

COMMUNITY



Glastonbury Town Council

Glastonbury Co-operative Fair celebrates 'This Beautiful Idea'

Community groups, organisations, businesses and residents gathered at Glastonbury Town Hall on Monday evening for the town's first Co-operative Fair, held as part of Co-operatives Fortnight, promoted by Co-operatives UK. This year's theme was 'co-operate and we can change the world'. And the event was launched by a specially commissioned poem by Tony Walsh - 'This Beautiful Idea' - a tribute to the Rochdale Pioneers.

The event celebrated Glastonbury's long tradition of co-operation, mutual support and fair trade whilst exploring how co-operative approaches can help strengthen communities and encourage greater participation in local decision-making.

Opening the event, Mayor Councillor Zoe Price welcomed attendees and reflected on Glastonbury Town Council's recent decision to join the Co-operative Councils' Innovation Network (CCIN), becoming the first council in Somerset to do so.

Speaking about the principles behind the network, the Mayor said:

"At its heart, the co-operative movement is built on a simple but powerful belief: that by working together, sharing power, and valuing every voice, we can create stronger, fairer, and more connected communities...That is the spirit of co-operation. Not the absence of difference, but the willingness to work together through it."



Glastonbury Co-op Fair town hall

The Talks

The evening's programme featured a series of talks exploring how co-operative approaches are being used by organisations and local authorities across the country.

Graham Jeffery, Chairman of the Board of Directors of Radstock Co-operative Society, spoke about the history of the movement and the role co-operatives can play in supporting local economies and strengthening communities.

Pete Vallance, Strategy Manager for the Co-operative Councils' Innovation Network, introduced the principles of co-operative engagement, inclusive participation, community wealth building and co-operative placemaking. His presentation highlighted practical examples of how councils can work alongside residents and community organisations to shape local priorities and services.

Alex Lawrie from South West Co-operative Development provided an introduction to co-operative identity, values and principles, outlining the history of the co-operative movement and the opportunities it presents for communities wishing to take greater ownership of local projects and initiatives.



Glastonbury

Co-op Fair group

Round-table Discussions

Following the presentations, attendees participated in a series of roundtable discussions hosted by local organisations and community representatives. Conversations covered a wide range of topics, including housing, energy, transport, finance, community mapping, fair trade, food growing, gardening, arts and culture, and Glastonbury's distinctive visitor, spiritual and faith communities.

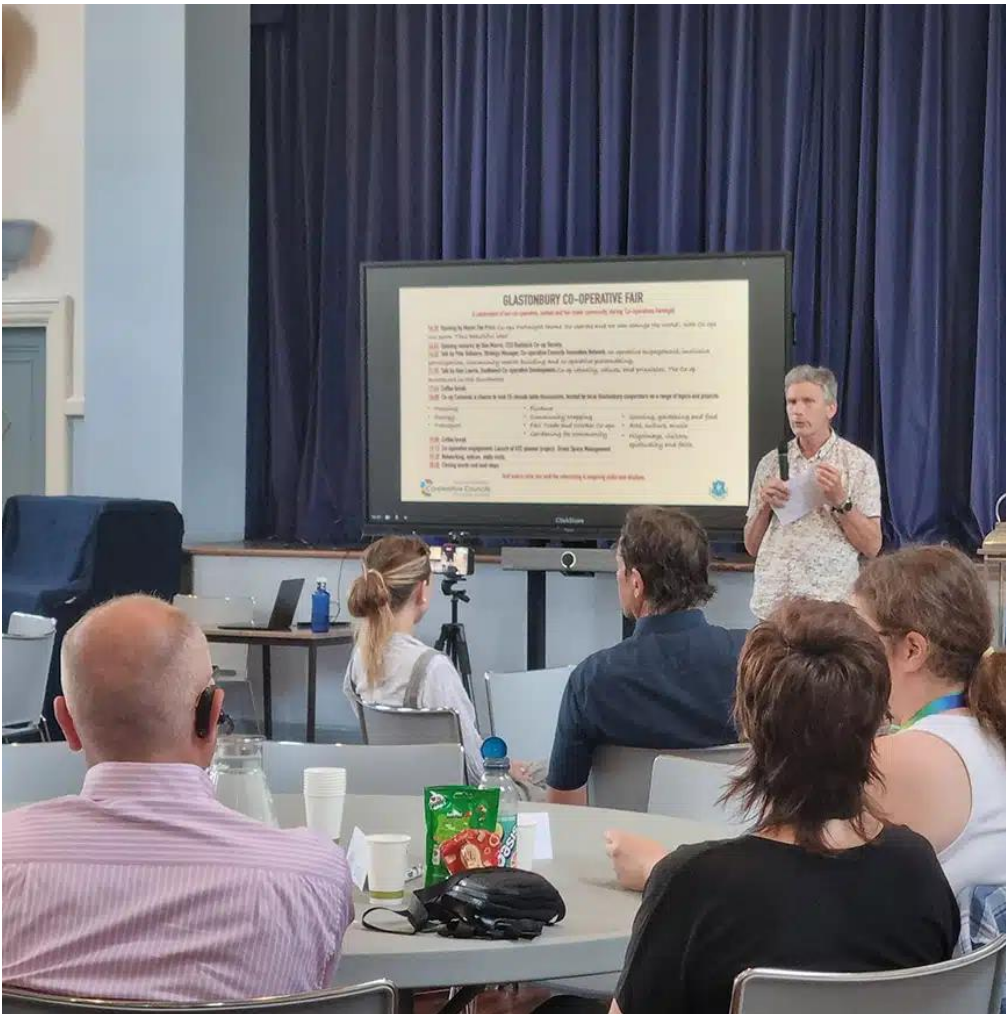
The event highlighted just how many organisations within Glastonbury already operate in co-operative, mutual or community-led ways. Participants shared experiences, identified common challenges and explored opportunities for future collaboration across a wide range of sectors.

Co-operative Councils' Innovation Network.

The fair also provided an opportunity to explain Glastonbury Town Council's recent membership of the Co-operative Councils' Innovation Network.

The CCIN is a national, non-party political network of councils that share ideas, resources and practical examples of how local authorities can work more closely with their communities. The network supports approaches that encourage participation, collaboration and shared decision-making, and provides access to hundreds of case studies, toolkits and examples of best practice from councils across the country.

In April 2026, Glastonbury Town Council became the first council in Somerset to join the network as an Associate Member. This category of membership is specifically designed for Town, Parish and Community Councils, enabling them to access training, resources, events and peer support, whilst contributing their own ideas and experiences to the wider network.



Glastonbury Co-op fair Cllr Lokabandhu

Membership of the CCIN encompasses a broad range of political opinion, including many different party and independent groupings in councils and from outside bodies, such as the Co-op College, the Co-operative Heritage Trust and Co-ops UK. All united by the shared values and principles of the co-operative movement.

Through its Associate Membership, Glastonbury Town Council has already begun working with partners from across the country on the development of its Green Space Management Strategy.

One example involves the use of a co-operative engagement approach that seeks to involve people who may not traditionally participate in council consultations. Working alongside organisations including Children’s World, the council is exploring ways to ensure that young people and those with diverse experiences and needs can play a meaningful role in shaping future plans for the town’s parks, recreation areas and green spaces.

This approach reflects the principle described by the Mayor during her speech:

“The Co-operative Council approach is not something the council does alone. It is something we build together.”



People-centred councils
driving social innovation
putting people first

E: comms@councils.coop | X: [@CoopInnovation](https://twitter.com/CoopInnovation) | W: councils.coop

The evening concluded with networking, discussion of future opportunities, and a shared sense of enthusiasm for strengthening connections between organisations already working across the town.

A follow-up meeting will take place at Glastonbury Town Hall on 9 July to review the event, consider ideas that emerged during the discussions and explore opportunities for future co-operative initiatives in Glastonbury.

Glastonbury Town Council would like to thank all speakers, organisers, volunteers and attendees who helped make the Co-operative Fair such a positive, informative and inspiring event, and looks forward to continuing the conversations and partnerships that began on the day.



Glastonbury Co-op fair town hall

For further information contact:

Melissa Taylor

Climate Emergency & Resilience Officer – Glastonbury Town Council

climate@glastonbury.gov.uk | 07516 239185 | www.glastonbury.gov.uk