

# LIBERTY

PROTECTING CIVIL LIBERTIES  
PROMOTING HUMAN RIGHTS

## RESOLUTIONS AND RESULTS: AGM 2006

The 2006 Annual General Meeting was held on Saturday 20 May at BPP Law School in London. This document contains the resolutions passed and remitted and the Council election results.

### Changes to the Constitution

**The following changes to the Constitution were carried by more than three quarters of those voting and therefore do not require confirmation by postal ballot.**

Clause 8.7 deleted:

~~The Executive Committee shall make proposals to each AGM of groups of Liberty members and / or affiliated organisations which in its opinion constitutes a functioning Liberty Network and the AGM may by resolution approve any such Network.~~

Sub-paragraph 7.4 (f) deleted:

Members of Council must be members of Liberty. The Council shall consist of:

...  
~~(f) One representative nominated by each Liberty Network which has been recognised by the AGM.~~

Amend clause 11(b) as follows:

(b) Except in elections for the Council under clause 7.4(a) each recognised Liberty group ~~or network~~ shall have the number of votes as follows:

Amend Clause 9 as follows:

A ~~n~~ **registered** auditor shall be appointed annually by the Annual General Meeting.

### ***Resolutions carried:***

#### **Defence of the Human Rights Act**

This AGM notes with alarm the misrepresentation of, and attacks upon, the Human Rights Act by sections of the media and some politicians.

This AGM believes that the Human Rights Act, enshrining values of respect for dignity, equal treatment and fairness, is a vital means of protecting rights, freedoms and democracy.

This AGM therefore rejects calls for a "rebalancing" of the Act or of human rights themselves and calls on all democrats to advance a more positive discourse about what rights and freedoms offer to everyone in society.

### **No Torture No Compromise**

This AGM believes that torture robs us all of our humanity and is therefore rightly outlawed across the globe. Compromising this principle in any way undermines democracy and makes the world less safe.

This AGM notes with extreme concern that the UK is becoming complicit in torture being carried out overseas.

This AGM therefore calls on the Government to comply with the UN Convention Against Torture and the Human Rights Act and:

- Fully investigate recent allegations that 'extreme rendition' flights are passing through British Airports and enact legislation creating a legal requirement for the police to investigate where such suspicions exist.
- Ensure information gained by torture is not used in any legal process.
- Ensure no individual whether suspected of involvement in terrorism or not is deported to countries where they may face torture, inhuman, cruel or degrading treatment.

### **Rights of the Child**

This AGM embraces the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and notes that in 2007 the UK must report on measures it has adopted to give effect to the rights recognised therein.

This AGM believes that the UK is falling well short of its obligations to its children; both demonising children and young people and failing to protect them.

This AGM calls on the Government to comply with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Human Rights Act in particular to:

- Reduce the number of children entering the criminal justice system and ultimately penal custody by the provision of suitable alternatives.
- Ensure that children are educated to understand and respect human rights and fundamental freedoms.
- Implement a national strategy to reduce child deaths and child abuse as recommended by the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child in 2002.
- Respect the right of children to privacy which has in recent years been eroded to a frightening extent.
- Respect the rights of children seeking asylum in the UK whose rights under the Convention are being routinely denied.

### **Freedom of Expression**

Liberty notes with increasing alarm, the umpteen and increasing threats to the core democratic value of free speech and expression in Britain as too many people imagine an illusory right not to be irritated or offended:

- Baying mobs and death threats attempt to censor the press, theatre and the Arts.

- Police officers use overbroad public order offences and powers as the justification for investigating public figures for controversial comments and penalising teenagers for swearing and wearing certain types of clothing.
- Broad, dangerous and counterproductive speech offences are becoming the latest Governmental panacea for dealing with community relations and terrorism.
- Academic institutions seek to limit the wearing of religious dress or interfere with academic discourse.

Liberty renews its commitment to Article 10 of the European Convention on Human (now part of the Human Rights Act) as the appropriate framework for analysing the importance and limits of free speech and expression in our society. Free speech is the life blood of democracy and only such necessary, proportionate and lawful and objectively defined limits on speech and expression as set out in this provision may be permitted. By definition, counterproductive interferences do not meet the requirements of Article 10.

Liberty resolves to continue its work in promoting free speech and expression essential to the human rights framework. In particular, it must continue to demonstrate how minority groups have little to gain and everything to lose from intolerant attitudes and illiberal speech laws. It is by the consistent and even-handed application of our values that we spread the message of fundamental rights and freedoms which must also be protected against unrepresentative and vociferous elements who may seek to undermine them.

***Remitted Constitutional Amendments:***

**Constitutional Amendment 1: Council Protocols 1 of 3**

Insert new sub paragraph 7.9:

7.9 The Council shall have power to make protocols governing the conduct of its members and members of the Council are obliged to abide by any such protocols. Protocols must be agreed by two thirds majority to take effect.

**Constitutional Amendment 2: Council Protocols 2 of 3**

Insert new sub paragraph 7.10:

7.10 The Council shall have the power to expel from Council by two-thirds majority any member who has breached a protocol without reasonable excuse. The member of Council will be given an opportunity to make representation to the Council before it makes a decision. A decision to expel a member may be appealed to the Conference and Appeals Committee within fourteen days.

**Constitutional Amendment 3: Council Protocols 3 of 3**

Insert new sub paragraph 12.2 (f):

- (f) Expulsion from Council in accordance with Clause 7.10

## ***Remitted Motions:***

### **Police Act 1997**

That Liberty resolves to make representations to the Government to remove the adverse effects of the Police Act 1997 whereby enhanced disclosure forms produced by the Criminal Records Bureau contains mere allegations made to the police

### **Freedom of Expression and Blasphemy**

This AGM believes that legal constraints on freedom of expression should be limited to public order and Article 10 considerations, calls for Liberty's opposition to the blasphemy laws to be upgraded to an active campaign for their abolition, and opposes attempts by European bodies to criminalise disrespect for religion where, if adopted, the provisions could apply in the UK.

### **Election to Council**

*The following Liberty members have been elected to the Council of Liberty:*

Mona Arshi, Mohammed Aziz, Camila Batmanghelidjh, Caspar Bowden, Bill Bowring, Richard Clayton QC, Madeleine Colvin, Michael Ellman, Carolina Gottardo, Jean Lambert MEP, Doreen Lawrence, Sarah Ludford MEP, Steven Montgomery, Edward Northcote, Rod Robertson.

***These 15 join the following Council members who were elected (under 7.4.a) in 2005:***

Frances Butler, Louise Christian, David Downes, Shaheed Fatima, Marion Fitzgerald, Fiona Horlick, Francesca Klug, John Lyons, Mike McColgan, Nick O'Shea, Lou Simans, Richard Stone, John Wadham, Stephan Ward, Mazin Zeki

*And Liberty's Treasurer:*

Tish Anderwartha

### **Election to Conference and Appeals Committee**

Samantha Palmer was elected unopposed to serve for three years. She joins Henrietta Hill (chair) who has two years left to serve and Adrian Marshall Williams who has one year left to serve.

### **Appointment of Auditors**

Gotham Erskine were appointed as auditors.