

RULES AND CONSTITUTION

MACRA NA FEIRME

These Rules supersede all previous issues of the Rules of the Organisation.

EFFECTIVE FROM 2001

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ORIGINATION A.S.G.I

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NAME

1. The name of the organisation shall be “Macra na Feirme” which is herein after referred to as “ the organisation”.

FLAG

2. The organisation shall have a flag, which shall also be the flag of each branch of the organisation. The flag shall be tri-colour, horizontally placed, of the colours, brown, green and gold, intended to represent the soil, plant and animal life, and the sun, respectively.

OBJECTS AND LIMITATIONS

3. The object of the organisation shall be to promote and foster agriculture and rural development in all its branches by doing all such things as are or may be incidental and conducive to the attainment of that object and, in particular, by :
 - a) Assisting the personal development of rural youth
 - b) Promoting social and cultural education among rural youth of both sexes
 - c) Providing opportunity for learning the skills and theory of farming
 - d) Widening the interests of rural youth by increasing their store of general knowledge
 - e) Encouraging leadership in preparation for responsible roles in farming and community associations.
4. The organisation shall be non-party-political and non-sectarian. No action which would favour one political party or one religious denomination over any other shall be undertaken by any member on behalf of or in the name of the organisation.

STRUCTURE

5. Structure of the organisation
As specifically set out in the rules hereunder, the ordinary members of the organisation are the *sine qua non*. They, in groups of not less than 10, shall constitute the branches of the organisation. Branches shall co-ordinate their activities through a County Executive or, where National Council shall give approval, through Regional Executives. The management and control of the organisation and the direction of its policy at the National level shall rest and be vested in a National Council. Ordinary members shall elect branch officers, representatives to the County and/or Regional Executive and the representatives from their County/Region to the National Council. The National President and three National Vice-Presidents shall also be elected by the ordinary members through branch ballot.

MEMBERSHIP

6. The organisation shall consist of ordinary members, associate members, honorary members and patron members.

7. Qualification for Ordinary Membership :

It shall be a condition precedent to ordinary membership of the organisation that the member shall be a member of a branch of the organisation. Membership of the branch of Macra na Feirme shall be open to all members of the rural community who:

- a) have attained the age of 17 years and are under the age of 40 years (save as in article 7a hereunder), and
- b) have paid the membership subscription determined by the branch and
- c) are desirous of and willing to promote and confirm to the objects of the organisation and these rules.

In addition to the fulfilment of the requirements for branch membership ordinary membership of the organisation shall also require :

- a) receipt at National Office of his application for membership together with the membership fee as determined by National Council at its Annual General Meeting, and
- b) inclusion on the current register of branches as a member of ‘... branch of Macra na Feirme’.

The phrase ‘rural community’ shall be defined by each branch for the area of that branch. Any person aggrieved by the definition of a branch committee shall have a right of a appeal to the National Council, whose decision thereon shall be final.

A branch member who is in default of the requirements for ordinary membership of the organisation shall not be entitled to the benefits of the ordinary memberships which, inter alia, include :

- a) The right to participate in Nationally organised competitions and other programmes.
- b) The right to go forward for election to any position of responsibility in the organisation at any level including branch officer or branch delegate to the Regional/County Executive.
- c) The right to vote at branch meetings in the election of the National Council Representative, National President or National Vice-President.
- d) The right to vote in a ballot of branches to alter or add to these rules.
- e) Cash savings on the Macra na Feirme travel/exchange programmes and through the organisation’s National discount scheme.

7a. A former member who is elected to the position of branch President or Vice-President shall not be required to be under the age of 40 years and during the term of office shall be deemed to be a member of the branch.

7 b. Membership Year :

The membership year shall extend from 1st November to 31st October in the following year. The National Council may at its absolute discretion authorise the acceptance of prepayment of membership fees by National Office and the consequent conferring of the full benefits of ordinary membership in advance of the 1st November in any year.

8. Candidates for admission to membership shall be voted for by the branch committee, and a majority of votes shall admit. Candidates who have applied and not been admitted, shall not be eligible for admission until a period of six months from the date of voting has expired, subject to appeal to the National Council.

9. A person who has been duly elected a member of a branch and has fulfilled the requirements for ordinary membership as set out in Rule 7 hereof shall automatically become a full ordinary member of the organisation. Such membership of the organisation shall cease when the annual fee(s) shall be unpaid in accordance with Rule 22 hereof.

10. Association Membership

Qualification for Associate Membership :

Any person, corporate body or company desiring to be associated with the promotion of the objectives of the organisation may be admitted to Associate membership at National level by contributing financially to the National funds. The contribution to be an annual subscription, the amount of which shall be determined by the National Executive Committee. The membership year shall be the same as for ordinary members.

Associate members shall have the right to elect two representatives to the National Council. The election shall be carried out bi-annually by postal poll. Thus elected, one shall be automatically admitted to a seat on the National Executive Committee at the Annual General Meeting of the Council each year. The Associate Member receiving the highest number of votes shall be the representative to be admitted to a seat on the National Executive Committee. In the event of a tie, a decision shall be obtained by the drawing of lots.

The Associate members thus elected to the National Council cannot serve two consecutive terms but are eligible for re-election after an interval of two years from expiry of term of the office.

PATRON MEMBERSHIP

10a Qualification for Patron Membership

Any person may become a Patron member through payment of an annual subscription to the National organisation, the amount of which shall be determined by the National Executive Committee.

BRANCHES

11. Each branch shall consist of not less than ten ordinary members.

12. Each branch shall be called ‘...Branch, Macra na Feirme’ with the name of the branch inserted in the appropriate space.

13. Formation and Recognition of branch :

A branch shall be deemed to exist only when it has complied fully with the affiliation procedure as determined from time to time by the National Council. Members of the rural community who are eligible for membership under Rule 7 hereof and who wish to form a branch of Macra na Feirme shall in the first instance apply for recognition as a branch and affiliation to the organisation. Such members of the rural community may be assisted by the appropriate County/Regional Executive or by the National Council.

13a. A branch shall comprise such persons only as are eligible for membership under Rule 7 hereof. A branch of the organisation may not be formed within a radius of five miles of an existing branch of the organisation existing in the same parish ; or within a radius of four miles of a branch of the organisation existing in a neighbouring parish. On the recommendation of the County Executive concerned, however, this distance limit may be modified at the discretion of the National Executive Committee.

13b. An existing branch is one which is one which is affiliated and included on the current register of branches.

14. Affiliation Procedure :

An application for affiliation shall be made in writing to the General Secretary of the organisation and shall be in such form and shall contain such particulars as the National Council may from time to time determine.

15. Affiliation Sponsor :

An application for affiliation by a group wishing to be a Macra na Feirme branch shall not be considered by the National Council unless it is sponsored by the County Executive Committee or by the President of the organisation.

15b. The National Council may at its absolute discretion allow affiliation without a sponsor where a branch was affiliated and included on the branch register in either of the two immediate previous membership years.

16. It shall be a condition of affiliation that the new branch affiliate also to the appropriate County and Regional Executive.

17. A branch shall not be affiliated to the organisation unless and until the National Council shall have approved such affiliation. Such affiliation may be refused entirely at the discretion of the National Council.

18. Each branch shall before the 1st December each year send to Macra na Feirme National Office the names and addresses of the officers elected for the current year, a list of its fully paid up members for the current year and a copy of the branch's annual report for the preceding year.

19. Register of Branches :

The Honorary Secretary of the organisation shall keep a register of all branches and members thereof. In it shall be recorded all such particulars as the National Council shall from time to time determine and on the affiliation of a branch all such requisite particulars concerning it shall be entered in said register.

On the affiliation of a branch the Honorary Secretary of the branch shall be furnished with one copy of these rules free of charge. Further copies for the use of a branch may be obtained on payment of a sum fixed by the National Council.

20. On the affiliation of a branch to the organisation the members for the time being of the branch shall thereupon be deemed to be and shall be bound by the Rule and the Constitution of the organisation and shall accept the liabilities and ensure compliance with the obligations of membership of the organisation. On their ceasing to be members of such branch or on such branch ceasing to be affiliated they shall cease to be so bound.

21. Branch Fee(s) :

Each branch shall subscribe annually to be organisation at such a rate or rates as the National Council shall from time to time determine, and such annual fee(s) shall fall due to the National Council prior to the 1st of November each year. The membership year for

branches and members shall run from the 1st November to the 31st October in the following year.

21a. Any branch whose branch affiliation fee or branch insurance fee shall be unpaid on or before the 7th November in each year shall automatically cease to exist and thereupon be struck off the current register of branches.

22. The members of any branch whose individual membership fee(s) shall be unpaid on the 7th November in any year shall cease to enjoy the rights and privileges of the membership for so long after that date as the annual fee(s) shall remain unpaid.

23. On a branch ceasing to exist pursuant to Rules 21a and 40 and being struck off the register of branches its members shall automatically cease to be members of the organisation but on the reinstatement of the branch the members, whose membership fee, as determined by National Council at its Annual General Meeting is currently paid up and received by National Office, shall be automatically reinstated as members of the organisation.

BRANCH GOVERNMENT

24. The control of the affairs of each branch shall be exercised by the members of the branch.

24.a The management of the branch on behalf of the members shall be exercised by the officers which shall consist of a President, a Chairman, an Honorary Secretary, an Honorary Treasurer and an Honorary Public Relations Officer and such other assistant officers as may be elected at the Annual General Meeting of the branch.

25. Branch Annual General Meetings shall be held on or before 10th October each year or at such other time as the National Council shall from time to time determine. At such meetings branches shall elect their officers for the current year and present the branch's annual report and a statement of accounts for the preceding year.

26. Members under the age of 35 only shall be eligible for election as Chairman, Honorary Secretary, Honorary Treasurer and Honorary Public Relations Officer of a branch or to act on a branch committee provided that a person under the age of 35 years at the date of election who attains that the age during his year of office shall be entitled to continue to act in whatever capacity he has been elected until the end of the year of his term of office.

No age limit shall apply for the office of branch President and Vice-President.

27. Each branch shall have the power to make its own branch rules for the management and control of the branch, but only insofar as such rules shall not be inconsistent or at variance with the Rules and Bye-laws of the organisation. In the event of there being any

difference or conflict between the Rules of a branch and Rules or Bye-laws of the organisation, the Rules or Bye-Laws of the organisation shall prevail.

28. Branch Subscription :

The annual subscription of branch members to the branch shall be such sum as the branch may from time to time determine and shall become due on a date to be determined by the branch members which must in any event be a date prior to the 1st November each year. The membership year shall be and extend from the 1st November to October 31st in the following year. Members whose subscriptions are in arrears shall not be entitled to vote at any meeting of the branch or to take part in the management or the control of the branch nor shall they be eligible for election to any officership of the branch. Each branch shall have the power and right to retain the members' branch subscription and to apply them for the benefit of the branch in such manner as they shall think fit consistent with the objects of the organisation.

COUNTY AND REGIONAL EXECUTIVES

29. In each county there shall be formed, on approval of the National Council, a County Executive Committee, for the purpose of co-ordinating the efforts and activities of the branches, to promote the formation of new branches, and to render help and guidance to all branches.

30. Counties, where the number of branches or other circumstances warrant, may, with the express approval of the National Council, be divided into Regions and Regional Executive Committees formed, in order to assist the County Executive in carrying out its functions.

31. Each County Executive Committee shall consist of the County Representative to the National Council, together with an equal number of representatives of each Regional Executive Committee in the county, or where there are no Regional Executive Committees in the county, an equal number of representatives appointed annually by each branch in the county.

Each County Executive Committee shall hold its Annual General Meeting on or before October 1st each year.

Because of its regional structure, Cork County Executive shall be exempted from this rule. Instead the Cork County Executive shall hold its Annual General Meeting on or before October 15th each year.

32. Each Regional Executive Committee shall consist of an equal number of representatives appointed annually by each branch in the Region. Each Regional Executive Committee shall hold its Annual General Meeting on or before October 1st each year.

33. Each County and Regional Executive Committee shall determine its own procedure, the number of representatives to be appointed to its Sub-Committees, and the affiliation fees (if any) to be paid.

NATIONAL COUNCIL

34. The management and the control of the organisation and the direction of its Policy shall rest and be vested in a National Council which shall consist of the President, three Vice-Presidents, the Trustee(s), two representatives elected by the Associate members, the immediate past President, a representative nominated by the IFA and one other member of each county in which there is at least one properly affiliated branch provided that if on an election being held one member is not elected for each such county the National Council may consist of those members only who have been duly elected at such election.

The member for a county shall be elected by the branches in that county only, in the manner hereinafter provided. The county in which a branch shall vote in shall be the county in which is situate the place referred to in its name or if the name is not a place name, the place where the Honorary Secretary of the branch resides. The National Council may on request of any branch grant it permission to vote in a different county than above provided, subject to revocation of such permission by the National Council and provided also that such branch is not the only branch in the county in which it is situate. Candidates for election must be members of a branch of the organisation and must be under the age of 40 years on the 31st March in the year of election.

Members elected to the National Council shall hold office for a period of two years from the date of their election, provided that a co-opted member shall only hold office for the term of the Council to which he has been co-opted. Outgoing members shall be eligible for re-election to the next ensuing Council.

Any county having 50 or more affiliated branches shall be entitled to elect a second representative to the National Council, and any county having 75 or more affiliated branches shall be entitled to elect a third representative to the National Council. All members elected or nominated to National Council shall be full voting members.

34a. An exception can be made at the discretion of the National Council in the case of Tipperary by allowing a member from both North Tipperary Riding and South Tipperary Riding to be a member of the National Council where the National Council is satisfied that the separate independent public administration is hindering the overall development of the organisation.

34b. An exception can be made at the discretion of the National Council in the case of County Cork by allowing a member from each of the five Cork Regions ; Avonduh, Carbery Imokilly, Muskerry and Seandun, to be a member of the National Council where

the National Council is satisfied that the existence of five Regional Executives in County Cork is in the best interest of the organisation.

35. The following powers shall be vested in the National Council, but it may delegate some or all of these powers to the Executive Committee.

36. The National Council shall have the control and the application of the finances of the organisation at national level and in addition to all other powers conferred on them by these rules or vested in them by implication or by law shall have the power to employ, suspend and dismiss employees and to fix the remuneration of such employees and to determine their duties; to approve and sanction the affiliation of branches to the organisation; to convene special meetings of the National Council; to expel any branch of the organisation; to suspend or expel any member of any branch of the organisation; and generally to do all such executive and administration acts as may appear to be necessary for properly carrying out the objects of the organisation in accordance with these rules.

37. The National Council shall have power to borrow for the purposes of the organisation such amount of money either at one time or from time to time at such a rate of interest as it shall seem fit provided that the amount so borrowed shall not without the consent of a specially convened meeting at any one time exceed a limit of 10 % of the previous year's income as determined by the audited accounts together with interest thereon at the rate at which it was borrowed.

38. The National Council shall have power to make such by-laws (not being inconsistent with nor in contravention of these rules) as it may deem proper in the interests of the organisation. Such bye-laws shall the same effect and force as these rules until the holding of a postal plebiscite of the branches of the organisation when they shall, if approved, be adopted as rules of the organisation.

39. The National Council shall have the power to increase or decrease either generally or in any particular case the annual subscription payable by branches.

40. Expulsion of branches and members :

The National Council shall have the power to expel any branch from the organisation or any particular member or members of a branch from membership of the organisation provided that a majority of two to one of those present and voting, vote for such expulsion. In the event of expulsion the expelled branch or member or members shall automatically cease to have any rights or interest in the organisation and shall forfeit all right to or claims on the organisation or its property or assets and shall be struck off the register. On the expulsion of a branch each and every member of it shall be automatically expelled.

40a. Suspension of Membership :

The National Council shall have the power to suspend any member or members from membership of the organisation for a fixed period of time not exceeding one year on any

single occasion provided that a majority, of two to one of those present and voting, vote for such suspension.

On the expiry of the time period that suspended member shall be entitled to membership of the organisation provided he meets the criteria set down in Rule 7.

41. The National Council and its Executive Committee may appoint sub-committees from the members of the organisation, to advise on the activities of the organisation and may delegate to sub-committees any or all of its own powers ; and may determine the size, powers and duration of such sub-committees.

HONORARY OFFICERS

42. Officers :

The officers of the organisation shall consist of the President, three Vice-presidents, a Chairman of the Executive Committee, an Honorary Secretary and an Honorary Treasurer.

43. The president shall be elected by the branches voting in the manner hereinafter appearing. He shall hold office for a period of two years subsequent to his election, and shall not be eligible for re-election for the ensuing period of two years. In the event of the office of President falling vacant during its term, due to death, resignation, or any other cause, the National Council shall appoint one of the Vice-President to fill it for the remainder of the term. The President, on retiring, shall automatically become a member of National Council for the ensuing two years. Only persons who have been affiliated members of the organisation for a period of at least three years prior to the date of election shall be eligible as candidates for the office of President.

44. Vice-Presidents :

There shall be three Vice-Presidents. One Vice-President shall be elected from each of the three Regions viz-the Munster Region; North Western Region (all counties in Connaught plus Longford, Cavan, Monaghan and Donegal); the Eastern Region (all counties in Leinster except Longford), and shall hold office for the same period as the President and shall have full power to speak and vote at Council meetings. The Vice-Presidents shall retire at the annual General Meeting of the second year after their election. They shall be eligible for re-election but shall not serve more than two consecutive terms. Each Vice-President shall be ordinarily resident in the Region he shall represent.

NATIONAL EXECUTIVE

45. The National Council shall at its meeting held next after 31st March each year by ballot elect from its own members an Honorary Secretary, Honorary Treasurer and such other members not exceeding ten in number who shall, together with the President and three Vice-Presidents, form the Executive Committee. The National Council shall determine the functions and powers of the Executive Committee and may delegate to it

any or all of its own powers. The Honorary Secretary, Honorary Treasurer and other members of the Executive Committee shall hold office until their successors are elected. The National Executive Committee as its first meeting held after its election shall authorise two members of the Committee to sign and countersign all cheques. A member of the staff can be authorised to sign on behalf of one of the Executive members. The outgoing National President shall serve one year on National Executive.

46. Chairman :

Duties and powers - The chairman shall take the chair at all meetings of the Executive Committee and in his absence a member of the Executive Committee present and elected by the meeting. The presiding chairman shall have a casting vote in addition to a deliberative vote at all meetings of the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee shall at its first meeting held after its election in each year elect its own Chairman.

47. Honorary Secretary :

Duties and Powers - The Honorary Secretary shall record correctly the names of all members present at a meeting; and the minutes of the proceedings, which he shall transcribe into a book which, at the next meeting following shall be authenticated as a true record of the proceedings by the signature of the presiding Chairman, with the permission of the meeting ; he shall forthwith hand over all monies received by him to the Honorary Treasurer; he shall produce and hand over all books, documents, property and money of the organisation in his possession and render a full and clear account at each audit, and whenever required by the National Council or Executive Committee duly authorised by it or by the Trustees to do so; he shall summon and give due notice in accordance with these rules of all meetings of the National Council and of the Executive Committee and keep accounts, documents and papers of the Council ; he shall prepare the annual report of the Executive Committee for submission to the meeting of the Council held after April 1st of each year and submit a draft of such report to the Executive Committee for approval prior to the above meeting ; he shall carry out all such acts as are required by the rules hereinafter appearing in connection with the election of officers and members of the National Council or Executive Committee duly authorised by it ; he shall carry out all such other duties as he may be directed from time to time by the National Council or Executive Committee duly authorised by it and shall on all occasions in the execution of his office act under the superintendence, control and direction of the National Council or the Executive Committee duly authorised by it ; and he may depute such of his duties as the National Council or Executive Committee duly authorised by it may determine to an assistant Honorary Secretary or to an employee of the organisation. The Honorary Secretary shall be elected in manner hereinbefore appearing. In case of the absence of the Honorary Secretary the minutes of the proceedings of the meeting shall be taken by such other member as the presiding Chairman shall appoint for the occasion.

48. Honorary Treasurer :

Duties and Powers - The Honorary Treasurer shall take full charge of the funds of the organisation which are not invested or in the hands of the Trusteeship and shall pay all demands when directed so to do by the National Council or Executive Committee duly

authorised by it. He shall produce and hand over all books and documents, property and money of the organisation in his possession and render a full and clear account at each audit and whenever required by the National Council or Executive Committee duly authorised by it, or Trusteeship to do so ; he shall keep full and true accounts of all money which shall come to his hands and showing the financial position and receipts and disbursements of the organisation ; he shall close and balance the accounts of the organisation as on the 31st December in each year and present accounts duly audited at the meeting of the Council held before 1st April in each year ; he shall carry out all such other duties as he may be directed from time to time by the National Council or Executive Committee duly authorised by it and he shall on all occasions in the execution of his office act under the superintendence, control and direction of the National Council or by the Executive Committee duly authorised by it and he may depute such of his duties as the National Council or the Executive Committee duly authorised by it may determine to an assistant Honorary Treasurer or to an employee of the organisation. The Honorary Treasurer shall be elected in manner hereinbefore appearing. All money received by the Honorary Treasurer shall be lodged monthly to the credit of the organisation's current account with the organisation's bank. No payment shall be made by him without an order of the National Council or Executive Committee duly authorised by it .

49. Executive Committee :

Vacation of office - Any member of the Executive Committee who during his term of office shall absent himself for six calendar months from meetings of the Executive Committee without furnishing a satisfactory explanation of his absence to the Council shall be deemed to have vacated his membership of the Executive Committee.

MEETINGS OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL AND NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

50. National Council :

The National Council shall meet at least four times in each year between the 1st April and 31st March following, the first meeting to be held in the month of April or May of each year. At its meeting following next after 1st April, and which must be held within sixty days of that date, the order of business shall be :

- (a) Reading of notice convening the meeting.
- (b) Minutes of the previous meeting.
- (c) Reception and consideration of Executive Committee's annual report.
- (d) Reception and consideration of audited Statement of Account and Balance Sheet to previous 31st December.
- (e) Declaration by presiding chairman of the election of officers and members as returned by the returning Officer.
- (f) Election of Honorary Secretary , Honorary Treasurer and Executive Committee members.
- (g) Election of Auditors.

(h) Any such further business of the organisation as its provided by the next two succeeding rules.

After the above business shall have been disposed of, any business which the Executive Committee thinks proper to introduce shall be entered upon. After the business introduced by the Executive Committee shall have been disposed of it shall be competent for any member of the Council with the permission of the meeting to make any proposition which may legally be entertained at such meetings and to give any notice he may think fit of a proposition to be considered at the next meeting of the Council.

51. At the meetings of the Council other than the meetings in the month of April or May, the business shall be as set down in the agenda which shall accompany the notice calling such meeting and other business which, with the consent of the meeting, may be introduced by the Executive Committee, or by a member of the Council.

52. At least 14 clear days' notice in writing of a meeting of the Council shall be given to each member. Twelve members shall form a quorum of the council.

53. Meeting of the Council, in addition to the four normally held in each year, shall be convened by the Honorary Secretary on the written request of the President, Executive Committee or the majority of the members of the Council.

54. The President shall preside at each meeting of the Council, or in his absence, a member of the Executive Committee elected to the chair by the meeting.

55. The Executive Committee shall meet at least six times in the calendar year and provided that there is no more than a two month interval between meetings to deal with affairs of the routine administration and such other matters as may be assigned it by the National Council. Three clear days' notice in writing of each meeting shall be given to each member. Five members shall form a quorum.

56. Adjourned Meetings :

In the case of a meeting of the National Council or Executive Committee shall be adjourned, the business to be transacted at the adjourned meeting shall be specified previously to the adjournment taking place and shall be entered on the minutes and no business shall be transacted at the adjourned meeting which shall not have been so specified and entered. At all adjourned meetings the business to be transacted shall be taken in the order in which it shall have been entered on the minutes of the meeting from which the adjournment took place.

57. Voting at the meetings :

Open voting shall be permitted at all meetings of the organisation on all questions except (1) elections which shall be carried out by secret ballot ; and (2) where these rules otherwise specifically provide for voting by ballot. Should one third of those present request any question to be submitted to vote by ballot that mode of voting shall be adopted. At all meetings all questions shall be decided by a majority of votes, except where these rules otherwise specially provide. The presiding Chairman may vote and shall, in case of an equality of votes, have a casting vote in addition to his first vote.

57a. Proxy Voting :

A member of the National Council who is unable to attend a meeting of the National Council may be represented by another ordinary member from his constituency provided notice is given in writing to the General Secretary by the National Council Representative at least two working days in advance to the meeting. No proxies shall be allowed at any other meeting of the organisation.

58. Speaking at Meeting :

No member shall be permitted to speak more than once on the same question except for the purpose of explanation or except with the special express permission of the presiding chairman, provided that the mover of any resolution shall have the right to reply after which the discussion shall be closed.

59. Disputes at Meetings :

In all cases of dispute, doubt or difficulty arising at any meeting, the decision of the presiding chairman thereon shall be final and conclusive.

60. Irregularity at Meetings :

In case any irregularity shall occur in the convening or holding of a National Council or Executive Committee Meeting or in any election or other proceedings at such meeting and the same shall not be publicly noticed and objected to at such meeting, all proceeding at such meeting shall be of the same force and validity as if no irregularity had occurred; but if any irregularity shall be publicly noticed and objected to, the meeting shall decide thereon and such decision shall be final and conclusive.

AUDITORS

61. Financial Year:

The financial year of the organisation shall be from the 1st January to the 31st December and the accounts of the organisation shall be made for each financial year.

62. The National Council shall, each year, at its meeting held next after 31st March, appoint a professional accountant, or firm of professional accountants, to audit the accounts of the organisation. The auditor, or auditors, shall hold office until the commencement of the meeting held next after 31st March in the following year, and shall be eligible for reappointment. The auditor, or auditors shall be remunerated out of the funds of the organisation.

63. Vacancy in Office of Auditor :

If any vacancy occurs in the office of auditor during the year a new auditor or auditors shall be elected by the National Council or Executive Committee duly authorised by it to fill the vacancy.

64. Audit of Accounts :

The audit and examination of the organisation's books and accounts for the year to the 31st December shall be carried out by the auditor or auditors not later than 28th day of February following. A copy of the Revenue and Expenditure account and Balance Sheet with the auditor's certificate thereon shall be submitted by the Executive Committee with its annual report at the National Council meeting following the audit. After the reading of the accounts at the meeting and their approval by the meeting or adoption by any other means the Chairman of the meeting shall sign the account and balance sheet in testimony of such approval and such account and balance sheet shall thereupon be binding and conclusive on all the members of the organisation. If at any time the National Council considers it to be advisable, the organisation's account may be audited more frequently than at yearly intervals and at such time or times as may be the National Council.

ASSETS AND LIABILITIES

65. The assets and property of the organisation shall be vested in Trustees who shall be appointed by the National Council. The National Council may appoint either the Body Corporate now named Macra na Feirme Ionataobhaithe Teoranta or other such Corporate Body it may substitute therefore to be sole Trustee, the directors of which shall be members of the National Council and the National Executive committee. Alternatively, the National Council may appoint three members of the organisation to be Trustees jointly, who shall be ex-officio members of the National Council and the National Executive Committee. The National Council shall power by resolution, supported by two thirds of the members present at the voting to remove any Trustee but subject to this provision a Trustee shall hold office until resignation, or (in the case of individual Trustee) death. All references to be 'the Trustee' occurring in Rule 34 shall be construed as applicable only to any period or periods during which the Trustees shall be individual members of the organisation and shall not apply during any period or periods in which a Body Corporate is sole Trustee.

During a period or periods when the Trustees shall be individual members of the organisation the continuing or surviving Trustee or Trustees shall appoint such person or persons as may be nominated by the National Council as new Trustee or Trustees.

The trustee or Trustees shall hold the assets and property of the organisation at the disposal of the National Council and shall invest, sell, lease, let, licence, lend, mortgage, pledge, charge, or otherwise dispose of or apply the same and all incomes arising therefrom as the National Council shall from time to time determine provided that nothing contained in this Rule shall preclude the Trustee or Trustees from allowing any monies which shall come to the hands of the National Council being retained by such Council or held under its control, either in hand or in any Bank or Banks or being applied by it for the purposes of the organisation. No personal liability shall attach to any Trustee except to the extent of such assets or property of the organisation as actually have been received by it to him. The Trustee or Trustees shall sue or be sued on behalf of the organisation.

66. Any vacancy occurring in the office of Trustee shall be filled by the National Council at its first meeting after the vacancy has occurred.

67. The property and assets of each branch, County Executive and Regional Executive shall be vested in and under the control of such branch, County Executive and Regional Executive respectively.

The officers of the branch jointly shall have discretion to vest all or any of the branch property in the names of Trustees who shall be nominated by them with the approval of branch members.

The officers of a county Regional Executive respectively jointly shall have discretion to vest all or any of the property or assets of the County Executive or Regional Executive in the names of Trustees who shall be nominated by the officers with the approval of the delegates of the branches affiliated to the County or Regional Executive.

If, on the dissolution of the branch or a county or Regional Executive of Macra na Feirme there remains after satisfaction of all its debts and liabilities any property whatever of the branch, County Executive or Regional Executive respectively, the same should be used for the benefit of the rural community in the area of the branch, County Executive or Regional Executive respectively, after an interval of five years. If a replacement branch, County Executive or Regional Executive is established within five years the remaining property should be at the disposal of the newly established unit of the organisation respectively.

67a. The organisation shall not be responsible for any debts and/or liabilities or engagements incurred or undertaken by any branch, County Executive or Regional Executive save in such circumstances that they have been legally incurred or contracted with the express prior authority in writing of the President and Chief Executive on behalf of the National Council.

67b. Dissolution :

The dissolution of Macra na Feirme can occur only by a ballot of branches with three out of four voting branches, voting in favour of the dissolution. If, upon such dissolution, there remains after the satisfaction of all its debts and liabilities any property whatever of the national organisation the same shall be held in trust by the Trustee or Trustees for a period of not less than ten years from the date of the dissolution.

If, after ten years, Macra na Feirme or a substitute organisation with the same objects is not constituted, the funds shall be applied for the purposes of the agricultural education at the discretion of the Trustee or Trustees. If, however, within ten years of the dissolution, Macra na Feirme or a substitute organisation with the same objects is constituted, the funds shall be applied for the use of this newly constituted organisation.

68. Indemnification of Officers:

Every trustee, Officer and Member of the National Council Executive Committee shall be indemnified out of and by the assets of the organisation against all losses which he may sustain or incur in or about the execution of the duties of his office or otherwise in relation thereto and no such person shall be personally liable for any loss or damage which may result to or be sustained by the organisation arising from any act done in the execution of the duties of his office.

MODE OF ELECTION OF NATIONAL PRESIDENT, VICE-PRESIDENTS AND NATIONAL COUNCIL

69. The Returning Officer at an election for the office of President, Vice-Presidents and ordinary members of the National Council shall be the President at the time or such other person as he shall appoint and he may appoint such persons to assist in the election as he may deem necessary.

70. Every candidate for election to the office of President shall be nominated by at least four branches. The secretary of the nominating branch shall, before sending forward such nomination, obtain the consent of the person so nominated to act if elected. Each nomination paper shall reach the General Secretary of the organisation on or before the 4th March or three weeks after date of issue from National Office, whichever is the later, in the year of election.

70a. Every candidate for election to the office of vice-President shall be nominated by at least four branches within his Region. The Secretary of the nominating branch shall before sending forward such nomination obtain the consent of the person so nominated to act if elected. Each nomination paper shall reach the General Secretary of the organisation on or before the 4th March or three weeks after the date of the issue from National Office, whichever is the later, in the year of election.

71. Every candidate for election to membership of the National Council shall be nominated by at least one branch. The secretary of the nominating branch shall before sending forward such nomination obtain the consent of the person so nominated to act if elected. Each nomination paper shall reach the General Secretary of the organisation on or before the 4th March or three weeks after the date of issue from National Office, whichever is the later, in the year of election.

72. The Returning Officer shall decide on the validity of every nomination paper and his decision shall be final.

73. If one person only is nominated for President, the Returning Officer shall forthwith without selection declare that person elected to the position for the ensuing term.

73a. In the event of only one person being nominated for any one Region for the position of Vice-President, the Returning Officer shall forthwith, without election, declare such person elected for the ensuing term.

73b. In the event of one person only being nominated for any one county for membership of the National Council, the Returning Officer shall forthwith, without election, declare such person elected for the ensuing term.

73c. A person shall only be eligible for nomination to one position at any one time. If the nomination papers in respect of two or more positions are signed by the same candidate he shall be deemed to have accepted the nomination to the higher officership and shall not be eligible for election to the other officership.

74. If the elections are contested the Honorary Secretary shall cause ballot papers to be printed in the forms contained in the schedule to these rules or as near thereto as circumstances admit and shall on or before the 14th March or no more than two weeks after the close of nominations in the year of election send one of each such paper to each branch.

75. If in the opinion of the National Council a candidate for election to National Officership breaches the election rules agreed each year by the National Council and published to candidates that candidate shall be automatically disqualified from holding office at any level in the organisation.

Such a decision shall require a two-thirds majority of National Council members present and voting.

76. In the event of all nominees for the office of National President or for the office of Vice-President withdrawing after close of nominations new nomination papers shall be issued to branch secretaries and the intervals provided for in Rules 70,70a, 74 and 77 shall apply.

77. The poll or election shall take place on the 4th day of April or three weeks after the issue of ballot papers, whichever is the later, in each year. The Honorary Secretary shall provide three ballot boxes - one for the election of President, one the election of the Vice-Presidents and one the election of members of National Council and the Returning Officer shall attend at such place as the National Council or Executive Committee duly authorised by it shall have appointed on the said date from 11 o'clock a.m. to 1 o'clock p.m. and each branch desiring to vote shall by representative hand its voting papers for such elections to the Returning Officer and any branch not finding it convenient to have a representative in attendance and desiring to vote for any election shall be at liberty to enclose the voting papers for such election in the envelopes forwarded to it for that election by the Honorary Secretary, on the outside of which an identification number of each branch shall be printed and either to deliver the same to the Honorary Secretary of the organisation or transmit it to him by post or otherwise so that the same reach him not later than 1 o'clock p.m. on the polling day and in such case the Honorary secretary shall during the election hand such envelopes to the Returning Officer, by whom it shall be opened and the voting paper placed in the proper ballot box, after the Returning Officer shall have ascertained that such branch is entitled to vote and the envelopes shall be preserved until after declaration of the poll and of the admissibility of each voting paper

the Returning Officer shall be Sole judge. The election of members of the National Council shall be carried out in alternate years to the election of Presidents and Vice – Presidents.

78. As soon as practicable after the close of the poll, the Returning Officer shall proceed to count the votes, at which counting any member of the organisation may be present. Upon the completion of the counting, the Returning Officer, shall declare the candidate for the election to the office of President, the three candidates for the election to the office of Vice-President and the candidate for each county for election to membership of the National Council securing the greatest number of votes elected to the respective officership for the ensuing term. If two or more candidates for any position shall secure an equal number of votes the Returning Officer shall decide by lot which of them shall be elected. If, after the declaration of the result of the election any county in which a properly affiliated branch is situate shall not have secured representation on the National Council, the candidates elected shall form the National Council and shall have power to co-opt one person to the National Council for each such county not having so secured representation as aforesaid. On the completion of the elections the President shall be responsible for the notification of the newly elected officers.

79. In the case of death or resignation of any of the Vice-Presidents or any County Representative on the National Council, a bye-election shall be held within two months of the next meeting of the National Council following.

PUBLIC OFFICE

80. Members of the parliament of the European Community, Dail Eireann, Seanad Eireann and County or Urban District Council or consenting nominated candidates for any of these bodies shall be eligible for membership of Macra na Feirme but cannot hold and shall not be eligible for any position within Macra na Feirme as officer or staff member whether at branch, county or National level during election and period in office if elected and for two years subsequent to relinquishing public office. Defeated candidates shall continued to be similarly excluded from any position in Macra na Feirme for a period of two years subsequent to the date of the relevant election.

80a. An intending candidate for election to any of the bodies mentioned in Rule 80 shall resign from any officership or staff position he holds in Macra na Feirme at branch, County or National level from the time of his nomination as a candidate for such election.

80b. The National Council may waive Rules 80 and 80a in the event that it decides to nominate a Macra na Feirme officer or staff member for election to public office in order to highlight a particular issue or particular issues.

STAFF

81. The National Council may appoint and remunerate a Chief Executive who shall be General Secretary of the organisation on such terms and conditions as may from time to

time be determined. The Chief Executive may be dismissed during his term of office for good cause shown and by vote of not less than thirds of the members present and voting at a National Council meeting specially convened to consider a dismissal resolution of which 14 clear days notice shall have been given in writing.

The Chief Executive shall be responsible to the National Executive Committee for the day to day business of the organisation and the direction of all staff of the organisation.

The Chief Executive shall, ex officio, have the right to attend all meetings of the National Council, the National Executive Committee and their sub-committees. He shall have speaking rights, but no voting rights.

MISCELLANEOUS

82. Service of Notice :

Any notice or other document required or authorised by these rules to be served on a branch may be so served by sending the same by prepaid post addressed to the Honorary Secretary of the Branch at his address and the date of service shall be the day following the date of posting.

83. Saving clause as to Sundays :

When anything is required by these rules to be done on any date which falls on a Sundays, Saturdays or Bank Holiday such thing shall be done on the following working day.

84. National Office :

The National Office of the organisation shall be in the Irish Farm Centre, Bluebell, Dublin 12 until otherwise determined by the National Council.

REPRESENTATIVES TO OUTSIDE BODIES

85. Representatives to outside Bodies :

No representative of Macra na Feirme shall serve more than five years from the date of first appointment representing the organisation on an outside body.

FORCE AND INTERPRETATION OF RULES

86. By accepting membership of the organisation each member shall be bound by and shall submit to the Rules and Bye-Laws of the organisation .

87. In these Rules, where the context so admits and unless the contrary intention appears, words in the singular shall include the plural and words in the plural shall include the singular and words denoting the masculine gender shall be deemed to include the feminine gender. Should any doubt, dispute or case arise under these rules or as to the interpretation of these rules or which may not be provided for by these Rules, the matter

shall be referred to the National Council, whose decision, taken in accordance with the aims and objects of the organisation thereon, shall be final.

ALTERATION OF RULES

88. These rules shall take the place of all previous rules, bye-laws and regulations which are hereby rescinded.

88a. No alteration or addition to these rules shall be made, except as a result of a postal poll of properly affiliated branches, and only then when two thirds of branches eligible and voting are in favour of such alteration or addition.

Proposals to amend, alter or add to these rules shall only be put a ballot of branches with the agreement of not less than two thirds of the members of the National Council present and voting.

Postal ballots on changes to these rules shall at all times allow at least three weeks from date of issue from date of issue from National Office of the proposed amendment(s) to polling date.