

Principle FIVE

P5

Yorkshire Co-operative Resource Centre
May 2026



**End of an era with meeting planned to
wind up the UK's Co-operative College**

The Co-operative College was founded by the then Co-op Union in 1919 as ‘a centre for higher education in the specialised subjects required for the full equipment of the co-operator and the further development of efficiency in the Co-operative Movement’.

In June 2021, Miles Hadfield, writing in Co-op news looked back at the story of the College, leading up to its re-organisation of that year. You can read this article in Co-op news [HERE](#)

Later this month, the members of the Co-operative College will vote at the EGM. The proposal is for the remaining funds to be transferred to a different charity, which would use the funds to make grants supporting co-operative education.

Rebecca Harvey writing in *Co-op News* today (5th May 2026) gives further information which you can read [HERE](#)

Principle 5 and the Co-operative College have mutual membership. It is sad that 107 years of co-operative education through the College will come to an end if the proposal is passed.

If the resolution to dissolve is not passed, the charity will remain open, and the College will proceed with the transition to an unstaffed, grant-giving model which will be difficult to sustain. This will probably result in another proposal for closure in the near future. It will be for the members to decide.

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In October 2019 the management agreement between the **Co-operative Heritage Trust** and the Co-operative College expired and was not renewed. This meant that the College ceased to provide management services and staff for the CHT.

From this date The Co-operative Heritage Trust became independent of the College, with its own constitution and governance as an independent Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO).

Co-operative education is vital to the life of a caring resilient society. The self-help learning which is offered by Principle 5 becomes more precious with the decline of the giants of the Co-operative Movement.

The Principle 5 Library has a copy of *Learning for a Co-operative World* (Edited by Tom Woodin and Linda Shaw) which is available to borrow:
<https://www.principle5.coop/books/learning-for-a-co-operative-world>

Or contact steve@sheffield.coop if you would like a link to the PDF version.

The Co-operative Movement is fortunate to have as its standard the values and principles which have been honoured and honed since their beginning with the Rochdale Society of Equitable Pioneers, founded in 1844.

The sixth principle is co-operation amongst co-operatives. Without mutual help, support and trade between co-operatives there would be no co-operative movement. And the word co-operative would mean nothing.

Principle 5 is a member of the UK Society of Co-operative Studies, which is itself a member of Principle 5. Two co-operative educational organisations offering different but complementary services.



Founded in 1967, UKSCS has a rich history and deep roots in the co-op movement and co-op studies both in the UK and internationally. At the inaugural meeting on 2nd and 4th April 1967 at the Co-operative College, Stanford Hall, the Society for Co-operative Studies was established 'to promote the exchange of information and experience on co-operative studies and research and to help in identifying and developing the studies and research still needed'.

Principle 5 receives the *Journal of Co-operative Studies* and they are available in PDF format on the UKSCS website: <https://www.ukscs.coop/pages/journal-of-co-op-studies>

Links to other co-operative organisations can be found on the UKSCS website:
<https://www.ukscs.coop/pages/links>

The Principle 5 online index for *Co-op News* can also be downloaded from the UKSCS website: <https://www.ukscs.coop/articles/searchable-index-of-co-op-news>

The complete collection of the *Sheffield Co-operator* May 1922 – July 1939 (170 editions) and the 13 Bulletins which followed from 1939 can also be downloaded from the UKSCS website: <https://www.ukscs.coop/articles/copies-of-the-sheffield-co-operator-newspaper-1922-1945-available-on-line>

You will also find news about conferences, lectures and other events on their website:
<https://www.ukscs.coop/>

Ian Adderley secretary of UKSCS has written a useful guide: *Co-operatives: Linking practice and theory* published in 2025 by Co-operative Press Limited, Holyoake House, Hanover Street, Manchester, M60 0AS

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

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