

LIBERAL DEMOCRATS FOR SEEKERS OF SANCTUARY (LD4SOS) CONSTITUTION

As adopted by a resolution of the Annual General Meeting held on 16 September 2017

1 TITLE

- 1.1 The Group shall be known as Liberal Democrats for Seekers of Sanctuary, hereinafter referred to as "LD4SOS".

2 AIMS

- 2.1 To act as a forum within the Liberal Democrats (the Party) for those standing up for those who seek sanctuary in our country believing that Asylum seekers should be treated with compassion, humanity and dignity.
- 2.2. To co-ordinate work already being done, share ideas and experiences; be a point of reference for decision makers; and to contribute towards party policy.
- 2.3 To promote the Party within those who share our concerns.

3 MEMBERSHIP

- 3.1 Membership shall be open to any current member of the Party, provided that they subscribe to LD4SOS's stated aims, on payment of the prescribed annual subscription.
- 3.2 If a Member does not renew their annual subscription within 3 months of the subscription becoming due, or if they cease to be a member of the Party, their Membership shall cease.
- 3.3 Members must treat others with respect and must not bully, harass or intimidate any Party member, member of Party staff, member of Parliamentary staff, Party volunteer or member of the public. Such behaviour will be considered to be bringing LD4SOS into disrepute.

4 DIVERSITY

- 4.1 LD4SOS rejects all prejudice and discrimination based upon race, colour, religion or belief, age, disability, gender identity or sexual orientation and opposes all forms of entrenched privilege and inequality.
- 4.2 LD4SOS welcomes and encourages diversity within its Membership and in its governing bodies, and seeks to be inclusive in all its activities.

5 AFFILIATIONS

- 5.1 LD4SOS shall seek and maintain the status of an Associated Organisation within the Party.
- 5.2 LD4SOS may also affiliate to other organisations within the Party, and to external organisations that further the aims of LD4SOS.

6 GOVERNANCE

- 6.1 The governance of LD4SOS shall lie with its Membership through General Meetings; between General Meetings, and subject to the decisions of those meetings, the general and financial business of the Group shall be controlled and carried on by the Executive Committee.
- 6.2 Only Members who are current Members at the date when a General Meeting is called shall be eligible to vote, or to stand for election, at that General Meeting.
- 6.3 The Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Group shall be held each year between 1st September and 30th November at a date and venue determined by the Executive Committee.

- 6.4 The AGM shall also be called if a written requisition, signed by at least one current Member, is received by the Chair or Secretary and an AGM has not been held during or since the preceding calendar year.
- 6.5 The business of the AGM shall include
- 6.5.1 The receipt of reports from the Executive Committee;
 - 6.5.2 Consideration for approval of the examined annual accounts for the preceding year;
 - 6.5.3 Determination of the annual subscription for the following year;
 - 6.5.4 Acceptance and close of nominations for the election of Officers and Ordinary Members of the Executive Committee;
 - 6.5.5 The appointment of an examiner of the Group's accounts for the following year;
 - 6.5.6 Discussion of the activities of the Group.
- 6.6 Notice of the AGM, together with copies of the proposed agenda, minutes of the previous AGM, examined accounts for the preceding year and requests for nominations for all Executive Committee places, shall be sent to all Members, including any Members who cannot be reached electronically, at least twenty-one days before the date of the meeting.
- 6.7 An Extraordinary General Meeting (GM) may be called by the Executive Committee, and shall be called if a written requisition, signed by at least twenty Members or one quarter of the current Membership (whichever is less), is received by the Chair or Secretary.
- 6.8 Notice of the EGM shall be sent to all Members, including any Members who cannot be reached electronically, at least twenty-one days in advance of the meeting, and shall specify the reason or reasons for which the meeting is being called and the precise business to be transacted, which shall be the only business of that meeting. Members unable to attend shall be encouraged to advise the Secretary of their views on the matter to be considered.
- 6.9 Voting at an AGM or EGM shall be by a simple majority of those Members present and voting, except where otherwise stated by this Constitution. In the event of a tie on a simple majority vote, the Chairman shall have a second, casting vote.

7 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

- 7.1 The Executive Committee (the Committee) shall comprise the following elected Officers: Chair, Vice-chair, Secretary, Treasurer, Membership Secretary; together with up to 7 elected Ordinary Members of the Committee.
- 7.2 Any Member of the Group may be nominated for election as an Officer or Ordinary Member of the Committee. Each nomination must be submitted to the Secretary or to another Officer nominated by the Committee, in advance of the AGM, or to the AGM, by two Members after obtaining the nominee's consent.
- 7.3 A Member may stand for election to more than one position on the Committee, but may not be elected to more than one position unless the elections to all of these positions are uncontested and the AGM consents by a two-thirds majority of those present and voting.
- 7.4 If there are any uncontested elections, the nominations for each uncontested election shall be subject to approval by a simple majority of those present and voting at the AGM, immediately after close of nominations for the relevant position;
- 7.5 If there are no contested elections, the election of all the approved candidates shall be declared during the AGM and shall take effect at the start of the seventh day after the AGM.
- 7.6 If there are any contested elections (where there are more candidates than vacancies):
- 7.6.1 the Committee shall appoint a Returning Officer, who shall not be a candidate

- in any of the contested elections, and who shall be responsible for the preparation and distribution of ballot papers, their receipt and counting on return and the declaration of the results;
- 7.6.2 the contested elections shall be decided by a secret ballot of all Members, using the Single Transferable Vote method;
 - 7.6.3 each candidate for a contested election shall be invited by the Returning Officer to provide a statement in support of their candidacy;
 - 7.6.4 ballot papers or links to an online voting facility, together with candidate statements, shall be circulated to all Members including any Members who cannot be reached electronically, between fourteen and twenty-one days after the date of the AGM;
 - 7.6.5 the deadline for online voting or return of ballot papers shall be between fourteen and twenty-one days after circulation of voting materials;
 - 7.6.6 within three days after the deadline for online voting or return of ballot papers, the Returning Officer shall conduct the count and declare the result for each election including any uncontested election, in the order shown in 7.1;
 - 7.6.7 when the result of each election has been declared, the successful candidates shall have their nominations for any remaining elections declared void by the Returning Officer;
 - 7.6.8 each election shall take effect immediately after the declaration of the relevant result by the Returning Officer.
- 7.7 The Chair shall be eligible for election to that position no more than three times consecutively.
- 7.8 The Committee may co-opt a Member of LD4SOS to fill any vacancy occurring among its Officers or Ordinary Members between AGMs.
- 7.9 The Committee may also, by a two-thirds majority of those present and voting, co-opt up to three Members of the Group to join the Committee as Ordinary Members.
- 7.10 The terms of office of Officers and Ordinary Members (whether elected or co-opted) shall run until the relevant elections at the following AGM take effect, or until they resign from the Committee, or until their membership of the Group ceases, whichever is earliest.
- 7.11 The Committee may remove any Officer or Ordinary Member who does not attend three successive meetings without good cause. Before exercising this power the Committee shall give the Officer or Ordinary Member concerned an opportunity to state the reasons for their non-attendance.

8 PRESIDENT

- 8.1 The Committee may nominate an Honorary President or Honorary Co-Presidents to be approved individually on an annual basis at the AGM, by at least two thirds of those present and voting.
- 8.2 The Honorary Co-President or Co-Presidents are entitled to attend (but not to vote at) all meetings of the Committee.

9 REFUSAL, SUSPENSION OR WITHDRAWAL OF MEMBERSHIP

- 9.1 The Committee may, by a two-thirds majority of those present and voting, refuse, suspend or withdraw a person's Membership of LD4SOS on the grounds that their activities or conduct are likely to bring LD4SOS into disrepute or are not compatible with its' Aims or with the Party's fundamental values and objectives.
- 9.2 Before any meeting at which such a vote is to be taken, the Committee's Officers and Ordinary Members must be notified and the person must be given a reasonable opportunity to make a written statement in their defence to the Committee.
- 9.3 Any Party member who believes that their rights as a Party member have been

- infringed by such a decision may appeal against the decision to the Federal Appeals Panel of the Party. Such an appeal may only be made if they believe the process has not been correctly followed and not just because they do not agree with the outcome.
- 9.4 If the appeal is successful, the person's Membership shall be restored; the Committee may also restore the person's Membership by a simple majority of those present and voting.

10 FINANCE

- 10.1 The finances of LD4SOS shall be managed by the Treasurer subject to regular reports to, and guidance by, the Committee
- 10.2 It shall be the duty of the Treasurer and the Committee to ensure that the funds of LD4SOS are used solely in accordance with its' stated aims and that LD4SOS never has debts beyond its available resources.
- 10.3 LD4SOS funds may be used to reimburse reasonable out-of pocket expenses incurred by Officers and Ordinary Members in carrying out their duties for the Committee.
- 10.4 LD4SOS's financial year shall be 1st January to 31st December.
- 10.5 Following the end of each financial year, the Treasurer shall prepare financial accounts for that year, and shall arrange an independent examination of the accounts, by a person who is not a Member, for consideration at the following AGM.
- 10.6 It shall be the responsibility of the Treasurer and the Committee to ensure that LD4SOS complies fully with any requirements that apply to LD4SOS under the Political Parties Elections and Referendums Act 2000 or any successor Act.

11 WINDING UP

- 11.1 LD4SOS may only be dissolved by a two-thirds majority of Members present and voting at an AGM or EGM. Notice of the proposed dissolution must have been given in the notice calling the meeting. Upon dissolution, the LD4SOS funds shall be applied to paying LD4SOS's debts, and any remaining funds and other assets shall then be passed to the Party or its successor body.
- 11.2 If LD4SOS ceases to function, and is no longer capable of holding an AGM or EGM, the Group's assets, including any bank accounts, shall become the property of the Party or its successor body.

12 AMENDMENT AND VALIDITY OF THIS CONSTITUTION

- 12.1 Nothing in this Constitution shall conflict with the Federal Constitution of the Party.
- 12.2 This Constitution may only be amended by a two-thirds majority of Members present and voting at an AGM or EGM. Notice of the proposed amendment, including its precise wording, must have been given in the notice calling the meeting.