



It's what we do

May Council Newsletter



Hello from Nick

The National Members' Council was back together in Manchester on 19 May following our festival of democracy, the Co-op Annual General Meeting (AGM).

It was a fantastic day that really celebrated our difference and all the brilliant things happening around Co-op to champion co-operation in our communities. Thanks to everyone who came along and got involved. You can read the highlights from our AGM [here](#).

Ahead of our AGM, we also shared the results of our **2019 Council elections** - take a look at who your local voices are at the heart of our Co-op. Myself and Council were delighted to welcome our new Council Members to their first weekend with us and I wish them all the best in their roles. Congratulations to everyone who was successful and commiserations to those who weren't - thank you for taking the time to apply and get involved in Co-op democracy.

This update provides an overview of the highlights and key topics we covered over the weekend. 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

Co-op Ventures update with Tim Davies and Louise Anderson

An exciting and engaging session with Tim and Louise from our Co-op Ventures team was much needed to kick start our meeting after a busy day at our AGM.

Announced at our AGM, Co-op has re-entered the health market with the launch of our digital pharmacy app, [Co-op Health](#). As our 'innovation unit', the Ventures team have spent a long time establishing the right space for us to move into, helping us to grow and diversify to remain relevant in highly competitive markets outside of food. Louise shared that with our rare combination of 175 years in business, a movement-wide history of internal innovation and 100 years of existing experience from our Co-op Pharmacy days, we're in prime position to pioneer the self-care revolution.

Now live, the Co-op Health app is unique and allows customers to order and manage their repeat prescriptions, which can be delivered to your door or to local GPs and pharmacies to help us work with our communities. Tim shared that there's still lots to do to provide a full service from Co-op Health; the team are currently looking at

alternative delivery options, like click and collect from our Food stores, and testing health stations to provide routine check-ups and take pressure off local surgeries - all part of working with the NHS to encourage patient-led services.

Tim also took the time to thank our Council New Opportunities Advisory Team for their feedback and input along the way to create an app that delivers a real difference. It's shaping up to be a great success as our first new market and service since 2006 and I'm excited to see how it develops.



Co-op Party update with Claire McCarthy, General Secretary

Claire was our next guest at our May Council meeting, joining us to share an update on what's been happening in the Co-op Party. As the political party of the co-op movement, they promote co-operative and mutual forms of economic, social and voluntary organisations. To do so, the party influences policy, inspires people and makes change happen across the movement and country. Showing that together, we are powerful, the Co-op Party has been working on abolishing modern slavery from local authority supply chains and has called for evidence from the public to highlight retail violence and abuse happening in stores in England and Wales.

By talking about co-operation in a simple, compelling way, the party aims to mobilise people around the issues that matter to them and has been running community projects and devolved assemblies to create a louder movement that achieves widespread, local political action.

We have many proud supporters and members of the Co-op Party on Council, and it was great to have Claire with us; it's been rewarding seeing our relationship go from strength-to-strength.



Update from Peter Hunt, Managing Partner of Mutuo

We also welcomed a former Council Member, Peter Hunt, back into the fold with an update on our legislation work with Mutuo, a consultant for co-ops and mutuals.

Led by the National Members' Council on behalf of our own Co-op and the wider movement, we have been looking into how we can improve legislation to better reflect modern co-op businesses and focus on capital, whilst facilitating new opportunities and safeguarding assets.

Ultimately, we want to enhance and protect co-op capital and offer permanent shares and indivisible reserves - after all, more capital means more good stuff can be done. Our legislation work is an ongoing project for us so I'll keep you updated as it progresses.



Update from Jim Cooke, Head of Co-op Foundation

Jim from [Co-op Foundation](#), our charity, provided our last business update of the day on his fourth visit to a Council meeting.

The Co-op Foundation's ambition is to help shape strong communities where people work co-operatively to make things better. Supported by Council, the Foundation's main programme, Belong, has focused on helping young people beat loneliness; so far, an amazing £330k has been raised through 63,000 members selecting related projects as their local cause. The Foundation has also awarded £6.2m to Belong projects, making it the leading charity tackling youth loneliness. By 2021, Jim hopes 7,500 young people will have been connected and empowered through their work.

More recently, the Foundation introduced an interest-free loan offer to help community organisations fund projects, especially in disadvantaged areas. Up to now, an incredible £1.4m has been given to 20 community spaces around the UK, of which over half are co-ops.

A huge well done to everyone at the Foundation for the impact they're having and the difference they're making - I look forward to welcoming Jim back to Council for his fifth visit and update.

Update from Senate with John Dalley

Fellow Senate member and Independent Society Member, John, took to the platform to share the latest from our May Senate meeting. As the link between Council, the Board, the Executive, and our members, it's always good for our Council Members to hear about what Senate are doing on their behalf.

This time, we discussed: our new national advertising campaign, our Council elections process, a paper on our colleague survey, vouchers given to members in stores, and work on Stop Funding Hate.

Council Effectiveness Review update from Tanya Noon

To make sure Council is succeeding in its role, we recently completed our first Council Effectiveness Review, which was led by our Governance Committee. From 92 responses, we can now determine areas for improvement and will use feedback given by Council Members to start implementing and exploring changes. A huge thank you to everyone on the committee, those who took the time to complete the survey, and Adam and Andy from Council Secretariat for all their hard work on the review.

Nick Crofts
President of the Members' Council



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