

# Standing Orders for Edinburgh Green Party



The Edinburgh Green Party (the Branch) shall be guided in its work by the Principles of the Scottish Green Party and the remit of the Branch as set out in the Branch Constitution.

The following Standing Orders should not conflict with the Branch Constitution or the Constitution of the Scottish Green Party. The order of precedence holds that the Scottish Green Party's Constitution supersedes the Branch Constitution.

An asterisk (\*) indicates where an item is covered in the Branch Constitution as well as Standing Orders.

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# 1. Branch Meetings

**Note: Branch Meetings comprise both General and Ordinary meetings.**

## 1.1. Purpose

- 1.1.1. Branch Meetings are the main vehicle for making decisions about the direction of the Branch.
- 1.1.2. They are also a forum for debate and learning about green issues and Scottish Green Party policy and local strategy.

## 1.2. Occurrence

- 1.2.1. The Branch shall hold a minimum of 4 Branch Meetings a year. Branch Meetings include General Meetings and Ordinary Meetings.
- 1.2.2. As far as possible, a timetable of Branch Meetings for the year shall be agreed at the first meeting after the Branch AGM and shall be available to all Branch members

## 1.3. General Meetings (AGM/EGM) and Ordinary Meetings

- 1.3.1. General Meetings are Annual General Meetings (AGM) and Extraordinary General Meetings (EGM). Members and the Branch Committee can submit motions to General Meetings.
- 1.3.2. The Branch AGM shall be held each year, within 14 months of the previous AGM.\*
- 1.3.3. All members must be given at least 21 days notice of the date, venue and agenda of any AGM or EGM.\*
- 1.3.4. A Branch EGM can be called by the Committee or by 5 members of the Branch. If being called by members only, the Committee must facilitate the calling and organisation of the EGM.
- 1.3.5. Ordinary Meetings are all other Branch Meetings conducted in accordance with the Branch Constitution and Standing Orders.
- 1.3.6. All members must be given at least 7 days notice of the date, venue and agenda of any Ordinary Meetings.\*

## 1.4. Conduct of Branch Meetings (General and Ordinary)

### Agenda

- 1.4.1. The Convenors are responsible for preparing an agenda in consultation with the Committee and shall invite members to submit items for the agenda.
- 1.4.2. Normally, the agenda will be circulated via e-mail to Branch members in advance of the meeting.

### Papers

- 1.4.3. Any papers to be discussed at the Branch Meeting shall be sent to all members, usually by email, no less than 7 days before each meeting. Emergency items may be submitted within a shorter timescale at the discretion of the Convenors.
- 1.4.4. A paper will normally be sent by the member/s who are responsible for that paper.

## **Chair's action**

- 1.4.5. The Convenors may jointly take 'Chair's action' on Branch decisions outwith Branch Meetings.
- 1.4.6. Each meeting shall include a report of any such decisions taken since the last meeting, including details of:
  - Why the decision needed 'Chair's action'
  - Who was consulted and how
  - Reasons for the decision
  - Outcome of the decision

## **Chairing**

- 1.4.7. A Branch Convenor shall chair Branch Meetings unless this role has been delegated to another member.

## **Minutes**

- 1.4.8. The minutes shall include a record of attendance.
- 1.4.9. Branch members may request that the number of votes on an item be recorded in the minutes.
- 1.4.10. Convenors shall be responsible for ensuring that minutes are made available on the SGP Members' website and notifying all Branch members when they are available. Paper copies shall be provided on request.\*

## **Quorum**

- 1.4.11. To be quorate, any General Meeting of the Branch must have at least 2% of the membership present. Any normal meeting (including a selection meeting) must have at least 1% of the membership present.\*
- 1.4.12. A member participating in a meeting by way of video or telephone conferencing or other form of remote participation will be included in the quorum.\*
- 1.4.13. A Branch Meeting which is not quorate can decide on any action, providing that such decisions are taken to the next quorate meeting of that group for ratification.

## **Voting**

- 1.4.14. Where possible, decisions will be made by consensus. Where consensus cannot be achieved, and the Chair deems that a decision is necessary, a question at a meeting will be decided by a simple majority of the votes of the Branch members present and voting. In the case of the number of votes for and against being equal, the Chair will have a second or casting vote.
- 1.4.15. Members attending by video or telephone conferencing are regarded as having the same voting status as if they were physically present at the meeting.
- 1.4.16. In no circumstances may a Branch member, who is absent from a Branch Meeting at the time of the vote, vote by proxy or by post.
- 1.4.17. The outcome of a vote will take immediate effect.

## **Observers**

- 1.4.18. Other SGP members may attend Branch Meetings as observers. Those who are not members of the SGP may only attend meetings with the permission of the Chair.

- 1.4.19. The right of an observer to attend Branch Meetings may be suspended by the Chair at any time.
- 1.4.20. The Chair may close the meeting to all observers for one or more agenda items if s/he deems it to be in the best interests of the Branch.

### **Suspension of Standing Orders**

- 1.4.21. No Standing Order may be suspended except by a two-thirds majority of those Branch members present and voting.

## **1.5. Motions to General Meetings**

- 1.5.1. Motions to General Meetings must be submitted to the Convenors 10 days in advance of the meeting and circulated to Branch members by email at least 7 days in advance of the meeting.
- 1.5.2. Motions may be proposed by the Branch Committee or by any 2 Branch members.
- 1.5.3. Proposed amendments must be submitted to the Convenors 5 days in advance of the meeting and circulated 3 days in advance of the meeting.

### **Emergency Motions**

- 1.5.4. An Emergency Motion may be submitted to the Branch Committee who are responsible for ruling on its relevance and deciding if it is to be presented to a General Meeting. An Emergency Motion shall have a preamble stating the grounds for acceptance.
- 1.5.5. Where possible an Emergency Motion shall be submitted to the Convenors days before the General Meeting. Only where it relates to events occurring after that, may it be submitted to the Branch Committee at the General Meeting.
- 1.5.6. As Emergency Motions may not have been circulated to members for consideration in advance, they must be concise and focused.
- 1.5.7. The Branch Committee will rule out of order any Emergency Motion which could reasonably have been submitted at the deadline for ordinary motions, or is insubstantive or in essence restates existing policy or procedure.
- 1.5.8. The Branch Committee may abbreviate Emergency Motions before presenting to a General Meeting if they deem it to be in the best interests of the meeting.

## **1.6. Branch Events**

- 1.6.1. The Branch may also organise non-constituted meetings (e.g. speaker events, hustings, socials). These are not Branch Meetings and therefore do not count towards the minimum number of required Branch Meetings.
- 1.6.2. Branch Events can be hosted either before or after Branch Meetings, or on another day.

# **2. Branch Committee**

## **2.1. Purpose**

The purpose of the Branch Committee is to:

- 2.1.1. Execute decisions of the Branch
- 2.1.2. Develop the Branch and local policy
- 2.1.3. Ensure the Branch is represented on Scottish Green Party National Council.

## 2.2. Responsibilities

The responsibilities of the Branch Committee include:

- 2.2.1. Organising Branch Meetings and other events.
- 2.2.2. Formulating Branch electoral and operational strategy for approval at Branch Meetings.
- 2.2.3. Formulating Branch budget and expenses policy (for approval at Branch Meetings) financial management including bank account.
- 2.2.4. Organising the Branch candidate selection process.
- 2.2.5. Running election campaigns with Sub-Branches and Local Teams.
- 2.2.6. Keeping members informed about decisions made by the Scottish Green Party National Council that are relevant to the Branch.
- 2.2.7. Fundraising for Branch activities.
- 2.2.8. Supporting Sub-Branches and Local Teams.
- 2.2.9. Day-to-day running of the Branch.
- 2.2.10. Implementing the Branch disciplinary procedure.

## 2.3. Membership

- 2.3.1. Branch Committee membership consists of:
  - Office bearers and other official posts
  - Sub-Branch representatives
  - Ordinary members
  - Co-opted members.
- 2.3.2. Also invited to sit on the Committee in ex-officio positions shall be representatives of the Councillor Group, the Parliamentary Group, and any representative groups (for example the Young Greens) with an organised presence in Edinburgh. Those elected to public office for the Scottish Green Party may not also hold an elected position on the Committee.
- 2.3.3. Office bearers and other official posts shall have a job description which must be available to all Branch members.

## 2.4. Elections and nominations

- 2.4.1. The Branch Committee shall be elected at the AGM and shall hold office for one year. Each Branch Committee member may stand for re-election each year.\*
- 2.4.2. Nominations for posts on the Branch Committee shall be made to the Chair before the start of the General Meeting.
- 2.4.3. Nominees for all Branch Committee posts must be members of the Scottish Green Party.
- 2.4.4. To be valid, nominations will be proposed and seconded by members of the Branch.
- 2.4.5. Nominees for Co-Convenor, Treasurer and any other office bearers or official posts which involve unsupervised access to membership or other confidential data, must normally have been members of the Party continuously for one year immediately prior to the date of the AGM at which they wish to be elected. If a member who has not been a member for a year wishes to stand for these positions and is elected, special dispensation can be sought from the Scottish Green Party Operations Committee, via the Branch Committee Co-Convenors.

- 2.4.6. There is no membership length requirement for other nominees, or for proposers or seconders. Proposers and seconders can each only be involved in the nomination of 2 individuals.
- 2.4.7. Election is by ballot using single transferable vote.

## 2.5. Meetings

- 2.5.1. Meetings shall be conducted as far as possible in the same way as Branch Meetings.
- 2.5.2. Committee Meetings shall be arranged in consultation with Committee members.
- 2.5.3. A meeting shall be quorate if one third of the Branch Committee, rounded up to a whole number, is present. A Committee member participating in a meeting by way of video or telephone conferencing or other form of remote participation will be included in the quorum.
- 2.5.4. A meeting that is not quorate can decide on any action, providing that such decisions are taken to the next quorate meeting of that group for ratification.
- 2.5.5. Minutes of Branch Committee Meetings shall be sent to all Branch Committee members and be available for members to view on the SGP Members' website, unless they include confidential information.
- 2.5.6. Co-opted Branch Committee members, ex-officio members and observers do not have voting rights at Branch Committee meetings.

## 3. Local Teams

### 3.1. Role

- 3.1.1. Local Teams provide a flexible structure for Branch members to grow and develop activity at a local level. Once a Local Team is fully established its members can consider becoming a Sub-Branch which has more autonomy.
- 3.1.2. Local Teams provide a social focus for Branch members.
- 3.1.3. Depending on how well a Local Team is established, it will be expected to:
  - Distribute publicity material for the Branch.
  - Implement campaigns and election strategy on behalf of the Branch.
  - Support elected representatives of the Scottish Green Party (SGP).
  - Attend local community meetings, including Community Council meetings, on behalf of the Branch.
  - Fundraise locally for the Branch.
- 3.1.4. Local Teams may also be asked to support and campaign in areas other than their own.
- 3.1.5. Local Teams may not issue press and publicity statements on behalf of the Branch.

### 3.2. Formation

- 3.2.1. If requested by a ward member or the Branch Committee, the Committee will facilitate a local ward meeting, including notifying all ward members, for the purpose of setting up a Local Team.
- 3.2.2. At the meeting, branch ward members will agree 3 people from amongst the ward membership to be the nominated Local Team contacts for the period of 1 year.

- 3.2.3. As the local team grows and develops, it will be supported by the Branch Committee to elect annually at least 3 office bearers, including a Convenor and Membership Secretary.
- 3.2.4. The contacts or office bearers shall be ratified by a Branch Meeting. They will hold office for one year and shall be eligible for re-selection.
- 3.2.5. A Local Team with office bearers will administer the SGP ward discussion list. In all other cases the Membership Secretary of the Branch committee will be responsible for the list.

### **3.3. Support, communications and reporting**

- 3.3.1. The Local Team will work with and be supported by the Branch Committee.
- 3.3.2. Each team will have a named committee member with whom to liaise. They shall be responsible for ensuring the Local Team acts in accordance with the SGP Constitution and the decisions of the Branch.
- 3.3.3. The Local Team will report on the year's activities at the AGM of the Branch.
- 3.3.4. The Local Team will report to the Branch Committee on any undertakings that have been funded or organised on its behalf by the Branch Committee.

### **3.4. Membership**

- 3.4.1. Any member of the Branch may join the Local Team, with the team's agreement. The team may co-opt 'green-minded' members of the local community, who may hold office bearers posts, with the exception of the Convenor, Secretary and any other post that has access to confidential Branch or SGP information, without joining the Party
- 3.4.2. Elected representatives of the SGP for the area covered by the Local Team will be ex-officio members of the team.
- 3.4.3. A Local Team will normally cover a Council ward or a group of Council wards.

### **3.5. Meetings**

- 3.5.1. The Local Team will meet formally at least twice a year.
- 3.5.2. Formal Local Team meetings shall be conducted as far as possible in the same way as Branch Meetings including quoracy.
- 3.5.3. Additional meetings may be called as required.
- 3.5.4. Meetings are open to all members of the Branch.
- 3.5.5. The dates of the meetings will be made available through email discussion and announce lists, and on the Branch website.
- 3.5.6. The team may invite members of the local community to attend meetings.
- 3.5.7. Decisions at meetings will normally be made by consensus. If a vote is taken, only full paid-up members of the Scottish Green Party may vote. The Chair holds a casting vote only.

### **3.6. Funds, fundraising and resources**

- 3.6.1. Branch funds and resources will normally be available to Local Teams who are successfully fulfilling their role. The team may request funds for election campaigning from central Branch funds. The amounts allocated to a team will be dependent on the Branch strategy.
- 3.6.2. Allocation of funds will normally be made within the annual Branch budgets and election budgets. Election campaigning and funding will be coordinated by the Branch Committee across wards and teams to ensure best value for the Branch.

- 3.6.3. The Branch Committee will liaise with the team or its nominees, to ensure that local fundraising does not infringe on the normal Branch fundraising activities. The team will inform the Fundraising and Events Officer of all events or fundraising activities in advance, to ensure unintentional overlaps or timings clashes are avoided.
- 3.6.4. Local Teams may not have their own bank accounts and will follow normal Branch financial procedures, including obtaining approval for expenditure in advance. Any net funds raised will be banked by the Branch Treasurer into the Branch bank account.

## 4. Sub-Branches

### 4.1. Purpose

The purpose of a Sub-Branch is to:

- 4.1.1. Developing local participation, decision-making and activism at council ward level.
- 4.1.2. Providing a social focus for members.

### 4.2. Formation and dissolution

- 4.2.1. A Local Team shall be eligible to become a Sub-Branch when its members can demonstrate that they fulfill these standing orders. If a Sub-Branch is no longer able to meet these standing orders, it can revert to a Local Team.
- 4.2.2. The formation and dissolution of a Sub-Branch shall be agreed by a simple majority of those present and voting at a quorate and properly convened AGM or EGM.

### 4.3. Support and representation

- 4.3.1. A Branch Committee member shall be responsible for overseeing the activities of each Sub-Branch in accordance with the Scottish Green Party Constitution and the decisions of the Branch.
- 4.3.2. This officer shall inform Scottish Green Party members living within the Sub-Branch area of the meetings of the Sub-Branch.
- 4.3.3. Sub-Branches shall not be entitled to representation on the Scottish Green Party Council.
- 4.3.4. Sub-Branches shall be represented on the Branch Committee.
- 4.3.5. The Branch Committee Representative shall be elected by ballot at the Sub-Branch AGM (or in the case of a newly created Sub-Branch, the Local Team meeting which agrees to form that Sub-Branch), and ratified at the Branch AGM.
- 4.3.6. The Branch Committee Representative may delegate attendance to a Sub-Branch office bearer.

### 4.4. Responsibilities

The responsibilities of Sub-Branches are to:

- 4.4.1. Implement campaigns and election strategy on behalf of the Branch in their ward and other wards if required (e.g. distribute leaflets, run stalls, canvassing).
- 4.4.2. Input into Branch elections strategy.
- 4.4.3. Fundraise locally.
- 4.4.4. Campaign locally.
- 4.4.5. Attend local community meetings, including Community Council meetings, on behalf of the Branch.



- 4.4.6. Support the elected representatives of the Scottish Green Party.
- 4.4.7. Ensure that new members are welcomed, inducted in the workings of the Branch and provided with any reasonable adjustments or support they require, as available.

## **4.5. Membership**

Sub-Branch membership can consist of:

- 4.5.1. All members of the Scottish Green Party within a City of Edinburgh Council ward area.
- 4.5.2. Any other Party members outwith this area who choose to be members.
- 4.5.3. Ward councillors
- 4.5.4. Co-opted local green activists who aren't Party members (non-voting).
- 4.5.5. Members can only have membership of one Sub-Branch.
- 4.5.6. The minimum membership is 5 members.

## **4.6. Meetings**

- 4.6.1. The Sub-Branch shall hold a minimum of 4 meetings a year, including an Annual General Meeting (AGM).
- 4.6.2. Sub-Branch AGMs should take place 2-4 weeks before the Branch AGM. Meetings shall be conducted as far as possible in the same way as Branch Meetings.
- 4.6.3. Sub-Branches shall copy agenda and minutes of each meeting to the Branch Convenors.
- 4.6.4. Meetings should be scheduled to enable members to attend both Branch and Sub-Branch meetings.

## **4.7. Office Bearers**

- 4.7.1. Sub-Branches shall elect 3 office bearers: either a Convenor, or Co-Convenors (the two post holders must be of differing gender identities, one of whom must be a woman); a Membership Secretary; and may create further official posts. One office bearer must take responsibility for liaising with the Branch Committee over financial matters.
- 4.7.2. Office Bearers and other officials must be Party members.
- 4.7.3. Office Bearers and other officials shall be elected by ballot at the AGM.

## **4.8. Finance**

- 4.8.1. Sub-Branches will be allocated a proportion of capitation fees relating to its members.
- 4.8.2. Sub-Branches will be allocated a proportion of their own fundraising income.
- 4.8.3. These proportions will be decided at a Branch Meeting.
- 4.8.4. Sub-Branches may not have their own bank accounts and will follow normal Branch financial procedures.
- 4.8.5. Sub-Branches will operate to a budget – agreed with the Branch Committee and approved at a branch meeting. This may include a proportion of capitation fees or fundraising income related to Sub-Branch members.

## 5. Complaints and disciplinary action

### 5.1. Committee member dismissal

- 5.1.1. A properly convened and quorate Branch Meeting may dismiss an elected or co-opted officer of the Branch Committee, having followed procedures laid down below.

### 5.2. Member complaints

- 5.2.1. In the event of a Branch member wishing to make a complaint against another Branch member, it is expected that this would be addressed between the members concerned. Where the complainant has exhausted more consensual approaches and wishes to make a formal complaint, this should be made in writing to the Convenors of the Branch.

### 5.3. Disciplinary procedure

Any disciplinary procedure must take the form of the following steps:

- 5.3.1. The member who is the subject of the complaint must be informed of the nature of the grounds for concern, in writing, by the Convenors of the Branch. In this letter the member must be invited to respond to the Convenors within 21 days of the date of the letter.
- 5.3.2. At the discretion of the Convenors, the member may be suspended from any Branch office held while the alleged offence is investigated by Convenors. Any such suspension must be notified to the member in the letter referred to in 4.3.1 and notified to the next Branch Meeting, where it must be ratified by a simple majority of members present and voting.
- 5.3.3. Where the member accepts that an offence has taken place, they should be invited to undertake not to repeat that behaviour. This invitation must be in writing from the Convenors, and the member will be given 21 days from the date of that letter to provide the undertaking.
- 5.3.4. Where the member does not accept that an offence has taken place, or does not undertake to refrain from such behaviour in the future, a properly convened and quorate Branch Meeting may dismiss that member from his/her Branch post.
- 5.3.5. In the event that any dismissal or expulsion is to be discussed at a Branch Meeting, all Branch members must be given at least 10 days notice that this discussion is on the agenda. The member who is the subject of the complaint shall be given the opportunity to attend any Branch Meeting which considers his/her dismissal or expulsion.
- 5.3.6. Where the alleged offence has previously been the subject of disciplinary procedures and has been repeated in spite of assurances from the member to the contrary, a properly convened and quorate Branch Meeting may dismiss that member from his/her Branch post.
- 5.3.7. If a Co-Convenor is the subject of the complaint, other Committee members should take the lead in the disciplinary procedure.

## 6. Amending Standing Orders

### 6.1. Branch approval

- 6.1.1. Changes to Standing Orders must be approved by a two-thirds majority of those members present and voting at a quorate Branch Meeting.

## **6.2. Scottish Green Party confirmation**

- 6.2.1. These amendments must be confirmed by the next Scottish Green Party Operations Committee meeting, failing which any such change/s shall cease to apply.

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