



## Women's Equality Party Conference

26 November 2022

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Title: **Steering Committee Remit between Conferences**

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Proposed by: **Fodo Higginson**

Seconded by: Charlotte McCandlish

Proposer: **Fodo Higginson**

Signatories:

Ali Ceesay  
Amanda Simpson  
Bev Barstow  
Clarissa Fabre  
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Helen Everett  
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Magda Devas

Morven Magari  
Rae Webster  
Roxanne Tandridge  
Ruth Wilkinson  
Sarah Crofts  
Val Carpenter

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Type of motion: **Business motion**

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### **Motion text:**

1 Conference:

2 1) Confirms Party Conference is the supreme governing body of the Party.

3 2) Clarifies the Steering Committee's powers between conferences are set out in the  
4 Constitution along with the Steering Committee Business Motion 2020 Sections: E1) and E2).

5 3) Asserts that:

- 6 • Strategic decision making does not include the power to make major amendments to the  
7 Constitution between conferences.  
8 • The Steering Committee can use its powers under s4.11.1 to choose members of the  
9 Policy Committee, but these powers do not extend to refusing to hold elections for vacant  
10 positions.
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- 11 4) Resolves that the Steering Committee have training in the Constitution and extent of Steering  
12 Committee members' powers.
- 13 5) Asserts that referrals back from Conference should be fully actioned by the appropriate  
14 committee/s, by the next conference – this includes previous referrals.
- 15 6) Agrees that approved WEP caucuses should be temporarily suspended from holding seats on  
16 the Steering Committee pending the Steering Committee revisiting 'in discussion with groups'  
17 (as per Section 7.5.4 of the Constitution) the 'criteria for recognising official WE caucuses, for  
18 specifying their rights and for approving their status' including consideration of giving caucuses  
19 seats on the Steering Committee.

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20 **Motion rationale:**

21 We believe that since the last Conference Steering Committee have acted unconstitutionally:

- 22 1. By refusing to hold elections for the Policy Committee  
23 2. By establishing some Caucuses without due regard to S7.5.4  
24 3. By not fully undertaking previous referrals from conference.

25 This motion seeks to ensure the SC do not overstep their remit in future. This is important for  
26 democracy within the Party and for the message sent outside the Party. It's not conceivable that the  
27 SC have ever been given the powers they have exerted this year as they would be able to  
28 effectively do anything they choose and disregard the constitution.

29 The Constitution <https://rb.gy/knodex> states:

30 **6.1** *Party Conference is the Party's governing body and functions as the ultimate policy- and*  
31 *decision-making body for the Party*

32 **4.2** *Party Conference shall be the supreme governing body of the Party... ..and is responsible for*  
33 *policy- and decision-making, subject only to the terms of this Constitution.*

34 The SC has certain powers between conferences but cannot make major changes to the  
35 constitution, such as amend the structure of the PC which is clearly defined in S7.6.1 and  
36 mechanism for electronic voting in S4.11.1.

37 On 12<sup>th</sup> August 2021 The Chair of the SC announced postponement of PC elections for 9 vacancies  
38 and formation of a Democracy Commission. In doing so the SC initiated the demise of the PC to 3,  
39 rather than 18, elected representatives. The Democracy Commission have made no contact with  
40 members and shared no recommendations.

41 On 24<sup>th</sup> January 2022 several branches and members sent a letter of concern to all members of the  
42 SC. <https://rb.gy/qvaooov>. On 26<sup>th</sup> January 2022 this letter was acknowledged, but no response was  
43 forthcoming.

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44 A Business motion from 2020 <https://rb.gy/nsl60z> extended powers to the SC outwith Conference.  
45 The rationale behind Clause E was intended to allow for the impact of other motions on the  
46 constitution.

47 In a separate matter regarding Caucuses we believe the SC have acknowledged they acted outwith  
48 their powers. S7.5.4 States *the SC “is responsible in discussion with groups for drawing up criteria*  
49 *for recognising official WE caucuses, for specifying their rights and for approving their status.”* The  
50 rationale was to *“ensure that potential caucuses are all subject to the same criteria, to be*  
51 *recognised by the party. This is necessary to maintain a fair, democratic process.”* We believe that  
52 no such consultation has taken place; the SC have endorsed some caucuses, giving them access to  
53 the membership and each an unelected seat on the SC.

54 It’s important that internal committee representatives recognise that conference is the decision  
55 making body of the party and that any referrals back from conference are fully acted on. E.g. the PC  
56 initiated a members consultation process around self ID, but 4 years on this hasn’t been completed.

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