



The Midcounties Co-operative Climate Action Report 2021



About this report

The Midcounties Co-operative is one of the largest consumer co-operatives in the UK, with 700,000 members and a range of businesses.

Our mission is to be a successful consumer co-operative working toward creating a better, fairer world to enhance the lives of our members, colleagues, customers and the communities that we serve.

To help us achieve this, we focus on four of the values that guide co-operatives around the world: democracy, openness, equality and social responsibility. Our members help drive our strategy and we support issues that are relevant to them. We work closely with members and colleagues to build strong local communities.

We seek to manage and develop our business in a sustainable and values-driven way, which means that our business activities should meet our present needs while building strong local communities and enabling future generations to thrive. Our Society also actively supports the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. These 17 Development Goals form the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development – including health and wellbeing, responsible consumption and production, sustainable cities and communities, quality education, and climate action. This short report focuses on the Climate Action goal, outlining our strategy in this area, including some of the key environmental successes we've achieved so far and our targets for the future, as we continue to work towards a better, fairer world for all.



Business of the Year Award
edie 2021 Sustainability
Leaders Awards



Social Sustainability and
Community Development Award
edie 2021 Sustainability Leaders
Awards



Responsible Business
Champion 2020
Business in the Community
Responsible Business Awards



What we've achieved so far...



99%
99% of all Society waste is now recycled


8 million 

We've saved 8 million carrier bags each year by switching to compostable bags




Eco-Schools

All of our Childcare Nurseries hold the Green Flag Eco-Schools accreditation



We're enabling our customers to recycle soft plastics through Your Co-op Food Stores

55,000 

We work with community energy generators to power more than 55,000 homes each year through Your Co-op Energy Community Power. [Find out more](#)



Launched our 1 Change campaign, asking our customers and members to make small sustainability changes that together make a big difference



All of our own-brand packaging is now widely recyclable in Your Co-op Food Stores

2 tonnes 

We have cut 2 tonnes of single use plastics per year from our direct operations across our businesses




40

Using anaerobic digestion, our food waste from Your Co-op Food Stores powers 40 homes each year

200 tonnes 

We're reducing over 200 tonnes of waste per year across our Society operations



4,000 tonnes

Since 2010 we've reduced energy usage across our Society operations by 20%, saving around 4,000 tonnes of CO₂.



We co-founded the International Co-operative Entrepreneurship Think Tank (ICETT), which collaborates globally on topics including climate change



We're helping bring together Co-ops to share best practice around climate action. [Use this link](#) to watch the 2021 World Environment Day event organised between ICETT and the European Research Institute on Co-operative and Social Enterprises, moderated by our Chief Values Officer.



We're enabling our members and customers to live low carbon lifestyles through our products and service. For example, our Utilities business now offers a green broadband product, which offsets customers' broadband carbon footprint by working with a third party to plant trees.

CASE STUDY

The difference our 1 Change campaign is making

Our 1 Change initiative, launched to tackle single use plastics, demonstrates our co-operative values in action. Through the campaign we're working with other co-operatives to cut operational plastic waste, mobilising our members to make simple changes that make a big difference and working with our communities to turn waste into useful products.

Member pledges

When surveyed, 94% of our members said tackling single use plastics was their number one priority. So we launched into action and asked our members, customers and colleagues to do the same. We were overwhelmed to receive over 1,000 pledges from members with actions they planned to take to cut their own plastic waste.

Making changes

As a Society we've cut two tonnes of plastic from our own operations and, working with other co-operative retailers, have removed 1,000 tonnes of plastic across Co-op branded products in food stores. We introduced soft plastic recycling centres at our stores to enable members to recycle more of their plastic waste and swapped plastic carrier bags for compostable ones.

Community engagement

We're working closely with members of our community to drive change, including galvanising 700 volunteers into action through community tidy ups. Our 1 Change ambassador, environmental campaigner Cal Major, has helped us engage with our partner schools and young people to tackle plastics. And, one of our Regional Community groups worked with Fairytale Farm in the Cotswolds to give plastic bottles a new lease of life by turning them into eco bricks, which they used to build a turkey shed. Over 1,000 waste plastic bottles were re-used as part of this initiative.

Backed by our members, the 1 Change initiative continues to go from strength to strength in driving change both inside our Society and through our wider influence.

[Watch our video](#) to see how we're making a difference to our communities locally.

Cal Major



rewards.

You can too.

Our owners receive:

- ✓ A share of our profits
- ✓ Exclusive offers
- ✓ Money off coupons
- ✓ Free hot drink whenever they shop
- ✓ 10% off, for the over 60's on Diamond Day Tues
- ✓ They get to vote for our board members
- ✓ They help to decide on which local cause we



Soft plastics recycling

What we hope to achieve in the future

We continually strive to do more and do better in addressing climate change, waste management and environmental support. We're committed to achieving NET Zero Carbon Emissions by 2040, and to help achieve this our future targets are to:

- Reduce the Society's direct Green House Gas (GHG) emissions by 50% (from 2019 levels) in line with the UK's NET Zero Carbon aspirations.
- Work with our local suppliers to reduce waste and recover waste back into production processes. We are looking at a range of zero-waste solutions, leading the way in supporting circular economy principles and helping tackle the issue of diminishing natural resources.
- Increase the amount of community energy generated and made available to consumers across the UK. Supporting the growth of renewables across the UK will enable our members to live socially responsible and low carbon lifestyles. Plus, by working with community energy generators, we will help communities live more sustainably.

- Promote green spaces to help protect the natural environment and support wellbeing. By protecting the natural environment locally to climate-proof our businesses and communities, we will also be safeguarding these green spaces to ensure colleagues and local communities have access to them to improve their happiness and wellbeing.
- Mobilising our members and the next generation to take climate action through 1 Change. We will continue to educate and work with our members, partner schools and young co-operators to take action against climate change.
- Work with the broader Co-operative Movement to mobilise climate action. Our aim is to be recognised as an exemplar business in supporting Sustainable Development Goal 13 – Climate Action. We will continue to tackle this global issue by working with our co-operative partners around the world to find co-operative solutions.

Fairytale Farm



Community tidy ups

your
coop



SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT GOALS