

Draft minutes of Principle 5 AGM 2024

15 January 2025. 3.30pm in the Mike Bower boardroom, Aizlewood's Mill

1. Welcome: Chair, Dr John Carlisle welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. Attendance: Jonathan Cook, John Carlisle, Nick Edmondson, Felicity Reed & Jayne Meadows (Share Instead), Steve Thompson, Bryan Munsey, Dave Berry, Naomi Lopez, Chris Croome, Chris Olewicz, Michael McGowan, Jean Tinsley.

2a. Apologies: John Baxter came, left early and gave apologies. Gareth Roberts, Kath Clements, John Drewery, Wales Co-op, Gillian Lonergan, Jane Mason and Graham Mitchell sent apologies.

3. Minutes of the last AGM: Those present agreed the minutes are accurate and accepted them as a true account.

4. Matters Arising:

a) Referring to item 4a) in Minutes of 2024 AGM – about Martin Mayer of Sheffield Trades Union Council. He remains suspended. At this point is not thought to be wanting to return.

b) Referring to item 8a), Dave Berry said of Community Wealth Building, that it is still being promoted in Sheffield. It does not have much influence on NHS, Universities or the Council. Most contracts go to big corporations. But there is more local interest.

c) Referring to item 9, Jean Tinsley asked for an update on Mikee Whitson's work on Cooperation Town for VAS. Nick has heard from him that he has initiated 2 Food Co-ops operating out of the Verdon Recreation Centre, and one at Southey Green. Now wanting to expand this.

5. Directors Report:

See Steve's annual report [here](#). This includes a list of P5 publications, and news of recent acquisitions; an article about Co-operative Education, Training, and Information; History of P5 and a timeline of development; a list of P5 Directors; our Purposes and Aims; Contact details.

6. Accounts:

a) Signatories are Steve, Jonathan and Chris

b) Treasurer: Since its founding in 2014, P5 has never had a treasurer. John Carlisle willing, and duly elected.

c) Naomi asked us to consider applying for funding for P5. Steve suggested that we should rely on the support of our members through subscriptions and donations.

d) Rent of £1843.20 pa was highlighted and considered good value.

8. International Year of Co-operatives 2025:

John Carlisle: While sceptical of the value of 'International Years of...' John called for P5 to launch a new effort to build up the Co-operative movement in the UK.

What should be the strategy? How will this come about? John quoted an article by Chris Olewicz proposing the need to develop such a strategy, and the formation of a working

group to take that forward.

Brian felt that the main problem is the sense of isolation and the need for solidarity, and could be addressed through holding big meetings, designed to encourage and bolster support.

Dave felt the 'International Year' does give an opportunity to counteract isolation, and especially among young people.

9. Library. Steve Thompson gave a quick outline of the main new acquisitions by Chris on behalf of P5, of the last year from:

- a) Auctions in Bourne on the 24-25th January 2024
- b) Gift of the Open University Co-operative Research Unit in November 2024. We agreed to send a message of thanks to Roger Spear.

The acquisitions have helped balance the content of the library by adding more about worker co-ops and the International Movement.

10. Update on personal involvement in Cooperative activity:

John invited those present to outline to the meeting what co-operative projects each was actively engaged in:

Dave Berry spoke of his involvement in Sheffield Renewables, an energy project within a community benefit society, and his passion for political education.

Nick Edmondson is trying to keep the building until recently used by Pitsmoor Methodist Church as a community asset

for one of its former user groups, running dance and musical theatre sessions for young people, in a possible collaboration with Reyt Repair who are looking for more space in the medium term, and perhaps Mikee Whitson's food co-op expansion. Nick is also hoping to bring together people he knows with Dementia and their friends+family carers, into a local 'Burngreave Dementia Community'.

Jonathan Cook is involved at Union St which hosts Ragmash, running monthly meals for Homeless people and activist groups. He has been involved with the [Alt-Sheff](#) website. Jonathan would like to help in the running of some kind of co-operative Newsdesk for South Yorkshire.

Felicity Reed and Jayne Meadows are residents with a Co-Housing group, Share Instead, which have 3 flats and a common house (where Sheffield Renewables have installed solar panels). Share Instead is an intergenerational community, who have been working out how to live together and serve their community of Wisewood and Wadsley. They use co-ops like Beanies and Lembas to supply their needs where possible.

Chris Croome works full-time with [Webarchitects coop](#) Also [Agile Collective](#) and [workers.coop](#) their last 'big meeting' was a Workers' Co-op Event in Sheffield, with 60-80 participants. Next one is in Thornbridge. They like to make it a Fri/Sat night weekend, with beer and a bonfire on Saturday. Also involved with [Sheffield Social Enterprise Network](#), who have an event coming up. (John Carlisle recommends talking to Chief Exec Terry Murphy about

collaboration between P5 and SSEN in putting on an event in Sheffield).

Altogether, very busy, but would like to help organise more Sheffield co-op events.

Chris Olewicz works full-time as public affairs officer (lobbyist) with De Montfort University, Leicester. Role with P5 is publications, having worked on editions of The Co-operator and six pamphlets. He is an historian, publishing in the Journal of Co-operative Studies; currently working on an article about Basil Rawson, founder of Woodcraft Folk. P5 should be providing a resource for students of history and politics.

There are courses about Social History. We should work on having livelier communication with these departments in the Sheffield Universities and increase use of the P5 resources among those students. His most recently published article in The Journal of Co-operative Studies about [The British Co-operative Movement](#).

Jean Tinsley works for Sheffield Renewables and was one of the original directors. She helps proofread publications for P5. Supports the co-operative movement by using phonecoop and Lembas in personal life.

Brian Munsey is a shareholder at Wortley Hall and would like to see P5 take a more active interest in that co-operative. Their library is running out of shelf space. Also a mention for the Morning Star, has relied on income of only £18,000 per month since 1945 and is the only mainstream

publication asserting the Palestinian people's right to self-determination. It is a co-operative.

Naomi Lopez acts in a support role at P5. Recent move to Parkhill flats and enjoys participating in the litter-picking group there, which links everyone. When people meet together, things come from that experience.

Michael McGowan describes himself as a fanatical believer in the idea of co-operative socialism and is still very optimistic. Co-operation is about doing what you can, where you are, with what you have. Care for the whole planet, and be based locally.

11. Research Groups:

- i. The CWS/Co-operative Group – Co-operative Movement. John Carlisle. See his summary [here](#).
- ii. Equipment of the Workers. Nick Edmondson. Nick apologises for inactivity, but has now contacted the University Library to set up a meeting to discuss ownership and copyright questions regarding the possible publication of the manuscript of 'Education of the Workers' which was intended as a sequel to 'Equipment of the Workers', by the same authors. Will circulate replies in due course.

12. Publications: Chris Olewicz. See recent publications listed in the Directors' Report [here](#).

13. Election of the Directors:

Nominations:

Dave Berry,
John Carlisle,
Jonathan Cook,
Nick Edmondson.
Chris Olewicz

All these current Directors will continue in post.

14. Any other business:

a) John Carlisle: Feels Steve should be released from some mundane tasks to give more time for research (which is why he has offered to take on role as Treasurer). Steve explained he would keep hold of Membership role and handling inquiries to P5. Steve would like someone to help keep the P5 Library in good order.

b) Jonathan Cook: Suggests getting volunteers to help catalogue all the existing books properly. Also the idea of making use of duplicate bound volumes of Co-operative News – distribute to whoever is interested. Chris made a suggestion of dismantling duplicate bound volumes so that individual editions could be properly scanned.

c) John Carlisle:

- What kind of educational resource should P5 be? What kind of business model? What do we teach? Would like to

see more co-operation among Co-ops. We need campaigns. Any ideas?

Chris says the question is What are Co-ops for? Is it to even out wage disparities? To get rid of the boss-role? To change the world? The Preston model is the gold standard. Dave Berry says we have to start with the means of production and how workers manage that. The Public Procurement Act may herald opportunities for Co-ops. Look at the example of Co-ops of carers. Look locally at Forgemasters, now owned by MOD. There has been no discussion of what they are making among workers, including components for arms to Israel.

Steve says to start from where we are – trading with other co-ops eg. Footprint Workers Co-op, Lembas, Web Architects, (who host the ILP and Co-op News websites). If you want something doing, look for a Co-op to do it.

- John mentioned example of creating an energy source at the centre of a community which is shared across the neighbourhood. Highlights conference about [New Community Energy Projects in Sheffield and the Surrounding Area: A call to action](#) 25th Jan 2025 2-5pm at Cemetery Road Baptist Church, free admission

d) P5 stall at Radical Book Fair when it is announced.