

Christians on the Left Constitution

Preamble

Christians on the Left is a Socialist Society affiliated to the Labour Party. It is the continuation of the Christian Socialist Movement formed in 1960, and is the natural home of Christian Socialism and the inheritor of the Christian Socialist tradition in the United Kingdom.

[1.0] Name of the Society

1.1 The name of the Society shall be Christians on the Left (hereinafter referred to as the Society)

[2.0] Values, objectives and aims

2.1 *Our values*

2.1.1 We believe that Christian teaching should be reflected in laws and institutions and that the Kingdom of God finds its political expression in democratic socialist policies.

2.1.2 We believe that all people are created in the image of God. We all have equal worth and deserve equal opportunities to fulfil our God-given potential whilst exercising personal responsibility.

2.1.3 We believe in personal freedom, exercised in community with others and embracing civil, social and economic freedom.

2.1.4 We believe in social justice and that the institutional causes of poverty in, and between, rich and poor countries should be abolished.

2.1.5 We believe all people are called to common stewardship of the Earth, including its natural resources.

2.2 *Objectives*

2.2.1 Members pledge themselves to work in prayer and through political action for the following objectives:

- A greater understanding between people of different faiths
- The unity of all Christian people
- Peace and reconciliation between nations and peoples and cultures together with worldwide nuclear and general disarmament

- Social justice, equality of opportunity and redistribution economically to close the gap between the rich and the poor, and between rich and poor nations
- A classless society based on equal worth and without discrimination
- The sustainable use of the Earth's resources for the benefit of all people, both current and future generations
- Co-operation, including the creation of cooperative organisations

2.3 *The Society will:*

- Promote Christian Socialist values in politics
- Encourage Christians to engage in political action to work for a society reflecting our values and objectives
- Provide a forum for the exchange of ideas and policies to develop Christian Socialism
- Campaign vigorously against all forms of oppression, prejudice and abuse of power
- In all our transactions seek to create and sustain a spirit of Christian fellowship and seek the Kingdom of God through deepening knowledge of God.

[3.0] Membership

3.1 Membership of the Society shall be open to all Christians who subscribe to its objects.

[4.0] Property

4.1 All property, both real and personal, whatsoever and wheresoever situate that shall belong to the Society shall be vested in the Executive Committee as trustees for the members.

[5.0] Officers

5.1 The Society shall have the following Officers (hereinafter referred to as the Officers, which expression shall include the Officers for the time being), a chairperson, two vice-chairpersons, a secretary, a treasurer and a Political Communications Officer.

[6.0] The Executive Committee

6.1 The Executive Committee (which expression shall include the Executive Committee for the time being) shall consist of the Officers; up to five ordinary members; a member with responsibility for Trade Union Liaison and one elected national/regional representative from each of Scotland, Wales and the English Labour Party Regions (as they are defined by the Labour Party from time to time).

6.2 Each member from Scotland, Wales and the English Labour Party regions will be elected by the Society's membership resident in each of those Nations and the Labour Party Regions.

6.3 The Executive Committee will also have the power to co-opt a further two members with full voting rights to improve gender, regional, and ethnic balance.

[7.0] Quorum

7.1 The quorum for the Executive Committee shall be one third of its membership from time to time, excluding those members who have been co-opted in accordance with this sub-clause.

[8.0] Elections

8.1 All candidates wishing to stand for election as an officer or member of the Executive Committee will need to be proposed and seconded by fully paid up members of the Society for a minimum of 6 months.

8.2 All persons nominated must be fully paid-up members of the Society for a minimum of 6 months and agree to their nomination.

8.3 Nominations must be made to the Secretary and received by the Secretary on or before 1st January. In the event of no nominations being received for an Executive Committee post by the 1st January, nominations may be made for that post at the annual general meeting by any member attending the annual general meeting.

8.4 In the event of more than one nomination being made the Executive Committee shall be responsible for holding a ballot for each contested post.

8.5 Upon the report of the Secretary, the EC shall agree the rules of any ballot, including the form that the ballot will take. The arrangements for general meetings and the choice of any reasonable and recognised method of conducting elections shall be the responsibility of the Executive Committee. Such methods may include balloting either by post or by any other reasonable means, or balloting at the Annual General Meeting.

8.6 In the event that the EC decides to hold a ballot at the Annual General Meeting, the EC shall agree proxy voting provisions for members unable to attend the meeting in person.

8.7 The result of any such ballot shall be declared at the annual general meeting, or as soon as possible thereafter.

[9.0] Terms of office of Officers and the Executive

9.1 Officers and other members of the Executive Committee shall be elected for four-year periods of office as follows-

9.1.1 The Chair, Treasurer, one Vice Chair, two or three of the ordinary EC members, **a member with responsibility for Trade Union Liaison** and the National Regional Representatives for East Midlands, Eastern, Greater London, North, Northern Ireland and Scotland Regions be elected in a 'first election cycle'.

9.1.2 The Secretary, Political Communications Officer, a second Vice Chair, two or three of the ordinary EC members and the National Regional Representatives for the North West, South East, South West, Wales, West Midlands and Yorkshire and the Humber Regions be elected in a 'second election cycle'.

9.2 In the event of the death or resignation of a member of the Executive Committee, the officers shall have the power to decide on a selection process for his/her successor.

[10.0] Meetings of the Executive Committee

10.1 The Executive Committee shall meet at least twice per annum, normally in May and November. At least 14 days notice shall be given of an Executive Committee meeting to all members.

10.2 At the request of not fewer than seven Executive Committee members writing to the Secretary additional meetings must be called. Such meetings must take place between 14 and 28 days after receipt of such a request, such a request to be deemed to have been received within three days of having been sent by ordinary first class post.

[11.0] Patrons of the Society

11.1 Officers will be able to invite suitable people to become patrons of the Society for three-year periods, after consultation with the Executive Committee. Patrons will be figureheads and not play any role in the governance of the Society.

[12.0] Subscriptions

12.1 Each member shall pay an annual subscription to the treasurer as shall be determined and agreed by the annual general meeting. All annual membership subscriptions shall fall due on the anniversary of the individual or couple joining. The level of such subscriptions will be set each year by the national executive.

12.2 Only fully paid up members shall be entitled to vote at general meetings or elections of officers and other members of the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee shall have the discretion to keep in membership of the Society a member unable to pay a subscription.

[13.0] Annual General Meeting

13.1 There shall be an annual general meeting of the Society every March (or as soon thereafter as is practically possible) with a quorum of 20 members of the Society. In addition there shall be such other meetings of the Society, as the Executive Committee shall decide.

[14.0] Functions of the Executive

14.1 The Executive Committee shall set the strategy for the Society and ensure that the directions and suggestions proposed and agreed at the annual general meeting, including the establishment and support of regional groups, the annual budget and the general business of the Society are carried out in a proper manner.

14.2 The Executive Committee shall have the authority to receive donations on behalf of the Society. The Executive Committee shall also appoint from amongst the membership of the Society such specialist subcommittees and working groups as it shall deem necessary.

14.3 The officers shall meet at least ten times per annum to implement the strategy agreed by the Executive Committee, and in all other ways manage the day-to-day affairs of the Society.

14.4 The officers will report on their activities to the Executive Committee in a timely and regular manner.

14.5 The quorum for meetings of the Officers shall be four.

[15.0] Finances

15.1 The financial year of the Society shall end on the last day of December.

15.2 The Society's accounts shall be audited and a statement presented to the annual general meeting.

15.3 In the event of the Society being dissolved its funds shall be transferred to a body or bodies the objects compatible with those of the Society.

[16.0] Branches

16.1 Branches of the Society may be formed.

16.2 All branches shall have a constitution. Such a constitution shall not be effective until the Executive Committee or a general meeting of the Society has ratified it, and the branch shall then be a recognised branch.

[17.0] Affiliation

17.1 The Society shall affiliate to the Labour Party.

[18.0] Amendments

18.1 Any part or parts of paragraphs 3 - 16 of this Constitution may be deleted, augmented or in any way changed or amended by the agreement of the annual general meeting.

18.2 Such amendments must be forwarded in writing to the Secretary by 31st January.

18.3 Any such amendment shall be notified to all members at least 14 days before the AGM.

18.4 To be carried such an amendment must be supported by two thirds of the members present.

18.5 Any part or parts of paragraph 1, 2 & 17 of this Constitution may be deleted, augmented or in any way changed or amended by the agreement of the members of the Society.

18.6 Such an amendment should be forwarded by January 31 to the Secretary who must place the amendment before the next annual general meeting, after notifying all members at least 14 days beforehand.

18.7 If agreed by the AGM by a two-thirds majority the Secretary must conduct a postal ballot within 6 months.

18.8 To be approved such an amendment must secure the support of two-thirds of those replying in the postal ballot.

Notes on Amendments:

2009 – Timing of AGM – amended so that the AGM must take place in either the month of March or as soon as possible thereafter. This amendment was made to take into account the fact that the AGM is held at the same time as the RH Tawney Memorial Lecture and the officers must have the flexibility to arrange the date to accommodate the availability of guest speakers taking part in that.

2011 – the former Publications Officer was amended to 'Political Communications Officer' to reflect new responsibilities.

The term of office of officers and EC members was reduced from five to four years. However, the terms of office of the existing Chair, Treasurer, one Vice Chair, three of the national EC members and the National Regional Representatives for East Midlands, Eastern, Greater London, North and Scotland Regions, elected in a 'first election cycle,' was not abridged but were to end in 2012 as originally planned.

2013 – Name of the Christian Socialist Movement amended by members ballot to 'Christians on the Left.'

Voting arrangements for EC elections amended to allow balloting at the AGM and proxy voting.

Northern Ireland NRR added.

2016 - Reformatted.

2021 - Addition of an executive committee member responsible for Trade Union Liaison. Addition of wording specifying that executive committee members must have been a member of CotL for minimum 6 months. Removal of transitional arrangements circa 2007.