

*Peter Willisman's*

## **ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2016 GUIDE FOR CLP DELEGATES AND CLP SECRETARIES**

### **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 and we need to address this oversight.
- NPF Report, including reports from the seven policy commissions of the National Policy Forum.
- Contemporary Motions and Emergency Motions that cover matters that would not otherwise appear on the conference agenda.
- 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).
- Election for the CLP Section of the National Constitutional Committee (NCC).

(Details are set out in written reports from the Conference Arrangements Committee (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.)

[If CLP secretaries have any general conference queries before conference they should contact Conference Services on 0845 092 3311 or [conferenceservices@labour.org.uk](mailto:conferenceservices@labour.org.uk)]

### **Reports from the seven Policy Commissions**

There are currently seven policy commissions, which draw up policy reports for discussion by the NPF. Each of these commissions reports to conference.

The seven policy commissions (each made up of 16-20 members representing the shadow cabinet, the NEC and the NPF) are: Economy (Building a productive economy); International (Britain's security and defence priorities); Communities (housing policy); Health and Care (Mental Health); Children and Education (Early years); Home Affairs (Crime and policing); Transport.

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

The closing date for submission of a "contemporary motion" is 12 noon on 15th 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 2016. Head Office has issued guidance on drafting CMs. The CM must be no more than 250 words. **CLPs need to ensure** that the subject has not been substantively addressed by the NPF or NEC. This year this means that the CM must relate in some way to something arising after 5<sup>th</sup> August. 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.

Contemporary motions are submitted online via Membersnet – if you have any difficulties/queries or would prefer a form, contact the Assistant Secretary of the CAC, (0207 783 1498).

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". The CAC then contacts the CLP Secretary with its decision. There is an appeal process on the eve of conference when CLP reps can put their case directly to the CAC. (See below).

### **Emergency Motions**

Emergency resolutions may be submitted on matters that arise after the final date for submitting Contemporary Motions. To be valid the issues in an Emergency:

- Could not reasonably have been the subject of a Contemporary Motion.
- Should cover an issue of urgent and immediate importance to the discussions of the whole party at Annual Conference

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 (0207 783 1376). In the past the CLP Secretary has been asked to follow this up by a hard copy signed by the secretary or authorised officer.

## **Rule changes from the NEC**

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 Yellow Pages.

## **Rule changes from CLPs (submitted in 2015 but debated in 2016)**

- **Rule change from East Devon CLP – ruled out by CAC**

This very good rule change provides for Party and TU Branches to be able to interview prospective Parliamentary candidates as part of the selection process. It has been ruled out under the three-year-rule on grounds these procedures were part of the remit of the Collins Report in 2014. But the three-year-rule does not say that a rule change is out of order if its subject matter is vaguely referred to in a conference document. No, the 'three-year-rule' is very precise and specific; it says, "when Party Conference has made a decision on a constitutional amendment, no resolution to amend the constitution or rules of the Party, having the same or a similar primary objective, shall appear on the agenda of the three following annual party conferences", (for information, a "constitutional amendment" is a more formal way of describing a rule change). But, of course, Collin's was a document, not a rule change and so it is invalid to vaguely quote "Collin's".

The East Devon delegate may move "reference back" of the CAC Report on Sunday morning. Please give East Devon full support.

- **Rule Changes on agenda from CLPs – Full Support! (the NEC may find an excuse for opposing them)**

- (1) **From Bury North, Exeter and Blackpool North and Clevellys**

This rule change will ensure that CLPs always have 4 Priority subjects to move.

- (2) **From Mid-Beds and 6 other CLPs**

This rule change would give every CLP and TU the right to submit a rule change AND a Contemporary Motion, not one or the other.

- (3) **From Sheffield Heeley**

At present Conference has to vote on huge policy documents on a take-it-or-leave-it basis. It might be that only one paragraph is controversial. This rule change provides for the deletion of the paragraph.

- (4) **From Wimbledon**

This rule change removes the unhelpful word "contemporary" and would mean that each year a CLP or TU could submit a motion on any issue it prefers. Obviously if it is not a crucial issue, then it won't be chosen in the Priorities Ballot and disappear without trace.

- **Leader to be automatically on ballot paper**

This summer we had malcontents taking the Party to court on this matter (and then losing). This wasted a lot of staff time. The problem was the rules were not crystal clear. This year some 31 CLPs have submitted a rule change making it crystal clear. They would normally go to the 2017 Conference but the NEC has, very wisely, agreed that the rule change will be put at Liverpool. Thus preventing any further time wasting.

### **Voting for the National Constitutional Committee (NCC)**

At conference CLP delegates will vote for one representative on the NCC. It is important that delegates are fully mandated by their CLPs. Mandating is in order. The TUs always mandate. The Rule Book is silent on this issue so CLPs are able to act as they wish. 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 this election, but the likely time is 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 a candidate in the NCC election (details from CLPD on 01865 244459). Details will also be given to delegates in our daily Yellow Pages, distributed outside the Conference Centre.

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

CLPs can apply to the CAC if a replacement delegate becomes necessary. Contact the Assistant Secretary of the CAC, 0207 783 1498 (before/during Conference). At Conference, CAC office, Terrace Suite (first floor of the Exhibition Centre).

If the delegate is replaced at the last minute then the transfer can be arranged at conference. 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). The Concourse, Echo Arena at Albert Dock. 0345 0923311 (before and during Conference). 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.

### **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 (rail tickets through the pooled fare scheme, will be sent to home addresses). 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 NCC only one delegate votes and this should be agreed collectively. Card vote booklets are given to delegates by regional officials before conference starts on Sunday. Otherwise they can be collected from the Ballot Area.

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.

Delegates are, of course, at conference to represent the views of their CLP and are accountable to their own CLP and not to 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 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:

Saturday

12.00 – 17.00 Women’s Conference [The declaration of the Party leadership ballot will be just before midday]

Sunday:

11.00 – 12.45 Conference Session Contemporary Motions ballot (ie Priorities Ballot) (between 10.30 – 15.00)  
14.15 – 17.30 Conference Session

Monday:

9.30 – 12.45 Conference Session NPF – Priorities for the Year Ballot (9.00 – 16.00)  
14.15 – 16.00 Conference Session  
16.15 – 17.30 Policy Seminars (Probably International, Economy and Communities)

Tuesday:

9.30 – 11.45 Conference Session NCC ballot (CLPs) in Ballot Area (9 – 16.00)  
The rule changes from CLPs are likely to be taken first thing Tuesday morning after the rule changes from the NEC are taken.

14.15 – 16.00 Conference Session  
16.15 – 17.30 Policy Seminars (Probably Health and Care, Children and Education, EU Referendum).

Wednesday:

9.00 – 10.15 Policy Seminars (Probably Transport, Home affairs, Equalities, Civil Society and Political Reform)

10.30 – 12.00 Conference Session  
14.15 – 16.00 Conference Session The Leader’s Speech is in the afternoon.

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.

Sometimes the platform asks for an aspect of conference business to be “remitted”. Delegates should be aware that a former Party Leader remarked that “in the Labour Party remission is tantamount to defeat”.

**Daily Business**

**Before Conference (in London)**

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. (The CAC meeting is Wednesday afternoon 21st September in London). 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 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. After 7am each day they can be downloaded from Membersnet.

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 2016, ballot and card vote results are likely to 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 10.30am and 3pm. 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 Saturday evening and in the Sunday edition of CLPD's **Yellow Pages** handed to delegates outside the conference centre.

### **Sunday evening – Compositing meetings for CMs chosen by the Priority Ballot**

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, on Sunday evening to draw up composite motions (unless, of course, only one CM was submitted on a subject). Every delegate must attend, unless they are given permission by the CAC to be absent and in this case the words of their motion can be used. 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. Delegates should be aware that if the mover of the composite withdraws support, the composite falls. The mover "owns" the composite. (After debate and vote at conference the subject is referred to the Policy Commission for deliberation. 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. A document covering the procedure can be downloaded from Membersnet and will be available at the meetings. Delegates are entitled to take along their own draft composites (take at least 20 copies of each draft) 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. Only words from the CMs may be used to form the composite, although linking and bridging words may be permitted and changes in tense.

Delegates have the right to opt for their motions to stand alone outside the composite.

### **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 takes place at the end of a session.

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). The result of card votes are weighted to give 50% of the total votes cast to CLPs and 50% to affiliates. Abstentions are not recorded.

## **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 Yellow Pages – a must for all delegates and visitors! Indeed, Michael White of The Guardian has been on record to describe Yellow Pages as “indispensable”.

CLPD's website, together with [www.grassrootslabour.net](http://www.grassrootslabour.net) and [www.leftfutures.org](http://www.leftfutures.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 was always published. This gave full details of each day's business. It also gave a breakdown of the election results for the CAC and NCC and the voting record of each CLP. Unfortunately in the last couple of years this has not happened. Nevertheless, a considerable amount of the information is published on [membersnet](http://membersnet).

## **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, 2005-10 and 2015 onwards); NPF (1998 – 99, 2002-2010 and 2015 onwards).

As necessary, please copy this Guide to 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.leftfutures.org](http://www.leftfutures.org) for very useful material.

## **CLPD events at Conference 2016**

### **CLPD Conference events 2016**

#### **Labour Party Conference (Liverpool)**

Saturday 24 September 6pm	Tuesday 27 September 6pm
CLPD Rally and Delegates Briefing	Conference Assessment
Both at Yacht Club Coburg Wharf	