

The Rule Book – Section E - Membership Rules

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.

Membership Conditions

2. It is a condition of membership that each individual member shall also be a member of a recognised co-operative as determined by the National Executive Committee (NEC) of the Co-operative Party.
3. Individual members shall pay the annual membership subscription as approved by the National Annual Conference of the Party.
4. Individual members must be at least 14 years of age
5. Individual Members shall sign a declaration as follows:

I declare myself a Co-operator, and agree to accept the programme, policy and constitution of the Co-operative Party, national and local. I will do all in my power to promote the policy of the Co-operative Party as declared from time to time. I am not a member of any political Party other than the Labour Party or the Social Democratic and Labour Party. I am a member of a recognised co-operative as determined by the National Executive Committee of the Co-operative Party.

6. A member of the Party who stands for election or acts as the election agent to a person standing for election in opposition to a Labour Candidate, shall automatically be ineligible to be or remain a Party member.
7. A member of the Party may not join or support a political organisation in opposition to an official Labour Group or other unit of the Labour Party. Such an action may render him/her to be ineligible to be or remain a member of the Co-operative Party, subject to the provisions of the Disciplinary Rules.
8. To be and remain eligible for membership, each individual member must also:
 - Accept and conform to the Rules, principles and policy of the Party.
 - Normally be a member at the address where he/she is registered as an elector unless having moved since electoral registration qualifying date, temporarily resident abroad or otherwise prevented from being registered, in which case he/she must be resident at the address recorded for membership purposes. The NEC shall consider any applications to take special circumstances of a member into account.
9. The NEC may rescind endorsement as a full Party member when evidence is provided that the individual concerned is not on the electoral register and is therefore (subject to the provisions above) ineligible for membership.

10. No member of the Party shall engage in a sustained course of conduct prejudicial, or in any act grossly detrimental, to the Party. Such conduct shall also be deemed to include discrimination against groups and/or individuals on the basis of sex, sexual orientation, marital status, disability, colour, race, ethnic origins or religion. Any dispute as to whether a member is in breach of this provision shall be determined by the CPDC.
11. The CPDC may consider the member's financial support for, organisation of and/or involvement in:
 - the candidature of a person standing in opposition to a Labour Party candidate
 - the activities of a Party or organisation acting in opposition to a Labour Party candidate.

The NEC and/or CPDC shall not have regard to the mere holding or expression of beliefs and opinions.

12. No member may become an officer of the Party, or a representative on any public body or organisation to which the Party is affiliated, until he/she has been a member for six months since the date of their membership qualification as outlined in these Rules. The NEC shall have the power to waive this restriction temporarily in the case of a newly formed Branch, Society or Voluntary Party. Such a waiver of the Rules should be recorded in writing, and a copy of the letter should be forwarded to the Secretary of the Branch or Society Party, as is appropriate, at which point the waiver is deemed to be effective, if the NEC so approves.

Membership Procedures

13. Individual membership of the Party shall be organised through Society, Regional and Voluntary Parties and through the head office of the Party. Individual members shall pay an annual subscription as approved by Annual Party Conference and shall be issued with a membership card supplied by the NEC.
14. All recruitment to the Party shall be in accordance these Rules, which shall be issued to Party and affiliated organisations from time to time. The NEC shall be empowered to determine any dispute or question that may arise in respect of the enrolment of, and/or the membership of, a member or members, and its decision in respect of such dispute shall be final and binding.
15. Any breach of the following enrolment procedure is liable to be dealt with by the CPDC as a disciplinary offence.
16. Membership applications may be submitted to the Co-operative Party Head Office using a printed application form, through the Party's website or by telephone.
17. The applicant shall sign and date the declaration on the application form. Where application forms do not require a signature, or where an application is made by telephone or through the Party web site, the applicant shall be deemed to have signed the declaration.
18. The applicant shall provide proof of membership of a recognised co-operative as determined by the NEC. Such evidence should be provided within three calendar months. The application must be accompanied by the appropriate membership fee or completed Direct Debit mandate.
19. The application shall be considered by the Society Party Council/Voluntary Party at the next appropriate meeting after application. Notification of any acceptance or rejection of the application shall be given to the applicant within three calendar months of receipt of the application.

20. Full membership rights shall commence three calendar months from the date the application is received by the Co-operative Party Head Office, providing all conditions of membership have been met and there are no objections to the application. Prior to full membership, the applicant can attend branch meetings as a visitor.
21. At any time before the individual is accepted as a full member of the Party, the General Secretary of the Party may rule that the individual application for membership be rejected for any reason under these Rules which he/she considers the applicant does not comply.
22. In the event of objections to the application such objections shall be heard by the Society Party Council/Voluntary Party within six weeks.
23. The reasons for the rejection of an application from the Society/Voluntary Party or by the Party General Secretary must be sent to the individual applicant at the address given. He/she will have the right of individual written appeal to the NEC. Such an appeal shall be considered and dealt with by the disputes committee of the NEC in any manner that it deems fit and the decision of the disputes committee, once approved by the NEC, shall be final and binding on the Society/Voluntary Party, General Secretary and the individual concerned.
24. In the event of a paid up member moving residence to an address administered by another Society or Voluntary Party, that member shall inform Head Office, who shall make arrangements to inform the new Society Party/Voluntary Party Secretary.
25. Any dispute as to the eligibility to vote in meetings shall be resolved by a designated representative of the Party NEC using appropriate national records. It is the responsibility of the individual member to produce a valid membership card and proof of membership of a Co-operative Society or other recognised co-operative as determined by the National Executive Committee of the Co-operative Party when required by the NEC representative or any Officer of the relevant Branch.
26. A member may apply to be entered on a Head Office Register. Such an applicant must furnish proof of membership of a Co-operative Society or other recognised co-operative determined by the National Executive Committee of the Co-operative Party and complete and date an appropriate membership application form. Such application shall be subject to the approval of the NEC.
27. Members so registered on the Head Office register shall not be a member of a Society, Voluntary or Regional Party and may not be accorded rights exercised by Society, Voluntary or Regional Parties, and should they seek to transfer to a Society, Voluntary or Regional Party they do so in accordance with procedures as above.

Membership Subscriptions

28. Each individual member of the Party shall pay an annual membership subscription as determined from time to time by Annual Party Conference.
29. An individual member shall be deemed to have lapsed from membership if he/she has failed to renew his/her membership within 12 months of the membership subscription falling due.