

Bath Co-operative Alliance

Rules of association

1. Name of Association: Bath Co-operative Alliance (BCA)

2. The purpose of the BCA

BCA aims to support the spreading of knowledge and practice of enterprises of whatever type, appropriate to the desired task, product or service, based on seven currently recognized Co-operative Principles.

Cooperative Principles

Principle 1: Voluntary and Open Membership

Co-operatives are voluntary organization, open to all persons able to use their services and willing to accept responsibility of membership, without gender, social, racial, political or religious discrimination.

Principle 2: Democratic Member Control

Co-operatives are democratic organizations controlled by their members, who actively participate in setting their policy and making decisions. Men and women serving as elected representatives are accountable to the membership. In primary co-operatives members have equal rights (one member, one vote), and co-operatives at other levels are also organized in a democratic manner.

Principle 3: Member Economic Participation

Members contribute equitably to, and democratically control, the capital of their co-operative. At least part of that capital is usually the common property of the co-operative. Members usually receive limited compensation, if any, on capital subscribed as a condition of membership. Members allocate surpluses for any of the following purposes: developing their co-operative, possibly setting up reserves, part of which at least would be indivisible; benefiting members in proportion to their transactions with the co-operative; and supporting other activities approved by the membership.

Principle 4: Autonomy and Independence

Co-operatives are autonomous, self-organizing organizations, controlled by their members. If they enter into agreements with other organizations, including governments, or raise capital from external sources, they do this on terms that ensure democratic control by their members and maintain their co-operative autonomy.

Principle 5: Education, Training and information

Cooperatives provide education and training for their members, elected representatives, managers, and employees so they can contribute effectively to the development of their co-operatives. They inform the general public-particularly young people and opinion leaders- about the nature and benefits of co-operation.

Principle 6: Co-operation among Co-operatives

Co-operatives serve their members most effectively and strengthen the Co-operative Movement by working together through local, national, regional, and international structures.

Principle 7: Concern for the Community

Cooperatives work for the sustainable development of their communities through policies approved by their members.

3. Elected Trustees

The administration of the BCA will be supervised by a minimum of five trustees appointed at the Annual General Meeting.

4. Carrying out the purpose

(a) Receive membership dues, voluntary subscriptions, donations and grants.

(b) Utilise funds to carry out the work of the BCA.

(c) Co-operate with other organizations and enterprises that share the purpose of the BCA.

(d) Do any other relevant activities which are lawful and necessary to achieve the purposes.

5: Membership

a) Membership is open to all over the age of 16, who agree with the purpose and rules association of the BCA; and reside or work in Bath and NE Somerset or adjacent districts

b) Members will pay an annual subscription fee set at an AGM.

c) Membership will lapse if a member's dues are more than one year in arrears.

d) Members whose subscriptions are in arrears will be entitled to vote if they pay these before the relevant event takes place.

e) Associative and corporate membership.

A group, association or incorporated cooperative /community enterprise whose aims are compatible with those of BCA, may join as a collective member, having one vote and paying a group subscription.

Members of these groups may also join as individuals at the minimum subscription rate.

6. Annual General Meeting-AGM

a) The AGM must be held within 15 months of the previous AGM each year, with 14 day notice given to all members telling them what is on the agenda. Minutes must be kept of the AGM.

b) There must be at least five members present of whom at least three must be trustees for the AGM to be quorate.

- c) Every member has one vote
- d) No member more than two proxy votes apart from his or her own.
- e) The trustees will present the annual report and accounts.
- f) Any member can be elected as a trustee
- g) Members will elect at least five trustees. One must be appointed Chairperson, one the Secretary and one the Treasure. They will retire at the AGM but may stand for re-election.

7. Trustee meetings

- a) The trustees must hold at least three meetings a year. Decisions will be by majority vote.
- b) At least three trustees must be present at Trustee meetings. Minutes must be kept of all meetings
- c) Trustees may coopt an additional trustee subject to giving a to the membership by electronic means unless requested by individual members to do otherwise.

8. Money and Property

- a) Money and property must only be used for the BCA's purposes.
- b) The trustees must keep accounts. The most recent accounts must be available to be seen by any member on request.
- c) Trustees cannot receive any money or property from the BCA, except to refund reasonable out of pocket expenses.
- d) Money must be held in the BCA bank account. Two trustees must sign all cheques.
- e) The trustees may sanction the spend of up to £250 or 25% of available funds, whichever is the greater, for expenditure by a group of members on activities relevant to BCA purposes. If this limitation of expenditure needs to be exceeded the trustees must inform the membership and give three days' notice before doing so. This notification can be done electronically.
- f) Working groups may be formed to do specified tasks, temporary or ongoing.

A working group needs a minimum of three members to request recognition by the trustees. The Trustees must post their approval electronically to the membership and the working group will be recognised if there are no objections after three days.

f.ii) The Trustees may grant a ring fenced budget to a working group. The working group must keep records, minutes and financial, and report back to the membership at least once a year, no latter that 7 days before the AGM.

9. General Meeting and Internet Voting by Members

a) Any change of rules or winding up of the BCA must be done in a General Meeting. Trustees must also call a General Meeting if they receive request from at least a quarter of the membership. A notice of 14 days must be given. All decisions require a two-thirds majority. Minutes must be kept.

b) Winding up – any money or property remaining must be given to institutions that support the aims of the BCA.

c) Changes to the Constitution – can be made at AGMs or General Meetings; these need a two thirds majority

d) General Meeting- can be called on written request of at least a quarter of the membership.

e) The trustees may put decisions to the general membership through the use of Internet decision-making platforms such as Loomio. A quarter of the members can require this by requesting this by electronic communication.

These updated rules of association for Bath Co-operative Alliance were adopted at a general meeting held on 11th May 2020

Notes

This document has been based on the Cooperative Principles as published by the Co-operative College.

The rules are adapted from a Charity commissioners document - Small Charity Constitution.