

## RULES OF THE FABIAN SOCIETY

**1** The name of the Society shall be the Fabian Society.

**2** The Fabian Society consists of socialists. It therefore aims for a classless society, where a just distribution of wealth and power assures true equality of opportunity. It holds that society, through its democratic institutions, should determine the overall direction and distribution of economic activity, and seeks to promote where appropriate the social and co-operative ownership of economic resources. It argues for strong and accountable public institutions reflecting the values of public service to meet need. It believes in an active democracy, characterised by liberty, tolerance and respect for diversity. It aims at the implementation of the Charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and seeks the creation of effective international institutions to uphold and promote world peace and sustainable development. It seeks to secure these ends by the methods of political democracy.

The Society, believing in equal citizenship in the fullest sense, is open to persons, irrespective of race, gender, sexual orientation, age, disability or creed, who commit themselves to its aims and purposes and undertake to promote its work. Its activities shall be the furtherance of socialism and the education of the public on socialist lines by the holding of meetings, lectures, discussion groups and conferences, the promotion of research into political, economic and social problems, national and international, the publication of books, pamphlets and periodicals, and by any other appropriate methods. The Society shall be affiliated to the Labour Party.

**3** The Society as a whole shall have no collective policy beyond what is implied in Rule 2; its research shall be free and objective in its methods. No resolution of a political character expressing an opinion or calling for action, other than in relation to the running of the Society itself, shall be put forward in the name of the Society. Delegates to conferences of the Labour Party, or to any other conference, shall be appointed by the executive committee without any mandatory instructions.

**4** Full membership of the Society shall be limited to those who are willing to accept the rules and bye-laws of the Society and who are eligible for individual membership of the Labour Party. Those who are members of political parties which oppose, or intend to oppose, the Labour Party at local and national elections cannot remain or be accepted as members. The acceptance of candidates is subject to confirmation by the executive committee.

The executive committee may, in special cases, elect honorary members of the Society.

Those who do not desire, or are ineligible for, full membership of the Society may become associates, if in general sympathy with the objects of the Society. The acceptance of candidates is subject to confirmation by the executive committee. Associates shall have the same rights as full members in regard to the publications, schools, conferences and lecture meetings of the Society. Federations of Labour Parties, borough, divisional and local Labour Parties, trades unions and their branches, co-operative organisations and other bodies, may become subscribing bodies to the Society. The acceptance of candidates is subject to confirmation by the executive committee.

**5** The Society shall be governed by an annual meeting of members to be held at a time and place to be determined by the executive committee. Members shall be invited to submit resolutions. The resolutions shall be circulated and the members invited to submit amendments. The full agenda, including the resolutions and the amendments thereto, together with copies of the annual report, shall be circulated not less than a fortnight before the meeting. The chair of the meeting shall have the right to accept emergency resolutions and amendments with the consent of the meeting. All national members, fully paid up members of recognised local societies, and the representative from each subscribing body, shall have the right to attend and vote at the meetings.

**6** The executive committee may at any time call a special general meeting to discuss any business of the Society. If 5 per cent of all members entitled to vote in the election of the executive committee send to the general secretary in writing a request for a special general meeting, the executive committee shall appoint for the meeting the earliest convenient date thereafter and shall circulate any resolutions submitted.

**7** The executive committee may, and on a requisition signed by not less than 5 per cent of all members entitled to vote in the election of the executive committee shall, refer any question to the decision by ballot of all the members entitled to vote in the election of the executive committee.

**8** The rules may be revised by an annual meeting or by a special general meeting, provided the proposals have been circulated 14 days before the meeting, or by a ballot of all members. Any alterations of or additions to rules 1-6 shall be adopted only if supported by not less than three-quarters of the members present and voting at the annual or special general meeting or by a simple majority of those voting in a ballot of all members.

**9** The executive committee shall comprise: (a) the Honorary Treasurer, who shall be elected as provided in rule 12 following; (b) 10 other members elected as provided in rule 12 following; (c) three members elected to represent local Fabian societies as provided in rule 12 following; (d) one member who shall be appointed by the Scottish Fabians executive and one member appointed by the Welsh Fabians executive (subject to the provisions of rule 12); (e) one member who shall be an employee of the Society and who shall be elected to hold office for one year by the employees excluding the General Secretary and Deputy General Secretary who may neither stand nor vote; (f) one member who shall be appointed by the Young Fabian executive; (g) one member who shall be appointed by the Fabian Women's Network executive; (h) members co-opted by the executive committee provided that the membership of the committee does not at any time exceed 22 in number.

The executive shall have the right to fill casual vacancies other than the employees' representative who shall be elected by the employees, and the Young Fabian, Fabian Women's Network, Scottish Fabian and Welsh Fabian representatives who shall be appointed by their respective executives.

The executive committee shall elect such officers for the year as it thinks necessary, including a Chair and at least one Vice Chair. Six members shall be a quorum for the executive committee.

Any member absent from three meetings of the executive committee (excluding meetings where apologies are accepted for a satisfactory explanation) shall be deemed to have vacated his or her seat.

**10** The President and Vice Presidents of the society, if any, may be elected at an annual or special general meeting on the nomination of the executive committee. They shall not be members of the executive committee.

**11** The annual general meeting shall be held within the period of not more than six months from 30 June upon a date and at a time and place to be decided and announced by the executive committee not less than four months before the date of the meeting. Any member wishing to move a resolution at the meeting shall submit the resolution to the General Secretary not less than ten weeks before the date of the meeting. Any such resolution shall be circulated to the membership not less than seven weeks before the date of the meeting. Members wishing to move amendments to such resolutions shall give written notice to the General Secretary not less than five weeks before the date of the meeting.

**12** Before every second annual meeting (in odd-numbered years), the Society shall elect by ballot an honorary treasurer and 10 other members of the executive committee to hold office for two years. Nominations for these shall be invited from national members and fully paid-up members of local societies whose names have been received at the central office one month before voting papers are sent out. At least two of the 10 other members elected shall be under 31 years of age on the date of the forthcoming annual general meetings, provided that two such members are duly nominated. If

only one such member is duly nominated, that member shall be elected. No more than 5 of the 10 other members elected shall be Members of the House of Commons or House of Lords.

The Society shall also elect by ballot a further three members of the executive committee to represent local societies. There shall be a separate section on the ballot paper for the election of three members and all full members of the Society shall be entitled to vote. Nominations for this section shall be limited to currently affiliated local societies. Each candidate must be nominated by a local society which has satisfied itself that the candidate is an active member of that society. At least one of the three members elected to represent local societies shall be under 31 years of age on the date of the forthcoming annual general meeting, provided that such a member is duly nominated. None of the members elected shall be Members of the House of Commons or House of Lords.

A statement from each of these candidates and biographical details shall be circulated with the ballot paper.

Only members of the society who are paid-up and who were members of the society 90 days before the nomination deadline may stand or vote in the ballot.

In the absence of a valid nomination by constituted executives of the Welsh Fabians and/or Scottish Fabians, the Society shall also elect by ballot one member of the executive committee to represent the Society in Scotland and/or one member to represent the Society in Wales. There shall be a separate section on the ballot paper for the election of these members and all full members of the Society (including local society members) whose membership addresses are in Scotland and Wales respectively shall be invited to vote.

Elections may be held using secure paper or electronic methods. All votes must be cast within a period to be determined by the executive committee, which shall be not less than 14 days and not more than 28 days after the day the ballot opens. Scrutineers shall be appointed by the executive committee, whose duty it shall be to oversee the accuracy of the vote, and to certify to the General Secretary the results. In the event of a tie the chair of the society shall have the casting vote.

All members of local societies whose names have been received at the central office shall be entitled to vote in the ballot for the election of the executive committee. The new executive committee shall come into office immediately after the annual meeting.

**13** The executive committee shall conduct the general business of the Society, appoint such paid employees as it deems necessary, including a General Secretary; create such sub-committees and groups as are considered desirable from time to time, oversee research and editorial strategy; and appoint all delegates to represent the Society. It shall delegate its responsibilities to sub-committees or to the General Secretary as it sees fit.

The executive committee shall, subject to the rules of the Society, have the power to make and revise bye-laws for the composition and procedure of committees, bureaux, groups, local societies (and their regional or other committees) and other organs of the Society. Such bye-laws shall be published in Fabian Review and on the society's website, and shall come into force as determined by the executive committee, but may be amended or annulled by a resolution at an annual or special general meeting of the Society.

Subject to the decision of the annual or any special meeting the executive committee shall have full control over the affairs of the Society.

**14** No article, essay, book, pamphlet or tract submitted to the Society shall be published unless approved as of a suitable standard according to rules made by the executive committee. All publications sponsored by the Society shall bear a clear indication that they do not commit the Society, but only those responsible for preparing them.

**15** In 2021/22 the full rate of subscriptions for members and associates shall be £5.10 per month or £61.20 per annum. The concession rate for under-23s, students, low-income pensioners and people receiving out of work benefits shall be £31.20 per annum or £2.60 per month. Additional members at the same address may pay half price (and receive one mailing per household). Members with overseas addresses will pay an additional £12 per year to cover additional postage costs. The annual rate for publication subscriptions shall be £150 (£200 overseas). Subscribing bodies shall pay a minimum subscription fee determined on the following scale: constituency Labour parties £30; organisations up to 10,000 members £150 (up to 3 mailing addresses); organisations with 10,000 to

100,000 members £495 (up to six mailing addresses); organisations with 100,000 to 1,000,000 members £995 (up to 12 mailing addresses); organisations over 1,000,000 members: £1,750 (up to 18 mailing addresses). In each subsequent year prices for all categories will increase by a percentage amount that shall be the higher of earnings or price inflation. In setting these annual increases the executive may round prices up or down as it sees fit (the following year's increase will be calculated with reference to the actual amount).

**16** The executive committee may take such disciplinary measures as it deems necessary to ensure that all members and officers conform to the rules, bye-laws and policies of the society. Action may include a written warning, removal from a position of responsibility, suspension or expulsion from the society.

No member of the society shall engage in conduct which in the opinion of the executive committee is harmful or grossly detrimental to the society. The executive committee shall make bye-laws and policies to give effect to this rule.

**17** The executive committee shall have the power to recognise a local society and to approve its rules and to make bye-laws for the regulation of such societies. Each local society shall pay an annual affiliation fee to the national society. This fee shall be the same as the annual concessionary rate of subscription for members and associates.

The executive shall have the power to intervene in the running of a local society, amend its rules or de-recognise it in the event of unacceptable practice which brings the national society into disrepute.

**18** Any question as to the interpretation of these rules shall be settled by the executive committee subject to appeal to a meeting of members qualified to effect an alteration of rules.

## **Bye-laws**

### **1. Committees**

- i. The executive committee shall appoint a finance and general purposes committee consisting of not less than five of its members, including the honorary treasurer as chair. The finance and general purposes committee shall be responsible to the executive committee for the finances and general administration of the society and shall have power to act for the executive committee in between meetings of the executive committee.
- ii. The executive committee shall appoint a research and editorial committee consisting of not less than five persons, to oversee the society's research and editorial strategy.
- iii. The executive committee shall appoint other committees as it sees fit to organise the Society's activities, subject to the general control of the executive committee.

### **2. Participation in society activities**

- i. The executive committee or any sub-committee of it shall be empowered to reject any applications for admission to any school, conference or meeting without giving reasons for its decisions. It shall similarly be able to bar people from contributing editorial content.
- ii. The Society reserves the right to exclude members from any or all of its activities for a specified period of time for disruption or violent behaviour. Any such exclusion shall be decided in accordance with a procedure laid down by the executive committee (available from the Society).
- iii. People participating in society activities shall be treated with dignity and respect at all times, free from harassment or discrimination. Procedures for fairly addressing any concerns or complaints raised by people participating in society activities shall be laid down by the executive committee.

### **3. Local Societies**

- i. The executive committee shall have the power to recognise a local society where a minimum of four members of the national society wish to serve on its committee and it has submitted its rules for approval.
- ii. The rules of a local society shall conform to the rules, bye-laws and regulations of the society and shall ensure that full membership is limited to those eligible under rule 4; that associates shall have

no voting rights and shall not hold office or be elected to the governing committee of the local society; and that the local society shall have no collective policy and shall put forward no resolutions of a political character. No delegate shall be given instructions which would commit the society to a collective policy.

iii. No member shall be qualified to hold office in, or to serve on the executive committee of, a local society, or to represent the society, unless he or she is a full member of the national Fabian Society.

iv. A society shall pay an annual affiliation fee that is the same as the concessionary annual subscription for individual members of the national society.

v. The membership of a local society shall consist of either: all members of the national Fabian society who reside in the geographic area of the local society (which shall be agreed with the executive committee) (model 1); or individuals who apply for membership and are eligible under rule 4, including both those who are and who are not members of the national society (model 2). Under model 1 membership shall be free; under model 2 subscriptions shall be set by the local society, with a minimum annual payment for membership of £0 (free) for members of the national society and £5 for non-members.

vi. After the inaugural meeting, at which a resolution shall be passed by a two-thirds majority of national members present to set up a society, the new society shall send to the national society the affiliation fee together with its proposed constitution and a list of members (if it wishes to operate under model 2). Recognition shall not be given to the local society until its constitution has been approved by the executive committee or its appointed sub-committee. Local societies shall send notices of annual general meetings to the national society. The executive committee reserves the right to send an observer to local societies' annual general meetings.

vii. The secretary of every local society shall complete the annual return circulated by the national society and shall supply during the years such other reports of its activities as the national society may require.

viii. Members of local societies who are not also national members shall, at the discretion of the executive committee, have the right to attend national activities at special rates.

ix. The executive committee shall have the power to set up such regional or other groupings of local societies and national members as it may from time to time determine.

x. Each year a local society shall pay its dues, meet regularly, complete an annual return, submit membership information, and hold a properly constituted AGM. It will at all times behave in a manner consistent with the rules, bye-laws and principles of the national society; and shall act to prevent its members bringing the national or local society into disrepute. The executive committee shall have the power to withdraw or suspend recognition if these conditions are not met subject to the right of the local society to appeal to the annual general meeting.

xi. Local societies shall comply with data protection legislation at all times, with respect to the personal data of their own members, national members and the general public. Local societies provided access to the personal data of national members in order to undertake the functions of the society may only use the data for purposes associated with the society. Local societies shall provide personal data of their members to the national society for purposes associated with the society and this data shall only be used in ways that comply with data protection legislation. Local societies must inform members and where necessary obtain their consent with respect to the national society's use of their personal data, where this is required by law. National and local members may request not to receive communications from the local society and/or the national society.

xii. Local Fabian societies are independent membership associations with their own legal obligations and responsibilities towards their members. Recognised local societies are covered under the national society's public liability insurance, in the case of bodily injury or damage to third party property.

xiii. The term Fabian Society is a registered trade mark of the national Fabian Society. Only recognised local Fabian Societies have permission from the national society to use the term or any words or images associated with it.

#### **4. Fabian Women's Network**

Membership of the Fabian Women's Network shall be open to all national members of the Society who are women. The affairs of the group shall be regulated by a constitution, amendments to which shall be subject to the approval of the executive committee. The group shall be responsible for the

organisation of its own activities, which shall include the publication of pamphlets and the holding of schools, conferences and meetings.

#### **5. Scottish and Welsh Fabians**

Membership of the Scottish Fabian group and the Welsh Fabian group shall be open to all national members and fully-paid up members of local societies whose membership addresses are in Scotland and Wales respectively. The affairs of the two groups shall each be regulated by a constitution, amendments to which shall be subject to the approval of the executive committee. The groups shall be responsible for the organisation of their own activities, which shall include the publication of pamphlets and the holding of schools, conferences and meetings.

#### **6. Scottish and Welsh representatives**

In accordance with Rules 9 and 12 the Society shall elect a Scottish representative and a Welsh representative (the titles to be decided by the Executive Committee) to represent the Society in Scotland and Wales respectively. These persons must be full national members of the Society and members of the Labour Party. Their function is to act as the focal point for Fabian Society activity and contact in Scotland and Wales respectively and to be the national representative on the executive committee.

#### **7. Young Fabian Group**

Membership of the Young Fabian Group shall be open to all national members of the Society who are not over 30 years of age. The affairs of the group shall be regulated by a constitution, amendments to which shall be subject to the approval of the executive committee. The group shall be responsible for the organisation of its own activities, which shall include the organisation of local groups, subject to rules similar to those adopted for local Fabian societies, the publication of pamphlets and the holding of schools, conferences and meetings.

#### **8. Local affiliation to the Labour Party**

i. Local Fabian societies may affiliate to local units of the Labour party with the prior agreement of the executive committee. No local society may affiliate to any unit of the Labour Party for a period of six months from the date of its recognition. The agreement of the executive committee must be obtained before a local society affiliates to any additional units of the Labour Party. The executive committee shall have the power to withdraw its agreement to an affiliation subject to the right of the local society to appeal to the Annual General Meeting.

ii. All decisions regarding affiliation to Labour party units and all decisions regarding Labour party democratic processes shall be made at constituted, quorate meetings or by a ballot of all members. Where a society has fewer than 30 paid-up members (under model 2) all members of the national society who reside in the area of the society shall be eligible to vote in any process relating to Labour party affiliation. Where a society has more than 30 members its rules may state whether national members who are not paid up members of the local society are eligible to vote (in the absence of such a statement they will be eligible).

iii: Delegates to units of the Labour Party shall be elected either at a meeting or by a ballot of all members. Participation in the vote is not restricted to members residing in the geography of the party unit in question.

#### **9. Labour party elections, selections and nominations – the national society**

The executive committee shall lay down procedures for the selection of candidates for public office and Labour Party officers which shall be adhered to by the society and its constituent sections.

i. Full paid-up members of the national society and full paid-up members of local societies whose names have been received at the central office may participate in internal Labour Party ballots as Fabian members, in accordance with the rules of the party (eg 'affiliated supporter' status). The national society and local societies shall promote and facilitate members' ability to participate.

ii. Only the national society shall have the power to make nominations on behalf of the society in internal Labour Party elections at region level and above. No nominations will be made for the

positions of Leader, Deputy Leader or Treasurer of the Labour Party, or for Leader or Deputy Leader of Scottish Labour and Welsh Labour, and the candidate for Mayor of London.

iii. The executive committee may decide to nominate for the Socialist Societies seat on the National Executive committee, for representatives to the National Policy Forum of the Labour Party, or for officers of the Labour Party socialist societies executive, in which case the society's vote will be cast for the nominee(s). Any nominations to the youth and women's sections of the Labour party shall be determined on the society's behalf by the executives of the Young Fabians and Fabian Women's Network.

iv. Where there is a possibility of an active Fabian being elected to the Socialist Societies seat on a Regional Board of the Labour Party, a nomination may be made by the executive committee, in consultation with the relevant local societies where appropriate. In the case of Scotland and Wales, the Fabian nominee for this seat will be nominated by the executive of the Scottish or Welsh Fabian groups respectively. In these cases, the society's vote will be cast for these nominees.

v. Should the Labour Party conduct any other process in which the Society is eligible to cast votes or make nominations, the executive committee shall decide whether it shall participate in that process, and if so put appropriate arrangements in place.

vi. Delegates representing the national society shall be appointed by the executive committee, unless this responsibility is delegated. For the relevant Labour party conferences or forums, responsibility for making appointments shall be delegated to the executives of the Scottish Fabians, Welsh Fabians, Young Fabians and Fabian Women's Network. Delegates may not be given mandatory instructions.

## **10. Labour party elections, selections and nominations – local societies**

The executive committee shall lay down procedures for the selection of candidates for public office and Labour Party officers which shall be adhered to by local societies.

i. Nominations for candidates for any elected office below nation/region level shall be made by local Fabian Societies with an affiliation to a Labour Party unit which entitles them to participate.

ii: Local societies are entitled to nominate prospective candidates for public office (whether selection or re-selection) in any Labour Party unit to which they are affiliated or entitled to make a nomination, provided that the number of national or local members resident in the area of the party unit and paid up for the current year is 10 or more. Local societies must send notice to the national society of their intention to make a nomination and a nomination will not be valid without this prior notification.

Eligibility to vote will be determined by by-law 8 and in addition members must have been paid-up for at least 90 days (of either the local society or national society). A list of members eligible to vote must be supplied to the national society and approved. The executive committee reserves the right to provide directions or send an observer to oversee the process.

iii. In any contested election within the Labour Party where a local society has a right to cast a vote on behalf of its members, the society will only cast a vote after a ballot of members. Voting by a Fabian delegate to a local Labour Party unit on prospective candidates, or on any other matter, will be at the discretion of the delegate, in accordance with Rule 3 of the Fabian Society which prohibits mandatory instructions being given to Fabian delegates.

iv. The national society shall determine how a nomination is to be made where more than one local society may be eligible to nominate.

## **11. Fundraising**

The Executive Committee shall lay down procedures regarding the society's conduct and standards with respect to fundraising

*amended November 2021*

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