

Annual Report



Co-op News annual report for the year to 28 February 2021



Chair's report

It has been a privilege to once again chair Co-operative Press over the past year. Like for most organisations, the pandemic has brought challenges and opportunities for the organisation, as colleagues moved to home working and the board moved to online meetings only.

I would like to thank Co-op News colleagues for their work over the last year, and the directors for their ongoing scrutiny of the business. During the year, the board welcomed three new directors: Lesley Reznicek (Co-op Group appointment), Phil Hartwell (Co-operatives UK appointment) and Harry Cairney (co-opted to replace David Paterson who stepped down due to university commitments). It is wonderful to work alongside a board that is so diverse, professional and passionate about the organisation they are serving.

AN UPWARD TREND

I am delighted to report that following the turmoil of the last three years, which encompassed the unexpected departure of the former editor and ongoing New Force conversations, the organisation has generated a small surplus for the year. This is in

line with our strategy of diversifying membership, exploring new income streams and improving and developing our digital output. Earlier in the year we undertook a comprehensive member survey, which will be informing our future direction and editorial content. We are confident that long term, this trajectory will continue.

THE FUTURE

The pandemic is clearly not over, and the conversations about membership, funding, and what our eventual future will look like are dynamic and evolving. But Co-op News has served the global co-operative movement for 150 years and a large part of the activity in our anniversary year is looking forward to the decades ahead.

What makes Co-op News unique is that it collates global news about co-operatives and uses expert knowledge about the business model and the principles behind it to tell stories in an engaging and far-reaching way. Our strategy has been extremely helpful in guiding us through this process, and we look forward to telling the world's co-operative stories for years to come.

As we moved into our 150th year, we were pleased that members of the Co-operative Group voted to support continued funding for the Co-operative Press and other central bodies in the movement such as the Co-operative College, Heritage Trust and Co-operatives UK at the Group's 2020 and 2021 AGMs.

While these votes are not binding, we look forward to working with the Co-operative Group and our other key funders and partners to continue our work of "connecting, championing and challenging" the cause of co-operation for many years to come.

Thank you very much for your ongoing support of Co-op News, and I hope to see our members in person once again in the not too distant future. Barbara Rainford
Chair

Barbara Rainford
Chair



Editor's report

When we held our AGM online in June 2020, little did we know just how much the world would change over the coming year. The work of Co-operative Press (and its publication, Co-op News) moved online swiftly at the start of the pandemic, and as a team we have grown and adapted with a changing world and adapted as the world of work evolved.

2020-2021

As the pandemic unfolded, we moved to home working from March 2020, and have remained so since. Our lease at Holyoake House came to an end in December 2020 – and while, for now, we have not renewed, Holyoake House is still our registered address and postal address, and I have no doubt we will return in some capacity as the world settles into hybrid ways of working. I would like to pay tribute to my wonderful colleagues Miles Hadfield, Anca Voinea and Keir Mucklestone-Barnett, each of whom have adapted to the challenges of home working diligently, professionally and with a great deal of necessary humour. Keir left the organisation in April to pursue further opportunities, and we wish him all the very best.



AN ONLINE WORLD

While news gathering is a largely remote undertaking, some notable challenges have been the lack of face-to-face interaction, juggling home and work environments and interacting with a new world of wholly online events.

However, there have been some welcome new opportunities too. In particular, we are delighted to be working a) with worker co-ops Data Content Reach and Co-operative Web to develop a fit-for-purpose website (complete with new member areas) and b) Co-operatives UK, the Co-op College and Co-operative Heritage Trust to develop a joint online presence: both of these will increase the footprint of co-operatives online and provide spaces for people to easily engage with the movement.

Preparations for the ICA's World Cooperative Congress are also well underway: communicating about an event that is likely to be mostly online has been a satisfying challenge, and it's wonderful to see everything starting to pull together ahead of 1-3 December 2021.

FAREWELLS AND WELCOMES

The last year also saw the departures of old faces and the arrival of new within the movement. In particular, we were shocked and saddened to learn of the deaths of Ted Graham, Chris Herries and Nigel Todd and others – all of whom were very good friends of Co-op News.

It was also the end of an era seeing Ed Mayo depart from Co-operatives UK: we are already working closely with new CEO Rose Marley and look forward to working together with the wider movement to continue to tell co-operative stories to bigger and wider audiences.

Rebecca Harvey
Executive Editor



COOP news

JULY 2020

BUILDING BACK BETTER?

Diversity, equity and inclusion in a co-op-focused rebuild

Plus... Dr. Jessica Gordon-Leubman on the fight for economic empowerment, the role of ethical lending post-Covid-19 and Co-op principles during the crisis

ISSN 1700-0001
www.the-news.coop
CA 20

COOP news

AUGUST 2020

RECOVERY

What are the social, economic and cultural ripple effects of the COVID-19 pandemic?

Plus... How the ripple effects of the COVID-19 pandemic are changing the way we think about co-ops

COOP news

OCTOBER 2020

A NEW MEDIA

Ownership models and spreading the word on co-ops

Plus... 25 years of the Statement on the Co-operative and Social Enterprise Bank... US National Cooperative Bank... ways to assess a decent living wage around the world

ISSN 1700-0001
www.the-news.coop
CA 20

COOP news

NOVEMBER 2020

MEC

Members rally after the sale of Canada's largest co-operative

Plus... Meet the new chief executive of Co-operatives UK... The US election and its impact on co-ops... How a Co-op director saved a Clicketers' Almagest

ISSN 1700-0001
www.the-news.coop

Who's who?

YOUR CO-OP PRESS DIRECTORS DURING THE YEAR:

Barbara Rainford Chair

(elected by and from organisations in membership
– representing Midcounties Co-operative)

Elaine Dean Vice-Chair (from 19/6/2020)

(elected by and from organisations in membership
– representing Central England Co-operative)

David Paterson (to 25/8/2020)

(elected by and from organisations in membership
– representing Scotmid Co-operative)

Harry Cairney (from 25/8/2020)

(co-opted from organisations in membership
– representing Scotmid Co-operative)

Shajidur Rahman (from 19/6/2020)

(elected by and from individuals in membership)

Lesley Reznicek (from 25/8/2020)

(appointed by the Co-op Group
- National Members' Council vice president)

Sofygil Crew

(appointed by the Co-op Group
- National Members' Council)

Beverley Perkins (to 19/6/2020 and from 25/8/2020)

(appointed by the Co-op Group
- National Members' Council vice president)

Phil Hartwell (from 7/12/2020)

(appointed by Co-operatives UK)

Tim Hartley

(co-opted by the board for media skills and experience)

Gillian Lonergan

(co-opted by the board in 2019 for co-operative
movement and heritage skill sand experience)

Secretary: **Richard Bickle**

Treasurer: **Ray Henderson**

YOUR CO-OPERATIVE PRESS COLLEAGUES

Rebecca Harvey Executive Editor

Miles Hadfield Digital Editor

Anca Voinea International Editor

Keir Mucklestone-Barnett Designer

Membership

BACKGROUND

Co-op Press was founded by co-operative societies in 1871, and societies remained the only admissible members until 2004, when individual members were admitted for a minimum £10 share. In 2016, a further rule change linked membership to subscription, ensuring that all individual members are subscribers and vice versa; at the 2016 AGM, members voted to credit all £10 members with a year's subscription and after that their membership was conditional upon continuing to pay a subscription.

THE CURRENT SITUATION

Last year we reported that the society was aware that we have had multiple issues with the membership system inherited from legacy databases, and this is being addressed as a matter of urgency. This process was delayed by lockdown, but we have been working with colleagues from Co-operative Web (a tech worker co-op) and Co-operatives UK to amalgamate and

verify multiple data sets to ensure the correct and proper data is verified and complete. This process has been challenging and frustrating for colleagues and members alike, and we thank members for their patience with this situation.

THE FUTURE

Co-op Press has several long-standing historic membership agreements with UK retail societies. We are grateful for the vital, ongoing co-operation with these co-operatives – and see long-term, sustainable relationships with these and other organisations as an integral part of our future - but we are aware that these societies do not necessarily represent the majority of Co-op News readers. Over 55% of our online readers are from outside of the UK, for example. This is reflected in the diverse locations of our digital members, who live in 16 different countries, from Switzerland and Serbia to France and the Philippines.

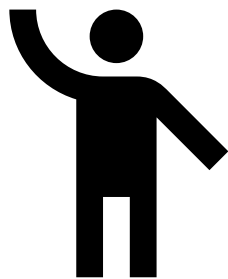


WE PUBLISHED

754 STORIES
754 STORIES

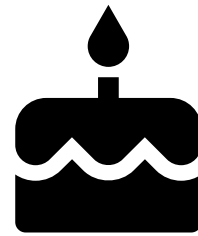
WHICH WORKS OUT AT

2
STORIES
PER DAY



THE NUMBER OF
PAGES VIEWED UP

10%



28%

OF OUR USERS ARE AGED

25-34

VISITORS TO THE SITE



48% & 52%
FEMALE MALE

WE HAD VISITORS TO THE WEBSITE FROM EVERY COUNTRY IN
THE WORLD EXCEPT FOUR.



★ 1. UK (45%)

TOP 10 COUNTRIES BY VISITORS:

2. US

5. PHILIPPINES

8. NEPAL

3. CANADA

6. AUSTRALIA

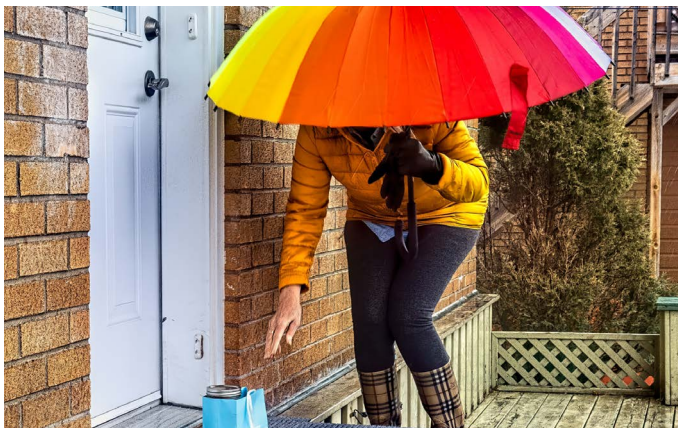
9. GERMANY

4. INDIA

7. IRELAND

10. NIGERIA

Living co-op principles



1. Voluntary and Open Membership

Membership of Co-operative Press is open to all persons able to use our services and willing to accept the responsibilities of membership, without discrimination.

2. Democratic Member Control

Our members help us set our policies, stand for and vote in our elections, and help us decide our future strategy direction.

3. Member Economic Participation

Members contribute equitably to, and democratically control, the capital of the Co-operative Press co-operative.

4. Autonomy and Independence

Co-operative Press is an autonomous organisation, providing independent co-operative journalism to its members and the wider co-operative movement.

5. Education, Training, and Information

Co-operatives provide education and training and inform the general public - particularly young people and opinion leaders - about the nature and benefits of co-operation. Co-op News does this through imparting information and analysis through news stories, features, interviews and other content. Our

expert journalists fully understand what co-operatives are how they should act – and how this fits with into the context of contemporary issues. Co-op News is a vital resource for knowledge about co-operatives, and is used as a learning, information and reference tool by educators, students and interested parties from around the world.

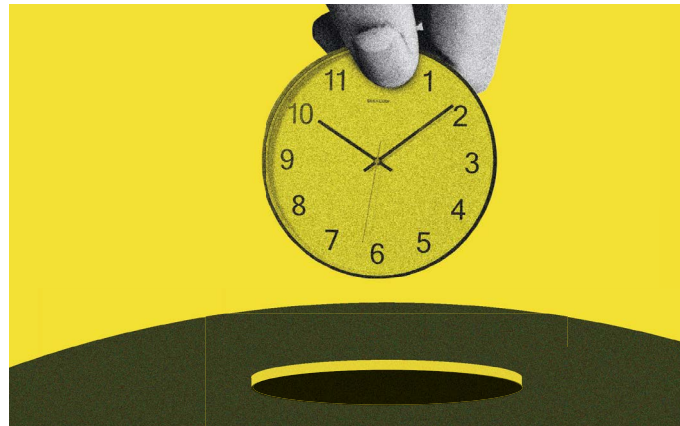
6. Co-operation among Co-operatives

Co-operatives serve their members most effectively and strengthen the co-operative movement by working together. We are committed to this principle and demonstrate this through working with co-operative organisations where we can, including in the procurement of professional services, such as accountancy (Third Sector Accountancy), digital (Web Architects, Co-operative Web) and business development (Co-operative Futures and Data Content Reach).

7. Concern for Community

Co-operatives work for the sustainable development of their communities. Co-op news supports communities worldwide by telling their co-operative stories. We are also committed to environmental and sustainability policies. Operationally, we are paper-free. Our printed magazine uses vegetable inks on sustainably sourced paper and is delivered in compostable potato starch wrapping.

Telling co-op stories



Throughout the year, Co-operative Press has published a 52-page print magazine that connects, champions and challenges co-operative businesses very month. Each issue takes a theme that is relevant to something that is happening in the world at that time, and develops a set of stories and features to bring the co-operative angle to the fore.

March 2020: Health and Housing

How can co-ops change the future for sectors in crisis?

April 2020: Co-operation on lockdown

A first look at how Covid-19 was affecting co-ops around the world at the very start of the pandemic.

May 2020: Weathering the storm

As the scale of Covid-19 unfolded and co-operatives came together to support members and communities, we spoke with some of the workers on the frontline

June 2020: Renewal or return to normal?

The conversation last summer started to turn to a post-Covid world, as co-ops faced a turning point: what would the economy look like after Covid-19?

July 2020: Building Back Better

As co-ops began to focus on a rebuild, diversity, equity and inclusion was a vital part of co-operative thinking

August 2020: Recovery

A look at the social, cultural and economic costs of the pandemic to co-operatives.

September 2020: Youth

How can the global movement encourage young people to set up co-operatives?

October: A new media

Co-op News is itself a co-operative: but what are the other ownership models spreading the word on co-operation?

November: The sale of MEC

The demutualisation of Canada's largest mutual rocked the co-op world - and raised wider questions around democracy and the role of members.

December 2020: Places and Spaces

The nature of 'ownership' of spaces, and the impact this has on the fight for equality.

January 2020: Why aren't there more co-ops?

A simple question with a complicated answer...

February 2021: What next for the co-op movement?

As the pandemic continued, co-operatives in different sectors settled into a variety of 'new normals'.

Our Strategy

In May 2019, we worked with development organisations Co-operative Futures and Co-operative & Mutual Solutions to develop a five-year strategy for Co-operative Press that would help ensure the relevance and sustainability of Co-op News. The board affirmed seven long-term strategic goals and seven strategic objectives.

The impact of Covid-19 has delayed elements of this strategy, but we are pleased to report to members that progress has been made in all areas.

SEVEN LONG-TERM STRATEGIC GOALS

1. To create a distinct identity

The Co-op News identity is visually striking and our output is recognisable around the world. For 2021, we created a secondary logo to highlight our 150th anniversary year.

2. To achieve financial stability

Co-op News made a modest surplus in the 2020-2021 financial year, indicating current financial stability.

3. To be well run and governed

Our auditors are pleased with the progress we have made on processes, and we have a full complement of directors (a combination of elected, appointed and co-opted directors).

4. To grow

During the year we welcomed 67 individual members and two organisational members. Our turnover increased slightly.

5. To become a trusted partner for co-op societies

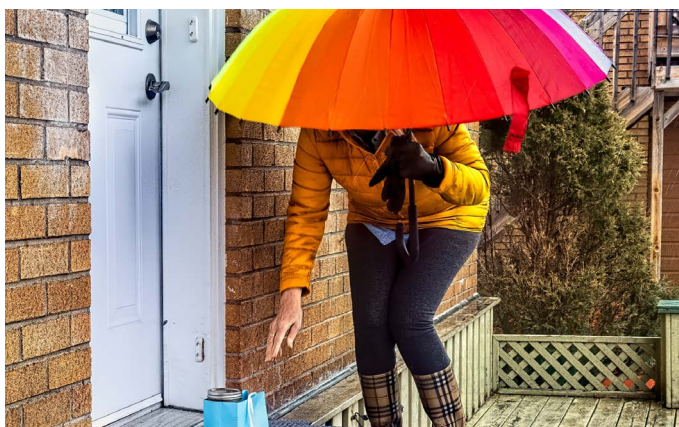
We are working with different organisations in partnership, to deliver wider communications work and activities.

6. To innovate

We are working with partners to tell new stories in new ways, and develop a clearer offer for our members.

7. To develop new partners, channels and markets

We are building relationships with co-ops and co-operators around the world to develop new channels and markets for co-operative news.



SEVEN STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES: CORE OPERATIONS:

1. Increase digital output

Our new digital output includes a revitalised fortnightly newsletter, a monthly webinar (Co-operative Women's Voices, co-hosted with the Co-operative College). We are also working with Co-op Web and Data Content Reach to bring our current website to its full potential. Alongside this, we are working with Co-operatives UK, the Co-op College and the Co-operative Heritage Trust to develop new digital ways of working that will increase communication and information about co-operatives to a wider public audience.

2. Develop new content and services

Much of this is coming out of (1) above.

3. Develop new geographies and sectors

This work is ongoing, but this in particular was delayed by the pandemic.

FACILITATING CORE OPERATIONS:

4. Improve business processes

Processes have been improved throughout the business, particular in the area of accounting,

banking and credit control.

5. Refresh stakeholder relationships

This work is ongoing, with regular meetings taking place with stakeholders online.

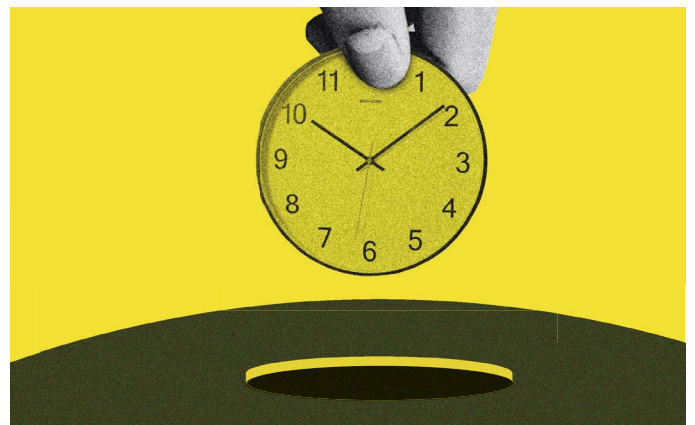
OUTCOMES:

6. Increase and diversify income

We have diversified income through increasing the number of individual members and organisational members, and also by using the skills we have a content we produce to undertake additional research, writing, and communications activity. This includes producing the a 72-page Covid Action Learning Set (including 32 case studies) for the Co-operative Councils' Innovation Network and leading a communications consortium providing comms support for the International Cooperative Alliance in the lead up to the World Cooperative Congress in Seoul, Republic of Korea, in December 2021.

7. Grow membership, subscriptions and circulation

In the 2020-2021 year Co-op Press welcomed 67 new individual members and 2 new organisational members.



Co-operative Press Limited
Revenue Account
For The Year Ended 28 February 2021

	Notes	2021 £	2020 £
TURNOVER		243,151	232,910
Cost of sales		(197,190)	(177,666)
GROSS PROFIT		45,961	55,244
Administrative expenses		(42,660)	(61,081)
OPERATING PROFIT/(LOSS)		3,301	(5,837)
Other interest receivable and similar income		3,565	4,485
PROFIT/(LOSS) FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR		6,866	(1,352)

The notes on pages 10 to 13 form part of these financial statements.

Co-operative Press Limited
Balance Sheet
As at 28 February 2021

	Notes	2021		2020	
		£	£	£	£
FIXED ASSETS					
Tangible Assets	3		-		1,170
Investments	4		84,970		94,141
			84,970		95,311
CURRENT ASSETS					
Debtors	5	158,499		123,702	
Cash at bank and in hand		121,674		128,679	
		280,173		252,381	
Creditors: Amounts Falling Due Within One Year	6	(84,105)		(73,587)	
NET CURRENT ASSETS (LIABILITIES)			196,068		178,794
TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES			281,038		274,105
NET ASSETS			281,038		274,105
CAPITAL AND RESERVES					
Called up share capital	7		53,530		53,463
Revenue Account			227,508		220,642
SHAREHOLDERS' FUNDS			281,038		274,105

The notes on pages 10 to 13 form part of these financial statements.

Co-operative Press Limited
Statement of Changes in Equity
For The Year Ended 28 February 2021

	Share Capital	Revenue Account	Total
	£	£	£
As at 1 March 2019 as previously stated	53,463	235,131	288,594
Prior year adjustment	-	(13,137)	(13,137)
As at 1 March 2019 as restated	53,463	221,994	275,457
Loss for the year and total comprehensive income	-	(1,352)	(1,352)
As at 29 February 2020 and 1 March 2020	53,463	220,642	274,105
Profit for the year and total comprehensive income	-	6,866	6,866
New shares issued to members	67	-	67
As at 28 February 2021	53,530	227,508	281,038

Co-operative Press Limited
Notes to the Financial Statements
For The Year Ended 28 February 2021

1. Accounting Policies

1.1. Basis of Preparation of Financial Statements

The financial statements are prepared under the historical cost convention and in accordance with the FRS 102 Section 1A Small Entities - The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland and the Co-operative and Community Benefit Societies Act 2014.

1.2. Going Concern Disclosure

The directors have identified material uncertainties related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt about the Society's ability to continue as a going concern, however, the going concern basis remains appropriate.

1.3. Turnover

Turnover is measured at the fair value of the consideration received or receivable, net of discounts and value added taxes. Turnover includes revenue earned from the sale of goods and from the rendering of services. Turnover is reduced for estimated customer returns, rebates and other similar allowances.

Sale of goods

Turnover from the sale of goods is recognised when the significant risks and rewards of ownership of the goods has transferred to the buyer. This is usually at the point that the customer has signed for the delivery of the goods.

Rendering of services

Turnover from the rendering of services is recognised by reference to the stage of completion of the contract. The stage of completion of a contract is measured by comparing the costs incurred for work performed to date to the total estimated contract costs. Turnover is only recognised to the extent of recoverable expenses when the outcome of a contract cannot be estimated reliably.

1.4. Tangible Fixed Assets and Depreciation

Tangible fixed assets are measured at cost less accumulated depreciation and any accumulated impairment losses. Depreciation is provided at rates calculated to write off the cost of the fixed assets, less their estimated residual value, over their expected useful lives on the following bases:

Computer Equipment	4 years, straight line
--------------------	------------------------

1.5. Pensions

The Society operates a defined pension contribution scheme. Contributions are charged to the Revenue account as they become payable in accordance with the rules of the scheme.

2. Average Number of Employees

Average number of employees, including directors, during the year was as follows: 4 (2020: 4)

Co-operative Press Limited
Notes to the Financial Statements (continued)
For The Year Ended 28 February 2021

3. Tangible Assets

**Computer
Equipment
£**

Cost

As at 1 March 2020	6,389
As at 28 February 2021	6,389

Depreciation

As at 1 March 2020	5,219
Provided during the period	1,170
As at 28 February 2021	6,389

Net Book Value

As at 28 February 2021	-
As at 1 March 2020	1,170

4. Investments

**Unlisted
£**

Cost

As at 1 March 2020	94,141
Additions	829
Disposals	(10,000)
As at 28 February 2021	84,970

Provision

As at 1 March 2020	-
As at 28 February 2021	-

Net Book Value

As at 28 February 2021	84,970
As at 1 March 2020	94,141

The investments consist of shares in other co-operative societies. Interest is either paid cash or added in the form of further shares. The shares cannot be sold or transferred but can be repaid. They therefore do not have a market value and are included at cost.

Co-operative Press Limited
Notes to the Financial Statements (continued)
For The Year Ended 28 February 2021

5. Debtors

	2021	2020
	£	£
Due within one year		
Trade debtors	151,332	94,835
Prepayments and accrued income	2,180	23,022
Other debtors	4,636	5,595
Net wages	351	250
	158,499	123,702

6. Creditors: Amounts Falling Due Within One Year

	2021	2020
	£	£
Trade creditors	8,647	14,516
Other taxes and social security	6,630	11,656
VAT	10,009	7,411
Accruals and deferred income	58,819	40,004
	84,105	73,587

7. Share Capital

	2021	2020
Members' shares	53,530	53,463

Co-operative Press Limited
Notes to the Financial Statements (continued)
For The Year Ended 28 February 2021

8. Related Party Transactions

The co-operative is owned by its members who are subscribers to the magazine. The members do not have any significant measure of control over the co-operative, except in the case of the Co-operative Group, which according to the rules of the co-operative is able to appoint four directors to the co-operative's board. All transactions with members are on normal commercial terms, except for the transactions with the Co-operative Group, which pays in excess of the commercial price for its bulk subscription in order to support the work of the co-operative.

Transactions with the Co-operative Group are as follows:

	2021	2020
	£	£
Sales to the Co-operative Group	106,000	122,000
Amounts due from the Co-operative Group	63,600	68,190

9. FRC Ethical Standard - Provision Available for Small Entities

In common with other businesses of our size and nature we use our auditors to prepare and submit returns to the tax authorities and assist with the preparation of the financial statements.

10. General Information

Co-operative Press Limited is a co-operative society registered under the Co-operative and Community Benefit Societies Act 2014, incorporated in England & Wales, registered number 1585R . The registered office is Holyoake House, Hanover Street, Manchester, M60 0AS.

Co-operative Press Limited
Detailed Revenue Account
For The Year Ended 28 February 2021

	2021		2020	
	£	£	£	£
TURNOVER				
Membership		67,259		78,273
Specialist packages		105,706		117,845
Advertising and services		69,498		35,005
Other income		688		1,787
		<u>243,151</u>		<u>232,910</u>
COST OF SALES				
Distribution costs	14,439		12,037	
Editorial	25,726		22,897	
Digital	10,855		10,767	
Website costs recharged to customer	15,000		-	
Wages and salaries	93,284		85,449	
Employers NI	4,207		5,165	
Employers pensions - defined contribution schemes	2,652		2,724	
Printing cost of sales	31,027		38,627	
		<u>(197,190)</u>		<u>(177,666)</u>
GROSS PROFIT		45,961		55,244
Administrative Expenses				
Rent	7,461		8,726	
Repairs, renewals and maintenance	-		444	
Insurance	1,270		1,854	
Telephone, postage and stationery	540		1,326	
Advertising and marketing costs	1,780		887	
Accountancy fees	9,180		8,889	
Consultancy fees	5,362		14,450	
Subscriptions	563		343	
Bank charges	746		461	
Bad debts written off	(1,329)		-	
Depreciation	1,171		1,173	

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Co-operative Press Limited
Detailed Revenue Account (continued)
For The Year Ended 28 February 2021

Sundry expenses	522	2,092
Events and marketing	6,073	8,817
Governance	<u>9,321</u>	<u>11,619</u>
	(42,660)	(61,081)
OPERATING PROFIT/(LOSS)	3,301	(5,837)
Other interest receivable and similar income		
Bank interest receivable	<u>3,565</u>	<u>4,485</u>
	3,565	4,485
PROFIT/(LOSS) FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR	<u>6,866</u>	<u>(1,352)</u>

