

the co-operative economy in the South East



A co-operative is...

...an autonomous association of people or businesses united voluntarily to meet their common economic, social and cultural needs and aspirations through a jointly owned and democratically controlled enterprise.

Co-operatives are based on the values of self-help, self-responsibility, democracy, equality, equity and solidarity.

Co-operative members believe in the ethical values of honesty, openness, social responsibility and caring for others.

Case studies

The Southern Co-operative is a consumer co-operative owned by its 90,000 members. The Southern Co-operative operates two customer-facing retail businesses, food and funeral and also has an e-commerce and mail order business supplying aids to daily living. The society started trading in 1873 and developed the first true self service store in the UK in 1948.



Hampshire Fare was established in 1991 by a small group of food producers who wanted to actively promote the benefits of buying local produce. Membership of Hampshire Fare currently stands at 200 food, drink and craft businesses. Member businesses range from pig farmers and wine makers to farm shops and four star hotels. Any business that produces, sells or serves local produce from Hampshire is entitled to join Hampshire Fare and benefit from the many services they have to offer.

Hampshire Fare aims to:

1. Connect consumers with farming through local food and help secure the future of farming in Hampshire
2. Encourage the development of sustainable food, drink and craft businesses that contribute to the rural economy in Hampshire
3. Raise awareness among the public and trade of the wide range of Hampshire food, drink and craft
4. Foster good business practice and assist producers to compete as viable enterprises
5. Champion optimum quality production methods and high standards of presentation
6. Organise marketing activities - festivals, exhibitions and promotions - to promote Hampshire produce
7. Promote the use of local food and drink by Hampshire public sector organisations

Activities of note include:

- The annual Hampshire Food Festival held every July which includes over 100 events designed to reconnect consumers and food producers
- The annual Great Hampshire Sausage and Pie Competition, now the largest county event in the country
- Our work with the public sector in Hampshire in introducing over £1m of local produce onto school menus

Hampshire Fare is a Community Interest Company based within the Economic Development Office of Hampshire County Council, who have supported the organisation since 1991. For more information please visit www.hampshirefare.co.uk



The Southern Co-operative trades in the South of England across 7 counties including the IOW. They have over 130 retail food stores and over 30 funeral homes. The society turnover in 2009-10 was £240M. 3,200 people are employed, more than 90% of whom are society members. Recently, the Southern Co-operative joined the national affinity Share of the Profits scheme and actively involves members and colleagues with their business.

Whilst trading under the national consumer brand, The Southern Co-operative is passionate about supporting local communities and suppliers of locally produced food. Much of the support given to their communities is on a local basis, with store managers and colleagues being very much engaged in local activities. Their store at Bosham in Sussex sells locally made products including bread, cheese and pasties.

www.thesouthernco-operative.co.uk

STAR (which stands for Supporters' Trust at Reading) or, to give it its proper name, **Reading Football Supporters' Society Limited** is a Supporters' Trust which was set up in March 2002 by converting the existing Supporters Club to a trust. It is an Industrial and Provident Society (IPS) and each paid-up, adult member of STAR has an equal £1 share in the IPS and one vote.

The Trust represents the interests of Reading supporters to the Football Club, the media and the football world, as well as helping to build and sustain a well-supported and well-respected football club in Reading where the whole community feels involved. All its aims are concerned with promoting liaison and respect for each other for all those involved in football in the Reading area.

A strong Trust is good for the Football Club, good for the Community and good for the Supporters of Reading FC and STAR is one of the best supported Trusts in the UK. It currently has about 1,500 members and a turnover of £15,000.



The diversity of co-operative enterprise

The co-operative model is successfully applied in many different ways.

We are all familiar with the consumer co-operatives on our shopping streets. Employee owned co-operatives have grown in popularity over the last twenty-five years or so and are becoming ever more well known.

Housing co-operatives provide an increasingly important element of the UK's social housing market, while business co-operatives (wherein each member is a business in its own right) offer great potential for economic development.

Other novel approaches continue to be developed, including community ownership, multi-stakeholder co-operatives, and a co-operative Community Interest Company.

Co-operatives operate in all areas of our society and economy, delivering sustainable, profitable goods and services to diverse markets.

Co-operatives and the Economy

Sector	Turnover	Total Employees	Number of Organisations
Housing	£13,166,943	44	46
Financial	£265,803,000	184	21
Agriculture	£768,802,276	205	65
Retail	£1,143,658,943	10,679	21
Other	£1,142,155,123	2,061	175
Total for the South East	£3,333,586,284	13,173	328

The Southern Co-operative operate a Community Support Card scheme where they donate funds to a good cause when customers use a special card. Local good causes bid for the fund and beneficiaries are selected by a panel of colleagues and members

Colleagues at The Southern Co-operative took part in an "It's a Knockout" contest to raise funds for a children's hospice. In 2009, all stores worked together and raised £13,500 in one week for the charity





'This is an incredible time to be talking about co-operatives and this is the time to have confidence in the model that we have and our vision of how markets and economics should be organised.

Human beings have evolved to work together, but the trouble is we've had years of being told humans can only compete, rather than co-operate.

The time for co-operation is now'.

Ed Mayo, Co-operatives UK Chief Executive

Co-operatives in the South East

Co-operatives South East provides a voice for the co-operative sector in the region, bringing together consumer retail and worker co-operatives, co-operative support bodies and other organisations sharing co-operative values and principles.

Co-operatives South East is always keen to contribute to future development and delivery of strategies to benefit the region. By working together, we can make our voice heard and ensure that opinion formers consider the role that co-operative, mutual and social enterprises have in contributing to the economy of the region.

More than profit

Co-operatives and mutuals are different from other businesses. They are organised to meet the needs of their member-owners. Co-operative enterprises measure success not just in terms of financial performance, but also by the benefits they bring to their members, their employees and to the communities they serve.

Sustainable business

It's becoming increasingly recognised that businesses need to look for opportunities to improve their profitability and market share without compromising opportunities and resources for future generations.

Yet co-operatives have always held this belief: their existence is underpinned by the need to conserve environmental and social integrity as well as maintaining financial stability. By pooling knowledge and resources co-operatives can trade competitively whilst retaining individuality and control – an excellent model for sustainable growth.

Co-operatives in the South East are engaged in a wide range of business areas, from consumer retail co-operatives and machinery rings serving the agricultural sector, to worker co-operatives providing consultancy and design services to a wider range of commercial, public and third sector clients.

The high cost of housing in the region means that housing co-operatives flourish in a variety of forms, from Brighton to Milton Keynes, while Supporters' Trusts thrive within football clubs around the region.

Co-operatives nationally and internationally

Co-operative enterprise is a major force for sustainable economic and social development not just in the South East of England, but across the UK and throughout the world.

Nationally, Co-operatives UK has verifiable data confirming turnover of £28.9 billion. There are 820 co-operatives, employing some 200,000 people and with a total of 11.3 million members, that's one in five of the population (as at 2008).

At the global level, the International Co-operative Alliance estimates that over 800 million people are members of co-operatives, which together employ over 100 million people.

A 2007 survey of co-operative and mutual enterprises worldwide (www.global300.coop) found that the top 300 such businesses alone were together equivalent in scale to the world's tenth largest economy, with a collective turnover nearing 1 trillion US dollars.

Co-operative development

We encourage the development and support of new co-operatives across the region through the provision of a range of targeted services designed to complement the mainstream business support available in the region and meet the unique needs of co-operative enterprise.



CO-OPERATIVES UK

Co-operatives UK represents the spectrum of co-operative enterprise throughout the UK, the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man.

Our purpose is to develop and extend the co-operative sector.

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www.cooperatives-uk.coop



ICA is an independent, non-governmental association which unites, represents and serves co-operatives worldwide. Founded in 1895, ICA has 224 member organisations from 87 countries active in all sectors of the economy. Together these co-operatives represent more than 800 million individuals worldwide.

www.ica.coop



CO-OPERATIVES
South East

For further information about the co-operative economy in the South East, and the work of Co-operatives SE:

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