

Principle  
FIVE

P5

Yorkshire Co-operative Resource Centre  
April 2026

Three Principle 5 publications coming this year



*co-opolitics*

*Building the Co-operative  
Commonwealth*

SIX YEARS OF LABOUR RULE IN SHEFFIELD, 1926-32  
presented by Alderman E. G. Rowlinson

Principle 5 Pamphlet No: 3

# CO-OPS BUILDING A BETTER WORLD

A podcast hosted by



With

Rebecca Harvey & Colin Talbot

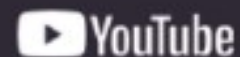
The new monthly podcast from Co-op News takes a deep dive into some of the articles featured in Co-op News, through background analysis and discussion.

Join us every second Tuesday of the month for 40 minutes of news, views, interviews and conversation, on YouTube, Spotify, Apple Podcasts or wherever you usually listen.

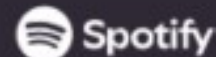


Episode#1 *Growing co-ops and global shifts* is NOW LIVE!

Search Co-ops Building a Better World on your preferred podcast platform



YouTube



Spotify



Listen on  
Apple Podcasts

Co-op News, the member-owned magazine and news website about and for co-operatives worldwide, has launched a podcast, Co-ops: Building a Better World, to share stories with a new digital audience. Each episode takes a deep dive into some of the articles featured in Co-op News that month, through background analysis and discussion. “This is something our members have suggested previously, so it’s great to be able to make it a reality,” says Co-op News executive editor Rebecca Harvey, who co-hosts the podcast with Colin Talbot. “It’s a chance to look a bit deeper at some of the stories we publish, and connect them to what else is happening in the world. It’s an opportunity to share our stories with current members and new listeners who are interested in how co-ops can, and are, building a better world.”

The name echoes the theme of the 2012 and 2025 UN International Years of Cooperatives, but suggests that the work of co-operatives is far from over.

**“This is something  
our members have  
suggested previously,  
so it’s great to be able  
to make it a reality”**

“Co-operation is a business model that brings people, communities and other stakeholders together to address a need or solve an issue,” adds Harvey. “The world is a challenging place politically, economically, and socially, and co-ops are a proven tool to help ease some of these challenges. They can help build a better world, and the stories

we feature in the podcast show how they do that, and how they face into their own challenges along the way.”

Each episode will be just over 30 minutes, and will usually be published on the second Tuesday of each month. The pilot episode is out now, and looks at the UK’s Co-op College’s move to an unstaffed model, an interview with Cooperatives Europe president Giuseppe Guerini, the state of worker co-ops in the USA, the new book from Bruno Roleants, former director general of the International Cooperative Alliance – and discusses how you, yourself, are a co-op. “I’m always curious (some would say nosy) and over the past few years I’ve developed a fascination with the co-operative movement,” says Talbot, emeritus professor at Manchester University’s Business School. “It’s a form of human organisation I’ve shamefully not looked at in detail until recently. The chance to engage with reporting and discussion was too good to miss. “One of the advantages of being a relative ‘newbie’ to the co-op movement is I can bring some of my four-plus decades of experience working, studying and engaging with publicly and privately owned enterprises to the conversation. With, I hope, a fresh perspective.”

Co-ops: Building a Better World is available on YouTube, Spotify, Apple Podcasts or wherever you usually get your podcasts.

Co-op News MARCH 2026

You can become a member of Co-op News **[HERE](#)**  
**[thenews.coop](https://thenews.coop)**

**The Principle 5 Library** has nearly every edition of Co-op News from its first edition in 1871 to the current edition.

The online index of 21<sup>st</sup> century editions is available to use:  
<https://www.coopnews.principle5.coop/>

As I was going through these editions, I came across a letter from Colin Richell. In it he says what I have said many times. When I was an elected member of the Co-operative Group, The CEO Peter Marks said “If another person says to me ‘I can remember my granny’s divi number’ I could get arrested for physical violence, that’s old baggage, people are always looking back. We are a modern business now”.

I will always remember him saying this. And I thought ‘of course people look back to the days when the co-op meant something. It was not just another chain of stores, it provided a structure for money management through ownership. Yes, the share book meant something, a half-yearly payout and a way of saving with decent interest. Membership meant social, educational, political, activity. It was for many a way of life. Of course we always remembered the divi number. It meant that every time we went to the shops, for ourselves or for mum and dad and granny and grandad, we could quote that number and it would add a bit more to the half yearly payout.

The Co-op of Peter Marks was a big business with him as a CEO with big ambitions to run the BIGGEST business. And to play down any talk of what he might call ‘co-operative baggage’. His policy led to the loss of half of the accumulated assets of the Co-operative Group and ruin.

# There's nothing wrong with looking back to the past

I WAS recently shown an article from *The Guardian*, in which the growing fortunes of the Co-operative Group were highlighted.

Peter Marks had been interviewed by the newspaper, and he said: "If another person says to me 'I can remember my granny's divi number' I could get arrested for physical violence. That's old baggage, people are always looking back. We are a modern business now".

Well, I am probably the "old baggage", but do we not still offer a dividend on purchases, in the form of points, so how is that "old baggage"?

We must look to the future, and what a future, but I feel that Peter Mark's comments were insensitive to the contribution of thousands of co-operators who contributed to the past successes of the Movement.

What is wrong with looking back? How many people

think back to their childhood where they were probably happier than they are today? Why would they want to forget this period in their lives, and consequently co-operators need to remember the good times when they were active in their then successful societies. It is a recognition of how effective the Movement was that most people can recall their granny's divi number.

You cannot change history so why try? The Somerfield deal was a great plus for the Group, but one man cannot change the world.

The Group's success, is down to the co-operation and effort of the directors and elected committees, who represent the shareholders of the Group and who spend much of their personal lives attending constant meetings and making important decisions, without much financial reward. Without this support, none of the

## Letters

Letters must be addressed to the editor and accompanied by the full address (not necessarily for publication). Co-operative News reserves the right to edit letters. Send letters to: Postbag, Co-operative News, Holyoake House, Hanover Street, Manchester, M60 0AS. Email: [editorial@thenews.coop](mailto:editorial@thenews.coop) or fax: 0161 214 0878.



recent innovations would have happened.

I am working hard for the future, but I refuse to forget the glorious past, and I will continue to remember my granny's divi number, in spite of the chance of being knocked out!

Peter Marks also told the reporter that he was a capitalist at heart, but the Co-operative Group is a democratic members organisation, and this must never be forgotten by members.

Lets all work together for the common cause, and not forget that when remarks are made to a reporter, they do not necessarily represent the views of the Group.

**COLIN RICHELL  
LONDON, N13**

A new independent co-operative society



The 26th January 2026 marked an important moment as we come together as a new Society, a family of co-operative businesses united by shared values, shared purpose and a belief that there is a better way to do business.

Find out more:

<https://www.centralcoop.co.uk/>

Principle 5 Members and visitors are always welcome to book an appointment to come to the library.

We look forward to seeing you.

Contact

[steve@sheffield.coop](mailto:steve@sheffield.coop)

Tel: 0114 282 3132

[www.principle5.coop](http://www.principle5.coop)

Principle 5 Yorkshire Co-operative Resource Centre  
Aizlewood's Mill, Nursery Street, Sheffield, S3 8GG

