

Yorkshire Party Constitution

1. Introduction

- 1.1. The Party shall be called the 'Yorkshire Party' or other names as registered with the Electoral Commission.
- 1.2. The Constitution of the Yorkshire Party sets out how the party will regulate its activities so that its actions and policies reflect the aims of the party and are in accordance with regulatory requirements and general standards of propriety and regularity.
- 1.3. The members of the Yorkshire Party must approve, by ballot, any amendments to the Constitution. The Executive Committee may vote to make interim amendments to the Constitution following the rules stated in clause 1.5.
- 1.4. Approval of amendments must be by at least a 50% +1 vote of those members voting. However, Section 2 may not be changed without agreement of 66% of party members.
- 1.5. Rules for interim amendments:
 - 1.5.1. All Executive Committee members should be notified at least seven days in advance of such an amendment being presented at an Executive Committee meeting.
 - 1.5.2. The interim amendment must meet the approval of 66% of all elected Executive Committee members in order to pass.
 - 1.5.3. Once passed, the amendment will be in force until the next Annual General Meeting, where it must be approved by party members as outlined in clause 1.4.
 - 1.5.4. Failure to gain member approval will render the interim amendment void.
- 1.6. Proposed amendments to the Constitution must be made available no less than seven days before the Annual General Meeting).

2. Objectives and Requirement

- 2.1. The objectives of the Yorkshire Party are:
 - 2.1.1. To build a fairer, stronger and more prosperous Yorkshire within the United Kingdom.
 - 2.1.2. To secure a devolved Assembly for Yorkshire.
 - 2.1.3. To promote policies as informed by the principles of the Yorkshire Party.
 - 2.1.4. To gain sufficient electoral support to win elections at all levels of government across Yorkshire.
 - 2.1.5. To advocate and deliver the aims and objectives set out in the party principles, manifestos and any other policy papers agreed by the Annual General Meeting or Executive Committee.
- 2.2. All Yorkshire Party endorsed candidates should act in accordance with the Yorkshire Party Code of Conduct and have no affiliation with any group or organisation that embodies beliefs contrary to these principles.
- 2.3. Our candidates should:
 - 2.3.1. Be willing to stand for the Yorkshire Party and support the majority of the party's aims, beliefs and manifesto.
 - 2.3.2. Abide by the Seven Principles of Public Life (Nolan Principles) of selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership.

- 2.4. We seek to achieve a settled view and expect all party representatives to operate within the framework of agreed principles and policies. However, we also recognise the importance of personal belief, providing it does not directly conflict with the principles of the Yorkshire Party.
- 2.5. All policies should be in keeping with and give expression to the principles and objectives of the Yorkshire Party.
- 2.6. For issues not covered by the Yorkshire Party manifesto or other policy positions, candidates adopt a stance based on the party principles and their conscience at their own discretion.
- 2.7. Actions and statements by candidates that risk undermining the integrity of the Yorkshire Party or risk bringing the party into disrepute, may be subject to internal procedures.

3. **Methods**

- 3.1. The Yorkshire Party shall pursue its aims by means of political activity, democratically organised by members of the party according to the provisions of the constitution.
- 3.2. We will seek to influence people, appropriate bodies, organisations and other political parties to support the principle of devolution for Yorkshire.
- 3.3. The Yorkshire Party does not presume to state how other regions should be governed. However, the party retains the right to support and cooperate with other organisations, nationally or internationally, that have broadly similar aims.
- 3.4. We will seek to compete against opponents of the Yorkshire Party by all electoral means.
- 3.5. We may choose to work with other organisations and competing parties on issues to try and secure our objectives.

4. **Membership**

- 4.1. The Yorkshire Party shall be made up of fee paying members. Categories of membership may be introduced, revised and amended by the Executive Committee.
- 4.2. Any person may apply for membership provided that they:
 - 4.2.1. Support the principles and objectives of the Yorkshire Party.
 - 4.2.2. Agree to abide by the Yorkshire Party Constitution.
 - 4.2.3. Have paid the annual membership fee.
 - 4.2.4. Have not had their membership rejected by the Executive Committee.
 - 4.2.5. Have declared, to the best of their knowledge, any possible conflicts of interest.
- 4.3. Members may:
 - 4.3.1. Vote on the constitutional and other business of the Yorkshire Party.
 - 4.3.2. Hold elected or appointed positions within the Yorkshire Party.
 - 4.3.3. Stand for public elections as a Yorkshire Party candidate, if approved by the Executive Committee or by an individual/individuals granted authorisation by the Executive Committee to approve candidates.
 - 4.3.4. All of the above points (4.3.1 - 4.3.3), remain subject to internal party structural process and procedures and whether any protections or additional support are in place for both the candidate and Party.

- 4.3.5. Elected Yorkshire Party representatives are expected to provide a percentage of any regularly paid allowances or other recompense to the party. A suggested percentage figure will be set by the Executive Committee on an annual basis.
- 4.4. The Yorkshire Party will seek to involve as many supporters as possible in all decision making and policy development processes subject to agreement of the Executive Committee and that it is not in breach of the constitution.
- 4.5. The Executive Committee shall have the right to suspend, investigate or expel from membership any person who no longer complies with membership rules, or whose behaviour is otherwise damaging to the interests of the Yorkshire Party. Members who are expelled shall have the right to appeal a decision in accordance with the Constitution and the internal procedures and structures of the party.
- 4.6. Any Member of the Yorkshire Party can bring issues that may require expulsion to the attention of the Executive Committee.
- 4.7. If a member is expelled, they will not be reimbursed their membership fee.
- 4.8. Membership may be refused or revoked if there is material disagreement, evidenced by conduct, with the fundamental values and objectives of the party or admission or continued membership would be likely to bring the party into disrepute.

5. Executive Committee

- 5.1. The Executive Committee is the Yorkshire Party's sovereign body and is responsible for:
 - 5.1.1. Endorsing candidates in appropriate elections.
 - 5.1.2. Holding to account the Yorkshire Party Leader, Chair, officers, candidates, branch structures, Yorkshire Party members and other elected persons, who represent the party.
 - 5.1.3. Determining the annual strategy and tactics of the party.
 - 5.1.4. Preparing election manifestos.
 - 5.1.5. Ensuring that proper arrangements are made for the election of the Yorkshire Party Leader, Chair and members of the Executive Committee.
 - 5.1.6. Appointing from Yorkshire Party members various roles, such as but not limited to: Deputy Leader, Treasurer, Secretary, Nominating Officer, and any other role it sees fit to introduce.
 - 5.1.7. Appointing an acting Leader and/or acting Chair, should those roles become vacant.
 - 5.1.8. Ensuring that proper arrangements are made for the Annual General Meeting, conferences and other events as required.
 - 5.1.9. Implementing decisions directed to it by the party membership at the Annual General Meeting.
 - 5.1.10. Appointing a Party President, should it choose to do so. A majority vote is required to appoint the position of President for a one year term.
 - 5.1.11. Handling disputes, complaints and various HR procedures as needed, in accordance with the internal procedures and structures of the party.
 - 5.1.12. Creating and adapting structures of the Party.
- 5.2. The Executive Committee shall cause to be drawn up and maintained, as and when required, the following sets of rules:
 - 5.2.1. Rules for the Executive Committee, with a minimum quorum of four.
 - 5.2.2. Financial rules.
 - 5.2.3. Rules for the selection of approved candidates.
 - 5.2.4. HR and complaint Procedures.
 - 5.2.5. Internal structures of the party.

- 5.3. Decisions by the Executive Committee must be agreed by a majority (50% +1) vote unless otherwise specified in the Constitution.
- 5.4. Meetings of the Executive Committee shall be conducted on a monthly basis. These should take place in person whenever possible. Where this is not possible they may be conducted via conference call.
- 5.5. Meetings will be headed by the Yorkshire Party Chair. The Deputy Chair or Secretary may chair the meeting if the Chair is not available or it has been agreed as such.
- 5.6. Another person of the Executive Committee may be appointed to chair the meeting if necessary and agreed prior to the meeting.
- 5.7. The agenda should be circulated at least seven days prior to an Executive Committee meeting.
- 5.8. Apologies for absence should be made to the Chair, Secretary or Executive Committee member who will be present. Those absent may need to create an update report of activities due to absence.
- 5.9. Those holding responsibilities should create an update report on activities carried out.
- 5.10. All reports should be sent to the Secretary or another agreed person as necessary at least seven days prior to the meeting so they may be circulated with the agenda.
- 5.11. Membership of the Executive Committee (between six and twelve in number) shall be:
 - 5.11.1. Leader.
 - 5.11.2. Chair.
 - 5.11.3. Ten elected Executive Committee Members, all serving two year terms - with five elected per year.
 - 5.11.4. For a meeting to be quorate, four members of the Executive Committee, including either the Leader or Chair, must be present.
- 5.12. The following may be permitted to attend Executive Committee meetings as non-voting members:
 - 5.12.1. Yorkshire Party President - (determined by the Executive Committee)
 - 5.12.2. Nominating Officer - (determined by the Executive Committee)
 - 5.12.3. Elected Yorkshire Party representatives.
 - 5.12.4. Any other persons whose presence is required for specific agenda items, at the prior invitation of the Executive Committee.
- 5.13. Members elected to the Executive Committee shall serve a term of two years, with terms commencing from the Annual General Meeting.
- 5.14. Members that have been elected should give a minimum notice of one week before leaving the Executive Committee:
 - 5.14.1. Any notice of leave or a resignation should be given to both the Yorkshire Party Leader and Chair, or their deputies as appropriate.
 - 5.14.2. The Executive Committee may co-opt members in order to fill vacancies and provide specific skills. The vote must be carried by a majority of at least 66%.
 - 5.14.3. Co-opted members must stand for election at the earliest opportunity.
- 5.15. Members of the Executive Committee have an obligation to attend Executive Committee meetings and present updates on activities as required.

- 5.15.1. Apologies for absence should be made to the Chair, Secretary or Executive Committee member who will be present. Those absent may need to create an update report of activities due to absence.
- 5.15.2. In the event of a member's absence, updates and reports may be delegated to an appropriate member of the Executive Committee.
- 5.15.3. If a member misses three consecutive Executive Committee meetings without adequate explanation and/or fails to undertake agreed actions without adequate explanation, they may be removed from the Executive Committee following a vote of no confidence. This vote must be carried by a majority of at least 66%.

6. Executive Officers and Groups

- 6.1. The Executive Committee may appoint, create and restructure, as it sees fit, such roles, positions, groups and responsibilities to further the objectives and organise the Party and this may include:
 - 6.1.1. Implementing the decisions of the Annual Meeting and the Executive Committee.
 - 6.1.2. Organising and directing campaigns.
 - 6.1.3. Managing the organisation and finance of the Yorkshire Party.
 - 6.1.4. Developing policies.
 - 6.1.5. Managing any assets.
 - 6.1.6. Organisation of elections and the administration of responsibilities this may include.
 - 6.1.7. Any other responsibility the Executive deems necessary to delegate or create a framework to ensure effective organisation.
- 6.2. The roles of the Officers shall be as follows unless legal requirements, or a decision of the Executive Committee, direct(s) otherwise:
 - 6.2.1. The Leader shall be the principal spokesperson of the Yorkshire Party. The Leader's responsibilities include, but are not limited to:
 - 6.2.1.1. Leading the Yorkshire Party, supporting and guide its members, candidates and elected representatives as required.
 - 6.2.1.2. The Leader has the responsibility of appointing the Treasurer and Deputy Leader from the Executive Committee members, subject to the approval of the Executive Committee.
 - 6.2.1.3. The Leader may appoint other Executive Committee members to other roles as they see fit for the benefit of the Party, subject to the approval of the Executive Committee.
 - 6.2.2. The Treasurer shall manage the Yorkshire Party's finances and reporting requirements. This role includes but is not limited to:
 - 6.2.2.1. Ensuring financial reports are made to the Electoral Commission and maintain the regulations of submitting reports to them.
 - 6.2.2.2. Ensuring financial reports are available to the party for the Annual General Meeting, conferences and other events as required.
 - 6.2.2.3. Providing regular financial updates to the Executive Committee.
- 6.3. Nominating Officers shall authorise candidates to stand for election.
- 6.4. The Yorkshire Party Chair shall be responsible for the following:
 - 6.4.1. Chairing Executive Committee meetings.
 - 6.4.2. Organising and delegating tasks for the internal running of the party, including but not limited to:
 - 6.4.2.1. Dealing with internal disputes and points of appeal.
 - 6.4.2.2. Organising the creation of the Yorkshire Party manifesto.
 - 6.4.3. Appointing the Secretary and/or Deputy Chair from the Executive Members, subject to the approval of the Executive Committee.

- 6.5. A Deputy Chair may be appointed as the Executive Committee sees fit to work alongside the Chair and assist with the Chair's duties as required
- 6.6. The Secretary shall work with the Chair and assist with communications for the Executive Committee, including but not limited to:
 - 6.6.1. Circulating the agenda and supporting documents prior to Executive Committee meetings.
 - 6.6.2. Taking minutes of the aforesaid meetings and circulating them to the Executive Committee afterwards.
 - 6.6.3. Acting as a reference or keeper of the Yorkshire Party Constitution and other agreed procedural documents.

7. Internal Elections

- 7.1. The positions of Leader and Chair shall be elected by all paid up Yorkshire Party members.
- 7.2. The position of Party Leader shall be elected using the following rules:
- 7.3. The Party Leader will serve a term of two years. Elections will be held in the September of every second year:
 - 7.3.1. The Executive Committee shall be responsible for arranging and managing the election process.
 - 7.3.2. The Executive Committee will delegate the day-to-day management of the elections process to one Executive Committee member who shall be termed the 'Returning Officer'. In years when the Leader is up for the election, the Party Chair will propose an Executive Committee member to fulfill the role of Returning Officer. In years when the Party Chair is up for election, this responsibility will fall to the Leader. The proposed Returning Officer must be approved by a vote of the Executive Committee.
 - 7.3.3. All paid up Yorkshire Party members who have been members for at least one year and who secure the support of at least five party members shall be eligible to stand as Party Leader.
 - 7.3.4. Should only one candidate be successfully nominated, they will be judged to be elected without the need for a contest.
 - 7.3.5. Should at least two candidates be successfully nominated, a four week election process will immediately begin.
 - 7.3.6. The Executive Committee shall immediately contact all paid up members to advertise the commencement of the election process.
 - 7.3.7. Through this process the Yorkshire Party will continue to operate as normal, with the Party Leader continuing to act to represent the party, whilst recognising the importance of not using their position to provide undue advantage through the election process.
 - 7.3.8. Every successfully nominated candidate will qualify for inclusion within a digital 'candidate booklet', to be sent to all members at a time of the Returning Officer's choosing
 - 7.3.9. Successfully nominated candidates shall not be provided with any membership lists or data. This will be retained by the Executive Committee, and all communications will be managed by the Executive Committee.
 - 7.3.10. Fourteen days after the commencement of the election process, the election itself will begin. This will be held using the Alternative Vote (AV) system should more than two candidates be successfully nominated.
 - 7.3.11. Should only two be nominated, the election will be contested using First Past the Post.

- 7.3.12. Upon the commencement of the election itself, the Executive Committee shall contact all members again and provide them with a unique voting code, qualifying them to vote.
 - 7.3.13. Voting shall run for a period of fourteen days.
 - 7.3.14. Voting shall close at 23:59 on the fourteenth day after the Executive Committee contacted members to advise them that voting had commenced.
 - 7.3.15. Upon the close of polls, the current Party Leader's term shall end and, following a four day handover period, the successful candidate shall take up their position.
 - 7.3.16. The Executive Committee shall be responsible for counting votes and, without undue delay, reporting the results to the party membership.
 - 7.3.17. The new Party Leader shall formally adopt their role at the next Yorkshire Party Annual Meeting.
- 7.4. The position of Party Chair shall be elected using the same rules in section 7.3, on the years in which the Party Leader is not up for election. In situations where this is not possible, a role may be elected for an interim term.
- 7.5. The Executive Committee will be chosen by a ballot of members.
- 7.5.1. The election will be held using the Single Transferable Vote (STV) system.
 - 7.5.2. The nominated Returning Officer as outlined in section 7.3 shall also be responsible for administering the Executive Committee elections.
 - 7.5.3. The Returning Officer will take account of the overall election principles outlined in section 7.3 when delivering the Executive Committee elections process.
 - 7.5.4. The Party Chair will be responsible for ensuring the Executive Committee election process is undertaken in such a way as to satisfy the principles laid out in section 7.3

8. Annual Meeting

- 8.1. The Annual General Meeting shall be responsible for:
 - 8.1.1. Approving the constitution.
 - 8.1.2. Approving the Treasurer's Report.
 - 8.1.3. Confirming the results of the elections for the Yorkshire Party Executive Committee, Leader and Chair, as outlined in section 7.
- 8.2. Annual General Meetings shall be convened and conducted annually with no more than 16 months between them.
- 8.3. The Annual General Meeting shall be conducted in any appropriate innovative way that is lawful and does not conflict with the constitution of the Yorkshire Party.

9. Resolution of Conflicts

- 9.1. The Executive Committee will retain ultimate and complete authority to act to resolve conflicts.
- 9.2. In exercising this power, the Executive Committee will take into account our operating principles as outlined in section 2.
- 9.3. The process of conflict resolution will follow the agreed internal procedures of the Yorkshire Party to ensure consistent judgements and rights of appeal.

10. Financial Rules

Yorkshire Party Constitution 8

- 10.1. All bank accounts of the Yorkshire Party shall be subject to the authority and scrutiny of the Executive Committee and shall only be opened or closed by resolution of the Executive Committee.
- 10.2. Authorised signatories on cheques, standing orders, direct debits etc. shall always include the person, normally the Treasurer, denoted at the time by the Executive Committee to be responsible for keeping the Party's accounts.
- 10.3. The financial year of the Yorkshire Party will be from 1 January to 31 December.
- 10.4. The Treasurer will prepare financial accounts within four months of the end of the financial year and those accounts to be audited and lodged with the Electoral Commission and any other appropriate body as required by law or regulation.
- 10.5. The Treasurer is responsible for compliance with all financial regulations and reporting requirements.
- 10.6. The Yorkshire Party Leader assumes the responsibility of Treasurer upon resignation until a replacement is adopted.