

Who will shape “Your Party”?

To contribute positively, Jeremy Corbyn’s “Your Party” has to offer better than the Greens, who already exist and have a form of democratic structures, i.e. it has to offer working-class socialist politics, class-struggle activity beyond elections, democratic structures and accountability of representatives. The proto-party has to be open to united-front activity with Labour Party members against the far right and against cuts. A thought-through anti-cuts strategy is essential for the May 2026 council elections. How does it look?

The draft constitution has two competing models running through it. The preferable one resembles a cleaned-up Labour-style delegate system: branches sending accountable delegates to a sovereign conference, with a Central Executive Committee and leaders elected by all members. The weaker model is closer to the Greens, with individual members proposing motions and attending conferences directly. Either may be supplemented by the worst option, online OMOV voting. Both allow for a “clickocracy” of digital ballots on major decisions rather than real deliberation.

Earlier drafts gave a formal role to local “assemblies” including non-members. Those have vanished. References to assemblies now appear inconsistently, and only in the Standing Orders as a synonym for all-member meetings.

The draft does, however, retain “Community Organising Units” (an idea taken from Labour, where it was pushed by David Miliband in 2010), with the option of national, regional, or (better) local control. It would be better if funds were directed to local parties to develop local voluntary campaigning.

IDEAS FOR FREEDOM 2025

Ideas for Freedom takes place on 22-23 November in Islington.

- 30 sessions. Key theme: building a socialist response to the far right.

- Tickets and more:

www.workersliberty.org/iff25

- A debate on the future of the left takes place on Friday 21 November, 7pm at Indian YMCA, Fitzroy Square, London W1 6AQ. More: bit.ly/iff25-left

Positively, the constitution expects the ex-Labour “independent” councillor groups which have made up a large part of the “Corbyn base” in recent years to integrate within two years.

Membership rules remain vague. The wording could permit proscription of all organised groups. It would be better to allow tendencies and debate while barring only candidates who oppose the party’s own ones. Internal factions are normal even in undemocratic parties; a democratic party should be more, not less, accepting of this than the norm.

On “Standing Orders”, over forty options are proposed, far too many to debate meaningfully in short assembly sessions. Even experienced activists struggle with the technicalities, and most members will not grasp their implications. Key issues include whether conference should be delegate-based (best), open to all (problematic), or selected by sortition (disastrous). Other proposals are unworkable, such as requiring 40% of all members to petition for a no-confidence vote in a local office or offering proportional list voting for single positions. The risk is a confused rulebook open to manipulation.

Weakness

“Organisational Strategy” is the weakest document of all. It would concentrate power in the CEC and leader from March 2026, even while they will be as yet unelected, allowing them to appoint senior staff, General Secretary and Directors of Finance, Organising, Strategy and Communications, before members have any say. This must be amended so that the party’s direction is determined democratically.

The paper also sketches the May 2026 local election plans. Since the national party will not yet exist, local groups may endorse “independent socialists” or run candidates chosen by OMOV. Yet there is no shared policy framework. Almost all endorsed independents offer no coherent anti-cuts strategy, and many are not really to the left of Labour. In Pendle, the jewel in the “Corbynite” local-government crown, the Independents ally with the Lib-Dems. There is no plan for coordinated campaigning, no stance against “soft cuts” coalitions with Greens or Lib-Dems.

A socialist intervention, as united as possible, is urgently needed to shape the founding process of the Sultana-Corbyn “Your Party”. Several

initiatives have appeared. Few are yet real campaigns.

The Democratic Bloc (dembloc.com) is the most “insider” effort, dominated by figures from Momentum in the later Corbyn period (bureaucratic and undemocratic) and The World Transformed. Includes James Giles, former organiser for Galloway’s Workers Party and now aide to MP Ayoub Khan. They back OMOV for most posts, which would entrench existing personalities. One their leading figures, Mish Rahman, has been reporting as arguing that dual membership should be allowed for Greens but not socialist organisations, which he views as entrists.

The Democratic Socialists (dsyp.org) are centred on younger rs21 activists and Max Shanly. Some toy with sortition but they are otherwise sound on structure and accountability.

Dignitaries

Organising for Popular Power is essentially Josh Virasami’s project and successor to “Our Party,” which demanded the initiative be handed to independent left dignitaries. No website and little activity.

A meeting at The World Transformed (Manchester, 9-12 October) brought together about 350 people from the above networks. It produced a lowest-common-denominator statement, calling for a sovereign conference (while fudging sortition), mandatory reselection, and MPs on a worker’s wage.

Your Party Connections is run by activists from Transform (a previous “new party” effort), linking around 50 local groups. More a networking hub than a faction, but likely the source of the broadest set of recommendations and amendments.

With assemblies already under way and conference five weeks off, there is little time to correct and develop a clear set of recommendations. The new party needs a left intervention to present clear amendments.

Late on the evening of Tuesday 14 October, the party website published the long-delayed list of regional deliberative assemblies. Far from the “huge” gatherings promised, these are modest events. The list covers 22 assemblies across Great Britain, but with patchy coverage — none in the East Midlands and only two in Scotland. Of the ten with confirmed details, most have advertised capacities far larger than the venues claim themselves. Average actual capacity is close to 300, or fewer with “deliberative” layouts.

Confusion

Accounts from activists reveal confusion and poor organisation. A Bristol activist described being

asked to find a venue for 2,000 people, and then given an unrealistic budget of £2,000, before facing bullying messages and eventual silence. A smaller venue was later booked without consulting locals. All typical of Karie Murphy’s management style. Later, the task of finding venues was reportedly given to Sean Halsall, a Southport Independents councillor. Halsall is personally blameless, but this suggests the London office lacks both capacity and trust in local initiative.

It has been reported that one reason for this downscaling are the divisions within Your Party, with the funds being trapped in the MoU Operation Ltd bank account controlled by Andrew Feinstein, Jamie Driscoll and Beth Winter. Some reports suggest the money has not been handed over because of the report made to the Information Commissioner made implicating MoU in a data breach around Zarah Sultana’s membership portal. However, this is not Feinstein’s explanation. He suggested at the end of September that delay was only due to the lack of a clear legal entity accountable to would-be members to transfer the funds to. It is unclear whether this has happened: Your Party registered with the Electoral Commission and Corbyn relinquished his controlling interest in the corporate entity, Your Party UK Ltd, which is now controlled jointly by all the Independent Alliance MPs. The Electoral Commission now shows Your Party holding £855,000 in assets, but it is unclear whether MoU funds are now under the control of Your Party.

As of Sunday 19 October, only three assemblies were fully booked. Rumour puts paid-up membership via the Corbyn portal at around 40,000, a fraction of the 800,000 sign-ups to “keep informed”. This suggests disillusion or passivity among supporters. Meanwhile, the Green Party now claims 123,000 members, more than the Conservatives and up 60,000 in seven weeks. One poll on 19 October put the Greens level with Labour on 15 per cent.

The Alliance for Workers' Liberty is an organisation fighting as part of the labour movement for a socialist alternative to both capitalism and Stalinism, based on common ownership and democracy. We have branches across the UK. Get in touch to find out more: awl@workersliberty.org