**Politics and YCL**

Following our last board meeting, and having reviewed available material on the subject, I would make the following suggestions and observations:

Going into this debate it was perceived by the board that the club held a longstanding prohibition against the accommodation of any political event, or the support for any political candidate, party or viewpoint. After reviewing the club’s rules as well as older governance documentation, it has become clear that this policy was more of a guideline then a rule. It appears that it may have been used to avoid possible conflict or controversy, rather than because it was inscribed in the club’s statutes.

In order to make this easier on the board to manage, and to provide greater transparency, I propose that we add some specific language to the club’s governance and operational procedures. The changes are as follows:

1. When planning any event, the organising member (“Sponsor”) will be required to highlight if the event carries a political component. This includes situations, such as:
   1. where an active elected official (either because they are seeking, serving or have recently held public office) is participating in the event;
   2. where a political party is funding an event;
   3. where the core theme of the event is to discuss a political subject. or
   4. the event will clearly touch subjects which have been part of a wider political discussion.

The event planning form will be updated to include a section for the Sponsor to describe the political component, even if this may only be peripheral to the event.

1. When considering an event the board will include the political consideration in its approval process. In some cases if the Sponsor has not included a political consideration in the event planning form, but the board feels one is appropriate or applicable, the board can ask that the Sponsor address this issue before approval is given.
2. In situations where the board feels there may be some unease within the club’s membership, or there is a lack of clarity on the nature of the political consideration, it can seek assistance from the club’s Political Advisory Group (“PAG”). The PAG is made up of members who have volunteered for this role, essentially representing a wider set of viewpoints to help the board to assess the situation. The PAG distribution list will be maintained on the club’s email server, which is managed by the board.
3. The board has the final say, which means that it can override the PAG’s advice, however, this must be clearly explained at the next board meeting. As with all aspects of the club’s operations the board will attempt to represent the views of the majority of members while respecting those of the minority. Clearly the membership has the ability to change the board.
4. Where there has been a political component to an event, when that event is circulated to the membership it will carry the following disclaimer.

*This event has been approved by the YCL Board. Part of the approval process is a political content assessment, which was made and approved. The YCL does not support or represent any political party, agenda, candidate or even viewpoint. The club’s aim is to provide a valuable and comprehensive service to all our members. If you feel that any event promoted by the club should be discussed or scrutinised further, or if you feel that something was not fully considered, then you are encouraged to join the club’s Political Advisory Group, which has been formed to help the board to determine the appropriateness and value of events like this one. For more information please contact the club’s president, at* [*president@yale.org.uk*](mailto:president@yale.org.uk)