



Greenwich & Woolwich Labour Party Membership Guide

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Welcome

Welcome to the Labour Party. You have joined the largest democratic socialist movement in Europe and thousands of like-minded activists determined to bring about real political change, a Labour government and to make a difference to their local communities. Labour is a vibrant, evolving movement. As well as being a member of the overarching Labour Party in England, you have automatically become a member of the Greenwich and Woolwich Constituency Labour Party (G&W CLP). This guide will describe the Labour Party structure at a local level and will hopefully help to clarify how things work in order to give you the confidence to get involved.



The Structure of the Local Labour Party

The structure of the Labour Party mirrors the electoral map of the UK. The local authority area of the Royal Borough of Greenwich (RBG) has 3 Constituency Labour Parties (CLP) based on the electoral districts:

- Greenwich & Woolwich (G&W)
- Eltham
- Erith & Thamesmead

The 3 CLPs are currently represented by Labour Members of Parliament (MP). The MP for the G&W CLP is Matthew Pennycook. He works hard on behalf of the residents of G&W and is appreciated by members for his clarity and candour.

The Ward

The ward is an electoral boundary which is drawn up by the Local Government Boundary Commission. In 2021 the Boundary Commission reviewed the electoral arrangements for RBG. The principle aim of the review was to create electoral equality. The Boundary Commission defined 23 wards in RBG represented by 55 councillors. Fourteen wards (some are part wards) of these are within G&W CLP and these are listed in Table 1 along with the number of councillors representing each ward. Six of these wards cross CLP boundaries so a number of councillors going forward will be reporting to members in more than one CLP. You will have the opportunity to be involved in the process of shortlisting and selecting your ward councillor candidates for local elections.



Table 1

Wards in G&W CLP and the number of councillors representing each ward:

Blackheath Westcombe	3	Plumstead & Glyndon	3
Charlton Hornfair	2	Plumstead Common	3
Charlton Village & Riverside	2	Shooters Hill	2
East Greenwich	3	West Thamesmead	2
Greenwich Creekside	3	Woolwich Arsenal	3
Greenwich Park	2	Woolwich Common	2
Greenwich Peninsula	3	Woolwich Dockyard	2

The Branch

The branch is the smallest organising and administrative unit of the Labour Party and can be a whole ward, many wards or part of a ward all within the boundary of the CLP. The Boundary Commission review will affect a number of changes and the G&W CLP is working through a period of transition towards a new arrangement of branches. This guide will be updated when the configuration of branches is finalised.

You will be invited to attend your branch meetings which take place once a month with the exception of August and December - although some branches will hold social events in these months. Agendas and minutes are distributed by email in advance. Often the branch has a particular focus or a special speaker on a topical subject. Councillors report at branch meetings on their activities. Matthew Pennycook is a regular visitor to both ward and branch meetings. The Annual General Meeting (AGM) of your branch elects its Officers and receives the Annual Statement of Accounts and other Officers' reports. These usually mirror the Officers of the CLP which include: Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary, Treasurer, Campaign Organiser, Membership Officer, Youth Officer, Women's Officer and Social/Fundraising Officer. At least 50% of the 4 main Officers must be women. You can stand to be an officer of the branch at the AGM.



You can submit a motion to your branch and if passed it will go to the next CLP meeting. If your CLP votes for the motion it may go to several places, such as the Local Government Committee (LGC) (the role of the LGC is described later in this guide) or to Labour's National Policy Forum (NPF). Getting active in your local branch is a great way to:

- Hear about local issues and challenges and how the council is responding
- Make your voice heard in shaping the direction of the Party and Party Policy
- Organise local campaigns and get Labour's message out to your local community
- Help Labour win the next general election
- Meet other Labour Party members in your local area
- Bring new ideas and enthusiasm to your local branch

Apart from the Borough Organiser, who is employed by the Labour Group of councillors to work across the 3 CLPs, the G&W CLP is run by volunteers. Every member has a part to play. Any time you can spare will be much appreciated. Here are just some of the ways you can help:

Canvassing

Knocking on doors is a tried and tested way of connecting with residents. We need to be out there as often as possible (not just at election times), being a visible presence in our community and listening to the concerns of our constituents.

Leafleting

Every so often there will be a newsletter or leaflet to be delivered to every address in your ward or branch and during an election campaign there may be many. Delivering a round of leaflets usually takes around an hour for one person. It can be done during the day or evening or at weekends and is one of the key methods we rely on for spreading the message.

Attend a meeting

Attending a Labour Party meeting gives you the opportunity to be involved in decision making at a grassroots level and ensure your views are represented.



Election campaigns

During election campaigns, there are other roles for which volunteers are needed including:

- Telephone canvassing
- Being a teller at a polling station
- Helping run the committee room
- Giving lifts to polling stations
- Additional leafleting and door knocking to get the vote out
- Show your support for Labour by putting a poster in your window

Stand as a Conference delegate

Represent the G&W CLP at the Labour Party Annual Conference or at the London Region or the Women's Conference by attending as a delegate.

Stand as a Branch or CLP Officer

G&W CLP and your branch are led by officers elected each year at their AGMs. Fresh ideas and energy enable us to thrive and all members are encouraged to consider becoming an officer. You can let people know that you would like to stand and be formally nominated and seconded. There may be a ballot if more than one person stands for a post. The party rules allow for job shares.

Stand as a Councillor

Your ward has 2 or 3 councillors who are elected for four year terms to represent the views of their constituents and to take up matters of council business on their behalf as well as guiding the overall policies of RBG. Councillors make policy decisions, taking into account public opinion and officer advice. RBG staff then put these policies into effect. You can stand in any ward so long as you can demonstrate a real connection to the area and understand the local issues. You will need to meet eligibility criteria and there are a number of steps in the process before you can be shortlisted for selection by a ward. In every ward at least one candidate has to be a woman.



Social Events

Social events run throughout the year organised by your branch and the G&W CLP such as quiz nights, curry evenings, annual dinners, summer BBQs. These all represent a chance to get to know other members in a relaxed and friendly setting. As well as supporting the social events which help with fundraising efforts you can join the G&W CLP 200 and 2000 Club Lotteries which also help to raise vital funds which are needed especially for campaigning activities.

The G&W CLP

Decisions in our CLP are made by the General Committee (GC) structure which is restricted to delegates only. Delegates are elected from branches, affiliated trade unions, socialist societies and the Co-op Party. CLP meetings discuss political issues; plan campaigning activities; send motions and delegates to Labour Party Conferences; elect officers and establish an Executive Committee (EC) to oversee the day-to-day business of the CLP. CLPs also organise hustings during candidate selections for the MP when required.

The G&W CLP has a set of executive officers:

- Chair
- ViceChair Campaigns
- Vice Chair Membership
- Secretary
- Treasurer
- Policy Officer

As the Labour party operates a gender balance, at least 50% of these officers must be women. In addition, the G&W CLP elects functional officers for specific areas of work.

50% of all officers must be women. The functional officers are:

- Women's Officer
- Youth and Student Officer
- BAME Officer
- Disabilities Officer LGBT+ Officer
- Political Education & Training Officer



In addition to the officers a number of co-ordinators are elected. There are:

- Fundraising
- Trade Union Liaison
- Community
- IT
- Communications and Social Media
- Premises Officer
- School Governors Liaison Officer

The G&W CLP has also elected a Climate Change Champion whose role is to monitor the delivery of RBG Carbon Neutral Policy. In order to achieve the goals in the G&W CLP Development Action Plan, especially with regards to equality issues, 4 Forums have been established. These Forums bring together members with a particular interest and skills and are also designed to reach out to community groups and to attract new members. The Forums are BAME, Disabilities, LBGT+ and the Women's Forum.

The G&W CLP organises monthly All Members Meetings (AMM) which provide the opportunity for members to receive Matthew's monthly report and to ask him questions.

AMM also discuss Labour Party policy and contributes to the local election manifestos.

The AMM often have guest speakers.

The Local Government Committee (LGC)

LGCs are based on borough boundaries, allowing the G&W, Eltham and Erith & Thamesmead CLPs to meet together. Membership comprises the Leader and Deputy Leader of the Labour Group of councillors, representatives from the CLPs, trade unions and the Co-op Party.

LGCs are responsible for recruiting and shortlisting potential candidates for council elections.

Representatives of the LGC are observers at Labour Group meetings and liaise with the Labour Group regarding local government issues and motions passed at CLPs. They also have input into the manifesto for local elections.



London Region (LR)

The Labour Party in England is divided into Regional Boards. The London Region has a role in policy development and organises London conferences. In addition, the LR acts as the appeal body for candidates who have been excluded from the panel of candidates for local councillor elections by the LGC.

The London Assembly

All three CLPs in RBG are in the same Greater London Authority (GLA) constituency - Greenwich and Lewisham. Our Assembly Member is the accomplished and highly regarded Len Duvall. Len Duvall is a regular visitor to both ward and branch meetings. The Assembly and its various committees hold the London Mayor, who is elected by the people of London, publicly accountable. Sadiq Khan is the Labour Mayor of London. His key activities are in housing, transport, and policing amongst others.

The National Governing Body of the Labour Party (NEC)

The governing body of the Labour Party is the National Executive Committee (NEC). The NEC oversees the work of the Labour Party and its policy making process. It meets bi-monthly and has a number of sub-committees dealing with specific areas such as disputes and equalities. All sections of the Labour Party are represented on the NEC. Some attend because of the position they hold; others are elected either at Labour Party Conference or by One Member One Vote ballots.

Labour Party Policy

Labour Party Conference meets annually in September and all CLPs and affiliated trade unions are entitled to send delegates. The number of delegates is determined by the number of members a CLP has. Conference is the ultimate authority of the party and decides the policy framework. CLPs can submit a motion on a contemporary policy issue or propose a change to Labour Party rules. The detailed policy development takes place outside of conference through the National Policy Forum.



Contact details

You can contact the G&W CLP through the Secretary. The email is

clpsecgwlabour@gmail.com

The G&W CLP website is www.gwlp.org

Postal address is: 32 Woolwich Road, London SE10 0JU

Telephone: 020 8853 1261

As the G&W CLP depends on volunteers, the office is not staffed full-time. Leave a message and someone will get back to you.

You can email your councillor at: firstname.lastname@royalgreenwich.gov.uk

Matthew Pennycook can be contacted at matthew.pennycook.mp@parliament.uk

Matthew Pennycook's website is www.matthewpennycook.com

Len Duvall can be contacted at len.duvall@london.gov.uk

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