

LABOUR PARTY CONSTITUTION 2023

*Adopted by Party Conference in Wexford 2017,
Amended in Cork 2023, Amended in Dublin 2024.*

A cluster of seven white stars arranged in a semi-circular arc, part of the Labour Party logo.

**An Ireland that
Works for All**

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Part 1: Principles and Objects

OUR OBJECTIVE is to build a society based on political, social and economic democracy. We seek to challenge and redistribute all inequalities of power and wealth in society through the empowerment of ordinary people. We strive for social and economic justice, where everyone has a guaranteed standard of security and well-being, and fair opportunity to develop their personal and social selves and to participate in the economic, social and cultural life of the nation in conditions of freedom, solidarity, justice, economic security and equality.

OUR DETERMINATION is to change Irish society through the broadest possible engagement with and empowerment of all progressive social forces – Irish, European and international – and through contesting elections and pursuing policies in government that further progressive ends.

OUR PARTY is a democratic socialist party and, through its membership of the Party of European Socialists and the Progressive Alliance, is part of the international socialist movement working for equality and to empower of citizens, consumers and workers in a world increasingly dominated by big business, greed and selfishness.

IT WAS FOUNDED from the trade union movement by James Connolly, Jim Larkin, Tom Johnson and others as a means for working people to organise politically, to combat squalor, ignorance, want, idleness and disease. These aspirations remain valid today. Despite Ireland's economic wealth, class divisions continue to exist and many of its citizens continue to experience, from childhood, major inequalities in wealth, health and life chances. The ability of most ordinary people to pursue free and flourishing lives, and the potential for a fully democratic society, are hindered by the concentration of wealth and power in the hands of capital. Inequalities based on gender, ethnicity, sexuality and political influence further deny people the equality and freedoms to which they are entitled in their daily lives. We will never be satisfied with the existing status quo in Irish or international society as long as this continues to be the case. We are a movement of democratic socialists, social democrats, environmentalists, progressives, feminists, trade unionists, united in our commitment to social and economic justice – to closing the gap between what is and what ought to be.

OUR PRINCIPLES are grounded on human dignity and rights and on the socialist and civic republican values of equality, interdependence, public participation, social organisation, civic pride and the common good. We promote social inclusion and solidarity between all members of the human family.

WE STAND for a dynamic role for the activist state working through responsive and accountable public institutions. In expressing the democratically decided public good, the state should be an enabling, civilising and bonding force. It should be central to the creation, management and distribution of wealth. It is also responsible for effective and accountable public services, for regulating and shaping markets in the public interest, for challenging and safeguarding against concentrations of private power and wealth, and for a progressive and effective taxation system. Its fundamental purpose should be to enhance the levels of equality, prosperity and personal freedom in society.

- Economy and society are inseparable, and a healthy economy is central to a decent society. our vision of social inclusion requires levels of prosperity that can only be produced by a dynamic, efficient and thriving economy, part of a society that also thrives. Above all, we recognise the centrality of work to achieving these ends, and the dignity and purpose which work provides. This means that we believe all citizens should have the right to work, and the right to direct democratic control over the conditions and fruits of their labour.

- High quality public services, equally accessible to all citizens, are a hallmark of a humane and civilised society. We stand for public provision in health care, education, social protection and all other basic needs and rights – progressive communitarianism and the civilised welfare state. We support an efficient public sector, operating in and central to the functioning of an open, mixed economy, responsive to citizens’ needs, generating and maintaining quality employment, and implementing egalitarian and evidence-informed solutions.
- Community solidarity and willingness to work for the common good are essential to good quality of life. a healthy public space is a precious inheritance, which each generation must protect and develop. We are committed to fostering, expanding, engaging with and participating in the public realm, civil society, the arts and recreation – the things that shape our national identity.
- And we commit to sustainable interaction with the environment, the common heritage of humanity, so that we can meet the needs of today without compromising the rights of future generations.

OUR VISION is of an Ireland that is committed to and inseparable from a wider international community – contributing to the sustainable development of the earth, to solidarity and mutual respect among peoples, to international organisation and engagement between people in their common interest, to the eradication of poverty and the protection of children’s rights, and to the strict observance of international legal commitments and to a collaborative and participative approach to international relations and peace between states.

Part 2: Articles of the Constitution

Article 1: Name and Principles and Objects

1. The name of the Party is the Labour Party. The Party's Principles and Objects are set out in Part 1 and form an integral part of this Constitution.
2. The Party is a member of the Party of European Socialists (PES) and is affiliated to the Progressive Alliance (PA).

Article 2: Membership

1. Irrespective of citizenship or place of residence, a person who –
 - a) has reached the age of 15,
 - b) accepts the Party's Principles and Objects and this Constitution,
 - c) is not a member of another political party, and
 - d) is not a member of, or associated with, a group or publication the objects or activities of which are declared by the Executive Board to be injurious to the interests of the Party or inconsistent with its Principles and Objects,

is eligible for Party membership.

Members outside the State

2. The Party acknowledges and endorses its obligations as a member of the PES and the PA to develop close working relationships with its sister parties and to support them to at elections. Save as provided by sections 3 to 6, the Party shall not establish or maintain branches or organise itself politically outside the State.

Members outside the island of Ireland

3. A Party member who lives in another state may also be a member of a political party in that state belonging to the PES or the PA. Similarly, a member living in the State may also be a member of a party belonging to the PES or the PA, organised in a state with which the member has a bona fide connection. Persons who were party members in the State and who move to live outside the State may continue as Head Office members only.

4. The Executive Board may convene area meetings of Party members living outside the island of Ireland. It may also establish support groups of those members, with power to hold meetings and elect officers on the same basis as branches. A support group shall support the activities of the party within the State. It shall not put forward candidates to contest elections in the state in which it is based, and it shall support in those elections only the candidates of parties belonging to the PES or the PA.

Members in Northern Ireland

5. a) A party member who lives in Northern Ireland may also be a member of a Northern Ireland political party belonging to the PES or the PA. And anyone belonging to such a party is entitled to Party membership.
 - b) The Party may organise in Northern Ireland on the same basis as in the State, and members in Northern Ireland shall be entitled to participate either as head office or constituency members accordingly.
 - c) The approval of the Party Conference, which can be given only on foot of a recommendation of the Party Leader, is required for the Party to contest elections in Northern Ireland.

- d) In Northern Ireland elections Party members shall only support candidates of parties belonging to the PES or the PA or otherwise belonging to the democratic progressive left.

Classes of Party Membership

6. Persons may become Head Office or constituency members. Both Head Office and constituency members are entitled to –

- a) participate as a member of any Party Member Section,
- b) attend the Party Conference,
- c) be appointed a member of the Central Council by a Section in which the member participates,
- d) be nominated by a Section in which the member participates to stand for election at the Party Conference,
- e) participate as an invited member in any committee or informal group involved in the review, development or formulation of Party policy, receive published Party policy documents and be kept generally informed on matters of Party policy and of administrative and organisational affairs, and
- f) vote at elections for Party Leader.

Head Office members are not entitled to the rights reserved to constituency members and may not, save as provided for in this Article, be elected to, or serve in, any other office or position provided for in this Constitution.

A constituency member is registered by Head Office as a Party member at Dáil constituency level. A constituency member may –

- a) participate as a member of the Constituency Council,
- b) participate as a member of selection conventions for Dáil elections in the constituency,
- c) participate as a member of selection conventions for European and local elections, if a member of a branch within the constituency or local electoral area concerned.

Applications for Membership

7. Applications for membership may be made to Head Office or to the Constituency Council for the constituency in which the applicant resides. An applicant for membership is deemed to accept this Constitution and to undertake to support the Party's candidates at elections.

8. Where an application for membership is made to Head Office, the General Secretary may, with the applicant's agreement –

- a) register the applicant as a Head Office member, or
- b) register the applicant as a member of the constituency in which the applicant resides.

9. Where an application for membership is made to a constituency, it may admit the applicant to constituency membership only if the applicant resides in the constituency or if he or she otherwise has a bona fide connection with that constituency.

Register of Members and Paid Up Status

10. The names of persons admitted to membership by Head Office or by a constituency shall be entered on a register of members ("the register") maintained at Head Office, on receipt of their name, address and annual membership fee, and they shall, on the date on which they are so entered, become Party members. A person so admitted is a member for the remainder of that calendar year and

continues to be a member unless his or her membership ceases in accordance with this Constitution. In this Constitution “member” means a person who is registered in the register as a member and who has not ceased to be a member in accordance with this Constitution.

11. Constituency members must pay an annual membership fee to their constituency. Head Office members must pay an annual membership fee to Head Office. On payment of the fee together with any arrears of membership fees due since the date on which the person first became a member, Head Office shall record in the register that the person is a paid-up member for the calendar year in which the fee is paid.

12. At election selection conventions, those entitled to vote are constituency members eligible to vote at the selection convention in question, whose membership was registered at least 6 months prior to the date of the selection convention and who were registered as paid-up members at least by the date of the close of nominations.

13. At an election for Party Leader, those entitled to vote are members whose membership was registered for at least 12 months prior to the date of the close of nominations and who were registered as paid up members at least 21 days prior to the election day.

General

14. If a member’s annual membership fees have been unpaid for 2 consecutive years, the member is deemed to have resigned from the Party.

15. A person whom the Executive Board has decided is ineligible for Party membership may not be admitted to constituency membership.

16. A member whose membership is paid up as of 31 December in any year is a paid up member until 31 March of the following year.

Article 3: Constituency Councils and branches

1. A Constituency Council must be formed in each Dáil constituency. Constituency Councils shall hold at least 6 meetings each year. Each Constituency Council shall ensure an effective branch structure in its area (with the aim of having a branch in each local electoral area and each post-secondary educational institute in the constituency) and shall advise the Organisation Committee on measures taken to achieve this objective.

2. Membership of a Constituency Council consists of all constituency members in the constituency concerned.

3. A branch may, with the approval of the Organisation Committee, be formed by a Constituency Council in any local electoral area or post-secondary educational institute. Branch rules may provide for an annual payment to be made by members into branch funds.

4. Every branch shall, after approval has been given to its formation, be registered by Head Office. A branch, in order to remain so registered, must comply with the conditions of branch registration set out in sections 5 to 9.

5. A branch shall have at least 10 members. It shall maintain an effective organisation within its area or institute and shall support Party candidates at elections. It shall hold an annual general meeting to

consider the state of Party organisation in its functional area and elect branch officers and, if required, committee members.

6. Branches shall, in addition to an annual general meeting, hold at least 3 other meetings in each calendar year.

7. Branches shall affiliate to the relevant Constituency Council and shall pay the prescribed annual affiliation fee and any other prescribed levy to the Constituency Council.

8. Branches shall comply with the General Rules for Branches and Constituency Councils.

9. The records of branches shall be available for inspection at all reasonable times by the relevant Constituency Council and by the Organisation Committee. Each Constituency Council shall monitor compliance by its affiliated branches with the conditions of branch registration.

10. If a branch is not in compliance with the conditions of branch registration, the Organisation Committee may suspend the branch from the register of branches. A branch which has been suspended from the register has no standing in the Party and, so long as it remains suspended the members of that branch are not entitled to attend meetings of a Constituency Council or a Party Conference.

11. If the Organisation Committee is satisfied that a branch suspended from the register is complying with the conditions of branch registration, it shall immediately cancel the suspension of that branch.

12. A branch that has been suspended from the register may appeal against that decision to the Executive Board.

13. If a branch has been suspended from the register for 2 years, it is deemed to be dissolved.

14. A member of a dissolved branch may transfer to, and be registered by Head Office as a member of, another branch (with the consent of that other branch). In default of transfer within 3 months, the member is deemed to have become a Head Office member.

Article 4: General Rules for Branches and Constituency Councils

1. The proceedings of a branch and a Constituency Council shall be governed by rules drawn up by the Executive Board. With the approval of the Executive Board, a branch or Council may amend its rules but the Board shall not approve an amendment that is inconsistent with this Constitution.

2. The rules of branches and of Constituency Councils shall make provision for the annual election of a branch committee or Council Executive and of a chairperson, treasurer, secretary and women's officer, with the following functions:

- a) the chairperson presides over meetings, authenticates by signature the minutes of meetings and exercises a general supervision over the affairs of the branch or Council;
- b) the secretary writes minutes of the proceedings of meetings, maintains a record of attendance at meetings and a register of members and is responsible for records and correspondence generally;
- c) the treasurer keeps all appropriate accounts and financial books and records; and
- d) the Women's officer keeps in contact with Labour Women, attends Labour Women's council meetings, conferences and other events, reports to every meeting on the activities of Labour

Women and encourages and supports women members, in particular new women members, of the branch or council.

3. The rules of branches and Constituency Councils may provide that a branch or constituency also elects –

- a) a vice-chairperson,
- b) an equality officer, responsible for keeping in contact with Labour Intercultural, attending Labour Intercultural meetings, conferences and events, reporting to meetings on the activities of Labour Intercultural and encouraging and supporting members to overcome discrimination,
- c) a youth organiser,
- d) a public relations officer, and
- e) a constituency organiser (in the case of a constituency), responsible for developing the Party and assisting the conduct of election and referendum campaigns in the constituency.

More than one of these offices may be held by the same person.

4. Branches and Constituency Councils may be amalgamated, divided, dissolved or suspended by the Organisation Committee, with a right of appeal to the Executive Board against such a decision.

5. On the dissolution of a branch or Council, its monies, documents and property vest in the Executive Board and may be disposed of at its discretion. The records of branches and Constituency Councils shall be available for inspection at all reasonable times by the Executive Board, or by its nominee, and shall be forwarded to it for inspection if so requested. Branches and Councils shall retain records to demonstrate their existence as functioning units of the Party, including in particular records of meetings held during the previous and current calendar year, and shall discharge the duties imposed on them as accounting units under the Electoral Acts.

6. The General Secretary may direct that a meeting of a branch or a Constituency Council takes place at such place and time as it directs. The Executive Board may direct the postponement or adjournment of a meeting of a branch or Council, to a time and place fixed by it.

7. Members of the Executive Board may attend and speak at a meeting of a branch or a Constituency Council, or its committee. The General Secretary may, in accordance with procedures decided by the Executive Board, confer on other persons the right to attend and speak at such meetings.

8. Branches and Constituency Councils shall pay an annual affiliation fee to Head Office. A branch or Council which has not sent its affiliation fee and the names and addresses of its current officers, by the date fixed for the purpose by the General Secretary in a particular year, shall have no standing in the Party for the rest of that year and –

- a) in the case of default by a branch, the members of that branch shall not be entitled to attend meetings of a Constituency Council, and
- b) in the case of default by a Council, that Council shall not be entitled to submit nominations, motions or amendments to a Party Conference and its members shall not be entitled to attend that Conference.

9. A branch or Council which is 2 years in arrears of payment of its affiliation fee is deemed to be dissolved.

Article 5: Party Sections

1. The following are recognised as Party Sections:

Public Representative Sections

- a) the **Parliamentary Party** comprises all Party members who are members of Dáil Éireann, Seanad Éireann or the European Parliament and who comply with the rules of the Parliamentary Party,
- b) the **Association of Labour Councillors** comprises all Party members who are elected members of a local authority and, where a Labour Party group is established on that local authority, are members in good standing of that group,

Party Member Sections

- c) **Labour Youth** comprises Party members under the age of 30 who opt to participate in the section,
- d) **Labour Women** comprises all party members who are women and other members who opt to participate in the section,
- e) **Labour Trade Unionists** comprises all party members who opt to participate in the section and who are members of trade unions,
- f) **Labour LGBT** comprises all party members who identify as LGBT and who opt to participate in the section,
- g) **Labour Intercultural** (previously Labour Equality) comprises all party members who opt to participate in the section and who share a commitment to promoting equality of respect, status and opportunity for all persons regardless of colour, religious or cultural background or national or ethnic origins, including membership of the Traveller Community,
- h) **Labour Disability** comprises all party members with disabilities, or with an interest in disability policy, who opt to participate in the section.

2. The Executive Board may establish additional Party Member Sections comprising professional associations, societies representing branches of social, economic or cultural life and other organisations which subscribe to the Party's Principles and Objects and accept this Constitution.

3. Each Party Section may make and amend its own constitution, which shall not contain anything inconsistent with this Constitution, and which may include provision for the expulsion or suspension of members from the Section in the event of breach of that constitution. Where any Party Section, other than the Parliamentary Party, adopts a proposal to amend its constitution, it shall submit a draft of the proposed amendment to the Executive Board and the proposed amendment shall come into operation immediately after the next following meeting of the Board unless at that meeting the Board decides that the proposed amendment is inconsistent with this Constitution.

Article 6: The Party Conference

1. The Party Conference is the Party's supreme governing body, vested with control of its policy, organisation and affairs; its particular function is to debate, set the general direction of and formally adopt Party policy. Every member shall abide by the decisions of the Party Conference.

2. A Party Conference shall be held at least once in every two calendar years, at a time and place decided by the Executive Board. In a calendar year in which a Party Conference is not held, the Party shall hold at least one conference or other policy meeting which all Head Office and constituency members are entitled to attend. A Special Party Conference may be summoned at any time by the Executive Board, to consider only those proposals that are submitted to it by the Board.

3. Every Head Office and constituency member who, for not less than 12 months prior to the date of a Party Conference, has been registered as a Party member and who is a paid up member as of the date of the Conference, is entitled to attend the Conference as a voting delegate.

4. Conference fees may be fixed by the Executive Board. The names and addresses of delegates, such other information as the Executive Board may prescribe and delegate fees must be transmitted to Head Office not later than the date fixed by the Board for that purpose.

5. Every person elected to an office or position by the Party Conference remains in that office or position until the conclusion of the next Party Conference, unless he or she dies, resigns, is removed from office or ceases to be a Party member (or, in the case of a member who is also a member of the Parliamentary Party, ceases to be a member thereof).

- a) In the case of a vacancy in the members elected to the Executive Board, the Board may appoint a person to fill the vacancy.
- b) In the case of a vacancy in the members elected to the Policy Research Unit, the Council may appoint a person to fill the vacancy.
- c) In the case of a vacancy in the office of Party Chairperson, the Vice-Chairperson shall fill the vacancy.

6. Every Party Conference (and, with such modifications as may be necessary, every Special Party Conference) shall be conducted in accordance with the Standing Orders set out in the Schedule.

Article 7: The Executive Board

1. Subject to the ultimate control exercised by the Party Conference and save as otherwise provided for in this Constitution, the Executive Board oversees, directs and co-ordinates the organisation and affairs of the Party. Party members shall abide by decisions of the Executive Board.

2. The voting membership of the Executive Board consists of –

- a) the Party Leader, Party Chairperson and Party Treasurer;
- b) 8 delegates (none of whom may be members of the Parliamentary Party) elected by the Party Conference;
- c) 2 delegates (one man and one woman) elected by the Parliamentary Party;
- d) the Chairpersons of the Association of Labour Councillors, Labour Youth, Labour Women, Labour Intercultural, Labour Disability and Labour Trade Unionists, and one of the two Co-Chairpersons of Labour LGBT.

The General Secretary is a non-voting member of the Executive Board.

3. For the purpose of the election of 8 delegates to the Executive Board by the Party Conference, the candidates shall be divided into a panel of men and a panel of women. Four candidates shall be elected from each panel, delegates at the Conference having 2 ballot papers and casting separate votes for the candidates from each panel.

4. A person who is a member of the Party staff (within the meaning of rules made by the Executive Board under Article 8 (4) (d)) and who is elected or appointed to the Executive Board or to any office entailing membership of the Executive Board must, within 14 days of having being so elected or appointed, resign or be seconded without pay from the Party staff.

A person who is a member of the Executive Board or holds an office entailing membership of the Executive Board may not accept a position on the Party staff unless he or she resigns from that membership or office.

5. The Executive Board shall meet not less frequently than once in every month other than the month of August, at such time and place as it decides unless the Board or a majority of the Party Officers postpones the next meeting of the Board until the following month: Provided that, on receipt of a written request for a meeting, for a stated purpose, signed by not less than 4 members of the Board, the General Secretary shall summon a meeting, to take place within 2 weeks of the receipt of that request.

6. The Executive Board may declare the objects or activities of any formal or informal group or of a publication to be injurious to the interests of the Party or inconsistent with its Principles and Objects if, in the Board's opinion, it promotes or facilitates a distinctive and separate organisation, programme, principles, policy or propaganda, or is engaged in the selective promotion of Party candidates at elections, or is allied to another political party.

Executive Board Committees

7. The Organisation Committee and the Finance Committee are standing committees of the Executive Board and the following provisions apply to them:

- a) the Finance Committee assists the Party Treasurer in the oversight and regulation of the Party's finances and advises him or her on levels of membership, affiliation and Conference fees and on fund-raising and expenditure targets;
- b) the Organisation Committee advises the Executive Board on matters relating to the organisation of the Party and in particular works with the General Secretary in developing and expanding the Party at branch and constituency level, membership recruitment and electoral strategy;
- c) the members of each standing committees are appointed by the Executive Board and the Board may at any time appoint an additional member, or may cancel the membership of any member;
- d) subject to paragraph (c), the members of each standing committee remain in position until the first meeting of the Executive Board after the next following Party Conference.

8. The Executive Board may appoint additional committees as it thinks fit, may assign or delegate to a committee such functions as it decides and may dissolve any additional committee whenever it thinks fit.

9. Every Party Officer is ex-officio a member of every committee of the Executive Board.

10. Non-members of the Executive Board may be appointed members of any committee. Public representatives may be appointed members of but may not chair the Organisation Committee.

11. Committees are responsible to the Executive Board and bound by its decisions and must report to the Board as required on the performance of their functions.

- 12. a) The Executive Board shall appoint one of its members to be International Secretary, with responsibility for fraternal relations with the international organisations of which the Party is a member or to which it is affiliated and with the other members and affiliates of those organisations.

- b) The chairperson of Labour Trade Unionists shall act as Trade Union Liaison Secretary, with responsibility for fraternal relations with the trade union movement from which the Party emerged.

13. The Executive Board may from time to time borrow or receive money, with or without security, from such bank, company or person as it thinks fit, and may mortgage or otherwise charge the assets of the Party, or any part thereof, as security for the repayment of such monies.

14. The Party Chairperson presides over meetings of the Executive Board. In his or her absence, the Vice-Chairperson presides. In both their absences, the members present shall appoint a person to preside.

15. The Executive Board may make its own rules, which shall not contain anything inconsistent with this Constitution. The Board may permit persons who are not members to attend and speak, either at a specified meeting or at its meetings generally, subject to such conditions as the Board thinks fit.

16. The Executive Board shall report to every meeting of the Central Council on its activities and on the activities of its committees.

Article 8: The Central Council

1. Subject to the ultimate control exercised by the Party Conference and save where otherwise provided for in this Constitution, the Central Council is responsible for the development, formulation and publication of Party policies and for ensuring participative, focussed and results-oriented debate throughout the Party on matters of policy. Specifically, the Central Council –

- a) shall consider policy proposals,
- b) may from time to time publish such statements of policy as are, in its opinion, in accordance with the Party's Principles and Objects and the decisions of the Party Conference,
- c) shall supervise, in consultation with the Parliamentary Party, the preparation, revision and publication of the Party Programme, and
- d) shall be responsible for the establishment and control of Party periodicals.

2. The Central Council shall, in consultation with the Parliamentary Party and in accordance with Party policies, approve and publish every election manifesto.

3. The Central Council shall meet no later than 10 days after polling day in a general election which results in no party, or no group of parties which contested the election under a pre-election agreement, having an overall majority in the Dáil. The Central Council shall receive a report from the Party Leader on the political strategy proposed to be followed in negotiations on the formation of a government. The Central Council may accept or reject the report from the Party Leader but may not amend it, other than with the agreement of the Party Leader.

4. Membership of the Central Council consists of –

- a) a representative elected by each Constituency Council,
- b) the members of the Executive Board,
- c) the chair of the Policy Research Unit, if not otherwise a member of the Council, and
- d) one person who is a member of the Party staff (including staff directly employed by members of the Parliamentary Party in their capacity as such) and is a member of the Party, elected by the Party staff in accordance with rules made by the Executive Board after consultation with staff trade unions.

The ordinary members of the Policy Research Unit, if not otherwise members of the Council, are non-voting members of the Council.

5. The Central Council shall meet as often as it decides but not less frequently than once in every quarter (excluding a quarter in which a Party Conference is to be held), at such time and place as the it decides: Provided that, on receipt of a written request for a meeting, for a stated purpose, signed by not less than one-quarter of the members of the Central Council, the General Secretary shall summon a meeting, to take place within 2 weeks of the receipt of that request.

6. The Party Chairperson or, in his or her absence, the Vice Chairperson, presides over meetings of the Central Council. In the absence of both Party Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson, the members present shall appoint a person to preside over the meeting.

7. The Central Council may make its own rules, which shall not contain anything inconsistent with this Constitution. The Council may permit persons who are not members to attend and speak, either at a specified meeting or at its meetings generally, subject to such conditions as the Council thinks fit.

8. The Central Council shall report to every Party Conference on its activities and on the activities of the Policy Research Unit and of the Central Council committees.

Policy Research Unit

10. The Policy Research Unit consists of –

- a) 3 members elected by the Party Conference,
- b) 2 members elected by the Parliamentary Party,
- c) 1 member elected by the Association of Labour Councillors,
- d) 1 member elected by Labour Trade Unionists,
- e) the Party Chair and the General Secretary, and
- f) 3 members nominated by the Party Leader, one of whom shall be nominated by the Leader to chair the Unit.

The Unit has primary responsibility for developing draft policies for approval by the Central Council, providing policy research and advice to public representatives and developing draft election manifestos. Parliamentary spokespersons or Ministers shall, where required, attend its meetings and provide advice and assistance. The Unit shall report and make recommendations as required on any matter referred to it by the Parliamentary Party or the Central Council.

11. The Policy Research Unit –

- a) is attached to and answerable to the Central Council,
- b) must report to the Council as required on the performance of its functions,
- c) is staffed by Party staff,
- d) shall establish and maintain participation channels for the Party membership and Sections, through regional forums and online.

A representative of a Party Section shall be added as a voting member of the Policy Research Unit if the Section is not otherwise represented in the Unit's membership.

Central Council Committees

12. The Central Council may appoint committees as it thinks fit, with such functions as it decides. The Council may dissolve any committee and may appoint or remove any or all members of a committee. The chairperson of each Central Council committee is appointed by the Council. Each Party Officer is ex-officio a member of every Central Council committee. Persons who are not members of the Central Council may be appointed to membership of any committee.

13. Central Council committees are responsible to the Council and bound by its decisions and must report to the Council as required on the performance of their functions.

Article 9: The Party Leader

Functions of Party Leader

1. The Party Leader is principal representative and spokesperson of the Party. He or she has authority, in consultation with the General Secretary and subject to Article 11, section 2, to direct the financial, personnel and political resources of the Party on a day-to-day basis, ensuring there is –

- a) liaison, co-ordination of activities and transmission of information between the Party leadership and the members,
- b) a management framework for major projects such as conferences, policy initiatives and public campaigns,
- c) a timely and focussed deliberation on key strategic issues, including in particular the formulation and implementation of plans for the development and expansion of the Party at branch and constituency level, membership recruitment and electoral readiness.

2. In performing these functions, the Party Leader is accountable to the Executive Board. Subject to the ultimate control exercised by the Party Conference and decisions of the Executive Board, the Party Leader is entitled to the support of every Party member.

3. The approval of the Party Conference, which can be given only on foot of the recommendation of the Party Leader, is required for the Party's entry into Government.

However, in the event of a Taoiseach resigning and a new Taoiseach being elected without an intervening general election, the approval of the Party Conference for the Party's participation in the new Government is not required if –

- a) the Party participated in Government immediately before the change of Taoiseach,
- b) the Party Leader recommends participation in the new Government, and
- c) in the opinion of the Executive Board, the programme of the new Government is not materially different, in terms of attainment of the Party's objectives, to the programme of its predecessor.

Term of Office

4. The term of office of the Party Leader –

- a) where no poll is required, commences when nominations are closed and the sole candidate stands elected,
- b) where a poll has been held, commences on the day after polling day.

If, following close of nominations, one or more candidates withdraw and a poll is no longer required, the Executive Board shall decide the date of commencement of office.

5. Following a general election in consequence of which the Party does not enter into Government, the term of office of the Party Leader ends on the day that is six months after the polling day in that general election.

6. Following a general election in consequence of which the Party enters into Government, the terms of office of the Party Leader ends on –

- a) the next occasion to which section 5 applies or
- b) the date that is 10 years after the term of office commenced, whichever is the earlier.

System of Election

7. The Executive Board shall appoint a returning officer for the election and may make rules for the conduct of the election.

8. Only members of Dáil Éireann are eligible for election. A candidate must be nominated either by –

- a) at least 2 persons (which may include the candidate) who are members of a House of the Oireachtas, or
- b) at least 5 Constituency Councils, whose members constitute at least 10% of the constituency party membership.

9. The closing day for nominations, which must be not more than 45 days before polling day, shall be decided by the Executive Board.

10. If there is more than one candidate, a poll must be held. Polling day (i.e., the day by which votes must be received and on which votes are counted and results declared) shall be fixed by the Executive Board but, where the vacancy arises on the expiration of the term for which a Party Leader was elected, polling day shall be the day on which the term of office of the outgoing Party Leader expires.

11. The counting of votes shall (with such modifications as the returning officer decides are necessary) be conducted according to the rules for the time being in force for the counting of votes at Presidential elections.

Vacancy

12. If a vacancy arises in the office of Party Leader otherwise than by expiration of the term for which the Leader was elected, the Executive Board and the Parliamentary Party, meeting in joint session not later than 15 days after the vacancy so arising, shall elect an eligible person to serve as acting Leader until such time as an election to the office of Party Leader is held and the vacancy is filled accordingly.

The Executive Board shall, as soon as practicable, call an election to fill the vacancy and shall fix a date for the close of nominations and a polling day, which shall be not more than 45 days after the close of nominations.

13. The Party Leader may be removed from office on a motion of no confidence passed with the support of not less than two-thirds of the membership of the Central Council. Notice of such a motion must be sent to the General Secretary at least 2 weeks before the day on which it is to be debated.

14. Notwithstanding any provision of this Article, in the event of a general election or of any other contingency considered by it to be of national importance or extremity intervening between close of nominations and polling day, the Executive Board has power to postpone, for no longer than three

months, the holding of an election. In those circumstances, but only to the extent that the provisions of those sections do not as result directly apply, the Executive Board has power to make such interim arrangements as are necessary or expedient.

Article 10: Other Party Officers

1. The Party Officers other than the Party Leader are the Party Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, Party Treasurer and General Secretary.

Party Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson

2. The Party Chairperson is elected by the Party Conference. He or she presides over the Party Conference and meetings of the Central Council and the Executive Board, authenticates by signature the minutes of meetings and exercises a general supervision over the affairs of the Party. In the event of a vacancy arising in the office of Party Chairperson, the Vice-Chairperson shall fill the vacancy.

The Vice-Chairperson is elected by the Central Council from among the members of the Executive Board of the other gender. In the event of a vacancy arising in the position of Vice-Chairperson, the Executive Board shall appoint another such person to fill the vacancy.

If a Party Chairperson or Vice-Chairperson becomes a member of either House of the Oireachtas, he or she is deemed to have resigned from office. Members of either House of the Oireachtas may not be nominated for either office.

Party Treasurer

3. The Party Treasurer is elected by the Party Conference. He or she –

- a) is responsible for ensuring that the financial affairs of the Party are well managed and that proper accounts and records relating to the finances of the Party are kept,
- b) shall co-ordinate the fund-raising activities of constituency treasurers,
- c) shall report to and keep the Executive Board regularly informed on the state of the Party's finances, including its assets, liabilities, income and expenditure, and
- d) shall, to enable the due performance of these functions, have all necessary access to Party books and records and to all necessary information from Party officers and employees.

General Secretary

4. The General Secretary is the Party's Chief Executive Officer. He or she is appointed by the Executive Board, upon such conditions as to tenure of office and remuneration as the Board decides. Under the direction of the Party Leader, the General Secretary is responsible for the management and control of Head Office, the Party's organisation and administrative affairs and its general development and expansion.

5. The General Secretary reports to the Parliamentary Party, the Central Council or the Executive Board, as appropriate, and is independent in and in relation to:

- a) ensuring that records are taken and maintained of meetings of the Parliamentary Party, the Central Council and the Executive Board;
- b) ensuring that a register of members (indicating their branches and trade union membership status, if any) and of branches is maintained, specifying their paid-up status;
- c) organising the Party Conference; and
- d) carrying out the decisions of the Party Conference, the Parliamentary Party, the Central Council and the Executive Board.

6. The Party Leader, Party Treasurer and General Secretary shall report to every meeting of the Central Council, the Executive Board and the Party Conference on the performance of their functions.

Party Trustees

7. The Executive Board shall appoint 3 trustees for such period as it decides not exceeding 3 years, upon such conditions as it sees fit. A trustee shall continue in office until his or her successor is appointed. At least 1 of the trustees so appointed shall be a woman and 1 a man. The Executive Board shall fill any casual vacancy that may arise in the office of trustee.

8. The property and assets of the Party shall vest in the trustees on their appointment for the period of such appointment and, in the application of such property and assets, the trustees shall be subject to, and shall comply with, the directives of the Executive Board. In the event of the trustees, or any one of them, refusing to comply with such directives, the Executive Board may remove the trustees, or any of them, from the office of trustee of the Party.

General

9. In the event of the absence, illness or incapacity of the Party Treasurer or General Secretary, the Executive Board may make provision for the performance of his or her functions by another person.

Article 11: Finance

1. The rate and scale of annual membership, affiliation and Conference delegate fees shall be fixed by the Executive Board, which also has power to reduce or waive those fees and to extend the time fixed for the payment of fees or the transmission of information required for the registration of members and branches.

2. All funds received by the Party and the Party Leader from the State shall be paid to, and administered under the direction of, the Executive Board.

3. The receipts and payments of the Party shall be audited annually by an auditor appointed by the Party Conference for that purpose. The financial year of the Party ends on the 31st December in every year, to which day the accounts of the Party shall be balanced.

4. The Executive Board may from time to time require a special levy to be paid by all or any members, branches or Constituency Councils. A levy shall be regarded, in the case of a member, as an addition to the annual membership fee and, in the case of a branch or Constituency Council, as an addition to the annual affiliation fee.

Article 12: Elections

1. Subject to this Article, the Executive Board shall prescribe the procedure for selecting Party candidates and the procedure so prescribed shall be complied with at every selection convention. For local, general and European elections, candidate selection conventions shall be convened and organised by the Executive Board, entailing decisions by members of the relevant branches and Councils in accordance with the principle of 'one member, one vote', the right to vote being confined

- a) in the case of Dáil elections, to members of the relevant Constituency Council, and
- b) in the case of local and European elections, to members of the branches within the relevant local electoral area or constituency.

2. The Executive Board may make provision for circumstances in which selection conventions have been held, and candidates approved, to contest an election in a local election area or constituency the boundaries of which are subsequently proposed to be amended or are amended.

The Executive Board may make provision, in cases where it is decided to select two or more candidates for a constituency or a local electoral area, based in different parts of the constituency or area, for separate selection conventions to be held in each part, with the right to vote at each convention being confined to Party members belonging to the relevant part.

3. The Organisation Committee may recommend the number of candidates to be selected at a convention. Where more than one candidate is to be selected, the Organisation Committee may also prescribe outcomes with regard to the gender balance of the panel of candidates selected. If a selection convention disagrees with a recommendation, it shall nonetheless proceed to select the number of candidates recommended to it, in accordance with the prescribed criteria, but it may make an alternative recommendation to the Executive Board as to the number of candidates to be selected and the criteria for selection, or both, but not as to the person or persons to be selected. Where the Executive Board receives an alternative recommendation, it may make its own recommendation in the matter and refer that recommendation, together with the recommendation of the selection convention, for consideration and decision by the Party Leader and Chairperson under section 5 or 6.

4. The Executive Board may in its discretion decide whether or not to ratify any candidate or candidates selected by a selection convention.

5. The Party Leader and the Party Chairperson may decide, acting jointly, but only if so advised by the Organisation Committee or the Executive Board, to add a candidate or candidates to those selected by a selection convention and ratified by the Executive Board.

6. At any time after a Dáil election has been called, the Party Leader and Party Chairperson may, acting jointly, decide to add a candidate or candidates to contest the election in any constituency.

7. The selection of candidates for the office of President of Ireland shall be a function of the Parliamentary Party and the Executive Board, acting jointly.

8. The selection of candidates for election to Seanad Éireann and any other body or position not mentioned in this Article whose members are elected by popular vote shall be a function of the Parliamentary Party and the Central Council, acting jointly.

Article 13: Complaints and Appeals

1. The Executive Board shall adopt standing orders for the purpose of resolving disputes or complaints within the Party (but not including a complaint about a decision of a Party Conference or of a Complaints Committee or of the Executive Board on appeal from a decision of a Complaints Committee).

It is a condition of Party membership that a dispute or complaint that is not otherwise resolved must be resolved in accordance with mechanisms laid down in or under this Constitution. A member who fails to avail of a procedure or opportunity provided for under this Constitution and, in particular, under this Article may be deemed to have waived his or her own rights under this Constitution.

2. Standing orders under this Article shall provide for:

- a) the constitution and operation of a Complaints Panel, from which members shall be drawn to serve on Complaints Committees;
- b) the circumstances in which a dispute or complaint may be initiated, the procedure for so doing and the grounds sufficient for a valid complaint;
- c) the informal resolution of complaints where possible, for example by mediation or arbitration;
- d) the rejection of complaints on grounds of invalidity, non-compliance with any prescribed form, frivolity, vexatiousness or manifest ill-foundedness, or that it is brought by a person having insufficient interest in the matter;
- e) the determination of who shall have carriage of a valid complaint;
- f) the constitution and operation of the Committee on Suspensions;
- g) the manner in which appeals to the Executive Board shall be made and the procedure for appeals;
- h) procedures under this Article generally.

3. The Executive Board shall establish in accordance with standing orders:

- a) a Complaints Panel, from which members shall be drawn to form Complaints Committees;
- b) a Committee on Suspensions, with power as an interim measure pending the outcome of an investigation, to suspend a member from membership or any office or position, other than the office of Party Leader or the party membership of the Party Leader.

The Committee on Suspensions shall consider the balance of convenience, the interests of the Party and the rights of individuals affected, and may at any time modify or remove a suspension.

Where a member is the subject of a valid complaint that he or she intends to stand as a candidate at an election otherwise than as a Party candidate, the Committee on Suspensions has power immediately to suspend the member from all rights and incidents of membership.

4. A person against whom a complaint is made is entitled to fair procedures in the handling, hearing and determination of the complaint.

Where the matter referred to the Complaints Committee is a dispute within the Party, the Complaints Committee shall either –

- a) decide that no determination by it is necessary, or
- b) issue a decision resolving the dispute, which decision may not involve any disciplinary sanction against a member or unit.

Where the matter referred to the Complaints Committee is a complaint against a member or unit, the Complaints Committee may decide:

- a) to dismiss the complaint,
- b) to note the complaint and the relevant facts, but to take no further action,
- c) to uphold the complaint without imposing a specific penalty,
- d) whether or not any penalty is imposed, to advise, warn or reprimand a member, or to make recommendations as to his or her future activities,
- e) to suspend a person or unit from membership of the Party, or of a unit, for a period not exceeding 5 years,
- f) to exclude a person from contesting, for a period not exceeding 5 years, any elective office within the Party, or within a particular branch,

- g) to deprive a person or unit from such other rights under this Constitution as are appropriate for a period not exceeding 5 years, or
- h) to expel a person from membership of the Party, or from a particular unit.

Article 14: Gender Balance

1. In any election of more than one member or delegate to a committee or Council established by or under this Constitution, the election shall be conducted so as to ensure that, so far as practicable having regard to the candidates nominated for election, not fewer than 30% of those so elected are women and not fewer than 30% are men.
2. At an election to which section 1 applies, the votes shall be counted in the normal manner, subject to the modification that a candidate shall not be eliminated if to do so would give rise to a breach of the gender balance outcome set out in that section.
3. This Article does not apply to elections to a single office or position. Where an election takes place to fill a casual vacancy, the vacancy shall not be filled in such a way as to reduce the proportion of either gender below 30% of voting members of the body in question.
4. The Central Council and the Executive Board shall ensure that not fewer than 30% of the persons appointed as members of each of their committees are women and not fewer than 30% are men.
5. Notwithstanding the foregoing provisions of this Article, a Constituency Council shall ensure that on its Executive as a whole, including both its constituency officers and the other elected members, a minimum of 30% of members identify as women and a minimum of 30% identify as men. Where this balance is not achieved, a waiver may be given by the Organisation Committee or on appeal by the Executive Board. A Constituency Council that does not achieve this balance on its Executive, and that has not been given such a waiver, is not entitled to submit nominations, motions or amendments to a Party Conference and its members are not entitled to attend that Conference.

Article 15: Circulation of Reports

Where any provision of this Constitution requires reports to be made to a meeting, the reports shall be sent in writing in advance of the meeting to every person entitled to attend. This Article does not require the prior circulation of information considered sensitive.

Article 16: Interpretation and Amendment of this Constitution

1. The Executive Board shall have authority to decide any matter in relation to which the interpretation of this Constitution is in doubt and to make provision for any matter on which this Constitution is silent.
2. This Constitution may be amended only by a resolution of the Party Conference expressly moved for that purpose; a resolution not expressly moved for that purpose and which is inconsistent with this Constitution shall have no effect.
3. Part 1 of this Constitution (Principles and Objects of the Party) may be reviewed by the Party Conference after periodic intervals of not less than 4 years from the date of last review. In any such review, Part 1 may be amended or replaced by resolution of the Conference.
4. Notwithstanding the foregoing sections, this Article may be amended only by resolution of the Party Conference passed with the support of not less than two-thirds of the delegates.

Part 3: Standing Orders of the Party Conference

Order 1: The Conference Chairperson

The Party Chairperson shall preside at the Party Conference. He or she is the judge of order, and of the interpretation and application of these Standing Orders, and has authority to suppress disorder and to ensure compliance with his or her rulings. In the absence of the Party Chairperson, the Vice-Chairperson is the Conference Chairperson. In the absence of both Party Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson, the Executive Board shall appoint a person to act as Conference Chairperson.

Order 2: Preparation of the Agenda

1. In preparation for a Party Conference, the Executive Board shall appoint a Conference Arrangements Committee (the CAC), a majority of the members of which shall be persons elected to a Party Office or Board membership by the Party Conference. The CAC shall decide the form and content of the Preliminary Agenda. The Preliminary Agenda shall be sent to every branch, Constituency Council and Party Member Section.

2. The business of Conference shall include, but is not limited to:

- a) motions submitted by branches, Constituency Councils and Party Member Sections and by the Central Council and the Executive Board
- b) Party Treasurer's report
- c) Party Leader's address
- d) Central Council report
- e) Executive Board Report, to be prepared by the 8 members of the Board elected by the Conference and to be presented by one of those members
- f) General Secretary's Report.

Motions may be submitted for inclusion on the Preliminary Agenda by any branch, Constituency Council, Party Member Section or any Sub-Section of Labour Equality (deemed to be active by the Executive Board) and by the Central Council and the Executive Board. Not more than 1 motion may be submitted by a Branch or a Constituency Council. Not more than 2 motions may be submitted by a Party Member Section. Every motion must be signed by an officer of the body submitting it and must be sent to the CAC not later than the time fixed by it.

The CAC may, following consultation with the Standing Orders Committee (SOC), consolidate motions received that relate to cognate matters, for the purpose of avoiding repetition of debate or voting.

3. Amendments to motions on the Preliminary Agenda may be submitted by any branch, Constituency Council or Party Member Section and by the Central Council and the Executive Board. Not more than 1 amendment may be submitted by a body other than the Central Council or the Executive Board. Every amendment must be signed by an officer of the body submitting it and must be sent to the CAC not later than the time fixed by it.

4. An amendment that is not relevant to the motion to which it is proposed, or which is equivalent to a direct negative thereto, shall not be accepted for inclusion on the Final Agenda.

5. The Parliamentary Party, the Central Council and the Executive Board may arrange for policy statements and other reports to be included on the Final Agenda. The Central Council and the Executive Board may, at any time before the Final Agenda is sent to delegates, submit additional motions and amendments for inclusion on the Final Agenda.

6. The CAC shall, after consultation with the SOC, decide the form and content of the Final Agenda, ordering the business of the Conference into areas of policy, for debate and consideration. The Final Agenda shall include a section for motions deemed non-contentious and suitable for adoption without debate; the CAC shall determine which motions shall be placed in that section. The Final Agenda shall be sent to delegates as soon as practicable before the Conference.

7. A motion or amendment may not be included on the Preliminary or Final Agenda if the SOC decides that it is contrary to the Party Constitution or these Standing Orders.

8. Save in the case of —

- a) reports of the SOC under Order 3, rule 6,
- b) procedural motions under Order 7, rule 7,
- c) motions for the suspension of Standing Orders under Order 9, or
- d) such additional business as may arise by virtue of the suspension of Standing Orders or a report of the SOC,

motions, amendments and other business that do not appear on the Final Agenda may not be considered. A motion under paragraph (b) or (c) may not be considered until notice is given to the SOC and communicated by it to the Conference Chairperson. On receipt of notice of an item of business under this rule, the Chairperson shall take the item as the next immediate item of business.

9. Where the Conference has by resolution declared its policy on any matter, no motion concerning that matter and which seeks directly or by implication to negative that resolution shall appear on the Final Agenda for 3 years from the passing of the resolution unless, in the opinion of the Executive Board, it is of urgent importance.

10. The CAC has overall responsibility for determining the management, organisation and deployment of resources at the Party Conference, except in relation to those responsibilities specifically reserved to the SOC. The CAC is, in particular, responsible for allocating the Conference budget in a cost-effective manner. It shall consult with the SOC so as to ensure that the organisation and procedures of the Conference facilitate the SOC in the performance of its duties.

11. If the Central Council submits a policy for approval by the Conference, that policy paper may appear on the Final Agenda, for debate either in plenary session or in a Conference committee, in lieu of motions dealing with the same topic.

Order 3: The Standing Orders Committee

1. The Party Conference shall elect by ballot a Standing Orders Committee.

2. Five members shall be elected members of the SOC, of whom not less than 2 shall be men and not less than 2 shall be women. The 3 members who are the last to be eliminated in the election shall be a panel of substitute SOC members. Each person elected to the SOC shall remain a member until the conclusion of the next following Party Conference, unless he or she dies, resigns, ceases to be a branch member or becomes disqualified under rule 3, in which case the eligible member of the panel of substitutes who received the highest number of votes at the election shall fill the vacancy.

3. No person who is a member of the Executive Board, or has been nominated for election to the Board or to an office entailing membership of the Board, shall be elected to, or serve as, a member or substitute member of the SOC.

4. The SOC shall meet so often as may be necessary before each Conference, for the purpose of —

- a) considering nominations and motions and amendments submitted for inclusion in the Preliminary and Final Agenda and reporting to the CAC as to whether they are valid,
- b) considering the arrangements for and management of the Conference, and
- c) any related business.

5. The SOC is responsible for examining the credentials of delegates. No person may be admitted as a delegate if the Committee decides that the person is not validly accredited. The SOC shall also supervise and exercise general control over the Conference meeting room, areas reserved for polling and for counting votes and all access and egress to and from those places.

6. The SOC shall make recommendations to every Conference in reports, the first of which shall be sent to delegates as soon as is practicable before each Conference and shall be considered by the Conference as its first item of business. The first report shall include recommendations relating to —

- a) the appointment of a chief teller and assistant tellers, a returning officer and scrutineers, and the conduct generally of divisions and elections;
- b) the prescription of time limits for speeches;
- c) the consolidation or composition of motions on the Final Agenda which relate to cognate matters, for the purpose of avoiding repetition of debate or voting;
- d) the sub-division of the Conference meeting into sessions, with a requirement as to attendance by delegates, in order to be entitled to vote at Conference elections, at 2 or more sessions;
- e) the order of, procedure for dealing with, and time to be allocated to, the items of business to be considered by the Conference;
- f) the admission of observers and members of the press to sessions of the Conference, and
- g) in the case of a Special Party Conference, such modification to these Standing Orders as is in its opinion necessary for the effectual conduct of the business of the Conference.

7. The SOC may make such additional reports to the Conference, setting out its recommendations on any or all matters relating to the Conference and its business, as it may consider necessary or expedient; such reports shall take priority over any other matter before the Conference.

8. On any report under rule 7 being approved by the Conference by a simple majority of delegates present and voting, the recommendations included therein shall take effect notwithstanding any other provision of these Standing Orders.

9. The Conference Chairperson may decide that any particular recommendation included in a report of the SOC must be submitted to the Conference for approval as a separate item of business.

10. The SOC shall advise the Conference Chairperson as to the interpretation and application of these Standing Orders and the Party Constitution.

Order 4: Nominations

1. Nominations of candidates to any office or position that is elected by the Conference may be made by any Constituency Council or Party Member Section. Not more than 1 nomination to each office or position may be made by any body. Every nomination must be signed by an officer of the body that made it and be sent to the CAC no later than the time fixed by that committee.

2. Nominations for the election of an auditor must be accompanied by an assent to the nomination, signed by or on behalf of the nominee. A nomination may be made by the Executive Board.

3. A person shall not be accepted as a candidate in any election if the SOC informs the CAC, or during the course of the Conference, the Conference Chairperson, that his or her candidature is invalid by reason of any provisions of the Party Constitution or of these Standing Orders.

Order 5: Method of Voting

1. Save as provided by rule 2, voting shall be by show of hands, each delegate having one vote. Save as otherwise provided by the Party Constitution or these Standing Orders, votes shall be decided by a simple majority of those present and voting. The Conference Chairperson shall interpret and declare the result: Provided that the Conference Chairperson may, whenever he or she considers it necessary to do so, order that a division be taken on any vote in accordance with Order 6, rule 2. In the case of an equality of votes, the Conference Chairperson has a casting vote.

2. The Party Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, Party Treasurer, auditor, the delegates elected by the Conference to the Executive Board, the Units attached to the Central Council and the members of the SOC shall be elected by secret ballot, on the system of proportional representation by means of the single transferable vote. Nominations for these positions shall be submitted to the General Secretary on or before a time and date fixed by him or her and notified to the members of the Central Council. Subject to Article 14 of the Constitution (Gender Balance), the counting of votes for elections held under this paragraph shall be conducted in accordance with the rules for the time being in force for the counting of votes at general elections or Presidential elections, as appropriate.

Order 6: Counting of Votes

1. Such person as is recommended by the SOC and approved by the Conference shall stand appointed as chief teller. He or she shall be assisted by such and so many persons as are recommended by the Committee and approved by the Conference to stand appointed as assistant tellers. The SOC may if necessary appoint additional tellers.

2. The chief teller shall arrange for the counting and recording of the votes whenever a division is taken. His or her decision as to the numbers recorded on any vote is final save that, where 2 or more tellers disagree on a vote, the Conference Chairperson may order a recount of that vote.

3. Such person as is recommended by the SOC and approved by the Conference shall stand appointed as returning officer. He or she shall be assisted by such and so many persons as are recommended by the Committee and approved by the Conference to stand appointed as scrutineers. The SOC may if necessary appoint additional scrutineers.

4. The returning officer is responsible for the counting of votes in elections held under Order 5 (2). The returning officer shall, after consultation with the SOC, take all such steps as he or she considers necessary or expedient to ensure the validity of the count. On the conclusion of the count, the returning officer shall declare the results and send a report to the General Secretary.

5. The SOC shall supervise and exercise general control over voting procedures.

6. A person who is a candidate in an election at the Party Conference may not be appointed a chief or assistant teller, returning officer or scrutineer.

Order 7: Rules of Debate

1. Each delegate on commencing to speak shall announce his or her name and the name of his or her constituency or section. Delegates shall address the Chair.
2. Except in the case of a motion or amendment submitted by the Central Council or the Executive Board, a motion or amendment may be proposed only by a member of the body that submitted it.
3. The proposer of a motion has the right to speak before all other speakers on that motion and again after them. This rule applies also to the proposer of an amendment. Save as provided by this rule, no delegate is entitled to speak twice upon the same motion or amendment.
4. The Conference Chairperson shall, subject to these Standing Orders, decide on the order of speakers in each debate.
5. A delegate who persists in irrelevance or repetition in debate or who, in the opinion of the Conference Chairperson, is speaking for the purpose of obstructing business may be directed by the Conference Chairperson to discontinue his or her speech.
6. The voting on each amendment shall take place before the voting on the substantive motion to which the amendment relates.
7. If a motion to proceed to the next business is proposed and seconded, the proposer of the motion under debate has the right to speak briefly in opposition thereto and the motion must then be put. If the motion is carried, the debate on the original motion must be abandoned and the meeting must proceed to the next business on the Agenda. If the motion is lost, the debate on the original motion must be resumed.

A motion that the question be now put must be proposed, seconded and decided without debate. If the motion is carried, the original motion must be put and decided without further debate (other than, at the discretion of the Conference Chairperson, a brief reply by the proposer of that motion). If the motion is lost, the debate on the original motion must be resumed.

If a motion that any business on the Agenda be referred to the Central Council or the Executive Board, or to any special committee (for the purpose of considering the same and reporting thereon to the Conference or the next following Conference) is proposed and seconded, not more than 2 delegates have the right to speak briefly in opposition thereto and the motion must then be put. If the motion is carried, the business in question must be so referred and the meeting must proceed to the next business on the Agenda. If the motion is lost, the business in question remains on the Agenda.

The Conference Chairperson may refuse to accept a motion under this rule if it appears to him or her that the motion is an infringement of the rights of a minority or that the motion is otherwise an abuse of these Standing Orders.

Where the Conference appoints a special committee to consider and report to it upon any matter, the special committee so appointed shall be subject to the direction of the Conference and shall submit its report to the Conference Chairperson within the time fixed by the resolution.

8. After the proposer has been called upon to conclude the debate, or does not claim the right to speak again, no further discussion shall take place on a motion or amendment and the Conference Chairperson shall call for a vote.

9. A motion once passed shall be referred to as a resolution.

10. The CAC, with the agreement of the Central Council, may structure debate on motions so that –

- a) motions relating to specific identified policy areas are debated and voted upon in a Conference committee or workshop, and
- b) any resolutions so passed are referred to the Conference for formal adoption without debate.

The chair of such a committee or workshop shall be appointed by the Party Chairperson with the agreement of the CAC and these standing orders shall apply to such a debate with any necessary modifications.

Order 8: Conclusion of Conference

1. The business of every Party Conference shall conclude at the time fixed by the first report of the SOC, unless a recommendation that it should conclude at an earlier or later time has been made by the SOC and approved by the Conference.

2. For the purposes of Article 6 (5) of the Party Constitution, the Conference is taken to conclude on the completion of the counting of votes, and the declaration of the results, in the elections conducted by the returning officer, if that is later than the time referred to in rule 1.

3. Motions on the agenda that are not disposed of by the conclusion of the Conference shall stand referred to the Central Council for its consideration and disposition. The Council shall report to the next following Party Conference on motions dealt with under this rule.

Order 9: Suspension of Standing Orders

1. Subject to Order 3, rule 9, any or all of these Standing Orders may be suspended or modified in effect for a particular purpose by motion proposed, seconded and passed with the support of not less than two-thirds of the delegates present and voting. No proposal to amend or repeal the Party Constitution (including this Schedule) or to suspend or modify the effect of this Order may be proposed by way of a motion under this rule.

2. The proposer of a motion under rule 1 shall have the right to speak briefly in support thereof and the motion shall then be immediately put.



Labour Party Constitution

Adopted by Party Conference in Wexford 2017, amended in Cork 2023

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