

workers.coop

News #26: Sparks flying in Scotland

Up to 100 members, supporters and partners participated over two days of Autumn Assembly events in Glasgow last month, putting worker co-ops on the map politically and strengthening worker co-op collaboration in Scotland. Kudos to our local members from Media Co-op, Research for Action and Greencity for their brilliant organising work, and to sponsors including Glasgow City Council, and Agile Collective who supported our day conference on worker cooperation in care, cleaning and low wage sectors - where we heard how worker co-ops like Great Care, Leading Lives, Southside AllClean and Belfast Cleaning Society are rewriting the rules on conditions and pay.

Glasgow showed how the Autumn Assembly can be used build worker co-op power regionally, as well as nationally and internationally. Interested in hosting the 2026 AA in your town or city? Email solidarity@workers.coop and let's talk!



Join workers.coop

Welcome to our newest members, Manchester Fruit Tree and Deli Lama Community Coop.

Not already a member of workers.coop? [Join now](#).

Individuals outside of worker co-ops are eligible for worker membership by joining working groups, or you can become a registered supporter by joining workers.coop's sister organisation, Solidfund.

[Join workers.coop](#)

Announcements

Welcoming three new Directors to the board of workers.coop

We are really pleased to be extending a warm welcome to Mairah Mahboob from Third Sector Accountancy, Adam Cole from Suma Wholefoods, and Caleb Elliott from Principle Six, who were elected to the board at our EGM on 2nd December.

Own The Future

Workers.coop is launching **Own The Future**, its first accelerator programme for workers leading the transition to a new economy 🏡. Come along to an online information session on 12th and 26th January to find out more.

In 2026, we will recruit five groups across the country for a one-year support programme of training, mentoring, specialist advice and peer support. Groups will learn how to set up and run a workers co-op, build viable business models, integrate degrowth practices into their organisation, and connect with peers across the worker co-op movement. Participating groups will receive £5,000 start-up funding and bespoke business advice worth £1,000.

We are looking for groups across the UK with a fully formed business idea, who believe the co-op model is the right fit, or those looking to convert. We are particularly interested in food, retrofit, transport and care businesses. The programme starts in March and groups can register interest [here](#).

Events

Communications group meeting

15 December, 3.30-5pm (online)

Monthly workers.coop Comms group meeting. Those looking to join are welcome.

Givers' Gain new business referrals - January session

7 January, 12-1pm (online)

For workers.coop members, cooperators, supporters and independent workers. 'Givers Gain' structured word of mouth marketing is the most effective way to learn about each others' businesses and commercial goals, find partners and generate new trading opportunities. Register [here](#).

Own The Future worker co-op accelerator programme DROP-IN

12 January, 10-12pm

workers.coop is launching its first accelerator programme for workers leading the transition to a new economy. We are running online drop-in information sessions on Monday 12 and Monday 26 January. More info [here](#).

Co-op Support & Development group meeting

15 January, 2-3.30pm (online)

If you're interested in helping provide specialist co-op support, services, training, networking to grow more worker co-ops, you're welcome to join.

Birmingham co-op meetup

20 January, 6.30-8.30pm (South Birmingham)

January cycle co-op online meetup

20 January, 2-4pm (online)

An online meeting to connect with other worker co-ops in the cycling sector and explore how we might support each other. Open to anyone. Register [here](#).

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News Shorts and reflections

A member from [Infinity Foods](#) shares learnings from a Palestine session that focused on agricultural cooperatives at the Autumn Assembly, November 2025. Having made the trip from Brighton on the south coast up to Glasgow, Martin says "Through a Zoom linkup we heard from Adhum from an agricultural cooperative in the West Bank and Adam Al Bharghouti from the [Palestinian Social Fund](#). They described how a nascent movement of new agricultural cooperatives was providing new hope by tackling many of the destructive pressures which have accrued over decades of occupation through seeking food sovereignty for the community and rejecting NGO dependence.

"It was inspiring to hear the extraordinary levels of resourcefulness and courage of these cooperatives. Despite decades of occupation and ever increasing violent settler-colonisation they have taught themselves permaculture methods of farming and are reviving the Palestinian roots of collective labour, community cooperation and their deep connection to the land. Hopefully this will be the beginning of closer ties and solidarity between Palestinian and UK cooperatives. Suggested further steps were possible delegations from the UK to visit these coops, internships for Palestinian cooperative workers to spend time in UK coops and funding support through the [Palestinian Social Fund](#)." For more info check out [Palestine Social Fund](#) or their [Instagram](#).

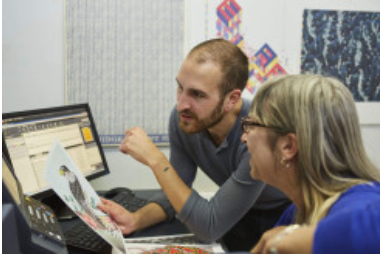


Celia from Leeds Bike Mill reports back on a new cycle meetup online. This Autumn, members from [Leeds Bike Mill](#), [Birmingham Bike Foundry](#) and [Wee Spoke Hub](#) gathered online to discuss balancing provision of affordable services with the need to pay decent wages. "We found it extremely helpful and validating to meet other cooperators in our sector, everyone was very generous in sharing ideas and insights from what they have learned over the years. We looked at developing a repairs and servicing offer - something we are now much more confident to make happen - and touched on a range of fun topics such as running courses, moving workshop, and VAT."

The plan is to run more sessions in the new year, including a specific one on the idea to organise work exchanges in the sector. Open to anyone in the sector, join the next one on [20th January](#).

Solidfund is gearing up. If you're one of [Worker Co-op Solidarity Fund's](#) 400+ contributing members, you'll know that workers.coop's sister organisation is making a significant investment in its comms and systems in 2026, ready for a growth push later in the year. If you're not already a member, look out for Solidfund's new newsletter - and learn how regular small contributions by individual supporters since 2014 created a brilliant resource for worker coop education and solidarity. You'll receive the new Solidfund newsletter early next year, when you can opt out if you want.

Your experience matters. Share it. Our first ever [cooperators census](#) will gather personal perspectives from members and workers from worker co-ops across the UK. If you're in a worker co-op, keep your eyes open for a special bulletin early next month, with detailed information and a link to a survey form designed by workers.coop's research group. Your responses will build a clear picture of who our people are and how we work, so we can advocate more confidently and focus on shared challenges. The survey is already live and you'll be entered in a prize draw, so please [dive straight in](#) if you're ready.



The full spectrum. Printing and graphic design co-op Calverts' 12 worker members had a near death-by-landlord experience in 2022, and their premises costs went up by 70% in 2023. But after that, the co-op posted two record years and it was able to make above-inflation hourly wage increases in 2024 and 2025, also bringing on new workers. Production coordinator Cherry Haynes puts it down to strong demand for Calverts high-end arts and book production, investment in skills and tech, and a determined - and happy - collective attitude. Turnover in 2026 is expected to be over £1.5m for the first time.

Cooperators in Birmingham are getting ready to move into their new co-op homes and premises after Christmas. The multi-stakeholder co-op's building is near completion, with members trekking around site in hard hats and high vis's to see the near-done insides. The hall was much larger than expected - a place to hold monthly general meetings and party - and the hallways were lined with lots of windows, which was a nice surprise! As part of the move, our member Loaf is crowdfunding for their bakery fit, so check it out. (Photo shows SCD under construction, Dec 2025).



Hold on to your hats!

A shoutout to our 410 amazing individual supporters from Worker Co-op Solidarity Fund (Solidfund). Last year, Solidfund and workers.coop made a landmark agreement to support each other, and collaborate as sister organisations to expand our network of contributors and

registered supporters.

Thanks to your support for an ambitious plan and budget, led and managed by a six-strong SF members' steering group, we're ramping up growth plans for 2026. One of the first things you'll see is a new SF member email bulletin in January, followed by the first edition of a newsletter going out more widely. With the modest aim of doubling Solidfund's income by mid-2027 - as the first step to turbocharging our capacity to support worker co-op education, organising and solidarity initiatives on a bigger scale - the growth campaign proper will start in Autumn next year.

If you're a Solidfund subscriber, but not yet signed up to take part in our discuss-and-decide group on Loomio, please email membership@solidfund.coop for an invitation link.

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