

ANNUAL REVIEW 2021

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**co-operative
party**

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CHAIR'S REPORT

In what was another tremendously difficult year for so many people across the UK, I'm proud that once again the Co-operative Party came to the fore and continued to be more effective than ever.

Our Party, its elected representatives at all levels and in all regions and nations, and our members in every community came together to put our co-operative principles and values into practice, ensuring we made a real difference where it counts.

The sheer breadth of the issues we've taken on, from greater protections for retail workers, support for our high streets and town centres, tackling modern slavery, supporting the mutual sector, fair tax, co-operative governance, fan ownership in football, food justice, access to cash, the aid budget, international development, co-operative development and so many more, demonstrates just how versatile and effective we are as a Party.

And within these efforts, we achieved so much. We helped secure in law better protections for retail workers against violence, threats and abuse at work; continued to help establish local food partnerships and Food Champions in local authorities to tackle hunger; helped defend the native bee population from the use of damaging pesticides, and so much more. Together, we once again demonstrated the strength of our movement.

We hit important landmarks in 2021, too. In reaching 13,000 members we are now larger than at any point in the Party's history. Following the elections in May we are also the second largest Party in the Senedd with 16 MSs, have our largest ever group of MSPs in the Scottish Parliament with 11, are represented by over 900 Co-operative councillors, 7 Police and Crime Commissioners, and 5 Metro Mayors.

This is a testament to the work of all of our members and elected representatives, and shows just what a powerful force for good we can be together.

Because throughout it all I've continued to be inspired by the difference our Party and proud movement can make. For many, times were hard. For some, it is only getting harder. But rather than sit back and hope for the best, our Party did what it always has done in times of crisis: we rose to the occasion.

I'm thankful for all the hard work of everyone who played their part in that, and the passion which saw 2021 as a year truly instilled with co-operative values and principles.

Yours in co-operation,

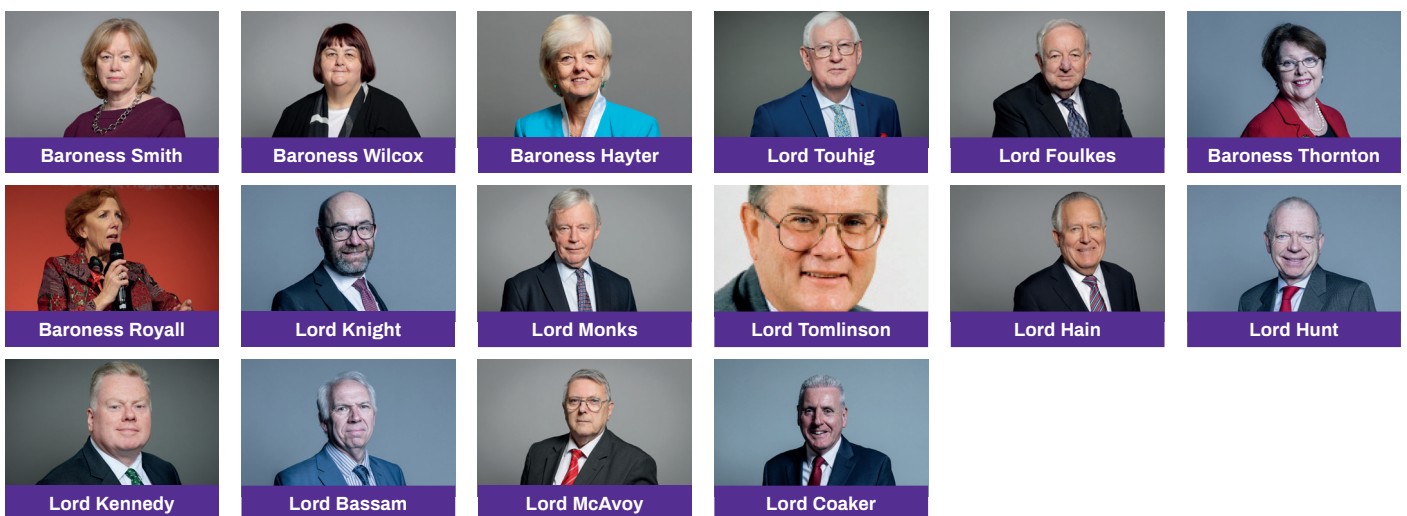
Jim McMahon MP

MEET OUR REPRESENTATIVES

House of Commons



House of Lords



Welsh Parliament / Senedd Cymru



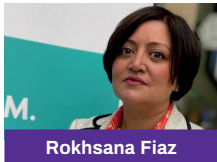
Scottish Parliament



Metro Mayors



Directly Elected Mayors



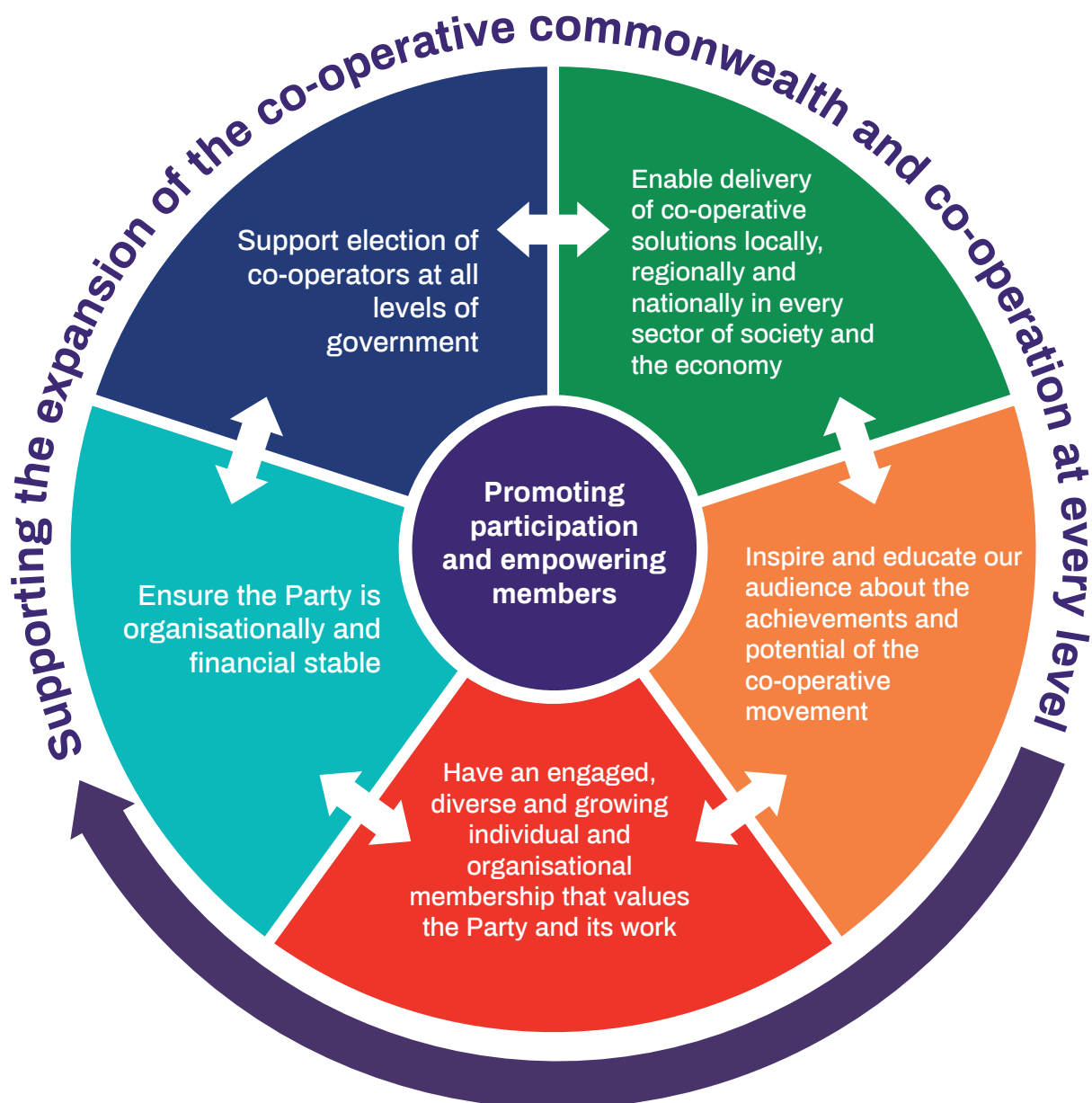
Police and Crime Commissioners



STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

Expanding Co-operation

The purpose of the Party is to promote co-operative and mutual forms of economic, social and voluntary organisation, which are based on the principles of mutual ownership and democratic control, and to support political action in pursuance of the Values and Principles of the Co-operative Movement in the UK and internationally. Below is a summary of the strategic objectives the Party worked to to achieve this in 2021. Through this Annual Review, each objective will be taken in turn and looked at in detail.



SUPPORT ELECTION OF CO-OPERATORS AT ALL LEVELS OF GOVERNMENT

2021 saw the biggest elections in years with the postponement of the 2020 elections due to Covid-19. The Party stood candidates at every tier from parish town and community councils, borough and district, county and unitary authorities in England, Welsh Senedd, Scottish Parliament, Metro Mayors and Police and Crime Commissioners. Co-operation was on the ballot paper for over 90% of voters across the UK in May.

Local Government



Our local government work and in particular fielding candidates and electing co-operators reached new heights in 2021, with 720 members contesting 803 seats across 185 different councils. The 2021 candidate cohort also saw the Party increase the proportion of candidates with protected characteristics.

Large numbers of Co-op candidates stood in Lancashire (25), Derbyshire (23), Oxfordshire (22), Surrey (22), Staffordshire (21), West Northamptonshire (21), Stroud (18), Sunderland (15), Stevenage (14) and Bristol (13) demonstrating our reach right across the country. This of course will be complemented in 2022 with all out local authority elections in Scotland, Wales and London.

Candidates signed up to our Candidate Development Programme (CDP) and were able

to avail of free training sessions right through the year both pre- and post-May, focusing on each stage of candidacy from starting and getting selected through to specific support around narrative, strategy, targeting and campaign organisation.

We further offered monthly Candidate Coffee Mornings and Dialogue phonebanks, particularly useful early in the year while restrictions on campaigning remained in place.

Every candidate standing in May received our Co-op Candidate Pack ensuring they had their certificate of authorisation to stand alongside helpful merchandise including a pen and our two branded facemasks in red and purple!



Our '12 ideas for local government manifesto' provided our candidates and even our sitting councillors with a variety of options for them to adopt and use as part of their campaign while our dedicated Candidate Hub provided Labour

and Co-operative digital assets including social media frames, sharers, banners and design tools for adapting locally produced leaflets and content. We were pleased to be able to offer a Labour and Co-operative Postal Vote letter and direct mail, the first time in many years we had been able to offer joint literature to our candidates to purchase for their campaign.

The results left us with over 900 Labour and Co-operative councillors across the UK, giving us the foundation to build on and grow in 2022. By the end of the year, we had already signed up 700 members to our Candidate Development Programme, a figure we didn't reach until the end of March 2021.

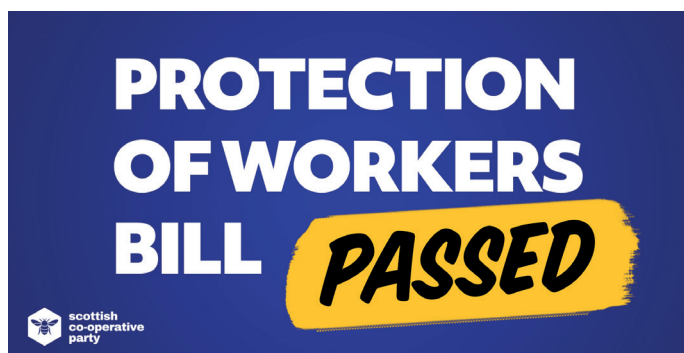
Looking ahead to the 2022 elections, we have already held candidate information events in:

- Wales with Baroness Wilcox and Mary Wimbury
- Scotland with Eunis Jassemi and featuring Glasgow Deputy Leader, an event titled 'Encouraging Diverse Candidates'
- West Midlands with Jeevan Jones

while also attending and presenting at Labour Groups, CLPs, LCFs and Co-op branches, Party Councils and events right across the UK.

Scotland, Wales and Westminster

Milestones were achieved in all Parliaments for the Co-operative Party. In Wales, with 16 MSs elected, the Party is now the second largest in the



Welsh Parliament. Whilst in Scottish Parliament, with 11 MSPs and new Chairs Daniel Johnson MSP and Monica Lennon MSP, the Party's group is now the largest it's ever been.

In Scotland, Wales and Westminster, our representatives continued to offer co-operative

solutions to the many challenges we faced. In legislation, for instance, in both Scotland and Westminster we secured greater protections against violence, threats and abuse for those in the workplace.

And across the UK our representatives were crucial in our campaigns on high streets, food justice, the prevention of potentially damaging pesticides for the native bee population, opposing the devastating cut to the UK aid budget for developing nations, co-operative growth, support for the mutual sector, a UK-style Marcora Law, fan ownership in football, and so much more.

A significant number of representatives were appointed to the Labour Party Shadow Cabinet in Westminster, in positions such as Shadow Secretaries of State for BEIS, DEFRA, DWP, International Development, Justice, Women and Equalities, Chair of the Labour Party and many



other positions across the frontbench, ensuring co-operative ideas and solutions are at the very heart of decision making in our sister Party.

In Wales, our Welsh Labour & Co-operative Group hit the ground running with Huw Irranca-Davies winning approval for backbench legislation in the chamber for a Welsh 'Marcora Law' to promote employee ownership – Wales is the only part of the UK where Co-operators are in government and could soon be leading the UK in this form of empowerment of workers. Our own Christina Rees, MP for Neath, is pursuing the same aim

with her Ten Minute Rule Bill at Westminster.

In Scotland, prior to the election, the Scottish Labour Party held an election for its leader. The Scottish Co-operative Party nominated Anas Sarwar for the position of leader. We were pleased that Anas was successful and that he has continued to be very supportive of the work



of the Co-operative Party since his election.

In the run up to the Scottish Parliament election, we developed a policy platform in consultation with our membership. We published our policy document in March entitled 'Owning the Future: A Co-operative Agenda for Scotland 2021'. Many of our ideas made their way into the Scottish Labour Manifesto.

James Kelly was the founding Convener of the Cross-Party Group on Co-operatives in the Scottish Parliament. We are pleased to say that this role has now been taken by Paul Sweeney MSP. Paul will continue the work highlighting the importance of co-ops in the Scottish Economy. The Co-operative Party will continue to support the work of the Cross-Party Group and all of our MSPs will support it along with other relevant Cross-Party Groups.

DELIVER CO-OPERATIVE SOLUTIONS LOCALLY, REGIONALLY AND NATIONALLY

High Streets

Throughout the year, councillors highlighted the struggles that high streets and town centres faced - and the opportunities for greater co-operation - in Council Chambers including:

- Lambeth
- Lewisham
- Redbridge
- Leicester
- Newcastle
- Liverpool
- South Kesteven
- Stoke on Trent

In a number of these areas, a number of branches took the opportunity to survey their high street to

provide an evidence base for the debate, making use of the High Streets toolkit which included a petition, draft letters to the paper, template motions for every national, and a how-to guide, that HQ produced.

Launched before the Budget, we focused initially on the unfairness of business rates on bricks and mortar businesses and were pleased that the Chancellor did begin to recognise the problem. Correspondence from Ministers as a result of the motions suggests that an online sales tax is a real possibility if we continue to apply pressure on the Government.

We are part of the Labour Party's Future of the High Street group with the Shadow Chancellor.

Modern Slavery

With well over 100 councils in England and Scotland having embraced the Co-operative Charter Against Modern Slavery over the past few years, we were delighted to mark the end of the campaign with that the second largest local authority in the country, Birmingham Council, signing the Charter.

Food Justice

Ahead of the local elections, we encouraged members and supporters to contact their council leader to encourage them to consider appointing a lead member for food insecurity. There are now double the number of food champions from when this started.



The Scottish Co-operative Party supported Elaine Smith MSP's attempts to have the Right to Food enshrined in Scots Law in the last term of the Scottish Parliament. Unfortunately, Elaine Smith ran out of time for her Bill, but she did conduct an extensive consultation on her proposal, and Rhoda Grant has now launched a fresh consultation on the proposal.

The campaign has also been focused on Healthy Start vouchers and encouraging take-up: this has led to take-up increasing in every council area in England and Wales by an average of nearly 20%.

Retail Workers

We were really pleased to join many others from across the co-operative movement including



Scotmid Co-operative in supporting Daniel Johnson MSP's Bill to protect retail workers. This was a major achievement for the Scottish Party, and we were pleased to support Daniel on this important piece of legislation. We hope that this legislation will make a real difference to our co-operative colleagues in the retail sector and that Police Scotland will treat violence, threats, and abuse to retail staff seriously. This was joined by calls in Westminster for a similar law, and amendments were secured to the Police and Crime Bill to ensure there were additional penalties for attacks against key workers.

Tied Pubs

In the last few months of the 2016-2021 session of the Scottish Parliament we were successful with a number of Members' Bills. Neil Bibby MSP was also successful in promoting his Bill on Tied Pubs. This Bill will give consumers greater choice and will be fairer to tenants in pubs.

Worker Ownership

The Co-operative Party has been supporting Labour & Co-operative Mayor Dan Jarvis through a co-operative advisory board. This board helped secure the first Ownership Hub in the country for South Yorkshire, ensuring there is specialist support for worker co-operatives to start up in the region within the existing business support offer.

We also held a West Yorkshire Co-operative Summit with support from: Mayor Tracy Brabin; Rose Marley, CEO of Co-ops UK; and Labour & Co-operative MP Alex Sobel. This event brought together a range of co-operative stakeholders in the region to look at the opportunities of working with a Co-operative Metro Mayor.

LV =

We have been part of the wider campaign on the LV demutualisation including ensuring members of the Party who are members of LV are part of the anti-demutualisation campaigning.

INSPIRE, EDUCATE AND INFORM ABOUT CO-OPERATION

During 2021, the Co-operative Party has continued to expand its programme of online events. As an organisation, we can now reach a greater number of members and supporters than ever before and actively engage them in our campaigns and ongoing work across all the regions and nations of the UK.

Since the start of January 2021, we have worked with the RNID to ensure all our online events are live captioned for greater accessibility. They are also uploaded to the Party's YouTube channel, so can be viewed at leisure.

Co-operation Live

Held on Wednesday evenings on Zoom, these hour-long online events focus on our policy



direction, campaigning and ongoing work. Guest speakers include politicians and representatives from the co-operative movement, charities and other organisations that the Party work with.

In 2021, we hosted 21 Co-operation Live online events with over 80 speakers taking part. These were attended by an average of 50 people (with some attracting over 250) on the following topics:

Supporting devolution to towns and cities:

- Learning from lockdown: Lessons from Labour & Co-operative Council leaders
- A New Economy: How can co-operative mayors shape a different recovery?
- Resilient and hopeful towns
- Delivering change in town and parish councils

Legislative change:

- Early years childcare provision
- Enforcing legally binding WHO air quality limits
- Calling for a more just and sustainable food system
- An Economy Based on Wellbeing
- Financial inclusion and greater access to cash

Policy direction:

- Accelerating the global change to clean energy
- Reflections from Cop26
- Worker buy-outs and a British Marcora-Style law
- Water – a mutual solution

Campaigning:

- Fair Tax – why it's so important (plus an additional Fairtax Briefing for MSPs)
- Giving football fans a greater say
- Violence, threats, abuse - it's not part of the job
- Cancelling the cut to Universal Credit
- In support of refugees

Working with our member-led Networks:

- International Women's Day Event: Bee the Change – encouraging more women to be active in the Co-op Party
- Marking Trans Day of Visibility
- International day for persons with disabilities
- LGBTQ+ History month – Co-op Housing
- Black History Month & Windrush Day
- Virtual Iftar

All Co-operation Live events demonstrate the Party's commitment to ensuring equality and diversity and our commitment to gender balanced panels. We have also demonstrated the width of the co-op sector platforming different co-ops and our subscribing societies.

National & regional conferences: Owning the Future

Throughout Spring, our event team and local organisers delivered four online regional events and conferences for the Wales, Scottish and

Northern Ireland Co-operative Parties. These were streamed on the Co-op Party's conference website, with additional – more interactive – sessions held on Zoom. We welcomed and profiled over 150 diverse speakers, including:

- **Mark Drakeford** – First Minister for Wales
- **Shavanah Taj** – General Secretary Wales TUC
- **Jim McMahon** MP
- **Liam Byrne** MP
- **Preet Kaur Gill** MP
- **Stella Creasy** MP
- **Emma Lewell-Buck** MP
- **Tracy Brabin** MP
- **Sarah McCarthy-Fry** – Co-op Group Non-Executive Director
- **Cllr Asher Craig** – Deputy Mayor of Bristol
- **Sinead McLaughlin** MLA
- **Daniel Johnson** MSP
- **Rhoda Grant** MSP
- **Neil Bibby** MSP
- **Dr Nik Johnson**, Mayor of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough
- **Joanne McCartney AM**, Deputy Mayor of London
- **Leonie Cooper** AM
- **Baroness Wilcox** of Newport & many more.

Speakers highlighted examples of great local work addressing our #UnlockTheHighStreet and other campaigns, also contributing to the debate on 2021's policy consultations on high streets and social care.

The Co-operative Comeback Summit



In July, the Party's online Co-operative Comeback Summit launched our series of essays examining how the co-op movement can provide new policy solutions which deliver the recovery that the country needs to build back after the impact of Covid-19. Drawing on the

work of the Co-operative Recovery taskforce, this online event focused on how we create the institutions to keep the co-operative values that this community spirit generated, with themes on how we can achieve change and achieve it quickly. Speakers included:

- **Richard Partington** - Journalist, The Guardian
- **Anneliese Dodds** MP - Chair of the Labour Party.

Annual Conference: Building Community Power

Held yearly in October, the highlight of the Co-operative Party's calendar is Annual Conference, our showcase of co-operative politics and the largest political online gathering of the year for the UK co-operative movement. Streamed online via YouTube, over 2,000 people watched part of the conference and took part in Zoom events.

We had over 50 speakers, including: co-ops small and large; Think Tanks (CLES and New



Local); Labour Party Chair Anneliese Dodds; Scottish Labour Leader Anas Sarwar; Welsh Economy Minister Vaughan Gething; and Co-operative Metro Mayors Tracy Brabin and Andy Burnham. The conference also included: campaign sessions on co-operative media and climate change; updates with representative

parliamentarians from Cardiff Bay; Holyrood and Westminster Parliamentary Groups; and workshops hosted by each equalities network.



Looking forward, the following announcements were made during the weekend:

- The Party hosting new movement wide ‘Building Community Power’ sessions to feed into Gordon Brown’s Constitutional Commission
- Tracy Brabin hosting a co-operative summit in West Yorkshire
- New co-operative representation on the Scottish Labour Energy Transition Commission
- A new Co-operative Rural and Coastal Taskforce reporting to Co-op MP and Shadow Secretary of State DEFRA Luke Pollard
- The launch of the Tower Hamlets Co-operative Commission
- The launch of our updated policy on Social Care and High Streets

Community Power in Action: Local Government Conference



Coming fast after Annual Conference, in November the Party held a successful online Local Government Conference highlighting the outstanding work being done in local government across the UK to strengthen community wellbeing and resilience by looking at how communities themselves can make a difference. It examined how we can widen ownership in our economy

and give people the tools and support to tackle the big issues from inequality and hunger to green jobs and high street regeneration.

Speakers included:

- **Steve Reed MP** – Shadow Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government
- **Joanne Anderson** – Liverpool’s New Mayor
- **Professor Donna Hall** – chair of New Local thinktank
- **Joanne Cairns** (USDAW)
- **Paul Gerrard** (the Co-op Group)
- Council Leaders: **Cllr Doina Cornell** (Stroud); **Cllr Anthony Hunt** (Torfaen); **Cllr Arooj Shah** (Oldham); **Cllr Joe Cullinane** (North Ayrshire); and other figures from local government.

Labour Party events

We continued to engage with our sister Party’s events throughout the year, though the programme was much reduced due to the pandemic.

Labour Local Government Conference, March

The Party held an online fringe on devolution with Party Chair Jim McMahon MP; Tracy Brabin MP, Labour & Co-operative candidate for Mayor of West Yorkshire, Liam Byrne MP; Labour & Co-operative candidate for Mayor of West Midlands and Miatta Fahnbulleh, Chief Executive of New Economics Foundation.

Labour Women’s Conference, July

The Co-operative Party held an online fringe event focusing on highlighting the launch of the #UnlocktheHighStreet campaign.

Labour Conference, September

Our Stronger Together ‘Communities’ event at Labour Party Conference was co-hosted with the Labour Party and Labour LGA. The Party was also represented by the General Secretary, Joe Fortune, at its main launch event in Brighton.

Preet Gill MP delivered the Co-operative Party’s fraternal greetings to Labour Party Conference.

New Member Summer & Winter Schools

During August and December, a number of online training sessions were held to give our newer members (less than 3-year) more

information on the Co-op Party, the need for political representation, our relationship with the movement and the Labour Party as well as encouraging to get more active in their branches.

Publications, policy and campaigns

Across 2021 we had a number of successes related both to our long-standing national campaigns and digitally-led actions. Our national campaigns saw significant wins on protection of retail workers and continued progress on issues such as food justice and modern slavery. Our digital actions helped engage our members and supporters to a number of wins: over 22,000 people signed our open letter from then Shadow Environment Secretary and Co-operative Party MP Luke Pollard on a successful action to stop the reintroduction of bee-killing pesticides, engagement by members with local councillors helped raise the uptake of Healthy Start vouchers by nearly 20%, and over 15,000 supporters engaged with our successful



campaign to support LV= members in stopping demutualisation.

We ran digital actions on a variety of topics, including but not limited to: access to cash, air pollution, bee health, the BBC, childcare, community energy, Channel 4, cuts to Universal Credit, demutualisation, fair tax, fan-owned football, food justice, levelling up, protecting international development and stopping cuts to aid, the Right To Food and violence against shopworkers.

We published two editions of our member magazine The Pioneer, including features by: former Prime Minister Gordon Brown; newly-elected Mayor of West Yorkshire Tracy Brabin; our Chair Jim McMahon MP; Power to Change CEO Vidyha Alakeson; President of Co-operative Group National Members' Council Denise Scott-McDonald; and many more.

We also published a number of publications, including:

- Two policy papers debated at our Annual Conference on social care and high streets
- “A Co-operative Recovery”, the concluding report of the Co-operative Recovery Partnership with the Shadow Treasury Team
- “How to Unlock Your High Street”, a practical guide for councillors and activists as part of our Unlock the High Street campaign
- “Fairer Taxes, Fairer Economy”, a policy and polling pamphlet explaining the Biden Tax proposals as part of our Fair Tax campaign

Press, social media and communications

2021 once again demonstrated the power of growing our supporter list in achieving our core objectives in terms of education, campaigns and membership growth. We reached over 73,000 subscribers to our mailing list, helping drive our successful campaigns, digital actions and record membership growth.

We continued to grow our reach over Twitter, reaching over 30,000 followers and growing our impressions per post by 22%, to a total of over 5 million impressions across 2021. On Facebook, we have continued to cultivate engagement via Facebook Groups and have recorded nearly 1 million post impressions. We also had success with growing our newer social media platforms. We relaunched our Instagram account and grew our number of followers by 30%, while over 1500 people joined “The Hive”, our WhatsApp broadcast list.

We generated a number of exclusives with print media outlets using polling and original research – combining our policy, campaigns and communications work to maximum effect. This included launching our Health Start Tool using exclusive data research via The Mirror and promoting our Fair Tax campaign using a polling exclusive on the Biden Tax plan in The Guardian. Our work was referenced by a number of national and regional print titles and we also had digital features in outlets such as PoliticsHome, LabourList and the New Statesman.

THE

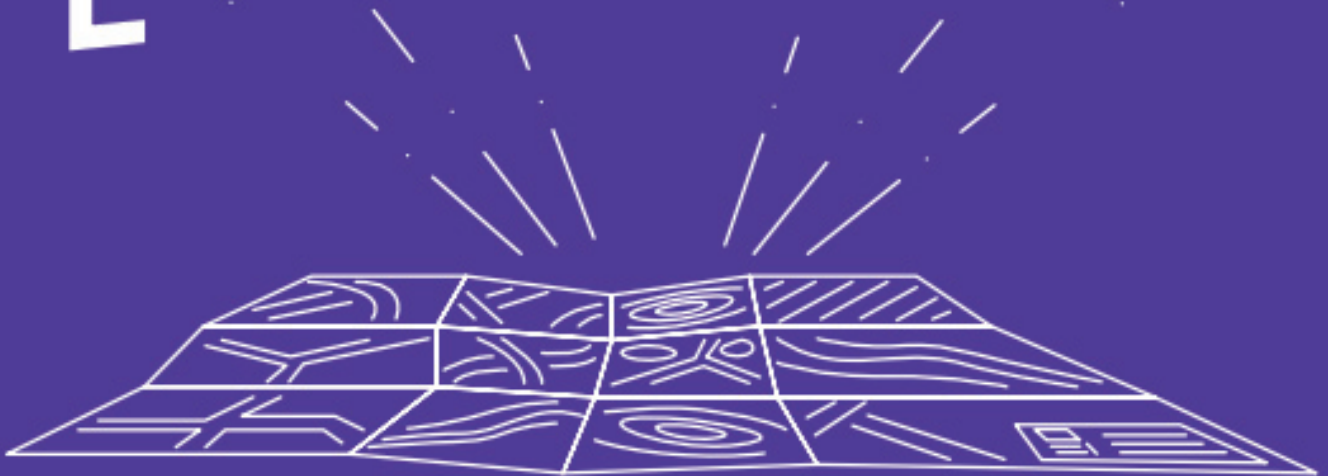


co-operative
party

Members' Magazine Spring/Summer 2021

PIONEER

[LOCAL LEADERSHIP
LOCAL ACTION]



Gordon Brown: Building
new co-operative
foundations
06

Our work supporting
candidates for May's
elections
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Votes at 16: How expanding
the franchise gives young
people more power
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Front cover of *The Pioneer*, Spring/Summer 2021 edition

TO BE VALUED BY AN ENGAGED, DIVERSE AND GROWING MEMBERSHIP

For much of 2021 the pandemic meant that lockdowns and restrictions prevented much in person activity taking place. Our members have taken these difficulties and transformed them into an opportunity to try new and innovative ways to ensure activity has taken place. Online activity has seen local parties reaching members who previously weren't able to attend meetings and host speakers from all over the country.

Examples include:

- Greater Manchester Party continued to hold their Greater Manchester-wide members' events with prominent guest speakers, including Lucy Powell MP (January) talking about High Streets, Metro Mayor Andy Burnham (April) talking all things GM and Anneliese Dodds MP (September) talking Parliamentary activity, Covid recovery and her work on the Labour Party Policy Review and Co-operative input
- Tyneside branch invited a new speaker to each branch meeting. Due to it being virtual they have been able to have speakers from further afield including Fair Tax Foundation. At this meeting members took away a commitment to pass the motion as a council.
- Northern Ireland hosted their online conference with a packed agenda attracting speakers from across the co-operative and labour movements from Northern Ireland, Great Britain and Ireland also, drawing on ideas and projects from all nations across the British Isles.
- Across the North West branches who had previously been struggling to meet were relaunched with AGMs or meetings held in Cheshire West and Chester, Fylde and Lancaster, St Helens and Tameside.
- The Rotherham branch organised a joint policy discussion with other branches in South Yorkshire to feed into the policy process. Due to low attendance in each of the branches, a joint

Zoom meeting made it easier to share ideas.

- Call for Co-operation – Several regions were able to organise national and localised phone banking through Zoom and Dialogue with guest speakers, candidates, and high profile politicians.
- Last year NEMCO trialled telephone conference calls, but in line with many other branches has now successfully moved to holding Zoom meetings with turnout as high if not higher than previously.
- Leicester branch has moved successfully to Zoom meetings with support from the regional organiser has held meetings throughout the pandemic featuring speakers from the council and drawing on members own knowledge and experience.

Building a growing and active membership

Recruitment remained strong in 2021 across our regions and nations with monthly figures exceeding modern records on several occasions. We finished 2021 with the largest individual membership in the Party's history. We're also pleased to have sixteen societies and affiliates. 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 Party is continuing to collect 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

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

Supporting our Member-led Networks

Elections to our member-led diversity networks – BAME, (dis)Ability, youth, women and LGBTQ+ - took place in 2020, the next set of elections are due to take place in the autumn of 2022.

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 throughout the year:

Youth: On 24 February, this online event encouraged Youth members to stand as Labour and Co-operative candidates in May's local government elections. We heard from a fantastic line up of inspiring young co-operators – Cllr Ayotunde Sokale, Cllr Olivia Fletcher, Cllr Harry Doyle, Cllr Eva Murray and our Local Government Officer Cllr Emma Hoddinott.

Women: to highlight International Women's Day, on 16 March we shared stories of three inspiring Co-operators Christina Rees, MP for Neath; Cllr Anntoinette Bramble, Deputy Mayor of Hackney and Elaine Dean, Vice-President of the Central England Co-operative. 'Bee the change - women building a society where power and wealth are shared' examined how women gain power in society, and why has this been blocked; if women have to make too many concessions to achieve their aims; and if wealth is viewed

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 surveying their High Streets for our Unlock the High Street campaign, writing to their MPs on violence against shopworkers and working with their local council on food justice.

At the beginning of 2021 named organisers for regions and nations began in their roles supporting local parties. This has helped officers to hold meetings online, attract interesting and engaging speakers and recruit local government candidates. This has been an important piece of work and the response from local parties at the increase in support has been very well received.

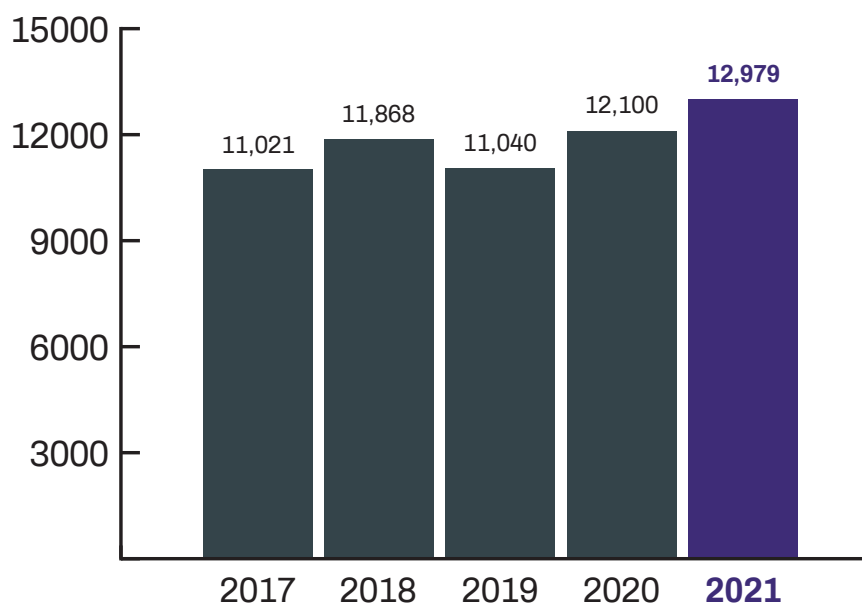


Figure 1: Total individual membership, 2017 - 2021

the same by all and what sharing means in a co-operative context.

LGBTQ+ Co-operators: held on 31 March to mark Trans Day of Visibility, this event discussed the positive aspects of what being transgender means as well as what action should be taken to work towards changing the biases of people who don't understand transgender. We welcomed speakers representing LGBTQ+ retirement community co-operatives, who support their members in retirement while also remaining out and proud, with Kira Lewis (chair), Andrea Jones - treasurer of SeaCity Housing co-op - and Helen Dixon - member of SeaCity LGBTQ+ Housing Co-op.

(dis)Ability: invited all its members to take part in two 'Big Conversation' Zoom events to feed into the Party consultation process:

- The High Street Big Conversation (12 April), what disabled people want from their High Streets and how the values and principals of co-operation can help the development of our town and city centres.
- The Social Care Big Conversation (26 April) discussing how co-operation can help the development of individual care services as the majority of those who receive and pay for social care are not involved in the design of the social care services.

Following the two Big Conversation sessions the (dis)Ability network Committee submitted two written consultations that recorded the aspirations, needs and wants of disabled people to be included in the two policy documents debated at the 2021 Co-operative Party National Conference.

BAME Co-operators: throughout October's Black History Month, BAME Co-operators were 'Proud to Be', with blogs posted by Party members.

Networks at our Building Community Power Annual Co-op Party Conference

As part of his opening address, Party Chair Jim McMahon MP, reminded members of the importance of marking Black History Month and that Building Community Power isn't about one community at the expense of another. We must

take stock of who has the least power in society and that as a Party where we find inequalities we do something to address it. He highlighted the recent launch of a Diverse Councils Working Group to improve diversity in local government, and the mentoring scheme for women from diverse backgrounds.

The steering committee of each of the Equalities held an hour-long online event at 6.30pm in the week immediately after Conference weekend, as follows:

- Youth on Climate Change (11 October) with Luke Pollard; Seren and Maddy representing the Woodcraft Folk. Chaired by Marion Craig.
- LGBTQ+ venues (12 October) with Izzy Lewis from Friends of the Joiners Arms and Lloyd Russell-Moyle MP. Chaired by Ashley Halstead.
- Creating Better Opportunities for BAME (13 October) with Preet Gill MP; Joe Fortune, Dr Evelyne Godfrey and Cllr Sanchia Alisha. Chaired by Professor Cecile Wright
- Women in Public Life (14 October) with Florence Eshalomi MP, Cllr Olga Fitzroy, Cllr Kemi Akinola, Emma Foody and Ruth Hall. Chaired by Joanna West.
- A dis(Ability) event which took place in December.

The Party was keen to increase diversity in candidates, so special sessions on standing for office were held with each of the equalities networks.

The Party ran its first year of the Chris Herries Mentoring Scheme in 2021. This scheme aims to support women currently underrepresented within politics and the wider co-operative movement.

The scheme also received a generous donation from the estate of Chris Herries, our former Party Chair. This donation has been ringfenced to support our Chris Herries Mentoring Scheme in to the future.

ENSURE THE PARTY IS ORGANISATIONALLY AND FINANCIALLY STABLE

Membership income

As a result of growing membership, membership income in 2021 was £408,800, up from £365,000 in 2020. 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 and our networks.

Fundraising

We are very grateful for the continued generosity of our members. The Party has been successful in increasing the number of individuals who are making additional donations. Work through 2021 has helped to deliver more 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.

Likewise, members have been kept informed of Co-op Society matters. From the difficulties caused by Covid and violence against retail staff, to emerging co-ops such as the Equal Care Co-op and Students Co-op Homes increasing their student housing stock.

In 2021 the Party initiated an innovative idea, inviting co-operatives from across the Co-operative Movement, and then from different sectors to evening Zooms get to know you events. A two-way process of getting Co-operative businesses to find out about the Party, what it does and why it might be supported by the Co-operatives. At the same time, the co-operatives attending were able to

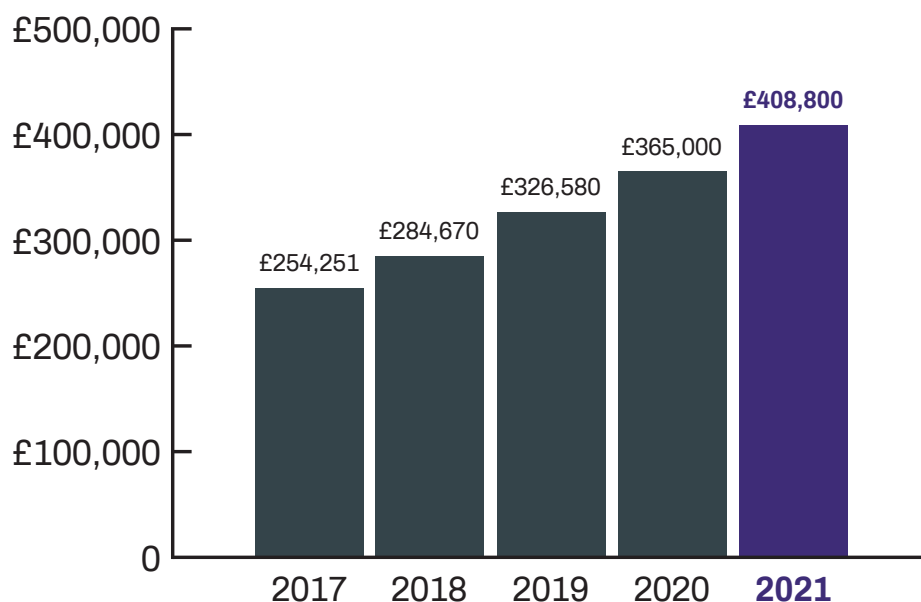


Figure 2: Membership income, 2017 - 2021

tell us what they do, what problems they face growing their business and asking us questions too.

Members of the Party engaged with Fairtrade Fortnight, with a range of online events across the UK, informing and promoting the co-operatives who produce and sell Fairtrade.

In the West Midlands, Party Council Officers working with Co-operatives West Midlands, to link regionally based co-operatives with local councillors and aspiring candidates for the 2022 elections. The Party also sits on a number of Regional Co-operative Bodies, Co-operatives West Midlands, East Midlands and East of England. The aim going into 2022 will be to engage with the rest of the English regions.

Throughout 2021, 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. For example, the Party supported Midcounties' work on seeking support for the childcare sector, especially through the 'pingdemic' and in terms of the need for quality guidance relating to staff absences. This work saw digital campaigning as well as questions of Ministers in the House of Commons.

OPERATIONS AND GOVERNANCE

National Executive Committee (NEC)

Elections to the Co-operative Party NEC take place every three years. The current NEC was elected in October 2020 with a one member one vote ballot for eleven regional and national places. They will serve until June 2023.

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. There are a

further three observers – one from the Lords, one from NI and one from our BAME members. At the July AGM of the NEC Jim McMahon was re-elected as Chair and Ruth Hall as Vice Chair.

The NEC held full meetings in both an online and hybrid format throughout the year.

NEC 2020-2023	
Co-operative Societies and Affiliates	Maria Lee Eddie Thorn (from April 2021)
Co-operatives UK	<i>Not filled</i>
East	Chris Vince
East Midlands	Jamie McMahon
London	Stella Creasy MP
North East & Cumbria	Michael Bell
North West	Gary Booth
Scotland & Northern Ireland	Ruth Hall Tony McMullan (Observer)
South East	Rosa Bolger
South West	Pat Jubby
The Co-operative Group	John Hughes <i>Vacancy</i>
Wales	Mary Wimbury
Westminster Parliamentary Group	Jim McMahon MP (Chair) Preet Kaur Gill MP Lord Roy Kennedy (Observer)
West Midlands	Chris Bain
Yorkshire & Humber	Abigail Marshall Katung
Youth	Nathan Burns
BAME	Faisal Rana (Observer)

PARTY STAFF



Emma Foody (above) and Emma Hoddinott (below) were welcomed into the roles of Assistant General Secretary in June 2021.

The Party now employs 19 staff – nine full time and ten part time. Seven of the Party’s staff work in Head Office (in London). The remaining staff work from Scotland, Wales, the Midlands and the North.

In 2021 Karen Wilkie retired from her role as Deputy General Secretary – Karen has played an enormous role within the Party over many years with almost 26 years service. She remains as Board Secretary. We were pleased to welcome Emma Foody as Assistant General Secretary (Membership and Organisation), and Emma Hoddinott as Assistant General Secretary (Politics and Representation) who was previously working for the Party as Local Government Officer.

Shane Brogan, Shanika Mahendran and Robin Wilde also left working for the organisation.

We were pleased to welcome several other new staff members including John Cook, Gareth Dowling, Oli Goulden, Georgia Horsfall, Chantal Lee, Huw Lewis and Stephen Stanners.

Party staff	
General Secretary	Joe Fortune
Assistant General Secretary (Membership and Organisation)	Emma Foody (from June 2021)
Assistant General Secretary (Politics and Representation) – part time	Emma Hoddinott (from June 2021)
Finance and Office Manager	Dorota Kseba
Digital and Communications Manager	Georgia O’Brien
Parliamentary and Political Officer	Rob Bates
Political and Membership Officer (Wales) – part time	Huw Lewis (from August 2021)
Political Officer (Scotland) – part time	Richard McCready
Party Support and Principle Six Officer – part time	John Boyle
Policy Officer	Anna Birley
Campaigns Officer	James Butler
Digital Officer – part time	Oli Goulden (from June 2021)
Membership Officer	Joel Northcott
Equalities Officer – part time	Chantal Lee
Events Co-ordinator – part time	Issy Oozeerally
Regional Organisers – part time	John Cook Gareth Dowling Stephen Stanners
Communications Assistant	Shanika Mahendran (January – August 2021) Georgia Horsfall (from August 2021)
Board Secretary	Karen Wilkie (from August 2021)

Fair Tax Mark

In 2021, 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.

Living Wage

The Party also maintained its accreditation as a Living Wage Employer in 2021.

Rules

The NEC completed its current review of the Party's rules in 2021 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 four cases necessitating a meeting of the CPDC in 2021. At the end of 2021 the NEC agreed a new process for protected characteristic complaints to be launched in 2022.

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 2021, which will be available at the AGM in June 2022.

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