



South Devon Alliance - Party Constitution 2020

Adopted on 26.01.2021

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1. NAME

The name shall be the South Devon Alliance - hereinafter referred to as the Party.

1.1 The Party is aiming to register as an official political party on the Great Britain electoral register.

2. PRINCIPLES

- i. We will work for absolute transparency in local government and ensure that all officers and legal teams within local government respect the Local Government Act (1972) Freedom of Information Act (2000) and the human right of free expression as codified in the Human Rights Act (1998) and the European Convention on Human Rights (2000). We will seek to reduce as far as possible the amount of council business that is conducted in secrecy under Part 2.
- ii. We will seek to end the undemocratic imbalance in Local Councils that has made unelected officers too free to pursue their own agendas and too far from scrutiny or



censure. We will seek to restore the fulcrum of decision-making to the elected members and ensure that those in paid service respond only to actions mandated in the council chamber.

- iii. We will work ceaselessly to restore confidence in local government by seeking out and eradicating any trace of corruption at all levels of council and to pursue a wide-ranging brief of investigation on this issue. We will examine all irregular and extraordinary transactions, business decisions, appointments and severances across all councils over, but not limited to, the past 30 years.
- iv. We oppose the adoption of flawed Local Plans across the South Devon region that threaten to destroy the fabric of our historic market towns, the surrounding countryside, places of special scientific interest and wildlife habitats.
We believe that local politics has for decades become hostile to the special character of the region and destructive of its traditions and its environment. The Party objects to excessive development being allowed across the region by its district councils despite decades of well-reasoned, properly channelled objection by national organisations, special-interest groups and thousands of individual residents.
- v. We favour the adoption of balanced and sustainable Local Plans for all South Devon councils which are consonant with the existing (and recognised) climate change emergency and which take full and transparent cognizance of local opinion.
- vi. We support all legal avenues of resistance to the housing and development model advocated by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government in the Planning Policy Framework (2019) and to the reforms outlined in Planning For the Future consultation document of 06.08.2020
- vii. We believe that the climate change emergency is an unquestionable emergency and must be regarded as such in every step, vote and decision we take. We hold that 'business as usual' is unsustainable and will lead to an existential crisis. We hold that there is no area of governance that may be viewed outside this consideration.
- viii. We oppose the unquestioned belief in local and national government that growth for its own sake is always a social good. Economic expansion must be restricted to methods that do not detract from the natural world, the people's quality of life, or from public amenity.
- ix. We will advocate for social housing and for development that is high-quality, secure and built to the best environmental specifications. We will support brownfield development wherever possible. We will oppose wholesale coverage of greenfield sites with massive, unimaginative and low-quality development that benefits only major development companies, land agents, planners and lawyers. We will oppose the construction of housing in excess of proven local need. We will work to minimise the trend of inward



migration encouraged by cheaper housing and urban flight following the Covid-19 emergency. We will advocate for piecemeal, proportionate development across the entire region that respects the landscape, inflicts minimal damage upon the environment and maximises employment benefits to local firms and local people.

- x. We will investigate the involvement of secretive organisations in council business and make it mandatory to declare membership of any club, society or organisation where membership might confer an advantage on the elected member.
- xi. We will seek to change the terms by which tenders for development and major planning applications may be made so that planning proposals must state in plain English the exact the nature of the buildings intended for construction, with the greatest provision within it stated first; without resort to needless adjectivisation or a disingenuous focus on the social, environmental or amenity benefit of the project. We hold as self-evident that planning terms such as 'net gain for the environment' and 'net biodiversity gain' are a nonsense and will seek to forbid these and other examples of semantic greenwash. We will strive to ensure that all plans submitted deal with environmental mitigations in the final paragraph only.
- xii. We would like to form District Council Executives that successfully challenge flawed Government national house building targets across South Devon and offer realistic resistance to the 'growth is always good' credo. We want to empower those who will always act fully alert to the danger of man-made changes to our local and planetary environments, and who will represent the very best interests of the residents of South Devon and of our future generations.
- xiii. We intend to question, revise or cancel all plans, proposals and policies, local and national, that promise environmental benefits without the power to fulfil them. We will subject to full examination any scheme that promises benefit to climate or environment, on any scale. We will identify and challenge 'greenwash' schemes that advocate projects as a gain in the fight against climate change but which in fact have a null or negative impact. We will identify and challenge any plan, proposal or policy that merely uses the climate emergency for reasons of fashion, public relations, 'message-sending' or any other purpose whereby the environment is not the true benefactor. We will challenge all projects undertaken on an environmental pretext that we believe are, in reality, taken primarily to access cash or other material resources, either in terms of grants or private investment, which yield no provable environmental benefit.
- xiv. We shall seek constitutional changes that directly involve the public in decision making and give the public non-permanent seats on council as Public Representatives. We believe that these would mitigate the effects of grandstanding by elected members and of party whips being applied to pass contentious changes that are of high public interest, and lessen the instance of grave decisions passing on slim majorities or by committee chair's decision, which thereafter sour the relationship of trust between local government and the public.



3 OBJECTIVES

The objective of the Party shall be to promote the Principles listed in Article 2, by means which shall include: (a) active participation in the political process, and (b) informing, educating and involving the public.

3.1 The Party aims to stand candidates in District Council Elections in May 2023 in (but not limited to) the administrations of Teignbridge, South Hams, Exeter, Torbay and Devon County elections thereafter as seen fit by the Party and allowed by the constitution and under UK electoral law and guidelines.

4 MEMBERSHIP

At the outset the Party does not have a membership. The Party will review the creating of a formalised membership scheme and the policies that will govern this at the first Annual General Meeting (AGM) or in advance of that at any Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM) if called for by 60% of Executive Members.

5. ORGANISATION

The Party shall consist of and Executive Committee, initially of seven Founding Members. All the Executive Committee positions will be up for re-election at the first AGM and AGMs thereafter or in advance of that at any EGM as can be called for by 60% of Executive Members at 21 days' notice. AGMs and EGMs will be minuted by the Executive and decisions held on record in these minutes.

The sitting Executive will vote on other executive members' election to the Executive on a majority basis. To remove a member of the Executive a clear majority must be in favour of removing the member.

The Executive will also review constitution, leadership and all other roles at AGMs and EGMs.

5.1 Founding Executive

The founding Executive will consist of:

Richard Daws

Janet Bradford

Georgina Allen

Paul Sampson

Liam Mullone

Kirk Field



5.2 Candidate Selection

The Executive will conclude a formal process for candidate selection in advance of the deadline for registration of candidates for the May 2023 District Council Elections.

5.2 Responsibility for Party Officers

The Executive will be responsible for any appointed Party Officers, including candidates and will conclude a reporting structure and terms of engagement for as and when any are appointed or engaged.

6. DECISION MAKING AND POLICY DEVELOPMENT

Decisions regarding Constitution and Policy, whether at meetings or conventions, shall where possible be made by consensus of the Party Executive. In circumstances where, in the view of a majority of the Executive, all reasonable efforts to achieve consensus have failed and the time available for debate is exhausted, all of the Executive committee may agree by majority to put the matter to a vote. Upon agreeing a decision to do so, the Executive can vote and a majority decision will then be upheld. The quorum for constitutional and policy decisions shall be 60% (three fifths) of the Executive.

7. ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Annual General Meetings shall be held by the Executive on or around the first anniversary of the formation of the Party by the Electoral Commission and annually thereafter. Extraordinary General Meetings as can be called for by 60% of Executive Members at 21 days' notice.

8. FINANCE

The Party has adopted the Financial Scheme dated 16.09.2020. The Party will operate within Electoral Commission Financial Guidelines and report as required.

8.1 The Executive has made its best endeavours to be sure that the constitution is consistent with the Financial Scheme.

9. PUBLIC REPRESENTATIVES

All members of the Executive will be public representatives of the Party. Other public representatives, including Candidates for Election, will be appointed by the Executive.



10. CODE OF CONDUCT AND OTHER POLICIES

Once formed the Party will adopt a Code of Conduct for Executive Members and Public Representatives along with other policies required for the running of a political party, as agreed by the Executive.

11. REVIEW OF CONSTITUTION

The Party will review, and as agreed by a majority of the Executive, update the constitution at the Annual General Meeting.

11.1: If it is agreed by the majority of the Executive at an AGM that the Party should be dissolved, then the Executive will take necessary steps to close the Party as appropriate at the time.

12. OPERATIVE DATE

This Constitution shall come into full force and effect on January 26th 2021.