

THE



**co-operative
party**

Members' Magazine Spring/Summer 2020

PIONEER



Liverpool's quiet
co-operative
revolution
06

Florence Eshalomi MP:
A new Co-operative
voice in Parliament
10

Love it? List it!
Our new community
assets campaign
24

‘By amplifying diverse voices and empowering members to take action, you can build change from the bottom up.’

See ‘Movement Building’,
page 10





Welcome to your latest edition of The Pioneer



The beginning of a new decade brings with it fresh ambition and fresh opportunity.

In the run up to the New Year, there was a trend of people posting '2010 vs 2020' pictures on social media. If the Party were to be able to be pictorially characterised in a similar fashion, I believe it would demonstrate incredible growth and change.

However, we are by no means content. This edition of The Pioneer focuses on how we can grow our movement in the upcoming years.

This decade must be one of co-operative and Co-operative Party proliferation – we have such a positive and apposite message allied with our values and principles, we owe it to our communities and society to ensure that the answers we have for the times we live in are felt, embraced and adopted.

I hope if that social media trend comes around again in 2030, we can collectively look back with true pride at the steps we have taken together in building the co-operative

commonwealth.

In this edition we reflect on the co-operative movement's history (p. 08), explore how we can build on those traditions to modernise our movement (p. 10), and we hear how trade unions are organising to win in the gig economy (p. 18).

We also look at the work our councillors are doing to build local co-operative economies (p. 04) with the case study of Inclusive Economy Liverpool (p. 06), and our new Love It? List It! campaign to protect our community spaces (p. 23).

Finally, we introduce you to our newest MP Florence Eshalomi (p. 16) and our new Disability Network (p. 26). And if you live in England, you can find out about standing for election this May (p. 25).

We have a busy few months ahead – so it's great to have you as part of the team!

Joe Fortune, General Secretary

Contents

04

Let's Build It Together

06

Case Study:

A quiet revolution in Liverpool

08

The Co-operative Movement: Values in Action

10

The Long Read:
Movement Building

14

Explained:
How It All Fits Together

16

The Conversation:
Florence Eshalomi and Andrew Pakes

20

Spotlight:
Northern Ireland, Scotland & Wales

23

Love It? List It! Campaign

24

Policy Process 2020

25

Member Updates: Elections, Disability Network and Events

THE PIONEER

Tel: 02073674150

Email: mail@party.coop

Editorial enquiries: Georgia O'Brien and Shane Brogan.

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

Promoted by Joe Fortune on behalf of the Co-operative Party, both at Unit 13, 83 Crampton Street, London, SE17 3BQ. Printed by Solopress, 9 Stock Road, Southend-on-Sea Essex, SS22 5QF.

Let's Build it TOGETHER



Anna Birley
Policy Officer,
Co-operative Party

We can help restore trust in politics by giving people the means to create and build wealth in their communities. That's what Labour and Co-operative councillors are already doing - and more should follow their example.

Since the EU referendum result it has become something of a cliché to talk about how to respond to the sense of powerlessness felt in many communities. The foundations of our economy have been shifted by Brexit, technology and deindustrialisation – and in turn these have shone a light on a growing divergence in views and values across geographies and generations. This divergence is both a symptom and cause of the breakdown of the ties that traditionally brought people together.

The mantra of trickle-down economics is being tested, as towns and cities who have long relied on inward investment to revitalise their economies have grown tired of waiting for austerity to end. They find themselves bearing the brunt of distant corporate decision-making. Britain's manufacturing heritage has been replaced by call centres and warehouses where jobs are too often secure only until the service is cheaper to provide elsewhere.

But, despite a bruising election defeat for Labour, our co-operative movement and activists aren't mourning. They're organising.

They represent a different way of doing politics - one grounded in communities, which builds from the bottom up and empowers people to take control over the things that affect their daily lives. From Preston to Plymouth, from North Ayrshire to Merthyr Valley, you can see this politics in practice. Labour and Co-operative councillors are building community wealth, using public procurement and working with anchor institutions to keep money circulating in their local economies. And crucially, they are growing the co-operative economy.

In Preston, for example, freelance psychologists have organised into a co-operative to share services and support each other. Plymouth councillors have

signed the city up to an ambitious pledge to double the co-operative sector. In Manchester, the Greater Manchester Co-operative Commission seeks to create a co-operative enterprise zone where new co-operative enterprises can thrive. In Oxfordshire, councillors have brought the community together to create a community-run bus. In Leeds, self-employed workers are piloting co-operative ways of providing each other sick pay and security.

These are not isolated examples – our co-operative values of participation, social responsibility and democratic accountability are taking root and finding practical application up and down the country. Imagine how extending democracy to our workplaces, cultivating engagement in civic decisions and building communities which support each other looks like on a national scale – Labour does not need to be in power in Westminster to make this happen now.

Our mission now as a Party and a movement is to grow this activism and to demonstrate our values and principles through their practical application. We know that co-operation offers many of the answers that our communities are asking for, and that it also offers a way forward for the left. ●

A quiet revolution in Liverpool



Cllr Patrick Hurley
CEO, Inclusive Economy Liverpool

There are almost too many co-ops in the city to keep track of. There's the Smithdown Social, proving the local community with access to great music, arts, culture and training. The Naked Lunch Cafe, Windmill Wholefoods and Homebaked Bakery, and Lock and Quay Pub all give a retail food offer that is tough to beat. Meanwhile, Urgent Care 24, Kitty's Launderette and Arts Hub 47 all provide different services to the community that aren't catered for elsewhere.

Taking this mini-renaissance to its next level, with an expected further expansion in the sector is the work

that Inclusive Economy Liverpool are doing with Creative Spaces Co. and Social Impact Consulting. Our CoStarters Pioneers programme is helping potential co-operators learn the basics of running a co-operative business and is running throughout 2020 and beyond to help people turn their ideas into action.

Since launching in Autumn 2019, our programme has already

had one recognisable success: The Clocktower Neighbourhood Society, formed with a view to taking over the running of a disused 19th century building on the outskirts of the city centre and turning it into a Co-op Academy to hothouse new ideas, and act as a recognisable physical home for the sector in the city. There should be more where that came from over the next twelve months too.

Over the last couple of decades, Liverpool's economic growth strategy has had a large focus on attracting external capital investment, both from large private organisations and from the European Union. It's highly likely that such a strategy has run its course for both obvious and unexpected reasons. In the meantime, the entrepreneurial skills

and talents of local people have perhaps been given insufficient attention. Changing that situation is part of the reason for the creation of CoStarters Pioneers.

It's a tough ask to protect state-funded business advice and support in an era of cuts to frontline services all round. But if the country is to grow its grassroots business sector, including the co-operative movement, and genuinely reverse the trend of retail closures, protectionism and gig economy work, then it's imperative that choices along those lines are made with an eye on the longer-term prospects for jobs and business growth throughout the next decade.

In Liverpool, we're hopeful that the work we've started will bear fruit in the coming years, and a renewal of the co-operative model will become evident. And of course, we're all stronger when we work together, so please do get in touch so we can all share knowledge of what works and how to survive in trying times. ●

**More
information at:**
ielifiverpool.com

From a store in Rochdale to a movement of three million co-operatives worldwide, co-operation is an idea with a proud history and an exciting future.

The co-operative movement: a history of values in action



Anna Birley
Policy Officer,
Co-operative Party

Just before Christmas 1844, a working-class community in Rochdale came together to take a stand. Facing a 12-hour working day, a government ban on trade unions, and food that was often deadly – they did something simple but revolutionary.

Building on the work of earlier co-operators, they established the Rochdale Society of Equitable Pioneers, setting down our co-operative values and principles for the first time.

Their goal was to sell good quality food at affordable prices; placing equality at the heart of what they did by giving every man and woman a vote and say, with members in the local community receiving the profits, not far-off investors.

Co-operation spread across the country from that first shop on Toad Lane, becoming a large movement for social change. They showed that you don't always have to be in power at Westminster to change our communities for the better, and that legacy carries on today.

As the number of co-operatives grew so did the movement: 150 years ago, they founded what is now Co-operatives UK, in 1917 they established the Co-operative Party, and that was followed by the Co-operative College, who celebrated their centenary in 2019.

Toad Lane is now a museum, but the society founded there grew to become the Co-operative Group. 175 years later it continues to show a better way of doing business that supports and invests in our communities and is part of an active movement that includes Scotmid, Central England, East of England and Midlands co-operatives.

Although we have a proud history, the co-operative movement



The Rochdale Pioneers' co-operative store on Toad Lane, Rochdale. CC BY 3.0: <https://bit.ly/2v2nxtb>

is not rooted in the past, but in our shared values and principles.

Scotmid toasted their 160th anniversary last year by encouraging every store to raise £160 for their charity of the year, raising over £20,000. And the Co-operative Group have used their 175th year to give to 4,500 local community causes.

Together we've launched a new era of co-operative campaigns, including working with Central England to bring our Food Justice campaign to the stages of Greenbelt music festival, and we're

working across all societies to protect retail workers from violence.

From tackling plastic waste and working to end modern slavery, to new co-operative ventures investing in community owned housing and energy, the movement is as relevant and transformative as ever.

We believe in an economy where wealth and power are shared, and at the heart of this is a larger co-operative sector.

The co-operative movement shows that ordinary people working together can change society. We are building on our rich heritage of change from the bottom-up to create a fairer country and make the 2020s a co-operative decade. ●

Movement Building

'A movement isn't just a group of people working towards a common goal. A movement is the stories we tell each other. It's our shared values and principles. It's the bonds we build.'



Georgia O'Brien
Digital and Communications
Officer, Co-operative Party



Joe Fortune
General Secretary,
Co-operative Party

The last decade saw the rise and reinvigoration of many political and social movements, driven not only by the incredible connecting power of the internet but by ordinary people looking for ways to make their voices heard outside of traditional structures. From #MeToo to Extinction Rebellion, modern movements have shown that by amplifying diverse voices and empowering members to take action, you can build change from the bottom up. The co-operative movement is strong, but there is so

much more we can do to make it truly transformative. And that starts now, in our local communities.

Our point of pride as a party has always been our practicality. It's what makes us different: we don't just talk, we act. We don't just organise, we build. That's why in recent years our members haven't just been holding meetings: they've been taking action – from saving their local pubs to starting community bus networks. The future of our movement lies in expanding this work and focusing on co-operation in action. We need our members to be community pioneers: identifying local issues from homelessness to housing and helping to craft local solutions. Concern for community is a key co-operative principle and by rooting ourselves in our communities, we can start



Moss Community Energy Launch in Greater Manchester. CC BY 2.0, from TenTenUK.

[continued from page 11](#)

making a difference right now.

The Party can act here as the connective tissue between co-operative communities and the centres of power, joining the dots between the work co-operators are doing on the ground and the politicians and policies that can take those ideas to communities across the country. If a local community energy co-op sets an incredible example of providing cheap green energy to a community, we can use that evidence to lobby for change across the country. Our role as the

political party of the movement is to provide co-operators with the tools they need to improve their own communities: from electing co-operators onto councils who can support local projects, to working in Westminster to make laws that create a better environment for co-operatives to thrive.

Another lesson to learn from successful modern movements



is that our diversity is our strength. A crucial element of a local approach is that it is also an opportunity to bring new voices into our movement. By reaching out to a more diverse audience, we can bring new ideas, energy and enthusiasm. Part of the strength of our movement is our heritage: for over a hundred years, we have been making change from the shop floor to the halls of power. But while I'm proud whenever I see the historic photo of the Rochdale Pioneers, we should remember that isn't the face of our modern movement. To expand, we must be rooted in our history while being more reflective of the young, vibrant and diverse movement we aspire to be.

A movement isn't just a group of people working towards a common goal. A movement is the stories we tell each other. It's our shared values and principles. It's the bonds we build. If our movement is to grow, we have to get better at demonstrating the co-operative difference through practical action and bringing new voices into our movement. It can be all too tempting to evangelise that we have all the answers – that

co-operation is the solution to all the political, economic and social problems that Britain faces. But the true way to grow our movement isn't to lecture about its virtues – it's to show, not tell. ●

HOW IT ALL FITS TOGETHER



Shane Brogan
Membership Manager,
Co-operative Party

Whether you're new to the Co-operative Party or an experienced co-operator, there are many ways that you can get involved and support our work.

Our Party relies on the time and energy of our members: from helping run local branches and our networks to taking part in our policy process and campaigns and electing our NEC and candidates.

Here's a look at how the Party operates and the different ways members can get involved – and a quick guide to some of jargon you might hear at a branch meeting.

LOCAL BRANCHES

Branches are at the heart of local Party activity, allowing members to debate policy, select candidates and organise campaigning. They elect delegates to CLPs, Party Councils and Conference. If you want to get more involved email: membership@party.coop.

CAMPAIGNS

Taking part in campaigns is one of the ways you can help us build a fairer society. Recently we've worked on modern day slavery; violence against retail workers; and food justice. Love it? List it! has just launched to protect community spaces – read more on page 23.

LABOUR MOVEMENT

For nearly a century, the Co-operative and Labour Parties have worked together. We stand joint election candidates, with 26 MPs, 7 MSPs, 11 AMs, and 800 councillors representing both parties. We also co-operate at a local level and members elect delegates to Constituency Labour Parties (CLPs).

PARTY POLICY

Each year our member-led policy process asks members and branches for your ideas and feedback on our policy platform. This then goes to annual conference, where delegates vote on the final document. This year's process is now open – read more on page 24.

ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Conference is our keynote event, bringing together members and speakers to debate and vote on policy, discuss our strategy, and shape our campaigns and activities. This year we're in Leeds on 17-18 October. You can attend as a delegate or as an individual member.

CO-OPERATIVE MOVEMENT

We're proud to be the party of the co-operative movement since 1917 – championing a society with co-operative principles at its heart. Our movement has 14 million members and a turnover of £38 billion, showing a way of doing business based on values, not profits.

NATIONAL COMMITTEE

EXECUTIVE (NEC)

The NEC sets the Party's strategy and political direction. It's elected by members and includes representatives from the nations and regions, as well as from our affiliated co-operatives and trade unions. New elections take place this spring – read more on page 25.

MEMBER

NETWORKS

Networks support members to organise campaigns, share experiences and shape our work. Our networks include Youth; Women; BAME; and LGBT+. You can read about the new Disability Network on page 26 or find out more about all our networks at party.coop/networks.

PARTY COUNCILS

Branches are grouped to form a Party Council, which administer the Party in their area, and support branches and member activity. Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales have a national Party Council. In England Party Councils usually cover several counties or a full region.

the conversation

FLORENCE ESHALOMI MP

Florence Eshalomi was elected as the new Labour and Co-operative MP for Vauxhall at the 2019 General Election. She was elected as the London Assembly Member for Lambeth and Southwark in 2016.



Congratulations on your recent election as Labour and Co-operative MP for Vauxhall, what does it mean to you to represent your constituency as a Co-operative MP?

It's the greatest honour of my life to be elected by the people of Vauxhall to represent them in Parliament. It means a great deal to do so as a joint Labour and Co-operative Member of Parliament, and represent the respective history and values of both.

Communities like mine have suffered over recent years, and whether it's the economy or the decision

on our place within the EU, too many feel like politics has left them behind. Since the election I've been working to put co-operative values in action, and show people another way of doing politics is possible.

How important are elected co-operators in Parliament for the wider co-operative movement?

Co-operative parliamentarians are a crucial presence at the heart of our political system, providing a strong voice to stand up for the co-operative movement and making sure local co-operation can continue to thrive in communities closer to home.

But effective Co-operative parliamentarians are part of a wider structure that represents our movement right across the country. From local government, devolved administrations in Scotland and Wales, to communities making change happen from the bottom up with co-operative initiatives, co-operators are working together everywhere. And with council elections fast approaching, it's as important as ever to have Co-operative Party representation at all levels.

With a history of involvement in the co-operative movement, how do our values shape your politics, both within Westminster and before it?

As a Co-operative councillor, Member of the London Assembly, and now MP, co-operative values have always been at the heart of how I approach politics.

In promoting co-operative principles, policy, and co-operatives themselves, I've always endeavoured to ensure power and wealth are shared more fairly in the hands of those making decisions in our communities, and I'll continue doing so in Westminster.

Given the current political landscape, what opportunities do you anticipate for the Co-operative Party?

In what is obviously a difficult time for the wider Labour movement, the Co-operative Party has a real opportunity to provide the progressive, pragmatic and optimistic solutions to so many of the challenges people face.

We have the chance to demonstrate the co-operative way of doing things, by putting our values at the very heart of how we do politics.

From housing, access to financial services, community safety, the wider co-operative economy and so much more, our movement and its principles can show the way to share wealth and power. ●

'I've always endeavoured to ensure power and wealth are shared more fairly in the hands of those making decisions in our communities'

ANDREW PAKES

Andrew Pakes is Director of Communications and Research for the Prospect trade union, and a current member of the Co-operative Party's NEC.



In this edition of 'The Pioneer' we look at movement building – what are your reflections on the Trade Unions' work in attracting new people in to membership and activism?

Today's world of work needs worker voices more than ever. The rise in precarious working, always-on culture, the impacts of austerity and ongoing squeeze on living standards all point to an economy that isn't working for working people. This has always been the space in which unions

operate, building on a drive to help people get on at work and create a sense of autonomy for workers that is shared with the co-operative movement.

Just 16% of workers in the private sector are in a union today. But there is a sense that worker organisation and unions are on the rise. Work can be an anxious place for many people whether that is due to fears about your job or poor pay. There is an appetite to help create a sense of belonging and

shared identity at work that is helping to grow many unions rebooting ourselves as a movement.

Given the radically changing nature of work and workplaces how are Trade Unions such as Prospect looking to develop new methods of organising?

There are many shared similarities between the co-operative movement and modern trade unionism. The starting point is about mutual interdependence and creating better individual opportunities through raising our collective endeavours. At Prospect and in our Bectu sector, we are making the best of new technology and drawing from ideas in community organising to supplement our traditional ways of working.

We already have thousands of freelance members, particularly in the creative industries, but as the economy changes at an ever faster pace we are creating new forms of engagement and networks for members. This means looking at new forms of collective voice, such as negotiating industry conditions for freelance and contract workers, and providing tools to enable members to build power wherever they are based.

You have written about 'DIY Unions' and tech activism in the US – what lessons do you think we can learn here in the UK?

There is a huge amount of energy coming out of a new breed of DIY organisation in the US, particularly in the tech sector and gig economy. Much of this comes as workers fight big tech and a hostile government to get basic protections. But it also comes from new forms of activism over concerns around discrimination in technology.

We are working with a collection of unions across the world to help develop our own worker tech, and sharing new tools to put power in the hands of workers. We are testing a new app in the UK that works much like a FitBit except all of the data is owned and held by workers. Using some of the tools that big tech itself uses, we are creating tools to

allow workers to collectively and share their own data together to challenge employers.

One of the policy challenges the co-operative movement has been looking to make a difference in recent years has been precarious working – in what ways should the trade union movement and the co-operative movement work together closer to provide real support to workers in these areas of the economy?

I really believe that trade unions and co-operatives share values that make us much stronger when we work together. We live in an era where division and anxiety are used to drive wedges between people. Neither waiting for a different government nor hoping for top down solutions are answers.

We need to reclaim a sense of community whether that is where you live or work. As I step down from the Co-op Party NEC this year, I really hope we can create more opportunities for co-operatives and unions to share ideas and make progress together. ●

Northern Ireland: The Winds of Change?



Tony McMullan
Chair, Northern Ireland
Co-operative Party

2019 was a busy year for election tellers in Northern Ireland, with three elections in just over six months, for local government, European Parliament and then Westminster.

Since its creation almost a century ago, politics here has been dominated by the border issue with political parties aligned to the unionist and nationalist communities coming out on top.

That's meant it's been very difficult to get a government that will support the co-operative policies we know Northern Ireland needs.

But these elections are the start of a more hopeful era, with the moderate parties and those who identify as neither nationalist or

unionist making gains at the expense of Sinn Féin and the DUP.

The results of the General Election in December means the return of progressive voices from Northern Ireland at Westminster, with both the SDLP (Labour's sister party) and the cross-community Alliance Party gaining seats.

There are real signs of optimism, and the Northern Ireland Co-operative Party is ready to play our part, with our first manifesto published last year setting out our vision of a more co-operative society.

This is the ideal opportunity for the Labour and Co-operative Parties to give the people of Northern Ireland the chance to vote for cross community, social democratic and co-operative policies. The time has come for the Labour Party to take the historic step to stand candidates here, a move that the Co-operative Party supports.

Hopefully, it won't be too long before we see Labour and Co-operative candidates pounding our streets. ●

Scotland: My Fight for Retail Workers



Daniel Johnson
Labour MSP for Edinburgh
Southern

My Bill to give more protection to retail workers has now started to make its way through the Scottish Parliament.

I am really pleased with the level of support that it has had from the co-operative movement. Scotmid and the Co-operative Group have been supportive. My fellow Scottish Co-operative Party members have also been very supportive, and I want to thank you for that.

When I formally tabled my Bill I was pleased that my friend Eddie Thorn was there to represent the Scottish Co-operative Party and show your on-going support.

From alcohol to cigarettes, from knives to acid there are now more than 50 types of product which are restricted by law. It is staff on the shop floor who we expect to enforce those laws, and who all too

often pay the price in the form of violence, threats and abuse from customers. That shouldn't be part of anyone's job.

In the next few months the Bill will make its way through the committees of the Parliament and eventually to a debate in the Scottish Parliament. If like me, you believe that people should be able to go to work free from fear then please take the time to contact your MSPs and ask them to make sure that the Scottish Parliament supports my Bill.

Please help me to make a difference and protect retail workers. ●

'It is staff on the shop floor who we expect to enforce those laws, and who all too often pay the price'

**Find your MSPs:
[parliament.scot/
msps](http://parliament.scot/msps)**

Wales: Working together for sustainable food



Poppy Nicol
Sustainable Places
Research Institute, Cardiff
University



Alice Taherzadeh
School of Geography and
Planning, Cardiff University

Commissioned by the Wales Co-operative Party and the Co-operative Party Group of AMs, researchers at the Sustainable Places Research Institute have published a new report on 'Working Co-operatively for Sustainable and Just Food Systems'.

Their work highlights how co-operative ways of working have the potential to support sustainable and just food systems within Wales.

Currently, co-operatives and co-operative ways of working play a fledgling role in the Welsh food economy. The report suggests co-operative ways of working could and should play an important role in fostering sustainable and just food systems in Wales in the future. This requires political and legislative support from the Welsh Government.

They found that challenges were found to be hindering the scaling-out of co-operative economies and

the flourishing of sustainable and just food systems within Wales.

The report also explored co-operative case studies from around the world, including Wales' Cae Tan, which offers insight into how community supported agriculture (CSA) can help create thriving local economies, cultivate healthy produce and support local ecology.

The study presents three key policy recommendations we need to work on:

1. Scaling-out sustainable and just food production in Wales
2. Co-producing Local Food Economies and Cultures through Food Hubs
3. Supporting Co-operative Welsh Economies: Information, Training and Advice

You can read the full report and find out more about our campaign at party.coop/site/wales. ●

'Co-operative ways of working could and should play an important role in fostering sustainable and just food systems in Wales in the future'

Love It? List it!

Campaign



James Butler
Campaigns Officer,
Co-operative Party

We're losing around 4,000 communal spaces every year. In some cases, cash strapped councils are forced to sell off their estate, in others the private sector is prioritising short-term profit at the expense of social value. In every case, the community ends up losing a much-loved space whether it's a pub, community hall, library, or open space.

Concern for community is a central co-operative principle, so it's no surprise that the Co-op Group has already done much to raise awareness of what might be the greatest loss of common space since the Enclosures. And it's why we're asking members to speak

to their friends and neighbours to identify the communal spaces that they love the most as part of our 'Love it? List it!' campaign.

In England, we are asking members to use the powers of the Localism Act 2011 to list their spaces as 'assets of community value'; in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland we can use the information about the places people love to encourage the Governments to legislate to protect our common open spaces.

We all know what's important to our community, and together as Co-operative Party members, candidates and representatives we can all make a difference. If you love it, list it. ●

**'Concern for
community
is a central
co-operative
principle'**

Back the campaign:
party.coop/loveitlistit

Policy Process 2020



Anna Birley
Policy Officer,
Co-operative Party

In the tradition of co-operation, our policy process is member-led and is your opportunity to shape the ideas we'll take to all levels of Government.

We're excited to announce that this year, our policy process will focus on:

Connecting communities: from buses to broadband

We'll be looking at the physical and virtual infrastructure that connects our communities, and asking how co-operative solutions can help.

Corporate governance: making businesses work for the common good

We'll be looking at how we govern our businesses so that they are more responsible and sustainable, in line with our co-operative values.

Get Involved

You can find out more about our policy process and how you can contribute by visiting our website on party.coop/policy/2020.

Our policy process consultation will run until 14th June.

You can take part by:

- Attending your local Co-operative Party meeting and having a policy discussion
- Coming to a Regional Conference in your region
- Individually, using the online form
- On behalf of a community group or co-operative that you're involved in

Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland

The policy process 2020 covers the whole of the UK and members in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland are encouraged to take part.

In addition, the Wales, Scottish and Northern Ireland parties lead policy development for their devolved administrations. In Scotland, there will be a Scottish policy process to prepare for the Scottish Parliament elections in 2021, with details announced soon. In Wales, themes for consultation will be launched later this year with online and branch consultation meetings ahead of Welsh Parliament elections in 2021. ●

Member Updates

Co-operative Party Elections 2020

This spring, we're holding elections to the Co-operative Party's National Executive Committee, to take office for three years from June 2020.

Self-nominations for the NEC closed on 6 February. Party Councils and Branches will soon receive a list of candidates and will have until 15 March to make supporting nominations.

Look out for your emailed ballot papers by 13 April – these will come from Civica, not the Party – please don't forget to check your spam if you haven't had yours. Ballot papers will only be posted to members that we don't have an email address for. The deadline to vote is 4 May.

Nominations are also open for the Co-operative Party Disciplinary Committee. There are two places for each of the nation and regions. This is a vital role in the Party and we are particularly urging women, BAME, LGBT+ and disabled members to come forward.

Read more at:

party.coop/cpdc-elections-2020. ●

Local Elections 2020

Elections take place on 7 May for councils, metro mayors, police and crime commissioners and the London Assembly in England, and police and crime commissioners in Wales.

There are now 800 co-operative councillors, championing co-operative solutions in their areas and helping to build stronger, fairer communities.

If you are a new candidate or standing for re-election in May, join our growing team and help strengthen our work in local government.

Applications are now open, and the process is easy and straight forward. All you need to do is complete the application form on our website with your personal statement, and your local party will then decide to endorse you as a joint councillor.

As a Labour and Co-operative candidate, you'll get help from the Co-operative Party in getting co-operative ideas into your manifesto, and you can use our logo on your materials and social media.

Read more at:

party.coop/local. ●

Disabled Members' Network



Caroline Walsh

Interim Chair, Co-operative
Party Disability Network

The new Disabled Members Network launches soon: join us!

We're launching a network of cooperators to build a strong disabled member-led arm to the Party. We want to attract a wide pool of talent from across the country to champion the co-operative difference we can make not just to disabled people and their carers' lives, but our wider political movement.

We've already got off to a great start, from a grass roots member-led campaign we've now got Conference's support and formed a steering group to lead us through our early days; advising the NEC on policy and practice making sure the Disabled community's voice is heard loud and clear. We now need you to add to that voice.

But we're not just a talking shop,

we are a team of activists seeking change both inside the Party and throughout society.

The Tories in government have waged war on disabled people across this country, systematically cutting services and support whilst creating the narrative that we're fakers and skivers to justify the blistering ideological attacks on our community. Well we say 'enough is enough'.

Since September 2019 we've made representations about policy and practice to the NEC, given recommendations about future campaigns alongside Labour and Co-operative councillors during speeches at conference 2019, including an inclusive play campaign proposal, and continue to make representations on a range of initiatives.

In the General Election we were out campaigning for candidates which enabled us to make the practical case for more accessible and inclusive campaign models and start to develop workable ideas.

Amongst our future goals we want to develop on the recommendations from our recent event around identifying and addressing barriers to standing for public office and civic volunteering.

We are an enthusiastic and friendly group eager to expand both regionally & nationally.

All members will receive an invite to our launch event in March with more details about how you can get involved and help shape our work. If you want to get in touch with us in the meantime email

disability@members.party.coop ●



Events

We have a full programme of events and activities this spring with our regional and national conferences as we run up to our Annual Conference in Leeds this October.

These events are open to all members, and are an opportunity to hear more about our work and help shape the Party's campaigns and policy.

For more information and to see our full events calendar visit party.coop/events

UK Events & Conferences

- **24 February - 8 March:** Fairtrade Fortnight
- **7 May:** English & Welsh Local Elections
- **6 June:** Co-operative Party Limited AGM, Birmingham
- **22 June - 5 July:** Co-operatives Fortnight
- **11 July:** Co-operative Party Local Government Conference, Oxford
- **17-18 October:** Co-operative Party Annual Conference, Leeds

Regional & National Conferences

- **1 February:** North West Conference, Salford
- **1 February:** South East Conference, Guildford
- **29 February:** South West Conference, Bristol
- **14 March:** East & West Midlands Conference, Coventry
- **14 March:** Yorkshire and the Humber Conference, Sheffield
- **13 June:** Wales Conference, Cardiff
- **13 June:** Scotland Conference, Edinburgh
- **20 June:** Northern Ireland Conference
- **31 October:** North East and North Cumbria Conference, Sunderland

It's rewarding to work for your own community.

Member Pioneers are people who love and understand their local area. If you're energetic, sociable and organised, you have the potential to change people's lives for the better. This job is all about listening to what people need and connecting them with each other to pursue common goals. You don't need experience; just community spirit.

You'll chair meetings with people who know and trust you to fight their corner.

And you'll build relationships with businesses, charities and other individuals who can transform ideas into realities. Like developing creative spaces to inspire our children. Finding ways to improve physical and mental health. And educating adults so they can gain more fulfilling careers.

Are you well-known in your community? Your personality can lend itself to a greater purpose. It's not just a job. It's what we do.



It's what we do

Apply online at communityspirit.co.uk