



COMMUNICATION WORKERS UNION

NORTHERN IRELAND CLERICAL BRANCH

RULES AND CONSTITUTION

1. NAME

The name of the branch shall be the Communication Workers Union Northern Ireland Clerical Branch (24/603)

2. OBJECTIVES

The objectives of each Branch shall be to:

1. Locally organise, recruit and maximise membership levels and to maintain accurate branch membership records.
2. Protect and promote the interests of members in accordance with the objectives as expressed in the National Rules and policies of the union.
3. Keep members informed on local, regional and national matters.
4. Effectively consult members on local issues affecting their work.
5. Implement the policies and directives of the NEC, Industrial Executives and conferences of the union.

3. MEMBERSHIP

3.1. General

Branches shall ensure that;

1. All applications for membership are dealt with in accordance with national rules
2. All members are aware of their entitlements and obligations as defined in the national rules

3.2. Branch Membership

The membership of the Branch shall include:

1. All relevant persons in the communications, financial services, information technology and related industries and in all businesses where the Union has recognition in Northern Ireland / Ireland.
2. Retired Members
3. Other groups or persons agreed between the Branch and CWU Headquarters.

4. BRANCH MANAGEMENT

4.1. Branch Constitution, Branch Rules and Standing Orders

1. Branches shall operate according to the Branch Model Constitution agreed by the NEC and the Branch Officers and Branch Committee shall ensure the terms of the Branch Model constitution are complied with.
2. Branches may also adopt and operate local Branch Rules and Standing Orders to govern any areas not specifically covered by the Branch Model Constitution, which shall be subject to the agreement of the Branch and approval by the NEC.

4.2. Management

The affairs of the Branch shall be governed by General Meetings of, which there shall be an AGM and minimum of one other. In the intervals between General Meetings the affairs of the Branch shall be directed by the Branch Officers and Branch Committee

4.3. Minimum Standards

The CWU is committed to ensuring that all branches provide effective and professional representation to all members. To achieve this it is a requirement that all branches ensure that the following minimum standards are adhered to:

1. All members and representatives will act in strict accordance with the rules and policies of the CWU at all times.
2. The Branch fully supports the CWU aim of providing all members with equality of opportunity, dignity and respect. Therefore members and representatives of the Branch will be encouraged, and where appropriate supported, in participating in such events that support these aims. This includes attendance at CWU organised/supported events such as; the various Equality & Diversity Conferences, Retired Members and Youth events.
3. The Branch will attend and take an active part in all national, regional and local meetings that affect the Branch membership.
4. All representatives of the branch have a responsibility to ensure that all issues are dealt with promptly and efficiently.

5. The Branch Committee will put in place effective communication channels throughout the branch area and ensure that members are kept fully informed on all relevant matters.
6. The Branch Officers & Branch Committee shall ensure that priority treatment is given to the recruitment and organising of new members throughout the branch area and that this important issue is properly funded and sufficiently resourced.
7. Each Branch within its area shall ensure fair representation of all members, in terms of race, creed, religion, age, political affiliation, disability, marital status, sex or sexual or gender orientation.
8. Each Branch shall strive to ensure proportionality in Branch organisation and leadership.
9. The Branch Office shall - **as a minimum** – contain the following basic items of essential equipment and it shall be the responsibility of the principle Branch Officers to ensure that they are operational/functioning at all times:
 - Secure filing and storage facilities
 - Telephone (including 24 hour answer phone facility)
 - Fax
 - Computer
 - Branch email address

4.4 Branch Organisation

1. The Annual General Meeting shall be held not later than 31st March of each year. Not less than 28 days notice shall be given to members of the Annual General Meeting. It shall receive and consider a Report from the Branch Secretary and a Statement of accounts from the Branch Treasurer and shall determine policy for the ensuing year. Motions for the AGM, signed by the Mover and Seconder shall be in writing and shall be received by its Branch Secretary 21 days prior to the date thereof.

The Agenda for the meeting shall be circulated to the members 7 days prior to the AGM. Voting shall be by a show of hands except:-

(1) For the election of the Branch Officers and Branch Committee and

(2) When a ballot of the meeting is demanded before the question is put (such a demand must be supported by at least 2/3 (two thirds) of the members present).

A Special General Meeting shall be held at anytime on the written request of 50 members of the Branch, or at the discretion of the Branch Committee. The notice convening such a meeting shall be circulated to members at least 7 days prior to the date of the meeting.

2. Each Branch shall elect a Branch Committee, which shall include as a **minimum** the following elected Branch Officers and members:
 - a. Chair
 - b. Secretary
 - c. Treasurer/Financial Secretary
 - d. Equality Officer
 - e. Political Officer
 - f. Youth Officer
 - g. Six other Branch Committee members (at least one of who must be a Women's Officer.)
3. Branches may also elect other branch officers and branch committee members as required and agreed by the Branch.
4. The precise composition of the branch committee and the duties of the branch officers shall be detailed in the branch rules or attached as an appendix to the model branch constitution.
5. Where a Branch has members in more than one Constituency of the union it shall establish Constituency Sections.

Branch Committee:

The Branch Committee shall consist of the Officers and 18 representatives.

The Officers shall be:

Chair, Secretary, Treasurer, Equality Officer, Political Officer, Vice Chair , Youth Officer, Women's Officer and Four Assistant Secretaries.

The Assistant Secretaries will be elected on the following basis:

- One to represent members in BT Retail/BTNI/BT Ireland
- One to represent members in BT Retail Customer Service UK
- One to represent members in BT Retail Billing UK (BT Ireland)
- One to represent members in Operator Services Portadown

No Branch Officer holding a position of (a) Chair , (b) Secretary or (c) Treasurer may hold another post of (a), (b) or (c). Different people must hold each of the three posts.

All candidates for the post of Political Officer must pay the political levy and with the exception of Northern Ireland members they must also be members of the Labour Party.

4.5 Branch Election Procedures

Branches shall establish rules governing the conduct of the elections to ensure equality of treatment for all candidates. These shall be incorporated into the branch constitution/branch rules and shall be published to the membership.

The Branch Committee shall consist of 18 Representatives elected from all relevant persons in the Communications, Financial Services, Information Technology and related industries and in all businesses where the Union has recognition.

The Branch Officers and Committee members shall be elected by a ballot of the full membership.

Nominations for Branch Officer Positions and Branch Committee Representatives, signed by the Proposer, Secunder and Nominee shall be received by the Branch Secretary 28 days before the date of the AGM at which time the Election results will be announced.

No person shall be eligible to hold a Branch Officership unless that person has served on the Branch Committee for a period of one year immediately prior to his or her Nomination for Officership.

The duties to be allocated to each Officer and Committee Member shall be determined by the Branch Committee.

Officers and members of the Committee who have been assigned duties shall render a report to the Branch Committee when called upon by the Committee to do so.

Vacancies on the Branch Committee shall be filled by the Nominee who obtained the next highest number of votes in the Election.

The Branch Committee shall have the power invested in it to co-opt members to the Committee in an advisory capacity and to appoint such sub-committees as may be deemed necessary.

Any member absent from a meeting of the Branch Committee shall furnish an explanation for such absence. Any member absent from 3 consecutive meetings of the Committee without adequate reason shall be deemed to have resigned from the Committee.

The Branch Committee shall conduct the business of the Branch in conformity with the policy of the Union and in accordance with instructions of the Annual or Special General meetings.

Members employed in the wider Communications Industry shall be organised in sub-branches specific to their Employer and/or Client Organisation at the discretion of the Branch Committee. Such sub-branches shall establish Sub-Branch Committees and will be regulated in conformity with the Rules of the Union and the Branch Committee.

Where Branch Members reside in more than one Constituency of the union, Constituency Sections shall be established.

The Branch Committee will hold Branch meetings for the benefit of the membership as a whole at least twice a year (including the AGM).

5. BRANCH FINANCES

1. The Branch shall ensure that the finances of the branch are conducted in strict accordance with the rules and policies of the union.
2. The Branch shall produce a financial plan for the following year.

3. The Financial year of the Branch shall correspond with the financial year of the Union. The monies received by the Branch in accordance with the Rules and Constitution of the Union shall constitute the funds of the Branch. These funds shall be administered in accordance with the directions of the Annual or Special General Meetings and at the discretion of the Branch Committee. The Branch Treasurer shall produce at each normal meeting of the Branch Committee a current statement of accounts together with relevant books and supporting vouchers, which shall be inspected and initialled by the Branch Chairperson. The Annual statement of accounts in the form prescribed by the Union shall be rendered to the AGM and a copy sent to the Union's Head Office in accordance with the Rules and Constitution of the Union.
4. Lay Branch Auditors
 - a) The Branch AGM shall elect two lay Branch Auditors who shall not be Branch Officers or Branch Committee members. Their names shall be circulated to members and notified to CWU HQ Finance Dept upon their election.
 - b) The lay Branch Auditors shall examine and audit all Branch Accounts to ensure accuracy and shall have the right to examine and question the Branch Finances, financial policy, income and expenditure on behalf of the lay membership. All vouchers, receipts, bank statements, documents, accounts books, remittance forms and ledgers shall be examined to verify accuracy or otherwise. Lay Branch Auditors shall also verify all cash at the Bank and shall satisfy themselves that all Branch income and expenditure is accounted for.
 - c) The lay Branch Auditors shall produce a signed statement to Branch members and copy it to CWU HQ Finance Dept declaring they have executed their responsibilities.

6. Delegation To Conference

The delegates to Conference shall normally be the Secretary and one delegate to be elected from the BTPLC / Subsidiaries Constituency and one to be elected from the wider Communication Industry Constituency.

The Branch Committee must ensure that all constituency / business interests are represented.

The Branch shall strive to ensure proportionality in its delegations.

7. AFFILIATIONS & LOCAL DELEGATIONS

1. The Branch may affiliate to organisations in accordance with National Rules.
2. Local delegations shall normally be appointed by and from members of the Branch Committee and whenever possible the Branch Secretary shall lead the delegation.
3. Each Branch shall strive to ensure proportionality in its delegations.

8. MEMBERS APPROACHING UNION HEADQUARTERS

The normal channel for communication between lay members and CWU Headquarters is via the Branch Secretary.

9. INTERPRETATIONS OF RULES

Should any point arise on which these Rules are vague or silent, such points shall be decided by the Chair and submitted to the next General Meeting. Should any dispute arise between any member or group of members of the Branch, such disputes should be considered by the Branch Committee and report made to the next General Meeting.

10. INDUSTRIAL ACTION

The procedures to be followed must be in accordance with the prevailing National Rule and relevant legislation.

11. DISCIPLINE

All matters of a disciplinary nature arising from the rules and regulations of the Union effecting Union members shall be dealt with in accordance with the prevailing National rule.

12 GENERAL

A Quorum at any meeting of the Branch Committee or its sub Committee shall consist of a majority of members elected to the Committee. A Quorum at any General Meeting of the Branch shall be 25.

13. ALTERATIONS TO BRANCH RULES & STANDING ORDERS

1. No Branch Rule or Standing Order shall be amended without the consent of a majority of those present at the Annual General Meeting or a Special General Meeting called on the instruction of the National Organising Secretary, at which any proposed amendments have been duly and properly notified.
2. Any amendments carried shall not be implemented until submitted to and approved by the NEC.

BRANCH STANDING ORDERS

1. Order of Business

The Order of Business shall be read to the meeting by the Chair at the commencement of the meeting and shall be as follows:

- (i) Minutes of the previous meeting
- (ii) Matters arising therefrom
- (iii) Officers' reports
- (iv) Motions

2. Rules of Debate

(a) A member who speaks shall address the Chair and direct his speech strictly to the subject under discussion.

(b) Every motion must be moved and seconded before it can be discussed or put to the vote. In the absence of either or both the proposer and/or seconder the motion shall fall. In exceptional circumstances, and at the discretion of the Chair, a member present at the meeting may deputise for either the proposer or the seconder and the motion may then be put. No speech shall occupy more than six minutes without the consent of the meeting.

(c) The Chair shall ensure the orderly conduct of the meeting and shall warn any member of unruly conduct or persistent interruptions, after the said warning, and if the member persists in his or her behaviour, they shall retire for the remainder of the meeting.

(d) No member, except the mover of an original motion, or the mover of an amendment which, having been carried, becomes the substantive motion, shall address the meeting more than once on any subject.

The mover of an original motion shall have the right of reply, but such reply shall be confined to answering points raised by previous speakers and shall not include any new matter.

After the reply the vote shall be taken.

(e) Any member shall be entitled, with permission of the Chair, to rise to a point of order. A member so rising shall be entitled to be heard forthwith.

(f) The ruling of the Chair upon all questions of order and matters arising in debate shall be final, and not open to discussion unless challenged as defined in Standing Order 7.

(g) A motion or amendment that has been moved and seconded may be withdrawn by the mover and seconder with the consent of the meeting, which shall be signified without debate. Should permission be refused, the debate shall continue. Any motion or amendment that has not been moved and seconded may be withdrawn by the mover and seconder without the consent of the meeting.

(h) Any member may formally second a motion or amendment, reserving his or her right to speak later in the debate.

(i) Motions; that the question be put on a particular item; move to next business or to close debate may be moved and seconded only by members who have not previously spoken at any time during the debate. There can be no debate on such motions.

3. Voting

Tellers shall be appointed for the meeting. The method of voting shall be a show of hands; if the count be challenged the Chair may order a re-count. The Chair shall not vote unless the votes for and against be equally divided, in which case he/she shall exercise a casting vote.

4. Decisions

Every decision at a meeting shall be decided by a majority of the members who vote on such questions and whatever decision is reached shall be binding on all members.

5. Suspension of Standing Orders

In the event of any matter of urgency, the Chair may accept a motion for the suspension of the Standing Orders. The member moving such suspension must clearly state the nature and urgency of his business, and the number or numbers of Standing Order affected. No suspension of Standing Orders may last more than 30minutes unless by the vote of the meeting, an extension be allowed. No suspension or extension of Standing Orders shall take place except by majority of at least two-thirds of the members present.

6. Secretary's Report

It shall be permissible under the Standing Orders for any member of the Branch to raise on the Secretary's report any question not dealt with in that report, providing that such question relates to any matter germane to the work of the Branch in the interim period between general meetings.

7. Chair's Decision

The Chair's decision the construction of the Standing Orders and on any question of order not provided for by them, shall be final, unless challenged in the appropriate way, and the motion "that the Chair do leave the Chair" must be supported by at least two-thirds of the members present at the meeting.