



It's what we do

National Members' Council Newsletter: December 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 your views with directors and leaders from around Co-op.

September and December meeting highlights

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

In September, Council welcomed Shirine Khoury-Haq to her first meeting after she was appointed as Co-op's permanent CEO, where she provided an update on business and commercial performance. Joined by our Chief Operating Officer, Chris Whitfield, and Director of Strategy & Transformation, Emma Hannah, Council Members heard about plans for the future and work that was being done now to navigate current external challenges, including business changes and restructures, the sale of Co-op's Petrol Forecourts business, our 'Lower prices, Local to you' campaign, reducing debt levels and tackling increased costs.

As the Cost-of-Living Crisis continues to impact society and our communities, Council Members were particularly keen to focus on how Co-op was 'Co-operating for a Fairer World' in challenging times. Meeting with directors in breakout groups, Council Members raised questions and shared ideas for how Co-op could support members and customers through its missions and could adopt its plans for current circumstances. In the afternoon, Council also received an update on Co-op's Diversity & Inclusion Strategy, which Council's Diversity & Inclusion Working Group has had input on, before spending some time discussing how to improve ways of working and governance structures.

In December, Council met for the final time in 2022, focusing on the theme of balancing sustainability with affordability. Following another business performance update, it heard from Food Managing Director, Matt Hood, as he talked through Co-op Food's new strategy and plans for implementation, incorporating input from Council Members at our July Council Meeting. Co-op's Director of Public Affairs & Campaigns, Paul Gerrard, also joined to update on our Climate Justice Campaign.

Meeting with directors, Council Members discussed our ethical and sustainable commitments and how we continue to prioritise these in challenging times. Feedback from these sessions will be shared with our Co-op Board at its next meeting. To end the meeting, Council split into breakout groups led by Senate Members, where they talked through priorities for delivering the first year of the Three-Year Plan.

We represent you and we've identified three priorities for our work in 2023:

- Co-operating for a Fairer World in Challenging Times
- Member Value, Business Performance & Effective Governance
- Member Participation & Community

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...

17 questions were put to Member Nominated Directors in September and December. Key topics included:

- ✓ The sale of Co-op's Petrol Forecourt Stores
- ✓ Increasing member participation
- ✓ Debt levels
- ✓ Support for colleagues and members during the Cost-of-Living Crisis
- ✓ Sustainable energy sourcing
- ✓ Promoting Co-op's ethical work
- ✓ Benefits of Co-op Membership



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 met with our Interim Chief Financial Officer for the first time and discussed Co-op's 2022 Interim Results, business reporting, protecting our Co-op during challenging times, and the latest business financials.

Member Voice:

Our Member Voice Committee agreed strategic recommendations to our Board for Co-op's 2023 AGM. It also received an update on Member Participation work and plans for the Co-op Collective, as part of wider activity between Council and the business to evolve our Member Participation Strategy.

Co-operative Leadership:

Senate helps to co-ordinate Council activities and connects Council to Co-op's Board and Executive. Recently, it's hosted an away day and approved changes to processes to increase Council interaction and collaboration and build stronger relationships with the Board and business. Our Governance Committee looks at the effectiveness of Council and our ways of working. In the last few months, it's also agreed strategic recommendations for Co-op's 2023 AGM and supported the launch of a private Council Facebook Group for internal communications.

Ethical & Sustainable Leadership:

Our Ethical & Sustainable Leadership Committee received an update from Co-op's Agriculture team in response to a letter it drafted. It also heard from our Property Sustainability team, learnt more about our WWF Basket Commitment and discussed its objectives for 2023.

Want to share your views?

Visit our Council [website](#) to find your constituency and get in touch with local representatives.

Join in Live events

Over four dates in October, Co-op's Join in Live events were back online and in-person again for the first time since 2019. Hosted by Council Members, the events focused on an update from our businesses on our performance so far in 2022 and on our new community partnership with Your Local Pantry. [Find out more](#) from members who 'joined in live' in our blog.

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.

You can also visit [Co-operate](#) to find things to do in your community and help make good things happen.

Co-op is at the heart of communities, but how do we connect with them and make great things happen? Find out more about our [Member Pioneers](#) and how they help our Members' Council represent Co-op Members.

Could you be a Council Member?

On 11 January, applications for our 2023 Council Elections will open. As a co-op, we're a unique business with unique opportunities. As part of owning our Co-op, you have a say in what we do and how we're run, and being a Council Member is at the heart of this. Keep an eye on our [website](#) for more information.

How we're doing things differently...



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



Keep up to date with us using
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