



July Council Newsletter



Our July meeting was a great opportunity for Council to explore areas of our business that are critical to our development, and that our members and customers experience first-hand.

This update provides an overview of some of the key topics that we covered over the weekend. As ever, please share your comments and feedback at council@coop.co.uk

Forum With Directors

Joining us for our Directors' Forum were Board directors Paul Chandler, Hazel Blears and Stevie Spring who kicked off the meeting with a lively Q and A session to answer questions posed by Council Members on topics including:

- Our ongoing relationship with the Co-op Bank, and the impact of its recent changed ownership structure
- The performance of the Food business, and an update on the success of the current franchising pilots.
- The progress of the Digital team to improve our digital product offer, and how digital solutions could be further integrated into our businesses to benefit front line colleagues.

These sessions with Directors are critical in enabling Council to fulfil its role of holding the Board to account and help us to build effective working relationships with our Board and Executive colleagues. New MND Gareth Thomas joined Council for his first meeting.



Co-operative Development Strategy

It was a real privilege to welcome Dame Pauline Green to our Council Meeting. Having been Chief Executive of Co-ops UK and more recently serving as President of the International Co-op Alliance, Dame Pauline is very well placed to be leading on the roll out of a [UK wide Co-operative Development Strategy](#).

The strategy will invite all UK co-ops and those business supportive of co-operative action to build a new participatory business action plan for co-ops.

Priority areas for this strategy area are:

1. Supporting freelance workers to come together in their less secure lines of work.
2. Finding co-operative solutions for current problems with social care.
3. Creating new digital and online-based co-operatives.

I'm committed to ensuring that our Co-op is fully engaged in this exciting opportunity to support the wider co-op sector.

Digital Update

Stephen Foreshaw-Cain (Chief Operating Officer - Digital) and Catherine Brien (Data Science Director) joined us in the afternoon along with our very own Mary McGuigan for an update on the progress of [Co-op Digital](#)

Stephen told us how Digital was working closely with Co-op Businesses to help them meet the needs of members, outlining a number of products which the team had built including the platform for the Co-ops new membership scheme, in store dashboards to help colleagues better manage performance, and an online store finder and product range finder.

Mary talked to us about the work of the Council's Digital Working Group (DWG) and how it's supporting the work of the Digital Team. Digital are helping Council to build more effective and responsive platforms to share the work of Council with members, and creating a new secure members' area so that we can work with each other online more effectively in between our physical meetings.

Out In Your Community

I'm pleased to confirm that Council representatives will be out and about at a series of roadshows this Autumn. We'll be joining forces with our business colleagues to showcase the achievements of our Co-op and highlight how our community and campaigning work is making a real co-op difference. Come along to meet your local Council representatives, tell us how we're doing and see how you can get more involved.

These events will be held in the autumn. Look out for dates and locations on our '[Get involved](#)' Co-op web pages from early September.

Our Senate and Vice President elections also took place at our July meeting and I'd like to thank all Council members who stood in these elections and congratulate Dan Crowe, who was re-elected as Vice President, and Frank Nelson, Gavin Ewing, Jenny de Villiers, Martin Rogers and Tricia Davies who have been elected to serve on the Senate.

Community Engagement - Young People

Our final session gave Council an opportunity to work with our community team to share our ideas on how the Co-op can better meet the needs of young people, through tailoring our products and services that we offer to this audience, and identifying opportunities to get involved that are attractive and accessible to younger members.



Nick Crofts
President of the Council