



Steering Committee briefing:

What the Your Party founding documents might mean for the 2026 elections

The November meeting of the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) all-Britain steering committee will be the first opportunity for the different component parts of TUSC to share their thoughts on the Your Party founding documents that were published on October 17th.

The documents can be found on the Your Party website at <https://www.yourparty.uk/founding-documents/> and have also been brought together into a single pdf document at <https://www.tusc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/11/YP-founding-documents.pdf> (page references given here are to this pdf version). They have been signed-off by the six-strong Independent Alliance group of MPs – Shockat Adam, Jeremy Corbyn, Adnan Hussain, Ayoub Khan, Iqbal Mohamed and Zarah Sultana – who are acting as the temporary stewards of the foundation process of Your Party, and cover core political principles, a draft constitution and standing orders, and an organisational strategy paper for the party's first year.

The documents are of course drafts, and are still subject to debate and amendment. But with that important caveat they do give an indication of how the new party could function at least initially, including for the period covering the first electoral opportunities it faces in May 2026.

What this briefing tries to do is not to give an overview of all the issues raised in the founding documents but to examine specifically how they relate to the 2026 elections, to matters of electoral law, and what all this might mean for how TUSC approaches these contests. It supplements the politically broader TUSC discussion document produced in September, *Ideas About The Next Local Elections: Opportunities and Challenges for a New Working Class Party in May 2026*, which is available at <https://www.tusc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/Ideas-about-the-2026-local-elections.pdf>

What do the founding documents say about the 2026 elections?

Elections will take place on May 7th 2026 for the Scottish Parliament, the Welsh Senedd, and for at least 71 English local authorities and probably more. The uncertainty is due to the local government reorganisation process underway which could still see scheduled local elections go ahead in an additional 66 councils or, alternatively, see all or some of them postponed until 2027. (See <https://www.tusc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/10/Provisional-2026-elections-directory.pdf>)

The Your Party Organisational Strategy Year One Paper founding document, under the heading 'Strategic Objectives (First Year)', speaks of "maximising the number of candidates *aligned to the party [my emphasis – CH]* at the 2026 local elections, with arrangements for the nations of

Scotland and Wales to be determined” (page 13). And later, in a separate section, headed ‘Elections 2026’ (page 15), there is more detail given, as follows:

“7. Elections 2026

- i. For the unique case of the 2026 Local Government elections, Your Party will seek to *support all Independent socialist candidates [my emphasis]* of good standing where there is evidence of candidates being engaged in community campaigning and having the support of their local communities or trades unions branches.
- ii. Your Party endorsements in the Holyrood and Senedd national elections will be agreed democratically by members in the relevant nation, including through an online all-member conference if necessary, supported by the interim Party leadership team as needed.
- iii. For the unique case of the 2026 local elections **only [emphasis in the original]**, in the absence of properly established national branch and regional party infrastructure, *the Independent Alliance [my emphasis]* shall facilitate democratic selections of candidates by local members in their area, under OMOV. After this, due diligence shall be undertaken, conforming to rules against misuse for political purposes laid down under the standing orders, and a full candidate list shall be submitted to the Electoral Commission by the Independent Alliance. *Your Party will agree not to support any candidate where there is any unresolved local conflict. [my emphasis]*
- iv. This is a unique process to be adopted due to time constraints and in the absence of agreed branch structures. **This process shall apply for 2026 only and will not be repeated thereafter [emphasis in the original]**”.

What does this mean then for candidates who will hoping to stand for Your Party in the May elections and how will it play out in practice?

Will there be any candidates using the Your Party name on their ballot paper?

For the purposes of this briefing the assumption is that Your Party will be the new party’s name although, of course, that has yet to be agreed in the proposed all-members’ online ballot. But Your Party has been registered with the Electoral Commission – accepted by the Commission on 30th September – and so could be available to be used as a description on a ballot paper in May 2026.

To do so however – as a matter of election law – a prospective candidate has to be issued with a formal *Certificate of Authorisation* from the Your Party ‘Registered Nominating Officer’. This has to be handed in to the relevant election’s Returning Officer along with the official nomination papers before the close of nominations. For the English council elections this is 19 working days before polling day, 9th April 2026. The election timetable is slightly different for the Scottish Parliament and Welsh Senedd elections but the same legally mandated procedure – of needing a *Certificate of Authorisation* to use a registered party’s name on the ballot paper – also applies.

The Your Party Nominating Officer registered with the Electoral Commission is Adnan Hussain, the Independent Alliance MP for Blackburn. And ultimately, whatever the discussions are in the local meetings of Your Party supporters (the ‘proto-branches’) about who is or is not going to be a Your Party candidate in six months’ time, it is only Adnan Hussain – or someone he delegates authority to in writing – who can issue a Your Party *Certificate of Authorisation*.

One further point to note is that if a different party name is chosen in the all-members’ online ballot, it is not straightforward that it will be successfully registered with the Electoral Commission. The

Commission, an unelected quango subject to pressure – from the government or elsewhere – could, for example, decide that the proposed alternative name is too similar to another already registered party. At this moment however the possibility is there for candidates to use the Your Party name on the ballot paper in May, if they are issued with a *Certificate of Authorisation* by Adnan Hussain or someone formally delegated by him.

So the ‘proto-branches’ won’t be deciding who can or cannot be a Your Party candidate then?

That’s certainly the implications of the interim arrangements contained in the founding documents. The Constitution document says that official branches of the new party shall be established “through the holding of inaugural all-member meetings” in Westminster, Cardiff or Holyrood parliamentary constituencies – to be attended by a to-be-determined percentage of members – “in a process overseen by the Central Executive Committee (CEC) [my emphasis] or its appointed representative” (page 15).

But elections to the Central Executive Committee, the Organisational Strategy Year One Paper document says, will only begin from January – “to conclude no later than 31st March 2026, at which point the CEC will immediately take over the management of the party” (page 13). Even if somebody in an existing proto-branch is immediately appointed by the new CEC to oversee the formal establishment of a branch on its behalf, there is no prospect of that branch being then able to organise a democratic selection process before the April 9th close of nominations.

There are caveats. The Independent Alliance MPs group are enabled in the Organisational Strategy Year One Paper to “facilitate democratic selections of candidates by local members in their area, under One Member, One Vote (OMOV)”, presumably accessing the central membership data that has not been made available to the ‘proto-branches’ and probably in an online ballot. A proto-branch, in reality a self-organised group of Your Party supporters in a particular area, could ask the Independent Alliance MPs to act on this remit – with the actual selection of candidates however being made by all the local members in the OMOV ballot not by the current proto-branch attendees, although their recommendations could of course help shape outcomes.

But even that is not the end of the matter. “After this”, the protocol in the Organisational Strategy Year One Paper document goes on, “due diligence shall be undertaken” and Your Party will not “support any candidate where there is any unresolved local conflict” (page 15). This actually is a strong argument for local Your Party supporters to adopt the TUSC consensus method of decision-making in this early stage in the party’s development, in which the imperative is to reach agreement in order to move forward.

But the main point here is that it will not be the proto-branches who will ultimately decide which candidates will or will not be able to use the Your Party name on the ballot paper next May.

But couldn’t a candidate say anyway that they are ‘Your Party’ on their leaflets and in other media, even if they can’t use the name on the ballot paper?

This idea has been raised in some of the proto-branch meetings – often with the genuine intent of ‘just getting on with things’ – but the political arguments against mischaracterising a candidate’s actual relationship with Your Party do not need to be repeated here. There is also the legal aspect, with the provisions on ‘false statements as to candidates’ in the 1983 Representation of the People

Act arguably applicable, particularly if a candidate was to win the election having made a ‘false statement’. The most famous example of this was the former New Labour minister Phil Woolas who had his 2010 election victory overturned on ‘false statement’ grounds, albeit for what he said about an opponent not for misrepresenting which party he was standing for.

On the other hand, a candidate stating in their campaign material that they support Your Party but are appearing on the ballot paper with another registered party’s description, such as one of the TUSC descriptions available – that they are ‘aligned to Your Party’ in other words – is another matter, politically and legally. And, although the founding documents do not suggest what figure is in mind when they speak of “maximising the number of candidates” (page 13), this approach would more likely accord with reaching that goal for “the unique case” of the 2026 elections – “in the absence”, as the documents put it, “of properly established national branch and regional party infrastructure” (page 15).

How do the founding documents suggest that the number of candidates could be ‘maximised’?

As stated, the documents refer to Your Party supporting “all Independent socialist candidates of good standing” (page 15) in their local communities or trade union branch and that would include, of course, TUSC candidates who have gone through our candidate application procedure if the steering committee decides that we need to begin that process for the 2026 elections. The last time this particular four-yearly cycle of elections took place, in 2022 under the Tory government, TUSC authorised 227 candidates to use one of its descriptions on the ballot paper in the local elections (with top scores of 18% in East London and Knowsley in Merseyside).

But a further provision is also made, in the Constitution founding document, for “existing local and community independent groups, already registered with the Electoral Commission” to become associate branches of Your Party for the first two years (page 5) – with the capacity, of course, to select their own candidates.

There are already a number of such parties registered with the Electoral Commission. These include the Aspire party in Tower Hamlets in East London, who have led the council there since 2022 and are up for re-election in May; the Black Country Party, based on a group of ex-Labour councillors in Dudley (also with elections in May); the Broxtowe Alliance, formed in January this year by ex-Labour councillors in Nottinghamshire (albeit with no elections in 2026); and in North East England, the Majority party, led by the former independent mayor of the North of Tyne Combined Authority, Jaime Driscoll.

Then there is the Newham Independents Party (also in East London, with four councillors now) and Arise (in Harrow in North West London); the Independent Oxford Alliance and Oxford Community Socialists; and a dozen or so separate parties registered as ‘Community Independents’ in specific local authority areas, including Birmingham, Ealing, Enfield, Kirklees, Liverpool (no elections in 2026), North Tyneside, Redbridge, Southport and Walsall.

It is clear then that there is already the basis there for Your Party to make a significant impact in the May elections, standing widely but also with the prospect of establishing a substantial presence in local government for the battles to come over Starmer and Reeves’ Austerity II agenda. It could win seats in the Scottish Parliament and Welsh Senedd and councillors in almost every authority with elections. In some it could expect to hold the balance of power after May 7th. And in others,

not just in Tower Hamlets but in some of the particular councils that are up for election in this cycle, even win majorities and form administrations.

This really is an important moment in British politics, an opportunity and a challenge, which is discussed further in the TUSC document mentioned earlier, *Ideas About The Next Local Elections: Opportunities and Challenges for a New Working Class Party in May 2026*.

But is a network of ‘aligned candidates’ with separate descriptions the best way to maximise the possible impact of Your Party in May?

In the TUSC discussion document produced in September we raised the question of how would the results of a network of candidates – standing under a variety of descriptions or as independents – be reported by the media, in comparison for example to the certain Reform surge next May? It is true, of course, that movements can exist without a presence in the legacy media and whether or not Your Party should boycott the possibilities of broadcast media coverage in the 2026 elections is a legitimate matter of debate. But the facts are clear.

“The broadcasting authorities are only legally obliged to report on candidates who appear on the ballot paper using a description of a registered party” we wrote, if there are enough of them to reach a ‘fair media coverage’ qualifying threshold of one-sixth of the seats contested. For the English local elections in 2026 the current figure is around 570 candidates, easily within reach. This guarantees a party election broadcast (PEB) and coverage of a manifesto launch as a minimum. For the Welsh Senedd election the threshold is 16 candidates. For the Scottish Parliament, with its mix of constituency and regional list seats, it is likely to be a minimum of four candidates in each of the eight regions or alternatively constituency candidates in 22 seats (ie one sixth of the total 129 Scottish Parliament seats).

For the English council elections the founding documents appear to address this issue when they say, after the reference to due diligence, that “a full candidate list shall be submitted to the Electoral Commission by the Independent Alliance” (page 15).

But, unfortunately, appearing on the ballot paper as an independent, or under the name of different parties registered with the Electoral Commission who are each standing perhaps 20 or 30 candidates, does not count towards the threshold, even if they all declare – or are so declared by the Independent Alliance MPs – that they are ‘aligned’ to Your Party. There is literally no provision in law for the Electoral Commission to do anything with ‘a full candidate list submitted’ to it, or in the Ofcom regulations dealing with election coverage.

The question remains. What will be the narrative from the elections on May 8th, the day after polling day, if the results won by Your Party supporters are buried in the ‘others’ column? While Reform, and probably the Greens and the Liberal Democrats as the alleged ‘progressive alternative’, are portrayed as the gainers?

The only solution, while preserving locally-established party identities on campaign material, is to get at least one of the Your Party-aligned registered parties’ descriptions over the candidate number threshold if we cannot get Your Party itself there in the unique circumstances the founding documents are attempting to deal with.

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