



It's what we do

New
look and
feel

Issue 1

National Members' Council newsletter: May 2022

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 Co-op Members' 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 was joined by Co-op Chair, Allan Leighton, and Chief Finance Officer, Shirine Khoury-Haq, to hear the latest business performance and finance update. Council Members took part in a strategy choices session last October to help our Board and Executive focus their plans and priorities based on what members value, want and need. As part of their update, Allan and Shirine highlighted where feedback had been taken forward, particularly around Co-op becoming carbon neutral and investing in technology to support membership.

Council also welcomed colleagues from Co-op's Member Participation and Community teams to the meeting, where they gave an update on member participation across Co-op. In 2021, members participated 1.7m times in activities that support us in creating a fairer world. Over 1m members chose their local cause, members joined in 578,483 times, 53,863 members voted in elections and 21,021 members learnt more about our difference through Council's Co-operative Member Education, Training & Information opportunities. Members also connected with Member Pioneers in their communities, attended Join in Live events and took part in research through the Co-op Collective.

In April, Allan and Shirine, in her new role as Interim Group CEO, were back with Council at its first face-to-face meeting in Manchester in 26 months. This time, they updated on Co-op's 2021 Annual Report & Accounts and answered questions on financial results, debt levels and future plans. Independent Non-Executive Director, Stevie Spring, also provided the annual Remuneration Report to update on executive pay, colleague pay and colleague bonus plans.

Colleagues from Co-op's Community team joined the meeting in the afternoon to give an update on community activity and funding. Council Members also split up into breakout groups, where they held discussions on ways to bring members closer to the community work they support.

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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...

16 questions were put to Member Nominated Directors and other Board Members in February and April. Key topics included:

- ✓ Co-op's Amazon partnership
- ✓ Store availability issues
- ✓ Changes to the convenience market
- ✓ Member recruitment
- ✓ Involving members in ethical decision-making
- ✓ Colleague wellbeing



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...



Member Value:

Our Member Value & Business Performance Committee has met with Finance leaders to discuss 2022's budget, **2021's Annual Report & Accounts**, and financials for each business period.

Member Voice:

Our Member Voice Committee has fed into plans for 2022's AGM & Elections, helped shape Co-operative Member Education, Training & Information opportunities and received updates on member participation work.

Co-operative Leadership:

Senate helps to co-ordinate Council activities and connects Council to Co-op's Board and Executive. Recently, it's been focused on shaping our approach to Council business as we adapt to life after the pandemic. Our Governance Committee looks at the effectiveness of Council and our ways of working. In the last few months, it's also fed into plans for 2022's AGM & Elections and has reviewed the latest Board Evaluation.

Ethical & Sustainable Leadership:

Our Ethical & Sustainable Leadership Committee has fed into the draft of **2021's Co-operate Report** and supported opportunities to educate members on our Fairtrade commitments and campaign activity.

2022 Annual General Meeting (AGM)

[Our Annual General Meeting \(AGM\)](#) takes place every May and is a celebration of what it means to be a co-op. If you've spent £250 with Co-op in the previous calendar year, we'll invite you to vote in our Council Elections and Member Nominated Director Elections. We'll also ask you to have a say on our motions, shaping what we work on next and how we're run as a business. Voting is open until midday on 16 May and this year, our Council is asking you to share your views on important issues like member participation, inequality and climate change.

Please email agm@coop.co.uk if you haven't received your post or email pack. Our AGM starts at 10:30am on 21 May and you can [join us online](#) or in Manchester Central.

How to play your full part...

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

Ahead of our AGM, hear from some of our [Council Members](#) as they bring Co-op democracy to life and share how you can play your full part in the business you own to help us create a fairer world.

You can also [visit Co-operate](#) to book onto one of 100 store or community events all about getting more from your membership.

How we're doing things differently...



Take care,

Denise Scott-McDonald

President of Co-op's National Members' Council



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