

Ann Black – Left Independent candidate for NEC

Dear CLP Secretary

I am seeking re-election to the NEC, and writing to ask your CLP to give me one of their nine nominations. I have served on the NEC since 2000 and the national policy forum since 1998, and been a voice for commonsense left politics throughout. I am accountable and transparent, and have reported after every meeting. My record and more information are at [www.annblack.co.uk](http://www.annblack.co.uk)

For eighteen years I stood as part of the centre-left grassroots alliance, which represented democratic socialist groups across the left and centre of the party and allowed individual candidates to retain freedom of judgment on specific issues while signing up to common principles of policy and party organisation. That broad coalition no longer exists, and this time I am standing as an independent left candidate.

My personal politics remain on the left, and it is great to have a leader who shares them. With my fellow-comrades I voted consistently against austerity, selective education, the Iraq war and Trident, and for public services, fair taxation, decent pensions and social security benefits, restoring council funds, and large-scale social housing. After the 2017 election manifesto showed the popularity of progressive policies I am hopeful, at last, of real change.

I have also worked consistently for party democracy. Together with the unions I achieved one-member-one-vote elections for national policy forum CLP representatives, against the wishes of the then leadership, and its extension to the conference arrangements committee. I steered the women's conference towards formal debate in 2017, with votes on motions this year and a free-standing women's conference next spring.

Turning to leadership elections, in 2010, as Chair of the NEC, I helped to ensure that members had a diverse choice of candidates. I followed through in 2015 when my MP provided the 35th nomination which took Jeremy Corbyn over the threshold. After that extraordinary summer, members sent me two clear messages: nearly 90% thought that the £3 registered supporters should have no role in future, and three-quarters said there should be a qualifying period before members could participate.

I kept this in mind when, to my deep regret, the party was pitched into another leadership election within the year. I defended Jeremy Corbyn's right to appear automatically on the ballot. I believed it was not only politically the right thing, but was the correct interpretation of the rule book, a view confirmed in the courts. I also proposed that everyone joining up to 24 June should get a vote. Unfortunately some NEC members had left, the vote was tied 14-14 and the cut-off date was set at 12 January, disenfranchising thousands.

In my time on the NEC I have always tried to act in a quasi-judicial capacity when interpreting the rule book, and when serving as Chair of the Disputes Panel. Making decisions on the rules as they stand is the only way to govern our party. If they are not fit for purpose they should be changed, not bent or ignored.

But above all our party is a broad church, and I have always aimed to represent all views. Every member has the right to be heard with respect, not treated as the enemy within, particularly in these polarised times.

In the last NEC elections I topped the ballot with 100,999 votes and I hope to keep your support this year as a left independent. Please pass this message on to your members, and invite them to contact me at [annblack50@btinternet.com](mailto:annblack50@btinternet.com) or 07956-637958 with any questions or comments.

Yours in solidarity,

Ann Black (membership number A353890)

PS Thank you to the many CLP secretaries who have already written. If you are no longer the secretary, please pass this on. It would also be helpful to know when your CLP has decided its nominations.

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