

# CONSTITUTION

## OF THE OXFORD UNIVERSITY LIBERAL DEMOCRATS

**Last major edit 5th week Hilary 2018 – *Jake Olenick, Secretary, Exeter 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”). 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 Sports 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

- (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 paragraph 5, 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. The Committee, having specific regard to the Senior Member's advice in relation to the relevant matter, may remove a person from membership if removal of such person from membership is deemed to be in the best interests of the Club. If the person concerned is an Oxford University student, that person may appeal against such removal to the Proctors.

#### **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 the annual report of the Committee for the previous year and the annual accounts of the Club for the previous year, the report and accounts having been approved by the Committee;
  - (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 be 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 15.

## **SECTION 5: THE COMMITTEE**

1. The affairs of the Society shall be administered by a Committee consisting of not more than eleven people, which shall determine the subscriptions payable by the members of the Society, and have ultimate responsibility for the activities of the Society. Members of the University shall at all times make up the majority of the members of the Committee. The Committee shall have control of the funds and property of the Society, and of its administration.
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 £1,000 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, and the Spirits Officer (together, the "Senior Officers"; and their offices are referred to as "the Senior Offices"), the Campaigns Officer, the Social Secretary, and the Communications Officer (together, the "Junior Officers"; and their offices are referred to as "the Junior Offices"), 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 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. 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*.
6. 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.
7. 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.
8. 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.
9. 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.
10. 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.
11. 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.

12. 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*.
13. There shall be non-executive roles on the Committee as follows:
  - (a) An IT Officer, with responsibility for the operation and updating of a suitable club web-page displaying (at a minimum) current club contacts and the constitution;
  - (b) A Deputy Spirits Officer, known as the Invisible Hand, responsible for assisting the Spirits Officer in keeping order at Spirited Discussions.
  - (c) A Charities Officer, responsible for organising and coordinating the society's charity work. Committee may choose not to fill this role when no charitable work is planned.
14. The new Committee and Officers shall take their roles at midnight on Sunday of 9th Week.

#### **SECTION 6: THE PRESIDENT AND PRESIDENT-ELECT**

1. The President shall 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.
2. The President shall 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.
3. The President shall 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.
4. The President-elect shall assist the President in the carrying out of their role.
5. The President-elect shall begin preparations for their own term as President.
6. 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.

#### **SECTION 7: THE TREASURER**

1. 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, such procedures to be reviewed regularly with the University's Internal Audit Section ("Internal Audit");
  - (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.

## **SECTION 8: THE SECRETARY AND SENIOR MEMBER**

### 1. 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.

### 2. 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 above, 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 8; and
- (f) be available to represent and speak for the Club in the public forum, and before the University authorities.

## **SECTION 9: THE SPIRITS OFFICER**

### 1. The Spirits Officer shall:

- (a) Organise, with the President, weekly meetings entitled ‘Spirited Discussions’, to take place every Wednesday in Full Term at a time to be decided by the Committee, involving debate of at least two motions;
- (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 6(1).
- (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) Spirited Discussions shall be open to non-members. Non-members shall abide by any regulation or ruling the chair shall make, and in addition, be bound by the disciplinary rules detailed in Section 16 of this Constitution. Non-members may be barred from attending by a vote of Committee, with any discussion surrounding such a vote being automatically *in camera*.
- (f) Any member may complain in writing that a non-member attending Spirited Discussions breached the disciplinary rules detailed in Section 16 to the President, who must then refer the matter to Committee.
- (g) During Spirited Discussions, attendees may interrupt a speaker in order to:
  - (i) Raise a point of information, subject to the rulings of the chair
  - (ii) Raise a point of order to draw the chair's attention to a breach of any of their regulations or rulings, or of Section 16 of this Constitution. Such a point must be heard by the chair immediately.

## **SECTION 10: THE JUNIOR OFFICERS**



1. There shall be three Junior Officers: the Campaigns Officer, the Social Secretary, and the Communications Officer.
2. 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) Request administration privileges on Connect or any other party data management system in order to adequately run the aforesaid campaigning events.
  - (d) 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 14, “attend” shall mean “be present for more than 50% of”.
4. The Social Secretary shall:
  - (a) Be responsible for the organisation of social meetings for the members of the Society, including social meetings with the members of other Societies.
  - (b) In consultation with the Committee decide the date, venue and other particulars of any social event, including crewdates, pub crawls and other similar activities.
5. 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.

## **SECTION 11: THE GENERAL COMMITTEE**

1. General Committee members shall be responsible for the setting up and preparation of events, including attending them, at the direction of the President.

## **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).

## SECTION 15: ELECTIONS

1. 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.
  
2. 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 15.
  - (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 15(4).
  - (d) Certify that nominations are valid according to Section 15(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 15(4);
  - (g) Arrange for ballot papers to be ready for the election;
  - (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.
  
3. Regarding nominations:
  - (a) A valid nominee must be a Full 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) 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.
  - (e) A nomination for a Junior Office will only be valid if the candidate has attended at least one campaigning event in the term of their nomination as detailed in Section 10(2)(d). A nomination for a Senior Office will only be valid if the candidate has attended at least 30% of campaigning events in the term of their nomination, up to the close of nominations, as detailed in Section 10(2)(d). A nomination for the office of President-elect or President will only be valid if the candidate has attended at least 50% of campaigning events in the term of their nomination, up to the close of nominations, as detailed in Section 10(2)(d). 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, Campaigns Officer, Spirits 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:
  - (g.i) Solicit votes using any University mailing list;
  - (g.ii) Spend any money for the purpose of soliciting votes;
  - (g.iii) Lie – whether knowingly or unknowingly – about another candidate in the election;
  - (g.iv) Extort, blackmail or intimidate in connection with the election;
  - (g.v) Impersonate another member in order to gain access to a ballot, or to solicit votes for the election;
  - (g.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;
  - (g.vii) Act in any manner deemed by the Returning Officer to be in bad faith and breaching the spirit of the electoral rules.

7. In the case of an alleged breach of the election rules or committing of electoral malpractice, the following complaints procedure shall be followed:

- (a) 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, may complain in writing to the Returning Officer by 12 noon the day after the election results are announced. The complaint must be made against a specific Member or Members, and can be made against the Returning Officer.
- (b) Any complaint should be forwarded to the Returning Officer and to all Deputy Returning Officers appointed.
- (c) Upon receipt of a complaint, the Returning Officer shall convene an Election Tribunal consisting of three Ex-Officers of the Society who are *in statu pupillari* according to subsection (d) below.
- (d) The Returning Officer shall email all eligible Ex-Officers to sit on an Election Tribunal as under subsection (c) above (including both ex-Senior and ex-Junior Officers) who were not themselves candidates in the election. The first three to respond shall constitute the Election Tribunal.

- (e) Any complainant has the right to present their complaint before the Tribunal. Any Member who is the subject of a complaint has the opportunity to defend themselves before the Tribunal.
  - (f) The Tribunal must deliver an explicit verdict of guilty or not guilty. If the Tribunal considers that a Member against whom a complaint was made has broken the rules concerning the election, they may, at their discretion:
    - (f.i) Give that Member a verbal or written warning;
    - (f.ii) Disqualify that Member, if a candidate, from the election concerned;
    - (f.iii) Ban that Member from standing in any future election;
    - (f.iv) Make a formal recommendation to the Committee that that Member have their Membership revoked;
    - (f.v) Order that the election for any one position, or for all positions, be annulled and re-run at the earliest possible convenience;
    - (f.vi) Elevate a complaint, in the case that it is made against a sitting Officer or member of the General Committee, to a Disciplinary Committee.
  - (g) The Tribunal shall release a report of its findings which shall be given to the next meeting of the Committee, as well as emailed to the President, and the complainant and all implicated parties.
  - (h) If the entire election is annulled at the end of term, then all outgoing members of the Committee shall carry on in their roles until the new election can be held. If any outgoing member of the Committee is unable or unwilling to carry on in the role, or the elections for some but not all positions are annulled, then the other members of the Committee shall share the duties and responsibilities of those positions until all positions are filled.
  - (i) Any member found guilty under (d) has the right of appeal to the Senior Member, who may overrule the Election Tribunal.
8. If any positions remain unfilled, or if by resignation, dismissal or any other means a vacancy on the Committee arises, 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. If the vacancy occurs due to nobody nominating for the position in the Society's elections, the Committee shall have the right to fill the vacancy by co-option. 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 14 paragraph 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.
9. 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.
10. If, after two rounds of election, a position is not filled, the Committee may fill the vacancy by co-option.

11. 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 pursuant to subsection (8) or (9) of this Section, 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 the vacancy to be co-opted occurs later than 7th Week of Full Term, the co-option meeting pursuant to subsection 10(a) may be held digitally, convened by the President, with at least 24 hours' notice being given.
  - (d) At the conclusion of nominations, a vote shall be held by secret ballot, utilising the Alternative Vote, counted by the President with the assistance of the Secretary.
  - (e) Within 24 hours of the co-option having taken place, the Secretary will notify the members of the Society of the result.

## **SECTION 16: DISCIPLINARY COMMITTEE**

1. Any member of the Society may bring a complaint in writing to the Returning Officer against any current member, including the Returning Officer, by emailing the Returning Officer and copying in all Deputy Returning Officers.
2. The Returning Officer, upon receipt of a complaint, shall convene a 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 below.
3. The Disciplinary Committee shall consist of three ex-Officers of the Society who are not themselves subject to or the maker of the complaint. This may include ex-Officers who are no longer *in statu pupillari*. The Returning Officer, or the senior Deputy Returning officer if the Returning Officer is the subject of the complaint, shall contact ex-Officers, with the first three to respond forming the Disciplinary Committee.
4. Any complaint as above must cite a specific offence. They are as following:
  - (a) Dereliction of duty by an Officer, demonstrating substantial weakness or failure in carrying out their duties as prescribed by this Constitution.
  - (b) Wilfully or recklessly bringing the Society into disrepute;
  - (c) Abuse of position by an Officer;
  - (d) Intimidating or harassing behaviour towards another Member, including violent conduct, discrimination, and other behaviour liable to distress, offend or intimidate other Members during Society events, or in periods of socialisation immediately before or after Society events. This includes harassment and discrimination on the grounds of race, national origin, religion, gender, gender identity, age, sexual orientation or disability.

- (e) Theft or deliberate damage to Society property;
  - (f) Making a complaint under this Section that is frivolous or is unfounded and malicious;
  - (g) Giving false evidence to any Disciplinary Committee or Election Tribunal;
  - (h) Acting disruptively at any meeting of the Society.
5. Any complainant will have the right to present their case before the Disciplinary Committee, and any member against whom a complaint is made shall have the right to defend themselves before this Committee. The Disciplinary Committee shall give no verdict until both parties have exercised these rights, or received a letter or communication explicitly waiving these rights.
6. The Disciplinary Committee must consider the complaint and give an explicit verdict of guilty or not guilty.
7. If the verdict is guilty, the Disciplinary Committee, at their discretion, may:
- (a) Give that member a verbal or written warning;
  - (b) If the complaint is made against a Committee member or Officer, dismiss that Member from the Committee.
  - (c) Ban that member from holding a specific Office, or Offices, on the Committee in future terms;
  - (d) Make a formal recommendation to the Executive Committee that that Member have their membership revoked under Section 6 of the Constitution;
  - (e) Any combination of the above.
8. Any member found guilty under Section 16(6) has the right of appeal to a Board of Appeal, but only if they believe that the Disciplinary Committee manifestly erred in its interpretation of the Constitution, or manifestly contravened the principles of natural justice.
9. The Board of Appeal shall consist of three Ex-Presidents or Ex-Returning Officers who were last *in statu pupillari* at least three terms ago, who are not themselves the complainant or defendant. The Returning Officer, or the senior Deputy Returning Officer, if the Returning Officer is themselves the subject of the complaint, shall contact potential members of the Board of Appeal and determine its composition, aiming as far as possible to have at least one Ex-President and one Ex-Returning Officer who never held the Office of President on the Board.
10. The Board of Appeal shall appoint a Chair, and have the absolute discretion to determine the manner of proceedings, provided that it meets – whether in person or digitally – within two weeks of the appeal being made. It shall:
- (a) Act solely as an appellate body, and not rehear the substance of the case unless it determines that the original Disciplinary Committee manifestly erred in its interpretation of the Constitution, or manifestly contravened the principles of natural justice.
  - (b) Make an explicit declaration that it either allows the appeal, or dismisses the appeal. Such a declaration must be transmitted to the Returning Officer, or most senior Deputy Returning Officer, in the case that the Returning Officer is the appellant or defendant, within 24 hours of being made.



- (c) If it deems it necessary, if it allows the appeal, rehear the substance of the case, as if it were a Disciplinary Committee, subject to the procedural provisions of Section 16(5), 16(6), and 16(7).
  - (d) If it allows the appeal, alter or commute any punishment given by the original Disciplinary Committee at its absolute discretion, or quash the original finding of guilt altogether.
  - (e) At its absolute discretion, issue rights of defendant to any person it reasonably believes to have committed a disciplinary offence as defined in Section 16, and hear their case as if the Board were a Disciplinary Committee. Any person found guilty of an offence under this subsection shall have the right of appeal to the Senior Member.
  - (f) Abide by the principle of *stare decisis* in being bound by the precedents established by prior Boards of Appeal.
  - (g) At its absolute discretion, issue or repeal any related interpretation of this Constitution. It shall have superior interpretative authority over both the President and the Returning Officer.
  - (h) Submit a report detailing its reasons for its rulings to the Returning Officer, or most senior Deputy Returning Officer, in the case that the Returning Officer is the appellant or defendant, within one week of its meeting, to be available to members on request, and to be stored on an archive to be transmitted to the next Returning Officer.
  - (i) For each appeal, consider whether the appeal was made frivolously. If the Board finds unanimously that the appeal was made frivolously, it shall suspend the appellant for a minimum of three terms.
11. 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.

### **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  
 Ex-Presidents in order from first election  
 President-elect  
 Ex-Presidents-elect in order from first election  
 Treasurer  
 Secretary  
 Spirits Officer  
 Ex-Treasurers in order from first election  
 Ex-Secretaries in order from first election  
 Ex-Spirits Officers in order from first election  
 Campaigns Officer

Communications Officer  
Social Secretary  
Ex-Campaigns Officers in order from first election  
Ex-Communications Officers in order from first election  
Ex-Social Secretaries in order from first election  
General Committee members in order from first election  
Ex-General Committee members in order from first election  
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, Saint 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, Saint Catherine's College, 9<sup>th</sup> February 2018*

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

### **1: Manifesto sizes**

Section 14(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 14(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 14(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 14(1)(d) at their discretion, in line with their requirement to appoint between one and three Deputy Returning Officers in 14(2)(i).

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

### **3: Campaigning requirements**

Section 15(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 15(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 15(3)(c) and staggered elections**

Section 15(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*