



## **The Midcounties Co-operative Campaigns Fund**

### **Annual Report 2023/24**

This short report highlights the activities of the Society's Campaigns Fund during the financial year 2023/24. It is provided to members for information.

Members are welcome to ask questions about the Fund at the AGM on 11 May 2024. Alternatively, members can contact the Secretary: [edward.parker@midcounties.coop](mailto:edward.parker@midcounties.coop)

Information about the Fund, its scope and the details for applications are also published on the Society's website: <https://www.midcounties.coop/community/campaigns-fund/>

**Edward Parker**  
**Secretary & Head of Governance**



## **1. The Society and political engagement**

In October 2013, the Society's members adopted a Statement on Political Engagement. The Statement shows that the Society is willing to engage with any political organisation that shares its objectives and beliefs. A copy can be found in the appendix to this report.

## **2. Campaigns Fund**

The Campaigns Fund was established, following member approval, at the Society's AGM in 2014. It supports campaigning activity that promotes the aims of co-operation in the public and political arenas and supports the Society's objectives and priorities.

Applications are welcome from any organisation, including the Co-operative Party, whose aims reflect those of the Society and the co-operative movement.

Applications can be submitted all year round and are reviewed by a Grants Panel, made up of Society directors, which makes recommendations to the Society's Board for final approval.

The Fund is funded by a distribution approved by members at each AGM. Members approved a distribution of £60,000 at the 2023 AGM.

The Board approved the most recent allocation of funds at its meeting held in January 2024. Recipients are listed overleaf.

## **3. Future grant rounds**

Members are invited to check the Society's website for further information. The Campaigns Fund webpage is regularly updated: <http://www.midcounties.coop/community/campaigns-fund/>

## **4. Review**

The Board is undertaking a review of the Fund and the Statement given they are now over 10 years old. It is planned that members will be updated on any recommended changes at the Half Year meeting in October.



Organisation	Activity request	Funds awarded (£)
Great Central Gazette	<p>Applied for Funding twice as detailed below:</p> <p>First application in March 2023 (£542.62) – Funding used to promote the local elections in Leicester through the publication of articles aiming to increase voter turnout and enhance voter engagement and education.</p> <p>Second application in September 2023 (£3,263) – Funding used to provide a full range of general election coverage for residents in Leicester.</p>	3,806
Make Votes Matter	Funding used to increase grassroots campaigning in the Tamworth area advocating for Proportional Representation.	5,000
Co-operative Party	Midcounties' predecessor societies are founding members of the Co-operative Party. The funding is used to support the Party's general activity.	34,437
Central Midlands Co-op Party Council	Funding used to sponsor candidates who contest elections to Councils and other public bodies in the Central Midlands area.	4,000
Co-operative West Midlands	Funding used to help the 'Save Birmingham' campaign to protect Birmingham's Community places in the wake of the City Council effectively declaring bankruptcy.	2,500
Oxford Branch of South-East Co-op Party Council	Core funding for the Oxford branch of the South-East Co-op Party Council. The branch maintains co-operative political activity in this part of the Midcounties core trading area.	5,129
Midcounties Gloucestershire & Swindon Co-op Party Council	Core funding for the Gloucestershire & Swindon Party Council. This covers 3 branches: Gloucester, Forest of Dean & Tewksbury, Stroud & Swindon. The branch maintains co-operative political activity in this part of the Midcounties core trading area.	5,129
	<b>Total</b>	60,000



## **APPENDIX**

### **The Midcounties Co-operative Limited**

#### **Statement on political engagement**

**Approved by members on 24 October 2013**

The Midcounties Co-operative supports, in letter and spirit, the Principles set out in the Statement of Co-operative Identity of the International Co-operative Alliance and the Governance Code of Co-operatives UK, to embrace all who accept the responsibilities of membership without gender, social, racial, political or religious discrimination.

The Society recognises the important role that the Co-operative Party has played, and continues to play, in promoting the interests of co-operation in the political sphere and, with the endorsement of members as expressed at successive Annual Meetings, provides financial support for the work of the Party.

The Society also seeks to engage with other political organisations and campaigning organisations which are active in its core trading area and which share its objective of working towards a society based on democracy, equal opportunities and social justice; and an economy where co-operative ownership plays an important and growing role in generating prosperity, genuine consumer choice and sustainable community development.