



University of Warwick Students' Union Liberal Democrats

Constitution

1. Name

- 1.1 The name of the Society shall be "University of Warwick Students' Union Liberal Democrats".
- 1.2 The Society may also campaign "University of Warwick Liberal Democrats", "Warwick Liberal Democrats" or "Warwick Lib Dems".

2. Aims and Objectives

- 2.1 The Society shall have written statements of aims and objectives, which shall be part of this constitution and shall be annually subject to review by the Society General Meeting.
- 2.2 The Statement of the Aims and Objectives of the Society shall be:
 - a) The University of Warwick Liberal Democrats exist to promote the principles, policies and campaigns of the Liberal Democrat party.
 - b) To promote the principles of liberal democracy at the University of Warwick
 - c) To support the local parties with campaigns and elections.
- 2.3 The Society, its Officers, its funds and all its activities shall be subject to the provisions of the Constitution, Regulations and policy of the University of Warwick Students' Union.
- 2.4 The Society shall abide by the Union's current Equal Opportunities Policy and Environmental Policy statement.
- 2.5 The Society shall be subject to a disciplinary code as laid down by the Students' Union and administered by the Societies Federation Committee.
- 2.6 Any alterations to the Society Constitution must be ratified by the Societies Federation Committee.
- 2.7 The Society shall be associated to Liberal Youth, the Youth and Students organisation of the Liberal Democrats, and shall cooperate with that body in pursuit of the Objectives of the Society.

3. Decision Making

- 3.1 The Society General Meeting shall be the sovereign body of the Society. It shall elect all officers of the Society, decide on Society policy and may decide on any matter relating to the activities of the Society other than those governed by this Constitution.
- 3.2 The Society Executive shall call a General Meeting if any of the following conditions are met:
- a) The Annual General Meeting is due as set out in 4.6;
 - b) A motion is received which is validly proposed in line with article 7 of this Constitution;
 - c) A vacancy arises on the Executive, subject to the provisions of 8.6;
 - d) A formal request for a meeting is received from the Students' Union;
 - e) The Executive Committee votes to hold a General Meeting for any other reason.
- At least one week's notice shall be given to the membership of a General Meeting. Such notice shall include all items of business to be on the agenda.
- 3.3 The Society Executive Committee shall be made up of at least five voting officers of whom three shall be the President, the Treasurer and the Secretary. The General Meeting shall be free to give titles to the remaining officers and create other non-voting Executive officers as it believes necessary.
- 3.4 The Executive Committee shall be responsible for the day-to-day running of the Society and may decide upon any non-constitutional matter which has not yet been decided upon by the General Meeting. The Executive shall be further responsible for:
- a) Organising the activities of the Society in such a way as to include the greatest possible number of the Society's members;
 - b) Directing the expenditure of the Society's funds in a responsible fashion and in line with the aims, objectives and planned activities of the Society;
 - c) Formulating and submitting an annual bid for funds from the Societies Federation Committee prior to any specified deadline which shall include a statement of activities and objectives for the coming year and detailed justification of the figures contained within the bid;
 - d) Formulating and submitting any additional bids for funds from the Societies Federation Committee or Groups within the Union;
 - e) Assisting any review of the Society's activities and use of funds carried out by a Standing Committee or Group of the Students' Union that has granted funds to the Society;
 - f) Upholding the Constitution of the Society and ensuring that its aims and objectives reflect the Society activities;
 - g) Ensuring that all Society activity abides by the law.

4. Elections and General Meetings

- 4.1 Elections can only be held at a quorate general meeting following a period of nominations lasting at least four days and closing no less than forty-eight hours before the Meeting.
- 4.2 Any full member may propose themselves as a candidate. Candidates shall have

the right to submit a manifesto no less than forty-eight hours before the scheduled start of the Meeting. Manifesto shall be communicated to the membership no less than twenty-four hours before the start of the Meeting, unless the President and at least one other member of the Executive Committee agree that publishing a particular manifesto would be contrary to the law or to the provisions of 2.3 or 2.4. Candidates shall have the right to make a short speech at the meeting before the ballot is taken.

- 4.3 All elections shall be held by secret ballot using the Single Transferable Vote system, with Re-Open Nominations as a candidate in all elections. Counting may be conducted by any member of the Executive Committee to whom no objection is raised or by an independent observer appointed as set out in 4.4.
- 4.4 At the discretion of the Executive or on the request in advance of any candidate, the Society shall request an independent observer from the Students' Union, who shall be nominated by the Students' Union's Elections Group or, if for whatever reason that is not possible, by the Societies Officer of the Students' Union. Such an observer must not have close personal ties to any of the candidates.
- 4.5 An officer of the Society may be removed from office only by a quorate General Meeting or by his or her own resignation.
- 4.6 General Meetings may be called at any time by the Executive Committee; however, an Annual General Meeting must always take place in the third term of each Academic year, at which all Executive committee positions will be reopened for nominations and election.
- 4.7 Positions not filled, because of lack of candidates or because of the success of Re-Open Nominations, will be co-opted according to 8.6

5. Job-share

- 5.1 All Executive positions, with the exception of General Executive Member and Treasurer, may be occupied by 2 persons holding the positions jointly.
- 5.2 If a job-share is to take place, candidates must nominate themselves jointly and, if submitting a manifesto, submit one manifesto jointly. Job-share officers enter and leave office as one unit.
- 5.3 When a job-share candidate has been elected, each member will be entitled to attend Executive Meetings together and speak, as any other Executive Member would.
- 5.4 Job-share Officers will have 0.5 votes each in Executive Meetings.
- 5.5 No Society Officer position may be job-shared by more than 2 people.
- 5.6 Presidential Job-share
 - a) A job-share of the role of President is to be permitted, subject to special restrictions.
 - b) No Vice-President will be nominated upon the election of job-share

Presidents. Upon the absence of one President, the other will be responsible for the roles of their absent colleague."

c) Division of Presidential Duties

(i) Presidents will be titled PresidentA and PresidentB.

(ii) PresidentA will be responsible for Roles listed in 8.5 (a)(i). PresidentA will have the sole vote for the resolution of ties.

(iii) PresidentB will be responsible for the roles listed in 8.5 (a)(ii). PresidentB shall have no vote in the Executive Committee.

(iv) The role in 8.5 (a)(v) will be assigned to either PresidentA or PresidentB, but not both.

(v) Candidates must stipulate at the point of nomination which candidate:

a) will be PresidentA or PresidentB if elected; and

b) will occupy the 8.5 (a)(v) role.

If elected they will remain in that role for the duration of their time in Office.

(vi) All other Presidential roles will be held jointly.

6. Membership

6.1 Membership of the Society shall be open to all full, associate and honorary members of the Students' Union and full, associate and honorary members of Societies Federation upon payment of the required subscription. Membership shall also be open to other persons at a subscription rate.

6.2 An individual's membership shall be renewable at the start of each academic year. The subscription shall be the same fee as for a new membership at that time.

6.3 All members of the Society shall be entitled to vote in elections.

6.4 No Associate, Honorary or person who received payment for the provision of services to a Society shall be entitled to hold office.

7. Meetings and Policy

7.1 The Society Executive shall hold regular executive meetings, which are not General Meetings, (hereafter 'executive meetings') to discuss and organise the day-to-day running of the Society. These meetings should be held once per week during term time unless no member of the Society Executive objects to holding them less frequently. It shall be permissible for an Executive Committee member to attend and vote through electronic means, provided that the means in question includes a voice channel and provided that no objections are raised in advance.

7.2 In the event of a decision being made under 7.1 of this constitution at an executive meeting to hold executive meetings less frequently than once per fortnight, executive meetings shall be held no less frequently than once per month during term time. There shall be no executive meetings outside of term time unless all members of the Executive are able to attend or give express written permission for a meeting to take place in their absence.

- 7.3 A motion to a General Meeting requires a proposer and a seconder, both of whom must be members of the Society when the motion is received by the Executive Committee and when the General Meeting takes place. A motion may set Society policy, recall any or all Executive Committee members (“no confidence”), amend the Constitution, or rule on any other matter of Society operations, except that motions falling under more than one of the above categories (“hybrid motions”) shall not be deemed valid and shall not be discussed at a General Meeting. Motions which fall in part or in whole outside the above categories shall also be deemed invalid and shall not be discussed.
- 7.4 All motions are open to amendment. Amendments to motions shall require a proposer and a seconder but may be submitted at any time up to the start of the General Meeting. Amendments received more than twenty-four hours before the Meeting shall be communicated to the membership in advance; those received after this point shall be made available before the start of the debate. Amendments which would make a motion hybrid shall not be accepted.
- 7.5 Requests for separate votes on particular aspects of any motion or amendment shall be taken at the discretion of the President. These may be submitted at any time up to the vote, and if accepted the separate votes shall be held at the end of the debate. No separate vote shall be held on any text, whether in an amendment or the motion itself, which has already been accepted.
- 7.6 The Society Executive Committee shall not take a formal position on any motion, amendment or separate vote, and in particular shall not mandate its members to support or oppose any proposal. In the specific case of a motion of no confidence in the entire Executive Committee, the President may read an agreed statement on behalf of the Executive Committee. Nothing in these provisions should be interpreted to impede the right of individual members of the Executive Committee to speak in their own defence.
- 7.7 Motions shall be passed by simple majority votes, except that constitutional amendments shall further require the support of at least 20% of the member of the Society and at least two-thirds of those present and voting at the General Meeting. Constitutional amendments must also be approved as set out in 2.6.
- 7.8 Motions shall be made available in PDF format or another appropriate open standard. Motions shall be communicated directly to members of the Society either in writing or electronically. Motions adopted shall be circulated again following the meeting and shall be made available on the Society’s website.
- 7.9 The Society may adopt policy on student politics and issues both at Warwick and nationally, local issues relating to areas with a strong link to the University of Warwick or to the Society, British politics, European Union politics and international affairs. The Society shall not adopt policy which conflicts with the aims and principles of the Liberal Democrats or which is incompatible with the Students’ Union’s Equal Opportunities or Environmental policy. The Society shall not automatically adopt any other area of Students Union policy and may retain, adopt or campaign on policies contrary to those of the Students’ Union. The Society shall not support any party other than the Liberal Democrats or any candidate other than the nominated Liberal Democrat candidate in any UK public election.

- 7.10 Policy shall be subject to annual review in the first term of each academic year. Any previous policy not reaffirmed by a General Meeting within the first term shall lapse on 1st January of that academic year. It may subsequently be restored by reaffirmation. For the purposes of the definition of a hybrid motion in 7.3 reaffirmation of policy shall be considered in the same way as the enactment of new policy. A motion which reaffirms a policy may therefore also update or extend it.
- 7.11 The Society shall automatically adopt all policy passed by the Federal Conference of the Liberal Democrats. This adoption shall be effective immediately, except that it may be delayed by the President of the Society for a maximum of two weeks of term time in order to allow the Executive Committee to discuss the matter. Within two weeks of term time of the policy's adoption, and irrespective of whether the President has invoked the aforementioned power, the Executive Committee may vote by a simple majority to refer the policy to a General Meeting, in which case the policy shall be suspended and shall only be adopted if it has the support of that Meeting. No part of this article should be interpreted as limiting the effect of 7.8. In the event of any conflict with existing policy the matter must be referred to a General Meeting, except where the existing policy was adopted automatically on being passed by the Federal Conference of the Liberal Democrats.
- 7.12 The Society shall automatically adopt all policy passed by the national Liberal Youth Conference. This adoption shall be effective immediately, except that it may be delayed by the President of the Society for a maximum of two weeks of term time in order to allow the Executive Committee to discuss the matter. Within two weeks of term time of the policy's adoption, and irrespective of whether the President has invoked the aforementioned power, the Executive Committee may vote by a simple majority to refer the policy to a General Meeting, in which case the policy shall be suspended and shall only be adopted if it has the support of that Meeting. No part of this article should be interpreted as limiting the effect of 7.8. In the event of any conflict with existing policy the matter must be referred to a General Meeting, except where the existing policy was adopted automatically on being passed by the national Liberal Youth Conference.

8. Executive Officers

- 8.1 The Executive Committee shall be comprised, in accordance with section 3.3 of this constitution, of a minimum of five executive officers.
- 8.2 The Executive Committee shall consist of the following positions:
- a) President
 - b) Treasurer
 - c) Secretary
 - d) Communications Officer
 - e) Campaigns Officer
 - f) Social Secretary
 - g) General Executive Members

The Executive Committee may decide, prior to the General Meeting, to add

further positions for election as it sees fit and must decide a number of General Executive Members to be elected, if any.

8.3 The Executive Committee shall collectively be responsible for the campaigns of the Society, although the day to day organisation of this will be delegated to the Campaigns Officer (see 8.5 (d)).

8.4 Any Society member may, at the discretion of the Chair, attend Executive Committee meetings and contribute to debate but shall not be permitted to vote. All Executive Officers shall be voting members of the Executive Committee and therefore must be elected by a quorate General Meeting.

8.5 Roles of Executive Officers

a) President

i) The President shall be responsible for chairing meetings of the executive committee. In this responsibility he or she will also have the deciding votes in situations where the Executive Committee is tied in number of votes. The President will not have a vote in Executive Committee, except to break a tie.

ii) The President will have the responsibility of interpreting the Constitution of the Society where ambiguities and disputes arise.

iii) The President shall be responsible for setting short- and long-term goals for the Society, deciding the most effective means to these ends and delegating tasks toward their completion as appropriate.

iv) The President will be the face of the Society. He or she shall hold the primary responsibility for ensuring that the constitution and policies are adhered to by the Executive.

v) The President shall be the nominated Liberal Youth representative. He or she shall be responsible for liaising with Liberal Youth, the youth wing of the Liberal Democrat Party, and shall be the named contact for Liberal Youth.

vi) The President will also appoint a Vice-President upon his or her election. The position of Vice-President will be neither a formal nor a separate executive position and must be selected from within the Executive Committee. See 8.5 (g) for the role of the Vice-President. The Secretary shall not be permitted to hold the Office of Vice-President.

vii) The President's domain of interest within the Society is not limited to any specific area. He or she is responsible for overseeing the actions of the Society and the Society's Executive Officers and may hold any Executive Officer to account and carry out their stated tasks when appropriate.

b) Treasurer

i) The Treasurer will be responsible for the finances of the Society. This will include, but not be limited to, setting the budget, submitting finance requests to the Students' Union when appropriate and allocating funds to campaigns and events.

c) Secretary

i) The Secretary will be responsible for the administrative duties of the Society. These will include, but will not be limited to, checking the post in the Resources Room at least once per week, taking minutes at Executive Committee, communicating with the membership and making arrangements for meetings etc.

c) Communications Officer

i) The Communications Officer shall be responsible for the publicity and promotion of the Society.

ii) One of the principal tasks for the Communications Officer will be promoting the Freshers' Fair campaigns.

iii) The Communications Officer's roles for the remainder of the year will include, but not be limited to: liaising with the student media to promote the Party, the Society and its campaigns and contacting individuals and bodies external from and internal to the University with the aim of promoting the aims and campaigns of the Society.

iv) The Communications Officer will be responsible for the maintenance of the Society website.

d) Campaigns Officer

i) The Campaigns Officer shall be responsible for the campaigns of the Society.

ii) The Campaigns Officer's roles shall include, but not be limited to: booking venues for campaigning days and campaigning events; planning and the execution of the campaigning days and campaigning events; liaising with the local parties to arrange Action Days; organising and planning Action Days.

iii) The Campaigns Officer will be responsible for arranging the theme of the campaigns, subject to the approval of the Executive Committee.

iv) The Campaigns Officer will also act as a policy co-ordinator. In this capacity he or she will be responsible for organising the campaigns of the Society. This will include, but not be limited to prioritising policies and promoting those policies both on campus and, where appropriate, off campus through campaigns approved by the Executive Committee.

v) In his or her capacity as a policy co-ordinator, the Campaigns Officer will be responsible for ensuring that policy passed through the provisions in 7 of this constitution do not contravene Liberal Democrat policy or the Students' Union's current Equal Opportunities Policy or Environmental Policy statements pursuant to 7.10 of this constitution.

e) Social Secretary

i) The Social Secretary will be responsible for planning the Society's social events ("socials").

ii) The Society Executive Committee will have final say on the socials that will and will not take place, although the Social Secretary will be expected to be the significant contributor of suggestions to these discussions.

f) General Executive Members

i) The Society Executive Committee will set the number of General Executive Members, which shall take effect from the next General Meeting.

ii) The Executive Committee is free to decide that there be no General Executive Members for the forthcoming term of office.

iii) If the Executive Committee makes no decision with regard to the number of General Executive Members before the calling notice is sent for the General Meeting, the existing number shall remain.

iv) General Executive Members shall have no specific role, but shall be expected to attend Executive Meetings. They may take on informal roles or shadow individual executive members in order to assist those with portfolios with their work.

g) The Vice-President

i) In the event that the President is unable to attend an executive meeting, the Vice-President shall assume the responsibilities of the President at that meeting, such as chairing the meeting and casting the deciding vote in ties.

8.6 Resignation of Executive Officers

a) Executive officers may resign their office at any time. This will be effective once notice has been given to the Executive Committee.

b) Notice of a vacancy will be communicated to the Society membership.

c) The Executive Committee will co-opt a new member for the vacant position. Co-option will be open to all Standard Society members and will take place using the Single Transferable Vote at an Executive Committee meeting. Notice of this co-option and the opportunity to stand therein will be communicated to the Society membership at least five days before the scheduled Executive Committee meeting.

d) The person co-opted to the Executive under 8.6 (c) will hold office until the next General Meeting, at which an election must be run for the position vacant under 8.6 (a).

Amendments 1-4, 6-10 passed on 3 May 2011

Proposers of Amendments: Stuart Wheatcroft

Seconders of Amendments: Liam Spalding

Signed by President:

Printed Name of President: Liam Spalding

20 July 2011