

Co-op Party Set to Become Independent

Co-operative Congress 2005

reported in Co-operative News 14th - 28th June 2005

Congress gave approval for the Co-operative Party to be set up as an independent society.

Subject to approval from members of the Co-operative Party at the annual meeting in September, the Party will be free to run its own affairs instead of being part of Co-operatives UK.

The proposal, submitted by the Board of Directors, Co-operatives UK, said it is determined to update the status of the Party in line with modern standards.

In particular, the Labour Party said it prefers its partnership to be directly with the Co-operative Party instead of going through Co-operatives UK.

Ben Reid, Chair of Co-operatives UK, told delegates: "The Co-operative Party will be able to run its own affairs, employ its own staff and take on more responsibility.

"We still very much want it to be part of the Co-op family. So as an extra safeguard, the new constitution of the Co-operative Party can only be changed with the approval of the Board of Co-operatives UK. This is just in case the Party is hijacked and used in a way against the wishes of the Co-operative Movement".

Members at the Co-operatives UK AGM voted unanimously for the Party to be incorporated as an Industrial & Provident Society.

Peter Hunt, the Co-operative Party's National Secretary, said: "this is a historic day for the Co-operative Party." The new draft constitution is expected to be released at the Co-operative Party's annual meeting in September, in Bradford. It will then have to be approved by members.