

*Peter Willsman's*

## **ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2012 GUIDE FOR CLP DELEGATES AND CLP SECRETARIES**

*(Published by The Campaign for Labour Party Democracy  
email – [info@clpd.org.uk](mailto:info@clpd.org.uk) website - <http://www.clpd.org.uk/>)*

*(Also see [www.grassrootslabour.net](http://www.grassrootslabour.net) and [www.leftfutures.org](http://www.leftfutures.org) for a wide range  
of useful information about Party matters, including NEC and NPF reports)*

### **The Conference Agenda**

The following business will comprise the Conference timetable:

The National Executive Committee (NEC) Report and possible late NEC statements that can be issued to delegates during conference. In 1997 under the Partnership in Power document it was agreed that the NEC Report would include, “a report on the resolutions and comments on organisational and campaigning matters submitted to the NEC during the previous year”. This agreement has never been properly honoured.

NPF Report, including reports from the six policy commissions of the National Policy Forum.

Contemporary Motions and Emergency Motions that cover matters that would not otherwise appear on the conference agenda.

An update on Refounding Labour. This will contain a range of proposals for improving the policy making process and may include some proposed changes to the Party's rules.

Proposed rule changes from the NEC and from CLPs. (The rule change proposals from CLPs were submitted last year, but by convention (known as the '1968 Ruling') are not tabled until this year. This convention does not apply to rule change proposals from the NEC).

Elections for the CLP Section of the National Constitutional Committee (NCC) and general section of the Conference Arrangements Committee (CAC).

(Details are set out in written reports from the CAC (ie the initial Delegates Report and daily CAC Reports). The CAC is in near permanent session during Conference and acts as the Standing Orders Committee. Delegates have the right to present any queries directly to the CAC itself. Delegates who feel strongly about a point should insist on this right.)

## Reports from the six Policy Commissions

There are six policy commissions, which draw up policy reports for discussion by the NPF. Each of these commissions reports to Conference. (The NEC is in the process of re-organising the Policy Commissions).

The six policy commissions (each made up of 16-20 members representing the Government, the NEC and the NPF) are: Britain in the World; Creating Sustainable Communities; Crime, Justice, Citizenship and Equalities; Education and Skills; Health; Prosperity and Work.

At last year's Annual Conference, Contemporary Motions on the following subjects were sent to the NPF. Jobs, Growth and Employment Rights; Public Services; Health and Social Care; Housing; Phone hacking. Subsequently each of these Motions has been discussed at the relevant Policy Commission. The best practice is that reps from organisations that submitted the Motions are invited to the discussions. The NPF should report to this year's Conference on the progress of these discussions.

## Contemporary Motions (CMs) from CLPs/affiliated organisations

The closing date for submission of a "contemporary motion" is 12 noon on 21st September. (Emergency Resolutions cover an event that occurs after this date). Each CLP can send one CM provided that they have not already submitted a rule amendment in 2012. Head Office issued guidance on drafting CMs. The heading of the CM should be expressed in 10 words or less (usually with up to 250 words of back up). **CLPs need to ensure** that the subject has not been substantively addressed by the NPF or NEC. In the past this has meant that the CM must relate in some way to something occurring after the end of July. The CM must be on one subject only. CMs on party organisation and campaigning **are in order**. This was clearly spelt out in the Partnership in Power procedures agreed by Conference in 1997, where it specifically referred to the possibility of CMs covering "issues that are not substantively addressed in the organisation and campaigning work of the NEC". However, in recent years the Party's senior officials seem to have forgotten this and have been resistant to such motions.

In the past head office has issued a special form for CMs and it is recommended that this is returned by recorded delivery. But the process may now be entirely electronic, although the Constitutional Unit at HQ will make arrangements for any CLP Secretary without access to a computer (0207 7831334). (The CM is sent electronically by email to the Assistant CAC Secretary but should be followed by a signed hard copy on the special form if there is one).

The time allowed for choosing a CM is very short. In many CLPs the EC, or the officers, are empowered to agree the CM.

Before Conference the CAC makes its decision as to whether each CM is judged to be "contemporary". Usually the CAC contacts the CLP Secretary with its decision a day or two before Conference opens. There is likely to be an appeal process on the

Thursday on the eve of Conference when CLP reps. can put their case directly to the CAC. (See below)

The Campaign for Labour Party Democracy has prepared several draft CMs for consideration by CLPs. These are being circulated to CLPs but are also available on [grassrootslabour.net](http://grassrootslabour.net) or by phoning 01865 244459.

## **Emergency Motions**

Emergency resolutions may be submitted on matters that arise after the final date for submitting Contemporary Motions and, therefore, could not be the subject for a CM. To be valid the issues in an Emergency:

- 🎬 Could not reasonably have been submitted through the Contemporary Motion process
- 🎬 Should not appear elsewhere on the Conference agenda
- 🎬 Should cover an issue of urgent and immediate importance to the discussions of the whole party at Annual Conference
- 🎬 Should not be covered in the NPF Report
- 🎬 Could not have been submitted to the NPF for its consideration

Unfortunately, there can be no guarantee that valid emergency resolutions will be debated at Conference. It is a matter for the CAC – delegates are encouraged to lobby the CAC as necessary.

There is apparently no special form for Emergency Motions. They have to be emailed to the CAC Assistant Secretary. In the past the CLP Secretary has been asked to follow this up by a hard copy signed by the secretary or authorised officer.

## **Refounding Labour Update**

In the months since the 2011 Annual Conference further discussions have taken place, particularly with the unions. The following are the most significant changes that will be introduced:

- 🎬 An online ‘policy hub’. This will publish National Policy Forum (NPF) policy papers. Members (and the general public) will be able to suggest amendments, make comments and have a general argument. There will also be provision for members to engage with the Party’s elected reps on current policy issues outside of the formal NPF process.
- 🎬 A new power for Annual Conference to shape the work of the NPF via a ‘Policy Ballot’, which will identify key topics for consideration. These will then presumably be taken up in NPF policy papers. The ‘Policy Ballot’ will operate alongside and in addition to the existing Priorities Ballot at Conference.
- 🎬 Every June the NPF will consider the policy arguments generated by the NPF policy papers that were published during the previous year (arguments that have taken place in Policy Commissions and on the Hub). The NPF will choose between different political positions on a simple majority basis. Final policy papers will then go to the JPC and then on to Annual Conference for a decision. There seems to be no provision for minority positions at Conference, which is

contrary to the existing arrangements. Conference will simply vote on a take-it-or-leave-it basis. This is a step backwards for party democracy.

- In the year prior to a General Election each Policy Commission will produce a 'final year document', which will draw upon all the previously agreed policy papers from earlier years. At this stage CLPs and affiliates will be able to submit specific amendments for consideration by NPF reps. This is the existing arrangement. It would be much better if CLPs and Unions could submit their amendments direct to Conference, rather than having to rely on the grace and favour of NPF reps.
- Once agreed by the NPF, and then by Conference, the 'final year documents' form the Party's Programme on which the General Election Manifesto is based.
- The current 6 Policy Commissions will be renamed and reorganised to focus on Labour's key priorities. All NPF reps will be able to attend meetings of one Policy Commission.

### **Rule changes from the**

These are set out in the **Delegates Report** issued to delegates before Conference. Advice in relation to these rule changes will be given to delegates in CLPD's daily Campaign Briefing.

### **Rule changes from CLPs (submitted in 2011 but debated in 2012)**

Conference will have the opportunity to debate and vote on the following important rule change proposals. These were submitted in 2011, but under the Party's procedures are not brought forward until 2012. (This procedure is formally called the '1968 Ruling', but it is not really working as it was intended in 1968). But the CLP rule changes are not actually timetabled at Conference unless a request has been made to the CAC by the CLP/delegate (the closing time for making this request is likely to be 5.30pm on Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> September). The safest way is for the CLP Secretary to write to the CAC (c/o Head Office) well before conference. Invariably the platform opposes all rule changes from CLPs, which devalues the whole process.

At the time of writing the following are the most important rule changes from CLPs coming before Conference (full details will be given in the **Delegates Report**). It is vital that delegates ensure that the CLP proposals are given a fair hearing and are not brushed aside. They are in line with the general thrust of the Refounding Labour reforms.

### **Support Rule change from Bridgend CLP**

This is a very important rule change proposal and agreement on this basic principle would be a big step towards restoring a more effective Annual Conference. Bridgend is proposing that CLPs and Unions should have the right to amend NPF documents at Conference. It is absolutely right that party organisations should be able to have their views tabled at our Party's Sovereign body. Bridgend doesn't specify when and how amendments should be submitted. In order to not frighten the powers-that-be too much, it could be agreed that direct amendments from CLPs and

Unions would only be allowed in the year that the final stage policy documents are being considered. It is already the agreed practice that, at this final stage, CLPs and Unions can send amendments to the NPF. But this means that CLPs and Unions have to rely on the grace and favour of NPF reps in order for their amendments to be progressed. If the party leadership are serious about giving more influence to members and CLPs then, at the final policy stage, CLPs and Unions should have the right to submit their policy amendments direct to Conference for a decision. In order to establish this vital principle delegates must vote for the Bridgend rule change. The platform will say that this matter is “under review” and ask for the Bridgend rule change to be remitted into the long grass. Don't be bamboozled! Vote for Bridgend!

### **Support Rule Change from Islington North CLP**

This important rule change seeks to make Annex Reports to Annual Conference from the NPF more democratic. Annex Reports gave an account of the action that the NPF had taken in relation to each of the Contemporary Motions/Issues that were considered by the previous year's Conference, consequent to the Priorities Ballot in that year. Conference could then assess to what extent the Contemporary Motion/Issue had been treated seriously by the NPF. It was a way of holding the NPF to account. But last year no Annex Reports were presented and it looks as if the 'powers-that-be' have redirected them to the long grass. But Conference should have a specific report about what has happened to the Contemporary Motions carried the previous year. Whether these were labelled 'contemporary motions' or 'contemporary issues' is neither here nor there. Annex Reports are an important mechanism of accountability. Minority reports within Annex Reports (as Islington South propose) would be an even stronger mechanism of democracy and accountability. Delegates need to rescue Annex Reports from the long grass by supporting Islington North.

The platform will say that this matter is “under review” and ask for the Islington North rule change to be remitted into the dustbin. Don't be bamboozled! Vote for Islington North!

### **Justice for CLPs!**

In addition to the rule changes from Bridgend and Islington North, a further 12 different rule changes were submitted to this Conference by a grand total of 28 CLPs. All twelve of these rule amendments have been ruled out by the Conference Arrangements Committee (CA). In at least one case the ruling out was completely unjustified and in many cases it was highly questionable. The 28 CLPs that have been brushed aside are: Leyton and Wanstead; Rochford and Southend East; Bury North; Hemsworth; Ilford South; Caerphilly; New Forest East; Tiverton and Honiton; Cardiff Central ; East Devon; Mid Beds; Wolverhampton North East; Banbury; Dulwich and West Norwood; Harrogate and Knaresborough; Holborn and St Pancras; Kettering; Kingston and Surbiton; Nottingham South; Uxbridge and South Ruislip; City of Durham; Cardiff North; Newport West; Salford and Eccles; Stockport; New Forest West; Greenwich and Woolwich; East Lothian.

### **Justice for Leyton and Wanstead and Rochford and Southend East**

An identical rule change from these two CLPs has been ruled out completely illegitimately. The rule change sought to establish the new position of a Party Ombudsperson. This person would investigate all complaints of dubious and unethical conduct within our Party, including complaints against full time party

officials. A cynic might argue that this is precisely why party officials might like to see this particular rule change redirected to the dustbin!

When submitting their rule change the two CLPs simply proposed adding a new clause 10 (establishing a Party Ombudsperson) to Chapter 1 of the Rule Book. And they asked for the existing clauses to be re-numbered. The rule change from the 2 CLPs was correctly printed in last year's Delegates Report. But in the version of the rule change shown subsequently to the CAC the office had added "Delete the current Clause 10". They then used this deletion as the basis for recommending that the Leyton and Rochford rule change be ruled out!!! The office also argued that since "a very similar proposal" from South Ribble CLP was defeated in 2011 then Leyton and Rochford are caught by the '3-year-rule'. But South Ribble was proposing a Code of Ethics for our Party, not an ombudsperson. Also South Ribble was to a different chapter in the Rule Book. The '3-year-rule' states:

***"when party conference has made a decision on a constitutional amendment, no proposal to amend that part of the constitution or rules of the party shall appear on the agenda for a period of three years"***

A completely different chapter is clearly not the same "part" of the constitution!

The definition of the word "part" has a major significance because the CAC has ruled out most of the 12 rule change proposals from the 28 CLPs by employing a blanket application of the word 'part'. They clearly maintain that if there is, say, a gigantic clause, covering lots of different parts/topics, then even the most minor successful rule amendment, to only one small part of that clause, automatically means that nothing whatsoever in the whole clause can be touched for another three years! This has to be an incorrect interpretation. Unfortunately it suggests that the powers-that-be have a deep seated hostility, perhaps subconscious, to what they see as pesky CLPs having ideas above their allotted station. Had the originators of the '3-year-rule' meant 'clause' they would have put 'clause' but they put 'part'. Obviously 'part' was generally intended to be something smaller and more discrete than a whole clause. The CAC needs to give the matter more thought and stop treating CLPs so unfairly. This injustice must be addressed! A completely different chapter is clearly not the same "part" of the constitution!

Delegates must give full support to the attempts by Leyton and Wanstead and Rochford and Southend East to get this injustice addressed.

### **Justice for the other CLPs**

How exactly the word "part" in the extract above is to be defined has a major significance, because the CAC has ruled out most of the 12 rule change proposals from the 28 CLPs by employing a blanket application. They clearly maintain that if there is, say, a gigantic clause, covering lots of different parts/topics, then even the most minor successful rule amendment, to only one small part of that clause, automatically means that nothing whatsoever in the whole clause can be touched for another three years! This has to be an incorrect interpretation. Unfortunately it suggests that the powers-that-be have a deep seated hostility, perhaps subconscious, to what they see as pesky CLPs having ideas above their allotted station. Had the originators of the '3-year-rule' meant 'clause' they would have put 'clause' but they put 'part'. Obviously 'part' was generally intended to be something

smaller and more discrete than a whole clause. The CAC needs to give the matter more thought and stop treating CLPs so unfairly. This injustice must be addressed!

Aggrieved delegates may go to the rostrum and seek redress by challenging the Chair of the CAC. Every delegate should give them full support. It could be your CLP next.

### **Voting for the Conference Arrangement Committee (CAC) and National Constitutional Committee (NCC)**

The CAC has seven members. There are five general section seats (of which two must be women) and two CLP section seats (of whom one must be a woman). In 2012 only the general section is up for election – each CLP has 5 votes in this section.

Biographies of the CAC candidates and information about obtaining the ballot papers at conference are usually issued to CLP secretaries and/or delegates in early September. [The biogs. are usually printed in the Delegates Report]. GCs should then decide how the vote is to be cast. (The votes are recorded and published).

CLP delegates will also vote for their representative on the NCC. It is important that delegates are fully mandated by their CLPs. The candidates' biographies are likely to be sent out in early September and may be sent direct to delegates rather than to the CLP (the biogs are usually printed in the Delegates Report).

The CAC will report on the timing, etc. of all these elections, but the likely times are given below.

The NEC has issued a Code of Conduct for internal elections which includes the following:

- Candidates are allowed to canvass delegates but must not distribute literature inside the conference hall. Contact with delegates must not be carried out in a manner likely to cause offence or be seen to be applying pressure to delegates.
- If one candidate is allowed to distribute literature at an official Labour Party event then that facility must be available to all candidates.
- Labour Party staff employed by the NEC shall not canvass or distribute literature on behalf of any candidate. **(Please immediately inform NEC members and the General Secretary of any infringements or possible infringements of the Code).**

CLPD and the Centre-Left Grassroots Alliance are supporting candidates in the CAC and NCC elections (details from CLPD on 01865 244459). Details will also be given to delegates in our daily Campaign Briefing, distributed outside the Conference Centre.

In early/mid September Head Office issues delegates' credentials, rail tickets and card vote booklets. These were always sent to CLPs, but recently they have gone to regional offices for distribution to delegates at the Pre-Conference Regional Briefing meetings (see below). Conference documents are usually sent to delegates around mid September.

## **Late Accreditation (eg for replacement delegates)**

CLPs can apply to the CAC at Head Office if a replacement delegate becomes necessary.

CLPs should advise the Conference Services Unit in writing and (unless an emergency) well in advance of Conference of any change of delegate giving the reasons. The Conference Unit is in Newcastle and can be contacted by the Head Office switchboard. Due to the tight security arrangements all late registrations at Conference itself involve a long wait. New delegates are therefore advised to attend the Late Accreditation Office of the Conference Services Unit on the Saturday before the start of Conference (the office usually opens at 9am and is open throughout Conference for help and advice). New delegates need to have a letter of authority from the CLP Secretary, personal identification and their Party membership card (delegates must have been a member for at least 12 months). They also need a passport-style photo and full payment.

## **Pre-Conference Regional Briefings**

Before Conference delegates are usually called to at least one briefing meeting in their region. In the last few years the practice has developed of handing delegates who attend these meetings their Conference credentials and other conference material (eg card vote booklets). Any delegates unable to attend these briefings must contact their regional office to make alternative arrangements for obtaining their credentials – any delegate without a credential is denied entry to Conference. Every CLP delegate (including women and youth delegates) should have their own card vote booklet. But when voting for the CAC and NCC only one delegate votes and this should be agreed collectively.

Delegates should be aware that in the past Regional Briefing meetings have occasionally been used, illegitimately, to pressure delegates to follow the platform line on the contentious issues coming before Conference. If delegates encounter this sort of behaviour by party officials they should formally complain at the meeting and to the NEC (and inform CLPD). Some officials even try to suggest that delegates can't be mandated. The rule book is silent on this. It is entirely a matter for the custom and practice in each CLP. Many CLPs do mandate, as do all trade unions.

In recent years a further platform-inspired tactic has developed of regional officials calling groups of delegates out of the hall during Conference sessions to be pressurised by Ministers. Delegates are, of course, at Conference to represent the views of their CLP and are accountable to their own CLP and not to ministers or regional officials. They should stand firm and not be bamboozled. Regional officials may need reminding that they are Party Civil Servants and should, therefore, be impartial at all times. Indeed, the General Secretary has recently written to all Party officials to remind them of their obligations in this regard.

## **Conference Times**

Delegates should arrive early each day, as the security arrangements involve long delays. Any delegate who misplaces documentation will need to report to the CAC



for replacements. (Before Conference opens the Secretary of the CAC can be contacted at the NEC hotel). Delegates need to be in Conference from the start of each session since this is when the CAC gives its very important reports.

The Conference sessions will **probably** be:

Sunday:

14.00 – 17.30	Conference Session	Contemporary Motions ballot (ie Priorities Ballot) (probably 13.00 – 16.00)
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Monday:

9.30 – 12.45	Conference Session	Likely CAC ballot and NCC ballot
14.15 – 16.00	Conference Session	(Probably 9.00 – 16.00)
16.15 – 17.30	Policy Seminars	

Tuesday:

9.30 – 12.00	Conference Session	NPF/JPC 'Priorities for year' ballot (probably in the morning)
14.15 – 16.00	Conference Session	The Leader's Speech is in the afternoon.
16.15 - 17.30	Policy Seminars	

Wednesday:

9.30 – 12.45	Conference Session	The rule changes from CLPs are likely to be first thing Wednesday morning.
14.15 – 16.00	Conference Session	
16.15 – 17.30	Policy Seminars	The Leader's Q and A is in the afternoon.

Thursday:

9.30	Conference Session	
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During the debates there will be a platform introductory speech and a platform reply. And during policy debates members of Policy Commissions will move reports. Ordinary delegates often feel they are not given a fair chance to speak. Platform speakers usually make lengthy speeches but ordinary delegates, if they are lucky enough to be called, are strictly limited to three minutes.

## Daily Business

### **Thursday 27 September (in London) and/or perhaps later at Manchester**

In the last few years the CAC has adopted the practice of being in session on the eve of Conference. This is in order to receive appeals from CLPs and affiliates that have had their contemporary motions ruled as not "contemporary" and, therefore, not appropriate for the Priorities Ballot. The CAC may also hear appeals concerning rule changes ruled out of order. CLP reps are invited to this meeting and where possible this right should be exercised. Written appeals will also be considered and there is the possibility of a telephone conference. It has to be said that major unions have had much more success than CLPs at getting the CAC to reverse its decisions. Nevertheless, it is always worth a try. Contemporary Motions that are ruled out, are not published and are referred to the NPF or NEC, whichever is appropriate. In effect they disappear without trace.

### **Sunday**

CAC Report No 1 (and the Delegates Report) moved by the Chair of the CAC. CAC Report 1 gives details of the definitively agreed timetable for the week. Delegates who feel the CAC has acted unfairly should challenge the CAC's position by moving

“reference back”. It is likely that CLPs, who have had their rule amendments ruled out unfairly under the 3-year-rule, will challenge the CAC on Sunday. In the interests of party democracy they should be given full support. Each day there is at least one report from the CAC some are written some are verbal. All of these can be challenged if a delegate is not satisfied with what is being said. The written CAC reports which set out the days’ business etc, are handed to delegates as they enter the Conference Hall. They can also be obtained from the Labour Party stand or the CAC office.

The Party produces a conference newspaper, which is usually available inside entry points to the centre every morning. The paper contains the very important daily Record of Decisions. Delegates should keep these for reporting back purposes.

In 2012, ballot and card vote results may be published in the daily CAC Reports.

### **The Priorities Ballot**

Those Contemporary Motions that slip through the CAC’s nets and reach Conference will be grouped into subjects and published in CAC Report 1 available on Sunday morning at delegation meetings, from the Party stand and when delegates enter the Conference Hall. These subject headings then go into the Priorities Ballot, which will be held on Sunday, probably between 1.30pm and 4.00pm. The Ballot opens before Conference opens, and therefore delegates are prevented from overturning any controversial decisions by the CAC in relation to what are, and what are not, valid Contemporary Motions. Thus, for the first time ever, the CAC is not accountable to Conference in respect of a major part of its decision-making powers.

### **Don’t Waste your Vote**

Following pressure from the rank and file, and a successful rule change from several CLPs, supported by the unions, the procedure used to calculate the result of the Priorities Ballot has been changed. It has now been agreed to adopt a ‘4 and 4’ formula. This guarantees that the top four motion subjects voted on by the unions and the top four subjects voted on by the CLPs, will be debated. So, for example, if the CLPs and affiliates both vote for three of the same subjects, with a fourth subject that is different, then there would be five debates on contemporary motion subjects. Thus, if CLP delegates want to make maximum use of this rare opportunity to control what conference debates, they should seek to ensure that eight subjects are chosen (four by the Unions and four different ones by the CLPs). This means that CLP delegates must **not** vote for any of the four subjects that are favoured by the Unions, since to do so is to waste your vote. The four subjects that the Unions will choose are known well in advance of the Priorities Ballot (the Unions vote as a block to ensure they get the four they want). On the Sunday morning, before the Priorities Ballot takes place, CLPD will give CLP delegates advice about the four subjects the Unions have chosen. This advice will be given at CLPD’s rally on Sunday morning and in the Sunday edition of CLPD’s **Campaign Briefing** handed to delegates outside the conference centre.

### **Sunday evening – CM meetings**

The delegates involved with the successful CMs emerging from the Priority Ballot (announced at the end of the Sunday afternoon session) will be requested to attend

meetings, probably on Sunday evening. Every delegate must attend, unless they are given permission by the CAC to be absent. At these meetings delegates will meet the relevant NEC Policy Commission co-convenor and shadow ministers to discuss how the subject could be taken forward. Speakers to propose and second the subject on the Conference floor will also be chosen. (After debate at Conference the subject is remitted to the Policy Commission for deliberation over the next 12 months. Reps from those organisations involved with the subject should be invited to these deliberations – that is the best practice established by some commissions.

At the Sunday evening meetings the various CMs are usually “composited” together into one or more composite motions. At this meeting each organisation has equal standing. The delegates alone are in charge of compositing and decisions are reached collectively. Don’t be bamboozled by ‘helpful’ officials or shadow ministers. Don’t allow material into a composite that contradicts or negates other material – be alert for wrecking tactics.

### **Tuesday – Voting on the NPF’s priorities for the year**

This is a new initiative and flows from the Refounding Labour consultation. The idea is that Conference will give the work of the NPF a steer by agreeing a number of priorities. On Tuesday the NPF and its governing body, the JPC, will present a list of possible priorities from which Conference will choose in a ballot. At the time of writing the actual mechanisms of this ballot were still being discussed.

### **Referring back sections of the CAC reports and NEC reports**

A delegate who wishes formally to challenge any recommendation by the CAC goes to the rostrum immediately after the Chair of the CAC has made a report and moves “reference back” of the relevant section of the CAC report. This is the established procedural convention, which ensures a vote on the point raised, and, if carried, is effectively a defeat for the platform.

Delegates also have the right to force a vote on any point in the NEC report by formally moving “reference back”. Delegates should have the same democratic right in relation to NPF/Policy Commission documents and NEC statements but this has been denied, despite the following statement in the Partnership in Power documents in 1997 – “Conference can refer back to the JPC the relevant section of the NPF Report if it is felt not to represent the view of the Party”. Instead delegates, who may only object to one or two sentences, are forced to move reference back of the whole document. This, of course, suits the platform but is out of line with the basic democracy that operates elsewhere in the Party.

The platform is invariably very unsympathetic to the right of “reference back”. Nevertheless delegates should stand firm and insist on their democratic rights.

### **Voting at Conference**

Voting at Conference is normally by hand unless a card vote is requested by a delegate or by the chair (voting on rule changes is always by card – delegates need to keep their wits about them. Quite often the platform gets in a muddle, which makes the situation doubly confusing).

## Making a Speech

**Note – Speakers from the floor are usually only allowed 3 minutes.**

The makings of a good speech:

- Thorough preparation. Set out your aims and plan the structure. assemble a few choice facts but don't overdo it – speeches that are a list of facts turn the listeners off.
- Write the speech out in bold clear writing; always use short punchy sentences and shorter words rather than longer.
- Try to find a startling beginning or try working backwards from a stunning conclusion.
- Develop an easy and logical progression of ideas.
- Brief personal anecdotes can be helpful for illustrating a point.
- Properly rehearse the speech several times in front of friends.
- Time the speech to the precise minute.
- Remember everyone is nervous before giving a speech to Annual Conference. This is natural.
- At the outset say who you are and give your organisation. Indicate which resolution(s) you are speaking in favour of/against.
- Stand easily. Avoid making distracting gestures. Don't move about – the microphone has a short range.
- Often a major argument is built up or emphasised by rhetorically asking three short questions/making three bullet points and raising the voice as you do this.
- Vary the pitch.
- Pauses for effect are a useful tool.
- Clarity of speech, so the audience understands each word.
- The knack is speaking to listeners and not at them.
- Conclude with a flourish

Always remember:

- Matter, Manner and Method
- Preparation, Practice, Pace, Pauses, Pitch and Punch.

Finally some Don'ts

- Learn your speech by heart and then recite it.
- Speak so quickly that your listeners can't follow.
- Speak in a monotone.
- Harangue or shout.
- Give lengthy statistics.
- Patronise your listeners.
- Over-use slang expressions.
- Use jargon.
- Contrive to introduce humour or tell off-colour jokes. If a joke falls flat, ignore it and continue.
- Be apologetic.
- Name dropping should be avoided.

Movers and seconders of CMs and CLP rule changes should get together and aim to make their speeches complement each other, rather than repeating the same points. But vital points are worth repeating in both speeches. Votes on rule changes are always by card vote. At other times delegates have the right to demand a card vote and this right is set out in the CAC's advice booklet issued to delegates.

### **Having difficulty? Consult CLPD**

CLPD are always available to give advice. Before Conference we can be contacted by phone – 01865 244459. At Conference we can be found outside in the street distributing our daily Campaign Briefing (the 'yellow pages') – a must for all delegates and visitors! Indeed, Michael White of The Guardian has been on record to describe Campaign Briefing as "indispensable".

CLPD's website, together with [www.grassrootslabour.net](http://www.grassrootslabour.net) and [www.leffutures.org](http://www.leffutures.org), contain a wealth of both up-to-date and archive material about all aspects of Party activity.

### **After Conference – Decisions Booklet**

After Conference a Record of Decisions booklet is published. This gives full details of each day's business. It also gives a breakdown of the election results for the CAC and NCC and the voting record of each CLP is published.

## **HAVE A GOOD CONFERENCE !**

Peter Willsman (phone 01865 244459)

Peter Willsman has uniquely represented CLPs on all four of the Party's national bodies: CAC (1981 - 94); NCC (1995 – 98); NEC (1998 – 99 and 2005-10); NPF (1998 – 99 and 2002-2010).

As necessary, please photocopy this Guide for other members. It can be downloaded at [www.clpd.org.uk](http://www.clpd.org.uk) and at [www.grassrootslabour.net](http://www.grassrootslabour.net)

Regular and full NEC and NPF reports are available at [www.grassrootslabour.net](http://www.grassrootslabour.net)  
Also see [www.leffutures.org](http://www.leffutures.org) for very useful material.

### **CLPD sponsored events at Conference 2012**

#### **Sunday 30 September (10.30am Bar 38 Peter Street, adjacent to secure area)**

CLPD Rally and detailed briefing for delegates of the key issues coming up at Conference.

#### **Wednesday 3 October (6pm Bar 38 Peter Street, adjacent to secure area)**

Assessment of Conference and discussion of the way forward for Labour.

## Support the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy

Annual rates: £20 individuals; £5 unwaged and low waged (under £8,000); £25 couples (£6 unwaged); £25 national & regional organisations; £15 CLPs, TUs and Co-op Parties; £5 CLP branches.

I/we enclose £ ..... subscriptions/renewal/donation (cheques made out to  
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Return to CLPD Treasurer; 157 North Street, Luton, LU2 7QH  
(CLPD has an email group; we also have a regional organiser in each region to co-ordinate local activity).