



member magazine 2016

the co-operative party
politics for people

In this issue

2016 Elections	4	Q&A Angela Smith	19
Merthyr Valley Homes	6	Scotland update	21
Dates for your diary	9	Wales update	23
Q&A Hazel Blears	11	European referendum	25
Campaigns update	14	Membership+	26
Co-op Party centenary	16		



DELI TO GO

**WE LOVE LOCAL FOOD
SO MUCH THAT OUR
DELI TO GO IS 100%
LOCAL PRODUCE.**

Our Sourced Locally range has been recognised locally, nationally and internationally.



Welcome

Firstly, I want to thank you for your continued commitment to the Party and the co-operative movement.



Whether you are one of the hundreds of new members who have joined the Party recently or a long-standing member it is people like you who are the lifeblood of the Party.

As we start 2016 there is a great deal of work for us to do together.

This year will see crucial elections in Scotland, Wales, London and across local government in England. In some areas we are looking to ensure that great co-operators are re-elected to enable them to continue driving forward the co-operative agenda. This is particularly true in Wales, where a Labour & Co-operative Government has pursued a pro-co-operative agenda in housing, social care, the economy and education. In other areas we are looking to grow our co-operative representation. Local Government will be a significant focus for the Co-operative Party this year and you can read more about this on [page 4](#).

We are proud to work with our subscribing societies and the wider co-operative movement to make the case for co-operative ideas; and to highlight their work as real life examples that co-operatives are a better way of doing business and providing services. You can read some reflections from Hazel Blears, member nominated director of the Co-operative Group, on [page 11](#).

As we approach the Party's centenary in 2017 we are looking to build the Party – growing the number of individuals and co-operatives who are members. So if you know people or organisations who share our values then please encourage them to join us.



Claire McCarthy
General Secretary

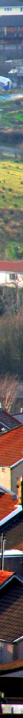
2016 Elections



With crucial elections in Scotland, Wales, London and in local government in England this May, there's a huge opportunity to elect co-operators at all levels of government. **Claire McCarthy** updates us on how you can help us make it happen.

The Co-operative Party exists to champion co-operative and mutual solutions and crucial to this task are our elected representatives. In Westminster, Holyrood, Cardiff Bay, the London Assembly and in town halls up and down Britain they champion and facilitate the development of the co-operative movement.

There would not be new credit union services for our armed forces without the tireless work of Co-operative MPs and Peers. There would not be new housing co-operatives in Wales without legislation brought forward by a Co-operative Housing Minister. There would not be exciting new developments in energy, education and community development without the hard work and commitment of co-operative councillors.



In some areas the Co-operative Party – working with the Labour Party – are looking to ensure that great co-operators are re-elected to government to enable them to continue to drive forward the co-operative agenda.

In Wales we will be working for the re-election of the Labour & Co-operative Government which established a Co-operative and Mutuals Commission and has subsequently pursued a pro-co-operative agenda across many areas of its responsibility including in housing, social care, agriculture and education. We have some fantastic new candidates standing in May's election in Wales – you can find out who they are and which seats they are contesting by visiting www.party.coop/people/wales

In local government there are crucial elections in places like Plymouth where a Co-operative Council, with Co-operative Party Councillors at its heart, has been developing innovative co-operative solutions to the challenges facing the City and playing a leadership role in the Co-operative Councils Innovation Network.

In other areas we are looking to grow our co-operative representation. Local Government will be a significant focus for the Co-operative Party this year. This work will be led by our new Local Government Officer who will work with local parties and councillors to increase the number of Co-operative Party Councillors, develop our Co-operative Councillors Network and help ensure that local election manifestos have a strong co-operative identity. We have recently launched a new online Local Government Hub on our website with all the information about how to become a Co-operative Councillor, policy ideas for local manifestos and leaflets, and much more.

In Scotland we are working with the Leader of Scottish Labour, Labour & Co-operative MSP Kezia Dugdale ahead of the elections in May. We are looking to grow the Co-operative Group of MSPs to ensure we have a strong voice for the co-operative movement in Holyrood. To find out more about the Co-operative Party's candidates in the Scottish elections go to www.party.coop/scotland-2016.

As Party Members we know that you will do all you can to support co-operators standing in these elections.

Learn more about standing as Labour & Co-operative via our new Councillors Hub: www.party.coop/2016-council-hub

Merthyr Valley Homes



In November, ownership of 4300 homes in Merthyr Tydfil passed to staff and tenants, creating Wales' largest housing co-operative. Here the **CEO of Merthyr Valley Homes, Mike Owen**, explains the decision to go co-operative.

At the end of 2015, Merthyr Tydfil council handed control over 4300 former council homes to tenants and the housing association's 185 employees. Via a new membership body, they'll have direct responsibility for overseeing repairs, appointing directors and setting rents and salaries. The resulting organisation – Merthyr Valley Homes – is Wales' largest housing mutual, and, along with Rochdale Boroughwide Housing, it's only the second housing association in the UK to be owned by both employees and tenants.

The move to bring Merthyr Valley Homes into mutual ownership is the product of more than a year of discussions and debates with tenants, employees, community organisations and councillors. With an income of over £20m, the

Association is an important player in both the local economy and community in its own right.

The creation of the housing co-operative reflects a changing consensus about the role of councils and government in providing public services, particularly as budgets have fallen. New models of delivery have emerged to reflect this shift, with housing stock transfers and charities running leisure providing as alternatives to rampant privatisation or outsourcing.

In Wales, there's a growing determination to create a new Welsh way of doing business and delivering public services. There's an appetite – reflected in the Welsh Government's recent "Is the Feeling Mutual" Report – for a new business model which recognises the importance of employees in the dynamic of creating an excellent organisation that serves the public.

I believe that this new model of tenants and employees being members will break down the tired, outdated model of public services being "delivered" to consumers, and the barriers created by the separate roles of landlord/tenant employee/employer.

This is a new coalition between those living in their houses, those working on their houses and local statutory and voluntary bodies supporting the community. Merthyr Valley Homes wanted to bring the people whose futures were linked by the way the organisation worked into the heart of the structure:

- The tenants who live in our properties
- The staff who work for the organisation. A member of staff recently retired after 38 years of service and we estimated that he had carried out over 50,000 responsive electrical repairs. They felt that a person who has given his whole working life to the tenants of Merthyr deserved to have a stake in the future and management of that organisation

These new shareholders will exercise considerable influence and will have the power to appoint and dismiss the Board of Directors, they will set the values and the budgets and will approve the accounts and audit report.

The organisation already has strong values on regeneration and employment. It has been a living wage employer since 2011 and has a valued trade union recognition agreement.

In designing the mutual one of the important decisions was that every employee would be an equal member. So Merthyr Valleys Homes does not operate any subsidiaries in which low paid and no pension employees are parked with second tier terms and conditions. All employees can join the Local Government Pension Scheme along with other important employment benefits.

The development of the mutual will continue until the go live date in May 2016. There will of course be tensions along the way between rents and salaries.

But in 30 years of housing, I've never been to a meeting where tenants talk about wanting housing employees who provide their services to be outsourced and paid the minimum wage. Equally I have never heard frontline employees, many of whom live in social housing themselves, calling for "market rents". So I am confident that with our colleagues in Rochdale that Merthyr Valleys Homes will be at the forefront of a new way of doing housing, and a better way of doing business.

Learn more about Merthyr Valley homes and our wider Co-operative Agenda for Wales at **www.party.coop/agenda-for-wales**

Dates for your diary

Seizing the Co-operative Opportunity within the Manchester City Region

Manchester

27 Feb

Fairtrade Fortnight

29 Feb - 13 Mar

Co-operative Group AGM

Manchester

21 May

Co-operatives Fortnight

19 Jun - 3 Jul

International Co-operatives Day

International

2 Jul

Durham Miner's Gala

Durham

9 Jul

Co-operative Party Annual Conference

Cardiff

9-11 Sept

Labour Party Conference

Liverpool

25 - 28 Sept

International Credit Union Day

International

20 Oct

What's going on?

If you or your local party are planning an event or activity, let us know. We can help by listing the event on the Party website, emailing members in the area, and promoting it via social media.

Email **membership@party.coop**



**For your career
For your family
For your peace
of mind**

**Join the modern union
for a changing world**

**www.community-tu.org
@CommunityUnion
0800 389 6332**

We are Community. The modern union for a changing world.



Q&A Hazel Blears

Last May, former Labour MP and Communities Secretary **Hazel Blears** was appointed as one of the Co-operative Group's first Member Nominated Directors. Here she tells us more about her role, and what's in store for 2016.

Why are MNDs important and what can you bring to the role?

The Co-operative Group is owned by its members and it is essential that Members views and ideas play a significant role in shaping the strategy and direction of the Society. As a member nominated director and a Co-operative Group and Co-operative Party member for over 30 years I bring a deep understanding of our co-operative values and principles.

I have always believed that our co-operative ethos can give us a competitive advantage but in recent years we lost our way and I am committed to making sure members voice is heard and we stay true to our co-operative values.

We hear a lot that the Co-operative Group wants to achieve the goal of 'meaningful membership' – what does that mean to you and how do you think it could work in practice?

We have over 8 million members in every part of the UK but only 5 million of them are shopping with us regularly and actively involved. Our members are our biggest resource and we are not making the most of their skills and talents.

Of course I want every member to benefit from shopping with us by bringing back the divi as soon as possible but in order to do that we have to put our co-op back on a secure financial footing. We are making good progress but we are not there yet. Co-operators don't just want a benefit for themselves – like the Rochdale Pioneers they want to help their communities to prosper and to grow. There is a lot we can do now to help our members make a meaningful difference in their local areas and our Community Pioneer pilots are testing out what practical help and support will deliver results.

I want us to help members encourage young people to learn and to achieve, to tackle loneliness and isolation of older people, to look after their local environment and to build respect between generations. Our members want to do their bit – our job is to help them do it.

There has been a lot of speculation about whether the old Co-op logo is coming back – what do you think the role of heritage in the Co-operative Group's future should be?

Our heritage is unique and gives us our Values and Principles as a movement. Self-help, responsibility, independence are as important today as they were in 1844. I am immensely proud of our history and achievements but we must continually make ourselves relevant in the modern world.

The Pioneers didn't have the internet or a smartphone (sometimes I wish we didn't either!) but life moves on and we have to engage a new generation to be proud of 'Being Co-op'. Our work with students and the NUS is a great example of the continuing interest and commitment of young people to our values.

The Co-operative Group has been using the #campaigningcoop on Twitter – what sort of campaigns would you like to see the Group getting involved in?

Our Fairtrade campaigning and action is second to none and shows the way our values can give us a commercial advantage. I would like us to campaign for co-ops to play a bigger role in the mainstream economy. More affordable Co-op housing, more co-op health and social care, more co-op nurseries and making the most of our co-op schools. Showing the success and relevance of our movement in 21st Century Britain could help transform our future.

What do you see as the biggest challenge and the biggest opportunities facing the Co-operative movement in 2016?

The biggest challenge for co-operatives in 2016 will be the continuing squeeze on spending but this can also be our biggest opportunity. Hard times can sometimes create space for new and different thinking. When Governments and consumers want to get more for less our co-operative model can offer excellent products at competitive prices with ethical sourcing but because we operate in a co-operative way we can bring added social value and impact for communities. It's a powerful and compelling proposition – we should seize the opportunity to show what we can deliver.

Advertisement

“The economy is recovering” - and we’re “all in this together”!

At Fair for You, we've been finding out that far too many people have no sign of any upturn, and feel very far removed from recovery.

And that when families hit a crisis in the household like a broken fridge or washing machine, they often have nowhere to turn other than the high-cost credit sector. The payday lenders or the Rent-to-Own shops on the high street.

And so begins the cycle of inflated prices, unnecessary extras, up-selling, and heavy penalties for missed payments.

Registered charity Fair for You has a mission: to change the way we lend to lower-paid households, and stop the stranglehold high-impact lenders have, instead **helping people out of poverty and into financial inclusion.**

We believe that household items supplied at regular high street prices by Hotpoint, Indesit and Whirlpool and paid for with a Fair for You loan* could save households £100's compared with some high cost credit - that's **money kept in the household, and within the community.**



www.fairforyou.co.uk

*Representative APR 42.6%

fairer prices
for you
and your family

0333 433 0739

Fair for You Enterprise CIC is the lender and lends to allow the purchase of goods from the retailer. We get commission from the retailer, which is used towards keeping our costs low so that you pay less. Terms and Conditions apply. Finance subject to status. Applicants must be 18 or over and resident in the UK. Credit provided by Fair For You Enterprise CIC, Delta View, 2309-2311 Coventry Road, Birmingham, B26 3PG.

Campaigns update

Following a hectic time at the Co-operative Party **Joe Fortune** gives an update on the priority areas which were highlighted for campaigning in the last edition of the members magazine:



A People's BBC

Under plans developed by the Party, the BBC Trust – created in 2006 as the voice of licence-fee payers and widely seen to have failed – would be re-established as a Members Council, giving licence-fee payers a proper say in the governance of the organisation they pay for.

This Campaign has developed a strong online presence, with endorsement from the thousands of members who co-signed the Party's response to the Department of Culture Media Sport's consultation on the issue. This campaign has been discussed and promoted around the country at both Co-operative Party and Labour Regional conferences around the country, and we're currently working as part of a coalition of trade unions and the creative industry as part of a wider 'Great BBC' campaign. Watch out for more this campaign when the Government publishes its White Paper outlining its plans in the Spring.



Community Energy

Since our last edition, the government has delivered on its threat to reduce the support available to community energy. In November, the Government brought an early end to renewable energy obligations, ceased

tax incentives to community energy involvement and reduced the Feed In Tariff below sustainable levels.

The Party has continually raised in the House of Commons, with our MPs writing to the Chancellor of the Exchequer and accompanying the Shadow Chancellor, John McDonnell, on a visit to an affected community energy scheme in Hackney. This work has been added to by the online campaign, with thousands of you sharing and spreading the word. All indications point towards this work needing to continue over coming weeks and months.



People's Bus

The cost and provision of local transport are often the difference between thriving communities accessing work, family and leisure or not. The Party has developed a range of policy proposals to boost the not-for-profit bus sector, helping to ensure that profits are reinvested in services and passengers obtain a real say over services.

Since the last update the Party has published a full campaign pack for members and Parties including model events, motions and press releases along with a policy brief. The first of these events have begun and the Party stands ready to help members and activists deliver local activity in their areas. We've already run events with the Shadow Secretary of State and the sector to further explore the potential of this area. This work goes hand in hand with the online activity the Party has developed and hundreds engaged with.

Sign up for information and take part in all of our campaigns via our new campaigns hub at **act.party.coop**

Co-op Party centenary



This year marks the lead-up to the Party's centenary in 2017. Membership and Party Support Officer **John Boyle** looks back at events a century ago, as well as updating us on some of the Party's plans for the centenary itself.

The Co-operative Party was founded in 1917 to represent and defend the co-op movement, though our roots go back all the way to 1844 and the Rochdale Pioneers, the founders of the modern day co-operative Movement and the Fenwick Weavers before them.

These pioneers established a radically different model for organising our economy and communities, putting values such as democracy, equality and solidarity at the heart of their project.

As a challenge to the way things had been done in the past, the co-op movement suffered attacks from private enterprise and government from their beginning. However, many of these issues came to a head during the First World War, with anti-co-operative legislation and taxes passed by the Coalition Government, while private shopkeepers profiteered off the back of the co-op's commitment to sell good quality food at fair prices.

The discrimination against co-operatives, even extended to life and death, with local draft boards dominated by private traders protecting their own staff while men from co-op stores were sent to the front line. By 1916 the Cambridge Society had 99 called up out of 102 military aged men, while staff at private businesses were often spared.

In the midst of these repeated attacks and a failure of existing parties to engage with the co-operative movement, over 1,000 co-operatives from across the UK attended a special Co-operative Union Congress in Swansea to call for the creation of a Party to represent them. These founders saw the Party as a way of building on the movement's long commitment to progressive politics, and electing co-operators to Parliament.

Today the successors of those founding co-ops continue to be members of the Co-operative Party in the form of societies like the Co-operative Group, Midcounties, Central England, East of England, Chelmsford Star and Scotmid and the Party continues our work to represent and defend the movement.

In the next few months, we will be working with members and partners like the Co-operative Archive to develop a comprehensive programme to mark one hundred years of the Co-operative Party, reflecting on our impact since 1917 as well as our role as a voice for co-operative politics today.

Highlights of the programme will include:

- A special exhibition at the People's History Museum covering the history of the Co-operative Party and the co-operative movement's long contribution to politics. The exhibition will also be travelling across the UK and will include the Party's local history as well.
- An oral history project to collect the stories and experiences of our members and activists, giving us a chance to get a new perspective of the Party's past.
- A series of publications, research, talks and other events to celebrate our heritage and engage a wider audience in our mission to build a fairer, more co-operative society.

Do you have any ideas on how we should mark the centenary? Do you have any stories, artefacts or other materials that we could include? How can we involve your local party in the programme? Get in touch with us to share your thoughts!

The **co-operative** energy

Helping our customers to keep their bills down as the heating goes up

Winter is now upon us and with the lights turned on earlier and the heating turned up for longer, the rising costs of energy bills can be quite a worry for many people.

To help our customers and members stay in control of their energy usage and keep their bills down this winter, Co-operative Energy has picked out 10 easy ways you could save over £500 on your annual energy bill:

Turning down a room thermostat by just **1°C** could save you between

£85 - £90

a year.⁽²⁾



Investing in a **£15** jacket for your hot water tank can save you

£30

annually.⁽¹⁾



You could save

£80

per year by **switching off** electronics rather than leaving them on standby.⁽¹⁾



Only boiling the amount of water you **actually need** in your kettle could save you

£20

annually.⁽¹⁾



Reducing time spent in the shower by just **one minute** per day can take

£10

off your annual energy bill **per person**.⁽³⁾



Regularly **defrosting** your freezer could save you

£100

per year.⁽¹⁾



Switching off lights when you leave the room and using **energy-saving, LED** light bulbs could give you an annual saving of

£45



Using a **washing up bowl** rather than just running the tap can save you

£30

per year in energy bills.⁽²⁾



Switching your washing machine temperature from **60°C to 30°C** and drying clothes outside could save you

£33



Only switching on your dishwasher when it has a full load (**at 30°C**) could save you

£75

per year.⁽¹⁾



That's a whopping annual saving of **£508**



Visit: **www.cooperativeenergy.coop/party** for more energy saving ideas

Sources

1 thisismoney.co.uk/money/bills/article-2842839/How-energy-save-From-simple-tricks-long-term-gains-cut-bills.html

2 energysavingtrust.org.uk/domestic/energy-saving-quick-wins

3 youtube.com/watch?v=159xTWSYec0

A portrait of Angela Smith, a woman with shoulder-length blonde hair, smiling and looking slightly to her right. She is wearing a dark blue jacket over a black top and a black beaded necklace. A brown strap is visible over her right shoulder. The background is a blurred indoor setting.

Q&A Angela Smith

In recent months, the Lords have played an increasingly active and visible part in holding this government to account. We catch up with the Leader of the Opposition and Co-operative Peer Baroness **Angela Smith** on her co-operative vision.

How did you get involved in the co-operative movement?

Very soon after I joined the Labour Party I was asked by local Co-op members to join. At that time both Basildon and Thurrock Labour Parties had strong Co-op Party branches and Co-op department stores, and there was a very distinct co-op identity and ethos that the local members promoted. From then on I was hooked!

Have you had any role models or mentors in the co-operative movement and Co-operative Party?

Some readers may remember Jack Smith from the London Region Political Committee and also Alf Dove from Basildon Co-op Party. Both men were Co-op to their bones – Alf was also the manager of the Co-op Food Hall in the Basildon store. They both encouraged and supported me to get more involved and I became Secretary of the Southend Branch and a member of the London Region

Political Committee. As Secretary I was handed the large black briefcase which contained the membership cards, the minute book and a large rainbow flag that was always to be used as a table cover for the 'top table' at all local meeting!

What does it mean to you to be a Co-operative as well as Labour politician?

I was enormously proud to be a Labour and Co-op councillor and then MP. The process for the Parliamentary panel was quite intensive with about three separate interviews but fortunately I passed. For me it was always about values and I was often frustrated that the Labour Party didn't make more of our Co-op ethos which I always found was very attractive and interesting to our voters.

You were a minister in the last Labour Government – can you give us an example of how you put your co-operative values into practice?

It's part of who you are and how you see things so I suppose it runs through all that you do as a politician but the ministerial post I had that was most relevant was in the Cabinet Office when I had responsibility for Social Enterprise, so that naturally brought me into contact with different kinds of co-operatives.

Where do you see the biggest opportunities for the co-operative movement in 2016?

Being a politician I see some obvious political opportunities. There's a real sense of frustration with 'politics as usual'. People are looking for new ideas, new policies and a new approach. Despite its longevity most people don't know much about the co-op movement which provides that opportunity to show that our way of doing things is different can apply to every aspect of society and our lives – housing, retail and banking for example.

Housing is one of the great challenges of the 21st century and this Government is offering nothing that will make the difference the country needs. The co-operative movement, has a big role to play in offering new ideas and ways of approaching this issue and I believe we can make that real difference.

Scotland update



With May's crucial Scottish election looming, Political Officer **Richard McCreedy** updates us on some of the priority areas for the Scottish Co-operative Party this year.

The Scottish Co-operative Party is looking forward to the Scottish election in May. We will be campaigning for the election of a Co-operative Party-led Scottish Government with Kezia Dugdale, a great co-operator, as First Minister.

We will have Scottish Co-operative Party candidates standing in every part of Scotland and hope to have co-operative campaigns across the country. The Party has been running strong campaigns around issues like fan ownership of football, land reform and not-for-profit bus services. There is a strong co-operative thread all the way through Scottish Labour's policy offer. Some of the priorities agreed at the Scottish Labour Party conference in Perth include:

- A commitment to a democratic economy and for employee ownership.
- A review of Co-operative Development Scotland aimed at strengthening it.
- Promotion of local marketing co-operatives to protect our high streets.
- Ensuring education on the co-operative model is available at all levels of education from school to university.
- Support for our People's ScotRail campaign and for developing

co-operative and mutual models for bus services.

- Support for a variety of co-operatively owned energy models, including local renewable energy co-operatives and mutual bulk buying schemes.
- Promoting radical land reform and especially promoting co-operative and mutual models of land ownership.
- Consideration of ways to promote co-operative and mutual models of wraparound childcare.
- The Scottish Co-operative Party looks forward to campaigning for the election of a Scottish Co-operative and Scottish Labour led Scottish Government at the elections in 2016. Get in touch and help us get more and more co-operators elected to the Scottish Parliament.

Football for fans

The Scottish Co-operative Party has been making the case for greater fan ownership in Scottish football, which we outline in our response to the Scottish Government's consultation on 'Supporter Involvement in Scottish Football Clubs'. As co-operators we believe that ownership of the assets of an organisation are important that is why we want to go further than give fan a say in how things are done at their club. We want fans to have the final say by being the owners. We think that the assets of the club like its name, colours and badge should also be protected. These shouldn't be changed without agreement from the supporters. The Scottish Government should make sure that the medieval Lyon Court stops taking clubs to court over their badges and instead makes it easy to register those badges.

Supporters' trusts should be given the right to buy at least 10 per cent of the club at the point of any change in ownership. Ownership should be clear and transparent, with the actual ownership of a club being a matter of public record. If the Scottish Government believes in greater fan ownership then it must back this up with incentives.

Fundamentally we believe that supporters should have more say in the running of their football clubs and we believe that mutual ownership and governance according to co-operative principles is how to achieve this.

Learn more and get involved at party.coop/scotland



Fresh from the launch of the Co-operative Party's manifesto for Wales, Deputy General Secretary **Karen Wilkie** highlights some of the opportunities for members in Wales to get involved over the next few months.

In Wales, we are very proud of the record of the Welsh Government and its Labour and Co-operative Ministers in promoting and defending co-ops and mutuals, and we want to make sure that this continues. In January we launched our 'Co-operative Agenda for Wales 2016', which you can download from www.party.coop. At this year's Welsh Assembly elections on 5 May the Co-operative Party will be hoping to secure our largest ever group of AMs.

This is an exciting time for members to get involved and to campaign for your nearest Co-operative candidate. In North Wales, Ann Jones AM will be defending a narrow majority in the Vale of Clwyd and Julia Dobson, one of our new candidates will be contesting Ynys Mon. Or you can join Mary Wimbury campaigning right across the region as the number one list candidate. This is an easy area for lots of members in the north west of England to get to, so please come and support them.

In Mid and West Wales, Lee Waters will be our candidate in Llanelli, which Labour gained from Plaid Cymru in 2011 with a 0.3% majority.

In South Wales West we didn't stand any Co-operative Party candidates last time but will be working hard to elect Rebecca Evans in Gower, Jeremy Miles in Neath and Huw Irranca-Davies in Ogmore. Ceri Reeves is No. 1 on the regional list. Across in South Wales Central, Mick Antoniw, current Chair of the Co-operative Party's Assembly Group is our candidate in Pontypridd, and Vaughan Gething will be defending his seat in Cardiff South and Penarth. Anna McMorris will be No. 3 on the list.

And finally, in South Wales East (and very handy for our members coming over from the South West of England), we have John Griffiths in Newport East, Lynne Neagle in Torfaen and Alun Davies in Blaenau Gwent all defending their seats, and a new candidate - Rhianon Passmore - in Islwyn. Debbie Wilcox is our candidate on the regional list.

Find out more about getting involved in Wales and read a copy of the Agenda for Wales at [**party.coop/wales**](http://party.coop/wales)

Co-operative Action Network

Environmental and consumer protections. Taking on the payday lenders. Securing a credit union for the armed forces. History shows that when we're bold and ambitious, the Co-operative Party and co-operative movement can achieve great things that change our world. It's now time to unleash a new era of co-operative activism – and we want to help you to lead it.

In the coming months our new Co-operative Action Network will be working alongside Stella Creasy MP, members and supporters with a series of workshops to develop our campaigning and show how co-operation can tackle the problems facing our communities in 2016 and beyond.

Get involved at [act.party.coop/network**](http://act.party.coop/network)**

European referendum

This year may also see a referendum on Britain's continued membership of the European Union. Labour Movement For Europe's **Giampi Alhadeff** explains what's at stake.

Our nation faces what will probably be its biggest decision in a generation. The Referendum on Britain's continued membership of the EU will have a fundamental effect on the future of our nation and impact on generations to come. Our jobs, our rights at work, our national security and our voice in the world are all in danger.

The Co-operative Party is committed to Britain remaining in the EU. We will therefore play a leading role in making the argument for our continued membership of the Union and for a progressive reform agenda, one in which cooperatives and mutuals play a central role. The Co-operative Party will therefore work in close collaboration with the Labour Party's "Labour In" campaign, led by Alan Johnson, and with the Labour Movement of Europe (LME), a socialist society affiliated to the Labour Party, who have put together a solid programme of campaigning, information and action.

The LME is organising across the country: working with the Labour Party and the Co-operative Party, attending regional conferences, and speaking at local meetings across the UK. The battle to win this referendum will have to be won by local conversations up and down our country.

The Referendum is likely to take place this year and probably before the summer. The importance of the decision facing us cannot be underestimated. As you know the polls are volatile and if anything are moving against membership. The Co-operative Party together with LME will be campaigning with vigour for Britain's future to remain at the heart of a reformed EU.

Co-operative Party members can now join Labour Movement for Europe at the discounted rate of £10 - find out more at **party.coop/lme**

Membership+

As the political party for the co-operative movement, we're working to support and develop great co-ops that are building a fairer economy. Here are some of the ways you can involved and support the movement.

Co-operative Energy

By making your energy supplier co-operative, you get competitive prices and low carbon energy from an open, honest and transparent co-operative – you also get a share of the profits and a voice in how they are run.

And by switching through our website, Co-operative Energy will also make a contribution to the Party, at no extra cost to you! Comparing and switching is quick and hassle free and can be done online or by telephone and there is no need to talk to your current supplier. party.coop/coopenenergy

Phone Co-op

As the only telecoms co-operative in the UK, and an accredited Fair Tax Mark and Living Wage employer, we share many of our values with the Phone Co-op - that's why we've launched a new offer to members and supporters. If you switch to the

Phone Co-op as your provider, you get £10 free credit, plus they'll donate another £10 to the Party and 6% of your monthly spend at no cost to you. Simply switch quoting the partnership code AF030.

thephone.coop/coopparty

Co-operative Credit Union

Through your membership of the Co-operative Party you are now able to join the Co-operative Credit Union and access savings and loans for members at competitive rates. As well as being kinder on your wallet, you are also supporting a better way of banking.

The Co-operative Credit Union provides an easy way to save, from a little as £10 per month. And as a 'not for profit' financial co-operative, any surplus profit is returned to members via the annual dividend.

co-operativecreditunion.coop

Co-operative News

Co-operative News is the leading publication about – and for – co-operatives. We connect, challenge and champion co-ops across every sector and around the world, from Rochdale to Rio, Delhi to Delaware.

You can subscribe for one year with a credit/debit card, or with an annual direct debit, which will get you Co-op News delivered to your door every two weeks. Subscription is usually £52 a year – but Co-operative Party members get an exclusive 10% discount using the code party10 when you subscribe!

To stay in touch with co-operatives in the UK and beyond, subscribe at thenews.coop/subscribe

Co-operative College

We're incredibly proud of our strong heritage and roots but we're focused on our exciting future and are keen to innovate. We want to become more sustainable and meet the growing and changing demand for our services, in the UK and across the globe.

We've started this process. We've recently changed our structure so that we're an independent, member led charity with a new three year plan focussing on key areas such as:

developing co-operators; building co-operative capacity; advancing co-operative policy; and progressing global co-operation.

You can now join us a member and support our work - find out more at co-op.ac.uk/about/becomeamember

Join a society

Joining your local society is an important way to get involved and support the co-op movement in your community. By becoming a member you get a say in the way your society is run and a share of any profits..

Co-ops that support the Party include the Co-operative Group which has stores in many parts of the UK as well as national businesses like Co-operative Insurance and owns part of the Co-operative Bank. Midcounties Co-operative operates stores in parts of the midlands and south west as well as national businesses like Co-operative Energy. Other societies include Central England (parts of the midlands), East of England, Scotmid (parts of Scotland and Northern England) and Chelmsford Star.

To find out how to join or find one of the 6,000 other co-ops, credit unions and supporters' trusts party.coop/join-a-co-operative

politics for people

65 St John Street, London EC1M 4AN

020 7367 4150

info@party.coop

 @CoopParty

www.party.coop

Promoted by Claire McCarthy
General Secretary, the Co-operative Party, at
65 St John Street EC1M 4AN



Co-operative Party Limited is a registered Society under the Co-operative and Community Benefit Societies Act 2014. Registered no. 30027R.