

The Midcounties Co-operative

Social Responsibility Report 2016/2017



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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 in supporting 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 1,000 families in need (compared to 450 families in the previous year) through supporting foodbanks and engaging over 9,000 young people in co-operative activities (compared to 1,000 in the previous year).

In recognition of our social responsibility programme we are holders of the prestigious Queen's Award for Enterprise: Sustainment Development and we were awarded 5 stars (the highest possible score) in Business in the Community's Corporate Responsibility Index. The Society also won 'Overall Excellence In Corporate Responsibility' in the 2016 National CSR Awards.

This booklet contains an overview of our achievements during the 2016/17 financial year. To see further details of our social responsibility activities please visit 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 achievements

The Midcounties Co-operative



We have achieved a 5 star rating in the CR Index

We distributed

£390,000

to over **500** local causes



£1.6m

We distributed £1.6 million to the community



Our colleagues and members donated over **70,000** products to **40** Foodbanks helping over **1,000** families in need



Our colleagues delivered **36,000** volunteer hours

Developing Your

Engaged with 9,000 young



280 students have been

Engaging our co

We engaged with more than 32,000 people at Member Events, o

32





Community Owned, Community Led, Community Rewarding

Working together to create a better, fairer world

Engaging People

More than 280 people supported with work experience opportunities



280

supported with work experience opportunities

Colleagues and members

More than 32,000 members during the year of our AGM and Half Yearly Meetings

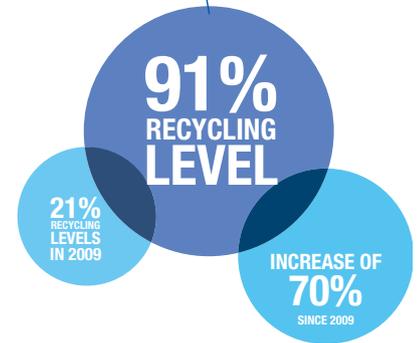
32,000



Defending the environment



We have increased recycling levels to 91% from 21% in 2009



10,000

We involved 10,000 members in selecting local opportunities across all 20 Regional Community Areas



Supporting our communities

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



€1.6million

£1.6 million distributed to the community in 2016 (compared to £1.2 million in 2015).

Our members, colleagues and customers have donated over 70,000 products to foodbanks in 2016 (compared to 24,000 in 2015), providing meals to over 1,000 families in need.



36,000

Our colleagues delivered over 36,000 volunteer hours in 2016 to support their local communities (compared to 26,000 in 2015).

We have been re-accredited with the Fair Tax Mark, awarded to organisations that display a high degree of transparency in their tax affairs.



234,000 volunteering hours have been provided by our colleagues in the community over the last 10 years.

The Society's fun days in Churchstoke and Gloucestershire raised over £70,000 for local good causes and over 16,500 people attended the 2 events.



Supporting our Communities

Regional Communities

With 20 Regional Community groups now in place, we are providing support and making positive impacts in our diverse community locations. Our programme enables colleagues and members to work together to identify relevant local community opportunities and collectively take action to make a positive difference in the community. In 2016 the following were achieved:

- Delivered 21,000 volunteer hours across our Regional Community areas (an increase from 10,800 in 2015)
- Involved 10,000 members in selecting local opportunities across all 20 Regional Community Areas
- Distributed over £390,000 to over 500 local community groups and good causes through grants and carrier bag monies
- Engaged with over 9,000 young people (an increase from 1,000 in 2015) through a range of initiatives working with over 50 schools and Higher Education partners across our trading area
- Produced over 400 press releases with a potential audience reach of 50 million people



Supporting our Communities case studies

Carrier bag funds

Over £200,000 has been distributed to over 250 local good causes in 2016 from the Society's carrier bag monies. Impacts made through this funding include the following;

- Raising awareness of dementia in over 2,500 members in our Regional Communities
- Enabling 5 schools to carry out employability skills workshops for their students
- Engaging 1,500 members in tackling loneliness campaigns in our Regional Communities
- Raising awareness of mental health issues amongst over 3,000 people in the community
- Raising awareness of young carers in the community by engaging 1,500 members about the advice and services available to them.



Supporting local foodbanks

Over 900,000 people are now reliant on over 400 Foodbanks in the UK. As a responsible Food Retailer we work with our colleagues, members and customers to donate products to foodbanks across our trading area. We also encourage colleagues and members to volunteer providing further support.

We have donated 104,000 products to foodbanks over the last 3 years, providing meals to over 2,000 families.

Engagement in our foodbank campaigns has increased year on year with 10,000 products being donated by our members, customers and colleagues in 2014 and 70,000 products being donated in 2016. We are now supporting 40 foodbank groups across our trading area.



Supporting our Communities case studies

Cannock Chase Regional Community - focusing on tackling obesity and health and fitness

Local members voted for the Regional Community to focus on tackling obesity and supporting health and fitness in 2016.

Support and donations have been provided to the following football clubs: FC Newlands, Cannock Blues FC, Huntington Harriers under-10s football team and Hednesford Town's girls under-12s team.

We enabled Huntington Harriers under-10s football team to buy waterproof jackets, while Hednesford Town's girls under-12s team used a

grant to contribute to costs for pitch hire, insurance and a first aid kit.

We enabled Cannock Town Blues FC to purchase trophies to be awarded to its under 11s team and helped them to buy training equipment for the squad.

A Co-operative Community grant of £1,359 was given to FC Newlands, enabling it to buy new rain jackets for almost 200 players to use during winter training and helping the club to start new Brazilian-inspired futsal training sessions.

**Stuart
Harris, Chairman
of FC Newlands, said:**

“As a club, we’re focused on helping members to develop as people and leading them away from falling into the wrong crowd and turning to crime. This grant is absolutely vital in ensuring our boys have everything they need to thrive, on and off the field.”

Central Oxford Regional Community - Café for homeless supported by Midcounties

The Central Oxford Regional Community Group has chosen The Gatehouse, a drop-in café for homeless people, as its local charity partner.

Midcounties has previously helped to raise more than £6,000 for the café and has now made the partnership official, with plans for more fundraising already underway. Six days a week the café serves hot food and drinks to homeless people over the age of 25.

This partnership is a great example of how some simple fundraising activity can be just the beginning of a longstanding, meaningful and supportive relationship – something Midcounties is keen to build wherever possible.

**The Gatehouse project
director, Katrina Horne,
said:**

“We’ve been lucky enough to work with The Midcounties Co-operative in the past, receiving donations from its carrier bag fund and its colleagues baking cakes, which were greatly appreciated by our guests who miss the comforts of home cooked food.”

Defending the environment

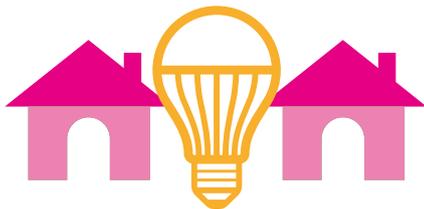
Concern for the environment is a key element of our social responsibility agenda and we believe that being environmentally responsible plays an important part in our Society's overall success.

91% of our waste is now being recycled (up from 85% in 2015 and 21% in 2009), diverting over 3,000 tonnes of waste from landfill.



The Society has reduced its energy usage by 4% in 2016 resulting in the business reducing CO₂ emissions by over 1,000 tonnes.

We achieved re-accreditation for Business in the Community's 'Sustainable Products and Services award'.



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

We have reduced the total amount of waste that we produce in 2016 to 3,600 tonnes, compared to 5,500 tonnes in 2013 (3,800 in 2015).



We have reduced energy usage by over 15% since 2010 (saving over 7,000 tonnes of CO₂).

Defending the environment case studies

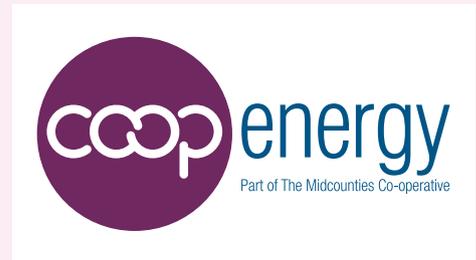
Co-operative Energy

Co-operative Energy has continued to lead in helping members and customers defend the environment.

We have stopped buying electricity generated from coal fired power stations and have over 45% of our energy purchased from renewable sources. That's allowed us to offer a 100% green electricity tariff.

We have continued to sponsor the Community Energy Fortnight, the UK's largest annual gathering of community energy practitioners, attracting over 300 people and helping facilitate new projects.

We've launched Co-operative Energy saving – a new business offering energy saving products and services.



Sustainable Products and Services award

We have been re-accredited with Business in the Community's 'Sustainable Products and Services' award.

The award recognises businesses that are developing their core products or services in order to cut dependency on diminishing natural resources.

This reflects our year on year energy reductions and increased recycling levels with a reduction in energy usage of 15% since 2010 (saving over 7,000 tonnes of CO₂).

It recognises the Society's development of Co-operative Energy, as a low carbon energy provider. It also recognises the Society's stance on ethical trade and increased sales performance of ethical lines including Fairtrade, local produce and animal welfare products.



Developing young people

We work with local schools, colleges and youth services across our trading area by offering an extensive activities programme to engage and inform young people about the values and benefits of co-operation. In 2016 the following were achieved:

Engaged with over 9,000 young people through a wide range of interventions (compared to 1,000 in 2015)

9,000  



50+

worked with over 50 Schools and Higher Education partners across our trading area.

supported 280 students with work experience opportunities compared to 189 students in 2015



280



52

delivered 52 'stores as classrooms' events verses 10 that took place in 2015

enabled 131 students to complete our Green Pioneers programme, learning and being inspired to protect the environment

**The Co-operative
Green Pioneers
Programme**



2,000

completed 2,000 colleague volunteering hours on developing young people projects.

Developing Young People case studies

Fairtrade Fortnight

During the fortnight we engaged with over 1,000 young people informing them how fair trade guarantees a better deal for farmers and producers in developing countries and contributes to our DOES values. We did this by delivering a host of workshops within our Partner Schools which informed the pupils of the historical links between Fairtrade and the very first Co-operative Food Store. As a result next year we are looking to arrange for a farmer to visit schools and we have secured a booking to deliver sessions to Year 10 students as part of their GCSE coursework.



1

Green Pioneers

We have been working in partnership with The Outward Bound Trust to deliver the Green Pioneers programme since 2013. To date 131 students from our Partner Schools have participated on the week long residential in Aberdovey, Wales. Here pupils developed an action plan for a green life at school and at home. A further 54 students attended our second Green Pioneers Conference in September at The Chateau Impney, Drotwich Spa. The theme was entitled "Think Globally, Act Locally" which raised student awareness of global issues while encouraging them to think how they can make a difference locally.



2

Engaging our colleagues & members

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

We engaged with more than 32,000 members during the year, compared to 25,000 members in 2015.



The Half Yearly meetings were attended by 517 members compared to 442 in 2015.

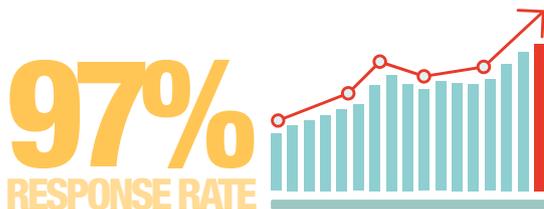
663 members attended our AGM with 94% of attendees scoring the overall event 8 or more out of 10.



£44 million

We have distributed £44 million to our members through share of profits over the last 10 years.

We again increased our colleague engagement by achieving a score of 82 (compared to 81 in 2015 and 76 in 2011) measured through our annual colleague survey (our independent survey provider ranks this as EXCEPTIONAL for our sector).



We achieved a 97% response rate for our annual colleague survey.

500 of our managers attended our 2016 Managers conference, enjoying our key note speaker, Sir Vince Cable.



Case studies

Managers Conference 2016

The 2016 Managers Conference took place on the 20th September with over 500 managers in attendance. The theme for the event was 'Shaping the Future'.

The day involved a detailed Society update, a presentation on the Society's progress against delivering the Blueprint and an update on the Co-op Group re-branding. Managers took part in an interactive breakout session themed around the Society's Community Strategy. During these sessions

Managers were asked to summarize what has been achieved within the Regional Community programme, discuss how the Community Strategy has developed and why all colleagues need to play their part.

The Key Note Speaker in attendance was Sir Vince Cable who gave a balanced account of the business implications and considerations of Brexit.



Member involvement in the community

In order to identify key focus areas within our 20 Regional Communities in 2016 we engaged with 10,000 members to find out what really matters to those who work, live and learn in the local community. This feedback enabled our Regional Communities to set their local strategies in line with our members wishes.

To further involve members at a strategic level we had 38 active members sit on Regional Community Steering Groups in

2016 (50% increase from the previous year). This enables our members to work with our colleagues making local level strategic decisions.

Our Regional Communities have also focused on raising awareness of member events in 2016. Over 1,000 members living in Regional Community areas attended democratic events including the AGM, Half Yearly Meetings and member days in 2016.





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



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 won the Overall Excellence in Social Responsibility at the 2016 National CSR Awards.



Keep in touch     

We are happy to provide publications in alternative formats

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

