



THE ROLE OF A BRANCH SECRETARY

**WORKERS PARTY OF BRITAIN
COMMITTEE ROOM, 91 CHURCH RD, B13 9EA
WORKERSPARTYBRITAIN.ORG**

WHAT IS A BRANCH?

Generally speaking a party branch is a geographical organisation of the party. The party is divided up into Regions and branches. The Regions are: Scotland, Wales, North West, North East, Yorkshire, East Midlands, West Midlands, East of England, South West, South East, London. Every region should have a responsible person appointed to it by head office to ensure compliance with electoral law, GDPR and the Rule Book, and that person known as the Regional Officer.

A Region with enough members may consist of a number of smaller branches. The Region, say the West Midlands, contains the Birmingham branch of the WPB, which itself may contain the Balsall Heath West ward branch etc. Every branch must have a minimum of members (the number is set by the head office for each area and differs greatly for a city or a ward) and an appointed branch secretary. Interim coordinators are appointed by the head office but a ballot can be requested by any branch member in good standing if they email info@workerspartybritain.org or contact the Membership Secretary requesting a ballot. The request must include the reasons for a ballot (i.e., first elections of a branch recently set up, or dissatisfaction with the performance of an appointed secretary etc).

Branches can only be recognised with the agreement of head office.

Every branch at its establishment must have an interim coordi-

nator named (who is a member) who accepts responsibility for ensuring compliance with the law and is issued with a letter of appointment from the General Secretary (GS). A branch wide general meeting should be called within a reasonable time to elect a Secretary and any other position necessary.

Every branch must maintain accounts (internal communication and social media) in the same name as the branch with at least one representative of head office appointed as Admin.

If a proposed branch is a sub-group of a Region or County branch (i.e., a village, ward, town or city) it must be formed in consultation recommended by the parent body (in this case the Greater Manchester Branch) or Regional Officer responsible for the area (in this case Alexandros).

WHO IS A MEMBER?

Membership is in two parts.

1. Full members have been with the party a minimum of six months (ratified by the head office), pay their subscriptions and have been assessed for their style of work by their fellow members through the NMC. This requirement is in place to ensure we keep out of the party careerists, trouble-makers, those individualists who cannot work as part of a team and “entryists” (like Trotskyists) who join organisations to spy on their activities or misdirect their work.

2. Affiliate members give no support to the party financially and may have joined as part of a campaign drive. The new rule book adopted at Congress 2023 introduced the requirement for members to pay subs, effectively ending this affiliate membership which was originally introduced during the pandemic for those losing their jobs. The affiliate members will be phased out and offered the opportunity to take out full membership. Existing affiliates are invited to participate in all party activities, and active Affiliate members should be asked by the Branch secretary to become full members. Affiliates have the right to speak but not to vote on party or branch decisions. To ensure transparency a record of all affiliates and supporters collected through campaigns and hosted sign up forms is reported as part of the membership report given to the Electoral Commission in accordance with GDPR.

THE ROLE OF A BRANCH SECRETARY

Branch secretaries are the key links in the chain of our party work. Every branch secretary plays a crucial part in the development of the Workers Party of Britain, being a link between the central office and the membership. The role will be different for everyone who takes it on, depending on the time they can devote to it, the restrictions placed upon them by work and family life, and their experience. As a minimum the WPB expects every branch secretary to maintain regular contact with the members

in their branch. This might look like:

- Passing on party news and campaigns
- Distributing leaflets and campaign materials
- Organising social meetings
- Organising political discussions
- Feeding back any news and issues to the central office

BRANCH MEETINGS

Branch meetings should be fun. Ensure flexible agenda's and make space to plan some practical work, some leafleting or a political discussion class. The branch secretary should try to chair the meetings so that we ensure everyone gets a chance to speak, even the quiet members. Non-members can be asked to participate in socials in pubs, coffee shops, libraries, and other public places, but non-members should not be permitted to attend formal branch meetings.

HEAD OFFICE

The registered head office of the WPB is located at Committee Room, 91 Church Road, Birmingham, B13 9EA. All

members are welcome to visit by appointment.

All party leaflets, campaign materials, books, merchandise, etc are distributed from

this office which coordinates the activities of the WPB on a daily basis.

NATIONAL MEMBERS COUNCIL

This council meets throughout the year, ratifies decisions of the head office and party leadership, approves plans and campaigns and helps to direct the work of the party between the Congresses and Conferences of the party. It is composed of those elected at the Congress 2023.

OTHER PARTY ORGANISATIONS

If somebody wished to establish a new branch, they must email info@workerspartybritain.org

Other types of party groups, teams and branches may exist. There are regional branches (groupings of branches), as well as teams and groups helping us to fulfil certain functions (video production, social media, campaigns, trade union group, youth). Any member may apply to offer their services to one of these groups by emailing info@workerspartybritain.org with their details, skills, experience. Currently the party has (or is in the process of establishing):

Media Team

Graphics Team

Trade Union Group

Musicians Group

Youth (Pioneers)

Writers Team

Anti-imperialist Team

Electoral Team

PARTY EDUCATION

The party organises broad political education through its publications and social media speeches, lectures and presentations. Additionally, George Galloway through his Moats radio show provides invaluable political education for the membership, these activities should be actively supported by the party membership. A motion at Congress 2023 encouraged party groups to help establish Moats watch parties.

Members of the party are at liberty to conduct their own activities so long as they do not contradict or undermine the spirit of the political programme and rules.

Only these party organised events and lectures are officially endorsed by the Workers Party of Britain and we urge members not to confuse ad hoc self-appointed lecturer's as representing party opinion unless they have sought and been granted authorisation from the head office.

HOW SHOULD A BRANCH SECRETARY CO-ORDINATE WITH THE PARTY?

A secretary should:

- Read all party emails and check that members are receiving theirs (many complain they find emails in the junk folder –

ensure members add info@workerspartybritain.org to their approved sender list.

- Keep in contact by text, email, telephone with Ed Renyard the full time officer (admin@workerspartybritain.org 07756766215)
- Keep in touch with their branch members (this will require persistence in many cases!) preferably face-to-face. Where possible visit members, meet them socially and prioritise face-to-face discussions.
- Think about how each party campaign could be conducted in your area

LEAFLETING AS A PARTY BRANCH ACTIVITY

The party will provide campaign materials, leaflets and freesheets to those groups who request them, in whatever quantity they are needed.

Leafleting, in its many forms, is a very low level activity any group can begin with. Types of leafleting:

- Door to door (without knocking) is quick and can be done at any time by any size group
- Door to door (with canvassing, speaking to and surveying opinions of local residents) takes longer and requires prac-

tice but can lead to improved contacts

- Street stalls and demonstrations need tables, flags and a variety of party materials but can be especially useful in town centres and during periods of increased political interest amongst the working class (i.e., during the Brexit referendum)

Leafleting means that we can take our message direct to the working class, even if they are not looking for us on social media. Donations should be made for production of materials and especially to contribute to the expensive task of postage.

PROGRESS FROM LEAFLETING

Groups that learn the planning, teamwork and discipline necessary for perfecting the process of leafleting will soon be able to expand into local campaigning and local electioneering. Parliamentary constituencies are so large that very large groups are necessary, but even small groups can cover ward elections with good planning and dedication.

TOP TIPS FOR LEAFLETING

Try thinking about these as you plan leafleting in your area:

- Download the WARD MAPS from your local authority website

- Have a look on the local authority website for the WARD PROFILE data to help you target
- Plan out routes on the Ward maps, if you split into two groups highlight the streets for each group to cover
- Buy some “newspaper boy” type bags to make carrying and accessing your leaflets easy as you go
- Fold your leaflets as a group before you go out and be sure to read it before someone asks you about it!
- Don’t destroy it as you put it through the door, take time and care, better fewer but better
- Take some membership leaflets with you and a pen in case you meet potential supporters.
- When you finish mark up on your maps where you’ve been and any problems, issues you may have encountered. You’ll soon forget this stuff so its important to build up a good bit of local intelligence
- Take a few quid so you can stop for a pint or coffee and remember you might not find a toilet all day
- Take a collection and make a one-off donation to the party via the website for leaflets, postage etc

DEVELOPING LOCAL CAMPAIGNS

All local campaigns must comply with the party ten-point programme and Manifesto and if you want to check, submit a request to info@workerspartybritain.org. Likewise, the party is happy to try and work with local groups to formulate good local campaigns.

Campaigns for free public transport for children or undertaking surveys of poor conditions in housing are ways in which you can engage with local workers. Letter writing to local newspapers, local social media campaigning and parish and local council minutes can all help give you ideas and get our case out to the public.



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