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PART I

PARTY AND ORGANISATION

1. The name of the Party shall be Fine Gael (United Ireland) herein after referred to as the Party.
2.
 - (i) Subject to the provisions of Rule 18, membership shall be open to every person who accepts the Principles of the Party and who agrees to abide by its Constitution and Rules.
 - (ii) No member of the Party may campaign for, participate in or assist in the organisation of the affairs of a candidate or candidates for election to Dáil Éireann, Seanad Éireann, the European Parliament, the Presidency of Ireland, Local Authority or Údarás na Gaeltachta other than those candidates ratified by the Executive Council of the Party.
3. Subject to the provisions of Rule 4 the members of the Party shall be those who are members when these rules come into effect together with such other persons as may be admitted to membership under the provisions of these rules.
4. No person shall be entitled to rights or privileges of membership of the Party unless he/she is a registered member of an affiliated Branch of the Party and his/her name is included on the copy register furnished by the Branch Secretary under Rule 14 and he/she is aged at least fifteen years on the date the relevant register came into force.
5.
 - (i) The Units of the Party shall be:
 - (a) Branch
 - (b) District Executive
 - (c) Constituency Executive
 - (d) Parliamentary Party
 - (e) Executive Council
 - (f) Árd Fheis

Each unit of the Party shall be organised on the basis that it shall:

- Be of service to the community in which it operates;
- Be capable of informing and educating in political and social matters;
- Provide a forum for debate on local and national issues;
- Provide access for the public to elected representatives;
- Identify, promote, support and ensure the election of candidates who best represent the principles and values of Fine Gael;

- Be open, democratic and participative;
- Maximise the numbers of Fine Gael candidates who are elected to public office;
- In so far as is practicable, and subject to the Rules and the directives of the Executive Council, each Constituency organisation shall be responsible for devising, administering and managing its own internal structures.

(ii) The Organs of the Party shall be;

- (a) Young Fine Gael
- (b) Council of Local Representatives
- (c) National Agricultural, Food & Rural Development Forum

and such other Organs as may from time to time be established by the Executive Council and ratified by the Árd Fheis.

6. (i) The National Officers of the Party shall be the President, two Vice Presidents, who shall be elected at each Árd Fheis to hold office until the next Árd Fheis, together with not less than five and not more than eleven Trustees. The Trustees shall be appointed and removed from office by the Executive Council on the proposal of the Party Leader as defined in Rule 49 (i).
- (ii) In the event of death or resignation of any National Officer, the Executive Council may appoint a successor to hold office until the next Árd Fheis.
7. (i) The property and assets of the Party shall be vested in the Trustees who, for the time being, shall control the finances of the Party, including the general policies and procedures to be followed in raising, managing and dispersing funds and shall be responsible for presenting audited accounts of the National Headquarter's revenue and expenditure to the Executive Council as soon as possible after the end of each calendar year and also to the Árd Fheis following the accounts year end. The Trustees shall not be liable for any loss howsoever arising other than such as shall have been occasioned by deliberate neglect or default.
- (ii) The Trustees shall be empowered and authorised to open and make arrangements for the operation of a banking account or accounts in such bank or banks or other financial institutions as the Executive Council shall from time to time determine. Other Units of the party may, however, open and operate banking accounts provided that sanction for doing so is given by resolution of the relevant Unit and that particulars of the said banking accounts be submitted to National Headquarters. A bank shall be entitled to rely on a text of such resolution in

relation to the opening and operation of such account and shall not be required to seek any permission or consent from the Trustees in relation to same.

- (iii) The Trustees shall be empowered to borrow from a bank or other financial institution such amount as the Party may require and shall be empowered and authorised to provide security therefore by the mortgage or pledge of the Party's property or assets or in such other manner as may be required or appropriate.
 - (iv) The Trustees shall on a quarterly basis present a statement to the Executive Council outlining the financial affairs of the Party. The Trustees shall, in consultation with the Party Leader and General Secretary, present a budget to the Executive Council, in the event of any election, an Árd Fheis, and annual running expenses.
 - (v) The Trustees shall be empowered to bring or defend any legal proceedings in the name of or on behalf of the Party.
 - (vi) The Trustees shall be responsible for determining the terms and conditions of employment of staff and subject to the approval of the Party Leader, their appointment and removal.
8. (i) The National Headquarters of the Party shall be established at an address to be determined by the Executive Council and shall be administered by the General Secretary of the Party.
- (ii) The Staff employed at National Headquarters shall act as secretariat to the Executive Council.
- (iii) The principal functions of National Headquarters shall include the efficient organisation of the Party throughout the country and the promotion in every way open to it of the Principles of the Party as enunciated in the Constitution.

PART II

THE BRANCH

9. The Branches of the Party shall be:-
- (i) All Branches affiliated to National Headquarters.
 - (ii) Such other Branches as may from time to time be established or reconstituted by the Executive Council or by any Constituency Executive with the approval of the Executive Council and may be duly affiliated.

10. Where any Branch fails to participate in Party fund-raising activity or carry out instructions issued by the Constituency Executive then either the registered members of such Branch or the Branch (whichever shall be appropriate) shall forfeit all voting rights in the Party for the following twelve months. Questions of fact as to whether the Branch fails in these matters shall be determined by the Constituency Executive, provided such Branch has been afforded an adequate opportunity of making any submission or tendering any evidence written or verbal or both. Such order shall not become effective until the expiration of ten days of its making and if within that time the Branch affected appeals against the order to the Executive Council the order shall not in any event become effective. In the event of such appeal the Executive Council and the Branch affected shall be furnished with a report by the Constituency Executive.
11.
 - (i) A Branch shall consist of not less than eight persons whose annual subscription has been paid and accepted under the provisions of Rule 14 (i) hereunder.
 - (ii) The members of a Branch shall be drawn from those who are ordinarily resident in the functional area of the Branch, but other persons may be members of a Branch with the consent of the Constituency Executive in whose functional area the Branch is situated. Save as otherwise provided for in these rules no person may be a member of more than one Branch at the one time and any person wishing to resign his/her membership of a Branch and join another Branch must have the consent of the Constituency Executive in whose functional area the Branch he/she proposes to join is situated.
12.
 - (i) The Executive Council may, however, establish a Branch or Branches without a functional area to which associate members may be admitted by applying in writing, by electronic mail or on the internet in accordance with guidelines established by the Executive Council and if approved, they shall be entitled to receive correspondence on policy or other matters from time to time, but shall not be entitled to vote at a meeting of any unit of the Party. The Executive Council shall determine the annual membership fee for associate members, and the method of payment.
 - (ii) Every Branch established under this rule shall have such functions as the Executive Council may from time to time assign to it and shall be subject to the direction and control of such Unit or Units of the Party as the Executive Council may direct.

13. (i) The functional area of each Branch other than a Branch established under Rule 12 shall be prescribed by the Constituency Executive. Disputes about functional areas shall be adjudicated on by the Executive Council.
- (ii) Every Branch other than a Branch established under Rules 12, 55 and 57 shall be responsible for the organisation of its members and Party supporters and for all other aspects of organisation within its functional area. It shall take an active interest in local affairs by holding regular meetings and organising political and social activities and by all other appropriate means seek to increase the standing, strength and effectiveness of the Party.
14. (i) Each member of a Branch shall pay an annual subscription to his/her Branch. The amount of the subscription and the proportion of such subscription to be allocated to National Headquarters and the affiliation fee for Branches shall, from time to time, be determined by the Executive Council, which may, at its discretion, set different fees and subscriptions for purposes of encouraging early affiliation of branches.
- (ii) Each Branch shall be affiliated at National Headquarters by completing the procedures at paragraphs (a) to (d) hereof inclusive, not later than 30 April in each year or in exceptional circumstances only, such as a Dáil election, such other date as may be specified from time to time by the Executive Council.
- (a) The registration by its Secretary (or in his/her absence the Branch Chairperson) with the General Secretary of the names and addresses of the Branch Officers and the date of their election; and
- (b) The payment of the Branch affiliation fee; and
- (c) The furnishing to the Executive Council of the Branch accounts for the previous accounting year in accordance with Rule 16; and
- (d) The furnishing to the Executive Council of a copy of the Branch Register in accordance with paragraph (iii) of this rule.
- (iii) The Branch Secretary shall ensure that the Members' Register contains at all times a complete and accurate record of membership and shall furnish copies of the Register through National Headquarters to the Executive Council and the Constituency Executive as soon as practicable in each year and whenever the Executive Council or the Constituency Executive requests a copy.

- (iv) A membership card of the Party shall be issued by National Headquarters to each member on a basis to be decided by the Executive Council, from time to time. Only persons who have been registered at National Headquarters by the Branch Secretary are deemed to be Branch members.
- (v) Provisional Membership, for a period not exceeding three months, may be granted to those seeking to join the Party only following a determination of the relevant Constituency Officer Board situated in the functional area where the applicant ordinarily resides, and pending consideration of that person's application for membership by the relevant Branch. A provisional member shall be entitled to attend meetings at Branch, District and Constituency level and receive correspondence from Party Headquarters, but shall not be entitled to voting rights or to otherwise participate in the affairs of the Party until registered in accordance with the rules hereof. Following the grant of provisional membership, National Headquarters shall advise the Branch appropriate to such member of the grant of provisional membership and request such Branch to consider within a period of two months, the grant of membership to that person. If the Branch fails to consider the application within such time, or to notify its determination to National Headquarters, the Executive Council may, on application by the person concerned, decide to admit the person to membership of the relevant Branch. If the Branch refuses to admit a person, the person may appeal the decision to the Affiliation Appeals Committee in accordance with Rule 14 (vi).
- (vi) National Headquarters shall, no later than June 30 in each year or such other date as may be specified from time to time in exceptional circumstances by the Executive Council, cause to be published by constituency, a Register of all Branches duly affiliated together with a list of the members thereof. This Register shall be furnished:
- to the Honorary Secretary and each Oireachtas member in the relevant Dáil Constituency;
 - in the case of each Branch, to the Honorary Secretary of that Branch, and
 - in the case of each Branch in a Local Authority Electoral Area, to the relevant Local Public Representatives.

The Register as aforesaid, shall be effective for the purposes of any vote from 1 July in that year until 30 June in the following year. Applications however, may be made for the rectification of such Branch

Register by no later than July 21 in each year or such other date as may be specified from time to time by the Executive Council. Such applications shall be considered by the Affiliation Appeals Committee in accordance with Rule 14 (vii). The Register of Branches duly affiliated and their members, as rectified by the Affiliation Appeals Committee shall be conclusive.

The provisions of this rule shall also apply to Non College Branches of Young Fine Gael. However, in the case of Young Fine Gael Branches in educational institutions, such Branches shall affiliate no later than 31 October each year and the Register of Members shall be issued no later than 31 December each year, and shall be effective from the following 1 January to the following 31 December. For the purposes of Rule 49 (i) all references to the previous year commencing 1 July and terminating 30 June shall be construed in the case of a Young Fine Gael Branch in an educational institution as a reference to the previous year commencing 1 January and terminating 31 December.

- (vii) An Affiliation Appeals Committee shall be established consisting of four members who shall be elected by and from the members of the Executive Council, at the first meeting of the Executive Council convened after the coming into force of this rule, and thereafter at the first meeting of the Executive Council following an Árd Fheis, together with the Chairperson of the Executive Council, the General Secretary and the National Organiser.

The Affiliation Appeals Committee shall have the power to adjudicate on and to determine finally any dispute relating to the Register of Members as follows:-

- (a) any disputes relating to Branch affiliations received after 30 April [or later date prescribed under Rule 14 (ii)] provided that such an appeal, stating the grounds of the appeal, is lodged with National Headquarters by the day occurring 75 days after the date affiliation had to be completed under Rule 14 (ii);
- (b) any dispute relating to members to be listed on the Register of Members, provided that such an appeal, stating the grounds of the appeal, is lodged with National Headquarters by 30 September;
- (c) any dispute pursuant to Rule 14 (v)
- (d) to administer the required changes to the Register of Members under schemes of restructuring or reformation of Branches,

which have been proposed by the appropriate Constituency Executive and approved by the Executive Council;

- (e) to consider, and if appropriate, to determine an application from a member who proposes to transfer his/her membership to a different Branch, to transfer their voting rights;
 - (f) to do all such other acts as are necessary to ensure the equitable and efficient administration of the Register of Members.
 - (viii) The Affiliation Appeals Committee shall issue its findings within one month of the date of the lodgment of an appeal in the case of appeals under (a) above and by 31 October in the case of appeals under (b) above.
15. (i) The Officers of the Branch shall be elected from among the members of the Branch present at the Annual General Meeting. The date of the Annual General Meeting shall be determined by the Branch with the consent of the Constituency Executive, and in any event not later than January 31 unless otherwise directed by the Executive Council. The Chairperson of the Annual General Meeting shall not be a member of the Branch, and his/her appointment shall be subject to the approval of the Constituency Executive. All Branches in a District Executive Functional Area should hold Annual General Meetings before the District Executive Annual General Meeting or where no District Executive exists before the Constituency Executive Annual General Meeting.
- (ii) The Officers of the Branch shall consist of a Chairperson, one Vice/Chairperson, one Secretary, two Treasurers, one Policy Officer, one Membership Officer, one Organiser and one Public Relations Officer. The Branch may, if it so desires, elect other officers.
 - (iii) The Officers so elected shall hold office until the commencement of the next Annual General Meeting and then retire. They shall perform the duties of acting officers at such AGM solely for the purposes of conducting the business of such AGM. No member shall be eligible for election to, or shall remain in the office of Chairperson, Vice/Chairperson, Secretary, Treasurer, Policy Officer or Membership Officer if he/she has held that same office since the Annual General Meeting held in the third year prior to the then current year. This provision shall apply similarly to the equivalent Officerships of District Executives and Constituency Executives. Each Officer must be elected individually

and a resolution providing for the election of officers en bloc shall not be entertained and shall be of no effect.

- (iv) A Branch may, by a majority of not less than two thirds of its members present and voting at a meeting of which not less than seven days notice in writing specifying the intended business has been given to all those entitled to be present, by order dismiss any Officer of the Branch from his/her office, provided such Officer has been afforded an adequate opportunity of making any submissions or tendering any evidence written or verbal or both. Such submissions may be made personally or by any other member of the Party acting on behalf of the Officer concerned. Such order of dismissal shall not become effective until the expiration of ten days of its making and if within that time the Officer affected appeals against the order to the Executive Council, the order shall not in any event become effective. In the event of such appeal the Executive Council shall be furnished by the Branch Officers with a report of the proceedings of the Branch meeting, a copy of which shall be furnished to the Officer concerned. If the Executive Council by a majority of two-thirds of its members present and voting so decides it may order the dismissal of such Officer from such office and thereupon the Officer shall be dismissed from such office and the order of the Executive Council shall be final. Otherwise such Officer shall continue as an Officer of such Branch.
- (v) Any vacancies arising during the course of the year, either through death, resignation, retirement or otherwise shall be filled by co-option at the following meeting.
- (vi) A person who is a member of the Parliamentary Party or a member of a Local Authority shall not be elected as an Officer of a Branch. If an Officer of a Branch becomes a member of the Parliamentary Party or a member of a Local Authority, they shall cease forthwith to hold their Branch office and the Branch shall proceed as soon as may be to fill the vacancy.
- (vii) Conventions for the selection of Candidates for Borough/Town Councils or co-options shall be convened by the Constituency Secretary in consultation with the General Secretary and in accordance with the terms of a directive from the Executive Council to select candidates for Borough and Town Council Election or co-option and to take decisions for any purpose that the Executive Council may direct.

Those eligible to vote at these conventions, unless otherwise directed by the Executive Council shall be:-

- (i) Members of Branches registered at National Headquarters in accordance with Rule 14 (ii) whose names appear on the Register of Members referred to in Rule 14 (vi) which applies at the date of the Convention and whose names also appeared on the Register of Members in the previous year commencing 1 July and terminating 30 June as published in accordance with Rule 14 (vi). Save that where restructuring or reformation of Branches has taken place in accordance with a Scheme of Reorganisation approved by a Constituency Executive, those Branches affected may seek the consent of the Affiliations Appeals Committee that their members be permitted to participate, notwithstanding the fact that such members have been affiliated with different Branches in accordance with the list aforesaid. At such a Convention, each registered member will be required to present identification when receiving a ballot paper.
- (ii) Public Representatives taking the Party Whip, who are members of the Party and who represent the Local Authority area or part thereof, provided that no Public Representative may vote at more than one Convention in the same Local Election;
- (iii) Senators, who are members of the Party, taking the Party Whip, ordinarily resident in the functional area of the Local Authority concerned.

Nominations for candidates shall be furnished in writing by Branch Members to the Constituency Secretary for the Constituency in which the Borough/Town Council is situated at least fourteen days before the Convention, unless a shorter period is authorised by the Executive Council and/or the General Secretary.

16. The Treasurers of each Branch shall, as soon as possible after the end of each calendar year, prepare and furnish accounts furnishing details of revenue and expenditure of such calendar year and of the assets and liabilities of the Branch at the end of each such calendar year. Copies of these accounts signed by two Officers of the Branch shall be furnished to all members of the Branch present at the Branch Annual General Meeting and through National Headquarters to the Trustees and to the Executive Council and the Constituency Executive not later than March 31 following such accounting calendar year or

such other time as may be specified from time to time by the Executive Council.

17. Meetings of the Branch shall be held at regular intervals and unless the Branch shall otherwise determine, with the consent of the Constituency Executive, a Branch shall meet not less than twice yearly and on a day to be determined by the Chairperson.. Special meetings may be called at any time by the Chairperson of the Branch and shall be called on a request in writing to the Chairperson by five Branch members or by any higher Unit of the Party. The quorum for a Branch meeting shall be five or a quarter of the membership whichever is the greater; for branches with a membership of over thirty however the quorum shall be eight or a quarter of the membership whichever is the lesser. A report on the activities of the Branch shall be furnished by the Secretary to the District Executive, or in areas where there is no District Executive to the Constituency Executive as may be appropriate, as soon as practicable after each Annual General Meeting.
18. Subject to Rule 14 (v) every application for membership of a Branch shall be considered at a meeting of the Branch and if accepted the Branch Secretary, or in his/her absence, the Branch Chairperson shall (but in the case of a Branch established without a functional area only with the consent of or in accordance with guidelines established by the Executive Council or the Unit of the Party to the direction and control of which such Branch is subject) following the first meeting attended by the applicant enter the name and address of the new member on the Members Register and communicate the new membership as soon as possible to National Headquarters. An application from a person who has stood for election to Dáil Éireann, Seanad Éireann (other than as a candidate on the university panels), European Parliament, Local Authority or Údarás na Gaeltachta other than as a Fine Gael candidate shall not be considered without the approval in writing of the Executive Council. An application from a person who has formerly been a member of Fine Gael but who has been expelled or who has resigned from the Party shall not be considered without the approval in writing of the Executive Council.
19.
 - (i) The representation of Branches at District Executive and Constituency Executive shall, unless otherwise determined from time to time by the Executive Council be on the basis that each registered member of such Branch is entitled to one vote.
 - (ii) The representation of Branches at all Conventions and at the Árd Fheis shall be on such basis as shall be determined from time to time by the Executive Council.

PART III

DISTRICT EXECUTIVE

20. District Executives shall be those which are in existence at the time when these Rules come into effect but the Executive Council shall be entitled, after consulting with the appropriate Constituency Executive, which shall furnish details of these functional areas to the General Secretary or his/her deputy to dissolve any District Executive or to establish further District Executives.
21. The Functional Area of each District Executive shall be defined by the Constituency Executive and shall ordinarily be the same as the boundaries of a Local Authority Electoral Area. The District Executive shall consist of all members of Dáil Éireann, City, County, Borough and Town Councillors, taking the Party Whip representative of the District Executive or part thereof. It shall also consist of all Senators ordinarily resident in the District Executive taking the Party Whip subject to the fact that a Senator may seek the consent of the Executive Council to become a member of a District Executive other than the one in whose functional area he/she is ordinarily resident and on foot of that application the Executive Council may make such decisions and issue such directions as seem proper. It shall also consist of the registered members from each Branch within the District Executive area.
22.
 - (i) The Officers of the District Executive shall be the Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, Secretary, two Treasurers, Membership Officer, Organiser and P.R.O. A District Executive may, if it so desires, elect other Officers. The provisions of Rule 15 relating to Branch Officers shall similarly apply to the election of the Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, Secretary, two Treasurers and Membership Officer of District Executives and their removal from office. The Organiser and P.R.O. shall be appointed at a meeting of the elected District Executive Officers and the Public Representatives taking the Party Whip representing the area or part thereof.
 - (ii) Nominations for Officers to be elected at the District Executive Annual General Meeting shall be furnished by Branch Secretaries to the District Executive Secretary at least fourteen days before the Annual General Meeting unless a shorter period is authorised by the Constituency Executive and approved by the Executive Council.
 - (iii) Any member of a Branch in the District shall be eligible for officership in such District Executive provided, however, that no member of the Parliamentary Party or of a Local Authority will be eligible for election as Officers of a District

Executive.

- (iv) The date of the Annual General Meeting shall be determined by the District Executive with the consent of the Constituency Executive but in any event an Annual General Meeting shall be held not later than March 1st in each calendar year unless otherwise directed by the Executive Council and/or the General Secretary.

The Annual General Meeting of all District Executives in a Constituency should be held before the Constituency Executive Annual General Meeting.

- (v) The Treasurers of each District Executive shall, as soon as possible after the end of each calendar year, prepare and furnish accounts furnishing details of revenue and expenditure of such calendar year and of the assets and liabilities of the District Executive at the end of each calendar year. Copies of these accounts signed by two Treasurers of the District Executive shall be furnished to all members present at the District Executive Annual General Meeting and to the Constituency Executive and through the National Headquarters to the Trustees and the Executive Council as soon as possible thereafter.
- (vi) Meetings of the District Executive shall be held at least quarterly unless otherwise authorised by the Constituency Executive, and shall be held whenever required by the Chairperson or by a higher authority, or whenever required in writing by two branches within the District. The agenda of every meeting of a District Executive shall include reports to be submitted to that meeting by every Branch within the District on its activities.
- (vii) The District Executive shall subject to the control of the Constituency Executive have full responsibility for Party Organisation in its functional area.
- (viii) The District Executive shall be registered at National Headquarters each year by completing the procedures set out at paragraphs (a) to (b) hereof inclusive not later than April 30 in each year or such other date as may be specified from time to time by the Executive Council.
 - (a) The registration by its Secretary with the General Secretary of the names and addresses of the District Executive Officers and the date of their election and;
 - (b) The furnishing to the Executive Council of the District Executive accounts for the previous accounting year.

- 23. (i) District Executives shall arrange Conventions for

the selection of candidates for election to Local Authorities in their area, in accordance with the terms of a directive from the Executive Council and subject to the authority of the Constituency Executive, shall control all Local Elections in its area.

- (ii) In any case where a Local Authority Electoral area includes all or part of the functional area of more than one District Executive, which are all in the same Constituency, the District Executive to carry out the duties provided in paragraph (i) of this rule shall be nominated by the Constituency Executive and approved by the Executive Council.

24. Local Authority Election and co-option conventions shall be convened in accordance with the terms of a directive from the Executive Council to select candidates for Local Authority Election or co-option and to take decisions for any purpose that the Executive Council may direct. Local Authority Election and co-option conventions and District Executive Annual General Meetings shall be conducted as follows:

Those eligible to vote at such Conventions and Annual General Meetings unless otherwise directed by Executive Council shall be:

- (i) Members of Branches registered at National Headquarters in accordance with Rule 14 (ii) whose names appear on the Register of Members referred to in Rule 14 (vi) which applies at the date of the Convention or Annual General Meeting and whose names also appeared on the Register of Members in the previous year commencing 1 July and terminating 30 June as published in accordance with Rule 14 (vi). Save that where restructuring or reformation of Branches has taken place in accordance with a Scheme of Reorganisation approved by a Constituency Executive, those Branches affected may seek the consent of the Affiliations Appeals Committee that their members be permitted to participate, notwithstanding the fact that such members have been affiliated with different Branches in accordance with the list aforesaid. At such a Convention or AGM, each registered member will be required to present identification when receiving a ballot paper.
- (ii) Public Representatives taking the Party Whip, who are members of the Party and who represent the Local Authority Electoral Area or part thereof, and Senators, who are Party members, taking the Party Whip as provided for in Rule 21, ordinarily resident in the functional area of the Local Authority concerned provided that no Public Representative may vote at more than one Convention in the same

Local Election and shall be required to opt by a date to be determined by the Executive Council as to where he/she proposes to exercise the right to vote.

- (iii) A Senator taking the Party Whip who wishes to vote or be a member of a District Executive other than the one in which he/she ordinarily resides shall give notice of that fact to the Executive Council who shall make such decision on the application.
 - (iv) Nominations for Local Election or Co-option Conventions shall be furnished in writing by Branch Secretaries to the District Executive Secretary at least fourteen days before the Convention unless a shorter period is authorised by the Executive Council and or General Secretary.
 - (v) Any vacancy arising on a Local Authority either through death, resignation, retirement or otherwise shall be notified in writing by the District Executive Secretary or where no District Executive exists by the Constituency Secretary through the General Secretary or his/her deputy to the Executive Council.
25. The Executive Council may from time to time issue directives relating to situations where the functional area of a Branch falls into two Local Authority Electoral Areas, two District Executives, two Dáil Constituencies or two European Parliament Constituencies.
26. In Constituencies where no District Executive or Executives exist their functions shall be discharged by the Constituency Executive.
- 26A Where a Dail Constituency comprises more than one county, separate County Executives may be established in the different counties (or parts of counties) in that constituency. The provisions of Rule 22 shall apply to the functioning of such County Executive, as if reference to "District Executive" therein were references to "County Executive" and as if reference to District were a reference to the county or part thereof. If as a result of a re-organisation of constituencies, the counties or parts of counties cease to be associated in the one constituency, all matters concerned with an existing County Executive shall be determined by that County Executive with the agreement of Executive Council (or in case the matter relates to financial issues with the agreement of Executive Council and of the Trustees)".

PART IV

CONSTITUENCY EXECUTIVE

27. (i) A Constituency Executive shall be established in each Dáil Constituency.

- (ii) A Constituency Executive shall consist of;
 - (a) All the members of Dáil Éireann, or of any Local Authority taking the Party Whip, representative of the Constituency or any part thereof.
 - (b) All Senators or M.E.P.s ordinarily resident in the Constituency taking the Party Whip subject to the fact that a Senator or M.E.P. may seek the consent of the Executive Council to become a member of a Constituency other than the one in which he/she is ordinarily resident and on foot of that application the Executive Council may make such decisions and issue such directions as seem proper.
 - (c) Registered members of affiliated branches within the Constituency.
 - (iii) The Constituency Executive shall, subject to the control of the Executive Council, have full responsibility for Party Organisation in the Constituency.
- 28.
- (i) The Officers of the Constituency Executive shall be the Chairperson, one Vice/Chairperson, one Secretary, two Treasurers, one Constituency Organiser, one Constituency P.R.O., one Policy Officer, one Membership Officer, one Youth Officer and one Disability and Equality Officer. The Constituency Executive may if it so wishes elect other Officers. The provisions of Rule 15 relating to the election of Branch Officers, the tenure under which they may hold office and their removal from office shall similarly apply to Constituency Officers with the exception of the Officers appointed under the provisions of Rule 29 hereunder.
 - (ii) Nomination for the Officers and Delegates to other organs to be elected at a Constituency Annual General Meeting shall be furnished by Branch or District Executive Secretaries to the Constituency Secretary at least fourteen days before the Annual General Meeting unless a shorter period has previously been determined by the Constituency Executive and approved by the Executive Council.
 - (iii) Any registered Member of a Branch in the Constituency shall be eligible for officership in such Constituency Executive subject to Rule 15 hereof, provided, however, that no Member of the Parliamentary Party or of a Local Authority will be eligible for election as Officers of the Constituency Executive.
 - (iv) A detailed written plan for the year ahead shall be submitted to the General Secretary by the Secretary of the Constituency Executive not later than three weeks after the Annual General Meeting

of the Constituency Executive.

29. (i) Each Constituency Executive shall have a Constituency Organiser and a Constituency Public Relations Officer who shall be selected as follows:

The Constituency Secretary shall seek nominations from all Branches in the Constituency after which a suitable person shall be considered by the Constituency Officer Board, by all members of Dáil Éireann and Seanad Éireann on the Constituency Executive and by the National Director of Organisation in the case of a Constituency Organiser and the National Director of Press and Information in the case of a Constituency P.R.O. When agreement on a recommendation has been reached between the Constituency Officer Board, the said members of Dáil Éireann and Seanad Éireann and the National Director of Organisation and the National Director of Press and Information, as the case may be, the appointment shall require ratification by the Constituency Executive. In the event of agreement on a recommendation not being reached within one month of the position becoming vacant the Executive Council shall have the power to take such action as it thinks fit on the matter.

- (ii) Save with the consent of the Executive Council, a person on accepting appointment as Constituency Organiser or Constituency P.R.O. shall remain ineligible to be nominated as a candidate for election to Dáil Éireann or Local Authority or European Parliament in that Constituency, until after the next Dáil Election, whether or not he or she continues to hold office.
- (iii) The term of office for a Constituency Organiser or Constituency Public Relations Officer shall terminate after the completion of each Dáil Election, or as directed by the Executive Council but he/she shall be eligible for re-appointment subject to the conditions referred to at paragraph (i) and (ii) hereof.

30. (i) The functions of a Constituency Organiser, Disability and Equality Officer and Constituency P.R.O. shall be those assigned to them from time to time by the Executive Council.
- (ii) The Constituency Organiser, on the dissolution of the Dáil shall call an immediate meeting of an Election Committee which will assume the powers conferred on the Constituency Executive under Rule 27 (iii) hereof until the declaration of the result by the relevant Constituency Returning Officer. The Committee will consist of the Constituency

Organiser, Constituency P.R.O., Accounting Officer and at least one other member selected by the Constituency Executive.

- (iii) For Local Authority, Údarás na Gaeltachta and European Parliament Election campaigns the Executive Council shall on the proposal of the Party Leader vest such power for such term in the Constituency Organiser as it may decide.
- 31.
 - (i) The Constituency Executive shall, except where the Executive Council otherwise directs, meet at least quarterly. Meetings may be convened by the Chairperson or by the Executive Council or by a written request giving not less than seven days notice addressed to the Secretary and signed by not less than seven members of the Constituency Executive.
 - (ii) The agenda of every meeting of a Constituency Executive shall include reports to be submitted to that meeting by every District Executive within the Constituency on its activities.
- 32.
 - (i) The Constituency Executive shall after consultation with the General Secretary or his/her deputy call a Constituency Annual General Meeting as early as practicable in each calendar year but in any event not later than March 31 unless otherwise authorised by the Executive Council to elect Officers and review the work of the Party in the Constituency during the previous year and to plan for the future.
 - (ii) The Treasurers of each Constituency Executive shall, as soon as possible after the end of each calendar year prepare and furnish audited accounts furnishing details of revenue and expenditure of such calendar year and of the assets and liabilities of the Constituency Executive at the end of each calendar year. Copies of these accounts signed by two Treasurers of the Constituency Executive shall be furnished to all members present at the Constituency's Annual General Meeting and through National Headquarters to the Trustees and the Executive Council as soon as possible thereafter.
 - (iii) A Constituency Convention or Conventions shall be convened in accordance with the terms of a directive from the Executive Council to select candidates for Dáil Éireann and to take decisions for any purpose that the Executive Council may direct.
- 33.
 - (i) The Constituency Officer Board shall comprise the Officers of the Constituency Executive, all Public Representatives who are members of the Constituency Executive and two Officers of each District Executive, or where no District Executive

exists, at least one Officer of each Branch.

- (ii) The functions of the Constituency Officer Board shall be to implement and expedite the work and decisions of the Constituency Executive as may be required.
34. The Constituency Executive shall have the power from time to time to delegate to a committee of its members any of its functions other than those specified in Rule 29 and Rule 32 (i) and (iii).
35. (i) Conventions for Dáil Elections and Constituency Annual General Meetings shall be conducted as follows:
- (ii) Those eligible to vote at any such Convention or Annual General Meeting unless otherwise directed by Executive Council shall be:
 - (a) Members of Branches registered at National Headquarters in accordance with Rule 14 (ii) whose names appear on the Register of Members referred to in Rule 14 (vi) which applies at the date of the Convention or Annual General Meeting and whose names also appeared on the Register of Members in the previous year commencing 1 July and terminating 30 June as published in accordance with Rule 14 (vi), provided that if a Convention for the General Election next ensuing after the date of this Árd Fheis does not take place until on or after 1 July 2006, that Convention shall be treated as an Excepted Convention for purposes hereof and the rule in existence prior to this amendment shall continue to apply to such Convention. Save that where restructuring or reformation of Branches has taken place in accordance with a Scheme of Reorganisation approved by a Constituency Executive, those Branches affected may seek the consent of the Affiliations Appeals Committee that their members be permitted to participate, notwithstanding the fact that such members have been affiliated with different Branches in accordance with the list aforesaid. At such a Convention or AGM, each registered member will be required to present identification when receiving a ballot paper.
 - (b) Public Representatives taking the Party Whip, who are members of the Party and who represent the Constituency or part thereof, and Senators or M.E.P.s, who are members of the Party taking the Party Whip ordinarily resident in the Constituency. A Senator or M.E.P. taking the Party Whip may seek the consent of the

Executive Council to vote at a Convention of a Constituency other than the one in which he/she ordinarily resides. The Executive Council may make such a decision on his/her application as to it seems fit and proper. Public Representatives taking the Party Whip whose area extends to two Dáil constituencies shall opt as to the Constituency Annual General Meeting or Convention in which they will vote.

- (c) Nominations for Conventions for Dáil Elections shall be furnished in writing by any two affiliated members to the Constituency Secretary before such date as may be approved by the Executive Council.
- (d) The Executive Council may from time to time issue directives relating to situations where the functional area of a Branch falls into two Local Authorities, two District Executives, two Dáil Constituencies or two European Parliament Constituencies.
- (e) In any Dáil Bye Election, the names of Candidates who may be nominated shall, unless the Executive Council otherwise decides, be furnished to the Executive Council by the Constituency Executive at least fourteen days before the Convention. Only Candidates so nominated and approved by the Executive Council shall be submitted to the Constituency Convention. Such a Convention shall select a Candidate from among the names so submitted.

- 36. The venue and other arrangements for each Constituency Executive Annual General Meeting shall be advised to the General Secretary or his/her deputy and approved by the Executive Council not less than three weeks before the proposed date. In the event of a failure to set a date the Executive Council shall act as it determines.

PART V

EUROPEAN ELECTIONS

- 37. (a) The Candidates for election to the European Parliament shall be selected by Conventions comprising delegates from each Dáil Constituency, the number of such delegates being as far as practicable approximately proportionate in number to the population or Dáil representation of such Constituency. The detailed arrangements for such Conventions shall be made by the Executive Council. The Executive Council may determine that a particular Constituency or Constituencies may

not vote at the Convention if, in the opinion of the Executive Council, such Constituency has failed to assist in fundraising activity or otherwise failed to carry out instructions issued.

- (b) Fine Gael Members of the European Parliament shall be entitled to attend any meeting of a Constituency Executive, District Executive or Branch held within the European Parliament Constituency for which they have been elected.
- (c) On the proposal of the Party Leader the Executive Council shall appoint persons who shall be known as Regional Directors of Election with such powers and for such period as may be necessary for the efficient running of the European Parliament Election campaigns.
- (d) The Executive Council shall determine the arrangements for the composition and ranking of the MEP replacement list in respect of the Fine Gael European Parliamentary representation.

PART VI

POLICY

- 38.
 - (i) The sole responsibility for the adoption of policy within the Party lies with the Parliamentary Party, subject to the authority of the Árd Fheis in accordance with Rule 54(d)(x)
 - (ii) The Parliamentary Party shall provide, for consultative purposes, a statement of current Party policy to all Branches (including Branches of Young Fine Gael), District Executives and Constituency Executives annually;
 - (iii) The Parliamentary Party shall present a consolidated statement of party policy to each Árd Fheis.

PART VII

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

- 39. The Executive Council shall consist of;

- (a) ex officio

The President

The Party Leader (if he/she is not President or otherwise a member)

The Deputy Party Leader

Two Vice-Presidents (at least one of whom shall not be a member of the Parliamentary Party) elected at the Árd Fheis.

Two Trustees nominated by the President.

(b) elected;

four members elected by the Parliamentary Party from among its membership at the Árd Fheis.

three members (who shall not be Public Representatives) elected from the County of Dublin

three members (who shall not be Public Representatives) elected from the province of Leinster (excluding Dublin)

three members (who shall not be Public Representatives) elected from the province of Munster

three members (who shall not be Public Representatives) elected from the provinces of Connacht and Ulster

- The Executive Council shall have power to determine the allocation of delegates for any constituency which crosses a provincial boundary.

two members (who shall not be members of the Parliamentary Party) elected by the Council of Local Representatives, elected by and from its membership at the Árd Fheis.

three representatives (who shall not be Public Representatives) of Young Fine Gael elected by and from its membership.

- (c) Any member of the Executive Council who shall be absent for three consecutive meetings during his/her term of office without furnishing a satisfactory explanation as to his/her absence shall be deemed to have vacated his/her office.
- (d) In the event of a vacancy arising on the Executive through death, resignation or otherwise, the Executive Council may co-opt a replacement either by:
- (i) Selecting the co-optee itself, or
 - (ii) Directing the manner in which the person to be co-opted will be selected by the relevant Unit or Organ of the Party.

The Executive Council shall also have the power to decide to leave the vacancy unfilled.

Only those members who are eligible to vote in accordance with Rules 24(i) and 35(ii)(a) shall be eligible to seek election as a member of Executive Council.

40. (i) The Executive Council shall meet at least quarterly and shall elect at its first meeting after each Árd Fheis a Chairperson, a Vice-Chairperson and five members of the Disciplinary Committee referred to

in Rule 44 hereof, to office.

- (ii) A meeting of the Executive Council shall be convened by the Chairperson after petition by six members in writing.

- 41. A quorum shall be seven members including the Presiding Chairperson but six during the period of a General Election Campaign or at a meeting called in connection with a Dáil Bye Election.
- 42. The Executive Council shall have power from time to time to delegate to a committee any business other than the discharge of its functions under Rule 44A (xi), (xii), (xiii), (xviii), (xix), and (xxiii) of these Rules and shall determine the quorum for each such committee, provided always that a majority of such a committee are members of the Executive Council.
- 43.
 - (i) Subject to the authority of the Árd Fheis the management, control, government and administration of the Party shall be vested in and exercised by the Executive Council whose secretariat shall be located at National Headquarters.
 - (ii) On the proposal of the Party Leader the Executive Council shall appoint a person to be known as the National Director of Elections with such powers and for such time as may be necessary for the efficient running of a Dáil Election, Local Authority, Referenda, Bye-Election, Presidential or European Parliament Election campaign.
- 44A. The Executive Council shall have the following powers in addition to the other powers conferred on the Executive Council by these Rules.
 - (i) To accept or refuse the affiliation of any Branch.
 - (ii) To convene meetings of an ordinary or special Árd Fheis or any meeting of any Unit of the Party.
 - (iii) On the proposal of the Party Leader to determine the maximum and minimum number of candidates to be selected by a Convention in any Dáil, European, Local Authority or Údarás na Gaeltachta Election.
 - (iv) On the proposal of the Party Leader to ratify candidates in Dáil, European, Local Authority and Údarás na Gaeltachta Elections.
 - (v) On the proposal of the Party Leader to add and/or delete and/or substitute a candidate at any election to those selected by a Convention. For the avoidance of all doubt and without prejudice to the operation of (iv) above, only those persons selected as candidates under and pursuant to these Rules are entitled to describe themselves as being Fine Gael candidates on literature, advertisements,

correspondence, through public discourse and whilst engaged in any form of political activity including inter alia election campaigning.

- (vi) On the proposal of the Party Leader to replace or add any candidate in the event of death or withdrawal of any candidate notwithstanding the prior exercise by the Executive Council of the power set out at (iv) of this rule.
- (vii) To require (after consultation with the relevant Constituency Officer Board) that a selection Convention shall select candidates for election in accordance with such geographical or other considerations as may be determined by the Executive Council.
- (viii) On the proposal of the Party Leader to determine what measures should be taken in the event of the death, incapacity or withdrawal of any candidate who has previously been selected at a convention for a Borough/Town Council, Local Authority Election or Dáil Election or European Election, which measures may include a new convention with a geographical directive and/or a restricted franchise, a reconvened convention at which all candidates previously selected must submit themselves or any other measure the Executive Council considers appropriate.
- (ix) To appoint, from time to time, Area Representatives to represent the Party in a Local Electoral Area or part of a Local Electoral Area, and to vary, extend, terminate and do all things consequential to the said appointment
- (x) To fix the date, method and allocation of the annual National Collection and to fix the target or levy for each Constituency or Unit contribution to National Headquarters.
- (xi) To establish for any period or for an indefinite period any Branch, District Executive or Constituency Executive (after consultation with the appropriate Constituency Executive in the case of a Branch or District Executive).
- (xii) To order for reasons of maintenance of party discipline or for strategic political reasons or for either the dissolution or suspension for any period or for an indefinite period of any Branch, District Executive, or Constituency Executive (after consultation with the appropriate Constituency Executive in the case of a Branch or District Executive), Organ or Support group providing always that no such order shall be made unless the Unit or Organ concerned has received adequate

written notice of the nature of the complaint made against it and has had an adequate opportunity of tendering evidence and making submissions in answer to the complaint provided always that such order shall not be made unless a resolution ordering the dissolution or suspension shall have been passed by a majority of two thirds of the members of the Executive Council present and voting at a meeting of which not less than one weeks notice in writing specifying the intended business has been given to all its members. In the event of such a resolution being passed, the order of dissolution or suspension shall be final and immediately effective.

- (xiii) To adjudicate on and determine finally, all complaints and matters of dispute within the Party (other than matters of discipline) save where such complaints or matters are reserved to the Parliamentary Party as herein provided and in such circumstances to refer for consideration such complaints or matters to the Parliamentary Party provided always that the Executive Council shall not be obliged to deal with any complaint or matter of dispute, in circumstances where it determines that it is not appropriate for it to do so.
- (xiv) To lay down from time to time a code of conduct for persons offering themselves for election and co-option and persons who have been selected as candidates under these Rules and for the behaviour of Members and Officers at all levels in the Party which Code shall contain inter alia provisions relating to co-options to Local Authority and other public bodies and rules requiring notification to the Constituency Executive and Executive Council of all occasions for co-options as soon as they shall occur.
- (xv) To require that all Members and Units of the Party shall comply with the provision of any Code of Conduct laid down as aforesaid.
- (xvi) To require that all members of the Party offering themselves for election or co-option and all Public Representatives taking the Party Whip shall take a Party Pledge in terms laid down by the Executive Council before their selection as candidates for election or co-option or before the Whip is extended to them.
- (xvii) To require all candidates prior to their selection as candidates for European, Dáil or Seanad elections, to agree, if elected, to contribute to the Party such sum as the Parliamentary Party shall have determined or may from time to time determine.
- (xviii) To decide to restore the Whip and/or set aside the suspension of any member of the Party from

whom the Whip has been removed or who has been suspended from the Party pursuant to this rule provided such decision shall only be made by a resolution passed by two thirds of the members present and voting at a duly convened meeting of the Executive Council.

- (xix) To hear and determine any question on appeal (with the exception of any matter of discipline other than that provided for in Rule 15 (iv) from any Member, Unit or Organ of the Party made to the Executive Council under the provisions of the Constitution and Rules of the Party and to take any such action as to the Executive Council may seem appropriate.
- (xx) To hear reports from time to time from the General Secretary/National Director of Organisation on the state of Party Organisation and the operation of National Headquarters.
- (xxi) On the proposal of the Party Leader to appoint and/or remove Trustees.
- (xxii) To require statements from the Trustees which shall be presented on a quarterly basis, outlining the financial affairs of the Party, including annual running expenses and also to receive a budget in relation to an Árd Fheis which shall be prepared in consultation with the Party Leader and General Secretary.
- (xxiii) To hear and determine all appeals arising from findings and decisions of the Disciplinary Committee referred to hereunder.
- (xxiv) From time to time and at its absolute discretion to remove either temporarily or permanently any member of the Disciplinary Committee referred to hereunder from his or her position on the Disciplinary Committee.
- (xxv) To do all such other acts as are necessary for the proper and efficient management, control, government and administration of the Party and to take all necessary measures to secure compliance with the provisions of the Electoral Acts 1992 to 2013, the Electoral Amendment (Political Funding) Act 2011, any other electoral legislation and any amendment of such Acts and all Statutory Instruments made thereunder, and all guidelines from time to time published by the Standards in Public Office Commission, and to issue directives to candidates and constituencies in relation thereto and generally to do all such other acts as are necessary or desirable to secure compliance with such legislation.
- (xxvi) To determine the arrangements for the

establishment of Constituency and District Strategy Committees (without prejudice to the operation of Rule 30 (ii)) and to prescribe standing orders for the governance of same following consultation with the resident Constituency and District Executives

- (xxvii) To lay down from time to time protocols governing the conduct of conventions in any Dáil, European, Local Authority or Presidential election, such protocols to include without limitation, procedures for the chairing, the holding of and voting procedures to be followed in respect of the said conventions

44B.1 The Disciplinary Committee shall have the following powers:

- (i) To adjudicate on and determine finally, subject to the appeal to the Executive Council provided for in Rule 44A. (xxiii) above, all complaints and matters of discipline within the Party, provided always that the Disciplinary Committee shall not be obliged to investigate a particular complaint or matter of discipline in circumstances where it determines it is not appropriate for it to do so.
- (ii) To determine whether any member of the Party has been in breach of the Code of Conduct or the Party Pledge and in the event of such determination, such Member shall be suspended automatically and (where applicable) lose the Party Whip unless the Disciplinary Committee shall otherwise determine and in the event of such determination the provisions of paragraph (iv) of Section B of the Rule shall apply.
- (iii) To determine notwithstanding paragraph (ii) of Section B of this Rule, whether any member who is or was a candidate for election at any Local Authority, Dáil Éireann, Seanad Éireann, Údarás na Gaeltachta or European Election has been in breach of the Code of Conduct or Party Pledge or has acted in a manner damaging to the interests of the Party in the course of an election campaign and in the event of such determination the Disciplinary Committee shall take such actions as it sees fit including (where appropriate) suspension or removal of the Fine Gael Whip in accordance with the provision of paragraph (iv) of Section B of this Rule. The Disciplinary Committee shall be entitled and is empowered to exercise all of its powers, functions and jurisdiction under the provisions of this Rule in relation to every candidate contesting an election on behalf of Fine Gael whether that candidate is ultimately successful or not or whether that candidate was at the time of the calling of election or at the time of the making of the complaint or at the time of the

hearing of that complaint or was not a member of the Parliamentary Party.

- (iv) To hear and determine any complaint (whether made by a member of the Executive Council or any other Member or Unit of the Party) on matters of discipline within the Party that a member of the Party has acted in a manner seriously damaging to the interests of the Party and in the event of the Disciplinary Committee determining that a member has acted in a manner aforesaid the Disciplinary Committee may decide to expel the member from the Party and (where applicable) withdraw the Party Whip from the person concerned or take such other action as it shall consider appropriate provided however that the person or persons against whom the complaint is made shall, prior to such determination and decision be given adequate written notice of the nature of the complaint made and shall be afforded the opportunity of making written or oral submissions to the Disciplinary Committee and the opportunity to adduce such evidence as he/she wishes in relation to the said complaint.
- (v) To hear and determine any question on appeal relating to matters of discipline from any Member, Unit or Organ of the Party made to the Disciplinary Committee under the provisions of the Constitution and Rules of the Party and to take any such action as to the Disciplinary Committee may seem appropriate.
- (vi) To determine where any member of the Party has stood for election, while a member of the Party other than as a Party candidate and in the event of such determination, such member shall automatically cease to be a member of the Party unless the Disciplinary Committee otherwise determines.
- (vii) To do all such other acts as are necessary to maintain and effect discipline within the Party.

44B.2 The Disciplinary Committee shall consist of five persons who shall be elected by and from the members of the Executive Council at the first meeting of the Executive Council convened after each Árd Fheis with at least one member from each European Constituency.

44B.3 The five persons so elected shall hold office until the first meeting of the Executive Council convened and held after the next following Árd Fheis shall take place.

44B.4 The Disciplinary Committee may from time to time, co-opt one (but not more than one) additional person as a member (who may or may not be a member of the

Executive Council) for a specified matter or matters at its discretion.

44B.5 In the event of any member of the Disciplinary Committee either:

- (i) withdrawing from the consideration of a particular matter before the Disciplinary Committee; or
- (ii) resigning from membership of the Disciplinary Committee; or
- (iii) being removed by the Executive Council

A substitute shall be elected by and from the Executive Council for such term as the Executive Council shall determine.

44B.6 The Disciplinary Committee shall at its first meeting elect a Chairperson from its number who shall act as Chairperson for the term of office of the Disciplinary Committee and who shall have a casting vote. The quorum for a meeting of the Disciplinary Committee convened for the purposes of making a decision or finding shall be three members. For all other meetings, the quorum shall be two.

44B.7 An appeal shall lie from any decision or finding of the Disciplinary Committee to the Executive Council provided that such an appeal is lodged within 30 days of such determination being issued. Such appeal shall relate solely to the decision and finding of the Disciplinary Committee although either party may adduce further evidence for the purposes of the appeal provided that such party had good and valid reasons for not being able to put such evidence before the Disciplinary Committee and the decision of the Executive Council in this regard shall be final. The Executive Council may inter alia determine that the matter referred to it should be re-heard and in this regard, shall have the power to give such ancillary directions regarding the re-hearing as it may determine, including, if appropriate, direction that the matter be reheard by a Committee, the composition of which shall be determined by the Executive Council. An appeal in respect of any decision resulting from any such rehearing may be appealed in accordance with the Rule.

45. Where any member of the Parliamentary Party is in breach of the Code of Conduct or Party Pledge or fails to make the contribution provided for in 44A (xvii) he or she shall automatically lose the Party Whip. Questions of fact as to whether the Pledge or Code of Conduct has been breached or the contribution specified has been made shall be determined by the Parliamentary Party.

46. No candidate for any election shall be entitled to be described on the ballot paper or elsewhere as Fine Gael unless and until the Executive Council has ratified such candidature.

PART VIII

PARLIAMENTARY PARTY

47. (i) The Parliamentary Party shall consist of all the members of Dáil Éireann and Seanad Éireann and the European Parliament taking the Party Whip and during the period from the dissolution of a Dáil to the election of the members of the following Dáil such members of the outgoing Dáil shall be deemed to be members of the Parliamentary Party.
- (ii) The Parliamentary Party shall meet at the commencement of each Parliamentary year, unless a General Election shall have taken place within the six months prior to such commencement and after each General Election to elect its Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, Secretary, and Assistant Secretary at that meeting. The officers so elected shall hold office until the conclusion of the meeting held at the commencement of the next Parliamentary year or following the next General Election process, as the case may be.
- (iii) All members of the Parliamentary Party shall be entitled to vote at such elections which shall be by the alternative vote system and shall be by secret ballot.
48. (i) The business of the Parliamentary Party shall be organised by the Chairperson who shall take into account the wishes of its members. Committees of the Parliamentary Party may be established from time to time by the Party Leader who shall also nominate the Chairperson and membership of such Committees.
- (ii) The business of the Parliamentary Party shall include issues of policy, parliamentary tactics, parliamentary disciplines and such other matters as may be referred to it by the Executive Council from time to time. The Parliamentary Party may also discuss matters of Party organisation and may submit its views on these by way of written report to the Executive Council.
- (iii) The members of the Parliamentary Party elected to the Executive Council shall report on the work and decisions of the Executive Council to the Parliamentary Party and shall likewise report the views of the Parliamentary Party on organisational matters to the Executive Council.
49. (i) (a) There shall be elected in the manner set out below a Party Leader who shall be known and referred to as "Leader of the Parliamentary Party" (in these rules referred to as the Party

Leader). The position of Leader of the Fine Gael Parliamentary Party shall be determined by the Electoral College system set out in this rule.

- (b) The Electoral College shall be composed of the following:
- (a) Parliamentary Party, being the persons referred to in Rule 47 (i)
 - (b) Members of the Party, other than persons at (a) and (c), who are entered in the register referred to in Rule 14 (vi) and are eligible to vote
 - (c) Public Representatives, being the persons referred to in Rule 56(a)
- (c) Voting weight attaching to each group shall be as follows:

Parliamentary Party	65 %
Party Membership	25 %
Public Representatives	10 %

For the avoidance of doubt, the vote of each part of the Electoral College shall be split proportionate to the votes obtained by each candidate in that part of the Electoral College. No member shall be entitled to vote more than once in an Election.

- (d) Party Membership shall be entitled to participate in the election of the Leader in the following way:
- Each member eligible to vote shall be issued with a ballot paper in a manner approved by Executive Council.
 - Members shall cast their vote at polling centres on the date fixed by Executive Council for polling.
 - Polling day and times of opening will be determined by the Executive Council but shall not be later than 20 days after a vacancy in the position of Leader arises. Provided that in an exceptional situation, Executive Council, following consultation with the Chairperson of the Parliamentary Party, may extend this time and any other period referred to in this rule.
- (e) Candidates for the position of Party Leader must be members of Dáil Éireann. A candidate must be nominated in writing by members representing at least 10% of the Parliamentary Party, not more than 7 days after the vacancy arises.

- (f) Regional meetings will be organised between day 10 and day 18, or if an earlier date is fixed for polling by the Executive Council, the day before polling day. The regional meetings will provide an opportunity for the Party membership including the local Public Representatives to meet the candidates.
- (g) The ballot shall be by the alternative vote system and shall be by secret ballot.
- (h) Public Representatives shall vote on the same day and at the same venues as the Party membership.
- (i) Parliamentary Party members shall cast their vote at a special Parliamentary Party meeting convened by the Parliamentary Party Chairperson.
- (j) All matters pertaining to the election, such as organisation of time, date and venue of regional meetings, fixing of polling centres and time of polling for all parts of the Electoral College, appointment of returning officers and distribution of votes will be decided by the Executive Council.
- (k) The national returning officer shall be appointed by the Executive Council.
- (l) Those Party members eligible to vote shall be members of Branches registered at National Headquarters in accordance with Rule 14(ii) whose names appear on the Register of Members referred to in Rule 14(vi) which applies at the date of the election for Party Leader and in the case of such an election on or after 1 July 2006 provided their names also appeared on the Register of Members for the previous year commencing 1 July and terminating 30 June as published in accordance with Rule 14(vi).
- (ii) If after a General Election the Party is not forming or joining in the formation of a Government, the Party Leader shall within two months after the conclusion of the election process submit himself/herself to a vote of confidence of the Parliamentary Party to be carried out by secret ballot. If he/she fails to secure a majority in such vote of confidence he/she shall resign as Party Leader. Whenever the Party Leader resigns or dies or in the opinion of the Parliamentary Party, becomes permanently incapacitated when in office, the provisions of rule 49(i) shall apply to elect a successor. A motion of no confidence in the Party Leader shall be valid only if tabled in writing

to the Secretary of the Parliamentary Party by not less than five members of the Parliamentary Party. If a motion of no confidence is defeated, any further motion shall not be valid until a period of at least six months has elapsed. Save as provided aforesaid, motions of no confidence or seeking to remove or change the Party Leader cannot be put down.

50. (i) In addition to the provisions elsewhere in this Constitution and Rules relating to the removal of the Whip in the Parliamentary Party, the Parliamentary Party may by a two thirds majority of its members present and voting at a meeting of which not less than one weeks notice in writing, specifying the intended business, has been given to all its members order the withdrawal of the Whip from or the suspension of any member of the Parliamentary Party. No such order shall be made unless the member concerned has had adequate written notice of the matter complained against him/her and has been afforded an adequate opportunity of making any submission or tendering any evidence written or verbal or both in answer to such complaint. Such a submission may be made personally or by any other member of Fine Gael acting on behalf of the member against whom the complaint has been made. Where, following a complaint the Whip has been withdrawn from a member of the Parliamentary Party, the Disciplinary Committee may if it thinks fit consider that complaint to see whether it wishes to proceed to consider the expulsion of that member from the Party and where it wishes to proceed as aforesaid the provisions of Rule 44B1. (iv) shall apply.
- (ii) Where the Whip has been withdrawn from a member of the Parliamentary Party whether under this provision or otherwise it shall be re-extended only at a meeting of the Parliamentary Party by a majority of two thirds of its members present and voting provided that not less than four days notice in writing specifying the intended business has been given to all its members.
51. The Party Leader shall at his/her discretion appoint and remove a Deputy Leader, members of the Shadow Cabinet, Spokespersons and Whips. He/she shall also nominate members of the Parliamentary Party to represent the Party at functions both in Ireland and abroad.

PART IX

SEANAD ELECTIONS

52. (a) The following shall be the method of selection of Fine Gael candidates for Seanad Éireann on Oireachtas sub-panels.
- (i) The number of candidates shall be decided by a Seanad Selection Commission which shall be established by the Executive Council, comprising five members.
 - (ii) The candidates on each sub-panel shall be selected by the Selection Commission following consideration of nominations which shall be submitted by units of the Party before a closing date to be decided by the Executive Council. The total number of nominations submitted for all Oireachtas sub-panels shall be as follows:
 - (a) 15 nominations from the Parliamentary Party
 - (b) 1 nomination per Constituency, from each Constituency Executive
 - (c) 5 nominations from the Executive Council
 - (d) 2 nominations from the Young Fine Gael National Executive
 - (iii) On each sub-panel, the Party Leader shall be entitled to add and/or delete and/or substitute a candidate notwithstanding the provisions of paragraph (i) and (ii) of the Rule.
 - (iv) The Selection Commission shall submit the final list of candidates to the Executive Council for individual ratification.
- (b) (i) The Selection Commission shall also determine the optimum number of candidates to seek election as Fine Gael candidates on each non-Oireachtas sub-panel and shall submit to the Executive Council, a list of candidates for each sub-panel for individual ratification.
- (ii) The full list of ratified candidates shall be circulated to all Fine Gael members entitled to cast a vote in the Seanad Elections.
 - (iii) Any member of the Party who receives a nomination to contest the election to Seanad Éireann on a non-Oireachtas sub-panel shall be obliged to notify the General Secretary accordingly, immediately upon receiving confirmation of such nomination.
- (c) The Executive Council shall have power to determine the manner in which candidates shall be

nominated for a Seanad Éireann Bye Election. Such a determination shall be consistent with Rules 52 (a) and (b).

- (d) The Executive Council shall have the power to determine:
 - (i) the manner in which Fine Gael candidates may be selected and ratified to contest a Seanad Éireann General Election on the National University of Ireland and the University of Dublin panels (or on any successor Higher Education panels to the aforesaid) or
 - (ii) the manner in which Fine Gael shall endorse the candidacy of persons nominated to contest a Seanad Éireann General Election on the National University of Ireland and the University of Dublin panels (or on any successor Higher Education panels to the aforesaid).

PART X

PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

- 53.
 - (i) The selection of a candidate who shall be nominated by the Fine Gael Party to contest a Presidential Election shall be carried out on the basis of an Electoral College system of voting with the votes of each elector weighted as follows:
 - (a) The votes of the Fine Gael Parliamentary Party to comprise 63% of the total poll.
 - (b) The votes of the Fine Gael Council of Local Representatives to comprise 18% of the total poll.
 - (c) The votes of constituency electors to comprise 10% of the total poll.
 - (d) The votes of the Executive Council to comprise 9% of the total poll.
 - (ii) Each Dáil Constituency shall be entitled to have five electors in the Electoral College being its Chairperson, Secretary, Treasurers and Constituency Organiser. If one of these offices is for the time being vacant or held by a member of Executive Council, the Constituency may appoint another officer to be a member of the Electoral College. The persons aforesaid shall be the constituency representatives for purposes of Rule 53 (i)(c).
 - (iii) The ballot will be conducted at a specially convened meeting of the members of the Fine Gael Parliamentary Party, Fine Gael Council of Local Representatives, the constituency electors and Executive Council of which at least seven days written notice has been given to all eligible

members. Only those members attending such meeting shall be entitled to vote. Members who qualify to vote under more than one category set out in Rule 53 (i) shall elect as to which category they vote in and shall not be entitled to participate in any other category.

- (iv) The Executive Council shall arrange for the convening of regional meetings to be addressed by prospective candidates if they so wish. These meetings will take place in the period leading up to the specially convened meeting referred to in Rule 53 (iii).
- (v) Nominations for such ballot shall be submitted to the General Secretary in advance of a date to be specified by the Executive Council and shall be accompanied by at least twenty signatures of members of the Fine Gael Parliamentary Party and at least twenty five signatures of members of the Fine Gael Council of Local Representatives and at least five signatures of members of Executive Council.
- (vi) An independent Returning Officer shall be appointed by the Executive Council to oversee the selection process and he/she shall draw up whatever procedures are deemed necessary to ensure the proper conduct of the ballot. The Returning Officer shall submit the name of the winning candidate to the General Secretary.

PART XI

ÁRD FHEIS

- 54.
- (a)
 - (i) The Árd Fheis shall be the governing body of the Party.
 - (ii) The Árd Fheis shall ordinarily be held once in any twenty four month period on a date to be determined by the Executive Council provided that this period of twenty four months may be extended where the Party Leader and the Executive Council in an exceptional situation so agree.
 - (iii) The Executive Council shall by regulation fix the time by which notice of motions for an Árd Fheis are to be received by National Headquarters.
 - (iv) The Agenda of Árd Fheiseanna shall be arranged by the Executive Council.
 - (b) The following shall be entitled to attend and vote at an Árd Fheis:

- (i) The members of the Executive Council.
 - (ii) Officers of each Constituency and District Executive.
 - (iii) Such number of delegates from each Branch recognised under the provisions of this Constitution and Rules and currently affiliated as may be determined from time to time by the Executive Council.
 - (iv) Members of the Parliamentary Party.
 - (v) Members of the Council of Local Representatives.
- (c) Such other persons as may be invited by the Executive Council or the Party Leader may attend but without power to vote.
- (d) The Agenda of the Árd Fheis shall include:
- (i) The appointment of Chairpersons.
 - (ii) The adoption of Standing Orders.
 - (iii) The election of the President.
 - (iv) Election of not more than two Vice-presidents at least one of whom shall not be a member of the Parliamentary Party.
 - (v) Election of four members of the Parliamentary Party to the Executive Council by and from its membership at the Árd Fheis.
 - (vi) Election of two members (who shall not be members of the Parliamentary Party) to the Executive Council elected by the Council of Local Representatives by and from its membership at the Árd Fheis.
 - (vii) Election of members of the Executive Council, none of whom shall be Public Representatives.
 - (viii) Presidential address.
 - (ix) Motions of which notice has been given in accordance with Rule 54 (a) (iii) and which have been approved for debate by the Executive Council.
 - (x) Review of new policies.
 - (xi) Any other Business.
- (e) Candidates for election at the Árd Fheis shall be proposed and seconded by units of the Party in accordance with regulations as may be decided from time to time by the Executive Council. Nominations for such elections shall be submitted in writing to National Headquarters not less than twenty-one days before the date fixed for the Árd Fheis.

- (f) (i) All decisions at an Árd Fheis other than election of Officers and members of the Executive Council shall be decided in the first instance by a show of delegate cards and any decision shall be referred to a ballot if so demanded by the Chairperson of the session or by four members of the Executive Council or by ten members of the Parliamentary Party or by fifty voting members at the Árd Fheis. Ballots so demanded shall be carried out in accordance with procedures to be determined by the Executive Council.
- (ii) At the beginning of each session of the Árd Fheis tellers shall be appointed on the proposal of the presiding Chairperson, who shall count a show of delegate cards whenever requested by the presiding Chairperson.

All elections at the Árd Fheis shall be decided by delegates to that Árd Fheis in accordance with procedures to be determined from time to time by the Executive Council.

PART XII

PARTY ORGANS

YOUNG FINE GAEL

55. (a) A Branch of Young Fine Gael should be established in each District Executive or, in Constituencies without District Executives, in each Constituency Executive. Additional Branches of Young Fine Gael may be established with the consent of the Constituency Executive.
- (b) Branches established in educational institutions should be branches of Young Fine Gael and shall be affiliated to and have voting rights in such Constituencies as the Executive Council shall decide.
- (c) Subject to the approval of the Executive Council of the Party, Young Fine Gael may from time to time adopt and amend a Constitution and Rules which shall entirely deal with Organisation, the election of Officers including Youth Officer, the holding of National Conferences, the election of a National Youth Executive and the method of selection of the representatives of Young Fine Gael on the Executive Council of the Party.

A member of Young Fine Gael should be a member of, and shall, if a member be eligible for election to office in a Branch having a functional area.

COUNCIL OF LOCAL REPRESENTATIVES

56. (a) There shall be established a Council of Local Representatives of the Party of which members of City, County, Borough and Town Councils and Údarás Na Gaeltachta taking the Party Whip shall be members.
- (b) Subject to the approval of the Executive Council the Council of Local Representatives may from time to time, adopt and amend a Constitution and Rules which shall entirely deal with Organisation, the election of Officers, the holding of National/Regional Conferences, the election of an Executive and the method of selection of the representatives of the Council of Local Representatives on the Executive Council.
- (c) The Officer Board of the Council shall meet at least four times a year and shall maintain contact with the Executive Council and the Cabinet/Shadow Cabinet between annual conferences. It may also arrange Regional Conferences of Party Local Representatives.

NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL, FOOD & RURAL DEVELOPMENT FORUM

57. (a) There shall be established a National Agricultural, Food & Rural Development Forum of which all members of the Party who are engaged to a material extent in an activity related to agriculture, agri-business or rural development shall be entitled to be members.
- (b) Subject to the approval of the Executive Council, the National Agricultural, Food & Rural Development Forum may, from time to time, adopt and amend a Constitution and Rules which shall entirely deal with Organisation, the election of Officers, the holding of National Conferences and the election of an Executive.
- (c) A member of the National Agricultural, Food & Rural Development Forum should be a member of and shall, if a member, be eligible for election to office in a Branch having a functional area.

OTHER ORGANS AND SUPPORT GROUPS

58. The Executive Council may from time to time establish other organs and support groups subject to ratification by the Árd Fheis.

PART XIII

GENERAL

59. Unless otherwise determined by the Executive Council all elections to office in Branches, District Executives, Constituency Executives, Policy Council, the Executive Council, the Árd Fheis and all Organs of the Party and at Conventions and at Annual General Meetings shall be carried out by the Proportional Representation Alternative Vote System on the same basis as employed in elections to Seanad Éireann.
60. Subject to any provisions herein before in these rules contained, at least four days written notice of meetings of any Unit or Organ of the Party shall be given to members and in the case of Branch and District Executive meetings a similar notice shall also be given to Members of the Parliamentary Party and other Public Representatives taking the Party Whip for the electoral area, the Constituency Chairperson, Secretary, Organiser, Public Relations Officer and Policy Officer, provided that the General Secretary with the consent of the Chairperson of the Executive Council can authorise a meeting of the Executive Council or any Unit or Organ of the Party on less than four days written notice, where the exigencies of the situation so require.
61. The General Secretary or in his absence such person as may be nominated by the President shall act as Secretary of the Executive Council and any Committee thereof and the Disciplinary Committee.
62. The Members of the Executive Council may attend at any meeting of any Constituency Executive, Constituency Officer Board, District Executive or Branch. The Officers of any Unit of the Party may attend any meeting of any unit subsidiary to their unit within their functional area. No member so attending may vote.
63. The accidental omission to give notice of any meeting to or the non-receipt of notice of any meeting by any member entitled to receive notice shall not invalidate the proceedings at the meeting.
64. (a) This Constitution and Rules shall not be altered save
 - (i) By the Árd Fheis on a motion of which forty two days written notice shall have been given to the General Secretary, or
 - (ii) By a Special Meeting convened specifically for such purpose following a resolution passed at the Árd Fheis on a motion to alter of which forty two days written notice shall have been given to the General Secretary and, in that event any such meeting shall have full and enabling power and authority to alter the Constitution

and Rules as affirmed by the Special Meeting.

Those entitled to attend any Special Meeting so convened shall be the persons referred to in Rule 54 (b) and (c). The agenda of the Special Meeting shall be arranged by Executive Council but shall be limited to proposals for alterations to the Constitution and Rules, the appointment of Chairpersons, adoption of standing orders and any other business.

- (b) Any motions passed providing for an alteration in these Rules shall have to be confirmed by Postal Ballot which shall be carried out by posting to each person entitled to vote at that Árd Fheis and/or the Special Meeting convened in accordance with (a) (ii), in the case of Branch delegates, to the Secretary of each currently affiliated Branch, ballot papers setting out the matter to be resolved, and shall be decided upon by a majority of votes cast by all such ballot papers which have been returned to National Headquarters within forty two days of such posting of the ballot papers. Notice of the date, time and venue of the count, which shall be open to any member of the Party, shall accompany the ballot paper.
- (c) Notwithstanding (a) and (b) above, if at any time a Rule of this Constitution and Rules shall in the opinion of the Executive Council become inoperable or invalid, the Executive Council may, for purpose solely of rectifying the invalidity or inoperability of the Rule, adopt an amendment of these Rules. Such an amendment may only be adopted on the proposal of the Party Leader and with the consent of the Trustees and must have the assent of at least 75% of the members of the Executive Council. Any such amendment shall be put before the next ensuing Árd Fheis and/or the Special Meeting convened in accordance with (a) (ii) and confirmed in accordance with (a) and (b) above. If the amendment is not so confirmed, the amendment shall cease to have effect but without prejudice to any action taken thereunder prior to the time it was not so confirmed.
- (d) Notwithstanding (a) and (b) above, the Executive Council shall have the power to make amendments to this Constitution & Rules solely in the following circumstances;
 - (i) to correct any error in cross referencing which arises following the adoption of alterations in accordance with Rule 64(a) and (b);
 - (ii) to correct references to the names of bodies referred to in this Constitution & Rules where

such bodies have been re-named or replaced by bodies with similar function.

65. The Executive Council shall be entitled to interpret these rules and their decision in this respect shall be final.
66. This Constitution and Rules shall come into effect on July 1, 1996.

