

Nominate Ann Black – Left Independent Candidate for the NEC 2020 / 2022

I'm writing to ask your CLP to nominate me for one of the nine constituency seats. CLPs can now do this online – the deadline is 27 September, with the ballot between 19 October and 12 November.

I served on the NEC from 2000 to 2018 as a consistent voice for left policies and members' rights. I kept in touch all year round – check my record at www.annblack.co.uk and ask how much you've heard since then.

Under Tony Blair I voted against the Iraq war, Trident and privatisation, and for public services, pensions, benefits and progressive taxation. I achieved one-member-one-vote elections for the national policy forum. I helped to get Diane Abbott onto the 2010 leadership ballot. In 2016 I voted to include Jeremy Corbyn without new nominations, and against requiring six months membership to participate.

Jeremy Corbyn's 2017 manifesto showed that bold, socialist policies could be popular, but 2019 was a bitter disappointment. Now the UK has left the European Union, today's priorities are surviving coronavirus and then making sure that debts are not again loaded onto the most vulnerable. Nor can cash-starved councils pick up the bill for Tory government decisions. There are also huge concerns about the disproportionate impact on BAME communities, private tenants and workers in the gig economy, and the climate crisis grows ever more acute.

For 18 years I stood as part of the centre-left grassroots alliance. In 2018 that broad coalition ended, and I ran as a left independent. I was nominated by 179 CLPs, but lost in the ballot. I hope this year's results will better reflect the diversity of our movement, and believe I can again play a useful role.

On the NEC I Will Work To

1. Support the elected leadership. I've had differences with all leaders at times, but never questioned their mandate. I will be loyal to Keir Starmer and Angela Rayner as I was to their predecessors.
2. Keep in touch. I will report on every meeting, consult before key decisions and visit as many local parties as I can, online and, when normal service resumes, in person.
3. Extend local party democracy. Many CLPs are meeting online and while this excludes some members, it can benefit those with disabilities, caring responsibilities or lack of transport. The NEC must restore decision-making powers to CLPs and look at a continuing role for technology in engaging members.
4. Build on the 2017 and 2019 manifestos towards a popular socialist programme. The national policy forum must be reformed so that it involves every member and reaches out to the wider electorate.
5. Allow local parties to choose their candidates, including in by-elections. From 2017 onwards CLPs were pleading to select parliamentary candidates. Dozens were still waiting when the 2019 election was called, and again had candidates imposed. Procedures can be simplified and still be democratic.
6. Review membership subscriptions and give local parties a fair share. The 2011 conference agreed changes which distributed money more equally between large and small CLPs but also increased central control. I nearly doubled the amount going to CLPs, but the system is no longer fit for purpose. With 550,000 members, surpluses pile up in national funds while the grassroots struggle, and even the reduced rate excludes those on low incomes. In 2018 the NEC promised a review. It's time to deliver.
7. Revive the women's conference. I steered women's conference to formal status in 2018 and a free-standing event in 2019, with 2020 also agreed. Sadly this slipped down the agenda. I will bring it back.

Please pass this on, and invite members to contact me at annblack50@btinternet.com or 07956-637958 with their ideas, comments and questions.

Yours in solidarity

Ann Black (membership number A353890)

Secretary of Oxford Labour, member of South East Regional Executive Committee, UNISON, Open Labour, Campaign for Labour Party Democracy, Fabian Society, Labour Campaign for Electoral Reform.

From Anneliese Dodds, MP for Oxford East, John McDonnell's shadow financial secretary 2017 - 2020, shadow chancellor 2020 - :

"Ann has been standing up for socialism and members' interests within the Labour Party for decades. I can't think of anyone who has worked harder to ensure that all our members have their voices heard without fear or favour - going beyond any cliques or factions. She has also been a democratising presence on our NEC, producing full, clear and unbiased reports on every meeting. I very much hope that members will support her to once again be a strong voice for all parts of the Labour membership."