

THE



**co-operative
party**

Members' Magazine Autumn/Winter 2020

PIONEER

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THE
FUTURE**

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Letter from the General Secretary



Welcome to your latest edition of The Pioneer

Welcome to your latest edition of 'The Pioneer' - much has changed since the last edition. I very much hope that our magazine finds yourself and family well.

It has been said many times before, especially following the global financial crash of 2008, that the need for co-operation has never been greater. However, this need has rarely been more pressing in living memory.

It is this necessity for greater co-operation that this edition of the Pioneer focuses on.

'Owning the Future' is also a title of a collection of policy

pieces the Party has published over the summer, which I would recommend to members.

Since the last edition I hope you have seen an active Party willing to adapt and learn, be a positive force both in the co-operative movement and labour movement. We have had much to focus on and campaign for and I don't see that changing any time soon. Thank you for your support.

Joe Fortune, General Secretary

As this edition was going to print, we heard the sad news that our Chair, Chris Herries had died. Chris was a powerful advocate for our movement throughout her life and we will all miss her advice and support. On page 27 we pay tribute to Chris and to our former General Secretary Ted Graham who died earlier in the year. Chris and Ted did so much for the Co-operative Party and the great work you'll read about in this magazine is testament to the legacy they left the Party.

THE PIONEER

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Our membership rates increase by inflation each year. This helps us to build and develop our work, while also ensuring that increases are kept small. The NEC has put forward a 5p per month increase to membership rates for 2021 - this will be voted on later this autumn and if agreed the new rates will start in January. If you would like to change or discuss your membership, please contact membership@party.coop

2021 Membership Rates: Higher/Solidarity Rate: £5.20 per month or £62.50 per year; Standard Rate: £3.20 per month or £38.50 per year; Reduced Income Rate: £2.20 per month or £26.50 per year.



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OWNING THE FUTURE



Anna Birley
Policy Officer,
Co-operative Party

As lockdown eased this summer, the hoped-for economic uptick did not happen. In August, Britain officially entered its deepest recession since records began. While the pandemic has had global economic impacts, the UK has fared particularly badly. The worst excess death rate in Europe coupled with the worst recession in Europe and largest drop in GDP of all G7 countries is a triple tragedy.

It didn't have to be this way. While a downturn may have been inevitable, the scale of the pending jobs crisis was not. We entered this crisis unprepared. As well as the late initial lockdown, shocking PPE shortages, and a health service overstretched after a

decade of austerity, our economy was ill equipped to cope.

Even before coronavirus hit, wages had decoupled from growth, leaving the majority of us behind while executive pay and shareholder dividends remained high and ever rising. The poorest households couldn't afford the basics, and the "squeezed middle" were already experiencing a fall in living standards. Communities across the country were still feeling the pinch from the long and



incomplete recovery from 2008's crash.

This growing inequality left our economy fragile and vulnerable to shock. While the economic effects of a pandemic and a global shutdown are unavoidable, its severity and longevity should not have been a foregone conclusion. History shows that growing inequality often precedes financial crashes, and that economies characterised by inequality crash harder, grow slower and risk their regrowth being short lived.

This inequality is a symptom of narrow ownership of our economy – wealth and power rests in the hands of a small number of investors, shareholders and executives. They too often make decisions in their own short-term interests and not for the wider benefit of workers, consumers, communities and the environment. The result is an unequal distribution of wealth, low productivity and weak growth.

We need to widen ownership so that more workers,

consumers, and communities have a stake in the businesses that shape their lives and the wider economy. Critically, economies with a greater percentage of co-operatively owned businesses are more equal, more productive and more resilient.

Ownership means taking control of your future and having a voice in the decisions that affect your community. Through this crisis, communities have responded with kindness and co-operation, and have rediscovered what we can achieve by working together. We need to rewrite the rules governing our economy so that these values are reflected too. ●

FEEDING COMMUNITIES

FOOD JUSTICE IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT

The Covid-19 pandemic has shone a light on the growing inequalities across the UK. Food is a basic human right, but it has also been a representation of those growing inequalities. Our Co-operative Councillors have not only been supporting our ongoing campaign for food justice, but providing direct practical support to communities. Our ability to organise and provide support to one another, was one of the founding principles of the co-operative movement centuries ago, we didn't expect to do that at such scale in 2020.



Cllr Asher Craig
Deputy Mayor, Bristol

The pandemic has not affected all communities equally. It has exacerbated already existing inequalities. Nevertheless, Bristol has been better prepared than many places to deal with the crisis as we have an established an effective support network underpinned by the remarkable work of Feeding Bristol, which has provided an extraordinary platform to deliver food to our most vulnerable residents. Backed by South West FareShare who mobilized and delivered hundreds of tonnes of food to over 100 organisations in the city. We've seen at least 221,000 meals and 16,200 food parcels distributed to those in need during lockdown with nearly half of the food going to children.



Cllr Joanna West
Derby City Council

When the pandemic hit I was asked by Central England Co-operative to swap my Membership and Community Council role for working in a store. Of course I said yes and spent a few weeks working in store helping colleagues who were finding a new way of working; keeping themselves and customers safe. During that time Derby City Council and Central England Co-operative had joined forces and created a community hub project where people who could afford to buy food but were unable to leave their home could order. I shopped for them, working with volunteers to get their food and essentials to them the next day. It provided a much needed lifeline to many vulnerable people, particularly as weeks went on with no other contact from the outside world.



Cllr Kemi Akinola
Wandsworth Borough Council

During lockdown Brixton People's Kitchen and Be Enriched Charity partnership have been delivering food parcels and a hot meal to 400 people a week across Lambeth and Wandsworth. But in the background something else has been in development. For the past 2 years we've been working on a model that will move people away from food charity and towards access to fresh and delicious food at a fraction of supermarket prices. We've been converting a double decker bus that will bring this food into areas of low income or low access to shops with a café and wifi to support people living in digital poverty. We hope that this will enable people to eat better, live better and connect more with each other. The project is going live this autumn.



Cllr Eva Murray
Glasgow City Council

Since lockdown began I have spent every weekday at a Covid-19 Support Hub that I helped set up in my ward with a number of community leaders.

The G13/G14 Hub, based in Yoker has helped, along with community partners, over 500 families and individuals, many on a weekly basis with a variety of issues including essential groceries, money advice, mental health support and prescription pick-ups.

This crisis has show the very best of communities and what they can do, not only in a crisis, but when they are given the support they deserve.

Communities have stepped up during this crisis, we have a duty to remember that in our decision making.

BACKING OUR CREDIT UNIONS



Jackie Baillie MSP
Deputy Leader,
Scottish Labour Party

Too many Scots in disadvantaged communities lack the access to the financial services that the rest of us enjoy. As a result they are worse off, paying more for household bills, unable to get home insurance and without the tools to save effectively.

The number of people who are financially excluded may grow as a result of the Covid-19 crisis and the looming recession. With people losing their jobs as the furlough scheme starts to unwind, the consequences of being out of work will have a profound impact.

As we stayed at home to stay safe, those who bank online could manage their finances and buy essentials online, while those who couldn't struggled. With some shops worrying about handling cash during a pandemic, only those with contactless payment could buy what they needed. To tackle inequality, there must be equal access to the tools that enable you to engage in the economy.

I have long been passionate about the role that credit unions can play in the fight against financial

exclusion. But if they are to make a full contribution, the movement needs to grow. Rooted in the communities they serve, credit unions exist to serve their members not investors and shareholders.

Scottish credit unions stepped up through this crisis. For example, the Glasgow Credit Union donated over £15,000 to local causes. Dalmeir Credit Union pledged to support savers worried about their finances. HI-Scot Credit Union developed new loan products that could be accessed over the phone for people shielding. Fast Track loans at the Grampian Credit Union offered affordable credit to people struggling to make ends meet. The 1st Alliance (Ayrshire) Credit Union

proactively phoned customers who usually rely on in-person services.

As the Co-operative Party's report, *Owning the Future*, sets out, we must remove barriers to growth and ensure that credit unions throughout Scotland have access to the support they require. While the Scottish Government's Credit Union Resilience Fund is welcome, we can do more to enable a fairer financial sector.

As Social Justice Minister, I delivered the very first credit union development plan backed by new resources to expand the movement, and just weeks into the new decade I secured an amendment to the Scottish National Bank Bill to ensure the bank can invest in co-operatives. I was proud to be nominated by Co-operative Party members for deputy leader of Scottish Labour – and will ensure I continue to be a strong voice for co-operative finance and the credit union movement in the months and years ahead. ●



REBUILDING TOGETHER

'We must learn the lessons of past recessions – that widening inequality leads to economic crisis, prolongs its effects and weakens recovery.'



Anneliese Dodds MP
Shadow Chancellor of the Exchequer

This year has been a year beset by uncertainty.

Coronavirus has taken the world by surprise and seen new restrictions placed on how we live our lives to keep ourselves and our communities safe. We have had to adapt to new ways of working, shopping and communicating. We've worried about our health and the wellbeing of friends and family – and too many of us have grieved the loss of a loved one.

But the easing of some

restrictions over the summer does not bring with it an easing of uncertainty. We now face lasting economic consequences, with the UK facing the worst recession in Europe as well as the highest number of excess deaths. The Government's one-size-fits-all withdrawal of income support is an error – continuing down this path means a worsening jobs crisis that British workers simply can't afford. Already by July, employees on the UK payroll were down by 730,000 since March. In the three months to June, the number of job vacancies fell to a record low.

We must learn the lessons of past recessions – that widening inequality leads to economic crisis, prolongs its effects and weakens recovery. Already, as we entered lockdown, the UK was one of the most unequal



countries in Europe. We also had other longstanding economic challenges: flatlining productivity, and stagnant wages since the time of the global financial crisis.

Not surprisingly, coronavirus has further exposed and exacerbated existing problems: the precariousness of work, the strain on household incomes, and the extent of underfunding of our public services. The number of people on zero-hours contracts has risen over the last year by 156,000 – many of whom are the frontline workers in health, social care and retail that have done so much for us all during this crisis.

Caring for communities, tackling the climate crisis, protecting workers and consumers, and confronting inequality cannot be left to the market alone to fix. Instead, we must take measures which narrow inequality by widening people's stake in the economy.

Evidence from other countries shows that this works. Economies characterised by a bigger co-operative

sector are more productive and more responsive to the needs of their communities. From Italy's Emilia Romagna to the Basque Country's Mondragon, co-operative economies have lower socio-economic inequality. Co-operation hardwires resilience into the economy too. In the UK, twice as many co-operatives survive the difficult first five years as other businesses.

This is critical – unemployment has a scarring effect on individuals and their communities for decades, so we must put in place policies that prevent unemployment and retain jobs. Now is the time to think boldly and creatively. The Co-operative

Party has called for an innovative job retention scheme – giving workers who are at risk of redundancy when a business closes or downsizes the right and the support to buyout the business, establishing it as an employee-owned co-operative instead. We should be looking at ways to keep people in jobs and ensure businesses stay open and productive, but also to ensure that the economy can, over time, shift to a fairer, more democratic structure where employees have a say and a stake in their workplaces.

A hopeful reading of history shows that we respond to crisis by looking out for one another. Out of the horror of the Second World War Labour built a welfare state to look after all our people from cradle to grave. Over the past few months, neighbours have helped neighbours, and local mutual aid groups and community and co-operative businesses have led the way from food justice to financial inclusion. Our task now as co-operators is to build on this renewed sense

of co-operation to protect jobs and rebuild a fairer economy together. ●

CO-OPERATIVE CAMPAIGNING THROUGH LOCKDOWN

Covid-19 has shaped this year and the Co-operative Party and the UK's co-op societies have used their campaigning to stand up for the most vulnerable in our society and support our communities. Here's a look back at what we've achieved together and the challenges we're facing.

55,000

Supporters engaged with our campaigns

From protecting Fair Trade and DFID, to demanding Food Justice and backing Fair Tax principles as part of any bailouts, our campaigns have led the way.

100

Councils have adopted our charter

Co-operative councillors have led the fight against modern day slavery, now 100 councils and procurement worth billions of pounds are part of our charter to stamp it out.

50%

off childcare costs for key workers

Midcounties Co-op Childcare offered discounted childcare to key workers through a special fund to say thank you to those who kept us safe.

1.3 MILLION

Children on free school meals

The Co-op Group was the first to say that no child should go hungry because schools were closed, helping get the government to take action.

300,000

Meals for people in need

As lockdown hit donations to foodbanks, co-ops took up the challenge, including Central England working with Fare Share to deliver thousands of meals in the Midlands alone.

5,000

New jobs created by co-ops

As many people lost their jobs in retail and hospitality, co-ops like Scotmid created thousands of new jobs to help people stay in work and help feed the nation.

140%

Increase in attacks on retail workers

As the number of attacks rises, we've worked with co-ops like Midcounties, East of England, Scotmid, Central England and Co-op Group to call for action.

£2.1 MILLION

Available to support community projects

East of England Co-op launched its Community Cares Fund to help members use their dividend to support local groups, with other co-ops launching similar schemes.

4,000

Council seats to be elected next May

It is going to be an important set of elections as we aim to grow our team at the local, mayoral and police and crime commissioner elections, as well as in the Scottish and Welsh Parliaments.

9

Co-operators in the Shadow Cabinet

Our MP have important roles in the new team including Anneliese Dodds as Shadow Chancellor – more than half of all shadow ministers are Co-op Party members.

VAUGHAN GETHING MS

Vaughan Gething is the Labour and Co-operative MS for Cardiff South and Penarth, and the Minister for Health and Social Services in the Welsh Government.



What does it mean to be a Co-operative Member of the Senedd?

There's a risk of looking backwards to co-operative traditions – but for me being a Co-operative MS is about my belief in co-operative values and their potential to shape our country. Promoting a wider mutual sector is a practical demonstration of our values. We can remake the case for co-operation by pointing to co-operative examples in Wales, like Principality.

The Owing the Future report focuses on how Britain's widening inequality damages our recovery. How has tackling inequality shaped your work?

We must make choices now about what sort of recovery we have, tackling inequality head on and deliberately levelling up. If you compare two maps showing socio-economic inequality and health, you'll see that the two are related. So as Health Minister, I published our ten-year vision, "Healthier Wales" with tackling inequality as a central plank.

The Welsh Labour Government proactively offered funding to Wales' third and co-operative sectors. Why is it so important to invest in the co-operative economy?

We need to remake the future – to do this, we must invest in the parts of the economy we believe in. If we don't, we shouldn't be surprised if we end up with an economy that doesn't reflect our values.

You've also announced a significant increase in funding for Welsh social care – how can we make sure carers and service users have a stake in services?

Social care offers more voice, choice and control for people than the health sector. We need to apply this learning now to health services. That isn't to say we can't do more in social care. Local authorities commissioning care know that they can do better.

BAME people are dying at much higher rates from Covid-19. How do we protect BAME frontline and health workers?

We have an important story to tell. As part of our work looking at why BAME communities are at higher risk, the section on essential workers is led by a BAME commissioner, Professor Keshav Singhal, and includes thousands of comprehensive risk assessments.

How do we ensure that the spotlight on racial inequality and racism during coronavirus embeds a long-term focus on improving BAME health outcomes?

While medical directors and deputies are becoming more representative there are still snowy white peaks. There's more to do – not only on overt racism but on the unconscious bias that pervades the system. I recently spoke with a group of women about how stereotypes affect their maternity care. It's so important to listen to people's experiences.

BAME communities are disproportionately represented in areas of higher deprivation, it's intersectional. We're still not on the right side of the Black Lives Matter movement, because, in all four nations, we haven't eliminated racial disparity. ●

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

MARGARET CASELY-HAYFORD

Margaret Casely-Hayford has served as a Member-Nominated Director of the Co-op Group since 2016.



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

At the age of about 11 or 12, I was introduced to the Woodcraft Folk by a school friend whose parents were two doctors with rather wonderful values, and I became intrigued by the co-operative ethic. It sat well with my precocious political sense of what was right! But I became

more constructively interested in alternative commercial structures much later in my life; and was overjoyed when, as a lawyer, I was asked whether I would like to become the Director of Legal Services for the John Lewis Partnership.

What kind of things has the Co-op Group done to support communities through the crisis?

I'm proud to say it's quite a long

list! And it's far from over.

We could see that the local community causes we support across the UK were going to be struggling to raise funds during lockdown, so we made an early distribution of £4.5 million to 4,000 local causes from our Local Community Fund.

In the early weeks of the crisis, we gave £1.5 worth of food directly to the FareShare charity to distribute to local food banks. We also invited our members and customers to donate too, by dropping our planned Easter TV campaign and switching it to promote FareShare.

Our network of nearly 1,000 local Member Pioneers have been working on the ground to bring communities together and help co-ordinate local support for the most vulnerable and isolated. And we brought forward the national launch of our online Co-operate platform, which links local need to local support.

We wanted to help our 26 Co-op Academy Schools too, which are in some of the most disadvantaged parts of the north of England. We provided them with £2.6m of Co-op vouchers to give to pupils who would normally receive free school meals. But we topped this up, so it was more generous than the government run scheme.

We haven't forgotten our trade partners around the world either. They're even more vulnerable to economic shocks. So, we've directed a total of £950,000 towards our Fairtrade partners and the water projects we've been supporting to help with better Covid19 hygiene.

Thankfully, we weren't starting from scratch with any of these initiatives. It was because we had established relationships and good local knowledge that we were able to act quickly, when it was most needed. And that comes back to our being a different kind of business.

'It was because we had established relationships and good local knowledge that we were able to act quickly, when it was most needed'

2020 has been shaped by the community response to Covid-19 and a renewed focus on the desperate need for equality across our communities - do you think this will shape the Group's plans for the future?

Yes, absolutely! But for us it's a question of making sure our existing agenda and priorities around tackling inequalities are still fit for purpose in our new Covid-19 world. After all, this is a path we've been taking for a great many years. Much of what we were already doing still makes good sense. For example, our commitments on addressing mental wellbeing look even more relevant this year than they did last year when we adopted our new campaign. Working to help young people through our Academy schools and through our apprenticeship programme remains an important route to improving opportunities for the least advantaged. We certainly want to do more to support those who will be hardest hit by this recession and we're looking at how best to achieve that over the coming months. ●

WESTMINSTER: CO-OPERATION COUNTS



Jim McMahon MP
Chair, Co-operative
Parliamentary Party

Over recent months we've seen huge changes across society, but one constant throughout has been the prevalence of Co-op Party Parliamentarians continuing to represent the co-operative movement, and offering co-operative solutions to the many challenges we now face.

What's more, with the change of leadership in the Labour Party, the presence of Co-op Parliamentarians in key positions leaves us in an excellent position to continue doing just that.

With nine members of the Shadow Cabinet – including Shadow Chancellor Anneliese

Dodds MP and myself as Shadow Secretary for Transport – and Shadow Frontbench Co-op Parliamentarians covering a range of policy briefs, co-operation is being represented where it counts.

And as we link up with Co-op Party grass roots activists and councillors on the front line of this crisis right across the country, we know just what issues are affecting the co-operative sector.

So that means whether it's ensuring retail workers are given adequate protection against violence, challenging the Government's decision to cut DFID, standing up for our Fairtrade principles, making sure co-ops are considered in Government's response to the current crisis or so many other areas, Co-op Parliamentarians are playing a vital role in standing up for the issues that matter to our movement. ●

NETWORKS: A NEW GENERATION OF CO-OPERATIVE ACTIVISTS



Tina Bhartwas
Co-operative Party
National Youth Committee

When I joined the Co-operative Party I was already a Co-op Group member and campaigning for Labour and Co-operative candidates.

I became active in my local branch, attending meetings, making membership recruitment suggestions and encouraging fellow Labour colleagues to join too. Now I am Vice-Chair.

From standing for selection as a Labour and Co-operative candidate in the 2020 local elections to campaigning, I received huge support from the Party and friends in the movement. Last year's Co-operative Party Summer School particularly stands out. I received excellent candidate training as well as debating policy issues and learning about our movement's

history.

I was also proud to contribute to the Party's blog announcing our policy platform on climate change, one of the greatest issues facing my generation.

As the Eastern Region Representative on the National Youth Committee I have worked on a number of campaigns and events. I am proud to have worked on the Connecting Communities policy submission, an issue that greatly affects my region.

Throughout lockdown we have seen lots of examples of co-operation from retail heroes feeding the nation to mutual aid groups. Co-operation is more important now than ever. ●

Co-operative Party Youth is the voice of all young members aged 30 or under. If you would like more support in getting involved in your local branch or want to organise an event for young members in your area please get in touch: youth@party.coop - you can also find out about the Committee at party.coop/youth

WE NEED TO ENSURE FAIR TAX PRINCIPLES ARE AT THE HEART OF THE RECOVERY



Claire Hanna MP
Social Democratic and
Labour Party MP for
Belfast South

The pandemic has caused the rules of capitalism and political economy to be re-written before our eyes. Opportunities for a fairer tax system should be grasped too, to ensure policies are fair and redistributive, and to help to address the financial precarity of so many which was exposed by recent months.

While long term thinking is required in relation to managing the inevitable Covid-driven deficit, the UK can and should use the tax system to correct imbalance in public contribution of major corporations, perhaps including a one-off windfall tax on some of the digital giants who have benefitted disproportionately from lockdown.

Northern Ireland is stunted by the failure of Stormont's leading parties to have sufficient vision to review and extend their devolved powers, lagging far behind Scotland in ambition and delivery. Limited fiscal levers thwart the ambition of those MLAs who want to move from sectarian, identity politics to real transformation.

The goal of Corporation Tax devolution, discussed endlessly for the last decades, would require commensurate investment in skills and infrastructure to attract decent jobs, and the newest lever, Air Passenger Duty, must be thought through to achieve dual goals of connectivity and sustainable future.

The co-operative movement has been a pioneer of the Fair Tax Mark – setting an example of how businesses paying their share to support society. That's why as we emerge from the lockdown, we need to ensure Fair Tax Principles are at the heart of the recovery and help build a fairer and more balanced economy. ●

UNIONS: STANDING UP FOR THE SELF-EMPLOYED



Kate Dearden
Community the Union

Community is a proud champion of the five million strong self-employed and freelance community across the UK. For many people, self-employment is the answer to finding a good work-life balance. It can be extremely rewarding, but it can also mean longer hours, less pay and more worry about your finances. We're a trade union that's here to help and support self-employed workers.

During the pandemic, the self-employed community have been hit particularly hard. Research shows almost half of self-employed people have lost work due to lack of demand and lockdown restrictions, or health or caring reasons such

as shielding and childcare. Many of our members have told us that they did not qualify for help from the government's support scheme and are suffering real financial hardship as a result. They feel like the forgotten self-employed.

We're continuing to call on the government to urgently support self-employed workers, and create long-term solutions to address the inequalities faced by self-employed and freelance workers that this crisis has exposed. ●

'We're continuing to call on the government to urgently support self-employed workers'

Join the collective
voice for the self-
employed today:
[community-tu.org/
join](https://community-tu.org/join).

Spotlight

ELECTIONS 2021



Emma Hoddinott
Local Government Officer,
Co-operative Party

2021 will provide a unique opportunity to grow our team of Co-operative Party representatives across the country.

SCOTTISH AND WELSH PARLIAMENTS

The elections to the Parliaments in Scotland and Wales will allow us to make the case for stronger co-op economies in the nations and support the election of a strong team at both Holyrood and the Senedd. The Scottish Co-operative Party and the Wales Co-operative Party have big plans for the elections and our policy agenda, and members will hear more in the coming months.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN ENGLAND

In England, there will be local elections for over 4,000 council seats, alongside directly elected mayors in places like Manchester and the West Midlands as well as the London Assembly and Mayor.

Our Co-operative Candidate Development

Programme is now open to all members who are interested in standing, are going through the process or are already selected.

Open to all levels of local government, from parish to unitary, if you are accepted on the programme, there will be support to help you get selected and campaign to be elected as a Labour and Co-operative Councillor.

Now is a great time to join our growing network of Co-operative Councillors, so fill in your application online today: **party.coop/candidate-development**

POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONERS

Already 23 out of the 40 Police and Crime Commissioner in candidates England and Wales have been supported by the Co-operative Party to take forward our values into policing.

The issue of shopworker violence has once again come to the fore with many retail workers facing increasing violence as new rules on social distancing and masks are introduced. The government has yet to act on calls for tougher action and the Co-op Party continues to campaign for violence to be #NotPartOfTheJob. ●

If you have questions about any of these elections, then get in touch:

Scotland: r.mccready@party.coop
Wales: k.wilkie@party.coop
Local Government: local@party.coop



ORGANISING FOR THE FUTURE



Shane Brogan
Membership Manager,
Co-operative Party

COVID-19 has shown the spirit of co-operation that sits at the heart of all our communities. We're proud that it was often Party members and representatives who helped lead the local response to the crisis.

Our branches have also risen to the challenge, with more than 100 online member meet-ups since March, helping bring members together to check in with each other, discuss policy and plan campaigns.

The next two years are going to be critical and that's why we are putting in place a new team of regional organisers to develop and support our work in communities across the UK.

They'll play a key role in helping us grow locally and become more representative of the communities we work in. They'll help deliver support and training to members and activists to lead our campaigns in their area and strengthen our links with their local co-operative and labour movements.

With big elections in 2021 and 2022 the organisers

will also help grow our team of co-operative representatives at all levels.

With members in every single council area and CLP, we know that strong and active local parties play an important part in making the case for a more co-operative society.

That's why member activity and strong local campaigning needs to be at the heart of our work – and we're excited by what we can achieve when the new team is in place later this year. ●

If you are interested in helping us build local activity and campaigning in your area, then get in touch: membership@party.coop



EQUALITIES



Karen Wilkie
Deputy General Secretary,
Co-operative Party

The Co-operative Party is committed to building a party that is open and accessible and reflects the full diversity of our communities.

A key and growing part of this agenda is our five member-led equalities networks. These Networks help ensure that our membership is more representative and that the diversity of our membership is reflected in our campaigns, policies, organisation and elected representatives.

Our member-led networks are:

- BAME Co-operators
- Co-operative Party (dis)Ability Network
- Co-operative Party Women's Network
- Co-operative Party Youth Network
- LGBTQ+ Co-operators.

Elections are taking place in Autumn 2020 for new steering committees of 12 members to lead the work of the Women, BAME, LGBTQ+ and (dis)Ability networks. The Youth elections have already taken place.

To receive Network updates and event invites, and to seek nomination to or vote in the elections you need to opt-in using our Equalities Questionnaire to update your membership.

The new Steering Committees will work the NEC, party staff and our local branches to help us strengthen our work to build an active, open and diverse Co-operative Party. ●

To opt-in to any of the Networks, please visit party.coop/equalities.



**TED
GRAHAM**
1925-2020

Ted was a lifelong co-operator who was just 14 when he began his work with the co-operative movement, delivering bread on his bike for a Tyneside co-op.

He was always passionate about the need for co-operators to have a strong voice in politics at all levels and was elected to Enfield Council in 1961, becoming the fourth national secretary of the Co-operative Party in 1967.

He was a hard-working parliamentarian for more than 40 years: elected in 1974 as the Co-operative MP for Edmonton and later made a Co-operative Peer in 1983.

Ted sought to highlight the excessive burdens placed on co-operatives compared to other businesses, and the need for the movement to reform.

He was a vocal advocate for environmental protection, holding several roles for Labour while in government and opposition, and was also Chief Whip from 1990 to 1997.

Ted's commitment, and knowledge made him an important adviser and source of support for many in the movement. When the Co-operative Party marked its centenary in 2017, Ted was painted on a new commemorative banner to mark the important role he played in the Party's history.



**CHRIS
HERRIES**
1947-2020

Chris dedicated her life to the causes she was passionate about and was a mentor and source of advice for many people across the movement.

She was a committed teacher, but left the profession after leading a campaign to end the use of corporal punishment at the special school where she taught.

Chris had a strong record as a members' representative and was a Board Member through the mergers that created the Co-operative Group, and was the first woman to Chair Co-operatives UK.

She was passionate about the difference co-operative politics could make, and was a strong advocate for local government, serving as a Co-operative Councillor in Norwich until 2018.

Chris was Vice-Chair of the Co-operative Party NEC on several occasions and became Chair in December 2019 – throughout her time on the NEC she was always on hand to provide support.

In the last few months, Chris played an important part in developing new projects to improve representation in the Party and bring in a new generation of co-operators. It is fitting that the fruits of this work will be part of the legacy of her decades of service.

WE BELIEVE IN A SOCIETY WHERE WEALTH AND POWER ARE SHARED.

Covid-19 poses new challenges, but the crisis has shown how desperately we need a fairer, greener and more co-operative economy.

Over the past few months your support has helped us to launch Owning the Future – setting out our vision for a co-operative economy; enabled us to campaign on important issues like food justice and modern day slavery; and allowed us to put in place new organisers ahead of next May's elections.

We're powered and funded by our members. Your regular contributions help us make a real difference and be a louder voice for our movement.

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