

Writing Motions for the Basingstoke Constituency Labour Party (CLP)

Introduction

Putting a motion to your Branch or CLP is a way that you, as a member, can influence the local Party. It might be that you would like to suggest a change in a local procedure or feel that the local party should be taking action on a specific local issue or suggest a local campaign to support or donate to.

Writing a motion for a meeting is not as hard as it sounds. You simply identify the problem you want to address. You state some facts and beliefs. Then you say what you'd like done about it.

A motion needs a 'Proposer' (you) and someone else (a 'Secunder') to introduce it. The Proposer and Secunder stand up and make a short speech explaining why they propose the motion and why they feel it's important. You try to persuade other members to vote for your motion.

People at the meeting can say that they oppose your motion (either all, or parts of it) and they will have similar opportunities to speak and try to persuade people to vote against your motion. They can also suggest some changes (an amendment) they would make to the motion to make it sound better. Members then vote on whether to accept the original motion, the amended motion or not at all.

How to write a motion

Motions tend to follow an established format. Following this format will generally save time and reduce confusion, and most importantly it will help to ensure that everyone understands what you are seeking to achieve. Motions that follow this format have a better chance of being successful.

A motion is generally split into three sections:

1. **This CLP Notes:** largely the facts of the argument
2. **This CLP Believes:** opinions
3. **This CLP Resolves:** actions

This CLP notes...	FACTS This must be factual information that can be independently seen to be true. In this section you would not debate the facts in any detail, just simply state them. Use short easy to read sentences and numbered lists. You do need to check that any factual points are accurate. Quote sources of information if possible, so people can see that the facts are accurate and true.
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	Remember most motions are sent to members in advance of a meeting so this gives them a chance to consider the issue carefully and check facts for themselves.
This CLP believes...	<p>OPINIONS</p> <p>This contains things that you believe to be true or important, but which other people might not agree with. Be open-minded and accept that other people may not agree with what you believe, even if you consider it to be “fact”.</p> <p>E.g statements like “There could be an election any day now so this is vital” should be in this section as it is an opinion or belief that makes the topic of the motion important but it is not a fact.</p> <p>If the motion has a financial impact, think about how the cost could be offset or where finance could be gained from.</p> <p>Again, your view on this is an opinion not a provable fact so would go in this section E.G. “ This this could be self-funding because...”</p>
This CLP resolves to...	<p>ACTIONS</p> <p>This section recommends to the CLP what action to take as an organisation. Making recommendations for action is the most important part of the motion.</p> <p>If there is more than one action to take write down each action separately using bullet points or numbered list. It makes it clear and simple to understand and if only one of your points are disagreed with the rest might still succeed.</p> <p>Actions could include things like writing to a government Minister, changing a local procedure, making a donation to an organisation, supporting a local community cause and so on.</p>
Proposer and seconder	You must say who the proposer and seconder will be. Motions without a Proposer and Secunder cannot be debated under Party rules.

Motions that contain a lot of criticisms or a detailed description of the problem but are thin and unclear in their conclusions or the specific action that is needed rarely succeed and they fail to “persuade” and are unclear. The Chair and Secretary will be happy to help with motion ideas.

How to submit a motion

The process for submitting motions is laid down in Standing Orders. These can be found on the CLP website. Motions need to be submitted in writing **at least** 14 days in advance of the meeting.

The more notice given the better that way the Chair or Secretary may be able to identify how to help you improve your motion if needed, and make sure the agenda for the meeting can fit the motion in to the timetable.

Motions should not be submitted during a meeting except for very urgent or emergency matters. They still need to be presented in writing.

Ask the Chair or Secretary for examples of past motions if this will help you.