



It's what we do

Council newsletter – March – May 2021



Hello from Nick

Welcome to this edition of our National Members' Council newsletter. This is my last as president, as my third and final term of office comes to a conclusion on July 3rd. It has been the honour of my life to serve our Co-op, its members and colleagues as our Society's president during these last six years.

My passion for co-operation and our Values and Principles remain undimmed, and I look forward to supporting our new president as they assume the leadership of the National Members' Council.

This newsletter provides an overview of the highlights and key topics we covered in recent Council sessions. Please share it with your networks and contacts within our Society and your own. We welcome any comments and feedback, which you can send on to council@coop.co.uk

Updates from our Co-op Businesses

Over the last few months, we've received updates from Co-op Insurance, Co-op Legal Services and Co-op Funeralcare. We discussed the business's performance and the outstanding response to the challenges of the pandemic from across our Co-op.

We also heard the plans of each business for the future and how they will support our vision of 'Co-operating for a fairer world' for members and communities, colleagues, and our planet.

Co-op Insurance

With over 150 years of being there for our members, we heard how our insurance business will be developing new products to better meet the needs of members and customers and how members will be involved in developing these.

The last year has seen changes in the insurance market and following the sale of the insurance underwriting business

and move to a distribution model, Co-op insurance should be well placed to meet these and provide a competitive offer with a Co-op difference.

We also heard how the business is campaigning to support younger drivers, introducing the T-plate which makes it clear that a driver is using telematics and working with our Co-op Academies to promote road safety.

Co-op Legal Services

CLS continues to grow and support members with a variety of legal services including family, life planning and conveyancing. We heard how the business was embracing digital services to support greater accessibility, affordability and understanding of legal protection for all.

We also heard how the business was supporting colleagues so that they could focus on providing the highest quality of service to our members and customers.

Co-op Funeralcare

Throughout the pandemic, our colleagues across the Funeralcare business have responded incredibly to the challenges of COVID-19 and done all they can to support members and customers to celebrate life and say the best goodbye to their loved ones in challenging circumstances.

We heard how the business rose to this challenge to support our communities, prioritising client safety, supporting a sector-wide response with Government, recruiting 600 additional staff, adapting services and establishing bereavement support groups and our funerals hardship fund to support people with meeting the costs of a funeral.

We also discussed the plans for the future as work continues to invest in affordability and transparency of pricing, new technology, digital arrangement options from clients and preparing for regulation of the market, which our Co-op welcomes.

Campaigning Co-op

Council plays a key role in approving and supporting Co-op Campaigns. We've had a number of updates and discussions with our Campaigns and Public Affairs team in April and May.

Our Safer Colleagues, Safer Communities campaign which was championed by Council, continues to support our colleagues and communities to tackle retail crime and challenge Government to introduce better protection for shopworkers. This campaign has changed the narrative around retail crime, making this a key issue and has been a great effort across the Co-operative Movement with support from the Co-op Party and independent co-operative societies.

We also approved future campaigns for our Co-op on the key areas of Climate Change and Social Mobility which build on our Council motions at the AGM 2021 on these issues which our members overwhelming supported.

Climate change is the biggest risk facing our planet and Council welcomes the announcement of our [Co-op's Ten-Point Climate Plan](#) to tackle this and looks forward to our Co-op campaigning and becoming a leading voice on this issue to drive the changes we need to see.

The past year has highlighted the inequalities faced in our society and the need to ensure equal opportunity for all. Fair access to food, mental wellbeing, education and employment are hugely important and as a co-operative it is right that we campaign on these issues in accordance with our [Co-operative Values and Principles](#).

Take care

Nick Crofts
President of the Members' Council



Council Meetings

At our April meeting we received an update from the Co-op Party on the work they are doing to promote co-operatives and mutual forms of economic, social & voluntary organisations and heard updates on key activities and ambitions. We also discussed the plans for the AGM 2021 in May and the Council responses to the AGM motions.

We also received an update and discussed our [Annual Report and Accounts 2020](#) from our Board and Executive who responded to a range of questions for Council members on these. Our accounts demonstrate good commercial and co-operative performance despite the challenging circumstances and impact of the pandemic.

At our May Council meeting we welcomed our new Council members following the 2021 Council elections and received a series of updates from our Council Committees and Working Groups on their activities over the last 12 months. For more information on the work of our Council and Committees, please see our Council annual statement in our Annual Report and Accounts 2020.

Our Annual General Meeting (AGM) and Elections

[Our AGM](#) was held on 15 May 2021. It looked different again this year because of lockdown but members were still able to watch online and raise questions from the comfort of their homes.

We heard from the Board of Directors on the performance of our Society, the power of co-operation and key achievements and plans across our businesses and communities to support our vision of 'co-operating for a fairer world'

Eligible Members cast their votes on a range of motions, including appointing our directors and auditors, receiving our Annual Report and Accounts 2020 and voting on two motions from Council on the themes of Climate Change and Inequality and Social Mobility.

Ahead of the AGM, members also voted in our Council elections, choosing who represents them from Council constituencies across the UK. Thank you to all who voted and took part in our 2021 elections and AGM.

If you want to know how members voted on our motions, find out who was elected as a Member Nominated Director and see who's been chosen as voices for your communities on our Members' Council, [head to our website](#).

If you'd like to get in touch with your local Council Members with ideas, thoughts or questions on how our Co-op does business, please email us any time using our [constituency email addresses](#).



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