

Constitution of the Local Sovereignty party at initial registration (draft)

- 1 The name of the party shall be Local Sovereignty.
- 2 The party shall operate in England, Scotland and Wales.
- 3 The party is founded on the principle that true sovereignty resides in all of us as individuals, that political institutions should have no more power than we collectively cede to them voluntarily and that the laws they make should be consistent with our shared values.
- 4 The party aims to bring about reforms to the constitution of the United Kingdom to ensure that political power is exercised as locally as possible, that no more power is delegated to higher levels of government than is necessary for them to have, and for no longer than it is necessary for them to have it, and that all levels of government, and all laws, operate in accordance with the rule of law and generally-accepted, uncontroversial principles.
- 5 In pursuit of those aims, the party shall:
 - 5.1 Develop detailed proposals for the specific reforms described in Appendix A;
 - 5.2 Nominate and support candidates committed to those reforms in elections at national level;
 - 5.3 Organise and participate in other lawful activities aimed at bringing about those reforms, including nominating and supporting candidates for other elections.
- 6 As a condition of party membership, all candidates standing for elected office shall make a legally binding commitment to resign if a recall motion initiated by their constituents meets the requirements advocated by the party, either at the time they were elected or (if those requirements have been subsequently amended) at the time the recall motion is validated.
 - 6.1 Any holder of an elected office applying to join the party shall be deemed to have agreed to the above condition at the time they were elected.
- 7 The party exists in order to bring about transformation, rather than to govern, and shall therefore be dissolved once the specific reforms outlined in Appendix A have been implemented.
 - 7.1 The party's primary reforms, as outlined in Appendix A, may not be dropped, added to or significantly amended without explicit agreement from both of the party's founders.
 - 7.2 The party's secondary reforms, as outlined in Appendix A, may not be dropped, added to or significantly amended contrary to specifically expressed objections from either of the party's founders.
- 8 Clauses 3 through 8 are integral to the identity and purpose of the party and may not themselves be amended but the references within them do not prevent amendments to Appendix A.

Membership

- 9 Membership is open to anyone who wishes to support the party, regardless of any affiliation they have to other parties, subject to clause 9.5 below.
 - 9.1 There shall be two classes of members: original members (being those who joined, or committed to join, prior to June 8th 2017, as long as they remain members) and ordinary members.

- 9.2 Members shall pay an annual subscription at rates set in the party's rulebook.
- 9.3 All members of the party shall be entitled to vote in ballots organised by the party.
- 9.4 All members' votes shall count equally, except that
 - 9.4.1 proposals to amend the party's primary reform goals, as listed in Appendix A, shall require the support of a majority of original members;
 - 9.4.2 proposals to amend the party's secondary reform goals, as listed in Appendix A, shall require the support of a majority of original members who vote on the proposal.
- 9.5 Any member who stands for elected office (including internal party positions), or anyone who becomes a member while holding an elected office, shall be bound by the condition outlined in clause 6 above.
- 9.6 A member may give up their membership by giving written notice of resignation or by not renewing their subscription when it comes due. An individual's membership may be revoked if the party's Tribunal determines that they have violated the party's rules in a way that is incompatible with the party's fundamental principles and ethos.
- 9.7 When the party is dissolved and any residual assets are distributed to the members, original members (if they've maintained their membership) will receive between ten and twenty times the share of ordinary members, in recognition of their crucial role in getting the party off the ground.

Organisation and governance

- 10 The organisation of the party shall reflect the principles it advocates, in its structure and in its operational processes, except that the principle of separation of powers implicit in Appendix A clause 2.1 shall only apply when there are sufficient willing members, with the necessary support from the membership as a whole, to fill all posts.
 - 10.1 An Overseer shall be responsible for the integrity of the party's governance and completeness of its procedural rules.
 - 10.2 An Assembly of members' representatives shall determine the rules by which the party operates (subject to ratification by the Overseer) and, within the constraints set by the party's constitution, the scope and details of the political reforms it seeks to bring about.
 - 10.3 An executive Council shall be responsible for the day-to-day direction of the party in accordance with the party's Rulebook.
 - 10.4 An adjudication committee shall be responsible for resolving internal party disputes.
 - 10.5 A Witness may be elected by the members to observe and report on the inner workings of the party on their behalf.
- 11 The Overseer shall, when the relevant post is vacant, appoint a Party Leader, Treasurer, Nominations Officer, Secretary and Adjudicator; shall authorise rules determined by the Assembly to be included in the party's rulebook; shall, when necessary, determine procedural rules that have not already been determined by the Assembly; shall have authority to overrule decisions made by the adjudication committee, or dismiss the Adjudicator, as long as the membership are informed of any exercise of that authority; shall be allowed unfettered access to all party documents; shall be allowed, and assisted, to communicate with party members on any matter related to the party; and shall have authority to initiate ballots of the membership on any issue. The Overseer may not personally take on the role of Party Leader or Witness.

- 12 Council shall include the Party Leader, Treasurer and Nominations Officer and up to 12 others, who shall be appointed as specified in the following sub-clauses and in clause 13.
 - 12.1 The Party Leader, Treasurer and Nominations Officer shall perform the functions defined for them under the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000, or any Act of Parliament which supersedes it, plus any additional functions assigned to them by the party's Assembly.
 - 12.2 The Party Leader may define functions for up to three members of Council, and may appoint and (subject to overrule by the Overseer) dismiss holders of those positions.
 - 12.3 The Party Leader shall appoint interim office holders to any vacant post whose holder is responsible for the fulfilment of any duties required by the party's constitution and may appoint interim office holders to any vacant Council position.
 - 12.4 The Party Leader shall be responsible for the performance of any necessary function not assigned to another member of Council.
- 13 The Assembly shall consist of three elected chambers, representing different aspects of the memberships' interests. No member may sit in more than one chamber unless there are not enough members with the necessary support from the membership as a whole to fill all seats.
 - 13.1 Each chamber shall have no more than 60 and no less than 12 seats. No decision of a chamber shall be considered binding if fewer than 7 members have agreed on it. No decision of the whole Assembly shall be considered binding if fewer than 19 members have voted on it.
 - 13.2 One chamber shall be based on geographic constituencies and shall primarily represent the membership on issues of local interest and matters concerning the relationship between local and national affairs;
 - 13.3 The other two chambers shall be drawn from temporal constituencies (based on members' birthdays). One shall primarily represent members regarding the party's internal affairs (internal communication, organising ballots etc), and the other shall primarily represent them regarding external affairs (standing candidates, campaigning, publicising the party etc).
 - 13.4 A Speaker shall be appointed for each chamber to be responsible for chairing internal discussions. One of the three chamber Speakers shall be designated Assembly Speaker for the Assembly as a whole. The chamber Speakers shall be responsible for making decisions of their chamber known to the Assembly Speaker.
 - 13.5 The Assembly Speaker shall be responsible for making decisions of the Assembly known to other party officials and the wider membership, and for the organisation of ballots of the membership, and shall perform any necessary duties of the other chamber Speakers when those posts are vacant.
 - 13.6 Decisions of individual chambers may be overruled by a two-thirds supermajority of the whole Assembly.
 - 13.7 Amendments to the party's constitution, or to the rules for appointing the Overseer, shall require a two-thirds supermajority of the whole Assembly.
 - 13.8 Each chamber may independently define functions relevant to that chamber's remit for up to two members of Council, and may appoint and (subject to overrule by the Overseer) dismiss holders of those positions.
 - 13.9 The Assembly may define functions relevant to the overall purpose and nature of the party for up to three members of Council, and may appoint and (subject to overrule by the Overseer) dismiss holders of those positions.

- 13.10 The Assembly shall have authority, with a two-thirds supermajority, to dismiss the Party Leader, Treasurer, Nominations Officer, co-opted members of the adjudication committee and (subject to overrule by the Adjudicator) the Secretary.
- 14 The adjudication committee shall be chaired by the Adjudicator who may co-opt up to 12 other members, and its conduct shall conform, as far as is practical, to the standards that society at large expects from the judiciary.
- 15 The party Secretary shall be responsible for maintaining and publishing the party's rulebook and register of office-holders and shall be permitted to attend Council meetings.
- 16 The Witness may attend any formal meetings held by any of the party's governing bodies, as a passive observer; shall be allowed unfettered access to all party documents; shall be allowed, and assisted, to communicate with party members on any matter related to the party; shall have authority to initiate a ballot of the membership on dismissing the Overseer; shall perform any essential functions of the Overseer when that post is vacant; and shall assume the role of Overseer should that post remain vacant for more than three months.
- 17 The party 'Elders' (comprising the Overseer, Party Leader, Treasurer, Nominations Officer, Secretary, Adjudicator and the three Speakers) shall meet once a year to confirm the continued need for the party, the meeting to take place on or around the anniversary of the decision to form the party (April 22nd), at or near the home of the Overseer. The Witness may attend to ensure that the conditions of hospitality outlined in Appendix C are observed.
 - 17.1 A decision to dissolve the party taken at that meeting shall not be implemented until sufficient time has elapsed for the Witness, or any dissenting Elder, to organise a ballot of the membership.
- 18 Rules determined by the Assembly shall override rules determined by the Overseer or inferred from judgements of the adjudication committee.
- 19 Rules determined by the Overseer, or inferred from judgements of the adjudication committee, may be amended or removed from the rulebook by the Overseer or (subject to overrule by the Overseer) the adjudication committee.
- 20 Rules determined by the Assembly shall not be amended or removed from the rulebook without explicit consent of the Assembly unless the Adjudicator and a majority of the adjudication committee have declared them to be derelict, in accordance with the procedures defined in Appendix B.
- 21 The party's financial affairs shall be conducted in accordance with the financial scheme submitted to the Electoral Commission.

Meetings

- 22 The location for physical meetings shall be chosen with due regard to the convenience for all parties eligible to attend, including the Secretary and the Witness.
- 23 The party's Council shall hold meetings at least once a month, which shall be held in person at least once every three months, but may otherwise be held via telecommunications unless required by the party's rulebook.
- 24 The party's Assembly, and each Assembly chamber, shall meet in person at least once a year but may otherwise conduct discussions through internet forums which shall be visible to all members.
- 25 The party's Tribunal shall meet whenever a dispute requires it, by whatever means it deems most appropriate.

- 26 The Witness shall be informed of any meetings scheduled to discuss party business and shall have the right to attend them and receive reports of them.
- 27 A members' internet forum shall be established which shall allow members to contact each other and submit petitions to party officials.

Ballots

- 28 Internal ballots conducted by the party shall allow members either to indicate their preferences numerically or to put a cross by their preferred option. The system for counting votes and eliminating options shall be clearly described in the party's rulebook and shall, as far as is reasonably practical, reflect the membership's collective preference between every pair of options.
- 29 Every ballot for election of a party official or members' representative shall include a sortition candidate, who shall be chosen by and from a panel of randomly-selected eligible voters who are willing to accept the role.
 - 29.1 The panel shall discuss privately among themselves which of them would best perform the role, for a period established in advance, before deciding by ballot which of them should be elected.
- 30 When a ballot is called, members shall be given explicit information about how abstentions will be treated. Abstentions may (according to what is deemed most appropriate for the type of ballot and most likely to encourage member engagement and stability) either be ignored or counted as votes for:
 - a) the status quo/ incumbent (or a successor nominated by the incumbent);
 - b) the declared preferred option of the party leader;
 - c) the declared preferred option of the Assembly;
 - d) the sortition option;
 - e) a re-run of the ballot;
 - f) nobody/nothing (e.g. position to be left vacant);
 - g) whoever/whatever the Overseer decides.
- 31 A ballot shall be conducted to appoint a Witness as soon as possible after the post becomes vacant and thereafter at intervals of not more than 24 months.
- 32 If there are vacant seats in an Assembly chamber a ballot shall be conducted as soon as a petition requesting one is received from 12 or more members of the relevant constituency.
- 33 If there are no vacant seats in an Assembly chamber, ballots shall be held for all seats in that chamber at intervals of:
 - a) not more than 24 months since a previous all-seat ballot was held; or
 - b) not more than 12 months since all seats were first filled.
- 34 A ballot shall be held for any Assembly seat, or other elected party office, which is the subject of a recall petition satisfying the conditions advocated by the party for parliamentary recall petitions.
- 35 A ballot shall be held on any matter which is the subject of a members' petition satisfying the conditions advocated by the party for calling referendums.

Appendix A

- 1 The primary reforms sought by the party are:
 - 1.1 Establishment of procedures to enable the public to initiate referendums and elections through jury-moderated petitions;
 - 1.2 Entrenchment of the principle of local autonomy through integrated representation, by:
 - a) making members of the House of Lords accountable to elected local representatives and restoring that House's power to block legislation which would infringe lower level sovereignty; and
 - b) requiring higher tier local authorities to facilitate similar integration with their own lower tier authorities, if their electorate requests it.
 - 1.3 Replacement of the current first-past-the-post electoral system with a voting system which maximises voters' ability to express their demonstrate their wishes, within reasonable constraints of practicality.
 - 1.4 Establishment of a requirement that laws be consistent, where possible, with generally-accepted, uncontroversial principles.
- 2 The secondary reforms sought by the party are:
 - 2.1 Enactment of legislation barring members of Parliament from serving as members of the Executive.
 - 2.2 Enactment of legislation to allow taxpayers to choose which level(s) of government their taxes are paid to.
 - 2.3 Enactment of legislation recognising the institution of the jury as a temporary representative body of the sovereign public; requiring all Acts of Parliament to be ratified in front of a jury; and establishing processes through which a jury can initiate public inquiries into the validity of any processes they have witnessed and laws they have seen enforced in the course of their jury service.

Appendix B

- 1 When the adjudication committee encounters an incompatibility between a rule determined by the Assembly and the party's principles, they shall make the incompatibility known to the Assembly and invite it to clarify its intent.
- 2 If the Assembly declares unequivocally that the incompatibility was intended, or denies its existence, then the committee may ask the Overseer to initiate a referendum on the matter.
- 3 If the Assembly fails to respond about the issue, the committee shall be authorised to declare the relevant rule derelict and amend it appropriately.

Appendix C

- 1 In celebration of the original decision to set up the party, the following refreshments shall be served at the annual meeting of the party Elders:
 - a) Elderberry and/or Pear beverages made by a party member from fruit they have picked themselves;
 - b) Sourdough bread freshly made by a party member with accompaniments of the Overseer's choice;

- 2 Decisions arrived at by the Elders during that meeting shall be reviewed when any undue influence brought about by the hospitality provided has dissipated.