
Scottish Socialist Party Constitution

Updated March 2006

AIMS & PRINCIPLES

- 1 Our name shall be the “Scottish Socialist Party (SSP)”.
- 2 The SSP stands for the socialist transformation of society. To replace capitalism with an economic system based on democratic ownership and control of the key sectors of the economy. A system based on social need and environmental protection rather than private profit and ecological destruction.
- 3 The SSP will provide political support and solidarity to all those who are involved in fighting back against injustice, whether it be trade unionists, community organisations, tenants groups, anti motorway protesters, anti nuclear protesters, animal rights campaigners, anti racist organisations and other campaigns and protest movements.
- 4 The SSP will oppose discrimination in any form on the basis of race, religion, language, nationality, sex, sexual orientation, age or disability.
- 5 The SSP will campaign for an independent socialist Scotland with the aim of establishing a Scottish socialist republic in a broader alliance of democratic socialist states. Recognising that in Scotland sovereignty resides, and ought to reside in the people, the republic will always seek the people’s prior consent to any transfer of powers outwith Scotland.
- 6 The SSP actively promotes the international solidarity of the working class and oppressed to defeat capitalism and imperialism. While preserving its political and constitutional autonomy the SSP will build the closest possible links with socialists in England and Wales, across Europe and world wide. The SSP stands ultimately for a new socialist world, where poverty, starvation, environmental destruction, exploitation, war and racial hatred are eradicated.

STRUCTURES & PROCEDURES

1. Preamble

The SSP is a new, developing party ready to learn from our members' experience of campaigns and struggle, as well as from those outwith the party. We envisage that our structures will continue to develop over time in the light of circumstances, experience and full consultation with the membership.

2. Membership

- 2.1 An individual member of the SSP is someone who accepts the Aims & Objectives, agrees to abide by the constitution and pays subs. Members are encouraged to participate in the SSP and promote Scottish Socialist Voice. Branches will normally accept new members.
- 2.2 A branch can consider people as members if they have agreed to join, agreed and paid a membership subscription and are no more than six months in arrears with their membership subscriptions.
- 2.3 Trade union bodies – including trade union branches, shop steward committees and district, regional or national level trade union organisations - can affiliate to the SSP. Affiliated organisations have the right of representation to Regional Councils and National Council. All representatives from affiliates must also be individual SSP members.
- 2.4 Individual subscription and affiliation rates will be decided by National Conference.

Affiliation fees are negotiable, but aim at a minimum of £50 a year for every 500 affiliated members or part thereof.

Individual minimum membership rates are £2 per month (amounts can be varied by National Conference and the National Council). However, members are encouraged to pay a higher rate if they can afford it. Standard recommendations are £12 waged per month, £6 low waged per month and £3 unwaged per month. Members themselves determine what subscription rate they are on and whether their sub should be varied up or down from the standard rate. Member are encouraged to pay more than the standard rate when possible but it is also recognised that some members may have individual circumstances that will result in lower subs rates.

- 2.5 (a) The SSP seeks to build a broad, pluralist and inclusive party. It is important that all members and affiliates participate within the SSP in this positive manner.
- (b) Members and affiliates are encouraged to recognise that different opinions are valued and diversity and dissent is positive.
- (c) The SSP strives for an internal atmosphere of openness, tolerance and respect where everyone is encouraged to fully participate at all levels.
- (d) The SSP is opposed to racism, sexism, sectarianism, homophobia and all forms of

discrimination. Members and affiliates should reflect this in their language and behaviour.

3. Branches

- 3.1 The SSP organises vigorously at local branch level. The SSP recognises that healthy and active branches are the building blocks of party progress.
- 3.2 Branches are organised on geographical areas, generally based on electoral boundaries. Branch members in liaison with their Regional Council can agree to subdivide their branch to create new branches. Regional Councils have overall responsibility for the creation of new branches, branch amalgamations etc.
- 3.3 Individual members should normally be part of the branch based on the geographical area where they live. In some cases however, an individual member may find it more appropriate to be part of a branch based on where they work or study – but this should be agreed with the Regional Organiser covering the area where the member lives. If a member does not agree with the decision of the regional organiser, they can appeal to the Regional Council (where the member lives).
- 3.4 In exceptional cases (such as to help establish a new branch) a regional council may decide to second a member(s) to other branch.
- 3.5 Branches should aim to meet fortnightly but meet at least monthly and aim to organise activities (eg further meetings, stalls, leafleting etc) at least on a fortnightly basis.
- 3.6 (a) Branches will organise an Annual General Meeting (AGM) at which a Chairperson, a Secretary/organiser, a Membership Secretary, a Treasurer, a Paper Organiser, and any other positions agreed by the branch to be necessary shall be elected. Branch delegates to Regional Council and National Council and any other appropriate delegations shall also be elected at the AGM.
- (b) Vacant positions, or positions created to meet a newly-identified need, may be filled by election at an ordinary branch meeting if members have been given proper notice.
- 3.7 Members should be informed of all branch meetings and activities. Members should receive at least two weeks notice of the branch AGM, candidate selection meetings and any other branch meetings at which elections are to take place (such as the selection of the National Conference delegation).

4. Regional Bodies

- 4.1 The SSP organises in eight regions: Highlands & Islands, North East Scotland, Central Scotland,

Mid-Scotland & Fife, Glasgow, West of Scotland, Lothian, and South of Scotland.

- 4.2 (a) In each region a Regional Council will be responsible for co-ordinating and prioritising campaigning and organisational activities, for assisting in the creation and building of branches and for encouraging political education within the framework of the decisions of the SSP's national structures.

- (b) Regional Councils will aim to meet monthly.

- (c) Regional Councils will consist of two delegates from each branch, one delegate from each regional Network, delegates from regional affiliates and the regional officers (including the Regional Organiser(s)). The branch delegation will normally consist of the branch secretary and one other delegate elected at the branch AGM.

Union branches, Trades Union Councils and stewards committees can affiliate to the appropriate SSP Regional Council (Committee), currently based on the 8 Scottish parliamentary regions. Each union affiliate would be entitled to 2 delegates – who must be individual SSP members – to the appropriate SSP Regional Council(s). This would be based on the location of the workplace(s) organised in that union body, with the right of union branches which organise in workplaces situated in more than one Region to send 2 delegates to each of the SSP Regional Councils covering such workplaces. Each delegate would have one vote at each SSP Regional Council. No individual union delegate could be delegated to more than one SSP Regional Council.

- (d) Trade Union organisations can also affiliate at this level.

- (e) Branches, regional networks, regional affiliates, the Regional Organiser(s), and other regional officers have the right to submit motions to Regional Council.

- (f) Regional Council (Committee) minutes and minutes of other regional meetings should be forwarded to the branches/affiliates in the region (this can be done via branch/affiliate delegates) and the national Executive Committee for information.

- 4.3 In each region a Regional Organiser(s) will be responsible for implementing the decisions of Regional Council and regional aggregates, giving political and strategic advice and co-ordinating the work of branches and other regional bodies in liaison with other regions and the SSP's national structures.

- 4.4 (a) A regional AGM shall take place at which all members of the region shall be entitled to participate and vote.

- (b) The regional AGM will elect the Regional Organiser(s), a regional chairperson, a regional secretary, a regional treasurer, and any other regional officers agreed by the Regional Council or regional aggregate to be necessary. Candidates for election at the regional AGM will require the nomination of one branch from the region.
 - (c) The Regional Organiser(s) and other regional officers will provide a written report to the regional AGM on their activities over the previous year and their plans for the future.
 - 4.5 In addition to the regional AGM, the Regional Council may agree to call an aggregate meeting of all members within the region at any time in order to involve the whole membership in the discussion of an important issue.
 - 4.6 Regional Councils/regional aggregates can elect sub committees as necessary to develop campaign and political education proposals and to organise events. Sub committees do not have to consist of delegates to the Regional Council, but are accountable to the Regional Council and regional aggregate.
 - 4.7 (a) Regional AGMs should elect local government committees to cover council areas where SSP councillors are elected in order to co-ordinate the party's activities in relation to the council. Local government committees should consist of the SSP's councillors, the Regional Organiser, representatives of the Regional Council, and one representative of each branch in the area covered by the council.
 - (b) Each local government committee is accountable to the Regional Council and regional aggregate, which may endorse, amend or reject its proposals. Local government committees should circulate regular reports on their activities and proposals.
- 5. National Council**
- 5.1 National Council is responsible for implementing party policy between conferences and monitoring the work of the Executive Committee, standing committees and sub committees/working parties. It is the body that takes stock, learns lessons and readjusts strategy where necessary between conferences as well as implementing policy agreed at conference.
 - 5.2 (a) National Council will consist of the Executive Committee, branch delegates, national network delegates, one Scottish Socialist Youth delegate, one delegate from the SSP's student groups, and (when applicable) national affiliate delegates. National Council will aim to meet at least every two months. In addition the following office bearers are members of the National Council (if not already members of the EC): the Press and Publicity Officer, the Assistant Secretary/Minutes, the International Co-ordinator, the trade union co-ordinator, the second editor of the Scottish Socialist Voice, and all Regional Organisers.
 - (b) Branches should elect a minimum of two delegates per branch (for the first 40 members and then an additional delegate for each additional 20, or part of 20).
 - (c) Unions at national level can affiliate to the SSP nationally, with each national union entitled to 1 delegate per 1,000 union members or part thereof to the SSP National Council – all delegates must be individual SSP members (national conference/national council can review the size of union delegations as the number of affiliations grows). The union would determine how best to democratically elect such delegates. Each delegate would have one vote at the SSP National Council.
 - (d) Branches and affiliates should seek a gender balance in their delegations. Branches should ensure that at least one member of a delegation of two is a women and that larger delegations consist of at most one more man than a women, eg, a delegation of three should include at least one women, but a delegation of four should include at least two women.
 - (e) All national Networks have the right to send one delegate to National Council.
 - (f) All registered platforms/tendencies have the right to send observers to the National Council.
 - (g) All national office bearers and national spokespersons who are not delegates to National Council are encouraged to attend and participate as observers.
 - 5.3 Branches, national networks, national affiliates, the national structures of Scottish Socialist Youth and the SSP's student groups, and the Executive Committee have the right to send motions and amendments to National Council.
 - 5.4 The National Council can elect sub committees/working parties as necessary to look in detail at specific areas of policy development, to develop campaign proposals and to organise events. Sub committees/working parties do not have to consist of delegates to National Council, but are accountable to National Council. Sub committees/working parties should report to the Executive Committee and National Council. The minutes of sub-committee and working group meetings should be forwarded to the national Executive Committee and National Council for information.
 - 5.5 The National Council has the right to call a Special Conference if it considers this to be necessary. A Special Conference can also be called by a signed requisition of 20% of the members.

- 5.6 The National Council should attempt to meet every two months. The National Council should circulate minutes of its meetings to branches.

6. Executive Committee

- 6.1 The Executive Committee provides political and strategic leadership and is responsible for the day to day running of the party. The Executive Committee is accountable for all its actions to National Council and National Conference.
- 6.2 (a) The Executive Committee consists of the National Convenor, National Secretary, National Co-Chairs, National Treasurer, the SSV Editor, the National Trade Union Co-ordinator and 14 members directly elected at National Conference.
- (b) To ensure gender balance for the directly elected positions National Conference will elect seven women by STV and seven men by STV.
- (c) If no member of the Executive Committee is a member of a branch in one of the SSP's eight regions, the candidate from that region with the highest number of votes in the election for directly-elected places will serve as a member of the Executive Committee.
- (d) The Regional Organisers, the Minutes Secretary and the Press and Publicity Co-ordinator can attend Executive Committee meetings as observers. The relevant office bearers, spokespersons and committee members should be entitled to observe discussions of the Executive Committee related to their field of responsibility.
- 6.3 (a) The National Secretary and National Co-Chairs in liaison with the Executive Committee will draw up the agenda for each National Council meeting.
- (b) The Executive Committee should refer all major decisions to National Council. This does not preclude the Executive Committee reaching interim decisions on urgent matters and seeking the ratification of National Council at the earliest opportunity.
- (c) Minutes of Executive Committee meetings should be tabled at National Council meetings.
- 6.4 The Executive Committee should meet at least monthly. The Executive Committee should circulate minutes of its meetings to branches.
- 6.5 The Executive Committee should oversee expense payments and wages to members who are regular volunteers and staff.
- 6.6 All heritable and moveable property of the SSP shall be vested in Trustees so authorised by the Executive Committee ("the Trustees") representing and acting for the whole of the members of the SSP. No personal liability shall attach to any Trustee except to the extent of such funds of the SSP as may be actually received by him.

- 6.7 The Executive Committee shall have power to authorise the Trustees and the Trustees when so authorised may (1) hold, purchase or take on lease any land or buildings, sell, exchange, borrow on the security of, lease or build upon the land and alter and pull down buildings and again rebuild; and (2) grant security over the heritable property of the SSP and obtain advances of money for the purposes of the SSP and upon such terms as to interest and repayment of principal as the Committee may determine;

7. National Conference

- 7.1 National Conference is the sovereign body of the SSP. National Conference should take place within 13 months of the previous annual conference. Between times, however, the elected National Council should conduct the party's affairs with the elected Executive Committee and eight elected Regional Councils supporting it.
- 7.2 (a) National policy will be democratically decided by a National Conference. SSP conferences are organised on a delegate basis from branches with one delegate for every four branch members, to be elected by branch consensus, or, in the event of a contest, by single transferable vote. Branches are not entitled to mandate delegates to National Conference.
- (b) Branches are encouraged to seek gender balance in their delegations. Women should make up at least one-third of a branch's delegation.
- (c) Branches are expected to ensure that their conference delegates are up-to-date with their membership subscriptions.
- (d) Branches should provide a full list of members to the Membership Secretary/National Secretary as soon as possible after a conference has been called and certainly no later than the deadline for motions.
- (e) National unions would be entitled to 1 delegate per 1,000 union members or part thereof to the SSP national conference – all delegates must be individual SSP members. The union would determine how best to democratically elect such delegates. Each delegate would have one vote at SSP national conference.
- (f) Union branches, Trades Union Councils and stewards committees would be entitled to 2 elected delegates – who must be individual SSP members – to the SSP national conference. The union would determine how best to democratically elect such delegates. Each delegate would have one vote at SSP conference.
- (g) Party members are also welcome to attend National Conference as visitors. Party visitors can participate in debates (including to move a

branch, network or platform/tendency motion) but they will not have voting rights.

- (h) Non party visitors to National Conference cannot routinely participate in debates.
- 7.3 (a) SSP branches, national trade union affiliates, union branches, Trades Union Councils and stewards committees can all send 2 motions and 2 amendments to national conference.
- (b) The Executive Committee has the right to send motions to National Conference in order to initiate debates on areas of key strategic and political importance.
- (c) National Council may submit the proposals of sub committees, working parties or standing committees, as amended by National Council, to National Conference in the form of motions.
- (d) Sub committees or working parties established by conference motion may be charged to submit proposals directly to National Conference.
- (e) National Networks, have the right to send one motion and one amendment to National Conference.
- (f) The national structures of Scottish Socialist Youth and the SSP's student groups each have the right to submit one motion and one amendment to National Conference.
- (g) A platform/tendency whose platform is registered with the National Council has the right to send one motion and one amendment to National Conference in its own name signed by 10 members of the SSP.
- 7.4 Each national office bearers and spokespersons is expected to submit a written report to National Conference on their activities (including the implementation of any relevant decisions made by the preceding conference), and on developments over the previous year in their field of responsibility. Reports should not seek to develop new policy and will not be voted on by conference. Branches may submit questions about any aspect of the reports.
- 7.5 If a motion or amendment seeking to amend, delete or add to any part of the Aims & Principles section of the constitution is agreed by conference by less than two-thirds of votes cast, a full debate on the motion/amendment will take place throughout the party. A debate and a vote will take place on the motion/amendment at the next National Conference (or at a Special Conference) at which a simple majority of votes cast will be required to ratify the motion/amendment.
- 7.6 Branches/Regional Councils have the right to determine local/regional policy on local/regional matters within the framework of national policy agreed by National Conference and National Council.

8. Office Bearers and Spokespersons

- 8.1 National Conference will elect all national office bearers. Office bearers will be responsible for processing the decisions of National/Special Conferences and National Council. Office bearers will be as follows:
 - National Convenor (acting as national spokesperson for the SSP);
 - National Secretary (preparation of agendas, dealing with external correspondence & communications, liaising with Regional Organisers, reporting to the Executive Committee and the National Council on progress etc);
 - 3 National Assistant Secretaries (one for Minutes, one for Membership records and one for maintaining the Website);
 - 2 National Co-Chairs (presiding over Executive Committee Meetings, National Council meetings, conferences etc. To liaise with Secretary over agendas for meetings etc);
 - National Press & Policy Co-ordinator;
 - National Treasurer (to keep details of party income and expenditure, preparation of quarterly financial reports to be sent to all Branch Secretaries, and presentation of audited accounts to National Conference, fundraising etc.)
 - National Deputy Treasurer
 - 1 National Trade Union Co-ordinator;
 - 1 International Co-ordinator;
 - 1 Student Co-ordinator;
 - 1 Youth Organiser (elected by SSY Conference – see 12.1 (a)) ;
 - 1 Magazine Editor;
 - 1 Editor - Scottish Socialist Voice;
 - 2 Auditors – to, in cooperation with National Treasurer, audit national accounts for presentation at National Conference. Auditor cannot be a member of the executive or finance committee.
- 8.2 The National Conference/Council can also elect members as Party Spokespersons to communicate with the media on specific topics (eg on the Environment, Employment etc). The Executive Committee can appoint Spokespersons between National Council meetings but the appointment can only be until the appointment is ratified or not by the next National Council meeting.

9. Conference Arrangements Committee

- 9.1 National Conference will elect a Conference Arrangements Committee. This committee will be:
 - (a) elected each year by the outgoing conference to deal with next year's conference;
 - (b) made up of nine people; one active SSP member from each region and one other SSP member from anywhere, but including no

- members of the Executive Committee. The national secretary and the national co-chairpersons can attend the Conference Arrangements Committee meetings in an ex-officio (non-voting) capacity.
- (c) The minutes of all meetings should be forwarded to the national Executive Committee for information.
- (c) responsible for the timing and running of conference agenda, including sending out a prioritised motion or resolution ballot form to each branch, and facilitating the compositing of motions where appropriate.
- 9.2 Conference Arrangements Committee will maintain a set of Procedures & Standing Orders for conducting the business of National Conference that may be amended by National Council or National Conference. [See Appendix A.]
- ## 10. Standing Committees
- 10.1 National Conference can establish standing committees to oversee specific areas of the party's work. Standing committees provide an opportunity for office bearers and spokespersons to share their workload and for the experience of as broad a range of party members as possible to contribute to the development of party policy and campaigning initiatives. Standing Committees should meet at least 3 times per year.
- 10.2 Standing committees are accountable to the national structures of the SSP, which have the right to endorse, amend or reject the proposals of standing committees. Standing committees should provide regular reports outlining their work and proposals for action. The minutes of all meetings of standing committees should be forwarded to the national Executive Committee for information.
- 10.3 The following standing committees will be established:
- (a) A Scottish Parliamentary Committee to oversee the strategy and tactics of the SSP group of MSPs in the Scottish Parliament. The committee will consist of all the SSP's MSPs, four representatives of the Executive Committee, and non-EC members equivalent to half the membership of the committee directly elected by National Conference. The committee should report to every meeting of the Executive Committee and National Council. The Parliamentary Committee should also agree to the deployment of Parliamentary staff beyond the normal posts of Parliamentary Assistant, Parliamentary Researcher, Caseworker (eg the deployment of a researcher as a Press Officer).
- (b) A publications committee responsible for arranging the publication of a series of discussion pamphlets and books. The committee should take a strategic overview of the pamphlets etc that will be most useful for publication. Pamphlets do not have to represent current SSP policy but, when appropriate, the committee should arrange for a foreword to be included that helps potential readers understand the context of a pamphlet with regard to party policy and ongoing debates.
- The committee will consist of the editor of Scottish Socialist Voice, Magazine Editor, National Policy and Press Coordinator, National Secretary, representative of Scottish Socialist Productions and five non-EC members directly elected by National Conference.
- (c) an International Committee to further the project of an international socialist alliance, build links with socialists throughout the world and to focus on the SSP response to international events. The committee will consist of the International Secretary and seven members directly elected by National Conference.
- (d) a Trade Union Committee to assist with the development of the SSP's trade union strategy and the party's trade union groups. The committee will consist of the Trade Union Co-ordinator and members directly elected by National Conference. The Size of the committee to be reviewed annually by the SSP's national structures.
- (e) a Youth and Student Committee to assist with the co-ordination and development of the SSP's youth and student work. The committee will consist of the Youth Organiser, the Student Co-ordinator, five members elected by the annual meeting/conference of Scottish Socialist Youth, and the five members elected by the national meeting/conference of the SSP's student groups.
- (f) a Finance Committee to provide an overview of the work of the SSP's treasurers (at all levels), ensure the party conforms with legal requirements and to present proposals for national fundraising activities. The committee will make available details of the party's finances to the membership between National Conferences. The committee will consist of the National Treasurer, the eight regional treasurers and two members directly elected by National Conference.
- (g) a Staff Committee to make proposals for establishing proper and fair procedures for employing staff and paying fees and expenses. The Staffing Committee to consist of 3 representatives of the Executive Committee and 3 non-EC members directly elected by conference. The Staffing Committee should invite other national office bearers to attend in an Ex-officio (non voting) capacity when appropriate – eg, the National Treasurer if finances are being discussed.

The Staffing Committee should draw up a staff/volunteer code of conduct and grievance procedures for workers and volunteers based at the national and regional offices - these should be agreed by the Executive Committee. The Staffing Committee should also act as a body that can deal with complaints/grievances based on the code of conduct (individuals are encouraged to first attempt to amicably resolve the matter informally). Any decision of the Staffing Committee is binding although an individual can appeal the decision to the Appeals Committee.

- 10.3 (h) A Magazine Editorial Committee consisting of the Magazine Editor, a representative from the SSV Editorial team, and 7 members directly elected by conference.

11. Networks

- 11.1 Members can organise in Networks agreed by National Conference/National Council/Regional Council.

- 11.2 (a) Networks can be set up to encourage the self-organisation of members of the SSP who suffer from specific discrimination and to enable them to organise collectively in campaigns against oppression and to take a lead in the party on these issues.

- (b) Networks can also be set up to bring together members of the SSP interested in campaigning on a specific issue. Such networks can help to bring together members who are active in campaigns in order to intervene more effectively, co-ordinate activity, promote the party's policies and feed-back experience into the party.

- (c) Networks must submit their constitution to National Conference/National Council/Regional Council for approval prior to being launched. These should state who is eligible to join the network, the activities it intends to undertake and how the internal democracy of the network will operate. Networks should submit written reports to National Council/Regional Council on their activity at least twice a year. The minutes of all meetings should be forwarded to the national Executive Committee for information.

- 11.3 (a) Each Network representing an oppressed group (as defined in 11.2 (a)) has the right to send one delegate to the National Council. Regional Networks representing oppressed groups have the right to send one delegate to Regional Council.

- (b) Only networks representing oppressed groups have rights to submit motions to SSP bodies.

12. Youth and Student Groups

- 12.1 (a) Scottish Socialist Youth will organise meetings of members of the SSP up to the age of 26 years old

in order to co-ordinate activities by young members of the SSP.

- (b) Scottish Socialist Youth will hold an annual meeting/conference at which a Youth Organiser, a National Council delegate, five members of the Youth and Student Committee, and any other necessary positions will be elected.
- (c) Scottish Socialist Youth will submit written reports on its activities to National Council at least twice a year.

- 12.2 (a) The SSP will endeavour to organise student groups in each college/university.

- (b) The SSP's student groups will come together in an annual meeting/conference at which a National Council delegate, five members of the Youth and Student Committee and any other necessary positions will be elected.

- (c) The SSP's student groups will submit collective written reports on their activities to National Council at least twice a year.

- 12.3 Where Scottish Socialist Youth and the SSP's student groups have established appropriate regional structures, they may apply to Regional Councils for rights to send one delegate and to submit motions. The minutes of all meetings should be forwarded to the national Executive Committee or, for regional networks, the regional council for information.

13. Trade Union Groups

The SSP will endeavour to organise groups of SSP members in each trade union in order to co-ordinate their trade union activities and promote the SSP's trade union strategy. The minutes of all group meetings should be forwarded to the national Trade Union Committee for information.

14. Platforms

- 14.1 Members have the right to organise in Platforms or Tendencies. The SSP, as a pluralist party, recognises that a range of political points of view is a healthy source of debate and new ideas.

- 14.2 All Platforms/Tendencies should be open - their constitution and aims & objectives should be brought to the attention of the National Council and should be available to all other party members.

- 14.3 Platforms/Tendencies have a right to be heard, to organise meetings, to produce literature, to distribute materials at SSP meetings and, in general, to try to influence and/or change party policy.

- 14.4 Platforms/Tendencies are not expected, however, to organise public campaigns against the overall aims or policy of the party.

15. Voting Procedures

- 15.1 At all levels of the SSP voting on policy matters will be by show of hands.
- 15.2 All internal elections will be by secret ballot, using a transferable voting system. If there is one post to be filled, votes will be transferred until a candidate receives at least 50% of the vote. If there is more than post (eg for branch delegations to conference), votes will be transferred (as described by current Electoral Reform Society rules for STV) until the appropriate number of candidates achieve the required quota.
- 15.3 Voting for internal party posts will normally take place at party meetings. However, party bodies can arrange for postal voting should they consider it to be appropriate,

16. Gender Equality

- 16.1 The SSP aims for gender equality in all national bodies. Specific measures to ensure gender equality have been adopted in some areas of the party's work. In no circumstances should any elected body consist of more than 66% men or women.
- 16.2 Where a gender imbalance occurs as a result of the normal voting procedures, a simple top-up system will be operated. This will involve the creation of additional places, open only to the under-represented gender. Elections will be based on the normal election procedures.

17. Accountability

- 17.1 (a) All SSP bodies shall keep members fully informed of their activities.
- (b) Elected officers and spokespersons, where appropriate, should provide regular reports on their activities and developments in their field of responsibility.
- (c) Minutes, where appropriate, should be kept to record the decisions of meetings.
- 17.2 (a) All SSP bodies have the right to recall the elected officers and spokespersons accountable to them.
- (b) A national office bearer, spokesperson or directly elected Executive Committee member may be recalled by the National Council. A recalled office bearer, spokesperson or directly elected Executive Committee member has the right of appeal to National Conference.
- (c) Regional officers (including the Regional Organiser) can be recalled at a special aggregate meeting of all members in the region. A meeting to recall a regional officer must be called if requested in motions submitted by 25% of branches in the region in the course of a three-month period.

- (d) Branch officers and delegates can be recalled at a branch meeting specially called for the purpose (branch members must receive two weeks notice).
- (e) The recall of candidates for public election should follow the appropriate branch, regional or national procedure.

18. Appeals Committee

- 18.1 National Conference should also elect an Appeals Committee of up to 7 members who are not National Office Bearers. The Appeals Committee may form a representative sub committee of at least 3 members to consider any one case.
- 18.2 Only a regional council or the Executive Committee can refuse anyone membership (or decide an existing member no longer meets the criteria for membership listed in 2.1) or take other disciplinary action against an individual member. Such a decision must be explained in writing to the member (or potential member) concerned with copies to the Appeals Committee, the National Secretary and the National Assistant Secretary (Membership). The individual concerned then has the right to appeal in the first instance to the Appeals Committee and then to a full conference. Should a branch consider any disciplinary action necessary, it should put its reasons in writing to the Regional Council for consideration.

Should a member resign from the party then subsequently seek readmission to the party, then the regional council should decide whether readmission is appropriate.

- 18.3 (a) In the event of the categories of dispute listed in 18.3 (b) below, the people concerned should first try to resolve the matter. If the matter is not resolved it can be referred the Regional Council or Executive Committee (whichever is most appropriate) for investigation. Following such an investigation, a member or party body can appeal any decision to the Appeals Committee. The verdict of the Appeals Committee will be considered to be binding. An individual or party body can then present an appeal to the next National Conference.
- (b) The categories of dispute referred to by 18.3 (a) include: (i) a complaint by a member or any party structure against the behaviour of a member in respect of clause 2.4; (ii) a complaint by a member or party structure against the behaviour of a higher body or elected officer/spokesperson in the party; (iii) a dispute in respect to the precise balance between the rights and duties of platforms/tendencies.
- 18.4 A regional council or the EC can set a sub committee to conduct any investigations in relation to point 18.3. The Appeals Committee and the executive should agree a set of procedures for use in such investigations.

An EC/Regional Council sub-committee can investigate a complaint regarding a member of their committee. However, the sub committee should not include any member who is either making a complaint or subject to a complaint. If a Regional council or the EC as a whole is the subject of a complaint, then the national office bearers should propose a sub committee from the National Council (to be ratified or amended by the full NC) to conduct an investigation

19. Public Elections

- 19.1 The SSP will seek to contest public elections. We will normally stand across the country in Holyrood, Westminster and European elections. Subject to sufficient resources, we will stand in as many seats as possible in council elections. However, National Conference and/or National Council can set a specific national policy for a particular election eg whether or not to stand in constituency seats at Holyrood elections or the number of candidates to stand in each multi member ward in future council elections under STV voting.
The following democratic safeguards will apply:
- (a) Members of the SSP within the relevant electoral ward or constituency will select their candidate using the same voting methods that are used in internal elections, with members from the appropriate branch(es) being entitled to vote. The Regional Council will determine in advance of the selection process which members/branches are entitled to vote in candidate selection meetings according to the geographical boundaries of wards and constituencies.
 - (b) On very rare occasions (eg where a local campaigning body which the SSP is supportive of is contesting a seat) the SSP may take a political decision not to contest a local seat when national policy would indicate that we should stand. However, both the appropriate branch and the regional council must put a proposal not to contest a seat to the EC. The EC can either accept the proposal from the branch/region or put the question to a National Council meeting for a final decision.
 - (c) Any paid-up member is entitled to put themselves forward for consideration as a potential candidate. However, nominations for candidates should be from a branch or, where appropriate, at regional or national level, an affiliate.
 - (d) In order to vote in the selection procedure members should have joined at least two months before the selection meeting and be no more than six months in arrears with their membership subscriptions.
 - (e) Where there is no branch in an electoral area (eg ward, constituency) or where an electoral area covers more than one party branch, the regional/national council should arrange for a democratic selection procedure. This should be in

line with the constitution on voting rights and, where appropriate, gender balance.

- 19.2 The SSP will ensure gender balance in the selection of candidates for our lists for Scottish Parliamentary elections with women composing half of all candidates on each regional list, half of all lists headed by a women and two of the top four target seats headed by women. [See Appendix B for details of mechanism.]
- 19.3 The party will seek gender balance for candidates in council elections. See Appendix 3 for details of how regions and branches should operate this.
- 19.4 Members should not stand or support candidates against the SSP.
- 19.5 All SSP elected representatives must be prepared to:
 - (a) represent local/area/national policy and be accountable to the appropriate SSP body.
 - (b) accept personal pay no more than the average Scottish skilled workers wage, with any surplus being donated to the SSP and administered by the Executive Committee appropriately with audited reports to each National Council/Conference.
 - (c) publish details of all their expenses and how those expenses have been spent and publish details of any outside activities for which they have received payment.
 - (d) participate in non-violent direct action campaigns and activities in pursuit of the aims and objectives of the SSP on the same basis as any other SSP member.
- 19.6(a) Where more than one SSP candidate is elected to a Parliament or council, the elected SSP representatives will form an SSP group. A standing committee will also be established (by National Conference/National Council or Regional Council as appropriate). The SSP group in liaison with its standing committee will co-ordinate strategy and tactics.
- (b) The SSP group and standing committee are accountable to the appropriate SSP body, which may endorse, amend or reject their proposals. The standing committee will circulate regular reports.
- 19.7 Election manifestos will be drawn up on the basis of party policy and approved by National Council or National Conference. Manifestos for local government elections, where appropriate, may be approved by the party's democratic regional structures.

Appendix A

This is the Conference Procedures/Standing Orders and can be varied by CAC/NC for each conference. The last standing orders can be viewed at

www.cardonaldssp.co.uk/conference.htm

Appendix B – Gender Balance on Holyrood regional lists

The executive should look at the eight regions in Scotland. Before any selection process is conducted they should make a recommendation that 4 specified regions should have a man in first place and that 4 should have a women in first place. This recommendation should go to the National Council, where every branch is represented. We believe that places 2 and 3 on each list should include the opposite gender of those in first place with the other places arranged in turn.

For example, where a woman is placed at the top of the list, the list would look like this:

1. woman
2. man
3. man
4. woman
5. woman
6. man
7. man
8. woman

If this is agreed by the national council, the following should be implemented:

- a) In each region there should be two separate nomination lists, one for men and one for women.
- b) The regional council should appoint a returning officer and seek nominations from the branches.
- c) Nominated candidates would be entitled to issue an election address of no more than 500 words.
- d) A regional aggregate of all members should be held (it must have a crèche) for the purpose of electing the regional list. Candidates would be asked to address the aggregate for an equitable and practicable period of time and be open to questions.
- e) SSP members would have two votes: one for the women's list and one for the men's list.
- f) The voting would be conducted by STV.

The top 4 men and the top 4 women would be allocated places according to their vote and in accordance with the national council decision on whether in that particular region a man or a women is at the top of the list.

Appendix C – Gender balance for council elections

1. Where the SSP is standing one candidate in a multi-member ward, to 'pair' seats on a gender basis within regions to ensure gender equality.
2. Where we choose to stand more than one candidate in a multi-member ward, to ensure equal numbers of male and female candidates standing in the ward, 'pairing' with other wards where necessary
3. This 'pairing' mechanism allocation to be decided by regional councils after consultation with branches. Exceptions may be authorised by Regional Council only if branches concerned can show that all efforts have been exhausted to find suitable candidates.