**Jewish Greens Questions for Chair**

 **Judy Maciejowska**

**What changes are needed to Green Party internal structures to match the ambition of the Party?**

Crumbs, this is a big one to start with!

On the whole, I don’t think too much needs to change to the framework of the Party. Local Parties have a great deal of autonomy over local campaigns and strategies; Regions provide support and guidance, as well as a useful forum for interaction between local parties. In my experience, the Field Organisers are excellent, though we could do with more of them. I also love the way that individual members have a genuine say in the overall workings of the party, whether it’s through their region’s meetings or attending conference. And of course, any member can propose and vote on policy. This is all good, though I do sometimes despair that local parties and individuals often don’t engage more readily.

However, now that we have so many members I have considerable concern that decisions made at conference can no longer be considered in the least bit democratic. We really do need to consider alternative forms of conference, probably revisiting the recommendations from the Holistic Review (declaring an interest: I was on the Holistic Review Commission), possibly establishing regional conferences and a national delegate conference.

When the current governance structure was formed not only were we much smaller, we also had very few staff. GPEx members did most of the work of running the party. Now that we have a good complement of staff the roles and makeup of the main governance bodies need to be tweaked. Some GPEx roles are better suited to sit on GPRC, e.g. Trade Union Liaison, Young Greens Chairs, where their input into the political strategy will ensure representation of their portfolios. This would free up GPEx to oversee the work of their individual roles.

Meanwhile, the governance bodies need to work more constructively, in a way that provides mutual support. So if, for instance, GPRC produces some guidance that might be controversial GPEx should be asked for advice, as should any relevant special interest groups. GPEx committees or working groups must already include two GPRC members, and any findings should not be contentious. Recently the two bodies seem to be clashing over their tasks, and this is debilitating for those involved and time-wasting for the Party.

**What do you see as GPEx chair's relationship with the Green Party’s liberation groups**?

I think my first response must be to find out from liberation groups what they need from GPEx. I imagine the lack of Equalities and Diversity Coordinator has made it difficult for many groups to have a direct conduit to GPEx. I would certainly like to meet up with the committee members of the various groups, to hear what support is needed, maybe back up for campaign ideas, or funding for leaflets, or maybe training in the use of IT and Action Network

**Should GPEx take a role in disciplinary matters**?

I don’t think GPEx should have a direct role in disciplinary procedures. It is important that the Disciplinary Committee is kept independent from GPEx and also from SOC. However, I am concerned that several disciplinary sanctions in recent years have been subject to legal challenges, leading to huge expense for the party both financially and reputationally. Clearly this is a major concern for GPEx.

When I was on GPRC and involved in disciplinary matters there were few suspensions or expulsions. Alternative routes to resolve matters were utilised, e.g. Alternative Disputes and Resolution Committee, or lesser sanctions were imposed. So, I would like to meet up with the chairs of Disciplinary Committee to discuss the problem and see how we can relieve the burden of legal challenges created by punitive sanctions.

**What role should GPEX take in defection processes, and ensuring they’re robust**

So far as I'm aware, the current process of dealing with defections works well. It involves the local party, the Field Organiser, the Head of Elections, and then the Political Committee. If there are problems with this I would be interested to hear them!

**Jon Nott**

# **What changes are needed to Green Party internal structures to match the ambition of the Party**?

Our 1989 constitution was a response to the challenges the Party faced at the time, but the Party has grown by orders of magnitude over the intervening decades - in terms of membership, staffing, and elected representatives. Tinkering at the edges is no longer enough, we need a complete overhaul.

For me some key areas are:

* move the “board” roles from management to governance. Our Executive is made up roles that date from when the Party had a few thousand members and basically zero staff, so the job was to co-ordinate volunteers to do practical tasks. Now we have over 50,000 members and almost 100 staff so the Executive should be structured much more like a charity board of trustees than the management committee of a local allotment.
* clarify the relationship between local and regional Parties, Wales Green Party, and the central Party. The role of regional parties is particularly ill-defined and the definition of local party autonomy is so vague as to be meaningless.
* move on from the adversarial model (based on outdated parliamentary procedure) for developing policy and managing the Party. Our commitment to do politics differently needs to extend to our internal processes - we need processes and a culture based on consensus, consent, transformative justice, and organisational learning rather than majority voting and a culture of blame-seeking and punishment.

Most importantly we need to understand (and demonstrate) that it is possible to modernise while remaining true to our values.

As I say in my candidate statement, amidst all this change, it is vital that we remain true to our Green values and maintain our grassroots, member-led, democratic and inclusive culture.

**What do you see as GPEx chair's relationship with the Green Party’s liberation groups**?

A good working relationship with the Party’s liberation groups is key to doing the role of Chair well. If there is one thing I would do differently if re-elected it is to be more proactive in this area.

Where I have (from my perspective at least) a good working relationship with some of the liberation groups it is largely because we have had to work together to address an issue (or issues) which has reached (or was approaching) a crisis point.

If re-elected, establishing regular contact with chairs/convenors of the liberation groups will be high on my agenda. And if hasn’t happened by the end of September, then please speak to me at conference and we can get something in the diary.

**Should GPEx take a role in disciplinary matters**?

Under our current system, no, it is important that individual cases are fire-walled from the political and financial decision-making bodies, to enable fair process and objective decision making.

If, as I set out in my answer to the question about the structural changes the Party needs, we were to move to a system modelled on transformative justice and organisational learning rather than the current adversarial model rooted in blame-seeking and punishment, then the answer might be quite different.

**What role should GPEX take in defection processes, and ensuring they’re robust**?

This is again related to the question of updating our governance structures. The governance body or bodies should have an oversight role - establishing the processes and regularly reviewing whether they are working well. They should not be routinely involved in decisions on individual cases.