

The Women's Equality Party

Standing Orders

Table of Contents

Standing Orders

Conference Chair

Quorum

Conference Agenda

Motions and Amendments

Rules of motions and amendments

Challenging a decision to refuse a motion

Registering to speak on a motion or amendment

Committee-nominated speakers

Emergency motions

Rules of Debate

Speeches

Order of Debate

Procedural motions

References Back

Next business

Closure

Points of Order

Voting

Method of voting

Counting Votes

Party Business

Suspension of and Amendments to Standing Orders

1 Standing Orders

- 1.1** These standing orders (“**Standing Orders**”) are the rules governing the proceedings of the Party Conferences of the Women’s Equality Party (the “**Party**”, or “**WE**”).
- 1.2** These Standing Orders should be read in conjunction with the Constitution of the Women’s Equality Party (the “**Constitution**”). In the case of a clash between the terms of the two documents, the Constitution shall take precedence.

2 Conference Chair

- 2.1** The Conference Chair is responsible for the running of the conference (the “**Conference Chair**”) and may appoint a committee of co-chairs (the “**Co-Chairs**”) each of whom can chair party business sessions on behalf of the Conference Chair. Whilst acting as chair of a session, each Co-Chair shall have the powers of the Conference Chair in respect of that session. All references to the ‘Chair’ in these Standing Orders shall be taken to refer to the session chair for the time being.
- 2.2** The Conference Chair has the final say on any disputes that may arise at and in relation to Party Conference.

2.3 During Conference the Conference Chair can temporarily close sessions to everyone other than voting delegates. The Conference Chair can also limit the participation of Registered Supporters, Observers and invited speakers in Party Conference debates.

3 Quorum

Party Conference shall be quorate when 70 voting delegates are present in the conference hall, but debate may continue in the absence of a quorum, as long as no vote is taken until sufficient delegates are present to form a quorum.

4 Conference Agenda

The Conference Agenda has been set by the WE Steering Committee or a committee operating on its behalf and has been published prior to Conference. The programme of debates, and the motions and amendments debated, except for emergency motions, at Party Conference will be conducted according to that Conference Agenda unless, in exceptional circumstances, the Conference Chair rules otherwise

5 Motions and Amendments

5.1 Rules of motions and amendments

Motions, emergency motions and amendments to motions and emergency motions should be submitted prior to Party Conference and within the deadlines set by the Steering Committee or another committee operating on its behalf. In exceptional circumstances the Conference Chair or the Steering Committee can allow a motion or emergency motion after the deadlines have passed.

5.2 Challenging a decision to refuse a motion

5.2.1 The proposer of a motion may challenge a decision to refuse a motion at Party Conference, providing that they believe the motion needs the immediate attention of the Party and that a majority of Party Conference would support it.

5.2.2 In such a case, the Conference Chair shall allow the proposer to provide their rationale, and a representative of the Steering Committee or an Agenda Committee operating on its behalf to respond, before moving to a vote in which the decision to refuse the motion can be reversed by a simple majority vote. The Conference Chair shall set an identical time limit for both proposer and responder to speak.

5.3 Registering to speak on a motion or amendment

5.3.1 Delegates who wish to speak in a debate on a motion, emergency motion or amendment shall hand in a speaker's card giving:

- (i) their name;
- (ii) their Branch or any other relevant affiliation;
- (iii) which debate they wish to speak in;
- (iv) whether they wish to speak on the motion or an amendment to it and, if so, which; and
- (v) whether they are for or against such motion or amendment.

5.3.2 Speakers' cards will no longer be accepted after the relevant vote has been called.

5.3.3 The Chair may refuse to accept further speakers' cards at any point due to time limitations.

5.4 Nominated speakers

5.4.1 The Policy Committee may nominate one of its members to give Party Conference its views on any policy motion, emergency motion and/or amendment which is being debated.

5.4.2 The Executive Committee may nominate one of its members to give Party Conference its views on any debate on Party business or constitutional amendments.

5.4.3 The Treasurer has the right to speak on the financial implications of a motion or an amendment before they are voted on.

5.4.4The Leader has the right to speak on any policy motion, business motion, emergency motion and/or amendment which is being debated.

5.4.5The Chair may call such nominees to speak at any point before the end of the debate and before the mover of the motion has summed up, and may set a time limit for any such speaker

5.5 Emergency motions

The Conference Chair shall have the sole discretion to allow Emergency Motions and amendments which are not on the agenda.

6 Rules of Debate

6.1 Speeches

6.1.1The time limits for speeches in debate shall be five minutes for proposers of motions and three minutes for all other speakers, except where provided otherwise elsewhere in these Standing Orders or determined otherwise by the Chair.

6.1.2The Chair may alter the time limits to allow more people to participate in the debate.

6.1.3 If chosen, the Speaker shall be ready to make their way in good time to the podium and speak when it is their turn, subject to Article 6.1.4 below. If they are not, the Chair shall have the discretion whether to allow them to speak later in the debate.

6.1.4 Every Speaker shall be allowed sufficient time to reach and establish themselves on the podium according to their accessibility needs.

6.1.5 The Chair shall introduce the Speaker and shall alert them when their time is up. The Speaker may not speak longer than the minutes allocated to them.

6.1.6 Debate shall be appropriate, reasoned, relevant, respectful and considerate, and not defamatory, obstructive, personal or abusive. The Chair has the right to remove from the rostrum anyone whose behaviour does not abide by these rules and ban them from participating in any or all following debates.

6.2 Order of Debate

6.2.1 The Chair directs the order of debate and shall seek to allow for a balanced conversation by selecting speakers both for and against the motion or the amendments.

6.2.2 A motion or amendment shall be proposed by one of the delegates who submitted it. If this is impracticable, the Chair shall allow a substitute nominated by those delegates to speak on their behalf.

6.2.3The proposer of a motion shall speak before all other speakers on that motion, and shall sum up after all the other speakers, including the movers of any amendments on that motion.

6.2.4The amendments shall be taken in the order set out in the conference agenda unless the Chair reasonably determines otherwise. The proposer of an amendment shall speak before all other speakers on that amendment, and shall sum up after all the other speakers on that amendment. The proposer of the original motion has the right to respond to any or all of the amendments.

6.2.5Delegates who are jointly responsible for putting forward the motion, but who are not the proposer, may participate in the debate; however the Conference Chair may limit their participation to ensure other delegates have the opportunity to speak to the motion.

6.2.6The Conference Chair can refuse to allow a delegate to speak to a motion more than once, except that the proposer may speak as provided above.

7 Procedural motions

Except at the discretion of the Chair, during debate no other interruptions to proceedings shall be allowed except the following procedural motions:

7.1 References Back

7.1.1 Any voting delegate, including the proposer of the motion, can suggest that the motion be referred back to the proposers, to the Steering Committee or to the Policy Committee for revision and for probable inclusion in its updated form at the following Party Conference.

7.1.2 Requests for references back should be submitted in writing to the Conference Chair, with information including to whom the motion should be referred and the reason for such referral.

7.1.3 The Chair shall inform Conference of such a request immediately after it has been submitted, without interrupting a speaker, and shall move it to a vote without debate.

7.1.4 If more than one request to refer back is submitted, the Chair has the discretion to decide which to accept.

7.1.5 Votes on a reference back can be passed by a simple majority.

7.2 Next business

7.2.1 Any voting delegate, including the proposer of the motion, may move that the meeting proceeds to the next business.

7.2.2 Requests for moving on to the next business shall be submitted in writing to the Conference Chair, with the reason for the request.

7.2.3The Chair shall inform Conference of such a request immediately after it has been submitted, without interrupting a speaker, and shall move it to a vote without debate.

7.2.4The Chair shall have the discretion to put, or refuse to put, any second or subsequent such request regarding the same item of business to a vote.

7.2.5Votes on moving to next business can be passed by a simple majority.

7.3 Closure

7.3.1Any voting delegate, including the proposer of the motion, may move that the question be now put to a vote.

7.3.2Requests for closure shall be submitted in writing to the Conference Chair, with the reason for such request.

7.3.3The Chair shall inform Conference of such a request immediately after it has been submitted, without interrupting a speaker, and shall give the proposer of the motion or the amendment the opportunity to reply before moving it to a vote.

7.3.4The Chair shall have the discretion to put, or refuse to put, any second or subsequent such request regarding the same item of business to a vote.

7.3.5Votes on closure can be passed by a simple majority.

7.4 Points of Order

7.4.1 Points of order may be raised by any delegate.

7.4.2 Points of order are factual, not a matter of opinion, and deal only with whether the conduct or procedure of a debate is in accordance with these Standing Orders.

7.4.3 Points of order take precedence over all other business, except that:

- (i) a speaker may not be interrupted during their allotted speaking time; and
- (ii) when a vote is in progress only points of order regarding that vote may be taken.

7.4.4 There shall be no other speech or discussion other than the ruling of the Chair on the point of order.

7.4.5 The Chair's decision on points of order shall be final.

8 Voting

8.1 Party Conference will reach decisions by a simple majority vote of voting delegates on the issues presented to it, unless otherwise specified in the Constitution.

8.2 Voting delegates may call for a vote on separate lines of any motion, but not of an emergency motion.

8.3 The vote on each amendment shall take place before the vote on the substantive motion to which that amendment relates. The Chair has the discretion to decide the order in which votes are taken on multiple amendments.

8.4 Method of voting

8.4.1 Each voting delegate is allowed to vote once when a vote is called.

8.4.2 The Chair shall first call for the vote from those in favour of the motion or the amendment, then from those opposed and lastly from those abstaining.

8.4.3 Delegates shall vote by raising their conference voting pass or by another method deemed appropriate by the Conference Chair.

8.5 Counting Votes

8.5.1 Any voting Member may call for a count, which shall be taken if 10 other delegates support them by showing their voting cards.

8.5.2 When a count is called for, the Chair shall organise the count.

8.5.3 Delegates are responsible for holding their delegate voting pass/voting card high up while the count is taken place. Otherwise their vote will not count. Appropriate arrangements shall be made for delegates unable to do this.

8.5.4The Chair shall announce the results.

8.5.5Recounts may be called for up to twice for any given vote, and may be granted or refused at the Chair's discretion.

9 Party Business

9.1 Reports tabled by the Steering Committee, the Executive Committee or the Policy Committee must be submitted for approval by Party Conference.

9.2 The relevant committee shall choose a representative to move the report.

9.3 One or more members of the relevant committee may also submit a minority report to the Steering Committee or another committee operating on its behalf and may choose a representative to present it.

9.4 Delegates may ask questions that concern issues for which the relevant committee is responsible. The questions shall be answered by the mover of the report.

9.5 The Chair shall determine how many questions may be asked in that session and how much time shall be allotted to each questioner.

10 Suspension of and Amendments to Standing Orders

10.1 Any or all Standing Orders except for Articles 1.2, 5.4.3, 5.4.4 and this Article 10 may be suspended or their effect modified for a specific purpose and for a specific period of time provided that the conditions below are met.

10.2 In order to suspend Standing Orders:

10.2.1 A motion to suspend Standing Orders must be proposed in writing by not less than 10 delegates and shall include the purpose of such suspension. It shall aim to amend or suspend the parts of these Standing Orders necessary to fulfil the purpose of the motion.

10.2.2 The Chair shall decide if the motion is allowable. If it is, the Chair shall decide whether the motion shall be debated or moved straight to a vote.

10.2.3 A motion to suspend shall be passed by a two-thirds majority of the delegates present and voting.

10.3 The Party Constitution may not be amended and repealed by a motion proposed under this Article 10 or under article 4.10 of the Constitution.

10.4 In order to amend Standing Orders:

- 10.4.1** a motion to amend these Standing Orders must be proposed in writing by the Steering Committee or by not less than 10 delegates, and shall include the proposed wording of such amendment.
- 10.4.2** the Chair shall decide whether the motion shall be debated or moved straight to a vote.
- 10.4.3** a motion to amend Standing Orders shall be passed by a two-thirds majority of the delegates present and voting.
- 10.5** The Steering Committee shall approve these Standing Orders and review them regularly.
- 10.6** The Steering Committee may provisionally amend these Standing orders. Those amendments may be acted on temporarily at the Steering Committee's discretion until ratified by Conference, but will not come into force unless and until approved under Article 10.7 below.
- 10.7** These Standing Orders shall be subject to approval by Party Conference at the start of each Party Conference, and each time they are amended during a conference.