

# **TEST VALLEY (Including Andover & Romsey) GREEN PARTY**

## **CONSTITUTION**

### **1. TITLE AND STATUS**

- 1.1. The name of the local party shall be Test Valley Green Party (hereafter referred to as TVGP).
- 1.2. TVGP is a constituent part of The Green Party of England & Wales and is subject to its rules and constitution.
- 1.3. TVGP is also part of the South East Federation of Green Parties.
- 1.4. The geographical area of TVGP is that covered by Test Valley Borough Council.

### **2. AIMS**

- 2.1. The objective of TVGP is to promote the aims of The Green Party as stated in its Constitution:
  - a. to develop and implement ecological policies consistent with the Philosophical Basis of the Party as expressed in the Policies for a Sustainable Society;
  - b. to that end to win seats at all levels of government;
  - c. to organise any nonviolent activity which will publicise and further these aims.

### **3. MEMBERSHIP**

- 3.1. The membership consists of all national Green Party members resident within the geographical area of TVGP.
- 3.2. Members of the national Green Party who are resident in adjacent areas may join the TVGP provided the local party agrees at a meeting to allow them to do so.
- 3.3. Members may not be a member of another political party (other than Green Parties abroad) at the same time.
- 3.4. Should a member join another political party then they immediately cease to be a member of TVGP.

### **4. OFFICERS OF TVGP**

- 4.1. TVGP shall elect its Officers at its inaugural meeting and thereafter at each AGM. These shall include a:
  - a. Chair, who will also act as local party contact
  - b. Treasurer
  - c. Election Officer
  - d. Press Officer
  - e. Secretary
  - f. Membership Officer

- 4.2. Nominations shall be proposed and seconded, and won by a simple majority vote. Any member can ask for a secret ballot.
- 4.3. The inaugural meeting and AGM has the discretion not to fill posts if no suitable nominations are forthcoming or to propose the merging of posts or the creation of other posts with the agreement of a simple majority.
- 4.4. Should any Officer fail to attend three consecutive meetings without good reason or apology, TVGP may co-opt another Member of TVGP to act in their place.
- 4.5. In the event of a vacancy an officer may be co-opted at the next ordinary Branch Meeting.
- 4.6. The Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 (PPERA) Second Officer shall be the Treasurer of the South East Federation of Green Parties.

## **5. MEETINGS AND DECISION MAKING**

- 5.1. The business of TVGP shall be decided and managed by meetings held monthly or such other times as members attending a meeting may decide upon, referred to hereafter as Branch Meetings. Branch Meetings shall be open to all Green Party members.
- 5.2. Potential new members and supporters may attend by invitation, but except at the discretion of the meeting chair, have no right to speak.
- 5.3. Motions should be proposed and seconded, and will be carried by a simple majority vote of members present.
- 5.4. Members should be notified of any motions relating to policy at least one week before the meeting at which the issue is being discussed.
- 5.5. Only members of TVGP will be entitled to vote. Those unable to attend may make their views known to the Branch Meeting, either in writing or through representation by another member, but only those in attendance will be entitled to vote. Hybrid meetings may be allowed subject to National Party agreement.
- 5.6. The business meeting will be deemed to be in quorum if there are three or more paid up members in attendance.
- 5.7. Attendance and business conducted at meetings shall be recorded in minutes to be approved by the next meeting.
- 5.8. A draft agenda will be circulated in advance of each Branch Meeting, together with the minutes of the previous meeting. Any TVGP member can suggest additional items for the agenda in advance of or at the start of the meeting.
- 5.9. In the event of a decision needing to be made before a Branch Meeting, an emergency decision may be made by agreement of a simple majority of Officers of TVGP. This decision must be ratified by the next Branch Meeting.

5.10. Working groups may be set up to discuss specific issues such as transport policy, literature updating etc. Any decision shall be ratified by the Branch Meeting. All members can attend these groups.

5.11. Individual wards or closely related groups of wards will be encouraged to set up “Teams” to run elections and campaigns in their area, but all decisions on Policy and finance must be referred to Branch level.

## **6. ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING (AGM)**

6.1. Every year an AGM shall be held for the purposes of:

- a. Presentation of Officers' reports of work which has been carried out over the year
- b. Presentation of a financial statement for the year
- c. Election of the Officers
- d. Reviewing strategy and setting goals for the following year and beyond.
- e. Any other business on the agenda.

6.2. The chair shall be agreed by members at the start of the AGM.

6.3. All members of TVGP who are present have one vote each, and resolutions must have the support of a simple majority.

6.4. Notice of the AGM shall be given at least two weeks prior to the meeting and any motions for consideration shall be submitted in writing to the Secretary at least ten days prior to the meeting.

6.5. The Agenda will be circulated in advance at least one week prior to the meeting.

6.6. The Chair of the AGM has the right to rule on the admissibility of any emergency motions put forward.

6.7. The quorum of an AGM shall be three or 25% of members of TVGP, whichever is the smaller.

6.8. An Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM) on a particular agenda may be called on the request of the monthly meeting or at least five members of TVGP. The same general rules apply to EGM's as to AGM's.

## **7. FINANCE**

7.1. The Treasurer shall collect or arrange the collection of all money due to TVGP and shall receive all donations to TVGP and shall be the custodian thereof.

7.2. The Treasurer will arrange payment of any bills incurred by TVGP, and will notify the group if it is in danger of becoming overdrawn.

- 7.3. All monies drawn from TVGP's bank account shall be signed by two authorised persons from a list of three, to be agreed at the AGM or in the event of casual vacancies, by the Officers.
- 7.4. Wherever possible, funds will be held by a banking organisation with a policy of ethical investment acceptable to the membership (such as Triodos, Cooperative Bank, Ecological Building Society).
- 7.5. Members, Ward Teams and Working Groups may incur expenditure on behalf of TVGP provided prior approval is obtained from an ordinary Branch Meeting, EGM or AGM.
- 7.6. Any affiliation fees to another organisation or donations to another group must have the approval of a Branch Meeting.

## **8. SELECTION OF ELECTION CANDIDATES**

- 8.1. For selection of parliamentary candidates national rules must be followed.
- 8.2. For selection of local authority candidates, arrangements will be agreed at a Branch Meeting of the TVGP with the proviso that all candidates are agreed at a Branch Meeting.

## **9. AMENDING THE CONSTITUTION**

- 9.1. This constitution can only be altered by an AGM or EGM of TVGP. Amendments to this constitution requires advance notice.

## **10. DISPUTES AND DISCIPLINE**

- 10.1. Any member who is suspended by the National Party will automatically be suspended from TVGP.
- 10.2. In the event of a complaint being received about any member of TVGP, either from another member or from someone else, the Convenor will consult with the Regional GPRC representatives and convene an urgent meeting of the Officers to decide what action to take. If the complaint is against an officer, that officer should not take part in this process. If against the Chair, the Officers' meeting should be convened by the Treasurer. The Officers' meeting may decide to suspend the person's membership of TVGP immediately pending a hearing. Any such suspension must be time limited and the Chair of the Regional party must be informed. Alternatively, the meeting may decide to recommend no action; to hold a local hearing without suspension or, in more serious cases, refer the case immediately to the national level.
- 10.3. Any local suspension must be confirmed by vote at the next and each subsequent Branch Meeting. If the matter is not being dealt with by the National Procedure, the Branch Meeting should appoint a hearing panel of three trusted persons who will hear the complaint against

the person, calling witnesses as appropriate. The person complained about must be given the option to be present and represented or befriended as they wish. The hearing may decide to:

- a. take no further action;
- b. place behaviour requirements on a member;
- c. exclude a member from Branch Meetings and activities (although not from voting in candidate ballots), either for a period or permanently;
- d. refer the case to the national party with a recommendation for expulsion or other action.

10.4. Where a dispute arises between members of TVGP, the members concerned should do their best to resolve it themselves. Officers should, as appropriate, take the initiative in trying to facilitate disputes resolution themselves or call on the services of the national Disputes Resolution Committee.

## **11. WINDING UP**

11.1. TVGP may cease to exist or join with other local green parties, only by agreement of an EGM or AGM. In the event of TVGP being wound up, the balance of funds shall be transferred to The South East Federation of Green Parties.

## **APPENDIX 1. OFFICER ROLES**

The first three Officers specified below are required by the National Party. The Branch cannot be formed without persons being appointed to these posts. The national party must be informed of appointments and any changes. TVGP can decide to amalgamate any posts (excepting Treasurer and Chair who must be different persons), split their responsibilities, job share them or create other Officers as appropriate.

### **1 CHAIR, ALSO ACTS AS LOCAL PARTY CONTACT**

- 1.1 Act as the liaison with the National Party and the point of contact for local enquirers. Responsible for ensuring that AGMs and Branch Meetings are called. Will receive updates on membership from the National Party.

### **2 TREASURER**

- 2.1 Responsible for opening and maintaining a bank account, holding the cheque book and paying in any receipts. Should keep Branch Meetings apprised of the financial position and present an annual account to the AGM. Has certain specific PPERA responsibilities, including keeping a record of all donations and reporting on ones over the appropriate threshold.

### **3 ELECTION OFFICER, ALSO ACTS AS ELECTION AGENT AND NOMINATING OFFICER.**

- 3.1 The Nominating Officer will be given delegated authority within Test Valley District to formally approve Green Party candidates. Their details will be held at the Council Offices for this purpose. The Election Officer is responsible for informing the National Election Office of candidates and results and will act as the returning officer for any internal elections (including the selection of parliamentary candidates). If they are themselves a candidate in an internal election, a temporary returning officer should be appointed. The Election Agent may act as agent for local candidates during elections. However, candidates may if they prefer opt to be their own agents or appoint another person. This Officer will also be responsible for preparing an election plan ahead of each main election.

### **4 PRESS OFFICER**

- 4.1 This person should be the main contact with the local press. They should issue regular press releases (possibly drafted by others). The National Party offers support and training for those new to this role.

### **5 SECRETARY**

- 5.1 Responsible for taking and issuing minutes of meetings and for informing members of meetings. Needs to work closely with the Chair and if appropriate these roles can be combined.

### **6 MEMBERSHIP**

- 6.1 Role entails welcoming new members, keeping records up to date using Action Network, encouraging involvement, ringing up members, make monthly new member report.