

workers.coop

News #28: Building momentum, building on strength

With [Unicorn Grocery](#) hosting a study visit to help others set up their own co-op and the Own The Future worker co-op accelerator programme underway, the commitment to showing that worker co-ops are possible, practical, and replicable is clear. The federation and its members' ability to demonstrate values often missing from the labour market, like worker control and wellbeing, relies on workers.coop being more than just a collection of member co-ops to being a dynamic relational network. Come join us at [Worker Co-op Weekend](#) in June to disrupt business as usual and shape a justice-based co-operative economy.



Join workers.coop

Welcome to our newest members, the [Leicester Gazette](#), [Fellside Forestry](#) and [Cloud Mountain Co-op](#).

A warm welcome also to the 5 groups on the [Own The Future](#) worker co-op accelerator programme (more below).

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

If your co-op is new or struggling financially, we have a 'pay what you can' option.

Now individuals can become registered supporters by joining our sister organisation, [Solidfund](#).

[Join workers.coop](#)

Announcements

[workers.coop is hiring a Board Secretary](#) to support the effective governance of the organisation. This role helps ensure that the Board meets its legal, constitutional, and governance responsibilities while promoting good practice in cooperative governance. [→](#)
Read more and apply [here](#).

A warm welcome to Nancy Langfeldt who is joining workers.coop as Movement Building and Business Operations Coordinator. Nancy was a co-founder of Loaf and Birmingham Bike Foundry (BBF) worker co-ops some 15 years ago, and a founding member of Stirchley Co-operative Development (SCD). More recently she has worked with [Landworkers' Alliance](#). We are as excited as she is to be working again within the worker co-op sector.





Worker Co-op Weekend 2026

Tickets are now up for Worker Co-op Weekend, 5-7 June 2026. **workers.coop members get a discount on event tickets.**

Taking place again at **Thornbridge Outdoors near Sheffield**, join others from across the movement for a 2 day programme built around collaboration, shared learning and reimagining the future of worker co-operation.

There will be opportunities for business networking, peer learning and meetups. Participants will be able to meet new members, and take part in sessions on the history and future of the worker co-op movement, international solidarity and how worker co-ops connect with the wider social, environmental and political movements.

➔ Enter programme submissions [HERE](#). The programme is member-created.

There will be childcare and a kid's programme, as well as time for relaxing, movement-based activities, music and campfires, and opportunities to explore the site's beautiful natural setting or go wild swimming. Read [more](#).

Buy tickets

News and updates



Own The Future: worker co-op accelerator programme launched

Democratic worker ownership is central to building caring, ecological and abundant local economies. With support from the [Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust](#), and in partnership with [Outlandish / Space 4](#) and [Tipping Point](#), we've been working on the launch of a new worker co-op accelerator programme, *Own The Future*. We're thrilled to announce the groups participating and leading the way in a just, worker-owned transition to a new economy.

After receiving 50 expressions of interest and 26 full applications from worker co-op start-ups, there is evidence that this type of support is sought after and desperately needed to scale the number of worker co-ops in the UK.

The final cohort of five groups was selected based on a range of ready-to-go ideas, geographical location, sector relevance and those considered most able to benefit from the type of support the programme is able to offer.



Joining the cohort are Canopy Co-op, an ecological tree surgery and forestry group in Sheffield; Holme Valley Foods, a food distribution hub in West Yorkshire; Nanny Solidarity, a childcare co-op in London; Feral Express, a queer-owned bike courier in Sheffield; and Zero Emissions Delivery Waltham Forest, also a bike delivery service and a conversion, in London.

The one-year programme includes training, mentoring, specialist advice and peer support. As support is intentionally light-touch, groups largely direct their own development. This month saw the assignment of mentors and group introductions, with the cohort scheduled to meet in-person at the Worker Co-op Weekend.

If you or your co-op can provide resources or one-off support to groups in your sector who did not get onto the programme, contact ownthefuture@workers.coop.

Image courtesy of Canopy Co-op.

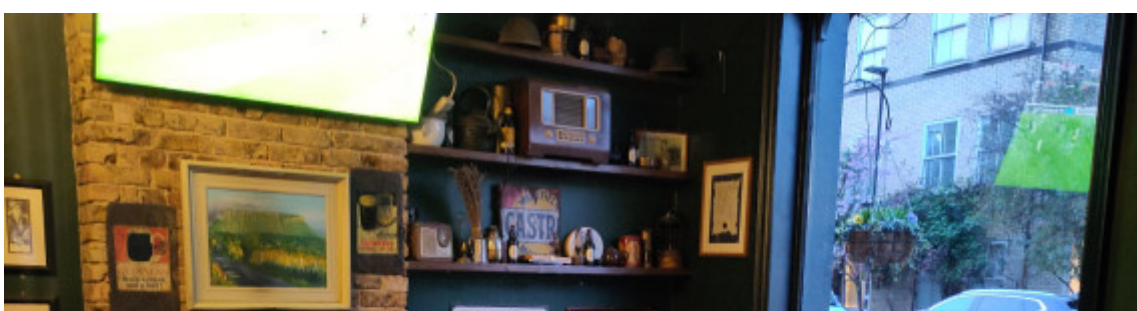
Last week, CoTech met at Outlandish cooperative's home, SPACE4, in Finsbury Park, for their twice-yearly gathering. Twelve members from tech and digital co-ops across the UK came together and planned a CoTech Conference trade fair for worker-owned tech, scheduled for Autumn 2026 to coincide with CoTech's tenth anniversary.

Members were able to build on the strong foundations the network laid in 2025, which included refreshing the website and community forum to streamlining the network infrastructure.

Attendees made good use of being together in-person, shaping the upcoming Conference schedule, outlining target audiences and setting objectives, and ended up with 12 lightning talks and a keynote speaker ready to go.

The aim of the Conference will be to showcase CoTech services & skills to the co-op movement and adjacent sectors to foster greater collaboration as well as promoting tech sovereignty and social value.

The day was topped off with practical workshops and social time over a delicious Caribbean lunch by Roti Joupa and an (earlier than planned) excursion to the pub!





Looking to do some exercise? *We Got To Move* was a movement, exercise & wellbeing-focused worker co-op. While no longer active, its members continue that work elsewhere. Movement and stress management are vital tools for cooperators to stay well through busy roles.

Former member Becca runs an all-abilities small group fitness class online each week, Tuesdays (6.15pm) and Fridays (6pm), as part of Big Bag Training. The classes cover the whole body. Strength: upper body push/pull and lower body. A circuit of 3 core exercises. Finally some interval rounds or steady freestyle (fun) cardio.

Rest is scheduled in and everyone goes at their own pace. For every section there's options for bodyweight only/no equipment, using homemade loads, or weights/bands. The exercises can be adapted for training seated. The price is sliding scale, with nobody excluded.



Long read

Authors' co-operative Gritstone Publishing celebrates 10 years. Gritstone, still the only author-run co-operative publisher in Britain, is turning ten years old in 2026. Established by four member-authors looking to assert more control over how their books were brought to market, the co-operative is fully mutual and is controlled collectively by its nine member-authors who discuss and agree proposed new titles for the imprint.

Book distribution to the book trade, including bookshops and online retailers, is handled by a mainstream trade distributor, but Gritstone titles are also sold directly from its own website. Gritstone has recently been accepted as a member of the Independent Publishers Guild.

Andrew Bibby, one of Gritstone's founder members, explained: "After ten successful years of

trading and growth, we can definitely say that our publishing model works. The publishing industry has changed enormously in recent years to become much more marketing-led, and authors are increasingly missing out on a fair share of the rewards for their work... Gritstone offers a third way between conventional publishing and author self-publishing.”

Gritstone takes as its model the long-established concept of marketing co-operatives used for example by farmers and wine producers in many countries to collectively sell their produce. The idea has proved very adaptable for the publishing sector. Gritstone believes there is considerable scope for its model to be adopted by other professional writers and has announced that it will be happy to work with other authors considering their own co-operatives.

Gritstone itself is currently welcoming approaches from potential new members writing in its fields of interest (broadly conservation, landscape and the outdoors, but also including fiction rooted in northern settings), with a view to potentially expanding to twelve members.

Gritstone will mark its tenth birthday with the publishing of select works, more [here](#). Thanks to Andrew Bibby for sharing this news segment with us!



Photo shared by Andrew Bibby, showing Gritstone members.

Events

Grow a grocery Unicorn study visit

25 March (Unicorn, Manchester) (now full)

As Unicorn celebrates thirty years in business, we want to double down on our commitment to solidarity in co-operation, and share some of what we've learned with existing and potential co-operators. This is now full but you can read more [here](#).

Organising meeting for Worker Co-op Weekend

30 March, 11am-12pm (online)

This is a monthly organising meeting for members to take part in shaping the event and forming a member-created programme that reflects current activities and demand.

Glasgow Co-ops - Monthly Meet-up

8 April, 5.30pm-7.30pm

Glasgow's informal co-op meetup, come along to meet other worker co-operators. Our April meet-up will be a session to brainstorm and pool our ideas for this year's meet-ups.

Cycle Co-op get together
20 April, 11am-12pm (online)

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

Givers Gain new business referrals - April session
22 April, 12.30pm-1.30pm (online)

'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. This event is for workers.coop members, cooperators, supporters and independent workers in the UK and internationally. Register [here](#).

Worker Co-op Weekend
5-7 June, Thornbridge Outdoors (Peak District)

Our annual late Spring gathering brings together worker cooperators and supporters to reconnect, celebrate, be inspired, learn - and do business. More info & tickets [here](#).



Get involved

This quarter workers.coop needs help with:

- **Join People, Policy and Care (PPC) working group.** The group is looking for new members experienced in HR. Email ppc@workers.coop to join.
- 🛠️ **Help organise and shape the Worker Co-op Weekend** by attending a member organising meeting, next one 30th March, [here](#).
- **Sign up [here](#) to help during Worker Co-op Weekend** (set-up, pack-down, general help, facilitation, photography).

Other ways to get involved:

- **workers.coop Inductions.** 15 minute inductions to the federation.
- **Submit a case study of your co-op.** Fill out [this form](#) [10 minutes].
- **Make sure the '[members of workers.coop](#)' logo is on your website.**
- **[Join a working group](#)**

Name: workers.coop Limited
Registered number: RS004981
Registered Address: 63 Rakewood Rd,
Rochdale, OL15 0AP



[unsubscribe](#)

[Bluesky](#) | [Mastodon](#)