

Board Director Elections

Candidate booklet and
voting arrangements

Have your say...

Each year eligible Members of Central Co-op have the chance to vote in the Society's Board of Directors elections.

Your Directors are responsible for ensuring that the Society carries out its commitment to be a successful co-operative business and serve the interests of you, its Member owners, so this is your chance to help shape the Society that you own.

Voting will take place from Wednesday 2nd April until noon on Tuesday 29th April

Your Society & Board of Directors

Your Board is collectively responsible for the long-term success of the business and Directors are responsible for ensuring that the Society carries out its commitment to be a successful Member-owned, community based Co-operative Society. Your Board sets out the Society's strategic aims and the strategic direction of the business in conjunction with the Executive Team and is guided by Our Purpose, '**Creating a sustainable Society for all**' underpinned by the internationally recognised co-operative values.

Being an effective member of the Board requires Directors who are able to:

- Demonstrate an ability to manage complex and important strategic, commercial and financial issues.
- Make considered and informed judgements in the best interests of the Society and its Members.
- Fulfil their duties, including legal responsibilities in line with corporate governance best practice.

2025 Vacancies and candidates

In 2025, elections will take place in the following constituencies:

- Eastern member – 4 candidates for 1 seat
- Central member – 3 candidates for 1 seat
- Western colleague – 2 candidates for 1 seat

All seats are for a 3-year term of office.

In the Western Member constituency, Richard Bickle was the only candidate who stood for the 1 seat so is appointed to the Board unopposed. The election statement for Richard is included in the candidate section of this booklet.

All eligible Members can vote in all of the above elections and can vote for one candidate in each election.

For more information on voting procedure and eligibility, visit www.members.coop/elections

Your Candidates

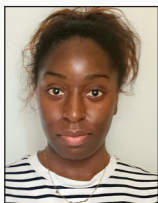
The candidates standing in the constituencies are as follows

| Member Director candidates | |
|--|--|
| Eastern member: | Central member: |
| Ornella AKICHI John CHILLCOTT Danny DOUGLAS Richard RADCLIFFE | John HOWELLS Jane AVERY James BAILEY |
| Colleague Director candidates | |
| Western colleague: | |
| Amanda GALLIE Kara BABB | |

To help you vote, each candidate has provided an election statement which includes a personal statement and a summary of their skills, knowledge and other relevant experience.

The order of candidates shown above and in the election statements in this booklet has been randomly selected.

Eastern Member constituency



Ornella Akichi

Personal Statement

I am passionate about making a positive impact in my community, which is why I am standing for election to the Central Co-op Board of Directors. As a consultant in real estate sustainable management and environmental building certification, I help businesses create greener, more responsible developments. I believe that ethical and sustainable decision-making is key to building a future where people and businesses thrive together.

Beyond my professional work, I am a dedicated volunteer for the NSPCC, meeting every quarter to raise funds for child protection services. So far, my fundraising group has raised over £55,000 to support vulnerable children and I remain committed to this cause.

I also serve on the Membership & Community Council (MCC), where I actively engage with Central Co-op members to support local initiatives and promote the Co-op's values. Through my work with the MCC, I have seen first-hand the power of the Co-op in strengthening communities and I want to take this further as a board member.

With my experience, I will advocate for sustainability, ethical business practices, and stronger community engagement. The Co-op should not only serve its members but also lead the way in responsible business, ensuring a fair, inclusive, and sustainable future for all. I would be honoured to represent you and bring my experience, passion, and commitment to the Co-op. I ask for your vote so we can continue building a business that truly works for its members and the wider community.

Thank you for your support!

Details of Academic & Professional Qualifications

I studied English Literature at the Sorbonne in Paris and International Trade and Diplomacy at the University of Strasbourg, developing strong analytical, communication, and strategic skills. Combined with my professional experience, this background equips me to navigate challenges, foster collaboration and contribute effectively to the Central Co-op Board.

Skills, Knowledge & Other relevant experience

Moving from France to England as a single mother with my baby boy was a leap of faith to build a better future and create new opportunities for him.

Through resilience and determination, I built a career in sustainability, fundraising, and community engagement. The Co-op's model resonates with me deeply as it bridges generations by preserving the wisdom of the past while empowering younger voices to push for a fairer, more fulfilling way of life.

My experience in environmental consultancy, fundraising and the Membership & Community Council, I am committed to driving positive change for members and the wider community.

Eastern Member constituency *(continued)*



John Chillcott

Personal Statement

I enjoyed my previous terms on the Board, ending April last year, working collaboratively with fellow Directors and the Executive team on our Society's strategy and financial planning. Co-operatives are dedicated to a fairer way of doing business and making a positive impact on people's lives. Central Co-op must deliver increased Member value:

Great value and service for daily shopping; exceptional care and empathy when looking after loved ones and families brought into our funeral homes; but also, the lightest environmental tread of our operations and the best we can do to support the wider community in the areas that we trade.

I have previously chaired the Board's Remuneration Committee, working to ensure that executive pay and incentive is hardwired to the strategic aims of our Society: to create a sustainable Society for all; improve pay and benefits for all colleagues; share profits with Members and our communities and invest in reducing our environmental impact. Improving our Membership offer, value and reach will be at the heart of achieving our vision.

If elected, I shall work with your Board to make Central Co-op a great place to work and shop: A Society we can all be proud to be Members of. Settled near Oakham this past few years, I'm active in local community life and really value the support I've found there: something Central Co-op can help to promote and support through engagement activities based on our Co-operative values of self-help and responsibility. Thank you

Details of Academic & Professional Qualifications

I have a BA degree in Development Studies (economic, social and environment). I've undertaken industry and company training and development throughout my career. I successfully completed the Co-operative Group's main board assessment process.

Skills, Knowledge & Other relevant experience

I have long and broad experience in Executive and non-Executive roles across sectors: Co-operative; PLC; Private enterprise; Social Enterprise and Charity. During my career I've developed skills and knowledge in complex transactions; mergers; organisational structure, culture and governance; commercial property; pensions; brand, marketing and public relations.

Positions over last 15 years: Executive; Interim CEO at Co-operative College, MD at Chillcott Consultancy, CEO at Anglia Co-operative Retail Society. Non-Executive Director or Trustee; Central Co-op, Social Enterprise East of England, Anglia Home Furnishings (Chair) Education East schools Academy Trust, Co-operatives UK, Co-operative College, Beales Department Stores.

Eastern Member constituency *(continued)*



Danny Douglas

Personal Statement

I am seeking re-election to continue the hard work to make our Co-op work for your needs. I have 100% attendance record over the last three years as your director. During this time our Co-op has won awards including Co-operative of the Year and Sustainability Retailer of the Year. I have also been part of the initiative to introduce member prices for you in store to address the crisis in the cost of living.

I have been at the forefront of the Board's efforts to challenge the unacceptable crimes against our staff and stores. The connections I have made ensured the Home Secretary has visited our stores to hear about the plight faced by our staff at the hands of local thugs. Our Society has been a major part of the success in getting tailored legislation to protect shop staff through Parliament.

I continue to work against the forces of conservatism in our society working to ensure that fox(drag) hunting will not happen on our land, staff pay is raised above inflation to the living wage and executive pay does not mirror PLCs. We want our Co-op to better address the needs of our members, with even more member prices and better food. We need to start giving priority to our members to access our 150 homes that we currently offer and actively seek to increase the amount of housing we provide to help young members.

Details of Academic & Professional Qualifications

- Training the Trainers
- Diploma in Management Studies
- Diploma in Management of Voluntary Organisations
- Diploma of Higher Education

Co-operative College

- Co-operative Values & Principles
- Co-operative Finance
- International Co-operatives

Other

- Member of institute of Logistics & Transport
- Food handling
- YHA: Safeguarding of Children and Young People Skills

Skills, Knowledge & Other relevant experience

As a current director I use my experience as a former CEO and environmental activist to ensure our Co-op can change, survive, and grow effectively to meet members' needs. I am the Chair of our Co-op Conduct committee which has ensured that elections and standards of directors have been exemplary over the last two years. As an experienced co-operator I continue to move forward the Co-operative agenda through senior positions in the Co-op College and Go-op (railcoop).

You can google Danny Douglas Co-op facebook to find out more about my hard work for staff, members and communities.

Eastern Member constituency *(continued)*



Richard Radcliffe

Personal Statement

I am passionate about our local community and run my own business helping charities raise more funds and have done this for over 35 years. Apart from my own company role, I have been the chair of a Youth Club, Director of Charities Aid Foundation, executive chair of a unique company which informs every charity of every legacy gift in every will every day of the year.

For nine years I was a member of our local and very active village hall committee. I have four children aged from 15 – 41. The younger two are passionate in their local hobbies riding and ice skating which means most of my (and my wife's) time is spent as taxi drivers, but these hobbies are "offscreen time" which is awesome. Main therapies: I am a passionate cook and love making my own curries and Italian food and the family is pescatarian! I love our local Central Co-op in Thrapston and probably go too often!

Details of Academic & Professional Qualifications

- Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Fundraising

Skills, Knowledge & Other relevant experience

- Over 40 years' experience in communications and marketing

I love changing mindsets and carry out focus groups with charity donors and volunteers meeting, so far, a total of around 37,000 people. I regularly present at conferences with audiences from 5 -4,000.

Central Member constituency



John Howells

Personal Statement

Having represented you on the Board and its sub-committees for the last six years, I am now asking you for your vote once again.

I have been a Co-operator all my life, having been recruited from school and spending my entire career employed by three independent Co-operatives, Central Coop, Midcounties and Heart of England.

During that time my roles in management included store, area and regional management, marketing and procurement. As a director of our Society, I have been a member of the Audit and Risk, Remuneration and Community Dividend sub-committees. I've had the privilege to be a member of the Eastern and Southern Membership and Community Councils, getting involved with some of the important work, supporting members and communities at events in our trading area.

During my time on the Board, I have been an independent supportive member, challenging at times some difficult decisions that have had to be made to ensure the future independent success of our Society. At all times I've given 100% and strongly believing in honest open ethics and Co-operative Values and Principles as the backbone to the high standards I set myself. So, to the future we live in an ever-changing environment both politically, personally and co-operatively.

I wish to support our Executive team and Colleagues along with members and communities to a fairer, brighter and sustainable future for all.

Thank you for your continued support.

Details of Academic & Professional Qualifications

- The Certificate in Co-operation and Mutuality
- The Chartered Institute of Marketing Diploma
- A retail career of continuous training and development

Skills, Knowledge & Other relevant experience

I'm a good listener, self-motivated and willing to challenge and ask questions, to ensure any decisions made are for the best interests of our Society. I enjoy meeting colleagues, members and customers to identify their wants and needs. I have a good understanding of current trends in retail, finance and technology, always looking to learn more.

Central Member constituency *(continued)*



Jane Avery

Personal Statement

I am seeking the support and confidence of the members of Central Co-op to serve on their Board. I was a Director of the Society from 2015 - 2024. I was proud to play a part in steering the Society through some tough trading times and unforeseen events like Brexit and the Pandemic.

During that time there was a complete change of the Executive team, and as a member of the Search Committee I assisted with the recruitment of firstly the Chief Executive and then the Society Secretary.

In 2020 I was very honoured to be elected by my fellow directors to the Presidency, representing the Society at a local, national and international level. I visited Malawi to assess the investment the Society made to develop Co-operatives and saw the impact the training and trading opportunities made to the members and how it improved their standard of living.

Under the Society's rules, I stepped down after three consecutive terms. During the past year I have maintained my involvement with the Co-operative Movement; I was invited on to the Board of the Co-operative Loan Fund and in May 2024 was elected to the National Members' Council of the Co-operative Group. Since then, I have been elected to their Senate, and I serve on the Business Performance Committee. I work in a workers' Co-op as a business adviser and get great job satisfaction from seeing people and their businesses thrive and grow using the Co-operative model.

Details of Academic & Professional Qualifications

- NVQ level 5: Business Administration (Open University and Oxford Brookes University)
- A levels: English Literature, History and Sociology
- Continuous Professional Development: Good governance, Risk management, Understanding Financial Accounts, People skills and employment law, Effective boards, Conflict resolution, Diversity and Inclusion, Developing Strategy, and Marketing

Skills, Knowledge & Other relevant experience

I have been a School Governor, a Trustee of Leicester Rape Crisis and a volunteer co-ordinator for the Dyspraxia Foundation.

I like finding solutions to problems and they are usually Co-operative ones. I am a member of my local credit union because I benefit as a member from attractive savings and borrowing rates and the community benefits as the credit union provides an alternative to doorstep lenders. Similarly, my membership of a wind farm co-operative provides clean, renewable energy and a reduction on my energy bills.

Thank you

Central Member constituency *(continued)*



James Bailey

Personal Statement

I am excited to submit my candidacy for the Central Co-op Board. As an active member of our community, I am committed to upholding the values of the Society which are aligned with how I like to conduct myself professionally, which will enable me to contribute effectively to the society's ambitions.

With a background in commercial estate and retail management, I have developed significant skills within leadership and communication and have direct experience of Board meetings in different FTSE 100 companies. I also have extensive experience of staff consultation and customer engagement programmes, which help to identify how the respective organisation can better perform and shape future planning. I am confident in my ability to collaborate with fellow members to address the Society's needs and help drive initiatives that benefit employees' customers and the local community.

I am particularly interested in sustainability, community engagement, creating opportunities for young people, and building more inclusive environments, which align with the Society's vision. I am eager to work with the Board to create actionable solutions that reflect our shared values and priorities.

My personal commitment makes me an ideal candidate for this role, and I am dedicated to giving my time and energy to ensure the continued success of the Society. It would be an honour to contribute to its growth and success.

Details of Academic & Professional Qualifications

- IOSH Managing Safety
- Diploma in Shopping Centre Management

Skills, Knowledge & Other relevant experience

Emergency planning, ESG (Environment, Social, Governance) leadership, Health & Safety, Compliance, Property, Lease negotiations, Procurement, Facilities Management, Customer Services, Safeguarding, Quality management systems. I am also a trustee of Pennine Domestic Abuse Partnership

Western Colleague constituency



Amanda Gallie

Personal Statement

Hello, I'm Amanda and I was elected to the Board 12 months ago to fill an unexpired term of office. It is a very responsible role with a lot of reading and a lot of learning knowing that the business and colleague's jobs depend on the board making the right decisions.

I have done all the training offered and believe I am contributing to debate and challenge. I ask for your vote to continue in this role as an elected member owner and colleague.

I have been involved in the co-operative movement since 2001 and have had the privilege of working for Central Co-op for the last 14 years as a Funeral Director. Since 2016, I've been on the Western Membership & Community Council, where I have engaged with our communities and helped to deliver Healthy Eating Sessions and the importance of Fairtrade products to our members.

Prior to Christmas, I did my share of working with and supporting the Toy Appeal van as it made 50 visits across the Society. I always attend Members' meetings and have recently attended as a Director at the Half yearly meetings where I positively promoted the Co-operative Values and principles which are the foundation of our business and have been since 1844.

I take an active interest in our Society and feel I would now like to continue to shape the future of Central Co-op by being re-elected to the Board of Directors.

Details of Academic & Professional Qualifications

- Institute of Leadership and Management Level 5
- Diploma in Funeral Directing
- Examiner NAFD (National Association of Funeral Directors)
- Assessor of Vocational Related Achievement Level 3
- Retail NVQ Level 3

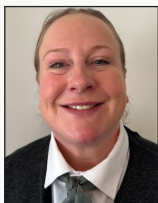
Skills, Knowledge & Other relevant experience

I have developed many skills whilst working as a Funeral Director for Central Co-op. Listening, Planning and being able to react to change whilst carrying out dynamic risk assessments is part of my daily role.

I enjoy coaching and mentoring and sharing my extensive knowledge of Funeral and I am now able to assess and examine the knowledge of Professionals across the UK.

My role requires Leadership, Management and effective Communication. I have also attended Essential Director Training with Co-op UK.

Western Colleague constituency *(continued)*



Kara Babb

Personal Statement

I am 48 years old and have a 15-year-old daughter living in Pelsall, West Midlands and I am employed by Central Co-op as a Funeral Director.

I joined West Midlands Co-operative in 1993 and after five years I left their employment but returned in 1999 to pursue my current career. I pride myself in my professional approach to my work and have excellent communication skills.

I have been in my current role as a Funeral Director for 10 years and prior to that an arranger for 5 years having started my employment as an Embalmer. I conduct my duties with empathy, extreme care and attention to detail. Since Central Co-op have retaken over the business, I have attained management skills and consider myself to be a "Team Player" and willing to go the extra mile to achieve excellence.

I have gained a better understanding of policy and procedures and have learnt a lot from my father, who has been the leader of my Local Authority for many years, who has instilled within me the importance of having the knowledge of all these aspects of the business and how this is transposed into everyday life.

I make this application with the opportunity to become a more integral part of the business and always have my uppermost in my mind through the values and principles of the Rochdale Pioneers of the Co-operative movement and the current evolution of these within our business.

Details of Academic & Professional Qualifications

- Qualified as an Embalmer in 1995
- Admitted as a Member of the British Institute of Embalmers
- NAFDD Diploma in arranging and administration May 2014

Skills, Knowledge & Other relevant experience

I approach all aspects of my work with empathy and strong leadership and can problem solve dynamically. I am a member of the colleague voice representing the views of our staff, increasing engagement with an inclusive approach.

It is imperative to pay close attention to detail and actively encourage my work colleagues to follow my direction and strive to always achieve excellence, I pride myself in being a passionate member of Central Co-op and I am always an advocate of their values and principles.

Western Member constituency (*Uncontested*)



Richard Bickle

Personal Statement

I have been an active Co-op member since I was 16 and passionately believe in the role co-operatives can play in building a better, fairer world, providing ways to tackle the challenges of a cost of living crisis, rising political extremism and climate change. I previously served as a Director, Vice-President and represented the Society at a range of internal and external events.

I'm proud of my part in the progress we've made since 2014 increasing frontline pay, putting members at the heart of the society and leading campaigns on colleague safety and retail crime, as well as pioneering Our Malawi Partnership.

Today our business is facing the most challenging market conditions for 40 years. I believe that, to have a sustainable future, and continue to deliver benefits for our members, colleagues and communities, we will need to increase both sales and the current low level of profitability. I believe that we can only achieve that by drawing on the knowledge and experience of grassroots members, colleagues and managers in local communities.

If elected, my priorities will be:

- Ensuring ethical and co-operative trading remain our point of difference; Dissertation on Co-operative Development in the West Midlands 1976-2006
- Maintaining close links with local communities as our trading area grows with opportunities for members to develop the skills they will need to serve on the Board in the future so that we remain member-led;
- Including community meeting spaces and affordable housing in as many of our new stores and refurbishments as possible.

Skills, Knowledge & Other relevant experience

I've served on the boards of Central Co-op, Co-operative Press, Co-operatives UK and the Co-operative Party NEC, co-founded Revolver Co-operative (a Fairtrade business) and lead a community buyout of York Supplies (a traditional hardware and gardening shop). This gives me a broad knowledge of the Co-operative Movement and its history in theory and practice.

As part of Co-operatives West Midlands, we developed the "Save Birmingham!" campaign, offering communities support to take over assets at risk of sale/closure following the City Council's financial problems.

I also deliver freelance training and consultancy in member engagement, governance and co-operative/business development for various clients

Canvassing Code Of Practice

The primary aim of the Canvassing Code of Practice is to ensure that Society elections are conducted in a positive spirit in the interest of both candidates and Members alike.

1. The resources of the Society (i.e., including (but not limited to) intellectual property such as Society photographs, videos, brand images and logos, digital content and materials) must not be used for canvassing or in support of any candidate. For example, if a candidate produces leaflets to support their election they cannot print these using the Society's resources and cannot distribute or display them in the Society's stores.
2. Placing advertisements in the commercial media by candidates is prohibited.
3. Candidates should not ask managers in the Society's stores or elsewhere to promote their candidature among their colleagues or to their customers generally.
4. Society management must not solicit votes in favour of or against any candidates
5. Organisations that have received funding from the Society within the last 12 months are prohibited from publicly endorsing any candidates
6. Any breach of the Canvassing Code of Practice will be investigated by the Returning Officer and brought to the attention of the candidate(s) concerned.
7. Canvassing of votes on Society premises is only permitted where such activity is not disruptive to the Society's business, and candidates are asked to be considerate of the normal day-to-day running of the Society's trading operations.

In particular, candidates are prohibited from the taking and/or use of images (including photographs) of Society colleagues and/or customers in the Society's trading outlets and other Society premises in order to promote their candidature.

Where the Returning Officer deems it necessary to do so, serious matters will be immediately referred to the Society's Conduct Committee (a sub-committee of the Board). In considering such matters, the Conduct Committee may determine that a candidate, who is not a current Director, is disqualified from the election. In such circumstances, the Committee's decision shall be final. If a current Director is the subject of such a breach, they may only be disqualified on agreement by the Board in accordance with the Society's Rules.

The Returning Officer is responsible for keeping all records of complaints made during the election, for report back to the Conduct and Rules & Practices Committees at the conclusion of each election.

By Order of the Board

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