

# The Midcounties Co-operative

## Social Responsibility Report 2015/2016



## Key Facts

4-5

## Supporting our communities

6

## Defending the environment

8

## Developing young people

14

## Developing links with co-operatives around the world

16

## Engaging our Members and Colleagues

18



# Social Responsibility Review

At its heart a true co-operative organisation is socially responsible and effectively engaged with the communities it serves. In order to achieve this we have developed our Regional Community programme which aims to involve members and colleagues to support issues that are relevant to their local communities. During the year we have made some positive impacts through this programme, including providing meals for over 450 families in need through supporting foodbanks and engaging over 1,000 young people in co-operative activities (including fairtrade workshops and employability skills workshops).

In recognition of our social responsibility programme we achieved the prestigious Queen's Award for Enterprise for Sustainment Development during the year, as well as being awarded 5 stars (the highest possible score) in Business in the Community's Corporate Responsibility Index. This booklet contains an overview of our achievements during the 2015/16 financial year. To see further details of our Social Responsibility activities please visit [www.midcounties.coop](http://www.midcounties.coop).



## Midcounties **DOES** The values that shape our Society



Ensuring the views of our members are reflected in the way the Society is run.



Being open, honest and fair in our dealings with everyone we come into contact with.



Recognising the contribution that everyone can make to the development of the Society.



Reflecting our responsibilities to the wider community in the way we conduct our business.



# Key facts

## The Midcounties Co-operative



Community Owned, Community Led, Community Rewarding  
*Working together to create a better, fairer world*

★★★★★

We have achieved a 5 Star rating in the CR Index

Supporting our communities

£11,000,000

Over the last decade we have given over £11 million back to the community

We are a global pioneer of the Fair Tax Mark

Fair Tax

26,000

Our colleagues provided over 26,000 community volunteering hours in 2015

650

Our members have helped feed over 650 families in need through Foodbank donations

We are supporting local community opportunities that matter to our members through our Regional Community programme

### Developing Young People

Over 90 young people have completed our Green Pioneers programme, enabling them to learn about co-operative values and sustainability



189

We provided 189 work experience placements in 2015, with placements offered in every trading group.

### Engaging our colleagues and members

81

Our colleague engagement score is ranked as **EXCEPTIONAL**, with a score of 81 measured through our annual colleague survey

### Defending the environment

5,000 TONNES

CO<sub>2</sub>

We have saved over 5,000 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> since 2009 by improving energy efficiency within our properties

We have increased our recycling levels to 85% from 21% in 2009

85% INCREASED RECYCLING LEVELS

21% RECYCLING LEVELS IN 2009

DIVERTING 2,500 TONNES OF WASTE

Diverting over 2,500 tonnes of waste from landfill per annum

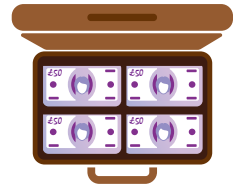
25,000

Over 25,000 members attended co-operative events in 2015



## Supporting our communities

**As a co-operative business we are committed to supporting communities by working with our colleagues and members to enable communities to grow together.**



**£140,633**

We distributed £140,633 from our community fund to support grassroots community organisations across our trading area

Our members, colleagues and customers have donated over 24,000 products to foodbanks in 2015, providing meals to over 450 families in need.



**26,000**

Our colleagues delivered over 26,000 volunteer hours last year to support their local communities

We have been re-accredited with the Fair Tax Mark, awarded to organisations that display a high degree of transparency in their tax affairs, achieving increased score following improvements to our tax charter



The Society has 20 Regional Communities set up, with members and colleagues working together in their communities to support local issues

We are proud holders of the Business in the Communities nationally recognized "Community Mark Award"



## Demonstrating the co-operative difference

### Regional Communities

In 2015 we have involved our members and colleagues to develop our Regional Community strategy. With 20 Regional Community groups now in place, we are ensuring that we are providing support and making positive impacts that are relevant to our diverse community locations. Our programme works by colleagues and members working together to identify relevant local community opportunities, and collectively taking action to make a positive difference in the community. This innovative programme builds on our strong track record of supporting communities, and aims to focus on the real 'Co-operative Difference', putting members at the heart of everything we do. In 2015 our colleagues and members have made a real difference in our Regional communities, including the following;



- 9,000 colleague volunteering hours completed on focused Regional Community activity
- Over 1,000 young people have been engaged in our Regional Community activity, ranging from fairtrade workshops to learning about employability skills
- Our members, colleagues and customers have donated over 24,000 products to foodbanks, providing meals for over 450 families in need
- 40 members actively involved in supporting Regional Community projects, ranging from strategic input on local Steering Groups to supporting community events

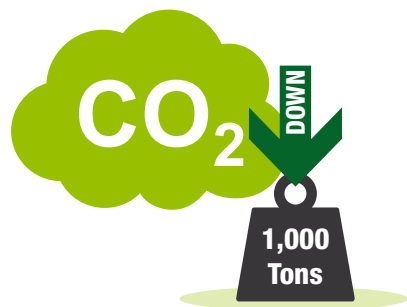
### Responsible Tax

As a values led and ethical organisation, we believe that we should pay the taxes that are due and not engage in aggressive tax avoidance schemes, even if legal. In 2013 we formalised this with the development of a Tax Charter, which sets out that, as far as is reasonable, the Society's preference is to make its tax affairs as simple as possible. In July 2014, we revised our Charter, making an explicit commitment to not establish operations in other jurisdictions for the purpose of evading or avoiding the tax laws of the UK. In February 2014, we were amongst a handful of pioneers to secure a Fair Tax Mark, which certifies that we "pay the right amount of tax in the right place at the right time." In early 2016, we were re-certified for the 2nd time and saw our score increase following improvements to our tax charter.

## Defending the environment

Concern for the environment is a key element of our social responsibility agenda and we believe that being environmentally responsible plays an important part in our Society's overall success.

85% of our waste is now being recycled (up from 21% in 2009), diverting 3,000 tonnes of waste from landfill.



The Society has reduced its energy usage by 3.1% in 2015 resulting in the business reducing CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by 1,000 tonnes (saving circa £250,000 on energy costs).

We achieved the Nationally recognised Carbon Trust Standard in recognition for excellence in managing, reporting and reducing our carbon emissions.



Our Society is benefitting from annual eco efficiency savings of circa £1.5 million as a result of our energy saving and recycling progress.

Our food waste recycling process produces enough renewable energy to power 40 homes a year.



## Demonstrating the co-operative difference

### Midcounties have been awarded the Queen's Award for Enterprise for Sustainable Development.

This prestigious award was achieved as a result of the Society placing sustainability at the heart of its operations. The Society was recognised for developing significant environmental improvements whilst delivering tangible social and economic benefits.

This accolade is recognised as one of the UK's most prestigious business awards given only to companies or individuals outstanding in their field.

Only 12 businesses in the UK were awarded the Sustainable Development award in 2015, and this accolade was presented to the Society by the Queen in July 2015.



THE QUEEN'S AWARDS  
FOR ENTERPRISE:  
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT  
2015

### Energy saving and recycling

Our sustainability activity across all of the business operations has made considerable positive environmental impacts. As a result of our energy saving awareness programmes and focused property projects, our annual consumption across our properties has fallen by over 10% since 2009 (saving over 5,000 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>), enabling us to achieve the Carbon Trust Standard.

Recycling of operational waste has increased over the last six years, from a 21% recycling rate in 2009 to 85% in 2015. As of summer 2014, we have set up a scheme with other Co-operative Societies to backhaul our waste through our distribution network to one central place. This has enabled even more of our waste to be diverted from landfill and reduced waste removal costs by circa £200,000 per annum. Through our recycling programme, we

send our food waste to anaerobic digestion to produce renewable energy. This process produces 477,000 kwh of renewable energy per annum, providing enough energy to power 40 homes in the community for a whole year. Operational eco-efficiency gains are now running in excess of £1.5 million per annum, as a result of our ongoing energy saving and recycling activity.





Performance in 2015: The **co-operative** energy

Energy mix

In 2011, we launched Co-operative Energy and began supplying electricity and gas to customers across England, Scotland and Wales. From the outset we pledged that the carbon content of our electricity would remain less than half the national average – and we delivered on this in each of our early years of trading. Last year (year ending March 2015) we did not secure the same levels of wholesale electricity from renewable sources, but have established new strategies to take us back to our high, industry-beating standards. We did however increase the number of active bilateral power purchase agreements with community energy providers, as described below. Our gas supply is from conventional sources and we will seek to actively avoid gas derived from shale until the impact of such developments is better understood and support a moratorium on commercial development

Support for community renewables

In addition to our general support for renewable energy, we actively seek to source power from community generation initiatives and independent generators. By offering long-term power purchase agreements we provide a secure market for community energy and significantly enhance a project's viability.

In 2015, the number of active agreements increased by eight to 26, totalling a renewable energy capacity of 46MW (2014: 39MW). Thirteen active agreements are now in place with community projects (2014: nine), which ranged from co-operatives through to charitable trusts and crowd-sourced debt offerings. These community energy projects generate enough output to power 8,000 homes.



Westmill, Oxfordshire - wind	Co-operative	3.9MW
Baywind Harlock Hill, Cumbria - wind	Co-operative	2.5MW
West Solent, Hampshire - solar	Co-operative	2.4MW
Galson, Isle of Lewis - wind	Charitable trust	900KW
Great Dunkilns, Gloucestershire - wind	Crowd-sourced debt	500KW
Berwick, Northumberland - wind	Charitable trust	500KW
REG High Down, Cornwall - wind	Crowd-sourced debt	500KW
Schools Energy Co-operative, Sussex - solar	Co-operative	150KW
Oxford Bus Company, Oxfordshire - solar	Co-operative	140KW
Ysgol y Bedol, Carmarthenshire - solar	Co-operative	100KW
Leominster Sunrise Co-op, Herefordshire - solar	Co-operative	90KW
Gloucestershire Community Energy, Gloucestershire - solar	Co-operative	50KW
Whitby Esk, Yorkshire - hydro	Co-operative	50KW

In July 2015, we added additional generation to User Chooser, a facility that allows customers to control the energy mix of the electricity they buy. Customers visit our Energy Hub website, register and then choose the generation type they prefer and, if relevant, the specific generation site to be utilised. User Chooser was recognised with a “Renewable Energy Award” at the 2015 EU Sustainable Energy Awards, beating off over three hundred entries from across Europe.

In September 2015, we sponsored Community Energy Fortnight for the second consecutive year and organised our third Community Energy Conference at Oxford University.

Energy Companies Obligation and Smart Meter roll-out

Once energy suppliers in the UK reach a threshold number of customers they become obligated to fund the installation of energy efficiency improvement measures across the UK domestic housing stock. In 2015, Co-operative Energy discharged its Electricity Company Obligation (ECO) commitments by working with bilateral delivery partners and Local Authorities to fund projects to targeted energy users, including the fuel poor. This includes work with Energy Local in Oxfordshire Energy to investigate how to help people change the time when they use electricity, reducing costs to them and the need for excess capacity in the energy supply system. In 2015, Co-operative Energy continued to prepare for its contribution to the national roll out of Smart Meters. These will give consumers detailed information about their energy consumption and enable them to better manage their usage, costs and environmental impact.

Lobbying for Good

The UK energy market is skewed toward six large incumbent corporations who control 90% of supply. At the same time, the penetration of renewables in UK energy supply is some of the poorest in Europe. This means that a progressive new entrant such as Co-operative Energy faces an uphill struggle to deliver a fair and sustainable offering. It is therefore vital that we engage with policy makers and influencers at the highest level and argue for a more balanced legislative and regulatory regime – one that recognises the value of fair, low carbon co-operative solutions. To date, we are the only UK energy supplier to play a full and active role in Community Energy England, the UK Community Energy Coalition and the European federation for renewable energy cooperatives (REScoop).

2016 targets

- Increase renewables content of electricity supply to up to 75% by 2018, and ensure no coal-powered generation is newly contracted from 2016.
- Lobby for Good and ensure that fair, low carbon co-operative solutions have the opportunity to thrive in energy markets
- Deliver on Energy Companies Obligation and contribute to Smart Meter roll-out



Community Energy

Community energy faced a number of policy reversals in the UK in 2015, not least the resurfacing of proposals to remove tax relief from investees – proposals that Co-operative Energy had successfully seen curtailed in previous years. Co-operative Energy co-ordinated a letter to the Chancellor of the Exchequer urging reconsideration, which was supported by over one hundred community energy groups. We also called for the introduction of a bespoke community feed-in tariff and provided modelling demonstrating that 3GW of community energy could be delivered for as little as 25p per UK retail customer per annum.

At our Community Energy Conference, we released polling, which was picked up by national media, demonstrating that the UK public are overwhelmingly in favour of more community energy, including onshore wind and solar farms. In the run-up to the general election, we worked with the Social Economy Alliance to raise the profile and importance of

community renewables, and contributed to a 'Right to Invest' pamphlet.

More positively, the co-operative voice is making headway in the corridors of power in Brussels and Strasbourg, where there is much to play for as the EU's Energy Union and Energy Market Reforms progress. Co-operative Energy has been active over the last 12 months in both REScoop and Co-operatives Europe's Energy Working Group, and provided evidence at the European Parliament on the impact and opportunity of community energy at a special hearing. It was most welcome that the subsequent EU consultation on a new renewable energy directive (REDII) for the period 2020-2030, suggesting that community energy support should be much more central to any emerging strategy. Amongst other things, this re-opens the question of better accommodation of community energy in EU State Aid Guidelines, an active issue for Co-operative Energy in 2015.

Renewable Energy and Climate Change

In support of the need for an accelerated deployment of renewable energy in the UK we co-signed a public letter to the Prime Minister expressing our strong support for the continuation of Feed-in Tariffs (FiTs) for renewable energy and an ambitious level of local deployment. Following a disappointing outcome, we subsequently lobbied the Secretary for State for Energy and Climate Change to reconsider draconian cuts to FiTs support rates – with partial success.

Internationally, we are a signatory to the Trillion Tonne Communique and the call for scientifically informed global greenhouse gas reduction targets. To this end, we attended the COP21 climate change talks in Paris together with other community energy enterprises from across Europe and urged that coops and citizens be more central to the realisation of climate change mitigation.

Warm Homes and Fuel Poverty

As a member of the Energy Bill Revolution alliance, we have been calling for a step-change improvement in the UK's energy inefficient housing stock. We co-signed a letter calling upon party leaders to make a commitment in their election manifestos to use infrastructure funds to invest in a more ambitious and effective energy efficiency programme. Subsequently, we co-signed a letter to the Chancellor of the Exchequer asking for energy efficiency to be designated as a national infrastructure priority. We also supported a Parliamentary Reception with the Sustainable Energy Association to advance the case for higher energy efficiency standards in buildings.



## Developing young people

**We work with local school, colleges and youth services across our trading area; offering an extensive activities programme to engage and inform young people about the values and benefits of co-operation**



Since the Green Pioneers was introduced in 2013 we have engaged with 90 young people from our Partner schools. The programmes primary aim is to engage young people in sustainability awareness. All participants are in Year 9 (aged 13 to 14 years). In 2015 The Midcounties Co-operative and The Outward Bound Trust delivered the first Green Pioneers Conference. This brought together the students who have participated on the programme since it began. It is aimed to remind the Green Pioneers about what they have learnt during their course, continuing the legacy.

Our Stores as Classrooms programme encourages local schools to use our sites to deliver lessons that fit their curriculum and projects during the academic year. This engages stores, colleagues and customers and demonstrates how we develop young people. During 2015 we delivered a variety of classroom sessions including Fairtrade events, Easter Egg Hunts, Maths Challenge and The Great Fire of London based around Health & Safety.



As a community based retailer we offer work experience and work placements to young people across our business and trading area. During 2015 we provided 189 work placements and we have continued to support local schools and colleges with their Employability events. This includes mock interviews, CV writing, Careers Insight events and representation at career fayres.



## Demonstrating the co-operative difference

The Midcounties Co-operative and The Outward Bound Trust have been working in partnership to deliver the Green Pioneers programme since 2013. To this date 90 students from our Partner schools have participated on the week long residential in Aberdovey, Wales. During 2015 Campion School Warwick, Walsall Academy, Beaufort Co-operative Academy Gloucester and The Community College Bishops Castle all took part. The programme aims to engage young people in sustainability awareness and it develops their skills and qualities, enabling them to reach their full potential and make positive changes. The programme consists of an induction, a five day residential course at Aberdovey, two school based sessions, a visit to a Midcounties Co-operative site and finally a presentation delivered by the pupils. It is a challenging yet rewarding week for the students on the two day expedition, staying in tents and

a cabin with no running water or power, trekking through the welsh countryside embracing co-operation and teamwork. It is about creating a legacy that will continue to impact the students and school after the programme has ended. Throughout the course the pupils explore climate change, sustainability and energy, learn about Co-operative DOES values and how to apply them in everyday situations. Pupils will also develop an action plan for a green life at school and at home. In addition they also complete the John Muir Trust Discovery Award which is an Environmental award scheme that encourages young people to discover, explore and conserve. At the end of the programme we invite the parents to share this celebration of the achievements the Green Pioneers have made during the event.

### Partner Schools & Further Education

The Midcounties Co-operative continues to develop relationships with our Partner Secondary schools across our trading areas. We embed and share our values and work in partnership supporting education, employability and work experience to help them achieve their goals and ambitions. Each year we work with the schools to plan and develop a calendar of activities for each school term. This year we have enhanced our employability skills offer by introducing a telephone techniques workshop in order for pupils to understand and develop telephone etiquette skills. Midcounties colleagues across each trading group support various careers events including mock interview workshops, careers insight days and careers fairs.

We have developing relationships with New College Swindon and Walsall College and have recently engaged and supported students with their Applied Business Studies Class. In line with our Developing Young People Strategy we delivered a presentation to students about our Co-operative business model and our DOES values. We then went on to task the students with a marketing challenge, they were asked to develop a membership recruitment marketing campaign targeted at 16-25yr olds with a marketing message, ensuring the pupils understands the benefits what it means to be a member of a Co-operative. In return the students can share with us with us how they think we as a business can engage and recruit young people.





## Developing links with co-operatives around the world

**Co-operation amongst co-operatives is a key principle in the co-operative business model and, as a successful co-operative, we want to support and work with others.**

We gave £75,000 to support the development of Co-operatives through Co-operative Futures, enabling 60 Co-operatives to receive support and guidance to thrive in 2015



This year 4 new co-operatives were registered and 56 were advised or supported by Co-operative Futures.

We hosted a visit from Japanese co-operators who were interested in our business policy and strategy. In particular; Co-operative childcare, co-operative energy and food retail.



**£261,000**

We provided a £261,000 worth of grants to support Co-operatives in 2015.

## Demonstrating the co-operative difference

### Community Development Grants

Through our Co-operative Community Developments grants, we help fund Co-operative futures. Co-operative Futures has been working with co-operative and community owned enterprises since 2000, helping them to become better businesses. Over the years they have worked with a range of organisations, in a variety of sectors on a series of different issues. They have a team of experienced advisers who provide advice and support to co-operatives. This year 4 new co-opratives were registered and 56 were advised or supported by Co-operative Futures.

Co-operative Futures work with start-ups and existing organisations. They advise a wide variety of enterprises including public sector spin-offs, groups of professionals, local community groups and other user owned organisations.

They have partnerships and projects that stretch across the South East, South West and the West Midlands and we work strategically on national and some international projects.

### Swindon Child Carers

Swindon Child Carers is a workers co-operative that has been providing professional mobile crèche services in and around Swindon since 1988. They run crèches at weddings and family functions, and a wide range of corporate events including; training days, exhibitions, long term courses and one-off conferences.

A large number of their customers had been providers of adult education funded by local authorities and as the cuts began to bite they recognised that this work was at risk. Co-operative Futures worked with them over a period of six months to explore what new products they could offer, where they might find some new customers and to develop a strategy for keeping in touch with former customers who might want to use them again. We also worked together on ways that the members could be more informed about and involved in the co-operative side of the business.

Since working with them they have developed a package for weddings which they are busy promoting. As the dust has settled the previous customers have come back and begun to use their services again. Where they went out and made new contacts this work has borne fruit with plenty of new customers booking crèches. One of these was the Brunel Centre in Swindon where they ran a Christmas 'Elf School' Saturday crèche. They are now so busy they have had to take on new staff. The members are now much more informed about the business, the good bits and the bad, and so when times are good there are collective celebrations and when difficulties arise support is always on hand.

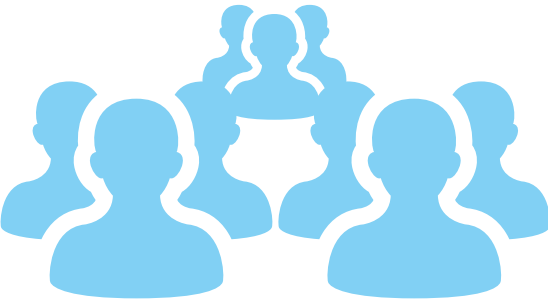
## Engaging our colleagues & members

Engaging with our colleagues and members helps us to achieve our social responsibility goals.



We engaged with more than 25,000 members during the year with 783 (635 last year) members attending the members days in which local charity partners showcased the impact Midcounties had made to their organisation.

We increased once again our a colleague engagement by achieving a score of 81 measured through our annual colleague survey (our independent survey provider ranks this as EXCEPTIONAL for our sector)



The AGM attracted 689 members with 93% telling us the event was worthwhile and engaging

We beat our target of the number of injury accidents/ incidents reported as a moving annual trend, with 738 reported (ahead of our target of 840)



## Demonstrating the co-operative difference

### Managers Engagement Development Programme

The Managers development programme took place in January 2015 where 70 managers from across all areas of the Society were nominated to attend. The day is the Society's commitment to supporting those Managers that have ongoing challenges with the levels of engagement within their teams. The programme is designed to be an interactive development day with opportunities for managers to share with each other the strategies and approaches they have adopted to tackle the day to day challenges around engagement and develop Managers skills to embrace these.

Managers were supported as they developed an action plan for their site. This included targeting areas indicated via the survey that needed improvement and then implementing those actions to increase their engagement in those areas.

Success was measured in the improvements achieved in the 2015 survey. The results were exceptional showing that 93% of the sites taking part had significantly improved scores. The impact was so great that the programme

was conducted again in January 2016 for those managers who it was felt would benefit.

The Impact of the day saw 93 % of the sites who had comparable reports having an increased engagement score in the 2015 survey compared to the previous year. Our 2016 event took place on 25th January where we hope to see great improvements for those teams reflected in the 2016 Colleague Survey results.



Colleague **Engagement**  
Development Day 2016

### Chinnor Food Retail and Maidenhead Childcare Nursery

Our Chinnor retail store in Oxford and our Maidenhead nursery saw great increase's in their engagement scores ( 25 point increase and 18 point increase respectively) in 2015 after attending the Managers Development Engagement Day. The day is designed to be an interactive development day with opportunities for managers to share with each other the strategies and approaches they have adopted to tackle the day to day challenges around engagement and develop managers skills to embrace these. Here are some of the ways in which the managers and their teams have achieved their Engagement scores and how the Engagement Day supported this.

Kevin Arblaster – Chinnor, Food Store Manager - 'The management team in Chinnor are dedicated to enhance the working life experience for all colleagues which included setting clear goals and celebrating success. With regular top team meetings and setting up working groups for events such as dress up days, cake sales etc.. everyone gets involved. We have had engagement evenings and local interaction with schools, basically we have had a lot fun over the year making the store into a family. As a manager I had one to one meetings with colleagues sharing memories of all they have achieved over the past year including hitting the £100k sales barrier for the first time. Invest in our colleagues and they will invest in the store ...make it fun. Remember that colleague engagement is ongoing and not just for a survey.'



Kate Hatter – Maidenhead, Childcare Nursery Manager – 'Since the Manager's Development day I have started working more closely with my fellow colleagues, allocating my time equally and engaging with colleagues during lunch breaks. I also ensure that I leave my door open for them to chat to me when they need to, and I have implemented 'thank you' cards amongst other tools to recognise their efforts. My aim has been to ensure that my team 'want' to come to work and enjoy what they do. I feel that I have achieved this and will endeavour to ensure that this continues.'



**Sustainability West Midlands is the sustainability adviser for the leaders of the West Midlands. We are also the sustainability champion body for the region, designated by government.**

We are a not-for-profit company that works with our members in the business, public and voluntary sectors. As a founder of Climate UK we also work nationally through a network of similar champion bodies.

Drawing on this knowledge we have worked with Midcounties Co-operative to conduct an independent resilience and sustainability review and have done so for the past five years. The review covers the key environmental, economic, and social uncertainties that our businesses and communities may face and the sustainability priorities where working together will deliver the best future in terms of jobs, carbon reduction, and healthy lives.

Our overall assessment has indicated that the Midcounties Cooperative is continuing to make good progress in building a resilient business that is contributing to a sustainable future where it operates.

### **Highlights for this year include:**

- Sector leadership – Midcounties Co-operative has continued to demonstrate leadership evidenced by:
  - Award of the Queen's Award for Enterprise for Sustainable Development in 2015
  - Recognition of their progress on energy efficiency and waste management through the achievement of the Carbon Trust Standard
  - Recertification for the second time with the Fair Tax Mark in early 2016
  - Their increasing star rating in the Business in the Community Corporate Responsibility Index
  - Growth of support for the community with 24,000 products being donated to foodbanks in 2015, up from 10,000 in 2014

- Delivering clear environmental and financial results – Energy and waste reduction programmes are delivering cost savings of £1.5 million per annum, which are probably under reporting the wider environmental and community benefits, such as greenhouse gas reduction beyond CO2.
- Support for community energy – Midcounties continue to increase the power sourced from community generation initiatives and independent generators acting as a catalyst for change, and lobby for good with partners to open up the energy market to more local and low carbon providers.
- Internal leadership. The Environmental Steering Group was established over eight years ago and continues to help deliver green objectives and embed the culture of sustainability across the Society through awareness raising, communication, and operational activity.

### **Future challenges remain for the business to address include:**

- Reporting on internal progress in improving the business resilience to extreme weather events
- Reporting on the health contribution from reduced fat, sugar, and salt within product lines
- Recognising and preparing for the changing demands from its customers, members, and staff as demographic change occur within different part of the Midcounties operating area
- Demonstrating how the business is planning over a longer period, such as 5 year targets with annual milestones in certain areas
- Further integration and linking of the Social Responsibility Report to the main annual accounts and goals.

**Anna Bright, SWM Chief Executive, March 2016.**



# Key achievements



We have received the prestigious Queen's Award for Enterprise in Sustainable Development in recognition of our positive environmental initiatives, sustained growth and contribution to our local communities

We returned £1.2 million to our local communities through grants, fundraising and volunteer support



We have been recognised as one of the best businesses in the UK for our CSR programme by the UK's leading CSR experts (Business in the Community), by achieving the highest level possible in the Corporate Responsibility Index with a 5 star score.



We engaged with more than 25,000 members during the year in Co-operative activities



Our members, colleagues and customers donated over 24,000 products to foodbanks in 2015, providing meals for over 450 families in need

We have been successfully re-accredited with the Fair Tax mark for the second time for being transparent about our tax affairs



## Keep in touch



## We are happy to provide publications in alternative formats

Membership Hotline freephone: 0800 435902  
[member.communications@midcounties.coop](mailto:member.communications@midcounties.coop)

The Midcounties Co-operative  
Co-operative House, Warwick Technology Park,  
Warwick, CV34 6DA  
[www.midcounties.coop](http://www.midcounties.coop)

Printed on: 100% Recycled stock  
Printed by: Hickling & Squires  
Designed by: The Midcounties Co-operative Design Studio

