



Paul Harman

Region

North East & Cumbria

Co-operative Party Experience

I was a Darlington Labour Councillor from 2011 to 2015 and joined the Co-operative Party in 2013. I became Secretary of the South Durham and Darlington Branch and delegate to the Party Council in November 2014. I am currently Treasurer of the NENC Party Council and Chair of Tees Valley Branch. (I proposed that branch reorganisation to better reflect the reality of the Tees Valley Combined Authority as the key political unit in this part of the North East.)

Co-operative Movement Experience

My direct experience of managing a co-operative body was with a group of Housing Co-operatives. In the 1970s, I chaired Neighbourhood Housing Services, a secondary co-op, which received funds from the Housing Corporation for the refurbishment and management of 400 rented houses and flats in South Liverpool. I was a tenant of Canning Housing Co-op for 15 years until moving to Darlington in 1990.

I am a Co-op Group member and Co-operative Bank account holder.

Governance Experience

I have led two Companies Limited by Guarantee in receipt of regular Arts Council funding, from 1978 to 89 and from 1993 to 2008. I served as Chair of the UK branch and, as UK International Representative, as Treasurer and Committee member of the International Association of Theatre for Children and Young People (ASSITEJ) at periods between 1989 and 2011. From 2013 to 2025 I have been a Trustee, Secretary and Treasurer of a Community Centre (Registered Charity 504606) and am currently Chair of DOVES, a forum of volunteer bodies looking after green spaces in Darlington.

Election Statement

I believe that all Party members should be drawn into active participation in the Co-operative movement. I am willing to set up a forum for the region where members can consider and organise the creation and management of co-operative bodies of many kinds. I have the time and means to visit all parts of my region to offer encouragement and support for new ventures.

I have experience of creative organisations, domestic and international, and know that many difficult situations may already have found solutions elsewhere.

The Co-operative Movement in the UK has seen both success and decline. Our Party should lead in reigniting faith in practical co-operative solutions to the many challenges facing the majority of UK citizens – from weakened public services to rising prices.

From Housing to Education and Social Care, Co-operatives can be a better way to provide services in partnership with those who need them.

I am old enough to have lived through several wrong turnings in our political life and wish to offer that experience to fellow co-operators as we build a humane society for all.