

## **The Midcounties Co-operative Campaigns Fund**

### **Notes to Applicants**

#### **The Midcounties Co-operative**

The Midcounties Co-operative is the largest independent co-operative society in the UK with over 640,000 members and annual gross sales of £1.35bn. We operate a range of businesses in Food, Travel, Healthcare, Funeral, Childcare, Energy, Post Offices and Flexible Benefits.

Our heartlands are in Oxfordshire, Gloucestershire, Buckinghamshire, Shropshire, Staffordshire, the West Midlands, Wiltshire and Worcestershire. However, we trade in the surrounding counties and our Energy, Childcare, Travel and Flexible Benefits businesses trade across the UK.

We have four core values that guide the way we work - Democracy, Openness, Equality and Social Responsibility. These are derived from the values and principles of the co-operative movement. We believe they demonstrate the strength of co-operation and set us apart from our competitors.

#### **Democracy**

Ensuring the views of our members are reflected in the way the Society is run.

#### **Openness**

Being open, honest and fair in our dealings with everyone we come into contact with.

#### **Equality**

Recognising the contribution that everyone can make to develop the Society.

#### **Social responsibility**

Reflecting our responsibilities to the wider community in the way we conduct our business.

## **The Midcounties' political engagement**

In October 2013 the Society's members adopted a Statement on Political Engagement. The Statement, which can be found on page 3, shows that the Society is willing to engage with any organisation that shares its objectives and beliefs.

## **Campaigns Fund**

To help bring the commitments in the Statement to life, the Society has set up a Campaigns Fund.

The Fund is intended to support campaigning activity (primarily within the Society's core trading area) that promotes the aims of co-operation in the political arena and supports the objectives and priorities of the Society.

The Fund is open to applications from any organisation, including the Co-operative Party, active in the Society's heartland areas whose aims are sympathetic to the Society and the co-operative model. A set of procedures and criteria for the Fund have been approved and can be found later on in this document.

Please note the Fund will **not** support:

- charitable or welfare activities
- applications for funding on behalf of individual candidates in local, national or European elections.

## **Application form and timetable**

Organisations interested in applying for funding must do so using the relevant Application Form, which becomes available on the Society's website when a round of grant-giving starts: <https://www.midcounties.coop/community/campaigns-fund/>

Once the deadline for applications is closed, the Society' Board of directors will evaluate all applications in detail and agree the final list of awardees, as well as the respective awards for each successful applicant. Results are published on the Society's website in due course and all applicants are also contacted directly, whether successful or not.

For any questions or further information about the Campaigns Fund, please contact the Secretariat Group:

**By post:** Secretariat Group, Co-operative House, The Midcounties Co-operative, Warwick Technology Park, Warwick CV34 6DA.

**By email:** Alexandra Borghesi, Senior Assistant Secretary & Governance Officer ([alexandra.borghesi@midcounties.coop](mailto:alexandra.borghesi@midcounties.coop)); or Edward Parker, Secretary & Head of Governance ([edward.parker@midcounties.coop](mailto:edward.parker@midcounties.coop)).

## **The Midcounties Co-operative Limited Statement on political engagement**

### **Approved by members 24 October 2013**

The Midcounties Co-operative supports, in letter and spirit, the Principles set out in the Statement of Co-operative Identity of the International Co-operative Alliance and the Governance Code of Co-operatives UK, to embrace all who accept the responsibilities of membership without gender, social, racial, political or religious discrimination.

The Society recognises the important role that the Co-operative Party has played, and continues to play, in promoting the interests of co-operation in the political sphere and, with the endorsement of members as expressed at successive Annual Meetings, provides financial support for the work of the Party.

The Society also seeks to engage with other political organisations which are active in its core trading area and which share its objective of working towards a society based on democracy, equal opportunities and social justice; and an economy where co-operative ownership plays an important and growing role in generating prosperity, genuine consumer choice and sustainable community development.

## Procedures and Eligibility Criteria

### Preamble

The creation of the Campaigns Fund is intended to reflect a move from the previous situation where the Society's political expenditure was focused on a single beneficiary to one involving a plurality of beneficiary partners.

### Procedures and eligibility criteria

All applications must be completed electronically and emailed to the Society's Secretariat Group: [alexandra.borghesi@midcounties.coop](mailto:alexandra.borghesi@midcounties.coop). The application form, as well as the notes to applicants, are uploaded on the Society's website on the date when the Campaigns Fund opens: <https://www.midcounties.coop/community/campaigns-fund/>

The Society's Board determines which applications will be supported and the scale of any grants made. To help with its determination, the Board has established a Grants Panel. The Panel can make recommendations to the Board but is not empowered to make decisions.

Successful applicants will be required to complete an End of Grant Form to document how they have spent the grant and to allow for audit and evaluation against the original application:

- The End of Grant Form must be completed within the 12 months following receipt of the grant. For longer projects, a final report on completion will also be required.
- Any further expenditure should be the subject of a fresh application.
- Any underspend must be reimbursed to the Fund.

### Who can apply?

Campaigning organisations and democratic political parties whose aims and principles are compatible with the Principles of the International Co-operative Alliance are eligible.

## **Distribution of funding**

While the scale of any grants will be at the discretion of the Society's Board, the share of available funds awarded to any one beneficiary will not be so large as to call into reasonable question the genuinely pluralist nature of the Fund.

## **Eligible activities**

The Fund is intended to support campaigning activity (primarily within the Society's core trading area) that promotes co-operation in the political arena and supports the objectives and priorities of the Society.

The Fund does not support charitable or welfare activities.

Applicants must demonstrate new activity. However, the Co-operative Party, which was set up by the Co-operative movement and exists to promote co-operation, will be entitled to apply for funding to cover expenditure on things which have hitherto been supported through the Society's subscription and grants; and applications from local branches of the Co-operative Party may include funding to cover costs of routine administration and publicity, which have previously been supported through grants from the Society.

In keeping with the Society's existing practice, applications for funding on behalf of individual candidates in local, national or European elections will not be approved.

## **Transitional support for the Co-operative Party**

Subject to the approval of the Society's Board and to an application, or applications, being received, the bulk of funds available will be made to the Co-operative Party; this was put in place when the former funding mechanism to the Party based on subscription was discontinued, and to allow the Party to adjust to the new funding system through the Campaigns Fund.

The Society endeavors to ensure that at least one third of the Fund is disbursed to organisations other than the Co-operative Party.

## **Review**

These procedures and criteria are reviewed by the Board every three years.

**Edward Parker**  
**Secretary & Head of Governance**