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Newsletter - July 2026

**“After the first week of his tenure in Number 10 (& Number 10 North),
it would be remiss of the Network not to acknowledge that we now have**

a

Co-operative Prime Minister.

As a proudly cross-party network, CCIN works with MPs from across the political spectrum who share our commitment to advancing co-operative principles, and we look forward to working with Andy Burnham—and others—to deliver practical, community-led solutions that put people first, and to continue to make a clear and unapologetic case for a cooperative economy that keeps wealth, power and opportunity rooted in local communities.”

We will also seek to extend our best wishes to his successor as Mayor of Greater Manchester to be announced later this week. CCIN stands ready to support and work alongside them to build on this legacy and to continue strengthening the co-operative movement across local and regional government.



Letter to the Prime Minister: Co-operatives & good growth

Cllr Paul Cassidy, in his role as CCIN's Interim Chair, was one of a number of Co-operative Leaders who supported a letter compiled by Co-operatives UK that was written to the Prime Minister setting out how co-operatives can help deliver on many Government priorities, including good growth, securing the essentials, community empowerment and supporting UK reindustrialisation.

[Download the letter here](#)



Cllr Shanika Mahendran

CCIN pays tribute to Cllr Shanika Mahendran following her passing after a short illness.

Her passion and commitment will continue to inspire our work for a cooperative society



Tribute to Shanika

It is with deep sadness that the Cooperative Councils' Innovation Network has learned of the passing of Cllr Shanika Mahendran following a short illness.

Aged just 28, Shanika had already made an extraordinary contribution to the city and community she loved.

Aged just 28, Shanika had already made an extraordinary contribution to the city and community she loved. Since her election in 2022, she was an inspiring force for change in Milton Keynes, where she served as Cabinet Member for Planning & Placemaking, previously as Cabinet Member for Economy, Sustainability and Innovation.

Her impact was recognised well beyond Milton Keynes. In 2025, she was nominated for 'Young Councillor of the Year' and earlier this year was named among the Planner Magazines 'Women of Influence 2026'.

Reflecting on Cllr Mahendran's passing, CCIN Interim-Chair Cllr Paul Cassidy said: "Shanika served as a valued member of CCIN's Executive Oversight Committee for two years, during a significant period of change for our network. She brought insight, energy, and generosity to every discussion.

Her dedication to public service was evident to anyone who had the opportunity to work with her. She was deeply committed to serving the people of Milton Keynes and making a positive difference to the communities she represented.

Her commitment to cooperative values and her belief in communities shaping their own future were reflected in everything she did. Her loss is felt deeply across our network. We extend our heartfelt condolences to her family, friends, and to her colleagues in Milton Keynes Labour and Milton Keynes City Council.

Shanika's leadership, kindness, and her determination to make the world a more cooperative place will continue to inspire us. She will be greatly missed"

CCIN at #LGA26 - Bournemouth

We were pleased to be in Bournemouth for Local Government Association (LGA) Conference earlier this month. It was a great opportunity to connect with our existing members and to expose CCIN and cooperative ways of working to council officers from across the country and councillors from across the political spectrum. It was fantastic to see cooperative themes at the heart of this year's LGA Conference; from discussions around community empowerment, to values-based AI solutions, to place-based delivery of services, it is clear from the future of local government is rooted in cooperative values and principles.



We were pleased to be a sponsor of this years LGA Conference and to have had the opportunity to promote the work our members are doing to the wider local government family.

Thank you to Paul Cassidy (interim-Chair), Nicola Huckerby (Honorary President), Pete Vallance (CCIN Lead) and Vince Barry-Stanners (Digital Officer) for overseeing our presence at the conference.

It was also great to have Melissa Taylor and Joe Joseph from Glastonbury Town Council staffing the stall on Day 2 of the conference.

New LGA Chair - Cllr O'Brien (Leader of Bury Council)

CCIN welcomes the election of another CCIN Member Council Leader as Chair of the

Local Cllr Eammon O'Brien (Bury Council) takes on the baton passed from Cllr Louise Gittings (Cheshire West & Chester), a previous Chair of the CCIN.



In his first speech as LGA Chair, Cllr O'Brien talked about how devolution to councils must be real, meaningful and felt in every community across the UK; arguing that national priorities can only be delivered effectively on a local level.

This will sound familiar to CCIN Members who have been at the forefront of drawing power down and passing it to communities – and we are excited to continue to work with the LGA under Cllr O'Brien to progress our cooperative agenda for local government and the communities we serve.

Welcoming our newest Supporter The Association of Green Councillors

CCIN is pleased to announce that the Association of Green Councillors (AGC) has become the first political network of the LGA to become a supporter-member of the network.

As a cross party network, we are proud to have

members of our network from across the political spectrum and welcome the AGC showing their commitment to our cooperative values and principles by becoming supporters of the network.

Want to know more why the AGC became a supporter of the network?

Watch the video below to hear what Cllr Rudi Schmidt, Deputy Leader of Lewisham had to say when we interviewed him at LGC Conference.



[Watch our YouTube Short with Cllr Schmidt](#)

CCIN Governance Vacancies - Executive Oversight Committee & Values & Principles Board

[Full Member Council Vacancies - Link](#)

[Associate Member Vacancies - Link](#)

Full Council and Associate Member representatives are invited to put yourselves forward to participate in the Governance structure of the Network.

Nominations for Vacancies close on Monday 10 August 2026 - 5pm

2 x Full Council Members on Executive Oversight Committee

3 x Full Council Members on Values & Principles Committee

3 x Associate Members on Values & Principles Board

About the roles:

The Executive Oversight Committee (EOC) manages the network affairs of the Co-operative Councils' Innovation Network (CCIN). They oversee day-to-day operations,

set strategic direction, and allocate the multi-year budget.

The Values & Principles (V&P) Board has overall responsibility for Values and Principles oversight within the Cooperative Councils' Innovation Network, including overseeing the progress of Policy Projects as part of their Sponsor role.

Download the nomination forms by clicking the links in the blue boxes above.



Hull's waste web app generates early rewards for residents.

As councils across the country look to increase recycling rates in a bid to cut down on waste, CCIN Members Hull City Council are leading the way with a new digital solution to help residents recycle more easily.

Launched earlier this year Hull's new waste app helps residents stay on top of bin collections, gives residents bin day reminders, and helps residents get recycling tips from the palm of their hand.

To celebrate the launch of their app they ran a give-away to encourage people to adopt the app too – with winners getting a £50 shopping voucher.

[Learn more about Hull's efforts](#)

New report demonstrates the power of community ownership

Community ownership is a proven, scalable driver of local economic renewal and resilient, connected communities. Locality members have shown across the country how community spaces reduce social isolation, improve health outcomes, strengthen social cohesion, and provide inclusive employment – particularly in areas of high deprivation.

CCIN Affiliate Members *Locality* and *Power to Change*'s new report "Keys to the future" sets out a detailed roadmap for a new era of community ownership. It explores how community ownership can do far more than save at-risk buildings and spaces, but can be used to create inclusive jobs, tackle social issues like isolation, and strengthen social cohesion.

Their report also includes practical recommendations which national government could implement to support community ownership – including an expansion of community share offers, and the creation of a National Community Ownership Strategy.

[For more information - click this link](#)



Glastonbury Town Council leads Cooperatives Fortnight 2026 Celebrations

Looking back on this year's #CoopFortnight, one of the real highlights came from Glastonbury Town Council, a proud CCIN Member stepping forward to lead the celebrations with imagination, energy and a clear commitment to cooperative values. Their first-ever Co-op Fair marked an important moment for the town — both as the official launch of Glastonbury as a Cooperative Town and as a celebration of their new membership of our network. It was a powerful example of how councils can bring people together to explore what cooperation means in practice.

The event created space for thoughtful discussions on cooperative development across a wide range of sectors: housing, economic growth, energy, transport, finance, community, fair trade, worker co-ops, arts and culture, and much more. It showed just how broad and ambitious the cooperative agenda can be when a community embraces it fully.

We were also delighted that Pete Vallance, our Strategy, Events & Membership Lead, joined the speaker line-up. His reflections on how cooperative values and principles are transforming communities across the UK added real depth to the conversation - and connected Glastonbury's local ambitions to the wider national movement. Glastonbury's leadership during #CoopFortnight demonstrated what happens when a council commits to doing things differently: celebrating community power, opening up new conversations, and putting cooperation at the heart of local life. It set a strong example for other Cooperative Councils and Cooperative Towns across the country.



Plymouth shows Cooperative Placemaking works



Across the country, councils are grappling with the same challenge: how to breath new life into high streets which have been reshaped by a combination of changing shopping habits, economic pressures, and the changing ways in which people want to experience public spaces.

As cooperators we know that place-based regeneration which puts people at the heart of these projects is key to their success and the continuing viability of high streets in and across our towns and cities.

One great example of this in practice can be found in the regeneration work recently completed by Plymouth City Council on Armada Way, a street at the heart of Plymouth's City Centre.

Bringing together residents, businesses, community groups and cultural institutions their 'Let's Talk Armada Way' consultation included thousands of conversations which helped the council develop a design for the redevelopment which addressed concerns about public safety, the local environment, and creating a multi-purpose space for the people of Plymouth.

Thanks to this work and the input from local people Armada Way now has:

- Over 200 trees, with a strong emphasis on biodiversity and climate resilience
- New seating, lighting, and walking routes designed to be accessible to all
- Spaces for community events, socialising and active travel
- Links to Plymouth's unique maritime history
- A layout that strengthens connections across the city-centre and through to Plymouth Hoe (Plymouth's iconic seafront).

Talking about the project Cllr Tudor Evans, leader of Plymouth City Council said:

“By working with our communities we've created a city centre which people are proud of. It's a place that's green, welcoming and accessible for all. It reflects the needs and aspirations of our residents, and our long-term objectives for Plymouth as a centre for investment, opportunity and innovation”.

Coop Places - First meeting for CCIN Pride in Place Practitioner Forum


Coop Places

Five Cooperative Commitments

Democratic Governance	Councils enable Neighbourhood Boards & Partnerships with genuine authority and provide capacity support. —This means designing governance structures where the board has real decision-making power over priorities and spend, and where the council provides capacity support (training, facilitation, administrative resource) to make that authority meaningful in practice.
Shared Ownership	Councils actively facilitate the transfer of assets, land and enterprises into community hands — through Community Land Trusts, cooperative enterprises, community asset transfer, and social investment readiness support. Ownership — not just involvement — can be the long-term solution.
Inclusive Participation	Councils go beyond standard consultation to reach those who don't usually engage — people in low social capital areas, young people, those with caring responsibilities, marginalised communities. This means going where people are commissioning trusted community intermediaries beyond standard council channels.
Economic Solidarity	Councils use their institutional weight — as employer, commissioner, landowner and anchor institution — to keep economic benefit local. This means progressive procurement, brokering collaboration between anchor institutions, supporting local enterprises to convert to cooperative or worker-owned models
Accountability	Councils design governance structures that are transparently answerable to residents — not just to government funders or council cabinet. This includes open reporting, community-facing monitoring frameworks, and feedback loops that close the loop between board decisions and community experience.

The Network is working with Local Authority Officers who are engaged in supporting Pride in Place as a positive, tangible way of contributing to supporting and sharing

best practice from across the UK, without replicating MHCLG efforts.

Our first Session included sharing CCINs Five Cooperative commitments for Coop Places, helping to solidify what good cooperative placemaking looks like in practice. Over the coming months, we will be seeking case studies from Member Councils with a focus on these five commitments.

We'd like to thank colleagues from Affiliate Members, [Sarah Patrice - Anthony Collins Solicitors](#) & [Mark Bandali - Mutual Ventures](#) for their contributions at this session, and their offers of continued support. **If you're an Affiliate Member and have something that you'd like to share or work through with this Community of Practice**, please email: hello@councils.coop

To get involved email: hello@councils.coop - for your invite.

[Click this link to view Presentations and Video from the Session](#)

Time running out for 21st Century Club applications

Expressions of Interest needed by 4 August 2026

CCIN Members are encouraged to share details of [Stir to Action's Programme for 21st Century Social Clubs](#) with groups and organisations in your area to join the first group programme of 21st Century Social Clubs, a new programme starting in Autumn 2026.

What's the opportunity?

A group of social clubs from across England will work with an embedded community organiser, receive specialist technical support, and access an annual budget to support events, engagement, and campaigns.

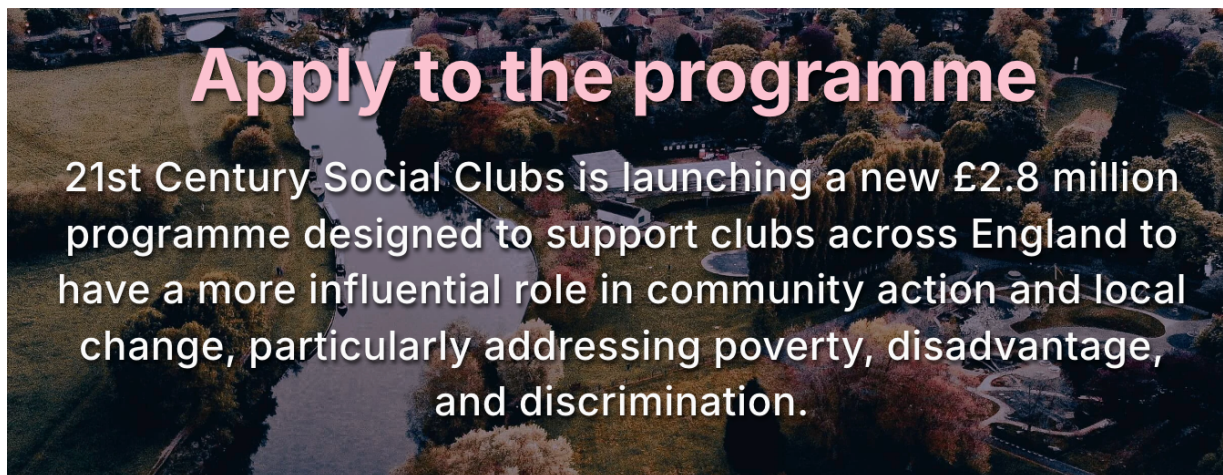
The 18-24 month group programme will offer a funded opportunity, including:

- A paid community organiser to work with your club for 3.5 days a week
- £15,000 annual budget to support the role and associated activities

- A package of specialist business support from expert advisors each year
- Expenses covered to attend regional and national events.

The deadline to submit an expression of interest is 4 August 2026.

For more information and to get involved follow the link below and fill in the expression of interest. <https://www.21stcenturysocialclubs.com/programmes/national/clubs>



[Find out more & share this locally](#)

Membership Invoices on their way with 3 Year Discounts available

Members will shortly be receiving invoices for CCIN Membership from Oldham Council (CCIN's accountable body).

We are offering a 5% discount on membership fees for council members who sign up to a three-year membership of CCIN and would encourage all members to consider this as an option.

For more information, please contact Jonathan Downs, Corporate Policy lead at Oldham Council, at Jonathan.downs@oldham.gov.uk.



**If you have a story you'd like us to share via our
Newsletter or Social Media
Contact Vince Barry-Stanners (Communications Lead)**

comms@councils.coop

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**People-centred councils
driving social innovation
putting people first**

Read the CCIN Annual Review 2024 - 2025