



It's what we do

Council Newsletter – June 2020



Hello from Nick

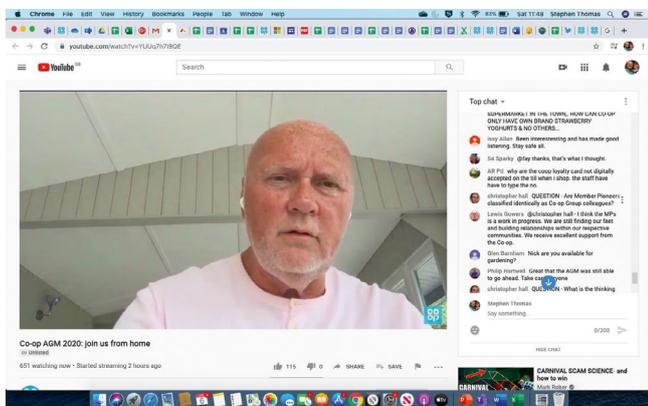
As our Members' Council can't get together in Manchester yet, we've been busy exploring new ways to stay connected to our Co-op and our communities. I'll be updating you soon on the latest from our Food business and our July Directors' Forum but this issue is all about our 2020 Annual General Meeting (AGM). This year, our festival of democracy went digital on 6 June and members were asked to vote in advance, stay home and tune in on YouTube.

Thanks to everyone who had their say and joined us from their sofas (or sunny gardens!) – it was great to bring everyone together in these unprecedented times to showcase the power of co-operation, reflect on the last 12 months and look ahead at what's to come.

Alongside planning for our AGM, we also held our Council and Member Nominated Director Elections. A big welcome to our [new Council Members](#), we're thrilled to have you with us and I'll see you on a video conference call in the next few weeks. I'd also like to congratulate Margaret Casely-Hayford on her re-election to our Board, I look forward to working with you again.

This update provides an overview of the highlights and key topics we covered at the AGM. 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 a year it's been...



Opening this year's AGM, Co-op Chair, Allan Leighton, said:

"The world is a very different place than it was 12 months ago. Our values and way of doing business have allowed us to go above and beyond in these incredible times".

As Council President, I'm so proud to have the opportunity to carry on representing Co-op Members and working with our businesses to shape a Co-op that cares about people and the planet.

Before the coronavirus outbreak took hold of 2020, our businesses were going from strength-to-strength to meet the needs of our customers around the UK.

From our exclusive plant-based range, GRO, becoming a budding success to us re-entering the life insurance market with member-designed cover, we've built a strong foundation of commercial achievements that saw our underlying profit before tax increase by 50% to £50m. Through good business, we've been able to do good and lead the way on issues that are affecting all of us, empowering people to work together to make a difference.

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In 2019, we gave an amazing £76m back to members and local causes. As a retailer at the forefront of tackling ethical issues, we also made 76% of our packaging easy to recycle, banned black plastic from our own-brand lines and became the first UK retailer to have science-based targets for reducing greenhouse gas emissions. You can read all about the last 12 months at Co-op in [our annual report](#).

We're committed to the high street and our communities, so when the time came to play our part, we were able to harness the power of co-operation to support the nation. From Funeralcare teams helping families find new ways to

grieve together to store teams delivering incredible service under intense demand and strict guidelines, colleagues' actions around the UK have been nothing short of heroic and I want to say a heartfelt 'thank you' to everyone for their efforts and hard work. Responding in a truly Co-op way, we also asked members to donate their unspent 5% rewards to our Co-op Members' Coronavirus Fund, launched our Co-operate platform to get people working together locally and pledged £4m in food and advertising airtime to FareShare. I'd like to give a special shout out to our Member Pioneers, who have been connecting our communities and helping vulnerable people through the crisis.

Council works for Co-op Members

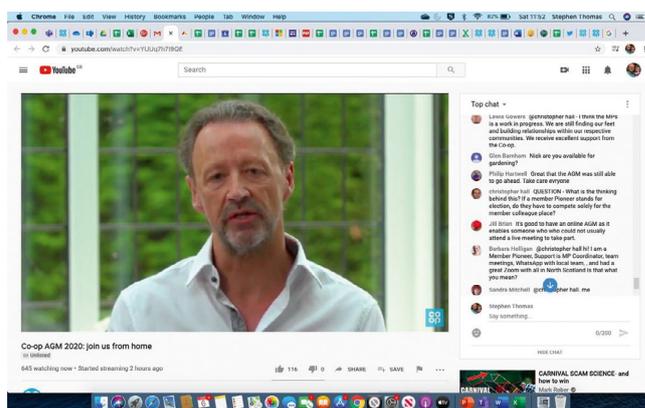
It's been a busy 12 months of representing members and holding the Board to account for our Members' Council too. At our 2020 AGM, I shared how we've been championing our Safer Colleagues, Safer Communities campaign: calling on our Co-op to lobby government, address the root causes of crime and provide evidence from brave colleagues on their experiences of violence and abuse as they serve our communities in stores. We also voted to make wellbeing the focus of our latest charity campaign, so Co-op has partnered with Mind, SAMH and Inspire to raise plenty in 2020 and tackle mental health issues.



As always, making sure that our members have a voice in our Co-op is a big priority for us. At our 2019 Join in Live events and through Join in opportunities, we asked members to help shape our plans and tell us what matters to them. Healthy eating and looking after the environment were the most important issues, so motions on these themes were put forward at our 2020 AGM with input from Co-op Members, Council Members and Independent Societies. This year's climate change motion was a great example of co-operation in action, with Council Member, Kat Rose, crowdsourcing views and ideas. Having your say in the Co-op you own really does make a difference: [get in touch with your local Council Members](#) to share your thoughts and ideas, keep an eye out for [ways to 'Join in'](#) and use your vote in our AGM and Elections. Together, we can make great things happen.

Co-operating for a fairer world

Our new vision is all about uniting people on the things we have in common to tackle the issues that separate us. To build a fairer world, we need to co-operate. As our Chief Executive, Steve Murrells, said as he wrapped up the AGM: "We've shown what co-operation can do in a crisis. Now we need to show what it has to offer to the world when the crisis recedes".



It's not going to be easy but co-operation and co-operators are the future - we'll share what we know, we'll work with others and we'll succeed together. As a member of this amazing Co-op, you are already part of the future we need to create as we pull through these unprecedented times - and look beyond them. You gave us lots to think about in our AGM Q&A alone; from support for overseas suppliers to home delivery initiatives and more opportunities to donate rewards, there's so much more we can do to keep this momentum going and I can't wait to be a part of it.

If you couldn't join us from home on the day of our 2020 AGM, catch up with our Co-op on [YouTube](#).

Take care,

Nick Crofts
President of the Members' Council



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