

# **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 postal 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 postal ballot. 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 postal ballot.

**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. Eight 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.

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 28 days and not more than 56 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** The Full rate of subscription for members and associates shall be £42 per annum or £3.50 per month. The Concession rate for Under-21s, students, retired people and the long-term unemployed shall be £21 per annum or £1.75 per month.

The annual rate for publication subscription shall be £95 (£125 overseas). Subscribing bodies shall pay a minimum subscription fee determined on the following scale:

Constituency Labour Parties	£ 42
Others up to 2,500 members	£150
2,501-100,000	£495

100,001-500,000	£995
over 500,000	£1,700

**16** 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 a minimum annual affiliation fee to the national society. This fee shall be the same as the full annual rate of subscription for members and associates and shall cover the first ten members. The annual fee of £1.00 per member shall be paid for members above the first ten. Fees need not be paid for those members who are also members of the national society.

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.

**17** 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 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).

### **3. Local Societies**

i. The executive committee shall have the power to recognise a local society which has a minimum of ten members qualified under rule 4 and 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 local society eligible for individual membership of the Labour Party.

iv. A fee of £1 per year per member shall be paid by a local society to the national society. The minimum annual payment shall be the same as the full annual rate of subscription for members and

associates and shall cover the first ten members. Fees need not be paid for those members who are also members of the national society.

v. The minimum annual payment for membership of a local society shall be £1. The executive committee may agree a lower minimum annual payment where the majority of members of a local society are students.

vi. After the inaugural meeting, at which a resolution shall be passed by a two-thirds majority setting up a society, it shall send to the national society the minimum fee plus £1 affiliation fee for each member over the first ten together with its proposed constitution. 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. In the event of a local society failing to pay its dues, failing to meet regularly, or behaving in a manner contrary to the rules or principles of the Society, the executive committee shall have the power to withdraw or suspend recognition subject to the right of the local society to appeal to the annual general meeting.

#### **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. A new local society must obtain the agreement of the executive committee on the Constituency Labour Party/Parties to which it may wish to affiliate.
- ii. No local society may affiliate to any Constituency Labour Party for a period of six months from the date of its recognition.
- iii. The agreement of the executive committee must be obtained before a local society affiliates to any additional Constituency Labour Party.
- iv. 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.

## **9. Selection of Parliamentary candidates and Labour Party officers**

The executive committee shall lay down procedures for the selection of parliamentary candidates and Labour Party officers which shall be adhered to by the society, local Fabian Societies and Young Fabian groups. These shall include the following:

- i. 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.
- ii. In any contested election within the Labour Party where the society or a local society or Young Fabian Group has a right to cast a vote on behalf of its members, the society/group will only cast a vote after a ballot of all members who have membership addresses in the geography of the election.
- iii. The executive committee may decide to nominate for the Socialist Societies seat on the National Executive committee or for representatives to the National Policy Forum of the Labour Party.
- 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. 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.
- v. Local societies are entitled to nominate prospective candidates for public office (whether selection or re-selection) in any Labour Party Constituency to which they are affiliated, provided that the number of members resident in the Constituency and paid up for the current year is seven or more. Only such members may vote on such a nomination, either at a meeting or by ballot.
- vi. Voting at a local General Committee on prospective candidates, or on any other matter, will be at the discretion of the Fabian delegate to the Committee, in accordance with Rule 3 of the Fabian Society which prohibits mandatory instructions being given to Fabian delegates.
- vii. Should the Labour Party conduct any other process in which the Society is eligible to vote, the executive committee shall decide whether the Fabian vote shall be cast in that process; and if so, shall conduct a ballot of all Fabian members.

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