



It's what we do

November Council Newsletter



Hello from Nick

The National Members' Council was back together in Manchester on 30 November for an early Christmas and our last meeting of 2019.

It's been a great year of collaboration and representation, making sure our members and communities are having their say to shape a Co-op we can all be proud of. Ending on a high, we also confirmed the appointment of our new Council Secretary, Andy Seddon. A big congratulations and best wishes from us all, we're looking forward to working with you.

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.

'What's next?' with Allan Leighton and Steve Murrells

A big part of Co-op's current strategy planning is around our vision for the future - the kind of business we want to be and the legacy we want to leave. At our September Council Meeting, we kicked off our 'What's next?' phase with workshops with colleagues from around Co-op to determine how we can make a real difference and have a big impact through co-operation. With our input, the Board and the business then started to bring to life a vision for how 'What's next?' would look in practice.

At our November meeting, we then got into the Christmas spirit with a strategic board game to map out what areas we would prioritise to introduce new ways of co-operating, putting people and the planet first and developing a more meaningful membership.

To introduce the session, our Co-op Chair, Allan Leighton, and Chief Executive, Steve Murrells, started off our day together with an update on what's been happening around our businesses to set the scene for the future. Allan shared that we're in a good place across our businesses, despite being in a tough market, so it's a good time to reshape our Funeralcare strategy and become the front runners in areas where our co-op difference can shine. We've taken big strides forward with our Safer Colleagues, Safer Communities campaign to offer the best protection and safety for our employees and customers but there's more to be done on pay and keeping colleague engagement and enjoyment moving in the right direction. Allan also updated us on the positive year all co-operatives have had by working with the Federal Retail Trading Services (FRTS) to share success, helping us all to feel truly aligned.



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Going forward, Allan said that our focus will be on making more progress in developing a meaningful membership and movement, uniting people who believe in co-operation for a fairer world, are passionate about making a difference and want to have an active role in our Co-op. Building on this, Steve then shared some of our latest achievements. With a particular focus on communities, our Big Payout Bus recently completed a personalised giving tour around the UK, donating an incredible £17m from Co-op Members to

Funeralcare with Sam Tyrer, Alison Close and Rachel Woodman

Joining us for her first time at a Council meeting in her new role, Sam Tyrer, Funeralcare Managing Director, shared the latest on future plans for our Funeralcare business.

Sam started by sharing that she was drawn to the Co-op because it offered her a chance to give something back in a really special market that's going through a lot of change. Sam's ambition is for the business to be a market leader that improves customer journeys, offers great affordability and enables colleagues to be the best they can be.

To bring this ambition to life, our Funeralcare Director of Strategy, Rachel Woodman, and Chief Commercial Officer, Alison Close, said that we're currently addressing challenges and reviewing customer needs to make sure that the future will offer more choice, value for money and personalisation. They were pleased to say that they have a really strong team working on this who are making good progress to understand where we can make changes and a real difference.

I look forward to hearing more about how Funeralcare is helping people to celebrate the lives of their loved ones when we next meet with Sam and the team.

La Rioja Fairtrade wine with Hazel Blears

One of our Member Nominated Directors, Hazel Blears, recently returned from a visit to La Rioja wine co-op in Argentina and joined us at our meeting to talk about her experience.

La Rioja produce some of our award-winning Fairtrade wines using organic and bio-dynamic processes. With Fairtrade premiums and additional funding from Co-op, Hazel shared that a school, now twinned with our Co-op Academy in Blackley, was built for the community and the educational access has been life-changing for local children.

We'll next be working on an exciting project to build a local healthcare centre and it will be fantastic to see how the support of our Co-op and our members continues to help the community go from strength-to-strength.

our local causes. Helping us to continue connecting people and inspiring co-operation, Steve also let us know that we now have 601 Member Pioneers in place nationwide.

With our input on priorities, the Board will now start to develop our future vision further as a plan for pushing us forward and helping us to stay true to our roots. Phase three of 'What's next?' will be on the agenda for our February Council Meeting - watch this space!

Directors' Forum

It's always great to open up the floor at Council meetings for questions to some of our directors. Some of our Committee Council Members also fed in questions from Co-op Members as part of a recent Join in opportunity, which was a great way to get them involved at the heart of our business.

From our Board of Directors, we were joined by Hazel Blears, Sarah McCarthy-Fry, Sir Christopher Kelly, Paul Chandler and Margaret Casely-Hayford.

Questions asked were on the topics of: membership, zero waste, Co-op Insurance, trading with other co-ops and Funeralcare in Northern Ireland.



Friday Night Live: Co-operation and Globalisation with Tony Webster

Every Friday night before a Council meeting, we host an event called Friday Night Live. This time, we were joined by co-op movement historian, Professor Tony Webster, to hear about his latest work around co-operation and globalisation. Tony is an incredible font of knowledge with the ability to really bring co-op history to life and it was brilliant to have him with us.

Support for credit unions with Frank Nelson and Sue Body

Two of our Council Members, Frank Nelson and Sue Body, have been busy working on a paper around encouraging Co-op Members to use the Co-op Credit Union. The paper was approved by Council at our November meeting and we have asked the Board to consider what Co-op can do to support the Co-op Credit Union.

Team #CoopNMC are saying 'Kiss My Ass Cancer' at the 2020 Manchester Marathon

Unfortunately, there's not many people who can say their lives haven't been affected by cancer. Five of our Council Members - Bev Perkins, Kat Rose, Zoe Selby, Gavin Ewing and Scott Allen (coach) - have joined forces to create a relay team for the 2020 Manchester Marathon and raise money to support the Royal Marsden Cancer Charity in saying 'Kiss My Ass Cancer'.

The team have a goal of £500 set but it would be amazing if we could get them beyond that. If you'd like to know more about their story and donate, please visit the team's [Just Giving page](#).

And finally... all the best for 2020!

Our Members' Council has had a great 2019 that's given us some invaluable insight for the future and we've been working hard to create our own plan for the next three years, which reflects our ambition to support Co-op with developing a stronger membership, stronger communities and stronger enablers for co-operation.

We look forward to connecting with Co-op Members even more in 2020 and wish you all the best for the New Year.



Nick Crofts
President of the Members' Council

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nick" with a long horizontal line underneath.



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