



**co-operative
party**

Annual Review: 2019



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Annual Review 2019

Introduction

Since we were founded in 1917, the Co-operative Party has been a consistent voice for bottom-up radical change. A movement founded on the shop floors and factory production lines is no stranger to adversity, and despite ending the year with a snap election and a challenging result, the Co-operative Party remains a steadfast voice for co-operation.

No matter who is in power, co-operation is never out of power. Because co-operation is about people coming together, so nobody gets left behind. This is truer today than it has ever been in modern political history.

Co-operative councillors and mayors are making change happen across the country, demonstrating what co-operative values mean in practice. In every community, co-operative members and activists are campaigning for a fairer food system, investing in community energy schemes, tackling modern slavery, promoting Fair Trade, starting up co-operative projects, protecting community assets, and volunteering in community projects from buses to gardening.

The Co-operative Party is the political voice of the co-operative movement, and strives to build a fairer society where wealth and power are shared and the co-operative movement can flourish. As defined in our rules, the Co-operative Party seeks to –

“promote co-operative and mutual forms of economic and social organisation which are based on the principles of mutual ownership and democratic control, and to support political action in pursuance of the Values and Principles of the Co-operative movement in the UK and internationally”

This has certainly been at the heart of activity through 2019, from securing historic commitments to the co-operative movement in Labour’s general election manifesto, to securing funding in Wales for new social business, the Party has been actively engaging and supporting the movement to grow and thrive.

We are clear that things work best when the people involved have a say in how they run and a share in their success. Democracy shouldn’t end at the ballot box, and our work this year has sought to develop the policy underpinning and political support for greater democracy and participation in workplaces too. From housing to the climate crisis, co-operative values and principles show us that the answers to the big issues facing society today can be answered from the bottom-up.

These beliefs are shared by the thousands of co-operators up and down the country who have stood for election under our banner, who have argued for our ideas to be included in local manifestos, who have organised meetings and attended our events, and who are involved in their own local communities and co-operatives.

Strategic objectives 2019-21



Chair's report

When I started thinking about the Chair's introduction to the Annual Report in February, 2019 seemed like a tumultuous year. A lot had happened with three chairs for the Party and a new General Secretary – not to mention a new Prime Minister, a difficult December election, the drama of prorogued parliament and narrow Brexit votes.

Now, writing this foreword a few months later, in the middle of a national lockdown and while the world gets to grips with a pandemic - 2019 feels like a long time ago! Next year's annual report from the Co-operative Party will read like no other - both in terms of the challenges faced by communities and co-operatives, and in terms of the remarkable response by our members, the movement, and our elected representatives.

We started 2019 with a large group of MPs at Westminster, and representation in the Scottish Parliament and the Welsh Assembly as well as Co-operative representation at all levels and in all parts of local Government. Our Food Justice Campaign was taken up in many areas and built on the work done earlier in the campaign against Modern Day Slavery. Our campaigning at local level continued throughout the year with great support from the wider movement and our society members as well as individual members.

We ended 2019 with a challenging winter election. We are proud that we were able to support 50 candidates, and I am particularly pleased that this was our most diverse cohort of Parliamentary candidates yet with an historic number of women and BAME candidates. We were thrilled to welcome new co-operators to Westminster, as well as welcome many back. However we were also very sorry that many lost their seats. We owe our departing MPs a great debt of gratitude for their contribution to the movement in Westminster and their constituencies, we wish them well for the future and hope that we can still work together in whatever roles they find themselves.

The election, while not delivering the results we hoped and worked for, had some positive results for the Co-operative Party and movement. We were able to grow our membership through 2019 and especially during the election, as we increased our communications capacity and ensured our policy ideas were high profile and engaging. This can be seen in the strength of the co-operative contribution to Labour's manifesto which included a renewed commitment to double the co-operative sector, support community energy, and democratise football, among other key policy pledges.

It seems quite strange to me to be writing the report for 2019 as I was only chair for 19 days that year. The Party began 2019 under the stewardship of Gareth Thomas as chair, who stood down in the summer after almost twenty years of chairing the Party. Thank you Gareth for your many years of hard work championing co-operation.

Gareth was succeeded in June by Anna Turley as chair – sadly her time in the post was brutally cut short by the General Election, but we are hugely grateful for her contribution both as a member of the NEC and as chair.

In the summer of 2019 we also said goodbye to Claire McCarthy who achieved a huge amount for the Party and movement as General Secretary. I wish her luck in her new role. Following Claire's resignation, we were pleased at the wide range of highly skilled and experienced applicants who applied for the role. Congratulations to Joe Fortune on his appointment. His has certainly had a baptism of fire with having to cope with two new chairs and a snap General Election, especially ensuring that we had as many Co-operative Party candidates as possible across the regions and nations. I am optimistic for 2020 under his stewardship when even more changes and challenges are presenting themselves.

On behalf of the Party I would like to thank Joe and his whole team for the amount of hard work and innovative and creative thought that they put in to the Cooperative Party in 2019 and thanks also to all of our Councillors, PCCs, MPs, MSPs, Welsh Assembly Members, peers, Mayors and London Assembly Members who have taken the message of co-operation as a solution to so many of the problems that we are faced with at the moment. Also heartfelt thanks to so many of our Party members, both individual and corporate, who put co-operation into action last year in our communities and who are carrying on the challenging work this year and into the future.

Yours in Co-operation

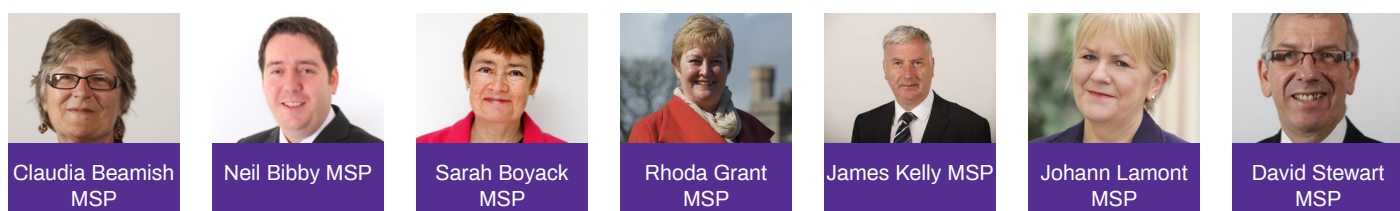
Chris Herries

Meet our representatives

House of Commons



Scottish Parliament



ⁱ Florence Eshalomi and James Murray were newly elected at the 2019 General Election

ⁱⁱ Luciana Berger, Mike Gapes, Chris Leslie and Gavin Shuker left the Labour and Co-operative Parties in February 2019.

ⁱⁱⁱ Louise Ellman left the Labour and Co-operative Parties in October 2019.

^{iv} Adrian Bailey stood down at the 2019 General Election.

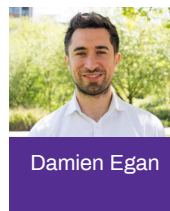
^v David Drew, Ged Killen, Jo Platt, Gareth Snell, Paul Sweeney and Anna Turley lost their seats at the 2019 General Election.

Welsh Parliament

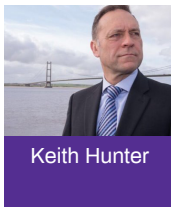


Directly Elected Mayors

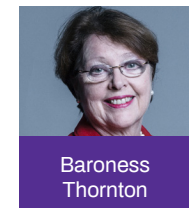
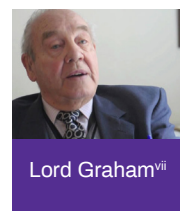
Metro Mayors



Police and Crime Commissioners



House of Lords



^{vi} Lord Davies passed away in March 2019.

^{vii} Lord Graham passed away in March 2020.

Support the election of co-operators at all levels of government

2019 in summary

2019 has been a tumultuous year for British politics. Despite the dramas of Westminster politics, the Co-operative Party has nonetheless ensured that co-operators have been supported and elected across the country.

While the snap general election may have defined 2019's political calendar, it was by no means the only opportunity to ensure co-operation was on the ballot paper. In May, co-operators across England stood in local and mayoral elections. Co-operative values and principles featured in local manifestos and hundreds of councillors, as well as a metro mayor in North Tyneside, are now in office putting those ideas into practice. And work in local government did not end in May. Work continued through 2019 to support co-operators in office across town halls in England, Scotland and Wales, and to support aspiring councillors ahead of elections in 2020.

We are also proud of the campaign we ran for the 2019 General Election. We supported 50 candidates and received over a million votes in seats across the country. Our cohort of 2019 was our most diverse yet. Over 50% of our candidates were women, and we had better than ever BAME and LGBT representation. We were very saddened that a number of stalwart co-operators lost their seats – in Leigh, Glasgow, Redcar, Rutherglen, Stoke-on-Trent and Stroud – and thank those former MPs for their service and all candidates for their efforts during the election.

All candidates had access to individual specialist staff campaign support, and in some more marginal seats staff worked directly with their campaign. Design support was offered remotely for leaflets and online materials and there were staff campaign trips to bring canvassing teams from head office to a number of seats around the country. The Co-operative Party fundraised £40k from members and supporters which was distributed among campaigns.

But we returned to Parliament undeterred, with 26 Labour & Co-operative MPs who will work tirelessly to put our movement's ideas for change into practice. In our Parliamentary group, we also welcome two new Co-operative MPs: Florence Eshalomi in Vauxhall and James Murray in Ealing.

Local government

Local elections took place on 2nd May for 8,311 seats across 248 of England's 343 local councils, including 33 metropolitan borough councils, 168 district councils and 47 unitary councils. There were also elections for

six directly elected mayors and some parish and town councils.

There were 472 Labour & Co-operative candidates – a significant increase on the 225 co-operative candidates who stood last time these seats were contested in 2015. A record number of candidates used co-operative on the ballot paper at 384, and co-operative ideas and branding were used in more leaflets and manifestos than ever before. 239 Labour & Co-operative councillors were elected, up from 102 elected when these seats were last contested in 2015, meaning there are now 815 Labour & Co-operative councillors. There are now 188 councils with co-operative councillors – there were 167 before the election and just 141 in 2017.

Labour & Co-operative councillors are an increasingly diverse group. Just over 41% of Co-operative councillors are women, up from 38% in 2018 and compared to 36% of all UK councillors. Their average age is 52, compared to 59 among all UK councillors, and just under 22% of Co-operative councillors are under 40 years old, compared to 10% of all UK councillors.

Some areas up for election in 2019 had large groups of co-operative candidates and the Party won a significant proportion of seats. In Stevenage there are 28 Labour & Co-operative councillors, 13 in Manchester, Milton Keynes, North Warwickshire and Slough, 12 in Medway, 11 in Liverpool and North Hertfordshire and 10 in Leeds. In the North of Tyne, as well as local co-operative councillors the new metro mayor, Jamie Driscoll, is Labour & Co-operative and stood on a platform of growing the co-operative sector in his region.

Inspire, educate and inform about co-operation

Events

Over the course of 2019, the Co-operative Party hosted and took part in more events than ever before. The annual conference in Glasgow was one of the Co-operative Party's biggest yet; the Party built on last year's launch of regional conferences to have a successful and well attended programme of events around the country; there were "Be a Councillor" events, fringes at Labour Party and co-operative movement events, events with diversity networks, a policy conference and the Party's annual local government conference.

Common Decency

Common Decency, March 2019: a policy conference bringing together campaigners, elected representatives, academics and members on how we can rebuild common decency and ensure decent living for all. Speakers included Meg Hillier MP, Sir Bob Kerslake, Anneliese Dodds MP, Philip Glanville, mayor of Hackney, and the CEO of the London Capital Credit Union.



Member-led events

The Co-operative Party now and then, Hull, February 2019: a one-day conference for members and supporters in Hull and the North East to learn more about the work of the Co-operative Party, with Tracy Brabin MP, Keith Hunter, the Humberside Police and Crime Commissioner, and Labour & Co-operative councillors.

- *Community Wealth Building Conference*, Liverpool, Sefton and Halton branch, February 2019: A free event to learn more about community wealth building with speakers from Preston Council and Mark Dowd MP. Sunderland branch also organised an event based on Community Wealth Building, with a workshop in September with councillors, academics, think tanks and local community organisations.
- Campaign day in Reading organised by the Surrey Berks and Bucks party, supporting Rachel Eden, a Labour & Co-operative candidate and local council candidates. Similarly, members in East Midlands organised a co-operative campaign day in Carlton and Nottingham and members in North East Essex in Colchester for local council candidates. In Birmingham, members organised a “Super Saturday” event to support their Labour & Co-operative candidate Preet Gill MP in December’s General Election.
- Kettering Co-operative Party organised a visit to Hackney Town Hall to learn from their Labour & Co-operative councillors and Mayor in March.
- People’s Vote March, March 2019: Co-operative Party members organised to march together alongside hundreds of thousands of others to demand a final say on Britain’s departure from the EU.

- A ‘Big Conversation’ on housing in Swindon, June 2019: An event to explore ideas and policies to grow co-operative housing organised by members in Swindon featuring local housing co-operatives and Jim McMahon MP.
- The Cardiff & Vale branch organised a discussion to learn more about co-operative approaches to social care, with Cartefi Co-operative, a pioneering Welsh social care co-operative, and the CEO of the Wales Co-operative Centre.

Regional and national conferences

2019 saw the Co-operative Party’s largest ever programme of regional and national conferences. In 2018, these conferences had around 135 attendees, and in 2019 this almost doubled to 260 attendees.

These ‘Co-operatives Unleashed’ events brought together member, supporters, councillors and MPs from each region to discuss policy and campaigning. Speakers at these events included Labour & Co-operative councillors from Oxford, Witney, Reading, Wandsworth, Preston, West Lancashire, Stockport, and North Warwickshire, as well as MPs including Matt Rodda and Sir Mark Hendrick.

‘Unleashed’ Conferences took place in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, as well as in the North West, South East, East and West Midlands, and Yorkshire and the Humber regions of England. Meanwhile the Activity Fund supported other Conferences in the North East and North Cumbria, South West England, London, and Eastern England. The Northern Ireland Co-operative Party national conference in June also included the launch of the Co-operative Party’s manifesto for Northern Ireland.

Local government conference

Unleashing Community Power, June 2019: The Co-operative Party’s annual local government conference,



bringing together councillors from across the UK for masterclasses, discussions, 'spotlight' sessions and keynotes. Speakers included Labour & Co-operative councillors from Manchester, Oxford, Hackney and Oldham, as well as Andrew Gwynne MP, Anna Turley MP and Sharon Hodgson MP.

Annual Conference

Building a Fairer Future - Annual Conference, October 2019: Conference this year was held in Glasgow. The theme 'building a fairer future' was forward looking, exploring the building blocks and practical action that can create change and inspire co-operative activism. 419 people registered to attend the Conference in Glasgow, this is almost double the 220 that attended the last time we were in Scotland (Edinburgh, 2013).

The number of delegates was 227, down just one compared to the previous year. More party councils sent the expected number of delegates (one per branch or one per 50 members), and there were over 100 visitors. Keynote speakers included Sir Keir Starmer QC MP, the Shadow Brexit Secretary, Richard Leonard MSP, Leader of Scottish Labour, and Christina McAnea, Deputy General Secretary of Unison. As well as keynotes and plenary discussions, the conference had a greater focus on workshops and practical breakout sessions to previous years, delivered in partnership with organisations including the Scottish Fair Trade Forum, CCIN, Social Enterprise UK, ABCUL, Oxfam, Energy4All, Common Wealth think tank, the Democracy Collaborative, and the Co-op College.

The conference was an opportunity to innovate and try new things. To reduce our carbon footprint, we didn't post packs and reduced the number of printed documents, using an online hub instead. 88% of attendees were supportive of this change.

Another new feature was the Topical Issues session.

This gave members and local parties the opportunity to choose topics in advance of conference for debate. This received very positive conference feedback, with mental health and modern slavery selected as the topics.

Events with the co-operative movement.

Co-operatives Working Together, February 2019: a Fairtrade Fortnight event for members and supporters in the Houses of Parliament on the role of co-operatives in promoting Fairtrade products. Speakers included the CEOs of the Fairtrade Foundation, Divine Chocolate and Revolver Coffee.

Ways Forward 7, April 2019: This year's annual event, organised by members of the co-operative movement, was sponsored by the Co-operative Party.

In August, the Co-operative Party joined forces with the Central England Co-operative and their chief executive to campaign on food justice.

Labour Conferences

The Co-operative Party played an active role promoting the Party's policy, campaigns and ideas at its sister party's events.

Taking Back our Towns – A Co-operative Approach to Rebuilding Communities, February 2019: a joint fringe event at the LGA Labour Conference with Lisa Nandy MP, Cllr Matthew Brown, Leader of Preston Council, and Henri Murison, Director of the Northern Powerhouse Partnership.

In March, the Co-operative Party held a successful fringe at the Scottish Labour Conference in Dundee on *The People's Money* with Scottish Co-operative Party MSP Kezia Dugdale, Scottish Co-operative MP Ged Killen and Mary Alexander the Deputy Scottish Secretary of Unite the Union, and chaired by Claudia Beamish MSP.

Eradicating Hunger in Wales, April 2019: The Co-operative Party's fringe at Welsh Labour Conference focused on campaigning for food justice and tackling food poverty locally and across Wales. Speakers included Jenny Rathbone AM, Chair of the Assembly's Cross-Party Group on Food and Nick Ireland of USDAW.

In Brighton at the UK Labour Conference, the Co-operative Party had a stall which promoted the work of the Party and movement. Linked with the food justice campaign, the stall was also home to a food collection for a local food bank.

The Co-operative Party also hosted a number of fringes as well as a rally and a breakfast meeting. Fringes included:

- *One Business at a Time* – Spreading new models of ownership, in partnership with Social Enterprise UK
- *Ending Scandal in Leasehold*, in partnership with the Building Societies Association and exploring themes around commonhold policy
- *Safer Communities, Safer Shopworkers*, in partnership with the Co-operative Group, as part of our campaign to end violence toward retail workers.
- *Rally Against Hunger* – with many of the leading charities and campaign organisations in the fight for food justice
- A breakfast discussion hosted with Community the Union and IPSE exploring challenges facing freelancers with disabilities.

Publications and policy

The Co-operative Party has educated, informed and inspired through its policy publications and communications. This year we have published a variety of pamphlets, policy papers and practical guides:

- *12 ideas for local government* – an updated policy paper for local councillors and candidates setting out some priority policy areas for inclusion in local manifestos. This is posted to every Labour Group with elections, and each policy area has a corresponding detailed briefing on the website.
- *Safer, Stronger Communities* – a pamphlet on community safety to provide our councillors, police and crime commissioners, members and communities with practical steps they can take to build safer stronger communities. The pamphlet includes case studies from around the country.
- *A Co-operative Green New Deal* – a detailed policy paper which was debated and voted on at annual conference, following a 6-month consultation with members. The ideas include policy for community energy, a just transition, a climate emergency and co-

operative-led green industrial strategy.

- *Community, Place and Power* – a detailed policy paper which was also debated and voted on at annual conference, following a 6-month consultation with members. Ideas include ways forward for devolving power, empowering local government, going beyond the town hall to involve communities from the bottom up, local government financing and digital democracy.
- *Building a Fairer Future* – the Co-operative Party's policy platform in the December 2019 General Election, including a comprehensive summary of the Co-operative Party's policy agenda and offering a to-do list for Parliament.
- *A Co-operative Agenda for Northern Ireland* – an ambitious and wide-reaching manifesto designed to radically reshape the Northern Irish economy around co-operative values, a wider more inclusive democracy and a growth in the co-operative sector.
- The newly designed *Pioneer* is a biannual magazine educating members and supporters on the work of the Party and the wider movement.

Press, social media and communications

Online, print and broadcast media are important ways to widen the audience for co-operative ideas and to involve more people with the Party, our policies and our campaigns. Over 2019, the Co-operative Party, our staff or our elected representatives have had articles published in a wide range of publications, including the House Magazine, the MJ, Citymetric, Politics Home, Tribune, Labourlist, Co-op News, and the Mirror. The Party has been interviewed on BBC radio and joined the popular podcast *Reasons to be Cheerful* with Ed Miliband MP to discuss democratic public ownership of water.

The Co-operative Party has increased its social media activity and reach, and has worked to increase the number of supporters who receive our updates by email.

2019 in numbers:

- We added over 9,250 email supporters last year
- Our tweets were seen 1.24 million times
- Our Facebook posts were seen 1.35 million times
- A tweet announcing our policies in the Labour manifesto received 19,200 views.
- 73,000 people engaged with our posts on Facebook
- Visitors to our website increased by 35%
- The number of people reaching our website from social media rose by 86%

Brand

To reflect the Party's renewed ambition, we launched a new brand identity featuring a fresh logo incorporating a bee. The beehive was initially used by the Rochdale Pioneers in the stonework of their first store on Toad Lane, back in 1844.

The party's new branding has already been adopted by dozens of local branches, who have received brand starter packs including a roller banner, tablecloth, membership forms, and a USB stick with templates to print and use.

The rebranding process began in 2018 when an agency, Soapbox, was appointed to refresh the Party's visual look-and-feel, the logo, and recommendations for how we communicate. After a year long process involving members, staff and elected representatives, a creative direction was agreed by the NEC and new stationary, promotional materials and guidelines were created ahead of the brand's launch in March.

General Election 2019

While the exact timing of the snap election in December 2019 was unknown, the Party had been working to ensure we are election-ready, working with candidates in target seats in areas like Swindon, Reading and Plymouth.

Elections are an opportunity to raise the profile of the Party in local communities and to promote our policy to the Labour Party as well as to the electorate. This election, we sought to engage our activists in new ways, be visible and support our candidates in their campaigns, and give our policy agenda a bigger platform.

The Co-operative Party held a campaign launch event - a first for the Party in a General Election - in Plymouth where we were defending one seat and targeting another. The event was a success, with local members in attendance and live streamed to an audience online via Facebook. The video had an estimated reach on Facebook of over 4,700 people. Increased social media and email output through the election means we attracted 5,500 new email supporters who signed up to learn more about the Party's activity and co-operative ideas, and 500 new members.

To engage activists in promoting co-operative ideas and supporting co-operative candidates, we created the "Campaign Hive" on Whatsapp so that we could share updates directly to members who had opted in to being more involved in the election campaign. We also organised a dial-in call for members with Co-operative MPs in the Shadow Cabinet to discuss the campaign and policy. New merchandise and co-operative campaign days helped to raise our profile.

In Parliament

It is important to the Co-operative Party that our representatives are well briefed and kept up-to-date on issues facing the co-operative movement. At regular meetings of the Parliamentary Group we have invited guest speakers from the movement to inspire and education parliamentarians, including the CEO of the Fairtrade Foundation, and campaigners and organisations which are tackling food poverty. In January we also organised an event, *Electoral Firsts in the 1918 Election*, in partnership with the History of

Parliament Trust, with MPs and members joining for a discussion of the first woman candidates and the first Co-operative Party MP, Alfred Waterson. Central England Co-operative commissioned a portrait of Alfred Waterson to commemorate his legacy as a co-operator, which hung in Parliament.

Deliver co-operative solutions locally, regionally and nationally

Co-operative representatives in local government, the Scottish Parliament, the Welsh Assembly, and Westminster have been championing the policies and campaigns important to the Co-operative Party and movement, working to deliver change and ensure co-operative values are represented in the places where decisions are made.

Double the size of the co-operative sector

Building on Labour's historic pledge to double the size of the co-operative sector in their 2017 manifesto, 2019 saw work continue to develop proposals to make this a reality. This included work in Westminster, the Welsh Assembly and Scottish Parliament to support co-operatives to succeed and grow, as well as partnership work with the Labour Party to develop detailed plans for delivery so that the next Labour and Co-operative government can hit the ground running from day one.

We formed an Implementation Group, pulling together the expertise and experience from co-operators from around the country to develop proposals. This was launched in Parliament with the Shadow Chancellor, John McDonnell MP, and hosted three roundtables - one in Manchester, one in Newport, South Wales, and one in Edinburgh.

These roundtables brought together senior leaders from large co-operative retail societies, building societies, SME co-operatives, credit unions, community pubs and more. The Implementation Group report detailed proposals for co-operative development support, and helped ensure the 2019 Labour manifesto included a commitment to a Co-operative Development Agency.

Labour & Co-operative MPs also worked to provide the co-operative sector with the support it needs to grow and thrive. In March, Luke Pollard MP, then Shadow Fisheries Minister, made front bench remarks on the Fishing Bill highlighting the success of fishing co-operatives from the South West to Scotland, and the need to help double the size of the co-operative sector in fishing. In May, the Co-operative Party held a roundtable in Parliament with the shadow Secretary of State for BEIS, Rebecca Long-Bailey MP, with representatives of SME co-operatives from across the country to explore the challenges that smaller co-operatives face. In June, Gareth Thomas MP secured a Westminster Hall debate for Co-ops Fortnight, highlighting the important contribution that the co-operative sector makes to the UK economy, and in



response to the Queen's speech Gareth also highlighted a lack of commitment from the Government to supporting the co-operative sector.

Outside of Westminster, Labour & Co-operative representatives are in power and delivering genuine co-operative change on the ground.

The new First minister of Wales, Mark Drakeford AM, agreed with the Co-operative Party's request that a minister be given specific responsibility for the co-operative economy, and Lee Waters AM now has this in his portfolio. Alongside Mark Drakeford, he met with Co-operative Assembly Members to discuss issues including food justice, procurement, social care co-operatives, employee ownership and a new community bank.

Lee also announced a three-year pilot bringing the Social Enterprise Academy to Wales and has committed to a review of the Co-operatives and Mutuals Commission recommendations to examine where progress has been made and where there needs to be a greater focus.

The First Minister also announced his support for the co-operative sector in May during questions in the Assembly. The Welsh Government backed this up in June by announcing £3 million funding for new social business. And in local government the Co-operative Party published its "12 ideas for local government" with practical ways to work co-operatively in local areas and respond to the challenges that communities face every day. These ideas found their way into manifestos from Bath and North East Somerset to Medway to Newcastle. In many areas, including West Oxfordshire, Stoke-on-Trent, Sunderland and Swindon, Labour & Co-operative manifestos pledged innovative ways to grow the co-operative sector locally, from co-operative development funds to anchor institutions buying goods and services from local co-operatives.

The Greater Manchester Co-operative Commission was launched in February by Jo Platt MP. This was an initiative promised by the Labour & Co-operative metro mayor for Greater Manchester, Andy Burnham, to bring

together commissioners from across the co-operative movement in the North West to develop proposals to grow the co-operative sector in Manchester. Similarly, in July Dan Jarvis MP, the Labour & Co-operative mayor for South Yorkshire announced the creation of the Co-operative Advisory Panel for South Yorkshire.

Retail crime

2019 has seen the Co-operative Party campaign to end the violence and abuse too often faced by retail workers. Working with Usdaw, the Co-operative Group and other subscribing societies, Labour & Co-operative representatives have worked to raise the profile of the issue, and to push for changes to legislation to create a new offense for people who threaten or attack shopworkers.

In January, Labour & Co-operative peer Roy Kennedy called for the government to support making it a specific offence to intimidate or assault a worker enforcing restrictions on a sale during the second reading of the Offensive Weapons Bill. Co-operative MPs took part in a Westminster Hall debate on the prevention of retail crime in April. The Co-operative Party organised a fringe event on retail crime at Labour's annual conference in September and in November, MPs helped to lead a Westminster Hall debate on "this house has considered the prevention of retail crime" during Usdaw's Respect for Shopworkers Week.

Meanwhile in Scotland, Daniel Johnson MSP, supported by Labour & Co-operative MSPs, published the Protection of Shopworkers Bill in October which will be debated through 2020. This new Bill seeks to give shop workers carrying out age-restricted sales the same safeguards afforded to emergency services carrying out their duties.

Financial inclusion

Ged Killen MP in his role on the Scottish Affairs Select Committee held an evidence session in March on access

to financial services to Scotland, and in April chased the Government through Treasury Questions to update on their progress in implemented recommendations from the Access to Cash Review.

In May, Jonathan Reynolds MP, in his capacity as a Shadow Treasury Minister, hosted a roundtable with large credit unions to identify opportunities to expand the sector, barriers to growth and examples of innovative best practice.

Later that month, Seema Malhotra MP led a Backbench Business Debate on financial inclusion and access to cash. Ged Killen MP raised the profile of this issue, and particularly the need to make cash machines free to use, in an article in the Huffington Post in June.

Democratic public ownership

In January, Gareth Thomas MP held a Westminster Hall debate on democratic public ownership in the water industry, and in February, Stephen Doughty MP secured a Westminster Hall debate on the rail industry, calling for co-operative and democratic public ownership. In March, Jim McMahon MP held an adjournment debate on bus services in Greater Manchester, calling for the formation of mutuals or co-operatives to make sure that passengers have a share and a say in the services they rely on.

Modern Slavery

Ending the scourge of Modern Slavery continues to be a campaigning priority for Labour & Co-operative representatives. In February, Alex Norris MP secured a Westminster Hall debate on the Seasonal Agricultural Workers Scheme, highlighting the encroaching role of Modern Slavery within migrant agricultural work, while Paul Sweeney MP asked about the consideration of Modern Slavery during International Trade Questions.

In a debate in March, Alex Norris MP, Preet Gill MP and Gareth Snell MP challenged the Government during a Westminster Hall debate on Modern Slavery and Victim Support – asking for the law to be amended to give victims longer than 45 days support, to improve enforcement and to monitor companies' compliance.

Carwashes are the most commonly reported site to the Modern Slavery Helpline so in April local government leaders, alongside MPs, London Assembly Members, City Mayors and Police and Crime Commissioners, signed the Co-operative Party's letter on carwashes, calling for the compulsory licensing of carwashes.

During an independent review of the Modern Slavery Act in June, Anna Turley MP highlighted in parliament the work of the Co-operative Group through their Bright Future programme supporting victims of modern slavery into employment, and Paul Sweeney MP and Alex Norris MP highlighted the lack of compliance with the existing legislation by other, less socially responsible, businesses. In response to the Queen's Speech in October, Jim McMahon MP also raised the need to do more to support

victims of Modern Slavery.

Co-operative housing

In June, Johann Lamont MSP led a debate on co-operative housing in the Scottish Parliament, asking the Scottish Government to recognise the key role of housing co-operatives and to open up the remit of Co-operative Development Scotland so that they have additional responsibilities to increase the number of housing co-operatives.

In April and again in June in Westminster, Gareth Thomas MP raised the need to open up empty land for veterans' housing co-operatives, suggesting that the Ministry of Defence could offer more help to homeless ex-military personnel through co-operative housing projects as is done in the USA.

In July, the Labour Party announced new policies on leasehold, which drew on Co-operative Party policies regarding the expansion of Commonhold tenure. The Scottish Labour Party also made co-operative policy commitments – in September, Scottish Labour Leader Richard Leonard MSP committed to a new law that would enable local councils, housing associations and housing co-operatives to acquire land at existing use-value to boost social house building.

Education

In February, Tracy Brabin MP as the Shadow Minister for Childcare raised the importance of co-operative childcare during a Westminster Hall debate, highlighting the work of co-operative nurseries she has visited and calling for the Minister to explore ways to support more co-operatives. Later in the year, at Labour's annual conference in September, Angela Rayner MP, the Shadow Secretary of State for Education, announced new Labour policy on the need for a co-operative university.

Food justice

Throughout 2019, the Co-operative Party has been campaigning for food justice, focusing on embedding a right to food in legislation alongside encouraging the take up of practical measures to tackle hunger at a local level. Councils have led much of this work: in Brighton & Hove the council came together to unanimously agree a motion in support of legislative change, and councils like Hackney have nominated a lead member for food justice and develop a food partnership and plan.

In March, Rhoda Grant MSP announced at the Scottish Labour Conference that the next Scottish Labour government will legislate for a right to food, and in December, Labour & Co-operative MSPs led a debate in the Scottish Parliament on food justice. The Co-operative Party's work here continues as the Scottish Government has promised a Good Food Nation Bill and is in principle committed to a right to food, a policy which has received widespread support including from the Scottish Human



Rights Commission amongst many others.

The Wales Co-operative Party has lobbied the Welsh Government on food justice, building on our resolution passed unanimously at Welsh Labour Conference, arguing for the recognition of the right to healthy and nutritious food, and a commitment to delivering food justice in the new 'national milestones' in Wales to track progress.

The work was underpinned by the publication of *Working Co-operatively for Sustainable and Just Food Systems* in Wales, a document commissioned by the Co-operative Party and members of the Co-operative Group in the Welsh Assembly.

Following a number of roundtable discussions with UK Labour's frontbench, Sue Hayman MP as Shadow Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs announced at Labour's conference in September that the next Labour government in Westminster would also commit to a Right to Food in a new Fair Food Act, halve food bank use in four years and build a secure, community-based local food system with a £6m Access to Food Fund, initially targeted at the areas of the country with the highest levels of food insecurity. Sue also spoke at the Co-operative Party's fringe event at Labour's Conference, which brought together the major groups working on food policy and hunger.

To be valued by our members as indispensable

Building a growing and active membership

The Co-operative Party is powered by the time, energy and support of our members right across the UK. At the end of 2019, we had 11,040 members, alongside 43,000 supporters involved in our campaigns.

We achieved strong recruitment in every region and

nation, helping to maintain the upward trend of recent years. Changes were made to how we deal with members in arrears, resulting in a fall in the overall figures as we removed those who had lapsed. Despite the drop, our membership is at the second highest level in our modern history.

Our recruitment also plays an important role in helping make the Party more diverse representative of wider society. In 2019 we began a process to allow members to tell us more about their background, helping to support our networks and track our progress.

As well as attracting new members to the Party, we also had a high retention rate and strong member satisfaction across all the key indicators that measure how members value us.

This includes new people coming forward to be officers, an increase in the number of candidates at the local elections, and improved attendance and feedback at our events and conferences. We also saw great growth in the number of members who joined our higher membership rates and clubs, or made a donation.

In the spring we launched a new design and look for our membership magazine, 'The Pioneer'. This has become a key tool for reporting our successes, helping drive increased local activity, and educating members on the wider movement, with practical case studies showing co-operative values in action and the difference our policies can make.

With new colleagues joining the team, we also began to implement wider changes to how we support and communicate with our members and activists, developing better resources to be rolled out in 2020 that empower them to lead activities and campaigns in their communities.

Developing local activity

We have members living in every single local authority in the UK, organised in around 200 branches focused on

member-led activity in their area. These branches are driven by hundreds of volunteer officers and activists who are at the heart of our work.

In 2019, our branches organised almost 400 local events and activities – that's an average of more than one every day of the year. These included campaigning sessions, street stalls, policy discussions and education events, and were supported by funding from our subscribing societies and the Activity Fund.

Increased member and branch activity was seen through a record number of party delegates attending Annual Conference in Glasgow, a large increase in the number of candidates for the 2019 local elections. Branches also received resource packs as part of our rebrand, helping increase visibility of the Co-operative Party locally.

Branches are also an important bridge between the co-operative and labour movements by electing delegates to Constituency Labour Parties (CLP). We affiliate to every CLP, meaning our delegates help ensure there is a voice for co-operation at all levels of our sister party. The General Election in December also saw more of our members on the doorsteps, giving greater visibility for Labour and Co-operative candidates.

We also had our largest ever programme of regional and national conferences. These *Co-operatives Unleashed* events brought together members and speakers from across the movement to discuss how we grow the size of the co-operative sector. They also allowed members to take part in our policy process and learn about their local co-operative economy.

Unleashed Conferences took place in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, as well as in the North West, South East, East and West Midlands, and Yorkshire and the Humber regions of England. Meanwhile the Activity Fund supported other Conferences in the North East and North Cumbria, South West England, London, and Eastern England.

Supporting our Member-led Networks

2019 saw the creation of our new Disability Network as the Party's fifth member-led network. These networks play an important role in helping highlight how the Party can become a more open and welcoming environment, as well as an opportunity for members to lead campaigns on the issues they care about.

Co-operative Party Youth held its annual Summer School in Birmingham in August. This event was the largest yet and provided a space for young members to learn more about getting involved in the Party as well as helping to shape our policies and campaigns.

Co-operative Party BAME held its first ever conference in Manchester in July. The conference was an important first step in strengthening the Network with a new steering committee set up to help develop a national programme of activity.

LGBT+ Co-operators supported our members taking part in pride events right across the country, helping raise the profile of the Co-operative Party and sign up new members to the Network.

Co-operative Party Women had several successful events, including marking International Women's Day at Parliament by highlighting the role of co-operatives in empowering women to shape their own lives and communities across the developed and developing world. They have also worked with MPs including Seema Malhotra MP to host networking events for members, organised campaign days for female candidates around the country, and hosted a 'Be a Councillor' training session in Doncaster ahead of local elections.

Co-operative Party Disability Network was formally created at Conference, but it built on the great work of members throughout 2019, with a particular focus on making campaign sessions and the process of becoming a candidate more accessible.

Ensure the Party is organisationally and financially stable

Membership income

In 2019 income from individual members was £326,500, an increase of 14.7% compared to the previous year. Since the start of the Centenary year in 2017 we have successfully increased our income from individual members by over 50%. Over recent years, this increase in individual membership income is helping to meet our aim to reduce our dependence on subscribing societies.

This sustained income growth has enabled the Party to invest additional resources in our members' priorities including additional campaigning capacity, allowed us to build on our existing work in local government and organise more events and conferences for members to participate in - such as training sessions for local government representatives.

At 31 December 2019, members of the Co-operative Party included 11,040 individual members, including 1,371 new members, and seventeen societies and affiliates:

Affiliates	
Central England	Enabled Works
Chelmsford Star	Glenhall Housing
Community Union	Grafton Housing Co-operative
Co-operative & Mutual Solutions	Midcounties
Co-operative Forum (NI)	Revolver
Co-operatives UK	Scotmid
Co-op Press	The Co-operative Group
East of England	United Cabbies

Fundraising

We are very grateful for the continued generosity of our members, in particular those who pay more than the standard membership fee in order to provide extra support for Party activity.

The Party has been successful in increasing the number of individuals who are making additional donations. The key element of this has been the 100 Club and 1917 Club, which were launched to mark our centenary in 2017. We have since introduced a voluntary higher rate of membership fee for members who are able to make an additional contribution to the Party.

The generosity of members in paying these rates helped us raised additional membership income of £26,000. We thank all our members for their continued support, without which the Party could not operate.

Subscribing societies

Our subscribing societies continue to be a vitally important source of support for the Party's activities – locally and nationally. We take every opportunity to engage with members of our subscribing societies to ensure they understand the work the Party is doing and the value that we bring to the whole co-operative movement.

Operations and Governance

National Executive Committee (NEC)

Elections to the Co-operative Party National Executive Committee take place every three years. The current NEC was elected in 2017 with a one member one vote ballot for the eleven regional and national places. They will serve until June 2020 and elections for the next NEC commenced in December 2019.

Two seats are appointed by the Co-operative Group and two elected from the remaining societies and affiliates. There is one Youth representative and two

representatives from the Co-operative Parliamentary Group.

At the June AGM of the NEC, Gareth Thomas MP stepped down as Chair after serving for many years in this role. Anna Turley MP and Chris Herries were elected as Chair and Vice Chair respectively.

Graeme Watkins passed away in May 2019 and will be much missed by the NEC and by very many co-operators.

The NEC held full meetings and phone conferences throughout the year, although following the announcement of the General Election the Strategy Weekend planned for late November was postponed.

NEC 2017-20	
Co-operative Societies	Jean Nunn-Price
	Graeme Watkins (<i>to May 2019</i>)
	Ian Miller (<i>from August 2019</i>)
Co-operatives UK	<i>Not Filled</i>
East	Chris Herries
East Midlands	Jamie McMahon
London	Gareth Thomas MP
North East & Cumbria	Janine Docherty
North West	Gary Booth
Scotland & Northern Ireland	Jim Lee
	Tony McMullan (<i>observer</i>)
South East	Andrew Pakes
South West	Sue Milestone
The Co-operative Group	John Hughes
	<i>Vacancy</i>
Wales	Alun Michael
Westminster Parliamentary Group	Jim McMahon MP
	Anna Turley MP (<i>to December 2019</i>)
	Lord Roy Kennedy (<i>observer</i>)
West Midlands	Chris Bain
Yorkshire & Humber	Cheryl Barrott
Youth	Nathan Burns

Youth Committee 2019

A new National Youth Committee was elected in autumn 2019 – you can view the full list of representatives at party.coop/youth. The NEC recorded its thanks to the outgoing Committee for all their work, including Stephen Stanners who served as Chair 2017-19.

Party staff

The Party now employs 14 permanent members of staff in both full and part-time roles. Caitlin Prowle has also worked for us throughout 2019 as Youth Organiser.

In 2019, Claire McCarthy left her role as General Secretary, having been with the Party since 2014. Following a recruitment process over the Summer, the NEC appointed Joe Fortune as General Secretary. Joe has worked for the Party since 2009.

Ben West, who was with the Party from 2014, also left in 2019.

We were pleased to welcome several new members of staff including Georgia O'Brien, Rob Bates and Robin Wilde.

Nine of the Party's staff work in Head Office (now in Elephant and Castle). The remaining staff work from Scotland, Wales, Yorkshire (2) and Derbyshire.

General Secretary	Claire McCarthy (<i>to August 2019</i>)
	Joe Fortune (<i>from August 2019</i>)
Deputy General Secretary and Board Secretary	Karen Wilkie
National Political and Policy Manager	Joe Fortune (<i>to August 2019</i>)
Membership Manager	Shane Brogan
Finance and Officer Manager	Dorota Kseba
Digital and Communications Officer	Ben West (<i>to March 2019</i>)
	Mark Whiley (<i>March-July 2019</i>)
	Georgia O'Brien (<i>from July 2019</i>)
Parliamentary & Political Officer	Rob Bates (<i>from November 2019</i>)
Political Officer (Scotland) - Part Time	Richard McCready
Party Support and Principle Six Officer - Part Time	John Boyle
Local Government Officer - Part Time	Emma Hoddinott
Policy Officer - Part Time	Anna Birley
Campaigns Officer	James Butler
Communications Officer - Part Time	Robin Wilde (<i>from October 2019</i>)
Events Co-ordinator - Part Time	Issy Oozeerally
Membership and Executive Assistant	Joel Northcott

Fair Tax Mark

In 2019, the Party was again awarded the Fair Tax Mark and continued to be the only political party in the country to do so. The majority of organisations accredited with the Fair Mark are co-operatives and mutuals.

#dyingtowork

The Co-operative Party has signed the GMB's #DyingtoWork Charter, which protects the rights of our staff at work should they face a terminal illness. It seeks greater security to ensure they cannot be dismissed as a result of their condition.

Living Wage

The Party also maintained its accreditation as a Living Wage Employer in 2019.

Head Office

The Party moved head office in 2019, leaving Farringdon for Elephant and Castle. This was a substantial organisational feat but one that we believe will be economical in the long-term.

Rules

The NEC continued to review the Party's rules in 2019 to ensure that they are clear and consistent.

Compliance with the rules and policies of the Party by members is good. Disciplinary issues are investigated as swiftly as possible and managed by the General Secretary in the first instance, supported by the Disputes Sub Committee of the NEC where necessary. Appeals are to the Disciplinary Committee (CPDC), which is an independent committee elected by and from the membership every three years. There were no cases necessitating a meeting of the CPDC in 2019.

Compliance

As both a Political Party and a registered Co-operative Society, the Party must comply with the Political Parties, Registration and Referendums Act 2000 and the Co-operative and Community Benefit Societies Act 2014, reporting to both the Electoral Commission and the Financial Conduct Authority.

Detailed information on the Party's compliance can be found separately in the Board Report and Accounts 2019, which will be available at the Society AGM in June 2020.

