



It's what we do

## National Members' Council Newsletter: April 2023

**Our Members' Council is made up of 100 passionate Co-op Members, colleagues, people from other co-op societies, and members chosen by Council to help diversify voices and thinking. When you join a co-op, you become a shared owner of a business that exists to meet your needs, so Council Members act as local representatives who champion your views with directors and leaders from around Co-op.**

### February and April meeting highlights

#### **Our Council meets six times a year, here's what's been on the agenda recently...**

In February, Council's meeting was themed around 'Young People and the Future of Co-operation'. To help Co-op and Council Members understand how membership can be made meaningful for younger generations, a panel of young Council Members hosted a discussion and Q&A with Co-ops UK CEO, Rose Marley. Lots of thought-provoking comments and ideas came from it, particularly around barriers and language, which were taken forward as part of thinking for a motion at our 2023 Annual General Meeting (AGM). Later in the day, Council Members also received updates on how our community and charity work has been helping young people with education and future opportunities.

Since last year, Co-op has been reviewing its membership offer to improve and innovate the ways we reward members and drive loyalty. In February, Council Members also took part in breakouts with directors and leaders to share ideas on monetary and non-monetary ways to deliver value to members and attract new ones. These will go on to shape campaigns and a renewed focus on members being at the heart of our business and have already been doing just that, with the launch of Member Prices, as we continue to support with the cost-of-living crisis.

Ahead of our 2023 AGM, Council Members also started discussions on motions it would like to put forward, considering its priorities, business plans, and creating a modern Co-op for a modern world.

In April, Council met to hear about Co-op's 2022 performance and financial results and put questions to the leaders of our businesses, including Interim Chief Financial Officer, Mike Hazell, and Independent Non-Executive Director, Stevie Spring, as she talked through our 2022 Remuneration Report. Council Members also heard from CEO, Shirine Khoury-Haq, and Chief Membership & Customer Officer, Kenyatte Nelson, as they updated on focus for 2023, highlighting the importance of our Co-op Difference and working more closely with other co-ops as a movement.

In the afternoon, Council Members looked ahead to their own future as a Council, taking part in a workshop with the Centre for Governance & Scrutiny on improving effectiveness, inclusivity and efficiency so that it can be a modern Council in a modern Co-op. As part of the AGM process, Council also agreed to support this year's motions and heard the latest from Director of Public Affairs & Campaigns, Paul Gerrard, on plans for the event and engaging members in the Co-op they own.

## Discussions with directors

To hold our Co-op Board to account on important issues for our businesses and members, Council Members ask questions as part of Directors' Forums...

13 questions were raised with Member Nominated Directors in February and April. Key topics included:

- ✓ Engaging young members
- ✓ Range reduction impacts
- ✓ Changes to management structure
- ✓ Strategy for Co-op Franchise
- ✓ Store leakage
- ✓ Food fraud
- ✓ Policy on disposable vapes



## Catch up with our Council Committees

Council Members also meet in smaller groups throughout the year to input into plans and ask questions on areas of our Co-op Difference. Here's what they've worked on recently...



### Ethical & Sustainable Leadership:

Our Ethical & Sustainable Leadership Committee has been busy inputting into our 2022 Co-operate Report. It also met with colleagues from Food Policy to discuss Co-op's plans for celebrating Fairtrade Fortnight, highlighting the need to showcase our own-brand products and their role in our Co-op Difference.

### Member Value:

Our Member Value & Business Performance Committee received an update on Co-op Franchise, with a particular focus on future plans to increase Co-op's overall store portfolio and take students on a membership journey. It also met with our Interim Chief Financial Officer for an update on Co-op's 2023 Budget. As Co-op Live has really started taking shape, the committee heard from Chief Membership & Customer Officer, Kenyatte Nelson, and Director of Transformation, Joe Kessler, on plans for the space and to ask questions in relation to member benefits and value.

### Member Voice:

Our Member Voice Committee met with our Co-op Young Members' Group, hearing about their 2022 achievements and plans for 2023, including around how Council can work with them and support their projects to engage young members. The committee also evaluated our 2022 Join In Live events and February's Fairtrade Live events and received updates on Join In plans to help members play their full part and deepen their participation journey.

### Co-operative Leadership:

Senate helps to co-ordinate Council activities and connects Council to Co-op's Board and Executive. Recently, it's focused on delivering Council's priorities and met with the Centre for Governance & Scrutiny to oversee a review into Council's effectiveness. Our Governance Committee looks at Council's ways of working and our governance processes. In the last few months, it's reviewed Council's training programme. It also met with Chris Kelly from our Board to discuss its latest evaluation report.

# 2022 Annual Report and 2022 Co-operate Report

Our [2022 Annual Report and 2022 Co-operate Report](#) were published in April. As member-owners, it's important that you read how our Co-op and our Council is working for you and with you to create a fairer world.

## 2023 Annual General Meeting

At 10:30am on 20 May, we'll be opening the doors at Manchester Central to celebrate another 12 months of Co-op. Our difference will be taking centre stage and we'd love to see you there or [online](#) if you'd prefer to join us from home. If you spent £250 at Co-op in 2022, make sure you vote in our elections and on our motions by 15 May to help us create a fairer world and shape the Co-op you own. Read our [blog](#) on how members' votes have gone a long way since our 2022 AGM.

## How to play your full part...

Join us on 02 or 04 May as we debate and discuss our 2023 AGM Motions with experts at our online events. [Register your place by 30 April.](#)

['Join In'](#) with regular online opportunities to shape products and plans and learn more about the Co-op you own.

## How we're doing things differently...



Co-operation is all about working together to achieve a common goal and make things fairer. There's lots of co-ops in the UK and around the world, and it's important that we collaborate and learn from each other. Council Members have been attending conferences and events since the beginning of the year to do just this, taking part in panels and workshops to share ideas and inspire thinking.



Take care,  
**Denise Scott-McDonald**  
President of Co-op's National Members' Council



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