

Annual Report of the Central Midlands Society Party Council

for the year ended 31 December 2019

(Incorporating the former Central England Co-operative (Western Region) Society Party Council, Midcounties West Midlands Society Party Council and Coventry & Warwickshire Voluntary Co-operative Party)

Officers

Chair: Cllr. Kate Booth
Vice Chair: Janet Marsh
Vice Chair: Cllr. Allah Ditta
Secretary: Cllr Rupinder Singh
Treasurer: Nick Stephens

Council Members

Richard Bickle
Olivia Birch
John Goodman
Sheree Peaple

Introduction

The Co-operative Party was formed in 1917 to support and advance the interests of the Co-operative Movement at all levels of local and national Government by getting co-operators elected to public office. To this end it has had an electoral agreement with the Labour Party to field joint candidates since 1926.

Membership of the Party is open to both individual co-operators and to organisations such as the Central England and Midcounties Co-operative Societies. The local and regional party structures reflect this hybrid form of organisation.

2019 has been exceptionally busy year due to various elections and it was same for the Central Midlands Co-operative Party. We had a new charged energy in our regional movement, especially after the Labour Party's commitment to double the size of Co-operative economy. We made many advances in the Council elections in the region for co-operative candidates, and we have now 13 new Labour and Co-operative Party councillors in North Warwickshire where we jointly funded a party organiser and two additional Labour and Co-operative Party councillors were elected in Coventry. We also sponsored candidates in other areas including Solihull, Walsall, Wolverhampton and Cannock Chase.

The Central Midlands Co-operative Party

We broadly reflect the area that is covered by the West-Midlands Combined Authority and the West-Midlands Mayor. The pooling of resources has also allowed us to do a better collaboration with the Labour Party. We did a lot of concentrated work in elections and campaigns programmes and events to improve the Co-op profile and development of the Party in the Central Midlands region.

This Party Council is funded by grants from the Central England and the Midcounties Co-operative Societies, alongside a portion of the subscriptions of individual party members paid to the party nationally. It is responsible for party organisation in the local authorities and parliamentary constituencies that broadly correlate with the area covered by the West-Midlands Combined Authority.

The Party Council comprises representatives of the two societies and their members as well as individual party members from each branch. The differential level of subscription received from each society reflects the relative balance of population in the region covered by each society's traditional trading area.

The Party Council has met on five occasions during the year and which included a wide range of talks and discussion with our delegates and members. Our members were very active at the Co-operatives West-Midlands Networking events in Leicester, the UK Society for Co-operative Studies Conference and our Annual Party Conference in Glasgow held in October 2019.

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for the year ended 31 December 2019 *cont.*

Parliamentary Representation

Adrian Bailey stood down as the Member of Parliament for West Bromwich West at the General Election held in December 2019 after serving for 19 years. The Central Midlands Party is pleased to support our sponsored local Labour & Co-operative Member of Parliament, Preet Gill who was re-elected in Edgbaston, Birmingham. She is a keen advocate for the West-Midlands Region, for co-operatives and local communities. At the General election we also gave support to our sponsored candidates Nick Stephens (Solihull) and Chris Bain (Tamworth) who were not successful on this occasion.

As a political party we depend upon the active participation of our members, of branch and party council officers, and of the national party staff. We are also grateful for the positive working relationship we have with colleagues in the Labour Party.

Kate Booth (Chair)

Rupinder Singh (Secretary)

Working with the Labour Party

The Co-operative Party has a long-standing electoral agreement with the Labour Party to field joint candidates in local and national elections. We also seek to influence Labour Party policy where possible and to use this agreement to secure a Co-operative voice in Westminster and locally. We are represented on the Labour Party West-Midlands Regional Board and we have three seats on Labour's National Policy Forum.

We were pleased that Liam Byrne was selected as the Labour and Co-operative candidate for the West-Midlands Mayor election which will now be held in 2021. Liam is committed to pushing a co-operative agenda for the West-Midlands in his campaign and if he is elected.

Thanks

The Party Council could not operate without the help and co-operation of many people. We would like to place on record our sincere thanks to both the Central England and Midcounties Co-operative Societies, not just for our annual grant, but also to the colleagues at Head Office for their help and support during the year.

Society Party Council Central England (Central Region)

Income & Expenditure Account

Year ended 31 December 2019

	2019		2018	
	£	£	£	£
Income				
Society Grant		7,500		7,400
Membership subscriptions		1,940		2,180
Interest Received		84		6
Midcounties Grant		3,500		7,000
Other		-		100
Total Income		13,024		16,686
Expenditure				
Operations				
Conferences and Meetings	8,098		10,494	
Election Grants	13,238		4,500	
Affiliation fees	1,919		-	
	23,255		14,994	
Establishment				
Travelling expenses	953		837	
Secretarial expenses	-		10	
Bank charges	-		52	
	953		899	
Total Expenditure		24,208		15,893
Excess / (Deficit) of income over expenditure		(11,184)		793
Balance Sheet				
as at 31 December 2019				
Assets				
Co-op Bank plc Deposit Account		15,102		23,018
Co-op Bank plc Current Account		2,624		5,892
		17,726		28,910
Funded by				
General Fund				
Balance brought forward		28,910		28,117
Excess / (Deficit) of Income over expenditure		(11,184)		793
		17,726		28,910