



How Your Co-op is supporting the creation of **50 new co-operatives**

Update report



Doing good together

Introduction

This year marks 180 years of co-operation. From humble beginnings in Rochdale, the global co-operative movement is now 3 million strong. From retail co-ops to housing co-ops, agricultural co-ops to tech co-ops, each one has the wellbeing of its people, members and communities at its core thanks to the co-operative values and principles that underpin all co-ops.

To bolster the UK's vibrant co-operative landscape, with a focus on our core trading area*, in May 2022 Your Co-op pledged to support the creation of 50 new co-operative businesses by January 2027.

Why? We believe the co-operative business model to be a sound and beneficial one, with new co-ops almost twice as likely to succeed as start-ups using other business models. Plus, doing good together is in our DNA. Working

with other co-ops is not only one of the co-operative principles, this initiative also forms a key part of our member-led Sustainability Strategy.

Now 18 months into our pledge, this short report offers an overview of what's been achieved so far working with our partner organisations, including Co-operative Futures, Plunkett Foundation and ICOF (Co-operative and Community Finance). We'll also take a look at what's in the pipeline for the future.

Peter Westall

Chief Values Officer
Your Co-op



Working in partnership with...



Plunkett Foundation

Plunkett is a charity that supports businesses owned by local communities. As well as supplying funding, we provide training and advice on sustainability and retailing to new businesses.



Co-operative Futures

Co-operative Futures is a business development consultancy specialising in co-operative, mutual and community led businesses. We provide financial support and have representation on their board.



ICOF

(Co-operative Community Finance)

ICOF lends to established and new co-operatives and community enterprises. Your Co-op provides them with financial support to help them help others.

*Oxfordshire, Gloucestershire, Buckinghamshire, Shropshire, Staffordshire, the West Midlands, Wiltshire and Worcestershire



What we've achieved together in 2022 & 2023

Together with our partners, Your Co-op has helped create 13 new co-ops and community businesses.

Plunkett has...



Helped **4 new community businesses** get off the ground in our core trading area.

Provided **507.5 hours** of business support to pipeline community businesses.



Given **216.5 hours** of business support to existing co-operatives to strengthen their viability.

Supported **199 community groups** in the process of setting up a community business.



Co-operative Futures has...



Supported **8 new co-operatives** in establishing themselves in our core trading area.

Worked with **10 pipeline co-ops**.



Helped **14 existing co-ops** looking to grow or improve sustainability.



Held the Future Co-ops Conference attended by **85 co-operators** and delivered the Co-operating Oxford project, providing co-operative development support to Oxford-based businesses.

We've also supported the creation and development of **Bright Future Co-op**, which helps create jobs for victims of modern slavery.

Because of this work...

Our core trading area has
(or will soon have)

An increased focus on sustainability

Sustainable Shrevenham

More greenhouses and community activities

Cuttleslowe Garden Project

2 new community hubs

Wolvercote Mill and Fromehall Mill

3 more community-owned pubs

The Rising Sun, Silk on the Downs and The Brewers Arms

A new community shop

Amberley Shop on the Common

A zero waste and refill shop

Our Green Shop

A new sports and community centre

Blackbridge Charitable Community Benefit Society

A neighbourhood care co-operative

Jigsaw Community Co-operative

A co-working space and magazine for creatives

Supporting Local Art and Performance

More opportunities for victims of modern slavery

Bright Future Co-operative



Case Study: Amberley Shop on the Common

When the village shop in Amberley, Gloucestershire closed, the community started searching for alternative locations to create a new community-run store, providing essential goods for local people unable to reach nearby towns. After much research, they have now created a café and a retail space in the nave of the village church providing good quality local produce, services and opportunities to all interest and age groups.

Plunkett advised the group as they explored their options. The group raised money through its 227 members and Plunkett helped them identify other sources of funding to reach their target.



Case Study: Blackbridge Charitable Community Benefit Society

Co-operative Futures worked with a group of residents and community organisations to set up the Blackbridge Charitable Community Benefit Society (Blackbridge CCBS), a community co-operative supporting wellbeing, learning, skills, and employment advice in Podsmead, Gloucester.

A key project of Blackbridge CCBS is the development of the Blackbridge Community and Sports Hub. The hub, which has now gained funding, will provide a wide range of sports activities with an emphasis on working with young people. Their work has already begun by offering opportunities for local children to try out different sports with a professional athletics coach and running a grounds maintenance course to help local people learn new skills.

Plans for 2024 and beyond

Looking ahead we plan to...

- Continue to provide funding to our partner organisations
- Offer training and support to new co-ops in conjunction with our partners
- Provide advice and consultation on retailing and sustainability
- Host consultations with our partners to find new ways to support them and the co-ops they work with

Plus, we'll be on the lookout for other ways to do good together and support new co-ops.

Watch this space!

Case Study: Bright Future

Your Co-op was one of the first organisations to work with Bright Future – a collaborative employment co-operative that brings charities and businesses together to create jobs for victims of modern slavery. Slavery survivors are offered a four-week paid work placement, leading to a non-competitive job interview, and potentially a permanent role.

Bright Future now has 33 members: 20 organisations who refer service users and 13 business members offering employment opportunities. Your Co-op also has representation on the Bright Future board. So far 77 people have found stable work through Bright Future.

The logo for Bright Future Co-op features the text 'Bright Future' in a dark grey sans-serif font, with 'Co-op' in a bold orange sans-serif font below it. A small orange circle with a white dot inside is positioned above the 'i' in 'Bright'. The logo is set against a white, rounded rectangular background that overlaps a larger orange shape on the right side of the page.

**Bright
Future
Co-op**



The Midcounties
Co-operative