

CONSTITUTION OF THE CONSERVATIVE WOMEN'S ORGANISATION

1 NAME, DESCRIPTION AND DEFINITIONS

- 1a The Organisation shall be called the Conservative Women's Organisation (hereafter referred to as the "the CWO"). The CWO is the national body for women members of the Conservative and Unionist Party (hereafter referred to as "the Party").
- 1b All women members of the Party are members of the CWO.
- 1c For the purpose of determining eligibility to hold office within the CWO, a "year" means the period (or part thereof) between two Annual General Meetings.

2 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- 2a To ensure that women are given every opportunity to play a full part within the Party, to uphold the Party Constitution and pursue its objectives.
- 2b To secure the return of Conservative candidates at Local, Regional, National and European elections.
- 2c To seek and support the selection and election of women candidates.
- 2d To work as set out in the CWO Executive Best Practice & Guidelines document.
- 2e To identify and promote the involvement of Conservative women in all aspects of political events, training and policy consultation.
- 2f To ensure that at least one conference is held every year which is open to all Conservative women.
- 2g To co-ordinate the work and promote contact between all Conservative women throughout the country, developing the national membership database to facilitate a two-way channel of communication, advice and guidance.
- 2h To engage in and debate issues in line with Party philosophy.
- 2i To act in an advisory capacity to the Party on any matter affecting policy and organisation.

3 MEMBERSHIP OF CWO CONVENTION

The CWO shall be constituted annually and its Electoral College shall be made up of the membership of the CWO Convention. Membership of the CWO Convention must be paid up members of the Conservative Party and its membership will comprise:

- 3a National Officers of the CWO;
- 3b National Chairman and Vice Chairmen of the British Section European Union of Women (if members of the Party);

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- 3c The Chairman of any regionally affiliated or recognised CWO Group;
- 3d The Chairman of any regionally affiliated or recognised Women's Group;
- 3e The following in each region: the Regional President, the Regional Chairman, the Regional Deputy Chairmen (no more than two), the Area Chairmen, the Regional Hon. or Elected Treasurer and the Regional Hon. or Elected Secretary;
- 3f Immediate past Regional CWO Chairmen - for one year only;
- 3g Any member of the CWO National Executive Committee, not otherwise included;
- 3h The Deputy or Vice Chairman of the Party with responsibility for Women;
- 3i All national Honorary Vice Presidents;
- 3j All past National Chairmen of the CWO.

4 FUNCTIONS AND POWERS OF THE CWO CONVENTION

- 4a To receive reports from the CWO Executive Committee, Regional/Area Chairmen, British Section EUW, Co-Opted Members and others as requested.
- 4b To receive reports, when requested, from Conservative women members of the House of Commons, House of Lords, Scottish Parliament, Welsh & Northern Ireland Assemblies and the European Parliament.
- 4c To recommend any further action to the CWO Executive Committee that ensures an effective organisation for Conservative Women throughout the country.
- 4d To have power to raise funds to support the work and further the objectives of the CWO.
- 4e To meet not less than once a year - one of the meetings shall be the Annual General Meeting to be held before the 30th April each year.

5 NATIONAL OFFICERS

The National Officers shall be:

- 5a President: who shall be elected annually and shall not hold office for more than three consecutive years, except in special circumstances;
- 5b Chairman: who shall be elected annually and shall not hold office for more than three consecutive years;
- 5c Up to three Deputy Chairmen: who shall be elected annually and shall not hold office for more than three consecutive years;
- 5d Hon. or Elected Secretary and Hon. or Elected Treasurer. If elected, who shall be elected annually and shall not hold office for more than three consecutive years;

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The Officers, together with the Executive Committee, at their discretion, shall invite and appoint Hon. Vice Presidents, who shall have held national office. These Hon. Vice Presidents shall hold Office for a maximum of 15 years.

6. ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Annual General Meeting shall normally be held before the 30th April each year. It shall be held for the following purposes:

- 6a To receive and adopt the report of the Chairman of the CWO;
- 6b To elect the Chairman and Officers of the CWO;
- 6c To receive and adopt the statement of accounts;
- 6d To receive Any Other Business relevant to the AGM.

7 NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

- 7a Not less than forty (40) days prior to the AGM, the Returning Officer of the CWO shall notify all members of the CWO Convention including the Regional Chairmen, who will notify members in their Region:
 - Giving the date of the Annual General Meeting of the CWO;
 - Inviting nominations from members of the CWO for election of the national Chairman and Officers;
 - Stating the date by which nominations must be returned, being no less than 21 days prior to the CWO AGM;
 - Stating the name and address of the Returning Officer to whom nominations must be returned.
- 7b Any nomination for office must be submitted on Official Nomination Papers signed by not less than 8 members of the CWO Convention from a minimum of 4 regions.
- 7f Any nominee for any such office referred to in Section 5 of this Constitution shall have been a member of the CWO Convention for not less than 2 years.
- 7g At the CWO Annual General Meeting, the CWO shall receive such reports as the CWO National Executive shall determine.
- 7h The Returning Officer shall be appointed by the CWO National Executive in agreement with the Conservative Party Legal Officer. They cannot be a member of the CWO National Executive.
- 7i Each member of the CWO Convention shall have one vote notwithstanding that the member's right to attend derives from holding more than one office or post.
- 7j In the event of more nominations than there are vacancies, a secret ballot will take place at the meeting. In the case of there being more than one nomination for the position of Chairman, those members of the CWO Convention who are unable to attend the meeting may apply for a postal ballot.

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- 7k Upon a petition signed by not less than 60 members or 20% of the total membership of the CWO Convention (whichever is less) and from a minimum of four regions, the Chairman of the CWO shall call an Extraordinary General Meeting of the CWO.
- 7l The Returning Officer of the CWO shall give not less than 28 clear days' notice of the EGM in writing to all members of the CWO Convention together with an Agenda for the Meeting.

8 QUORUM

- 8a For all General Meetings of the CWO the quorum shall be not less than 30 members or 10% of the total membership of the CWO Convention (whichever is less).
- 8b The quorum of the CWO Executive and of its Committees shall be one-fifth of their respective members, except that the quorum shall in no instance be less than three.
- 8c In the event that a General Meeting be or becomes inquorate, another meeting shall be called not less than 60 and no more than 90 days from the date of the inquorate meeting. Any nominations submitted to the inquorate meeting shall stand as nominations for elections at the quorate meeting.

9 VOTING AT MEETINGS

- 9a At all meetings of the CWO, including meetings of the Executive and its Committees, voting shall be by a show of hands in the first instance except if either the Chairman (at her discretion) directs, or upon one-third of members present and entitled to vote so requesting, the voting shall be by secret ballot.
- 9b Except where expressly provided otherwise, any motion at any meeting of the CWO, including meetings of the Executive and its Committees shall be carried on a majority vote.
- 9c The Chairman (or chairman of the meeting) shall have a second or casting vote in all cases where the voting is declared to be equal.

10 CWO NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The CWO National Executive Committee shall have responsibility for the overall management of the CWO and its membership will comprise:

- 10a All Officers of the CWO;
- 10b National Chairman and up to 2 Vice Chairmen of the British Section European Union of Women (if members of the Party);
- 10c All Regional Chairmen plus two Additional Executive Members (AEMs), who shall be nominated by the Regional Executive each year and confirmed to the national

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Executive at its first meeting after the national Annual General Meeting. AEMs cannot hold the position for more than three (3) years;

- 10d Conservative Women's Scottish Council Chairman and 2 representatives (AEMs);
- 10e The Committee shall have the power to co-opt up to eight other members, who shall not be eligible to serve more than three consecutive years and must be confirmed each year. A co-option fulfils a role that is in demand of the Executive;
- 10f The Committee shall have the power to appoint up to eight additional members. An additional member has professional or technical expertise that is not fulfilled by the Executive. The appointment of an additional member must be confirmed by the Executive each year;
- 10g A Conservative Woman MP, MEP, and a working Lady Peer nominated annually, who will together with the Party Deputy Chairman or Vice Chairman responsible for Women, be responsible for liaising with the CWO Executive.

11 FUNCTIONS AND POWERS OF THE CWO EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

- 11a To meet not less than three times a year. An emergency meeting may be summoned by the Chairman (or in her absence by the President and at least one other National Officer acting together);
- 11b To be responsible for the maintenance and regular revision of a database of members of the CWO;
- 11c To determine the criteria upon which groups are recognised by the CWO;
- 11d To determine the procedure to be adopted at Meetings of the CWO, including the Annual General Meeting, provided that it does not contravene the requirements as laid down in the Party Constitution;
- 11e To be responsible for the keeping of any accounts and the production of an annual statement in a format approved by the Board;
- 11f To be responsible for the selection of CWO and EUW Representatives to the National Conservative Convention and to ensure as equitable a representation from each Region as is reasonably possible;
- 11g To appoint any Sub Committee(s) which shall be deemed necessary;
- 11h To convene and organise national Conferences, Seminars and Training Sessions;
- 11i To appoint representatives to serve on and/or liaise with other outside organisations.

12 REGIONS

- 12a Any woman Party member may stand for the office of Regional Women's Chairman or Deputy for the Region in which she is a Party member provided that her

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nomination is supported by five or more Women's Constituency or Women's Area Chairmen from more than one Area within the Region;

- 12b The Regional Chairman together with her Area Chairman will produce a programme of events to meet the objectives laid out by the CWO in order to secure the return of Conservatives candidates at Local, Welsh & Northern Ireland Assemblies, Scottish Parliament, National and European elections. A Region shall be as is defined by the CWO;
- 12c The Regional Chairmen, in conjunction with the Area Chairmen, shall prepare a report on the activities within that Region and submit it annually to the national Annual General Meeting;
- 12d The Regional Chairman shall prepare accounts according to the guidelines set out by the National Hon. or elected Treasurer, or Deputy Chairman (Finance), which shall be confirmed by the Regional Executive and shall be submitted annually by the date required. These accounts shall be voted on by attendees at the Region's Annual General Meeting and signed by the Regional Chairman.

13 AREAS

- 13a Any woman Party member may stand for the office of Area Chairman for the Area in which she is a Party Member, provided that her nomination is supported by two or more members of Area Executives from more than one area. If there are no valid nominations for an Area, the Regional Executive may appoint an Area Chairman for that Area who shall hold office until the next Regional Annual General Meeting;
- 13b The elected Area Chairmen will each be responsible for an Area and wherever possible should reside in that Area. The Area shall be as is defined by the CWO. Together with the Chairmen of Constituency CWOs and recognised Women's Groups she will be expected to identify and contact Conservative women from the constituencies;
- 13c The Area Chairmen, together with her Regional Chairman, will produce a programme of events to meet the objectives laid out for the CWO in order to secure the return of Conservative Candidates at Local, Welsh Assembly, Scottish Parliament, National and European elections;
- 13d The Area Chairmen will assist the Regional Chairman in the preparation of a report on the activities within their Region to submit to each CWO National Executive.

14 EUW

Representatives nominated by the Chairman of EUW British Section to sit on the National Conservative Convention (as CWO Representatives) shall be fully paid up members of the Conservative Party and the number of seats allotted to EUW shall be at the discretion of the CWO Executive.

15 MEMBERSHIP OF THE NATIONAL CONSERVATIVE CONVENTION

The CWO Executive Committee will confirm the CWO members of the National Conservative Convention (NCC) at its meeting prior to the 1st October in any year. The NCC shall include (where they are not an NCC member in any other capacity):

- 15a All National Officers;
- 15b All Regional Chairmen;
- 15c One additional NCC nomination from each CWO Region and the Conservative Women's Scottish Council, as previously approved by each Regional Executive Committee;
- 15d EUW provision of seats (as per Section 11f);
- 15e All Co-opted and Additional Members of the CWO National Executive;
- 15f Additional NCC members as agreed by the Officers.

16 DISCIPLINARY ACTION

- 16a If any active member of the CWO acts, writes or speaks in any way that may bring the reputation of the CWO into disrepute or embarrasses the CWO, the majority of the National Officers of the CWO have the power to immediately suspend the member from the CWO for a period of 90 days, and the National Chairman will notify the member of such by email or post within 7 days.
- 16b Suspension is defined as not being able to attend any CWO event; conference; workshop; constituency group, area, regional or national meeting; and any Annual General Meeting. She shall also be suspended from all newsletters, mailings and membership of any online CWO social networking sites that the CWO administer.
- 16c Notification will be made within 7 days to all Regional Chairman, Chairman of the Conservative Women's Scottish Council and EUW British Section Chairman, outlining the reasons for the suspension.
- 16d The suspension will be discussed at the next Executive Meeting if a meeting is held within 70 days of suspension (minimum within 21 days). If no meeting is held within this time, the National Officers have the power to convene a disciplinary committee made up of the following:
 - The National President (or a Deputy Chairman if recused)
 - The National Chairman (or a Deputy Chairman if recused)
 - Three Regional Chairmen based on length of executive membership
- 16e If more than three Regional Chairmen have sat on the National Executive for the same length of time, the National President will choose the three additional members from them. Any member of the executive or committee will recuse herself if they have been involved with the initial complaint or the subject of the action is personally known to them outside of day to day CWO business.

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- 16f The decision of the executive or committee will be binding and a majority vote will suffice. In the event of a tied vote, the President (or Chairman if the President has recused herself) shall have the deciding vote. The decision will be to:
- Find no grounds for disciplinary action and immediately remove the suspension
 - Extend the suspension for up to 90 days
 - Exclude the subject permanently from the CWO
 - Exclude the subject permanently and refer the subject to the Party's disciplinary board.
- 16g The subject will be notified of the decision and reasoning by email or post within seven days of the meeting. The decision and reasoning shall also be emailed or posted to all CWO Executive Committee members.

17 ALTERATION AND INTERPRETATION

- 17a Any alteration of, or addition to, the foregoing Constitution shall be made at a meeting of the CWO National Executive. Not less than twenty-eight days' notice of such alterations or additions shall have been given in writing to all members of the CWO National Executive.
- 17b The CWO Executive Committee shall have power to interpret this Constitution should there be any ambiguity or difference of opinion concerning the purpose or intention of any part of it and shall have the power to deal with any matter not provided for in this Constitution, providing that it does not contravene the requirements laid down for 'Recognised Organisations' in the Constitution of the Conservative Party.
- 17c The CWO Executive Committee shall have power to form a panel of three people (including one National Officer) to resolve conflicts. Their decision shall be binding.

18 COMMENCEMENT PROVISION

Rule changes come into effect immediately following the Annual General Meeting of the Conservative Women's Organisation at which they are approved, and the endorsement by the Board of the Conservative Party.