



It's what we do

## Council newsletter: October - December 2021



### Hello from Denise

Welcome to this edition of the National Members' Council Newsletter.

As our Members' Council still can't get together in Manchester, we've been continuing to stay connected to our Co-op and our members by way of online meetings and other virtual platforms. It has been brilliant to stay connected in true co-operative fashion.

I recently had the opportunity to attend a celebration of Black History Month, together with colleagues from Co-operative Heritage Trust. The event took members through the history of co-operation and shined a light on where the movement has championed inclusion and where it's needed to improve over the years. I was honoured to join the call and talk to our members about Co-op's Commitments to Racial Equality & Inclusion and the steps we're taking to become anti-racist in all that we do.

Our Join in Live Events were a success again this year and I really enjoyed getting to chair one of them. I loved having the chance to hear more from our members about what's important to them and their communities.

I was also delighted to hear that the Co-op had been named Emerging Franchisor of the Year at the British Franchise Association Awards, particularly given that the National Members' Council supported the initial trial of franchising in 2017 following wholesale and franchise proposals put forward by Louise Walker (Council Member for the East of England) and Frank Nelson (former Council Member for the North West).

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank our members for your support and patience during this truly extraordinary year, we wouldn't be able to continue to achieve amazing things without your input and loyalty to our Co-op.

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](mailto:council@coop.co.uk).

## Interactive Choices Session

In October, our Council Members participated in workshops looking at how to prioritise and allocate a limited budget to a range of hypothetical investment decisions in various areas across the Co-op such as Co-op businesses, sustainability and social goals, infrastructure and digital systems. The input from this session was shared with the Board and Executive to help inform their discussions. This is a great example of how Council can offer input on the things we do as a business to help us keep our values and principles and our members' needs at the heart of decisions and I enjoyed getting to work together this way, as it sparked lots of interesting ideas and conversations.

## Council Meetings

At the December meeting we welcomed our Campaigns & Public Affairs Director, Paul Gerrard. He provided a brief update on the Safer Colleagues, Safer Communities campaign following the announcement that the Government had brought forward an amendment which would make any offence committed against those serving the public, including shopworkers, an aggravated offence. The amendment helps ensure that we can provide greater legal protection to our retail colleagues. Since Council approved the campaign in 2018, greater legal protection had been a key aim of the campaign and it was welcomed that this had been achieved through co-operation with the wider Co-operative Movement, USDAW and other retailers. I was so thrilled to hear this news and I'm very proud of the leading role Co-op has played in championing this cause and being a voice for colleagues.

## Directors' Forums

Our Council Members had the opportunity to ask the Board of Directors strategic holding to account questions at several recent forums. Discussion was raised about our commitments to racial equality and inclusion, which are focussed on our vision of 'co-operating for a fairer world'. The Board also talked about the recruitment methods we have in place to help encourage a younger and more diverse workforce.

Council also had opportunity to ask questions around availability in our food stores. Members of the Board outlined the steps they had taken to ensure that any supply-chain challenges were being addressed, in order to try to ensure that there is good availability in our stores as we approach the busy festive season.

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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**Wishing you all the best for the festive season  
and a very happy New Year.**

**Take care**

**Denise Scott-McDonald**

President of the Members' Council



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