

The Rule Book – Section P

Model Rules for a Branch Co-operative Party

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.

Name

2. The Branch Party.

Objects

3. To secure direct Co-operative representation in Parliament, the Scottish Parliament and National Assembly for Wales, as appropriate, and on local and other administrative bodies in accordance with the decisions of the NEC, to promote the political policies of the Co-operative Party; and to undertake in furtherance of these objects such promotional activity or other work as may be deemed desirable either alone or in co-operation with other committees or organisations having similar objects with a view to the establishment of the Co-operative Commonwealth.

Individual Membership

4. Individual members shall be members of a Retail Co-operative Society or recognised co-operative as determined by the National Executive Committee of the Co-operative Party and shall pay a subscription decided by the Annual Conference.
5. Individual members shall sign the 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. All members shall conform to the Membership and Disciplinary Rules as prescribed by the Society Party Council and National Rules.
7. 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.

Local Parties

8. Branch Parties shall be established comprising individual members of the Co-operative Party to carry on the political work of the Society Party and also general promotional activity in furtherance of the policy and principles of the Party in each Constituency or area as defined by the Party Council.
9. The Branch Party shall operate and be financed under regulations laid down by the Society Party Council and as approved by the NEC.

Executive Committee

10. The Branch Party may elect annually an Executive Committee, comprising such numbers as the Branch Party shall determine, together with the officers and their Society Party Executive Committee members.
11. The Executive Committee shall meet as and when decided by the Party. It shall be the function of the Executive Committee to discuss Party business prior to the Party meeting and make recommendations therein and to plan and discuss and direct Party activities.

Officers, Representatives and Candidates

12. The Officers of the Party shall (except in the case of full-time Officials) be elected by ballot vote at the annual meeting. They shall remain in office for one year and be eligible for re-election.
 13. The officers shall be:
 - The Chair
 - The Vice-Chair,
 - The Secretary
 - The Treasurer, and
 - The Membership Officer
 - Other officers as needed, such as Campaigns Officer, Education Officer, Co-operative Liaison Officer, Youth Officer and Equality Officer.
 14. Officers shall have been individual members of the Co-operative Party for not less than six months at the date of election, except in the case of a newly formed Branch where the NEC shall have the power to waive temporarily this restriction. This Rule shall also apply in respect of nominees for public bodies and representatives of the Co-operative Party on other bodies to which this Party is affiliated.
 15. Any officer or delegate shall be deemed to have vacated their position if they fail to attend three consecutive meetings of the Party Council or the body they have been delegated to. This shall not preclude them from standing for re-election to the position.
 16. Duties of Chair – to preside over all Party and Committee meetings.
 17. Duties of Vice-Chair – to preside in the absence of the Chair.
 18. Duties of Secretary – to be in attendance at all Party and Committee meetings, to keep correct records of all decisions made and to attend to all correspondence of the Party.
 19. Duties of Treasurer – to be responsible for the finances of the Party and present a report to the Party when requested.
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20. Other Officers may be appointed as approved by the Society Party Council.

21. There shall also be elected an auditor, who shall not be an officer of the Party.

Meetings, Reports and Accounts

22. Branch Party meetings shall be held at least four times a year.

23. The Annual Meeting shall be held not later than in each year, at which all officers shall be elected and the Annual Report and audited financial statement considered and adopted. The Annual Report and audited financial statement shall be submitted to the Secretary of the Party Council not later than

24. The Funds of the Branch Party shall be provided by;

- Such sums as may be allocated by the Society Party
- Other money raising efforts made by the Party with the approval of the Society Party.

25. In the event of the Branch Party being closed or suspended the funds shall be transferred to the Society Party. The Party shall not enter into any contract with a value in excess of £1,000 without the express permission of the NEC.

Resolutions

26. No resolution shall be discussed or passed at any meeting except a properly constituted meeting, and no resolution may be sent to any organisation outside the Society Party without the consent of the Society Party Council or Executive.

27. No donation or affiliation fee shall be paid to any organisation without prior consent of the Society Party Council or Executive Committee.

Local Government Elections

28. Branch Parties shall nominate, at the request of the Society Party, members for the Local Government Panel.

29. All nominees must have been members of the Co-operative Party for at least six months and members of a recognised co-operative as determined by the National Executive Committee of the Co-operative Party for at least three years, and comply with any other qualifications determined by the Society Party Council.

30. The Party shall, by arrangement with the appropriate Labour Party organisation, make nominations for Local Authorities from the Co-operative Party Panel.

Parliamentary Candidatures

31. Nominations for Parliamentary Candidates shall be made in consultation with the Society Party Executive Committee according to the procedure laid down by the NEC.

Alteration to the Rules

32. These Rules shall not be altered, or a new Rule made, except at a meeting of the Society Party Council, unless written notice is given to the Society Party Council Secretary at least 28 days prior to the meeting at which it is to be discussed and circulated at least seven days prior to this date. The proposal must be supported by two thirds of the members voting. No such Rule shall come operative until it is approved by the NEC of the Party.

Incorporation of the National Rules into this Constitution

33. It is hereby declared that the National Rules of the Co-operative Party are hereby incorporated into this Constitution. Any amendments or alterations to the National Rules as at the date of this Constitution shall also be deemed to be incorporated into this Constitution as at the date of those amendments or alterations. For the avoidance of doubt, it is hereby declared that such incorporation of the present National Rules or any future amendments to the National Rules shall be by way of automatic incorporation without the need for any resolution or vote by the members of the Branch at that time.