

The Rule Book – Section C - Party Conference

Introduction

1. These Rules do not replace the registered Rules of Co-operative Party Ltd and shall at all times be consistent with the registered Rules. In the event of any inconsistency, the registered Rules of the Co-operative Party Ltd. shall apply.

Party Conference – status

2. There shall be an Annual Party Conference, which shall itself be subject to the National Rules and Constitution.

Procedural Rules for Party Conference

3. The Annual Conference of the Co-operative Party shall be convened in accordance with the Constitution.
4. A Special Conference may be called in accordance with the Constitution
5. All delegates shall be individual members of local Parties.
6. A delegation fee for each delegate shall be payable by the organisation sending delegates to Party Conference. Such fees must be paid to the Secretary of the Party before credentials are issued. The amount of the delegation fee payable for each conference shall be fixed by the NEC and notified to all subscribing Societies and registered Parties. For the Annual session of Party Conference this shall be fixed by 31 December of the preceding year.
7. The organisation sending delegates to Party Conference should endeavour to ensure their delegation is gender balanced and representative of the diversity of the wider membership.
8. Ex-officio members of the Party Conference are as follows: -
 - Members of the NEC
 - Official members of Parliament
 - Official members of the Scottish Parliament
 - Official members of the National Assembly for Wales
 - Official members of English regional assemblies
 - Official Co-operative Party Councillors
 - Elected members of the National Youth Committee
 - Members of the Parliamentary, Scottish and National Assembly for Wales Parliamentary Panels and English Regional Panels
 - The Party General Secretary

- Members of the Conference Arrangements Committee
9. Ex-officio members may speak but have no voting powers unless appointed as a delegate. Staff members may also speak, where appointed by the NEC, but they may not be selected as delegates.
 10. Non-delegates may speak at the Chair's discretion but have no voting powers.
 11. Notices of motions for the Annual Party Conference shall be forwarded in writing to the head office at such times as the NEC shall determine, but at least eight weeks shall be given for their inclusion in the first Agenda issued to organisations entitled to representation. Amendments to the motions for inclusion in the Final Agenda shall be forwarded to head office before the closing date determined by the Conference Arrangements Committee (CAC).
 12. No other business than that upon the Agenda shall be considered unless recommended by the NEC or by the CAC.
 13. When the Annual Conference has by resolution made a declaration of a general policy or principle, no motion concerning such policy or principle shall appear upon the Agenda for a period of two years from the time such declaration was made (i.e. not before the third Annual Conference following the resolution), excepting such motion which, in the opinion of the NEC, is of vital importance and urgency.
 14. No motion or speeches dealing with staff terms and conditions or the appointment or behaviour of any member of staff shall be in order. Such matters must be referred in writing to the NEC.
 15. No more than three motions and three amendments shall be submitted by any one organisation.
 16. Submitted motions and amendments shall not exceed 300 words.
 17. The CAC shall have the power to composite motions dealing with the same issues. Where in the opinion of the CAC any organisation submitting a motion refuses to have its motion composited, the CAC shall reserve the right to recommend that the motion be not debated.
 18. Notices of motions of an emergency nature must be recommended to the CAC by the NEC or supported by not less than ten organisations represented at Conference. Such motions must be handed to the CAC duly signed not later than 5.00 pm on the day of the Conference excepting the last. No emergency motion shall be accepted unless its submission has been expressly authorised by the delegates of promoting organisations present at Conference. Subject to the approval of Conference, the CAC shall decide the admissibility or otherwise of any emergency motion submitted to it. The acceptance of such motion or motions by the CAC does not guarantee that the motions will be brought before the Conference for debate.
 19. The CAC shall be composed of five persons: four elected by ballot to be held at Annual Conference; and member of the NEC who shall be elected at the Annual Meeting of the NEC and represent that body. Notwithstanding casual vacancies, no more than two persons shall be elected at any one Annual Conference.
 20. Nominees for the CAC should be delegates to the Conference
 21. Voting for the CAC will be on the same basis as card votes at Annual Conference.
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22. No more than one representative shall be elected from any one Region.
23. The successful nominee receiving the highest number of votes shall serve for three years and the successful nominee with the next highest vote shall serve for one year.
24. The CAC shall call together not later than the day preceding the first day of Conference a representative or representatives of all organisations whom it deems necessary to cater for in connection with motions or amendments submitted for the Agenda. The CAC shall, immediately after the Chair's address, submit to the Conference for confirmation or otherwise a printed Conference timetable. It shall group the motions according to subject, indicate the order of precedence, and set down a maximum time limit for each motion or group of motions. It shall issue to delegates copies of all composite motions agreed upon and any new motions properly submitted in accordance with these rules.
25. The CAC, subject to the Procedural Rules for Party Conference, shall govern the procedure of the business of the Conference and make the necessary arrangements for the success of the Conference.
26. The CAC shall appoint its own Chair by simple majority, who will be responsible to the Conference for its work and guidance. The Secretary to the CAC shall be appointed by the General Secretary acting on behalf of the NEC. The business of the Annual Conference shall include the following:
 - Civic Welcome (if any)
 - Fraternal Greetings
 - Chair's Address
 - Report of the CAC
 - Parliamentary Reports
 - Policy Debates, the topics for which shall be notified by the NEC in advance
 - Motions and amendments on Party Organisation accepted for inclusion in the Final Agenda and emergency motions accepted in accordance with these Rules.
27. Except where a special time limit recommended by the CAC has been accepted by the Conference, the mover of every motion shall be allowed five minutes and three for reply, and the NEC shall be allowed up to seven minutes for reply to the whole debate. When an amendment is made to any motion and no further amendment is carried, then it shall become the substantive motion.
28. No delegate shall be permitted to speak more than once on the same proposition, except the proposer, who shall have the right to reply before the vote is taken.

Voting

29. Any debate may be closed by a resolution "That the question be now put" having been moved, seconded and carried. Such a resolution must be put to the meeting without debate, but no speech shall be interrupted for the purpose of proposing such a motion.

30. If carried, the debate will move immediately to the right of reply and then to the vote.
31. All votes shall be taken, in the first instance, by a show of hands.
32. A card vote shall be taken on any motion if it is either recommended by the CAC or requested by the delegates of ten organisations rising in their places and showing their book of voting cards.
33. All changes to these Rules must be taken by Card Vote.
34. Any Procedural Rule may be suspended by a majority vote of the delegates assembled.
35. On a card vote, each society or affiliated member shall have ten votes, plus one additional vote for every £25 or part of that amount paid to the Party during the previous financial year.
36. On a card vote, each Local Party shall have one vote per member.