should bring a complaint under Section 11 by noon of the day after the election.
10. If any positions remain unfilled, or if by resignation, dismissal or any other means a vacancy on the Committee arises, and Committee waives its right to co-option under Section 10(11), the Returning Officer shall call, and determine the date for, a by-election. The procedure shall be the same as for a normal election. In the meantime, the position will be filled by the next most senior sitting Committee member according to the Table of Seniority below, on an Acting basis, until the by-election takes place.



11. If any position has nominations re-opened due to the victory of the option RON, any candidate defeated by RON will automatically not be elected, and co-option by Committee to fill that vacancy will not be allowed. Nominations must be reopened, subject to Section 10(10). Committee may not co-opt any candidate against whom RON was victorious in the election for the specific position whose lack of result ended up with co-option.
12. In the case of any vacancy in the Office of President, the President-elect shall serve as Acting President for the remainder of that term. They shall then succeed as President to serve the term they were elected to.
13. Any co-option to the Committee must take place observing the following stipulations:
  - (a) After notice is given by the Returning Officer or President that a co-option is to take place, a Committee meeting must be called by the President within 14 days of the vacancy occurring.
  - (b) Any member of Committee may propose a candidate or candidates for co-option at this meeting, provided that the candidate in question has signified their consent to be co-opted by email both to the Secretary and the President.
  - (c) If there is a vacancy to be co-opted out of full term, the co-option meeting may be held digitally, convened by the President, with at least 24 hours' notice being given.
  - (d) A vote shall be held by Committee *in camera* to reject or accept a motion resolving outcomes of co-option, re-opening of nominations and order of election. The President shall ensure indicative votes are taken to adequately inform this proposal.
  - (e) Within 24 hours of the co-option having taken place, the Secretary will notify the members of the Society of the result.

## **SECTION 11: DISCIPLINARY COMMITTEE**

1. Any member or non-member of the Society may bring a complaint to any member of the Committee, who will immediately raise it to the President. If the President is themselves the subject of the complaint, it shall be raised to the President-elect, who will then carry out any duties the President would otherwise have done in this section. If the President-elect is unable, this is the duty of the next most senior elected member of Committee.
2. If the complaint concerns conduct that may contradict university practices or the law, the President is required to pass the relevant information on, subject to the consent of the complainant, to the appropriate higher authority whilst maintaining the anonymity, as much as possible, of the individuals involved outside of this action.
  - (a) Where the subject of the complaint is a student at the University, the appropriate higher authority shall be the University.
  - (b) Where the subject of the complaint is a member of the Party, the appropriate higher authority shall be the Party.

3. In such a case, the subject of the complaint will have their membership suspended pending the decision of the appropriate higher authority. If the Committee or a Disciplinary Committee is not satisfied with the decision of the higher authority, they may pursue further measures in accord with the remainder of this Section.
4. If the complaint concerns a member of the Society, then a Disciplinary Committee must be called immediately, following guidelines under Section 11(6). However, if the situation of the complaint is either serious or immediate the President may issue a ban or expulsion to the member against whom the complaint is being made subject to later ratification by a Disciplinary Committee.
5. If the complaint concerns a non-member of the Society, then the President may expel them from any event or ban them from attending future events, subject to later ratification by the Committee at the next Committee meeting.
6. A Disciplinary Committee shall be called by notifying the Returning Officer via email and copying in all Deputy Returning Officers.
  - (a) The Returning Officer will convene the Disciplinary Committee to sit no later than one week after the complaint has been received. In the case of a complaint against the Returning Officer, the responsibility for convening a Disciplinary Committee shall fall to the most senior Deputy Returning Officer, with seniority based on the Table of Seniority in Schedule 1.
  - (b) The Disciplinary Committee shall consist of three of the most senior members of the Society (according to the Table of Seniority in Schedule 1) who are not themselves subject to the complaint, the maker of the complaint, or currently sitting on the Committee. The Returning Officer shall email all eligible members until three members respond to constitute the Disciplinary Committee.
  - (c) All matters relating to a case actively under consideration by a Disciplinary Committee shall be *in camera*, which must be disclosed to anyone involved in discussion, until the Disciplinary Committee has reached its verdict on the case considered.
7. A complaint may come under any of the following offences:
  - (a) Dereliction of duty or abuse of position by a member of Committee;
  - (b) Wilfully or recklessly bringing the Society into disrepute;
  - (c) Failure to act in accordance with University Policy and Procedure on Harassment at or in the immediate vicinity of events and activities organised by the Society;
  - (d) Failure to act in accordance with the Society's Constitution;
  - (e) Electoral malpractice;
  - (f) Theft or deliberate damage to Society property;
  - (g) Making a complaint under this Section that is frivolous or is unfounded and malicious;

- (h) Giving false evidence to any Disciplinary Committee.
  - (i) Acting disruptively at any meeting of the Society
8. In cases where a complaint is made against a member, the complainant shall have the right to present their case before the Disciplinary Committee, and the member against whom the complaint has been made shall have the right to defend themselves before the Disciplinary Committee.
- (a) The Disciplinary Committee shall give no verdict until both parties have exercised these rights, or received a letter or communication explicitly waiving these rights. Any complainant and implicated parties who has not exercised their rights of defence shall be considered to have automatically waived their rights if the Disciplinary Committee has not received communication within five days of its convening.
  - (b) The Disciplinary Committee must consider the complaint and give an explicit verdict of “guilty” or “not guilty”.
  - (c) If the verdict is guilty, the Disciplinary Committee, at their discretion, may:
    - (i) Give that member a verbal or written warning;
    - (ii) Ban the member from consumption of alcohol at Society events for a number of terms at the discretion of Disciplinary Committee.
    - (iii) If the complaint is made against a Committee member or Officer, dismiss that member from the Committee.
    - (iv) Ban that member from nominating for Office or the Committee in future terms;
    - (v) Revoke the membership of that member;
    - (vi) In the case of electoral malpractice, annul an individual election result;
    - (vii) In the case of electoral malpractice, disqualify a candidate from an election;
    - (viii) Any combination of the above.
9. Any member, or former member if their membership has been revoked by a Disciplinary Committee, found guilty under Section 11(8)(b) has the right to appeal for a review of this decision by the Senior Member or Proctors.
10. The Disciplinary Committee shall submit a report of its proceedings to the next Committee meeting, as well as sending a copy to the complainant, the subject of the complaint, the President, and any other implicated parties. Relevant members of Committee shall be made aware of persons given any of the punishments under this Section as appropriate to their enforcement.

## **SECTION 12: INDEMNITY**

1. So far as may be permitted by law, every member of the Committee and every officer of the Club (each a “relevant officer”) shall be entitled to be indemnified by the Club against all costs, charges, losses, expenses and liabilities incurred by the relevant officer in the execution or discharge of duties as a relevant officer or the exercise of powers as a relevant officer, or otherwise properly in relation to or in connection with the relevant officer’s duties. This indemnity extends to any liability incurred by a relevant officer in defending any proceedings, civil or criminal, which relate to anything done or omitted or alleged to have been done or omitted by the relevant officer in that capacity and in which judgement is given in the relevant officer’s favour (or the proceedings are otherwise disposed of without any finding or admission of any material breach of duty on the relevant officer’s part), or in which the relevant officer is acquitted, or in connection with any application under any statute for relief from liability in respect of any such act or omission in which relief is granted to the relevant officer by the Court.
2. So far as may be permitted by law, the Club may purchase and maintain for the benefit of any relevant officer insurance cover against any liability which by virtue of any rule of law may attach to the relevant officer in respect of any negligence, default, breach of duty or breach of trust of which the relevant officer may be guilty in relation to the Club and against all costs, charges, losses and expenses and liabilities incurred by the relevant officer and for which they are entitled to be indemnified by the Club by virtue of the above.

## **SECTION 13: DISSOLUTION**

1. The Club may be dissolved at any time by the approving votes of two-thirds of those present in person or by proxy at a General Meeting. The Club may also be dissolved (without the need for any resolution of the members) by means of not less than thirty days’ notice from the Proctors to the Secretary of the Club if at any time the Club ceases to be registered with the Proctors.
2. In the event of the Club being dissolved, its assets shall not be distributed amongst the members, but shall be paid to or at the direction of the University.

## **SECTION 14: INTERPRETATION**

1. Any question about the interpretation of this Constitution shall be settled first by the President, or, if disputed and sent to a Disciplinary Committee, the Proctors.
2. This Constitution shall be binding on all members of the Club. No regulation, bye-law or policy of the Club shall be inconsistent with, or shall affect or repeal anything contained in, this Constitution.
3. The Secretary shall be empowered to make clerical corrections to this Constitution, defined as errors in spelling or the indexing and internal referencing to individual sections, subsections and paragraphs. This shall not include corrections to grammar. Any corrections must be ratified by a simple majority of voting members of the Committee. Any member at any time may request to the Secretary that such corrections be submitted to the next Committee meeting.
4. For the purpose of consistency of reference, the following stipulations shall apply to references to this Constitution:

- (a) Sections shall be named by Arabic numerals, with a title describing their purpose
- (b) Immediate subsections shall be denoted by Arabic numerals followed by a full stop (1., 2., and so on).
- (c) The next level of subsection shall be denoted by (a), (b), (c) and so on, following alphabetically.
- (d) The next level of subsection shall be denoted by (i), (ii), (iii) and so on, following the standard pattern of lowercase Roman numerals.
- (e) The next level of subsection, if necessary, shall be denoted by (1), (2), (3) and so on, following in numeric order.
- (f) Sections of this Constitution shall be referred to by their number, outside brackets, followed by all subsections, each individual subsection symbol being inside its own set of brackets. For example, a correct denotation might refer to Section 1(1)(a)(i).

### **SCHEDULE 1: Table of Seniority**

The Table of Seniority is used to calculate seniority where necessary, and to provide people to act as Acting Officers in the case of resignation, dismissal, or other vacancy, while the by-election is held, to ensure no role on the Committee is entirely vacant. For the purposes of determining seniority, where a former committee member not currently on committee has held multiple positions on committee, they are deemed to take their most senior position.

President  
President-elect  
Treasurer  
Secretary  
Spirits Officer  
Campaigns Officer  
Communications Officer  
Social Secretary  
General Committee members in order of election  
Ex-Presidents in order from first election  
Ex-Presidents-elect in order from first election

Ex-Treasurers in order from first election  
Ex-Secretaries in order from first election  
Ex-Spirits Officers in order from first election  
Ex-General Committee members in order from first election  
Ex-Campaigns Officers in order from first election  
Ex-Social Secretaries in order from first election  
Ex-Communications Officers in order from first election  
Appointed Officers in order from first appointment  
All other members of the society from the term they first joined

## **SCHEDULE 2: Interpretations of the President**

### **1: Senior Member appointment**

Section 5(5) will allow for the appointment of the Senior Member via election by members of Committee, acting as the democratic embodiment of the membership, with the understanding that no regulations of the Proctors forbid this.

*Joseph Crossley, University College, 30<sup>th</sup> October 2017*

### **2: Table of Seniority [unused]**

For the purposes of determining seniority, where a member has held multiple positions on committee, they are deemed to take their most senior position.

*Adam Higgins, St Catherine's College, 9<sup>th</sup> February 2018*

### **3: Table of Seniority - General Committee [unused]**

For the purposes of determining seniority amongst general committee, they shall be ordered by first elected, whilst interpreting a lower ranking at the same election to be more recent.

*Adam Higgins, St Catherine's College, 9<sup>th</sup> February 2018*

### **4: Timing of the Disciplinary Committee**

The word "sit" in Section 11(2) refers to the substantive hearing of a case and reaching of a verdict. As such, this section shall always oblige a Disciplinary Committee to explicitly reach a verdict within the time period the Constitution mandates for sitting on the cases it considers.

*Samuel Cole, Worcester College, 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2018*

### **5: University Authorities**

If either of the memberships of two complainants to a Disciplinary Committee has been granted under Section 3(4) and so they are not in statu pupillari at the University of Oxford, references to 'university practices' and 'appropriate university body' in Section 11(7) will be understood to refer to the universities at which they are enrolled.

*Finn Conway, Balliol College, 1<sup>st</sup> December 2018*

## **6: Committee Vacancies following Resignations**

Section 5(7) states that in the event of a vacancy that occurs in between election cycles, Committee shall have the power of filling the vacancy or vacancies up to the next election by co-option. Here ‘vacancies’ will be taken to include those brought about through resignations.

*Damayanti Chatterjee, Brasenose College, 4<sup>th</sup> December 2019*

## **7: Section 11(14) and Disciplinary Committee Reports**

The Disciplinary Committee shall submit a report of its proceedings to the next Committee meeting, as well as sending a copy to the complainant, the subject of the complaint, the President, and any other implicated parties. This presentation may allow the anonymisation of any names or other identifying details within the report.

*Damayanti Chatterjee, Brasenose College, 4<sup>th</sup> December 2019*

## **SCHEDULE 3: Interpretations of the Returning Officer**

### **1: Manifesto sizes**

Section 10(4)(a) sets limits on the manifesto sizes for Committee and Officers. These are to be interpreted as *maximum* limits, and the Returning Officer may, at their discretion, impose limits lower than these during the elections of their term as Returning Officer.

*Harry Samuels, New College, 7th June 2016*

### **2: Political party membership of nominees, Returning Officers and Deputy Returning Officers**

In the instance where a potential nominee is resident in a country that does not have an international sister party of the Liberal Democrats, the Returning Officer may accept a nomination not meeting the requirement in 11(3)(b) at their discretion.

In the instance where a potential Returning Officer is resident in a country that does not have an international sister party of the Liberal Democrats, the committee may select a Returning Officer not meeting the requirement in 11(1)(d) at its discretion.

In the instance where a potential Deputy Returning Officer is resident in a country that does not have an international sister party of the Liberal Democrats, the Returning Officer may appoint a Deputy Returning Officer meeting the requirement in 11(1)(d) at their discretion, in line with their requirement to appoint between one and three Deputy Returning Officers in 11(2)(i).

*Adam Hilsenrath, Lady Margaret Hall, 21<sup>st</sup> November 2017*

### **3: Campaigning requirements**

Section 10(3)(e) sets out campaigning requirements for standing for election. In the interests of

fairness, and for the purpose of this section, multiple campaigning events which take place at overlapping times should be counted by the Returning Officer as one single campaigning event.

*Harry Samuels, New College, 24th January 2018*

#### **4. Elections**

Section 10(5) of the Constitution makes clear that each election for each position is individual and distinct. Although the Returning Officer should endeavour to hold all mandated elections on the same day in the interests of efficiency, in exceptional circumstances, the elections for each individual position may be held individually, so long as this is before Saturday of 7th Week.

*Harry Samuels, New College, 3rd February 2018*

#### **5: Section 10(3)(c) and staggered elections**

Section 10(3)(c) makes clear that "no-one may nominate for more than one position in the election". Here, the word "election" is to be interpreted as encompassing all of the ordinary elections for each individual position (that is, the ordinary elections which arise every term, or every two terms for the Office of Treasurer - not by-elections) as a block, regardless of whether or not they are held on the same day. Therefore, if the ordinary elections are staggered as permitted by Interpretation 4, and not held at the same time, a member may only nominate for one position in the overall block of that term's ordinary elections.

*Harry Samuels, New College, 4th February 2018*