

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. I agree to accept the rules and to promote the policy and values of the Co-operative Party. 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 co-operative recognised 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 will automatically be ineligible to be or remain a Party member or to join the Party for a period of five years following the election.
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. Members of the Co-operative Party who are selected and/or elected to stand as Labour or Labour & Co-operative candidates to any level of public office are required within these rules to abide by the rules and procedures of the Labour Party. If subject to investigation or disciplinary action by the Labour Party, they may be suspended from representing or membership of the Co-operative Party until the Labour Party disciplinary action has concluded.
9. 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.

10. British and Irish Citizens resident overseas may apply to join the Party as an International Member, subject to payment of the applicable International Members' fee and all other membership conditions.
11. 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.
12. No member of the Party shall engage in a course of conduct prejudicial, or in any act grossly detrimental, to the Party. Such conduct shall also be deemed to include harassment, abuse or discrimination against groups and/or individuals based on age, disability, gender reassignment, marital or civil partnership status, race, pregnancy and maternity, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation. Such an action may render them ineligible to be or remain a member of the Co-operative Party. Any dispute as to whether a member or applicant is or has been in breach of this provision shall be determined by the NEC.
13. Where a member has been convicted of a serious criminal offence or the subject of a serious ruling from HM Courts and Tribunals Service or Council Standards Board, the NEC shall have the right to impose the appropriate disciplinary action.
14. The NEC or CPDC may consider the member's financial support to, organisation or promotion of and/or involvement in:
 - Candidates standing in opposition to a Labour Party candidate or who publicly declare their intent to stand against a Labour 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.

15. 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 nine months since the date of their valid application. The NEC shall have the power to waive this restriction temporarily in the case of a newly formed Branch, Society or Voluntary Party.

Membership Procedures

16. 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.
17. 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.
18. Any breach of the following enrolment procedure is liable to be dealt with by the CPDC as a disciplinary offence.
19. 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.

20. 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.
21. 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.
22. Any objections to the application should be forwarded to the National Party within six weeks, giving the reason under these Rules by which the application should be rejected.
23. At any time before the individual is accepted as a full member the General Secretary of the Party may rule that the individual application for membership be rejected for any reason under these Rules with which he/she considers the applicant does not comply.
24. Where it is deemed necessary by the General Secretary or the NEC, the Party may impose a temporary moratorium on new applications in a Society/Voluntary Party or Branch and/or request additional information from all applicants before applications will be processed. This may include proof of name and address and other relevant details. The Party reserves the right to ask to see the original document rather than a photocopy.
25. Notification of any rejection of the application shall be given to the applicant within three calendar months of receipt of the application. 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.
26. 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.
27. 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.
28. 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.
29. 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.
30. 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

31. Each individual member of the Party shall pay an annual membership subscription as determined from time to time by Annual Party Conference.
32. 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.