

Constitution of the English Young Liberals

As adopted [19/07/2020]

1. Name

- a. The full name of the organisation shall be English Young Liberals.
- b. The abbreviation EYL may be used where appropriate.
- c. The Executive may adopt additional names, abbreviations and variant branding at its discretion, without prejudice to the formal name.

2. Disambiguation

- a. 'Young Liberals' shall be taken to refer to the specified Youth and Student organisation of the Liberal Democrats

3. Mission and Objectives

- a. English Young Liberals exists to serve three purposes:
 - i. To represent the English Young Liberals at universities, schools, colleges, and to all young people across England;
 - ii. To represent the views of those young people to the wider party; and,
 - iii. To promote the regional branches of the Liberal Democrats (hereafter "the Party") and of the Party's specified Youth and Student Organisation.
- b. To do this, the English Young Liberals shall:
 - i. Promote Liberal Democrat policies to young people and students in England;
 - ii. Represent the interests of young people and students in England to the English Liberal Democrats;
 - iii. Represent the interests of young people and students within the federal Young Liberals; and,
 - iv. Work to support local Young Liberals branches, and help them to liaise with regional branches of the Party.

4. Affiliation

- a. English Young Liberals shall be the official representatives of the youth and student members of the English Liberal Democrats within the framework of the membership rules of the Constitution of the English Liberal Democrats.
- b. The Executive of English Young Liberals shall represent youth and student members of the English Liberal Democrats within the federal structure of Young Liberals as the 'State Organisation' for England, as specified by the Constitution of the Young Liberals.
- c. English Young Liberals shall ensure that Young Liberals represents the needs and views of EYL members fairly and accurately at all times.

5. Regional Branches

- a. The English Young Liberals shall be a federation of Regional Branches corresponding to the Regional Parties of the English Liberal Democrats.
- b. Each Regional Branches must have its own Constitution, which must comply with this Constitution, the Young Liberals Constitution, the Constitutions of the Liberal Democrats and the Constitution of the English Liberal Democrats. Each constitution should include provisions for:

- I. The existence of a Regional Executive, including any additional officers except the Chair, if it is deemed appropriate to have one.
 - II. The process of elections for any additional officers
 - III. The requirement to hold at least one General Meeting annually, including a process by which to hold a motion of no confidence in the Chair and any other Regional Executive members.
 - IV. The process to amend said constitution
- c. Any provisions that do not meet the requirements of 5.b shall be deemed null and void.
- d. Each Regional Branch shall be led by a Regional Chair, who shall:
- i. Convene and chair any and all General Meetings of the Regional Branch;
 - ii. Be the principal executive officer of the Regional Branch;
 - iii. Be responsible for organising, establishing, and supporting local branches, including but not limited to, student societies, in their region;
 - iv. Represent youth and student members of the corresponding Regional Party to the Regional Party's Executive Committee, subject to the procedures and constitutional provisions of that Regional Party;
 - v. Represent the Regional Branch on the English Executive;
 - vi. Be the primary point of contact for the Young Liberals Executive for matters concerning the relevant region, including but not limited to:
 1. Campaigns;
 2. Events;
 3. membership, and;
 4. Media coverage;
 - vii. Be the principal public representative and chief spokesperson for the Regional Branch, including but not limited to representing it to:
 1. The media;
 2. Youth and student organisations;
 3. Other political parties and their respective youth and/or student wings; and,
 4. Other members of the Liberal Democrats;
 - viii. Organise and co-ordinate such activities as are necessary and appropriate to:
 1. Recruit new members to the Regional Branch;
 2. Contribute to the campaigning priorities of the Regional Party and those of the Young Liberals in the relevant region;
 3. Present a report to General Meetings of the Regional Branch.
- e. Regional Branches may opt to have further officers and/or an Executive Committee, subject to the Regional Branch's constitution, or, if there is no such constitution in place, by appointment by the Regional Chair;
- f. Election to the post of Regional Chair is subject to Article 9 of this Constitution;

- g. Responsibilities under 4.d may be transferred by a Regional Branch to other executive officers of the Regional Branch, where they exist, provided that the responsibilities in question are relevant to the portfolio of the executive officer to whom they are transferred.

6. Membership and Branches

- a. Membership of the English Young Liberals shall be open to any member of the Young Liberals who belongs to a local party located in England.
- b. All members of the English Young Liberals shall have the right to:
 - i. Vote in elections to the Executive of English Young Liberals;
 - ii. Stand for election to executive;
 - iii. Serve, if elected to a relevant position, as representatives of the English Young Liberals to bodies within the English Liberal Democrats;
 - iv. Speak and vote at General Meetings;
 - v. Propose a policy motion;
 - vi. Propose amendments to the Constitution of the English Liberal Democrats; and,
 - vii. Participate in the activities of a Regional Branch or local branch of the English Young Liberals, subject to the relevant branch's procedures.

7. Executive

- a. The Executive shall be responsible for the day-to-day operation of the organisation, as well as carrying out instructions given at General Meetings, with regards to the long-term activities of the English Young Liberals.
- b. In order to accomplish its aims and goals, the Executive shall work and actively communicate with:
 - i. Local Parties;
 - ii. Regional Branches of the Young Liberals;
 - iii. Regional Branches of the English Liberal Democrats;
 - iv. The executives of the Young Liberals and the English Liberal Democrats;
 - v. Local branches of the English Young Liberals;
 - vi. Relevant party members
- c. The Executive shall be made up of the Chair of English Young Liberals and the Regional Chairs.
- d. The Chair of English Young Liberals shall be:
 - i. Responsible for setting the overall direction of the organisation in line with policy determined at General Meetings;
 - ii. The primary spokesperson for the English Young Liberals;
 - iii. The primary representative of members of the English Young Liberals to the Party and to external organisations;
 - iv. The primary representative of members of the English Young Liberals to the English Council, the English Council Executive, and other relevant bodies.
 - v. Responsible for co-ordinating, overseeing, and ensuring that the roles and activities of the rest of the Executive are appropriately carried out;

- vi. Responsible for chairing General Meetings, and meetings of the Executive;
- vii. The representative from the English State Organisation to the Executive of Young Liberals, per the Young Liberals Constitution;
- e. The Executive shall also include the Regional Chairs.
- f. The Executive shall, at its first meeting, elect from among the Regional Chairs, a Vice Chair of the English Young Liberals.
- g. The Vice Chair of the English Young Liberals shall fulfil any duties of the Chair of the English Young Liberals, in the event that the Chair is unable to carry out their duties.
- h. Executive positions shall be filled through election or co-option, according to Article 9 of this Constitution.
- i. The entire Executive shall ensure that the Regional Branches operate smoothly and successfully, and shall liaise with relevant members of the Party where necessary.
- j. The Executive shall meet no fewer than six (6) times per year, either in person or electronically.
- k. Two individuals shall be permitted to jointly hold any executive role, save for that of Vice-Chair.
 - i. The individuals in question may cast only one vote between them during any vote of the Executive, and must be in agreement in order for that vote to be counted.
 - ii. Where two individuals jointly hold a role, but one individual is absent from the meeting in question, the other individual shall be permitted to cast a vote.
 - iii. Where two individuals jointly hold a role, and one individual resigns from the role, both individuals shall be deemed to have resigned and the role shall be vacated until filled by an election or co-option. If the role in question is that of Chair, the Vice Chair shall be permitted to carry out the duties of Chair until the role is filled, in line with 6.g above.
- l. Any member of the English Young Liberals may attend executive meetings, and speak at the discretion of the Chair.
- m. The Executive may, at its discretion, invite individuals who are not members of the English Young Liberals to attend all or part of its meetings.
- n. Only members of the Executive may propose motions or vote.
- o. The Executive shall publish minutes of every meeting within fourteen (14) days of the close of the meeting.
- p. The Executive may create sub-committees, where positions shall be filled by members of the Executive, in response to events, issues, and circumstances.
- q. The Executive may, by majority vote, designate an item of business as closed business, meaning only members of the executive may be present and that discussion of the item may not be included in the released minutes.

- r. Representatives of the English Young Liberals to committees of the Federal Young Liberals shall be chosen from amongst the members of the Executive.
- s. The Executive shall commence its term at midnight on the first day of January following its election, and its term shall finish at the end of the 31st December of that year.
- t. All members of the executive are expected to attend all EYL Executive Meetings or send apologies before the meeting starts. Additionally Regional Chairs are expected to attend Regional Party Executive Meetings and the English Chair is expected to attend Young Liberals Federal Executive Meetings. Therefore:
 - I. Any Executive member who misses two consecutive EYL Executive meetings or three meetings in a single term without sending apologies, will be deemed to have resigned.
 - II. Any Regional Chair who misses two consecutive Regional Party Executive meetings or three meetings in a single term, without sending apologies, will be deemed to have resigned.
 - III. If the English Chair misses two consecutive Young Liberals Federal Executive meetings or three meetings in a single term, without sending apologies, they will be deemed to have resigned.
 - IV. It is incumbent upon Executive members to report to the wider Executive on their attendance or giving of apologies to Regional Executive/Federal YL Executive meetings.

8. Financial Regulations

- a. All financing of the English Young Liberals shall be undertaken by the federal Young Liberals, in line with relevant laws and regulations.
- b. The Young Liberals shall set the English Young Liberals a budget, which may be accessed at the discretion of the relevant officer of the Federal Organisation.
- c. The relevant officer of the Federal Organisation should seek to approve all requests to access this budget by members of the English Young Liberals Executive, except where granting such requests would breach a provision of this Constitution; the Constitutions of the Young Liberals, the English Liberal Democrats, and/or the English Party; and/or the law.

9. General Meetings

- a. The General Meeting (GM) of the English Young Liberals shall be the highest governing body of the English Young Liberals and may overturn any action of the Executive.
- b. There shall be at least one General Meeting of the English Young Liberals per year.
- c. Wherever possible, General Meetings should be held to coincide with a conference of the federal Young Liberals.
- d. General Meetings should be advertised to the EYL membership no less than twenty-one (21) days prior to the opening of the Meeting in question.
- e. The quorum for General Meetings shall be the presence either of 20 members, or of 1% of the total membership of the English Young Liberals, whichever is lower.

- f. If the quorum is not met, those present may hold consultation sessions on the agenda items, and refer any decisions taken to the Executive, except where this constitution indicates that only a General Meeting may take a decision on the matter in question.
- g. The General Meeting shall be chaired by the Chair.
- h. If the Chair is absent, the Vice Chair shall chair the General Meeting. If both the Chair and the Vice Chair are absent, the Executive shall choose one of its members to chair the meeting.
- i. The General Meeting shall:
 - i. Receive reports of the Executive;
 - ii. Have the ability to amend this constitution, subject to a two-thirds majority of those present and voting;
 - iii. Hear relevant motions subject to the discretion of the Chair; and,
 - iv. If requested by a member, hold a Motion of No Confidence in members of the Executive. A two-thirds majority of those present and voting shall be required for the motion to pass.
- j. The General Meeting shall, wherever reasonably possible, take place in person; however, in exceptional circumstances it may take place online.
- k. Between General Meetings, an Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM) may be called by the Executive.
- l. An Extraordinary General Meeting must be held between fourteen (14) and thirty (30) days following the passage of a relevant motion by the Executive, but not within thirty (30) days of another General Meeting.
- m. The agenda for the Extraordinary General Meeting shall consist only of those items specified in the motion passed by the Executive.
- n. Ordinary and Extraordinary General Meetings shall be governed by the rules of procedure and standing orders used at the ongoing or immediate past conference of the federal Young Liberals, except where explicitly noted by the Executive on the agenda.

10. Elections

- a. Members of the Executive who are directly elected shall be elected annually from amongst the members of the English Young Liberals.
- b. Members seeking the office of Regional Chair should be members in the region in which they seek to stand, on the date of the election.
- c. Nominations for the elected offices within the English Young Liberals shall open and run to the same timetable as those for the Young Liberals.
- d. Elections shall take place via online balloting.
- e. The Executive shall appoint a neutral Returning Officer to oversee and co-ordinate elections to the English Young Liberals Executive with the Executive, and the executive of Young Liberals, as required.
- f. The Returning Officer may not be a member of the English Young Liberals.
- g. Members shall be sent an electronic notice of the elections and nomination procedures not less than seven (7) days prior to the close of nominations.
- h. All candidates shall have the opportunity to provide the Returning Officer with a manifesto equivalent in size to (up to) one side of A4 paper, which

shall be made available to all members online at the time of ballots being distributed.

- i. Elections shall be conducted using a Single Transferrable Vote system and all positions shall include an option to re-open nominations.
- j. Members shall have at least seven (7) days from the date ballots are sent to return them to the Returning Officer.
- k. The Returning Officer shall determine what constitutes a spoiled ballot. Appeals against the Returning Officer's decision shall be heard by the Executive.
 - i. If a member of the executive is a candidate in the election in question, they shall recuse themselves from any discussion of an appeal.
 - ii. The matter may be brought to the English Party's procedure for appeals in the event that any party is dissatisfied with the outcome of a ruling in this manner.
- l. All forms of campaigning shall be permitted within the following limitations:
 - i. No candidate may incur, or may directly or indirectly authorise or cause to be incurred, any expenses at any time before or after the closing of nominations;
 - ii. Candidates may not engage in libel or slander;
 - iii. Any endorsements claimed by a candidate must be verified by supporting documentation if requested by the Returning Officer; and,
 - iv. No campaigning related activities may take place before the opening of nominations.
- m. When possible, efforts shall be made to organise hustings for the candidates of contested positions, either in person or online.
- n. If an elected position becomes vacant during the course of a term or no candidate presents themselves for election to a position, that position may be filled, following consultation with the Returning Officer, by either a co-option or a by-election, at the discretion of the Executive.
 - i. If the position is to be filled by a co-option, the vacancy must be advertised publicly for at least seven (7) days prior to a decision being made.
 - ii. If a by-election is to be held, the designated Returning Officer shall conduct the by-election.
- o. By-elections shall be held using the same process as detailed in 10.d-10.m above.
- p. If the sovereign body of the English Party is such that the English Young Liberals sends representatives, these representatives shall be directly elected at the same time, and using the same process, as the executive.
- q. The selection of representatives to other English Party committees may be through election or co-option at the discretion of the Executive. These representatives are not ex officio members of the Executive, but any member may serve as a member of the Executive and as such a representative simultaneously.

11. Policy-making

- a. Subject to the Constitution of Young Liberals and all associated regulations, all policy-making powers of the English Young Liberals shall be exercised by the Young Liberals, following its normal policy process.
- b. Article 10.a shall act as a permanent request to Young Liberals to make policy for the English Young Liberals under the relevant provisions of the Constitution of Young Liberals.

12. Amendments

- a. Amendments to this constitution may be proposed by:
 - i. The Executive or any recognised branch, following successful passage of a motion supporting amendment at their respective executive meeting; or,
 - ii. Any individual member.
- b. Amendments to this constitution must be submitted to the Chair at least seven (7) days prior to the commencement of a General Meeting.
- c. Amendments shall be passed only by achieving a two-thirds majority of those present and voting at a General Meeting which maintains quorum throughout the debate and vote on the amendment in question.
- d. Any amendment to the Constitution shall take effect from the end of the meeting at which the amendment was made.

13. Miscellaneous

- a. Any constitution or other governing document not previously repealed is hereby superseded by this Constitution.
- b. The Constitution shall bear the date of the General Meeting at which it was adopted or subsequently amended in order to clarify which is the current version of the Constitution.
- c. With regard to interpretation, where this constitution is silent the Constitution of the English Liberal Democrats, the Constitution of the Federal Party and/or Young Liberals shall apply. In case of conflict between this constitution, and the constitution of the Federal Young Liberals, the English Liberal Democrats, and/or the Liberal Democrats, those constitutions shall take precedence over this.
- d. The Chair shall in the first instance rule on matters of interpretation brought to their attention by any member of EYL seeking clarification, followed by, where necessary, the Chair of the Federal Organisation.
- e. A decision of the Chair (of this and/or the Federal Organisation) may be appealed to the relevant procedure of the English Liberal Democrats.

Amendment - 1

In Section 5 replace (b) and with "b. Each Regional Branches must have its own Constitution, which must comply with this Constitution, the Young Liberals Constitution, the Constitutions of the Liberal Democrats and the Constitution of the English Liberal Democrats. Each constitution should include provisions for:"

In Section 5 add new clauses (b)(i) to (b)(iv):

"i. The existence of a Regional Executive, including any additional officers except the Chair, if it is deemed appropriate to have one.

ii. The process of elections for any additional officers

iii. The requirement to hold at least one General Meeting annually, including a process by which to hold a motion of no confidence in the Chair and any other Regional Executive members.

iv. The process to amend said constitution"

Amendment 2 -

In Section 7 add new clause t. and subclauses (t)(i) to (t)(iv):

"t. All members of the executive are expected to attend all EYL Executive Meetings or send apologies before the meeting starts. Additionally Regional Chairs are expected to attend Regional Party Executive Meetings and the English Chair is expected to attend Young Liberals Federal Executive Meetings. Therefore:

i. Any Executive member who misses two consecutive EYL Executive meetings or three meetings in a single term without sending apologies, will be deemed to have resigned.

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