



It's what we do

Council newsletter: July – September 2021



Hello from Denise

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

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

But as the nation slowly gets back to normal, our council members are having discussions about what that might look like for our council members as we look towards the 'new-normal'. In December we will be trialling a hybrid meeting.

I'd also 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.

Updates from our Co-op Businesses

Over the last few months, we've received updates from our Co-op Young Members' Group, our Food Business and our Community Team. Our Board of Directors also reported back on our interim results for 2021.

We heard the plans for each of these areas and updates on how they are supporting our vision of 'Co-operating for a fairer world' for members and communities, colleagues, and the planet.

Co-op Food

In July we welcomed Jo Whitfield and the Food Executive Team who shared our trading performance and response to the challenges facing food supply chains. The team are working hard to be close to members, opening new stores whilst also updating existing ones, through franchise opportunities and investments in the business. They're also working to be close to things members care about through the introduction of our 'Gro' & 'Honest Value' food ranges, both of which are proving hugely popular in store.

Council Meetings

At the July meeting we heard from members of the Co-op Young Members' Group who talked about the projects they've been leading to help young people get involved with our Co-op and the Co-operative Movement. The work carried out by the group also ties in with our work on education and employment for young people and anti-loneliness campaign, **Lonely not Alone**.

At our September meeting we welcomed Rebecca Birkbeck, Helen Carroll and Russell Gill from our Community and Shared Value Team. Rebecca, Helen and Russell provided an update on our community plan which focuses on three key areas: fair access for food, wellbeing support and access to education & employment

It's great to see the role members are playing in supporting Co-op Community activity. Record numbers have chosen to support a local cause through our Local Community Fund. Members are also shaping our Community Partnership Fund which sees us partner with organisations to address key areas of concern within local communities such as our new Community Fridges partnership with Hubbub. I had a wonderful opportunity recently to attend the opening of the Community Fridge at Grenfell Tower. It was great to see the partnership working close up. We also heard how our Member Pioneers are connecting with members and colleagues in communities across the UK, including through Join in Live events.

Our Interim Results

Our interim results for 2021 were published in September. Our CEO Steve Murrells reported back that we'd had a strong year to date, despite the challenges presented by Covid and Brexit.

There has been significant investment within the business in new Food stores and refits which will help improve reach and the shopping experience for our members and customers.

We are also doing our bit to tackle climate change through introduction of soft plastic recycling in 1,500 of our stores and through our 10 Point Climate Change plan which was launched earlier in the year.

We also heard how the Funeralcare business was performing well and welcomed the focus on affordability and quality service with 98% customer satisfaction achieved.

Online deliveries has been a key priority in recent years. We are pleased to see this grow, meaning more members and customers will be able to get our ethically sourced products delivered to their door. As well as our own delivery services we discussed with the Board our approach to partnerships, including the recent announcement of a trial with Amazon.

We are also investing within the business through the creation of more apprenticeship opportunities and the implementation of a mental health & wellbeing programme for our colleagues, who have maintained a high-level of service to our members throughout the pandemic and continue to do a fantastic job at supporting communities across the UK.

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](#).

Take care

Denise Scott-McDonald

President of the Members' Council



Keep up to date with us using
[#CoopNMC](#) on twitter