

# NEWHAM GREEN PARTY CONSTITUTION

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## **1. Title and Status**

- 1.1. The name of the local party shall be the “Newham Green Party”, hereafter referred to as “the party”. The Newham Green Party may also be referred to as the Newham Greens.
- 1.2. The party is a local party of The Green Party of England & Wales, and is subject to its rules and constitution.
- 1.3. The geographical area of the party is the London Borough of Newham.
- 1.4. The party is also part of the London Federation of Green Parties (also referred to as London Region or London Fed).

## **2. Aims**

- 2.1. The object of the party is to promote the aims of The Green Party, as stated in its Constitution, and to that end win seats at all levels of government.

## **3. Membership**

- 3.1. The membership consists of all national Green Party members resident within the geographical area of the party, as well as and excluding those subject to the conditions detailed below

### **3.2. Associate Membership**

- 3.2.1. There will be a category of Associate membership of the party, which, while not conferring membership of the Green Party of England & Wales, is open to members of other local Green parties and members of the public, with a legitimate interest in Newham.
- 3.2.2. Members of other political parties which are not affiliated with the Global Greens are not eligible for Associate Membership.
- 3.2.3. Associate members will have full speaking and voting rights within the Newham Green Party, and will be eligible to stand and/or apply for all roles within the Newham Green Party.
- 3.2.4. The subscription rates for Associate membership will be fixed at the Annual General Meeting, and the monies will accrue to the party. If the Annual General Meeting does not pass a rate, the rate from the previous year will remain. These must always remain at or above the lowest rate of membership of Green Party of England & Wales and the Membership Officer has the power to make adjustments to that effect.

- 3.2.5. Subscriptions will ordinarily be paid annually. The Executive Committee has the discretion to introduce the option of monthly payments if they wish. The rates for this will be set by the Executive Committee to be reasonably analogous to the yearly subscription, plus any relevant fees.
- 3.2.6. All Associate members must adhere to the objects and aims of the party.
- 3.2.7. Associate membership can be denied to any individual at the discretion of the Executive Committee. If an annual subscription has been paid, the Executive Committee will refund the remaining balance of the subscription. If a monthly subscription has been paid, no refund will be due.
- 3.2.8. The Executive Committee will have the discretion to gift Associate Memberships

### **3.3. Membership Disputes**

- 3.3.1. The Executive committee should nominate an Independent Disputes Manager (IDM) within the first month of each term (or whenever there is a vacancy), to be ratified at the following business meeting.
- 3.3.2. Members of the party will seek to resolve any grievance, dispute, or complaint between members and groups within the party informally, through discussion and conciliation as laid out in the party's national Disputes Complaints and Disciplinary Policy and Procedure, and where necessary involving the Independent Disputes Manager.
- 3.3.3. The party has the right and responsibility to take disciplinary action (including suspension or expulsion from the party) against any member who has acted against the aims and agreed policies of the group or brought it into disrepute. The national disciplinary procedures shall be used.
- 3.3.4. Should a situation arise in which a member is in such conflict with the branch that outside mediation is unable to resolve the situation, a vote may be taken to exclude that member. This action must take place at either an Extraordinary General Meeting or the Annual General Meeting.
- 3.3.5. If the complaint cannot be resolved informally, the national procedures should be followed. The IDM will assist members in making use of these procedures.
- 3.3.6. There are two particular circumstances when it is not appropriate to consider using an informal approach first: a safeguarding issue or illegal conduct:

a) If the concern is of a Safeguarding nature, it must be referred to the Regional or National Safeguarding Officer as soon as possible.

[safeguarding@greenparty.org.uk](mailto:safeguarding@greenparty.org.uk) – The safeguarding procedure is available at <https://members.greenparty.org.uk/safeguarding>

b) If there is evidence of illegal activity going on within the party or national party the concern should be raised under the Speaking Out Policy available on the members website at

<https://members.greenparty.org.uk/governance/speaking-out>

- 3.3.7. The party has agreed a Standards of Online Communication, which is available as an appendix to this constitution.

#### **4. Executive Committee**

- 4.1. There will be an Executive Committee of the party.

#### **4.2. Elections**

- 4.2.1. Elections to the Executive Committee will take place at the Annual General Meeting.
- 4.2.2. The outgoing Executive Committee will appoint an Electoral Returning Officer (ERO), who should not be a candidate where possible, to facilitate these elections.
- 4.2.3. Candidates must be proposed by two members (commonly known as a proposer and a seconder). Candidates do not need to be present at the Annual General Meeting to be proposed.
- 4.2.4. Votes will be won by a simple majority of those present. Any member can ask for a secret ballot. Members will have the opportunity to vote to reopen nominations. Any tied vote shall be resolved by a coin toss, except that if reopen nominations is tied to win, in which case nominations will be reopened.
- 4.2.5. The ERO may organise a hustings at the Annual General Meeting in a suitable format.

#### **4.3. Roles**

- 4.3.1. The Executive Committee will be made up of, at minimum, a Chair, Treasurer, Election Agent (who shall also be the Nominating Officer), and Membership Officer (who shall also be the Local Party Contact).

- 4.3.2. The AGM has the discretion not to fill posts other than those named in 4.4.1 if no suitable nominations are forthcoming, or to propose the merging of posts (except those named in 4.4.1) or the creation of other posts (which may have eligibility criteria, such as a Young Greens Officer) with the agreement of a simple majority.
- 4.3.3. Any number of Non-Portfolio Officers posts can be created by the Executive Committee and co-opted at a Business Meeting or General Meeting.
- 4.3.4. Elected councillors who are not already Executive Committee members are ex-officio members of the Executive Committee, except that the Executive Committee can vote to exclude a councillor, for any period of time up until the next Annual General Meeting. This must be reported to the next Business Meeting.
- 4.3.5. To aid accountability of the Green Group and general transparency, The Leader of the Green Group may not also be Chair of the Local Party unless nobody else is willing to be Chair.

#### **4.4. Deputy Chair**

- 4.4.1. The Chair must appoint a member of the Executive Committee to serve as Deputy Chair in addition to their other role(s).
  - 4.4.2. The Chair can delegate any of their responsibilities to the Deputy Chair, or any other member of the Executive Committee.
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- 4.5. The Chair should make available to members, and particularly the Executive Committee, job descriptions for each of these roles.
  - 4.6. Executive Committee members may be deselected by Business Meetings.
  - 4.7. Executive Committee members may resign by notifying the Chair. The Chair may resign by notifying the Deputy Chair.
  - 4.8. In the event of the Chair becoming vacant, the Deputy Chair will serve as Acting Chair until a new Chair is elected.
  - 4.9. When a role on the Executive Committee becomes vacant or is replaced, there will be a handover period in which the previous member can, if they so wish, continue to fulfil any duties necessary to enable a smooth transition, as agreed by the (Acting) Chair. The time period and duties to fulfil during this transition will be agreed by the (Acting) Chair. This transition period should not elapse three months, and should be as short as practically possible. Those involved in a transition will not retain their vote on the Executive

Committee, but can attend meetings with the agreement of the (Acting) Chair to provide advice and updates on their transition.

- 4.10. Should any officer fail to attend three consecutive Business Meetings without good reason or apology, the party may co-opt another person to replace them as mentioned in the Co-option clause (4.12).

#### **4.11. Executive Committee Meetings**

- 4.11.1. The Executive Committee may meet from time to time (in person or remotely) and such meetings will be open to all members as observers.
- 4.11.2. Officers may take decisions in such meetings or through any platform which the Committee has agreed can be used to conduct business.
- 4.11.3. A quorum of the Committee shall consist of three Committee members.
- 4.11.4. Any decisions taken by the Executive Committee must be either a) matters of urgency that cannot wait until the next Business Meeting, b) minor operational matters that do not require the consent of a Business Meeting, or c) confidential matters
- 4.11.5. All decisions made by the Executive Committee will be reported to the subsequent Business Meeting and recorded in the minutes of those meetings.
- 4.11.6. Decisions made by the Executive Committee will usually be by consensus, and a majority vote if consensus cannot be achieved.
- 4.11.7. Members who cannot attend an Executive Committee meeting should give notice to the Chair.

#### **4.12. Co-options**

- 4.12.1. Vacancies arising during the term of the Executive Committee (i.e, after an AGM but before the end of the term) will be filled by co-option by the Executive Committee or a Business/General Meeting, not by election.
- 4.12.2. Co-options made by the Executive Committee must be ratified by a Business/General Meeting, and the member will not have a vote on the Executive Committee until that has taken place
- 4.12.3. Mid-term vacancies are generally not required to be filled until the next AGM. The Executive Committee can choose to co-opt to fill vacancies if they wish, but are not required to, with the exception of Chair and Treasurer, which must be filled as soon as possible.

#### **4.13. Job Sharing**

- 4.13.1. Every role on the Executive Committee may be job-shared, in which case office holders shall be known as Co-office holders. For example, when the role of Chair is held by a job-share, the members of this job-share will be known as Co-Chairs.
- 4.13.2. Members of a job-share share their vote on the Executive Committee, and any other committees they sit on in their role as Executive Committee members, and are expected to abstain when they cannot agree on a vote.
- 4.13.3. If any individual member of a job-share resigns, the whole job-share has resigned and their position becomes vacant.
- 4.13.4. It is not expected that every member of a job-share must be present at every meeting.

#### **5. Business Meetings**

- 5.1. The business of the party shall be decided and managed by monthly meetings open to all members and potential new members (subject to the chair's discretion)
- 5.2. The dates of these meetings must be advertised to all members
- 5.3. Motions should be proposed and seconded, and will be carried by a simple majority vote of members present. In the case of a tied vote, the status quo will remain.
- 5.4. Members should be notified of any motions relating to policy at least one week before the meeting to discuss the issue. Where possible, policy motions should be discussed at the Policy and Ideas meeting
- 5.5. The quorum for Business Meetings will be 5 members.
- 5.6. Only members of the party will be entitled to vote. Those unable to attend may make their views known to the meeting but may not vote.
- 5.7. Attendance and business conducted at meetings shall be recorded in minutes to be approved by the next meeting.
- 5.8. A draft agenda will be circulated at least one week (or a shorter time period if one week is not reasonably practicable) in advance of each meeting, together with the minutes of the previous meeting, to all members. Anyone can suggest additional items for the agenda in advance of or at the start of the meeting, and the meeting will begin with the agenda being agreed.

- 5.9. The Executive Committee should make any reports necessary of their ongoing work at Members' Meetings, and give notice of important upcoming events.
- 5.10. Working groups may be set up to discuss specific issues. Decisions made by working groups shall be recorded for later ratification during the next Business Meeting, except where specific powers are delegated. All members can attend these groups.
- 5.11. Local/Ward Teams may be formed to carry out and promote the work of the party in their geographical area. They shall work in accordance with all current policies and strategies. Any decisions shall be recorded for later ratification during the next Business Meeting.

## **6. Policy and Ideas Meetings**

- 6.1. There shall be a regular Policy and Ideas meeting, open to all members. The Membership Officer, or any member delegated by the Membership Officer, shall be responsible for publishing the agenda and ensuring that minutes are prepared and circulated.
- 6.2. The Policy and Ideas meeting will determine the policies of the party (subject to clause 6.5) and shall be a forum for debate. In particular, the Policy and Ideas meeting shall:
  - a) Regularly review and suggest improvements to local policies;
  - b) Debate and suggest motions for national party conferences, including amendments to motions proposed by other local parties and individuals;
  - c) At its discretion invite external speakers to give presentations on topics of interest to the membership, on which the party may wish to take a position.
- 6.3. Members unable to attend may make their views known to the meeting, either in writing in advance to the Membership Officer or through representation by another member, but only those in attendance will be entitled to vote.
- 6.4. Motions will be carried by consensus or, in the absence of a consensus, a majority vote of members present (requiring 50% plus 1).
- 6.5. Policy motions passed by the Policy and Ideas meeting may only be overturned by a two-thirds majority vote of a Business Meeting.

## **7. Green Group**

- 7.1. Where there is more than one elected councillor, they shall choose a Leader and, where necessary or practical according to Council rules, a Deputy Leader and/or a Business Manager. The choice shall be made by unanimity or consensus, as they see fit.



- 7.2. Councillors are not bound to vote in Council according to a Party Whip, but they shall seek to achieve unanimity or consensus wherever possible. If any councillor intends to vote differently from the group consensus, or from local or national party policy, they shall notify other councillors and give their reasons at the earliest opportunity (which wherever possible must be before the meeting begins).
- 7.3. Councillors will make a written monthly group report on their activities, to be given at a Business Meeting and for distribution to the local party membership.
- 7.4. Any decision of significant political strategy (for example alliances, coalitions and executive positions on the Council) shall be referred by councillors to the Executive Committee.
- 7.5. The Green Group may develop their own terms of reference (which may not contradict this constitution) and all Green councillors are expected to abide by its terms.

## **8. Annual General Meeting (AGM)**

- 8.1. Every year, an AGM shall be held in place of a Business Meeting, for the purposes of -
  - 8.1.1. Presentation of a report of work which has been carried out over the year by each member of the Executive Committee
  - 8.1.2. Presentation of a financial statement for the year
  - 8.1.3. Announcing the results of elections to the Executive Committee
  - 8.1.4. Any other business on the agenda (to be determined in the same way as for a Business Meeting).
- 8.2. Notice of the AGM shall be given at least one month prior to the meeting and any motions for consideration shall be submitted in writing to the Chair at least one week prior to the meeting.
- 8.3. The Agenda will be circulated at least one week in advance of the meeting.
- 8.4. The Chair of the AGM has the right to rule on the admissibility of any emergency motions put forward.
- 8.5. The AGM shall be chaired by a nominated person as agreed by the Executive Committee, who should ideally not be a candidate in the Elections
- 8.6. Members may attend the AGM in person or, if it is reasonably practicable, remotely by electronic communication.
- 8.7. Only members of the party will be entitled to vote. Those unable to attend may make their views known to the AGM, either in writing or through representation by another member.

- 8.8. Motions should be proposed and seconded, and will be carried by a simple majority vote of members present. In the case of a tied vote, the status quo will remain.
- 8.9. The quorum of an AGM shall be 5 members of the party.

## 9. **Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM)**

- 9.1. An EGM may be called on the request of a Business Meeting. The same general rules apply to EGMs as to AGMs.
- 9.2. When called, the EGM will take place instead of the following Business Meeting.
- 9.3. Any three members of the party can also trigger an EGM by notifying the Chair.

## 10. **Finance**

- 10.1. The Treasurer shall collect or arrange the collection of all money due to the party and shall receive all donations to the party and shall be the custodian thereof.
- 10.2. The Treasurer will arrange payment of any bills incurred by the party, and will notify the group if it is in danger of becoming overdrawn. Expenditure may be vetoed by the Treasurer if there are insufficient funds.
- 10.3. Members, Local/Ward Teams and Working Groups may incur expenditure on behalf of the party. This expenditure may be subject to certification by the Treasurer that there are sufficient funds to cover it. The Treasurer may, at their discretion, reimburse a member for expenses that the member has incurred on behalf of the party.
- 10.4. Unplanned spend will be agreed with the executive and reported to the next Business Meeting for ratification.
- 10.5. Members of the Green Group on Newham Council will be expected to provide financial contributions to the Newham Green Party and the London Green Party, as a percentage proportion of their post-tax allowances. A fixed-rate contribution will also be expected to the Association of Green Councillors. The rates of these contributions will be fixed at the Annual General Meeting. The Executive Committee will decide an exemption policy in consultation with the Green Group designed to ensure the role of an elected councillor in Newham remains accessible to those who do not have sufficient independent income/wealth.

**11. Candidate Selection**

- 11.1. For elections to Newham Council, members of the party are in charge of the procedure for selection, and this is not governed by this constitution. Where possible, the Executive Committee should ensure there is a procedure in place at least one year prior to any election to Newham council.
- 11.2. For all candidates above the local level, selection will follow national rules.
- 11.3. Candidates are required to use the Election Agent named by the Executive Committee.

**12. Amending the Constitution**

- 12.1. This constitution can only be altered by a motion to an AGM or EGM of the party.
- 12.2. Motions amending the constitution must be approved by two thirds of those voting.

**13. Winding Up**

- 13.1. The party may cease to exist or join with other local Green Parties, only by agreement of an EGM or AGM. In the event of the party being wound up, the balance of funds shall be transferred to The Green Party of England & Wales. In the event of the party becoming defunct, national rules apply

## **APPENDIX A: STANDARDS OF ONLINE COMMUNICATION**

Newham Green Party's standard of online communication is based upon Code of Conducts from the National Green Party and liberation groups.

### **PART A: GUIDANCE FROM THE CODE OF CONDUCT**

When engaging with online communication in groups associated with Newham Green Party, members are bound by the Green Party's Code of Conduct. While the whole code applies, areas of particular importance are adapted for online communication and highlighted below:

#### **Section 8: Freedom of Expression**

**8.1** Members' right to freedom of thought, conscience and belief should be respected.

**8.3** If there is dissent from political policy, members should state the Green Party policy as well as their personal view. They should also take care not to add to formal Green Party communications their personal opinions and criticisms of others.

#### **Section 9: Safe Space & Civility**

**9.1** The Green Party should be an organisation in which people can feel comfortable, feel welcome and enjoy being a member and taking part in its activities. Members' behaviour towards each other and non-members should therefore be: tolerant, considerate, respectful and civil.

**9.2** The Green Party should also be a space that is as safe or safer than society as a whole. Therefore discriminatory, oppressive or abusive behaviour should be prevented and stopped when it occurs. The aim is to provide an environment free of this. Any form of such behaviour is a breach of this Code, as is failure by a person in a role with responsibility, such as a Chair, Moderator or similar to take appropriate action to prevent or stop it. Members should also be aware of risks and act to mitigate them.

**9.3** Members should in all their interactions with colleagues, assume the best of them.

**9.4** Members should not: be aggressive in their manner; make belittling, derogatory or disparaging remarks about another member; insult a member or disrupt a discussion.

## **Section 12: Differences**

**12.3** When a dispute exists members are expected to take special care to behave in a civil manner towards other members and take even greater care than normal not to indulge in behaviour that could be perceived as provocative, intimidating or offensive.

## **Section 13: Infighting & cliques**

**13.1** Members should not use criticism to hurt, humiliate or belittle, undermine or otherwise attack someone. 'Attack the argument, not the person' is an approach that should be followed in debating situations.

**13.2** Members are entitled to disagree but should not treat others adversely or with discourtesy or open hostility due to political opposition.

**13.3** Members should refrain from criticising other Party members publicly, including any situations where non-members may be present. If criticism is felt to be necessary, it should be done sensitively and constructively by those given that responsibility. Criticism should be of actions and behaviour or statements etc., not of the person. Avoid labels, name calling and stigmatising a person.

## **PART B: RESPONSIBILITIES**

Members of Newham Green Party are all responsible for their own language and behaviour and should conduct themselves in a way which ensures the Code of Conduct is not breached.

When the above standards of online communication have not been met, Newham Green Party ask that members challenge breaches when they occur. Members should follow the principle of 'respect the person, challenge the behaviour'. If challenged on inappropriate behaviour,

members should apologise and reflect on their behaviour. Challenges should only be attempted if a member is comfortable doing so.

Particular responsibility for preventing breaches of the Code of Conduct also lies with members of Newham Green Party Executive, and ultimately the Newham Green Party (Deputy) Chair (/s).

In the event that a breach has not been appropriately challenged, members are encouraged to make the Chairs of Newham Green Party directly aware through an email.

([chair@newham.greenparty.org.uk](mailto:chair@newham.greenparty.org.uk) or [newhamgreens@gmail.com](mailto:newhamgreens@gmail.com))

## **PART C: BREACHES**

In normal circumstances, members of the Executive will seek to moderate discussion and, where appropriate, remind members of the standards of online communication. In the event that this approach is unable to prevent violations of the Code of Conduct, or where such breaches are harmful to others, members of the executive are empowered to take actions against those committing breaches. These actions include, but are not limited to,

- (i) Writing informal warnings and requests for an apology from the individual (/s)**
- (ii) Removal of the individual (/s) from online platforms for a specified period of time, or permanently for repeat offenders / severe offences**
- (iii) Submission of a formal complaint to the Greens Party of England and Wales**
- (iv) Suspension of membership of the local party for a specified period of time (or permanently for repeat offenders / severe offences). This will require ratification by a General Meeting of the Newham Green Party.**
- (v) Removal from internally elected positions, or from the Green Group on externally elected bodies where one exists**

Where Newham Green Party takes insufficient action, members are encouraged to use appropriate internal procedures from the National Green Party to address concerns, grievances

and complaints – through the Disciplinary and Complaints procedure or Whistleblowing procedure. Members are reminded of their ability to recall Executive Committee members who fail to enforce this policy.

## VERSION HISTORY

Amended at the 13th December 2023 AGM	<b>Latest version</b>
Amended at the 26th July 2022 AGM	<a href="#">☰ Past Newham Green Party Const...</a>
Temporary Amendment by Executive (5th July 2022)	<a href="#">☰ Past Newham Green Party Const...</a>
Adopted at the 22nd November 2021 EGM	<a href="#">☰ Past Newham Green Party Const...</a>