

# ANNUAL REVIEW 2020

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**co-operative  
party**



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# ANNUAL REVIEW 2020

This year has been extraordinary. Our communities have faced unprecedented challenges, and through the heartbreak, difficulties and uncertainty, the UK responded to this crisis not with division, but with co-operation. We befriended neighbours, joined mutual aid groups, donated to foodbanks and more. We came together in solidarity. Co-operation has seen us through this crisis – and co-operation will help us to rebuild our lives and livelihoods when it finishes.

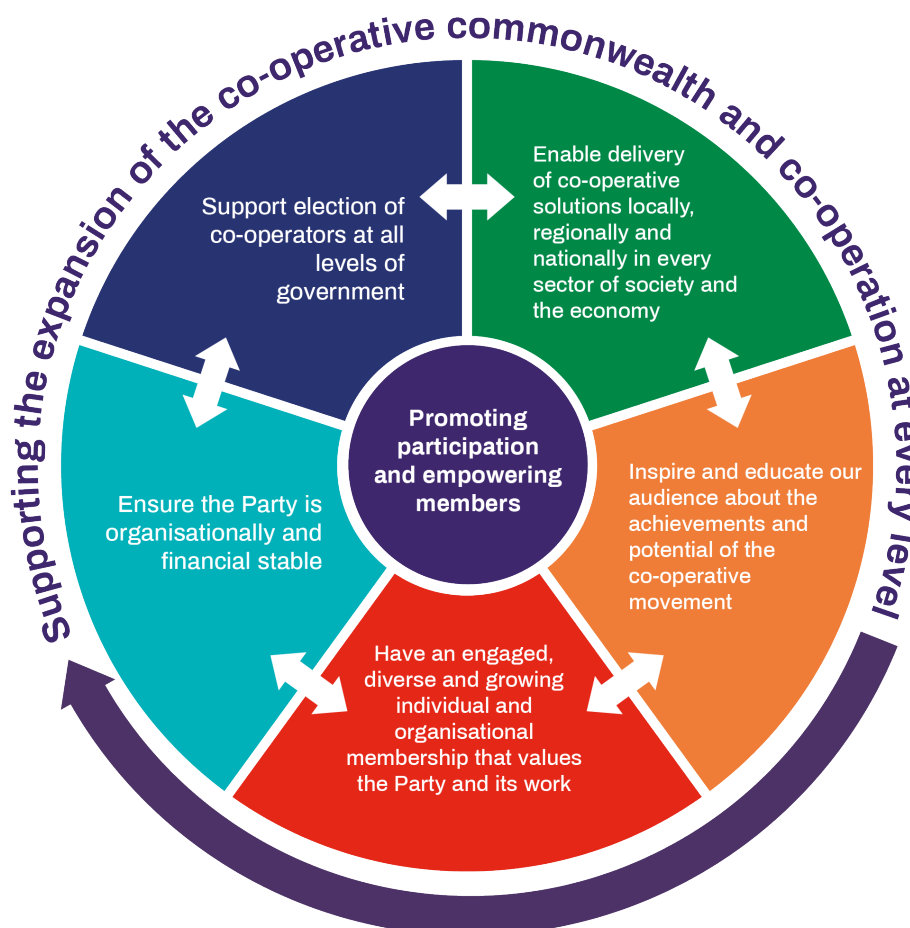
Our role as the political voice for the co-operative movement has been to champion the role that co-operatives have played through the past year, ensure that the ever-changing Covid laws and regulations include and reflect the priorities of our movement, support our members and help them to organise online, provide our councillors and activists with the tools they need to support their communities.

When events were cancelled, we took them online. When campaigns couldn't be carried out in person, we built virtual tools. When elections were postponed, we trained and recruited more candidates. When communities suffered, we came together and co-operated out of the crisis.

Looking back on 2020 is something we will do for many years. But in the face of significant struggles, we can reflect on a year within the Co-operative Party and movement with real pride and take huge inspiration for the future.

In a year where co-operation faced off against the constraints of coronavirus repeatedly, we as a Party found a way not only to survive, but to thrive.

## Strategic Objectives 2019-2021





## Chair's Report

I'm proud that in the face of the most difficult year, we have been more effective than ever. The breadth and scope of the issues we've tackled: mental health, community assets, childcare, Fairtrade, fair tax, international development, pubs, bereavement, co-operative governance, air pollution, mutual banking, football governance, inequality, the digital divide - the list could go on and on.

Our Party has sought to be at the vanguard, protecting and promoting our movement and co-operatives when they needed it most. Because for so many in our movement: shopworkers, childcare providers, teachers and more - they couldn't wait for a 'return to normal'.

Together, we have achieved so much. We worked to see shopworkers recognised as key workers – so they received the protections and benefits they deserve – and intensified our campaign to tackle violence and abuse in our shops. And in Scotland we even managed to change the law to better protect them from threats and violence at work.

On food justice, we helped councils across the country change the way they approach food poverty, embedding food justice with food champions and food partnerships. We helped ensure foodbanks received the guidance they needed to stay open during lockdown, providing a vital lifeline to hungry families.

We reached the landmark 100th council signed up to our Modern Slavery Charter, to ensure council tax doesn't inadvertently fund exploitation. We laid out our plans for owning the future post-Covid, expanding the co-operative economy and using our values and principles to tackle inequality. And overall, we saw nearly 200,000 people engage with our campaigns, over 25,000 new people sign up to become supporters of our work, and hit a record high in our membership.

I joined the Co-operative Party, because we don't just sit on the sidelines and let others do the work. Throughout our history, our movement has risen to the challenge at times of crisis and that's been true again in 2020. I've been inspired by the incredible work our members are doing to support their communities through the pandemic. Co-op societies have led the campaigns to force the Government to take action on important issues like school meals. And I'm truly thankful for the passion of our team of Labour and Co-operative representatives at all levels from the Senedd, Holyrood and Westminster to elected mayors, PCCs and councillors in town halls right across the UK.

Yours in co-operation,

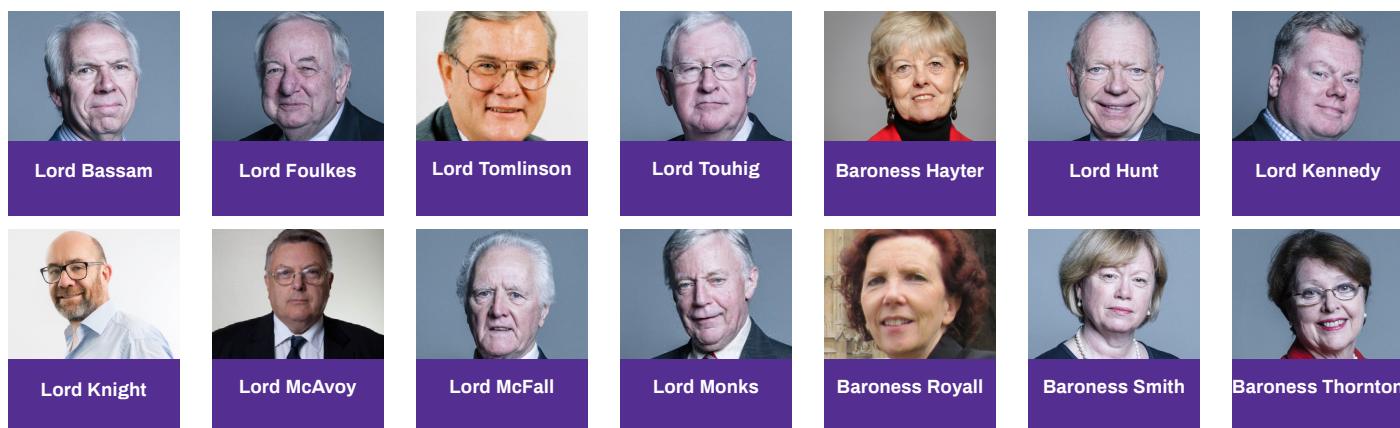
**Jim McMahon MP**

# Meet our representatives

## House of Commons



## House of Lords



## Welsh Parliament / Senedd Cymru



Mick Antoniw  
MS



Alun Davies  
MS



Rebecca Evans  
MS



Vaughan Gething  
MS



John Griffiths  
MS



Huw Irranca-Davies  
MS



Ann Jones  
MS



Jeremy Miles  
MS



Lynne Neagle  
MS



Rhianon  
Passmore MS



Lee Waters  
MS

## Scottish Parliament



Claudia Beamish  
MSP



Neil Bibby  
MSP



Sarah Boyack  
MSP



Rhoda Grant  
MSP



James Kelly  
MSP



Johann Lamont  
MSP



David Stewart  
MSP

## Metro Mayors



Andy Burnham



Jamie Driscoll



Dan Jarvis

## Directly Elected Mayors



Damien Egan



Rokhsana Fiaz



Philip Glanville

## Police and Crime Commissioners



Jeff Cuthbert



Keith Hunter



Alun Michael

# SUPPORT THE ELECTION OF CO-OPERATORS AT ALL LEVELS OF GOVERNMENT

## 2020 in summary

Covid-19 resulted in a year like no other. The year began with the Party poised to continue growing the numbers of Labour & Co-operative candidates, police and crime commissioners and councillors in the scheduled local elections, meeting with members of Sadiq's mayoral election campaign team to discuss co-operative assembly members and co-operative manifesto asks in London, and promoting co-operative ideas in Labour's leadership election.

However, the Co-operative Party has adapted quickly to changing circumstances – despite local elections being postponed, the Party continued to recruit candidates and provide candidates, police and crime commissioners, and councillors with campaigning and policy support. MPs, MSPs and Senedd members have continued to champion co-operative ideas and campaigns, including the new cohort of MPs elected in the snap General Election in December 2019.

The Party hosted hustings for the Labour leadership and ensured candidates put forward their co-operative pitches to members. The new Labour leadership has promoted many co-operative MPs into key positions including Shadow Chancellor and many frontbench roles.

## Local Government

In February 2020, we attended the Labour Local Government Conference in Nottingham, and launched our Love It, List It campaign, as well as sharing a revised 12 ideas for local election manifestos.

Recruitment of candidates for the 2021 elections was launched in September 2020 with the new Co-operative Candidate Development Programme. This incorporated the new NEC guidelines for selection, but also provided wraparound support and training to candidates throughout the process. The training started in November 2020 and by the end of the year over 200 participants had taken part in a session.

**CO-OPERATIVE  
CANDIDATE  
DEVELOPMENT  
PROGRAMME**

**LEARN MORE**

**Labour  
and co-operative**

**co-operative  
party**





We presented at Labour's Police and Crime Commissioner Development Day in February 2020 and shared our reports Safer Stronger Communities as well as our five ideas for Police and Crime Commissioner Manifestos.

We facilitated mayoral selections amongst our members, which has resulted in five candidates: Andy Burnham in Greater Manchester; Liam Byrne in West Midlands; Jessie Joe Jacobs in Tees Valley; Dr Nik Johnson in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough; with the final candidate Tracy Brabin for West Yorkshire Mayor selected in December 2020.

Our Local Government Conference was held in November 2020, and instead of being in Oxford, it was held virtually. Building on the spirit of community co-operation, "Local Leadership, Local Action" heard from key speakers such as Steve Reed MP, Cllr Susan Brown, Anneliese Dodds MP, Mayor Andy Burnham and Cllr Anntoinette Bramble.

We held our Co-operative Councillor Weekend in January 2020, with a dozen Councillors coming together in Manchester to hear from MPs like Jim McMahon, the Co-op Group and leading Co-operative Councillors. We heard from Cllr Sue Murphy, Deputy Leader of Greater Manchester who had been a long-standing Co-operative Councillor and sadly passed away this year.

We held numerous Zoom Calls for Councillors throughout the pandemic, with our first one on 12th March 2020 with Preet Gill MP. These were initially weekly providing help and support as communities and Councillors dealt with the emerging situation, and monthly coffee mornings still continue. Over 24 different local government Zoom calls, we have discussed economic recovery with Dan Jarvis MP, social care with Cllr Richard Watts and Liz Kendall MP, and heard from pioneering leaders like Cllr Georgia Gould in Camden, and Cllr Danny Thorpe in Greenwich.

## FOOD JUSTICE FINDER

We launched the Food Justice Finder Tool with Nick Forbes in November 2020, and have doubled the number of known food champions since. We also ran a successful and important petition to help keep food banks open when community venues and town halls were under threat of closure during March's lockdown.

# INSPIRE, EDUCATION AND INFORM ABOUT CO-OPERATION

## Events

Despite lockdowns and restrictions on meeting in person, the Co-operative Party held more events in 2020 than ever before. In the ten weeks or so before lockdown was announced, the Party embarked on its series of regional events. Within a week of lockdown and homeworking starting, the Party launched its 'Co-operation Live' events on Zoom, taking place at least once a week for members, with additional events for councillors, candidates, diversity networks, and supporters, as well as a Summer School.

We moved our annual conference, Summer School, Scottish and Welsh conferences, and local government conference online. Our staff team built a web platform to stream our conference live on our website as well as streaming on Facebook and YouTube.

And we offered our members support to organise their own events, with training and resources to help them get to grips with Zoom and other online platforms.

## The transition online

Within a week of the nationwide lockdown, the Co-operative Party started our weekly programme of hour-long Zoom events held on Wednesdays called Co-operation Live.

These 'Members Meet-Up' events continued throughout primarily to discuss policy, campaigns, and our current work. This formed an important part of supporting our members to shift online, and we produced resources to help them to learn how to use Zoom and upskill to organise their own meetings too. We have had a lot of positive feedback on the events, both in terms of content but also that they were engaging and uplifting at a difficult time for everyone, and that for many people



experiencing loneliness through lockdown it enabled them to see others and feel part of something bigger.

As the first lockdown impacted us across the UK, we supplemented this series of weekly zooms by holding additional weekly 'Councillors Call' supporting and sharing best-practice on the impact of coronavirus on local government across the UK, hearing from many of our elected representatives and co-ordinated by our local government officer.

These events addressed a wide-range of our ongoing work with invited guest speakers representing our Parliamentary colleagues and partner organisations. Topics included:

- The impact of Covid-19 on our economy
- Growing the co-operative sector
- Impact of Covid-19 on Fairtrade globally
- #NotPartoftheJob campaign to protect retail workers
- Fair Tax and tax justice
- What lockdown easing means for employees and workplaces
- Sustainable travel and air quality
- The impact of Covid-19 on inequality
- Developing co-operation regionally and the role of co-operative metro mayors
- Regional growth and regeneration
- Co-ops and the tech industry
- Better support for volunteers and carers

- Food justice campaign, food champions and local food action plans
- Credit Unions and personal debt
- Modern slavery
- Sustainable towns
- Greater investment in the north
- Grief awareness
- Co-operative solutions to the social care crisis

Some of our fantastic speakers included Shadow Chancellor Anneliese Dodds MP, Welsh First Minister Mark Drakeford MS, Welsh Health Minister Vaughan Gething MS; Scottish Labour Leader Richard Leonard as well as other elected representatives from local government, Westminster, Holyrood and Cardiff. We also highlighted the work of our partner organisations including USDAW, Community the Union, the Co-operative Group, the Fairtrade Foundation, Fair Tax Mark, Hope Not Hate, the Good Grief Foundation, Labour Hunger Campaign, Shelter, Sustrans and the TUC.



We also organised a series of calls supplementing the Owning the Future report, one on the theme of each chapter with shadow front bench MPs, representatives from the co-operative movement and other campaigners and experts.

In October, Co-operation Live focussed on Black History Month by examining how historical racism bears on systemic discrimination today and as well as celebrating the diversity and highlighting the stories of why some of our Co-operative BAME elected representatives entered politics.

In addition, we supported the work of our recently elected Network steering committees by running an online event on hidden disability.

Throughout 2020, the Party held 38 Co-operation Live zoom events with 70 speakers taking part. On average each Zoom event was attended by 60 people, with some events having over 150 attendees. These events were recorded and made available to view on the Co-operative Party's YouTube channel for those not able to join us live.

## Local Government Conference



We held a successful online Local Action, Local Leadership' Local Government Conference. 1300 people streamed parts of the content through the day. It was an extremely strong programme with contributions from the Shadow Chancellor, Deputy Leader of the Labour Party, Chair of Labour LGA, the Greater Manchester Metro Mayor, Shadow Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government. The conference garnered a range of media hits with BBC, LBC, The Telegraph, the I, Independent, MSN/mail, the Guardian.

## Annual Conference

Annual Conference 2020 took place online, a first for the Co-operative Party. Over the course of eight days, thousands of people joined in online, with 78 speakers and chairs across 24 sessions covering a wide variety of topics. Speakers included Keir Starmer MP, leader of the Labour Party, Anneliese Dodds MP, Shadow Chancellor, Ian Murray MP, Jonathan Reynolds MP, Hazel Blears, Liam Byrne MP, Steve Reed MP, Seema Malhotra MP, Meg Hillier MP, James Kelly MSP, Luke Pollard MP, Vicky Foxcroft MP, Stella Creasy MP, Baroness Thornton, James Murray MP, Colin Smyth MSP, Florence Eshalomi MP, Jim McMahon MP and Tracy Brabin MP.

# OWNING THE FUTURE

Co-operative Party Online Conference 2020



Representatives from co-operatives like the North Wales Music Co-op, Bunker Housing Co-op, Drive, a taxi co-op, West Oxford Community Transport, Peloton cycling co-op, Broadband for the Rural North, Granby Street CLT, and the Unicorn Co-op on how they have mobilised during this crisis, as well as the Fair Tax Mark, Black Lives Matter activists, mutual aid groups, the Brixton People's Kitchen, and co-operative councillors from across the UK.

The conference saw the largest ever attendance of any Co-operative Party event. By virtue of being online, the conference was free to attend and people could pick and choose sessions that interested them. Of the attendees, over half had never attended annual conference before.

Although there was no charge to attend this year's Conference, attendees were invited to make a voluntary donation. A total of 102 individual members made donations to the Party of £1,382 (an average of £13.55 each).

Overall, there were around 13,000 views, including 3000 via the microsite and around 10,000 on Facebook. Sessions ranged between 40 and 300 concurrent viewers. About half the views were achieved on the opening weekend, with a long tail of lower, but consistent viewership throughout the week. We've also had around 500 views on the recordings of sessions uploaded to YouTube.

92.5% of people who gave feedback found it easy to join the conference virtually, and 77% found it easy to follow the programme. 97% say they received the information they needed in advance and 96% found it easy to find conference papers and other resources on the conference hub online.

Sessions were run using a live stream of a Zoom webinar, and attendees could ask questions and make comments using Slido – a live Q&A panel to the side of the video where you could type your contribution. On the Sunday, all members had the option to speak during the policy debates. 83% of respondents said that they could ask questions and that there were opportunities to take part.

Feedback from conference was overwhelmingly positive. 90% reported that they enjoyed conference, and 81% say that conference improved their opinion of the Co-operative Party. Three quarters say that they found conference to be a welcoming environment



and 88% learnt something new about the Party and the co-operative movement. Conference covered a wide range of topics, from policy discussions to case studies from the co-operative movement. 91% responded that the topics discussed were engaging.

88% of respondents to the feedback survey say that speakers at conference were diverse and that there was a good gender balance – in fact almost two thirds of speakers were women. There was at least one BAME speaker every day, a number of speakers who have disabilities and good representation of speakers who are LGBTQ.

Every network had the option to host a panel event during the week, and had first pick of timeslots before the rest of the topics were agreed and allocated dates. This saw the networks host discussions on the impact of Covid on disabled people, the role of community ownership in saving LGBTQ venues, ways to deepen co-operation in BAME communities, youth activism on climate change and how co-operatives contribute to women's economic empowerment.

Based on those who completed the feedback form, 43% attendees were women, 36% have a disability, and 16% consider themselves BAME. All of these figures are higher than last year (2019 data shows that, 37% of delegates were women, and of those who provided feedback, 7% were BAME and 16% had a disability).

70% of the respondents who identify as BAME agreed or strongly agreed that people like them were represented at conference. This figure rises to 72% of attendees who have a disability who agree or strongly agree with this statement, and 77% of women. While these figures are encouraging, we need to continue to ensure our events have genuinely diverse speakers and that we use our platforms to amplify diverse voices.

Most attendees fed back that the online format was more or equally accessible than meeting in-person. Of those who consider themselves to have a disability, over half said that the online event was more or as accessible as an in-person event.

## Member-led events

While the Coronavirus outbreak has meant that in-person Co-operative Party branch meetings have been suspended since March, our members were keen from the start of this crisis to ensure that they kept on co-operating at a local level. Many members were an integral part of mutual aid groups in their area, or wanted to use their experience campaigning for food justice at Party meetings to be useful during this crisis. So we were quick to provide officers with the means and instructions to hold virtual branch meetings – and even we were blown away by the response.

Making use of video conferencing and, where broadband coverage is patchy, telephone conference calls, officers have found that they are not only having similar levels of participation in their meetings, but are even reaching parts of the membership which have previously found it difficult to attend physical meetings.

For example:

- NEMCO Amber Valley & Derbyshire Dales held telephone conference call meetings, with good turnout and important updates from Central England Co-op.
- Sunderland branch held their branch meetings on zoom to hear how each other were coping with lockdown and hear from guest speakers.
- Hampshire and the Isle of Wight held regular online discussions with guest speakers who wouldn't usually be able to travel to events.
- Daniel Johnson MSP hosted Scottish members in a zoom rally to update them on the progress of his retail workers bill.
- The Co-operative Party Youth Network hosted an online discussion on what it means to be well-connected and how co-operatives can help to improve connectivity, from public transport to better internet access.
- West Midlands Co-operative Taskforce held consultation events with all branches in the West Midlands, to ensure members could feed into the process.

## Summer School

Through summer 2020, we ran an online Summer School covering topics such as “Effective digital campaigning”, “Intro to local government”, and “Sister Parties and working with Labour”.



These were short Zoom calls with Party staff to help you find out more about who we are, what we do, how to get active and what support we can give to help people get the most out of your membership. Aimed at some of our newer members – who may have joined in the last few years – attendees could also learn how we interact with the wider co-operative movement and the Labour Party and how to become a candidate.

## Labour Conference

Labour’s annual conference was replaced by “Labour Connected” – taking place online instead. The Co-operative Party hosted a ‘Virtual booth’ and fringe events:

- Love it? List it: Campaign to protect community assets
- Food Justice: tackling food poverty and ending hunger in the UK

The Co-operative Party and its representatives also featured on the main programme – Joe Fortune, the General Secretary, and Anneliese Dodds MP joined a plenary panel discussion on Righting Wrongs: economic justice after Covid-19, and a video from the Co-operative Party featuring Jim McMahon MP and Tracy Brabin MP was screened.

## Publications, policy and campaigns

The Co-operative Party has educated, informed and inspired through its policy publications and communications.

The Pioneer is a biannual magazine educating members and supporters on the work of the Party and the wider movement, circulated to around 17,000 members and supporters.

The Party published a number of pamphlets and policy pieces, including “Making Business Work for the Common Good” and “Connecting Communities, from buses to broadband” published at annual conference in October. In the summer, the Party published a series of essays on the economic recovery, *Owning the Future*, including new polling on the themes and policy ideas.



Through 2020 the Party developed a number of campaigns – including on fair tax and tax avoidance, Fairtrade, international development, sun screen, free school meals and Healthy Start vouchers, fan ownership in football, violence against retail workers, and more.

## 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. In 2019, the Co-operative Party, staff and elected representatives had articles published in a wide range of publications including Indyvoices, the Scotsman, PoliticsHome, the FT, the Yorkshire Post, the Observer, on ITV News, letters in the Sunday Times, and the Mirror.

## 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 educate parliamentarians, including Mind charity on mental health, the Fairtrade Foundation, and Power to Change.



### KitKat: Petition delivered to Nestle opposing Fairtrade removal

1 October 2020



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.

### *In numbers:*

- We added over 24, 600 email supporters last year
- We made 5 million impressions on Twitter
- Our tweet announcing our KitKat campaign made over 90k impressions alone
- Our Facebook posts were seen 3.2 million times
- 257k people engaged with our posts on Facebook

# 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 to ensure co-operative values are represented in the places where decisions are made.

## Double the size of the co-operative sector

Since 2017's commitment from the Labour Party to double the size of the co-operative sector, this has been a focal point for a lot of Party activity. Anneliese Dodds, the shadow chancellor, was in [the Financial Times](#) discussing the importance of co-operative growth in her vision for her new role.

### UK needs new social contract, shadow chancellor says

Tax system should be redesigned in a fairer way after the coronavirus pandemic



In April, co-operative policies were put into practice in Wales, with a [new £500m Covid-support fund](#) including support for co-operatives. The Party worked to [ensure that co-operatives could benefit](#) from new UK-wide Covid changes to governance.

Metro Mayoral candidate for the West Midlands, Liam Byrne launched a Co-op Taskforce in June 2020. North Ayrshire Council became the first Community Wealth Building council in Scotland, developing strategies for fairer economic growth and co-operative development.

In her shadow culture role, Tracy Brabin MP ensured art co-operatives had equal access to funding in the [Culture Recovery Fund](#) and supported by the Co-operative Party, Anna McMorrin MP launched her Green Shares Bill.

## Retail workers

The Party's support for retail workers has continued to grow – and has become ever more important as they worked on the front line of this crisis. In April, Party members and supporters sent a #ThankYouShopworkers card to retail heroes. Lucy Powell MP sought to prevent the relaxation of Sunday trading rules, while Alex Norris MP called on the Government to release the consultation responses on retail violence. Alex also tabled the 'Assaults on Retail Workers (Offences) Bill and Co-operative Party members and supporters help to push Usdaw's petition over the line to secure a parliamentary debate on violence against shopworkers.

We also made great progress on this campaign in Scotland, where we are supporting Daniel Johnson MSP's Protection of Workers Bill as it continues to proceed through the Scottish Parliament.

## Financial inclusion and access to cash

Financial inclusion and access to cash has long been a priority for the Party. Co-operative MP and NEC member Stella Creasy [tabled an amendment](#) to remove unfair barriers for mutual banks in November 2020.

The wider financial sector benefits from mutual models too, so when LV= began the process of demutualisation in December 2020, Co-operative MPs and the Party mobilised through the All-Party Parliamentary Mutuals group and put in place work that would continue through 2021.



## A co-operative economic recovery

We developed new economic policies in response to the Covid-19 crisis, and published *Owning the Future*, a co-operative plan for recovery – launched by Anneliese Dodds MP and [Mark Drakeford](#), the Welsh First Minister. The publication included the launch of a new chapter every week, on topics from high street renewal and co-operative development to green jobs and employee ownership.



At the local government conference, we announced a new Co-operative Recovery Partnership with Anneliese Dodds and her shadow treasury team, to explore policy solutions to the crisis further and develop a roadmap out of crisis.

Seema Malhotra MP published a co-operative commission report for London in November, which set out the case for a co-operative development agency for London ahead of the 2021 mayoral election.

Covid-19 has been, at its heart, a very human crisis. As well as plans for an economic recovery, we need to develop ways to help heal from the heartache of the past year. For those who have lost a loved one to Covid-19, the inability to fully grieve has been one of the most difficult parts of the crisis. Many were not able to hug friends and family at funerals – or even hold a funeral at all. More materially, early and unexpected deaths have had a serious financial impact on their families. [We called on the Government](#) to publish a roadmap to dignity in bereavement, to support the financial and mental health of families dealing with loss and also the funeral sector as a whole.

## Employee ownership

Worker co-operatives and employee ownership is an important way to protect jobs, giving people a say and a stake in their workplace and helping to guarantee proper workplace rights. In July, Jonathan Reynolds MP, the Shadow Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, [championed employee buy-outs](#). We developed policy work on a UK Marcora Law, which would create the framework and financial support to better enable employee buy-outs.

## Food justice

In April, Co-operative MPs had a number of calls with the cabinet office regarding the Free School Meal vouchers – seeking to widen the voucher scheme to local convenience stores and discount supermarkets. By the end of April, the Education Secretary confirmed that schools can buy free school meal vouchers from the Co-op.

A number of local councils passed our food justice motion, including places like Suffolk County Council where, despite Labour being in opposition, co-operative councillors were able to persuade colleagues across different parties. Many co-operative councillors led proactive and impactful work on food justice. For example, West Lothian committed to becoming [a hunger free county](#).

We led a free school meals campaign to ensure self isolating pupils could access decent meals while staying home, as well as work on holiday hunger – including a letter to the Secretary of State from Florence Eshalomi MP. And in Parliament in October and at PMQs in November, Gareth Thomas raised the issue of food justice and the Co-operative Party's campaigning.

In November, the Party launched our Food Justice Finder, which was covered in the Mirror. The Finder allows people to type in their postcode to find out if their council has a food champion and works with a food partnership.

## International development and fair trade

The Co-operative Party and its members are proud internationalists, so when the Government began dismantling DFID, merging its functions into the Foreign Office, we

mobilised. Our campaign to save DFID saw thousands of members write to their MPs. Preet Kaur Gill MP led the calls in Parliament against the Government's decision to merge DFID into the FCO, outlining the importance of a department dedicated to tackling global poverty. Other Co-op MPs including Kate Osamor, Barry Sheerman, Meg Hillier, James Murray and Sir Mark Hendrick have also echoed the Party's calls for the decision to be reversed, as well as our General Secretary Joe Fortune in [LabourList](#).

In June, KitKat announced that they would be ending their support for Fairtrade, after decades of buying Fairtrade cocoa and sugar. This means 27,000 farmers from co-operatives in some of the poorest parts of the world losing nearly £2 million in Fairtrade premiums. 24k people signed our petition, delivered to Nestle in October. The issue was raised in parliament by MPs including Stephen Doughty, Tracy Brabin, Geraint Davies and Rachael Maskell.

We also ran a campaign to protect Fairtrade Farmers from high post-Brexit tariffs. Without a deal, farmers in developing countries risked a cliff edge – the loss of market access would be disastrous.

And in November, Shadow Secretary of State for International Development Preet Kaur Gill spoke at the dispatch box arguing to uphold our 0.7% aid commitment in the face of a Government breaking its promise to protect our international aid budget.

## Community ownership

Our Love It List It campaign encouraged councillors to list venues to protect them from closure – for example in Liverpool, co-operative councillors have listed pubs and venues at risk of closure during the crisis. We held a number of zoom 'Co-operative Live' events on how to list assets of community value, as well as producing guides and resources for branches and local communities.

## Fair Tax

As the Government had to step in to support businesses impacted by Covid, a number of businesses that don't pay their fair share of tax began talking about needing a bailout too.

Because we believe that all businesses should pay their fair share, we launched a campaign with partners like the Fair Tax Mark to say: no bailouts for tax avoiders. The campaign saw thousands of members and supporters sign out petition, as well as articles from our MPs such as [Anneliese Dodds in PoliticsHome](#). Labour & Co-operative representatives in Wales put this campaign into practice by banning tax haven headquartered companies from government bailouts. The campaign was backed by Dan Carden MP, the Shadow Financial Secretary to the Treasury.

## Mutual aid

Community-level co-operation has been a light during a dark year, and Co-operative councillors have helped to grow and support this outpouring of support for neighbours. For example, [Co-operative councillors in Polesworth](#) developed ways to support their local community. Building on this, we ran our #CommunityCooperator pledge for councillors and candidates in May, committing to continuing the spirit of co-operation that saw so many through the crisis.

## Fishing

Brexit has presented many challenges for the fishing industry – but co-operative models can help to protect livelihoods and make the sector more resilient. The Co-operative Party tabled an amendment to the Fisheries Bill to promote fishing co-operatives in September.

## Modern Slavery

We had [a campaign win](#) on our Modern Slavery campaign in September, with the Government announcing that it would extend the Modern Slavery Act to public bodies.

## Fan Ownership

The Co-operative Party has long campaigned for fans to have a say and a stake in the clubs they support. As local football teams struggled through lockdowns and restrictions, [Chris Evans MP put forward fan ownership](#) as an innovative way to save local clubs in Parliament.

# TO BE VALUED BY MEMBERS AS INDISPENSABLE

## Building a growing and active membership

We have continued to see strong recruitment, with numbers joining well above average. This is encouraging as autumn recruitment is usually driven by our presence at Labour Conference which didn't happen in person this year. We finished 2020 with the largest individual membership yearly increase in the Party's history. We're also pleased to have sixteen societies and affiliates:

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

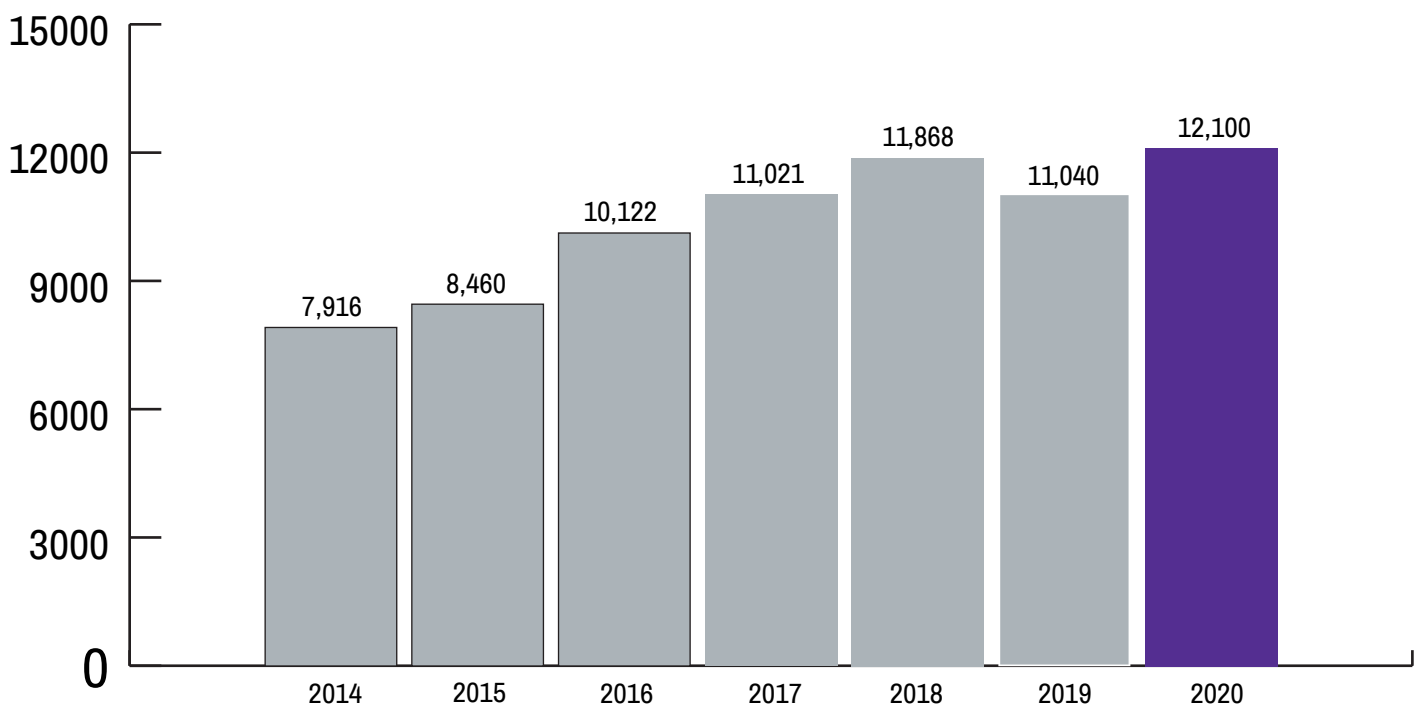
Recruitment continues to be delivered through our membership journey, using our campaign and policy activity to recruit new supporters and convert them to members. The average time someone is a supporter before joining is just over a year (down from 18+ months). Successful email join asks since August include Owing the Future Conference; Gordon Brown; US Election Results; Party's Anniversary; and Anneliese Dodds MP.

The Party has begun collecting data on how our members identify. This will help us monitor our progress and has been used to facilitate membership and voting for the Networks.

## Developing local activity

Branches and member activity and campaigning are central to the work of the Co-operative Party, and our goal of building a society where power and wealth are shared.

Party staff worked hard to support and equip members to transition online, including resources to run online meetings, regular training opportunities, and speakers at events.



Campaigns have included a range of local actions and activities for branches and members to undertake, from listing assets of community assets to supporting community co-operation such as mutual aid groups, and working with their local council on food justice.

At the end of 2020, we worked with the NEC and party councils to increase the support we provide, with each region and nation having a named staff organiser to support their work from January 2021.

## Supporting our Member-led Networks

Elections to our member-led diversity networks – BAME, (dis)Ability, youth, women and LGBTQ+ - took place in 2020, with further elections held to fill remaining vacancies later in the year, and committees/ councils established for each.

These networks play an important role in supporting the Party to be a more diverse, open and welcoming environment, as well as an opportunity for members to lead campaigns on the issues they care about.

Networks were able to organise events for their members including a fringe led by each network at our annual conference in October:

- Friday 16th October – BAME Communities and the Potential for Deepening Co-operation, hosted by the Co-operative Party BAME Network, with Dr Gregory Roberts, Cllr Rupinder Singh and Cllr Sanchia Alasia.
- Saturday 17th October – More than a night at the pub: protecting LGBTQ+ venues after Covid, hosted by Co-operative Party LGBTQ+ Co-operators, with Cllr Chris Penberthy, Tracy Brabin MP and James Lindsay from the Royal Vauxhall Tavern.
- Monday 12th October – Co-operating for gender equality: how co-ops can drive female economic empowerment, hosted by the Co-operative Party Women’s Network with Ria Bernard, Seema Malhotra MP and Rebecca Harvey of Co-op News.
- Tuesday 13th October – A fairer environment: co-operation and climate change, hosted by the Co-operative Party youth network with Marian Craig, Dr Afsheen Rashid MBE and Ishaq Asim.
- Wednesday 14th October – Impact of Covid-19 crisis on the disabled community, hosted by the Co-operative Party (dis)Ability Network with Cheryl Barrott, Vicky Foxcroft MP, Valerie Bossman-Quarshie, Fazilet Hadi and Cllr Eleanor Southwood.

# ENSURE THE PARTY IS ORGANISATIONALLY AND FINANCIALLY STABLE

## Membership income

As a result of growing membership, membership income in 2020 was £400,000, up from £326,500 in 2019. 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.

## 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.

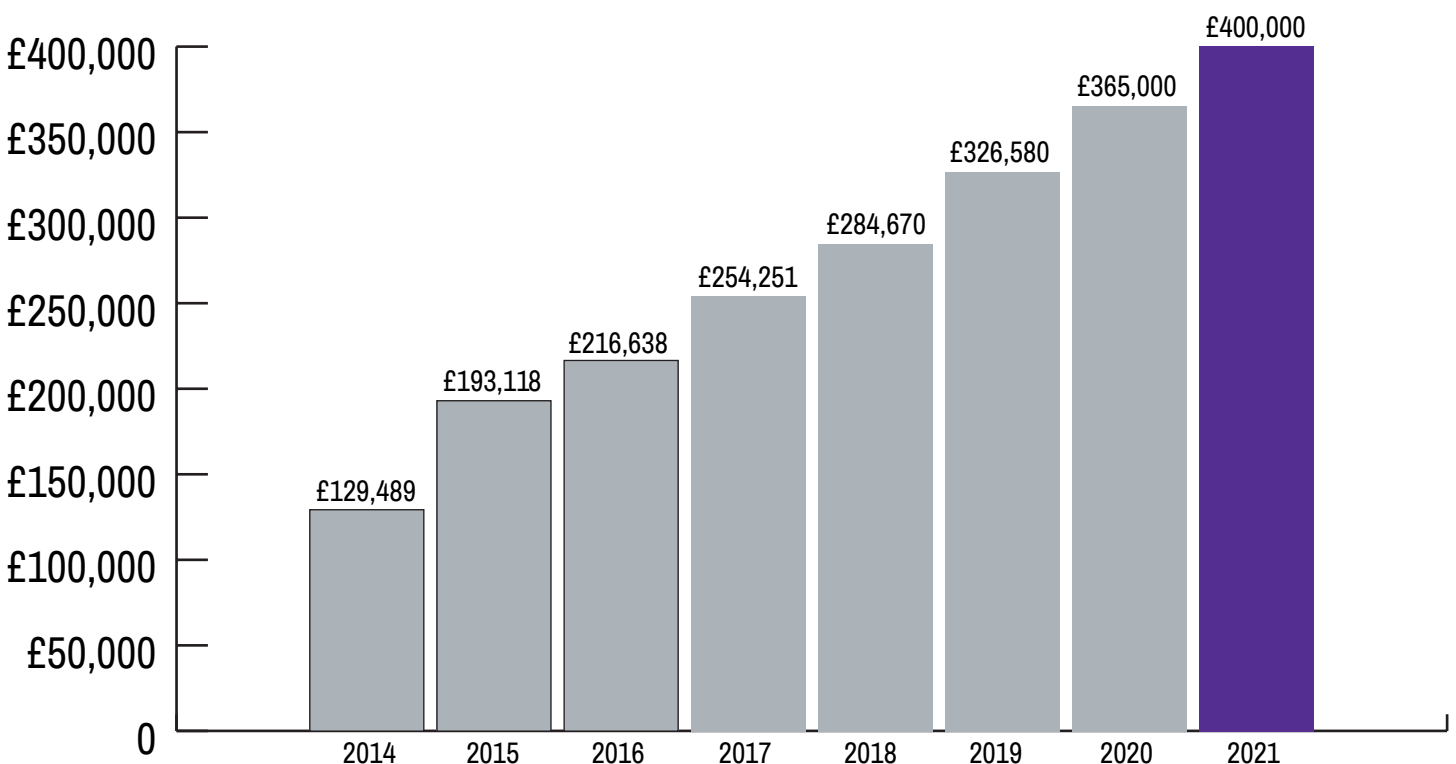
The Party has been successful in increasing the number of individuals who are making additional donations. Work through 2020 has helped to deliver a record increase in members

paying at the Higher/Solidarity Rate, and our 100 and 1917 Clubs. 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.

Throughout 2020, the Party has worked very closely with subscribing societies, including regular calls to understand the impact of the pandemic and changing Covid regulations, working to support and raise issues with Ministers and in Parliament as well as helping to highlight their Covid response such as work on food security, charitable partnerships, supporting co-op academy pupils and protecting retail staff.



# Operations and Governance

## National Executive Committee (NEC)

Elections to the Co-operative Party National Executive Committee take place every three years.

In addition to the 11 members elected by one member one vote for the regional and national places; two seats are appointed by the Co-operative Group and two are elected from the remaining societies and affiliates. There is one Youth representative and two representatives from the Co-operative Parliamentary Group, with an additional observer seat to ensure both the Commons and the Lords are represented.

The 2017-20 members were due to retire in June 2020 but due to the pandemic, voting for the NEC was postponed. The new NEC took office in October 2020 and will serve until June 2023.

Chris Herries was elected as Chair in 2019 but passed away suddenly in August 2020. This was a great shock and loss not only to the Party but across the movement that Chris had served for many years.

Ian Miller, who also gave many years' service to the Party and the movement, was re-elected to the NEC in 2020 but died in November. He will be very much missed by our Party staff and members.

	NEC 2017-2020	NEC 2020-2023
Co-operatives UK	Jean Nunn-Price Graeme Watkins (to May 2019) Ian Miller (from August 2019) Not filled	Maria Lee Ian Miller (to November 2020) Eddie Thorn (from April 2021) Not filled
East	Chris Herries	Chris Vince
East Midlands	Jamie McMahon	Jamie McMahon
London	Gareth Thomas MP	Stella Creasy MP
North East & Cumbria	Janine Docherty	Michael Bell
North West	Gary Booth	Gary Booth
Scotland & Northern Ireland	Jim Lee Tony McMullan (observer)	Ruth Hall Tony McMullan (observer)
South East	Andrew Pakes	Rosa Bolger
South West	Sue Milestone	Pat Juby
The Co-operative Group	John Hughes vacancy	John Hughes vacancy
Wales	Alun Michael	Mary Wimbury
Westminster Parliamentary Group	Jim McMahon MP Anna Turley (to December 2019) Lord Roy Kennedy (observer)	Jim McMahon MP (Chair) Preet Kaur Gill MP Lord Roy Kennedy (observer)
West Midlands	Chris Bain	Chris Bain
Yorkshire & Humber	Cheryl Barrott	Abigail Marshall Katung
Youth	Nathan Burns	Nathan Burns
BAME		Faisal Rana (observer)

## Youth Committee 2020

A new National Youth Committee was elected in Autumn 2020 – membership and activity can be seen at [www.party.coop/youth](http://www.party.coop/youth)

## Party staff

The party now employs 9 full time staff and 5 part time. 9 of the Party's staff work in Head Office (now in Elephant and Castle). The remaining staff work from Scotland, Wales, Yorkshire and Derbyshire.

General Secretary	Joe Fortune
Deputy General Secretary	Karen Wilkie
Membership Manager	Shane Brogan
Finance and Office Manager	Dorota Kseba
Digital and Communications Officer	Georgia O'Brien
Parliamentary and Political Officer	Rob Bates
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	Anna Birley
Campaigns Officer	James Butler
Communications Officer - part time	Robin Wilde
Events Co-ordinator - part time	Issy Oozeerally
Membership and Executive Assistant	Joel Northcott
Youth Officer	Caitlin Prowle

## Fair Tax Mark

In 2020, 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 Tax 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 2020.

## Rules

The NEC completed its current review of the Party's rules in 2020 and these were approved by a vote at Annual Conference.

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 two cases necessitating a meeting of the CPDC in 2020.

## 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 2020, which will be available at the AGM in October 2021.



**co-operative  
party**

