

Medway Independents

**Rule Book of
Medway Independents**

Rules Book of the Medway Independents Party

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Section 1: Introduction

1:1 This is the Rule Book of the Medway Independents Party

1:2 These Rules should be read in conjunction with the Party Constitution, which, in the event of a clash, the constitution shall always take precedence.

1:3 These rules came into effect on 1 November 2019.

1:4 These Rules may be amended by a simple majority vote of the Board.

1:5 This Rule Book will be made available electronically to members through the Party website.

1:6 Any member shall be sent a written copy of the Rules upon request to the Party's Administrative Head Office.

1:7 In the event of an inconsistency within these Rules, the Board (or the Party Chairperson, Party Secretary or Party leader) shall determine which Rule has precedence.

Section 2: Membership Rules

2:1 Members shall uphold the principles of the Constitution and are responsible to the Board via the Party Chairperson or their delegate.

2:2 A Branch or Associations may exist if authorised by the Board. No Branch may be established without the written consent of the Party Chairperson, on behalf of the Board.

2:3 A Branch consists of one entire area of either Chatham, Gillingham, Rainham, Rochester, Strood, a rural grouping, Council ward area, or a parliamentary Constituency and it shall bear that name. A Branch will not be an accounting unit.

2:4 A Parliamentary Constituency Association may be formed to contest General Elections. It shall have the Parliamentary constituency name. A Branch or association will not be an accounting unit.

2:5 Branches/Associations shall co-operate with the Party Board.

2:6 Branch Meetings shall be held following the Standing Orders for the conduct of Internal Party Meetings.

2:7 Parliamentary Constituency Associations meeting shall be held in accordance with the Standing Orders for the conduct of Internal Party Meetings.

2:8 Officers of all Branches and constituency associations shall complete the Party's Data Protection forms and other documentation as required by the Board to ensure the smooth functioning of the Party's internal procedures.

Section 3 Membership

3:1 The membership consists of all paid up member's resident within, or with a business, employment or other connection to, the geographical area of Medway. Applications for membership from people who are resident outside Medway may be accepted to join the Medway Independents provided the Party ruling committee agree and endorse the application for membership.

3:2 All Party members are members of the Branch in which they are registered to vote in UK elections and shall be entitled to participate in its activities.

3:3 Membership fees will be set by the Board as well as payment methods and periods. The membership is currently £25.00 per annum.

Section 4: Branch & Association Committees

4:1 Branches & Associations are responsible for determining local issues and campaigns. Branches & Associations must have the following officers, a Chairperson, Secretary and Election Agent.

4:1 The Chairperson, Secretary and Election Agent shall be members of the Branch & Associations committees. The number of Committee members to be elected shall be determined by the AGM, subject to a maximum of 5 members in total.

4:3 No current member of any other Party shall be permitted to hold office on a Branch committee, or to hold any other formal office within the Party. The Board may permit an exception where the Board believes it to be in the Party's strategic interests to do so.

4:4 The three principal Branch officers, Chairperson, Election Agent, and Secretary shall all be committee members. Further officers may be elected to fulfil other posts. If only two members are elected to the committee, they shall be Chair and Election Agent, and one of these shall also be named as Secretary.

4:5 The Branch & Associations officers and other committee members shall be elected at the Branches & associations Annual General Meeting (AGM) by ballot of members attending. Their term of office shall run from the AGM when elected until the next AGM. The principal officers shall be required to complete and return a Party Officer's Declaration and Acceptance form.

4:6 All paid-up members are eligible to stand for election to the Branch Committee of their Branch.

4:7 A Branch committee may accept nominations from members of other Branches to stand for election to the Branch Committee of their Branch if they agree to those nominations by a majority.

4:6 The elected committee shall have the power to co-opt other Branch or associations members for specific purposes, whose term shall end at the next AGM and whose voting rights shall be determined by the elected committee.

Section 5: Duties of Branch & Association Officers

5:1 The Chairperson has principal responsibility for the direction of the Branch & Associations and shall normally chair all meetings including the AGM and shall enjoy full voting rights. The Chair shall normally call meetings of the committee at least 4 times a year and Branch meeting at least 4 times a year. A simple majority of committee members may call a committee meeting if the Chair is unable or unwilling to do so.

5:2 Medway Independents is the sole accounting unit. The Party Treasurer shall be responsible for managing the finances and bank account. The Party Treasurer is responsible for compliance, the reporting of donations and the preparation and submission of the Party's accounts according to guidance to rules, regulations, and guidance.

5:3 No Branch or Association can hold bank account. Medway Independents is the only accounting unit for the Party.

5:4 The Branch Secretary shall normally be responsible for the general administration of the Committee, including taking minutes of meetings, maintaining a record of the Branch's party members, and advising the Party Secretary of changes in Committee. Minutes are to be retained by the Branch or Association, but the Party Secretary can request copies of any minutes at any time.

5:5 Only members who are Branch officers, or who have the express permission of the Committee, shall be authorised to represent the local party, or make use of party logos. Unauthorised use of the party name or logo may be bringing the party into public disrepute and therefore grounds for disciplinary action.

5:6 Where the Party's reputation could be affected, the matter shall be referred to the Party Chairperson who may suspend the member from office pending a board decision concerning removal from office.

5:7 Failure to disclose information under 5:6 may be grounds for disciplinary action.

Section 6: Selection of Candidates

6:1 It is the responsibility of Branches & Associations to seek to nominate candidates for local & parliamentary elections within the Branch or associations area, acting in accordance with the rules laid down in the constitution.

6:2 For all local Government and Parliamentary elections, it is the responsibility of the board to invite applications from members to stand. This should be any Member of Medway Independents who fulfils the requirements for Candidates for that election.

6:3 The Board shall have the responsibility for selecting candidates as appropriate following a hustling if more than one potential candidate applies.

6:4 Where a Branch or Associations has not selected a candidate for any election within their area at least 56 days prior to the close of nominations, the Party Nominating Office shall have the power to select a candidate to ensure that there is a candidate on the ballot paper. The Party Nominating Office can delegate this task to other members as appropriate to ensure the smooth running of the Party.

6:5 The Nomination Officer will publish the selection procedure and the rules for hustings.

Section 7: Authority for Candidate Nominations

7:1 Authority to use the Party's description and emblem on nomination papers at elections within Branches & associations boundaries is the responsibility of the relevant Deputy Nominating Officer (DNO), who is appointed by the Party's registered Nominating Officer. Where there are no branches then this is the responsibility of the Nominating Officer.

7:2 All Deputy Nominating Officers must provide authority to stand for all candidates validly selected under the rules.

7:3 No Deputy Nominating Officer shall authorise a candidate except where the candidate has been validly selected under the rules.

Section 8: The running of internal Party elections

8:1 The Nominating Officer will set the rules and procedure for the selection for the running of internal Party elections.

Section 9: Disputes

9:1 Differences within a Branch /association and across the Party threaten the Party's proper functioning and smooth running of Party. Every effort shall be made to resolve these at the local level, either by the Branch committee or at a full meeting of the Branch. If this fails, the dispute shall be referred to the Party Chairperson, acting on behalf of the Party.

9:2 If the dispute remains irreconcilable, or if the Party Chairperson deems that the behaviour of the individual or committee or its officers is inconsistent with the Party's Constitution the Party Chairperson may suspend or dissolve the committee, suspend, or remove a Branch officer or Committee member, suspend a member from Party activities, or dissolve the Branch & Associations in its entirety. In the case of an individual/s then the Party Chairperson can suspend or remove the individuals from Party activities or recommend expulsion from the Party. Any action under this rule needs ratification by the Board. Any appeal heard will be heard by the Board before expulsion from the Party is confirmed.

9:3 The Branch or Associations Chair may, with a majority vote of members present, require that any member acting in a disruptive manner leave a Branch meeting. The matter shall then be referred to the Party Chairperson who will decide whether the member concerned should be suspended from Party activities.

9:4 There will be a right of appeal to the Board against any action taken under the disputes rule.

9:5 The Standing Orders for the conduct of internal Party meetings shall apply to Branch and Constituency Association meetings.

Section 10: The Conduct of Board meetings

10:1 The Board shall normally meet at least 4 times a year. Additional meetings may be scheduled when necessary.

10:2 Board meetings should normally last less than 3 hours in total.

10:3 Minutes of the Board meeting should be sent to all Board members no later than 14 calendar days after the meeting has concluded.

10:4 Decisions of the Board shall not be criticised or undermined in a public manner by other Board members. (public is to be given a wide as possible interpretation and includes social media etc.)

10:5 The Board shall determine whether specific items discussed at the Board Committee are confidential in nature. The Chairperson will have the casting vote in any tied decision.

10:6 Board members wishing to submit an item for the agenda should normally submit it to the Chair and Secretary a minimum of 10 days before the meeting.

10:7 Agendas and papers for Board meetings should normally be circulated a minimum of 7 days before the meeting.

10:8 The Board or the Party Secretary, may request a copy of the minutes of any Party Committee meeting. Upon request to the relevant Committee secretary, minutes should be provided within 4 days.

10.9 The Board may (following due process) remove from office any Party official who makes serious public criticism of the Party or its decisions. Public criticism shall be deemed to include posts on social networking sites.

Section 11: Conduct of Internal Party meetings

11:1 Internal Party meetings, Branch meetings, Association committee meetings exist to promote the Party's aims.

11:2 Bullying, intimidating or offensive language is not permitted at any meetings. Members should not interrupt meetings and should speak only with the permission of the Chairperson.

11:3 Meetings are intended for members only. The public can attend meetings which are advertised as being open to non-members, members should only invite non-members to meetings with the consent of the Chairperson. Most meetings should seek to invite members of the public who share the aims of Medway Independents. Campaign strategy meetings and Hustings should exclude the public from attendance.

11:4 Speakers from the floor will be permitted only at the discretion of the Chair, and only when the nature of the meeting is such as to make such contributions appropriate. Speakers from the floor should speak for an appropriate length of time. If a contribution is so long as to disrupt the meeting, then the Chair may impose a time limit on member's comments.

11:5 Personal attacks on other members are not permitted at any Party meetings.

11:6 At committee meetings, in the absence of the Chairperson, the meeting may be chaired by the Vice-Chairperson.

11:7 If it is known in advance that neither the Chair nor the Chair Vice-Chairperson are available a deputy from the committee can be nominated by the Chairperson to chair the meeting. The nominated Chairperson should ideally be a committee member. If neither the Chairperson nor the Vice-Chairperson has arrived 15 minutes after the scheduled start time of the meeting, the meeting shall elect a member to chair the meeting. Under such circumstances, the meeting may not pass any resolutions which:

- (a) Change the Branch officials;
- (b) Would bring the Party into disrepute.

11:8 Two member of the committee shall be a quorum

11:9 No Meeting may select candidates or officers of the Party unless a minimum of 28 days' notice has been given to all members entitled to attend. The only exception to this is at an EGM and where 14 days' notice is required

11:10 For Clarity rule 11:9 above does not apply when an election is called at short notice, i.e. By-Elections

Section 12: Standing as a Party candidate for public elections

12:1 Anyone becoming a Medway Independents candidate grants permission for the Party to make such use, including publication or broadcasting via any medium, as the Party sees fit of any intellectual property such as photographs, written personal statements, recorded information and any other data received by the Party from the applicant and consents to publication of the telephone numbers and email addresses that they have provided to the Party for the purpose of allowing members of the public to contact them, unless they expressly state in writing that such information is copyright or they advance any matter of personal security which reasonably justifies such information being withheld.

12:2 By standing as a Medway Independents candidate the applicant/candidate agrees to appoint the election agent nominated by the party, in which case the remuneration of said agent and all election expenses shall be covered by Party, notwithstanding the applicant/candidate may make a donation towards election expenses in which case said donation shall be treated as a donation to the overall election campaign expenses and not any one particular or singular ward or election.

12:2.1 In the event a candidate who has been validly nominated and stands for Medway Independents terminates the services of the Party nominated agent, then said candidate shall pay to the Party the costs of remuneration for the agent in the sum of £400.00.

12:3 The Party Board has the sole right to request de-selection of candidates previously selected to stand for Medway Independents in any type of public election and shall maintain a list of people who shall not be permitted to stand for Medway Independents at any type of public election. Deselection is a last resort and will be done in consultation with the Branch /association.

12:4 In the event of serious misconduct by a candidate, the Party Chairperson shall have the right to suspend a candidate for up to 7 days pending a decision from the Board.

12:5 At the time of application, a candidate must disclose any prior criminal convictions to the Party. If a candidate is convicted of a criminal offence after disclosure, the candidate must notify the Party Chairperson and Secretary. Where the Party's reputation could be affected, the matter shall be referred by the Party Chairperson to the Board who may suspend the member from holding office and pending a Board decision concerning if the candidate should be permitted to stand as a candidate for the party.

12:6 Failure to disclose information required in 12:4 or 12:5 may be grounds for disciplinary action.

12:7 Any candidate who is successfully elected to the position of Councillor shall serve the entire term as a member of Medway Independents.

12:7.1 In the event the member who has been elected as a Councillor leaves the party or defects to and or joins another political party that person shall immediately resign their Council seat and in default of not resigning the council seat shall not vote on any matter at Council meetings and pay to the party the sum of twice the amount of their gross allowance for the period from which they left Medway Independents until the time they cease being a Councillor. This sum shall then at the discretion of the board be donated to a charity to be decided by the Board.

12:7.2 In the event a candidate shall resign from Medway Independents during an election campaign having been validly nominated and standing and joins another party, stands alone or stands as an independent, irrespective of how they appear on any ballot paper, then said candidate/former member shall pay all the costs incurred in respect of said campaign plus any costs incurred as a result of the resignation.

12:7.3 Should said candidate/former member be elected as a Councillor they shall immediately resign their council seat but in default of not resigning the council seat shall not vote on any matter and pay to the party the sum of twice the amount of their gross allowance for the period from which they left Medway Independents until the time they cease being a Councillor. This sum shall then at the discretion of the board be donated to a charity to be decided by the Board.

12:8 Membership of the Party does not confer any right to stand as a candidate for Medway Independents.

Section 13: Candidate Selection for all Public Elections

13.1 Branches and constituency associations are expected to field the maximum number of candidates that they can at all elections.

13.2 In general, the local Branch or constituency association shall have responsibility for candidate selection for all elections in their area.

13.3 For local authority elections Branches should select candidates as early as possible so that the candidate can start their campaign as early as possible. For parliamentary elections, candidates can be selected 3 years before the planned date for the next General Election.

13:4 The Branch or Association should take steps to satisfy itself that all candidates selected are appropriate people to represent Medway Independents at public elections, and are expected to contact the Board if they wish to select as a candidate a member with serious criminal convictions (to be defined as having been convicted of an offence for which the maximum sentence is a prison sentence of 12 months or greater or for which any custodial sentence was imposed).

13:5 The Branch should take steps to satisfy itself that all candidates selected are eligible to stand, having a suitable connection to the area as defined under electoral law and not holding a politically restricted post.

13:6 Where there is more than one candidate willing to stand for an election the Branch or association must give each potential candidate equal opportunity to present their case for selection.

13:7 The Branch committee shall then determine which candidate is selected by holding a vote.

Section 14: Party AGM & Conference rules

14:1 The Party shall normally hold its annual AGM & Conference in September.

14:2 The venue for the Party Conference shall vary annually to ensure a geographical spread of members able to attend, and to maximise attendance.

14:3 Members shall be entitled to attend the AGM & Conferences. The Conference Committee may, with the approval of the Board, open any part of the Conference to guests invited by members, or to the public.

14:4 The AGM will take place at the start of the conference and only members will be entitled to vote. Voting cards will be issued on arrival.

14:5 No member shall be entitled to interrupt Conference proceedings; breach of this shall be grounds for expulsion from the Conference.

14:6 Any member acting in an inappropriate manner at Conference, in the opinion of the Party Chairperson or his delegate, may be asked to leave the premises.

14:7 Any member who fails to comply with a request to leave or is expelled from the conference and refuses to comply with the request shall be considered to be bringing the Party into disrepute.

14:8 The Party Chairperson shall have overall responsibility for the organisation of the Party Conference. A Conference Committee may be appointed by the Party Chairperson and its membership shall be notified to the Board.

14:9 Any Constituency Association, Branch, or the Board may propose a motion for discussion at the annual conference. Conference motions must be submitted to Head Office in writing a minimum of 28 days in advance of the start of Conference.

14:10 The Party Chairperson shall select motions from those validly received to put before Conference. Motions which do not substantially impact upon the running of the Party or Party policy are unlikely to be selected.

14:11 Emergency motions may be considered if, during the month before Conference, there is such a major political change either internal or external that it demands further consultation with the Party membership.

14:12 Members shall be entitled to vote on motions laid before the Conference.

14:13 A motion shall be deemed to have passed if a majority of those voting are in favour of the motion, or by a two-thirds majority if implementing the motion would require amending the Party Constitution.

14:14 Amendments to motions shall be considered at the sole discretion of the Session Chair.

14:15 The proposer of the motion (or delegated representative) and one opponent of the motion may each speak for up to 3 minutes. Other speakers may speak for up to 2 minutes, with speakers in favour of and against alternating where possible. The number of speakers called is at the discretion of the Session Chair.

14:16 The Chair may announce that a motion has carried or failed on a simple show of voting cards if there is no doubt about the outcome. If such doubt exists, or at the request of at least 25% of members who shall indicate their request by rising to their feet or drawing the attention of the session Chair by waving the ballot paper above their head, then the exact number of votes for and against the motion shall be counted.

14:17 Motions laid before the AGM shall have advisory force if passed. The Board shall schedule motions passed by the annual conference for discussion at the next Board meeting which must be held within two months of the conference.

14:18 The Standing Orders for the conduct of internal Party meetings shall apply to the Party Conference.