



NATIONAL CONVENTION HANDBOOK

Your guide to the
National Conservative Convention,
the Voluntary Party,
Officer Roles and CCHQ

www.conservatives.com/nationalconvention

Written by Volunteers for Volunteers

September 2024 Issue

YOUR LEGACY – THE COUNTRY'S FUTURE

Every year, supporters leave us gifts in their wills. The majority we won in 2019 is their legacy. What will Your legacy be?

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This takes long term funding and long-term planning. This is where the Conservative Foundation comes in. The Foundation provides the Party with lasting financial stability, funded by gifts donated in supporters' wills.

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The money helps provide Conservative Foundation Bursaries for candidates in need of assistance. At the last election, the majority of candidates we gave bursaries to, won. At the next election, that could be the difference between a Conservative victory or not.

There's much more to do. So, if you want to help secure this country's future, then why not get in touch?

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TERMINOLOGY

Throughout this Handbook, 'National Conservative Convention' is also abbreviated to 'NCC' and 'National Convention'.

In general, the term 'Association' in this Handbook also covers Federations.

INTRODUCTION



Julian Ellacott
Chairman of the National Convention

The National Convention is the oldest national institution within the Conservative Party, and yet the vast majority of its members (around 850 of us) are only vaguely aware of its existence. I passionately believe that we volunteers are the backbone of the Party, and that through the National Convention we will be a vital element in bringing our Party back to government, along with our professional staff and our elected representatives.

Creating a Handbook is one small but important element in this, and it was one of my pledges in the recent National Convention election. I am glad to have been able to deliver it within 2 weeks of being elected, so that this Handbook can be distributed at the 2024 Conference. Please keep hold of it as a handy reference.

The responsibility of your role – and the support available to help you

When taking on an officer role at any level, it is essential that you carry out the duties of the role in an active, enthusiastic and effective manner. This Handbook outlines the key activities and responsibilities of Association, Area and Regional Officers, and thus should be essential reading for anyone in those roles (as well as anyone wishing to stand for them in future). There should be no excuse for not knowing what is expected of you. But equally, it should be clear to you that whatever role you are in, you are not an island - you are part of a structure in which others will support you, at Association/Federation, Area, Region and national levels.

My experience

My fellow Convention Officers introduce themselves in the following pages, and

INTRODUCTION

we will work as a team on your behalf. In terms of my own background, I have been an active volunteer for 25 years, being an Association and Area Chairman in the South East (as well as spending 19 years as a councillor) before moving to the South West and becoming Regional Chairman. More recently, as a Vice President of the National Convention I worked as part of Peter Booth's team, in particular supporting the North West and West Midlands regions. It is fair to say that the Voluntary Party is my passion.

It is a privilege to have been elected by you to be your Chairman, and I hope that together we can make this institution stronger and better in the time we each have before we hand over to our successors. We will not always agree on everything along the way, but by respecting each other as fellow volunteers, being accountable for our actions and making decisions democratically, we will make progress.

Thank you

I would like to thank Marjorie Baylis MBE and Geoff Baylis for their help in putting this handbook together in such a short space of time, and the Conservative Foundation and PPC Ltd for their sponsorship. It is an evolving document, and I welcome any and all feedback on it, so that we can improve it in future.

Thank you for all you do for the Party, and I look forward to our shared endeavours to advance the cause of Conservatism.



Working with Regions: London, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland

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PS. We are also developing a website, ultimately containing a library of relevant documents to help in your role - rules, guidance, best practice.

Visit conservatives.com/nationalconvention and check back regularly as we develop the content.

THE LEADERS OF THE NATIONAL CONVENTION



Michael Winstanley **President and Conference Chairman**

Michael is currently President of the National Conservative Convention and Chairman of the Party Conference, having been elected in September 2024. He was first elected as Vice President of the Convention in 2022.

He was Chairman of the North West Region from 2018-2021 and has also served as Greater Manchester Area Chairman from 2016-2019. He had experience of being a Constituency Officer when he was Chairman of Makerfield Conservative Association from 1997 – 2001 and was also the First Chairman of Wigan Federation (Wigan, Makerfield & Leigh Constituencies) when it was formed.

Michael has also served in Local Government as a Councillor on Wigan Council for a total of 17 years and he has stood for Parliament on five occasions in the North West, the first election being 1997 and latterly in this year's General Election in the Leigh & Atherton Constituency.

Working with the following Regions: Yorkshire & The Humber; South East

michael.winstanley@conservatives.com



Fleur Butler OBE **Vice President**

Fleur started in politics as a councillor, before becoming Leader of Richmondshire District Council. She served as the only woman on the Yorkshire Leadership Board, whilst also being on the Council of Europe in Strasbourg. She was on the candidate list and stood as an MEP for Yorkshire in 2009. As National Chairman of Conservative Women's Organisation, she rewrote the constitution and quadrupled the membership number, creating the modern CWO. She is Director of Development for CWO, leading one of the world's top training networks for women in politics and has regularly been asked to help train political parties around the world.

Fleur is the most experienced National Convention member on the Party Board, entering her 4th year. She is currently Deputy Chairman of CPF, and is leading on initiatives such as the Conservative Values survey, and on the CPF Female Communications Project.

Fleur is married with 4 sons and lives in Yorkshire.

Working with the following Regions: North East; East Midlands

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THE LEADERS OF THE NATIONAL CONVENTION



John Belsey **Vice President**

John is a chartered accountant and after a long career with Deloitte now runs his family's sports insurance business whilst serving the Conservative party nationally wherever and whenever he can. Currently South East Regional Chairman and Chairman of the Associations' Board of Finance, John lives in West Sussex where he is also a Mid Sussex District Councillor. In 2023 he bucked the national trend when he was re-elected with an increased majority having won the seat from the Lib Dems in 2015.

Very engaged in his community John is also chair of governors of a local primary school as well as chairman of his local tennis club and bonfire society!

Although John doesn't get much free time when he does he loves to play tennis and golf as well looking after his springer spaniel Drake who is occasionally allowed to join John on the campaign trail.

Working with the following Regions: North West; Eastern

john.belsey@conservatives.com



Stewart Harper **Vice President**

Stewart was born in Essex but he has lived in Yorkshire for 20 years. He was Regional Chairman for the Conservative Party in Yorkshire from 2020 to 2023, supporting the response to the parliamentary boundaries review and in three Westminster by-elections (as well as countless local government by-elections). He was the Party's Parliamentary Candidate for Leeds North West in 2019.

Stewart worked in the Higher Education sector for most of his career, has been a School Governor and is now a non-executive director of a Multi Academy Trust. A major passion of Stewart's is education and its ability to transform lives. He set up his own business in 2019 and now works in education, the NHS and in the private sector - with expertise in governance and compliance.

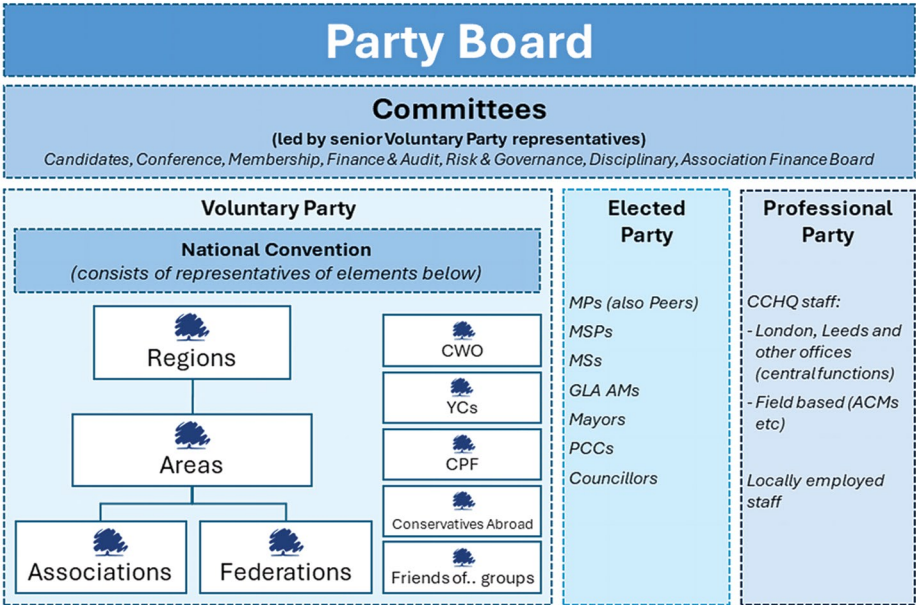
In his spare time he is a sports fan and enjoys watching his son playing sport of any kind. He also enjoys reading when he has the time!

Working with the following Regions: West Midlands; South West

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VOLUNTARY PARTY STRUCTURE

In simple terms, the Party has three main components - the Voluntary Party, the Elected Party and the Professional Party, all overseen by the Board (on which all components are represented).



The following are some of the more important groups which make up the Voluntary Party, beyond the main party structures:

Conservative Women’s Organisation (CWO)

The CWO’s aims are to encourage women to join and progress within the Conservative Party to stand for elected office as Councillors, PCCs, Mayors, Parliamentary Candidates and all elected roles in the Conservative Party.

Young Conservatives (YCs)

The Young Conservatives are the official youth section of the Conservative Party that has been representing the interests of young people for over 100 years. All Party members aged 25 and under are automatically members of the YCs.

Conservative Policy Forum (CPF)

The Conservative Policy Forum aims to find the world-changing, era-defining ideas and shape the policies of tomorrow. They are effectively the Party’s own think-tank, involving members in the development of Party policy.

For further information about these and the other groups which make up the Conservative family, such as the "Friends of" groups, visit: www.conservatives.com/organisation

THE NATIONAL CONVENTION

What is the National Convention and what does it do?

The Convention is the body which represents Associations, and therefore in turn, all members and volunteers. Its roots go back to 1867 (see page 24 for more about its history). Its composition and responsibilities are set out in Part V of the Party Constitution, which is reproduced below:

PART V: THE NATIONAL CONSERVATIVE CONVENTION

- 20 There shall be established and maintained The National Conservative Convention which shall consist of:
 - 20.1 the Chairmen of each Association within England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland or a Deputy Chairman nominated as a substitute by the Association at a meeting of the Executive Council of the Association. In respect of Constituencies which have joined together as a Federation or other groupings of Constituency Associations pursuant to the provisions of Article 44 below, then the representation should be the Chairman of that Federation or Grouping and the elected constituency officers of the Federation or Grouping
 - 20.2 the elected representatives on the Board; and the elected members of the Scottish Management Board of the Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party; and
 - 20.3 the elected members of the Board of the Welsh Conservative Party; and
 - 20.4 all members of the Area Management Executives as elected in accordance with the provisions of Schedule 5 and their equivalent in Scotland; and
 - 20.5 all Regional Chairmen and Deputy Regional Chairmen as elected in accordance with the provisions of Schedule 5; and
 - 20.6 such further representation from each Recognised Organisation, Specialist Group, or Other Body as the Board shall from time to time determine, having regard to the membership of the individual Recognised Organisation, Specialist Group or Other Body (not exceeding 100 such representatives for all Recognised Organisations, Specialist Groups or Other Bodies), who shall be elected by the members of each Recognised Organisation Specialist Group or Other Body in accordance with their respective constitutions; and
 - 20.7 the three past Presidents of the National Conservative Convention; and
 - 20.8 the two immediate past Chairmen of the National Conservative Convention;

THE NATIONAL CONVENTION

- 21 The National Conservative Convention shall elect, in accordance with the provisions of Schedule 3, a Chairman of the Convention whose responsibility it shall be to ensure that the Convention discharges its functions as set out in Article 24 below. The Chairman of the Convention shall, ex-officio, be a Deputy Chairman of the Board.
- 22 The National Conservative Convention shall elect, in accordance with the provisions of Schedule 3, a President of the Convention, who will chair the annual Party Conference, and who shall be a member of the Board and who shall be known as “President & Conference Chairman”.
- 23 The National Conservative Convention shall also elect three further Officers, in accordance with the provisions of Schedule 3, who shall be members of the Board and shall serve as Vice-Presidents of the National Conservative Convention.
- 24 The functions of the National Conservative Convention shall be to
 - 24.1 support and promote the objects and values of the Party;
 - 24.2 elect representatives to the Board;
 - 24.3 oversee and receive reports from the Board, the Area Management Executives and Recognised Organisations;
 - 24.4 provide a focus for views of Party Members and act as a link between the Party Leader and Party Members;
 - 24.5 keep under review, and from time to time propose to the Constitutional College, in accordance with the provisions of Schedule 9, amendments to this Constitution;
 - 24.6 recommend to the Board action that ensures the maintenance of an effective organisation throughout the Country.
- 25 The National Conservative Convention shall meet at least twice annually. The Leader and the Board shall be invited to attend its meetings.

Also:

- Under Part VIII para 65, members of the National Convention elect the Voluntary Political Director of the CPF every three years.
- Under Part XIII paras 90-92, members of the National Convention are part of the Constitution College which votes on any proposals to change the Party Constitution.
- Under Schedule 9 para 1.1, the National Convention may, by resolution, make a proposal to amend the Party Constitution (which would then have to go to the Constitutional College for approval).

THE ASSOCIATION CHAIRMAN'S ROLE

Schedule 7, clause 2 of the Constitution sets out the objects of an Association, which in turn should always guide you as Chairman:

The Objects of the Association shall be to sustain and promote the objects and values of the Party in the Parliamentary constituency of; to provide an effective campaigning organisation in the Constituency; to secure the return of Conservative Candidates at elections; and to raise the necessary funds to achieve these objectives; to contribute to the central funds of the Party.

A detailed role description for the Association Chairman is available, along with similar for DCPs and DCMFs – please look on the Convention website or contact one of the Convention Officers for more information. The information below is less formal, based directly on feedback from successful Association Chairmen.

KEY POINTS:

- The Chairman of an Association or Federation is also the Registered Treasurer with the Electoral Commission, which makes you legally responsible for ensuring that all financial returns required by the Party's Compliance Department are made, that donations made to the Association are permissible, and that annual accounts are filed.
- In terms of Association activity, ultimately you are the one that makes things happen! The initiative in keeping the Association running properly is with you. Use it wisely.

REMEMBER THE THREE Rs:

RULES

- Read and understand your Association rules (they are derived from Schedule 7/7A of the Constitution, but you should have your own local version – contact CCHQ to obtain a copy, if you don't have a copy locally)
- Send them to your Executive Council colleagues – it helps for them to know the rules (don't keep them in the dark)
- You can change the non-mandatory parts of your rules if you need to, at an AGM

ROLES

- Ensure that your officer roles are clear – use the standard ones by default (and make sure you share the role descriptions) but don't be afraid to adjust responsibilities if need be – as long as they are clear
 - Find round pegs for round holes – not just for the formal officer roles but also others who can help with ad hoc tasks/projects
- Task management – find a good, shared method for keeping track of who should be doing what (officers and staff), including action lists following meetings. Chase people up firmly and regularly right from the start – after a while people will police themselves and you won't need to chase them

RELATIONSHIPS

- Strong relationships are critical to the success of the Association – politics is a people business

THE ASSOCIATION CHAIRMAN'S ROLE

The Chairman's key stakeholders are the officers, Executive Council members, councillors, branches, staff (local and CCHO), other volunteers, and Area/Region officers

You must also invest time in your relationship with your MP/Parliamentary candidate (and any staff they have) – especially to nip any problems in the bud

Attend Council Group meetings, at least occasionally, for any councils covered by the Association (you are entitled to do so)

Staff:

- First and foremost you are their line manager, so the relationship is formal – performance management is vital.
- Create the right atmosphere around them – for example protect them from poor behaviour by volunteers.
- Always give and take – you cannot give orders to volunteers, so you need to be flexible. Create and use opportunities to socialise – e.g. before or after Executive meetings, invite people to have dinner or a drink together. Associations are fundamentally centripetal – you need to be the "glue" that keeps people together. Don't take sides in disputes – you need to be a neutral arbiter to resolve situations. If there are hard conversations to be had, it is the officers that have to have them (or at least ensure they are had). Succession planning (for your own and other roles) is vital – you don't want all your good work to be wasted.

BEYOND THAT:

- Ensure you have a clear Strategy Plan:
 - The Rules require it, but it really does help you as an officer team to prioritise and cut through the fog of the day to day issues that will otherwise take over
 - It should also set out where the officers can act under delegated authority from the Executive
 - It should underpin the staff's objectives
 - Use the "Defining an Association" checklist to find out broadly where you stand compared to the "ideal" Association (check the National Convention website or ask one of the National Convention officers)
- Focus on doing well in the Association Incentive Scheme – it hits all the key buttons in making the Association successful
- Communicate and share good practice with neighbouring Associations – e.g. sign up to each others' mailing lists so you can see what's going on, invite each other to Executive Council meetings to observe
- Use tools to help make life easier – WhatsApp, Toolkit, Google Forms, online banking, task management tool, etc.

THE ASSOCIATION CHAIRMAN'S ROLE

Tips for creating a successful Executive Council team:

- Use a round table - involve people - don't treat them like an audience and address them from a top table
- Maintain a clear and up to date Executive membership list, which you also use for signing in to meetings – it saves a lot of potential problems. Also clarify who are voting and non-voting members

Invite professional staff where possible/necessary, also remember standing invites to your Area Chairman

- Ensure officer reports are short and circulated in advance. Take them as read at the meetings and just take questions (always have a few key ones yourself to keep people on their toes and to get the questions flowing)
 - Update on Strategy Plan and performance reporting - both are vital
 - Keep good minutes - decisions and actions clear. Appoint a good Secretary
- Socialise before/after the meeting
- Invite outside guests occasionally - guest speakers, neighbouring Association Chairmen, CCHO staff, to share ideas and show members the bigger picture – it reduces the risk of silo'd thinking
 - Update Executive Council members on key points by email between meetings (or nowadays by interspersing formal in-person meetings with short Zoom updates)

Tips for an effective Management Team:

Meet regularly - put dates in the diary straight after the AGM (monthly is good, even fortnightly during busy periods) and stick to them

- Many of the same points above for the Executive Council also apply to the Management Team - keep notes of action points, hold people to account for them, socialise after meetings, etc.

THE ASSOCIATION CHAIRMAN'S YEAR

Many of the responsibilities of Associations, Areas and Regions fall into a routine cycle through the year – which this table is intended to capture. Note that this is not intended to be an exhaustive list and that this is only a guide – many items can happen a month or two either side of that shown here!

THE ASSOCIATION CHAIRMAN'S YEAR	
JAN	<p>Hold an early Management Team (MT) meeting to get the year moving:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Ensure the Treasurer is going to have the Annual accounts prepared by the end of the month b) Ensure any branches have paid across any surplus funds, and also that they have scheduled their AGMs (to happen before the Association AGM) c) Call an Executive Council in February to approve the accounts d) Ensure all candidates are selected for any elections in May e) Review events calendar for the whole year, ensuring several events are planned, interweaving Branch & Association events of varying expense, and one big formal dinner
FEB	<p>Hold MT meeting to discuss the next AGM</p> <p>Hold Executive Council meeting to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Agree the AGM date (if not already agreed) b) Approve the accounts c) Finalise campaign plans, any late selections and budgets for any elections in May
MAR	Intensive election campaigning. Monthly MT meeting
APR	<p>Intensive election campaigning</p> <p>Booking for Party Conference should be open, so publicise to your local members and encourage them to attend. Monthly MT meeting</p>
MAY	<p>Local elections (usually)</p> <p>Post-election debrief for candidates and key activists – document lessons learned</p> <p>Monthly MT meeting</p>
JUNE	<p>AGMs can be held any time from the end of February until the end of June</p> <p>Immediately after that takes place:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Notify Bluebook of any officer changes at the AGM

THE ASSOCIATION CHAIRMAN'S YEAR

THE ASSOCIATION CHAIRMAN'S YEAR	
JUN cont.	<p>b) MT to work on the Strategy Plan, get it approved by the Executive Council within 28 days of the AGM, and send to the Area Chairman</p> <p>c) Ensure your Executive is properly constituted and those who failed to turn up to meetings previously are replaced</p> <p>d) Schedule MT and Executive Council meetings for the year ahead, up to (and even including) the next AGM</p> <p>e) Elect 2 Association Reps to the local Area Council (who represent the Association in addition to the Chairman) – usually the two Deputy Chairmen</p> <p>f) Appoint a Voluntary Engagement Officer to work with your members, look for deliverers and scout for candidates</p> <p>g) Engage with your YCs (those under 26) to appoint an Association YC Co-ordinator</p> <p>Monthly MT meeting</p>
JLY	<p>Engage with your CWO Area Team to look for CWO members to start a branch (if you don't already have one)</p> <p>Engage with your local CPF to arrange regular meetings over the coming year (or if you don't have a local CPF, contact the national CPF team to help you set one up)</p> <p>Ideal time to approve/select candidates for the following May's elections (if not already completed)</p> <p>Monthly MT meeting</p>
AUG	Monthly MT meeting
SEP	Organise a meet up at Party Conference for those attending from the Association
	Monthly MT meeting
OCT	<p>Start the run-in to the May elections – ensure all candidates are selected and start regular candidate meetings/training sessions, involving CCHQ Field staff</p> <p>Hold an Executive Council. Monthly MT meeting</p>
NOV	Monthly MT meeting
DEC	<p>Christmas event(s) – good opportunity to raise funds and thank volunteers</p> <p>Monthly MT meeting</p>

AREAS AND THE AREA CHAIRMAN'S ROLE

REGIONS AND THEIR AREAS

SCOTLAND (Regional Councils being the closest equivalent to Areas)

- East Regional Council Area
- North Regional Council Area
- West Regional Council Area

NORTHERN IRELAND

NORTH EAST

- Cleveland & Durham
- Northumberland, Tyne & Wear

NORTH WEST

- Greater Manchester
- Merseyside
- Lancashire
- Cumbria
- Cheshire & The Wirral

YORKSHIRE & THE HUMBER

- North & East Yorkshire
- West Yorkshire
- South Yorkshire

EAST MIDLANDS

- Nottinghamshire
- Derbyshire
- Lincolnshire
- Leicestershire & Rutland
- Northamptonshire

WEST MIDLANDS

- Shropshire & Herefordshire
- Staffordshire
- Warwickshire & Worcestershire
- Heartlands
- Black Country

WALES

- Mid & West Wales
- North Wales
- South Wales Central
- South Wales East
- South West Wales

EASTERN

- Bedfordshire & Cambridgeshire
- Hertfordshire
- Essex
- Norfolk & Suffolk

LONDON

- South East
- South West
- South
- North
- North West
- East
- Lea Valley

SOUTH EAST

Hampshire & The Isle of Wight
Berkshire
Oxfordshire
Buckinghamshire
Surrey
East Sussex
West Sussex
Kent

SOUTH WEST

- Bristol & Gloucestershire
- Wiltshire & Swindon
- Dorset
- Somerset
- Devon
- Cornwall

AREAS AND THE AREA CHAIRMAN'S ROLE

What are Areas?

In rural parts of the country, Areas tend to correspond to counties, or in some cases they take in two counties. Cities may be covered by one Area, or a number of Areas, depending on size. See the previous page for a list of all the current Areas.

The Area Management Executive ("AME") comprises the elected Area Officers, and is responsible for fulfilling the responsibilities of the Area.

What are the functions of Areas?

Part VI (para 26 onwards) of the Party Constitution sets out the roles and responsibilities of Areas, and Schedule 5 sets out how the respective officers at this levels are elected.

The formal responsibilities are outlined in para 32 of the Constitution:

It shall be the function of each Area Management Executive to co-ordinate Associations and take initiatives in respect of:

- 32.1 sharing resources between Associations;
- 32.2 the finance and membership of Associations;
- 32.3 the motivation and monitoring of the performance of Associations;
- 32.4 the management and training of Officers of Associations;
- 32.5 campaigning and Conservative representation in National, and Local Government elections;
- 32.6 matters relating to Local Government;
- 32.7 assisting elected representatives and the professional staff with the co-ordination of local media relations;
- 32.8 resolving disputes within Associations and Branches thereof, including the investigation of breaches of Rules of Associations;
- 32.9 the provision of assistance to, and the undertaking of activities within a Supported Association;
- 32.10 preparing and submitting to the Board an annual report on the activities of each Association within the Area.

AREAS AND THE AREA CHAIRMAN'S ROLE

The best Area teams do the following:

- Set an annual Strategy Plan (just like Associations are required to do).
- Hold regular Area Management Executive meetings (typically monthly).
- Hold regular Area Council meetings in addition to the Area AGM, including the Area CWO Chairman, Area YC Co-ordinator, local CPF Ambassador and relevant CCHQ staff (for at least some of the meetings).

Allocate each Association to one of the Area officers, to build a close relationship with (but not their home Association, to avoid conflicts).

Attend (between them) all Executive Council meetings of Associations in their Area.

Regularly (at least once per month) contact their counterparts in their Associations, one on one or as a group (i.e. Area Chairman with Association Chairmen, Area DCP with Association DCPs, Area DCMF with Association DCMFs) – to foster good relations, share good ideas and pick up on emerging problems early.

Arrange annual Area dinners and/or Area Conferences.

Attend (between them) a good number of Association events across the Area, demonstrating visibility and support.

Proactively monitor and chase up selection of local government candidates.

Monitor key statistics on their Associations – e.g. membership numbers, VI collection.

Safeguarding: a responsibility of everyone

If you have any concerns about a child or adult at risk of harm, or wish to report an incident, please contact the Safeguarding Team by emailing: safeguarding@conservatives.com or calling: 020 7984 8040.

If there is an immediate risk of harm, this should be reported to the police by calling 999 and then reported to the Safeguarding Team.

THE AREA CHAIRMAN'S YEAR

THE AREA CHAIRMAN'S YEAR			
JAN	Hold an early AME meeting (and/or meetings of Association DCPs and Association DCMFs) Start completing Area accounts (if the Area has its own funds) Plan for and co-ordinate any potential campaign support for the May elections – those Associations without their own elections supporting those with elections	JUN Cont.	Schedule the Area AGM (to happen between June and end of September). Immediately after that takes place: Notify Bluebook of any officer changes at the AGM AME to work on the Strategy Plan within 28 days of the AGM, and send to the Regional Chairman Open nominations for and appoint an Area YC Co-ordinator
FEB	Ensure an Area Officer attends each Association Executive Council within the Area. Approve and submit the Area accounts (if applicable) Monthly AME meeting	JLY	Monthly AME Meeting
MAR	Monitor and chase up any Associations yet to submit accounts Monthly AME meeting	AUG	Monthly AME Meeting
APR	Monthly AME meeting	SEP	Monthly AME Meeting
MAY	Area-wide post-election debrief Monthly AME meeting	OCT	Ensure an Area Officer attends each Association Executive Council within the Area Monthly AME Meeting
JUN	Ensure an Area Officer attends each Association AGM within the Area Monthly AME meeting	NOV	Monthly AME Meeting
		DEC	Monthly AME Meeting

REGIONS AND THE REGIONAL CHAIRMAN'S ROLE



REGIONS AND THE REGIONAL CHAIRMAN'S ROLE

What are Regions?

In England the Regions are the same as UK government regions and they vary in terms of the numbers of Areas and Associations they each cover. Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland are not formally part of the Regional structure, having their own arrangements instead, but in many respects the same principles/functions apply.

What are the functions of Regions?

Part VI (para 26 onwards) of the Party Constitution sets out the roles and responsibilities of Regions, and Schedule 5 sets out how the respective officers at this levels are elected.

The formal responsibilities are outlined in para 39 of the Constitution:

The Regional Officers shall be responsible for:

- 39.1 co-ordinating campaigning and political activities which cross Area boundaries;
- 39.2 assisting Area Management Executives in the organisation of activities which cross Area boundaries;
- 39.3 co-ordinating campaign activity for Local Government elections where local authority boundaries cross Area boundaries;
- 39.4 ensuring the strategy of the Board in relation to Parliamentary boundary changes is implemented;
- 39.5 when so requested by the Board, providing assistance in the event of performance failings by Area Management Executives.
- 39.6 when so requested by the Board, providing assistance in the establishment of fair disciplinary processes and dispute resolution within the Region.
- 39.7 promoting liaison between the Area Officers within the Region.
- 39.8 introducing and promoting initiatives across the Region in any matters as requested by the Board from time to time.

REGIONS AND THE REGIONAL CHAIRMAN'S ROLE

The best Regional teams do the following:

- Set an annual Strategy Plan (just like Associations are required to do).
- Hold regular Regional Management Team (MT) meetings (typically monthly).

Hold regular Regional Board meetings, including the Regional Management Team, Area officers, and including the Regional CWO Chair, Regional YC Co-ordinator, CPF Ambassador and relevant CCHQ staff (for at least some of the meetings)

Allocate each Area to one of the Regional officers, to build a close relationship with (but not their home Area, to avoid conflicts).

Attend (between them) all monthly Area Management Executive meetings in the region.

Regularly (at least once per month) contact their counterparts in their Areas, one on one or as a group (i.e. Regional Chairman with Area Chairmen, Regional DCP with Area DCPs, Regional DCMF with Area DCMFs) – to foster good relations, share good ideas and pick up on emerging problems early.

Arrange annual Regional dinners and/or Regional Conferences.

Hold occasional meetings of all Convention members in the Region (usually online), with key speakers/updates and an open forum for Convention members to air issues.

Attend (between them) a good spread of Association and Area events across the Region, demonstrating visibility and support.

Monitor key statistics on their Areas – e.g. membership numbers, VI collection.

Ensure co-ordination in advance of cross border elections, e.g. PCCs and Mayoral elections.

THE REGIONAL CHAIRMAN'S YEAR

THE REGIONAL CHAIRMAN'S YEAR				
JAN	Hold an early Regional Management Team meeting Plan to hold Regional Board meetings and Convention meetings throughout the year Start completing Region accounts (if the Region has its own funds) Plan for and co-ordinate any potential campaign support for the May elections – those Associations/Areas without their own elections supporting those with elections	JLY	Monthly Regional Team meeting	
		AUG	Monthly Regional Team meeting	
		SEP	Ensure a Regional Officer attends and oversees each Area AGM within the Region Monthly Regional Team meeting	
		OCT	Monthly Regional Team meeting	
FEB	Approve and submit the Region accounts (if applicable) Monthly Regional Team meeting	NOV	Hold Regional elections. Immediately after they takes place: Notify Bluebook of any officer changes at the AGM Regional Team to work on the Strategy Plan within 28 days of the AGM, and send to the National Convention Officers Open nominations for and appoint a Regional IYC Co-ordinator	
MAR	Monitor and chase up any Associations/Areas yet to submit accounts Monthly Regional Team meeting			
APR	Monthly Regional Team meeting	DEC	Monthly Regional Team meeting	
MAY	Region-wide post-election debrief Monthly Regional Team meeting			
JUN	Monthly Regional Team meeting			

THE PARTY BOARD

What are the responsibilities and composition of the Party Board?

Part IV of the Constitution sets out the powers and composition of the Board – “There shall be established and maintained a Board of the Conservative Party which shall be the supreme decision-making body in matters of Party organisation and management.”

Paragraph 17 sets out the (extensive) responsibilities of the Board, and includes the generic power “to do anything which in its opinion relates to the management and administration of the Party.”

Composition of the Board, as set out in paragraph 12 (and named incumbents, correct at the time of publication):

Role	Incumbent(s) as at September 2024
Party Chairman	Richard Fuller CBE MP
Deputy Chairman (NCC Chairman)	Julian Ellacott
Deputy Chairman	Nickie Aiken
Four other Officers of the National Convention	Michael Winstanley Fleur Butler OBE John Belsey Stewart Harper
Chairman of the 1922 Committee	Bob Blackman CBE MP
Chairman of the Association of Conservative Peers	Rt Hon Lord Forsyth of Drumlean
Chairman of the Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party	Craig Hoy MSP
Chairman of the Welsh Conservative Party	Cllr Dr Tomos Davies
Chairman of the Conservative Councillors Association	Cllr Phil Broadhead
Treasurer of the Party	Graham Edwards
Further member	Matt Wright
Senior member of professional staff	Alan Mabbutt OBE
Further member	Katy Bourne OBE
Three further MPs	Rt Hon Sir John Whittingdale OBE MP Alicia Kearns MP Mark Garnier OBE MP

CONSERVATIVE CAMPAIGN HEADQUARTERS (CCHQ)

CCHQ (formerly Conservative Central Office) is the central, professional body within the Party. As shown in the structure diagram earlier, it is distinct from the Board (which appoints its senior staff), and from the Convention. Its main functions are, broadly speaking (along with primary contact email addresses):

Campaign activity – both central support and teams in the field

- Opposition.Watch@conservatives.com (for sending opposition literature to)
- toolkit@conservatives.com (Campaign Toolkit)

VoteSource

- helpdesk@conservatives.com

Research and briefings – undertaken by the Conservative Research Department, which was established in 1929

- briefing@conservatives.com

Media relations and communications

- press@conservatives.com
candidates@conservatives.com

Administration of membership

- membership@conservatives.com

Fundraising (through the Treasurer's team)

Training and support to the Voluntary Party

- training@conservatives.com
- voluntaryparty@conservatives.com

Organisation of the Party Conference and Spring Forum

- conference@conservatives.com

Advice and oversight on compliance – data protection, financial compliance, compliance with electoral law, Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act, and other rules from the Electoral Commission

- Election.Law@conservatives.com
- [DataProtection@conservatives.com](mailto>DataProtection@conservatives.com)
FinancialCompliance@conservatives.com

Complaints/Code of Conduct/Member Governance

complaints@conservatives.com

Safeguarding

safeguarding@conservatives.com

A HISTORY OF THE NATIONAL CONVENTION



A brief history of the NCC by Lord Sharpe of Epsom OBE, Chairman, National Conservative Convention 2018-2021

Since 1867 the Conservative Party has been built on solid national foundations. The National Union of Conservative & Constitutionalist Associations held its first meeting on the 12th November of that year. Its foundation pre-dated that of Central Office by three years.

The name 'Conservative Party' was commonly used by a variety of local associations and registration societies from the time of Sir Robert Peel's 'Tamworth Manifesto' of 1834, but the party had no national organisation. That changed in the space of three years under reforms approved by Disraeli. The passing of the Second Reform Act of 1867 increased the size of the electorate by almost 90% as large numbers of working-class men were given the vote for the first time. The purpose of the National Union was to persuade the newly enfranchised to vote Conservative and its foundation marked the first time that the party had a coherent national structure. It was remarkably successful and by 1874 over 400 local associations had affiliated. Conservative Central Office was established in 1870 and this basic model of the Conservative Party has endured, more or less intact, to the present day.

In keeping with Peel's original manifesto the party has, of course, had to reform to survive over the years but the present National Conservative Convention, established under William Hague's leadership in 1998, does not differ very much in spirit or intent from the 1867 original. The Associations group within Areas, the Areas within Regions and the officers of all those structures, plus the 105-year-old Conservative Women's Organisation, elect the National Officers – three Vice-Presidents, a President and a Chairman – all of whom sit on the governing board of the party and populate the various sub-committees. The Chairman of the NCC chairs the board in the party Chairman's absence.

The party's constituent parts were designed with one aim, to convince people across our United Kingdom to vote Conservative. The Convention still exists to ensure that the members, grassroots, volunteers, activists – whatever we are called given the fashion of the day – retain a significant voice in how our country is run, how we are represented in parliament and how our national narrative develops.

The principles behind the National Convention remain much the same as when the National Union was founded back in 1867 – Conservative Associations across

A HISTORY OF THE NATIONAL CONVENTION

the country have their autonomy recognised and preserved and all have an equal voice at the Convention and therefore the top of the party. That is entirely consistent with Peel's manifesto – he opposed unnecessary change, fearing a "vortex of perpetual agitation." I am confident that the National Convention will survive current and future vortices and thrive for many more years to come.

However as vortices go there is no doubt that 2024's has been severe. All of the candidates for leadership in 2024 proposed measures to reform various structures of the party. I pass no judgement on those as we clearly must evolve to survive but I would caution about blaming process too much for our recent travails. We need to have a broader conversation about Conservative principles and policies and I would expect the National Convention to be at the heart of that. Get that right and I am confident that we will win again. I am optimistic that Julian Ellacott and his team will ensure that happens.

Presidents and Chairmen of the National Convention

Presidents

1998-1999:	Graham Park CBE	2012-2013:	Paul Swaddle OBE
1999-2000:	Brian Hanson CBE	2013-2014:	Charles Heslop OBE
2000-2001:	Raymond Monbiot CBE	2014-2015:	Robert Semple CBE
2001-2002:	Jean Searle OBE	2015-2016:	Steve Bell CBE
2002-2003:	Caroline Abel-Smith OBE	2016-2017:	Gerry Yates OBE
2003-2004:	Don Porter CBE	2017-2018:	Lord Sharpe of Epsom OBE (Andrew Sharpe)
2004-2005:	Richard Stephenson OBE	2018-2019:	Thomas Spiller OBE
2005-2006:	Paul Marland	2019-2020:	Pamela Hall OBE
2006-2007:	Stephen Castle	2020-2021:	Andrew Colborne-Baber OBE
2007-2008:	Simon Mort OBE	2021-2022:	Debbie Toon MBE
2008-2009:	Jeremy Middleton CBE	2022-2023:	Fleur Butler OBE
2009-2010:	Baroness Pidding CBE (Emma Pidding)	2023-2024:	Peter Smallwood
2010-2011:	Charles Barwell OBE	2024-2025:	Michael Winstanley
2011-2012:	Fiona, Lady Hodgson CBE		

Chairmen

1998-2000:	Lord Hodgson of Astley Abbotts CBE (Robin Hodgson)	2012-2015:	Baroness Pidding CBE (Emma Pidding)
2000-2003:	Lord Taylor of Holbeach (John Taylor)	2015-2018:	Robert Semple CBE
2003-2006:	Raymond Monbiot CBE	2018-2021:	Lord Sharpe of Epsom OBE (Andrew Sharpe)
2006-2009:	Don Porter CBE	2021-2024:	Lord Booth (Peter Booth)
2009-2012:	Jeremy Middleton CBE	2024-	Julian Ellacott

NOTES

NOTES



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