



Foundation

Candidate Pack
for Chair



Welcome

Dear Candidate,

Thank you for your interest in becoming the next Chair of the Co-op Foundation.

Our new Chair of Trustees succeeds Jamie Ward-Smith MBE who will step down in late November following eight highly successful years of change and transformation for the Co-op Foundation.

We are a different sort of funder which we celebrate; working closely with communities, we've listened to the voices of young people and are using our learning to shape our vision and are now at the stage of working with others across the sector to create meaningful change and impact.

We are proud to be pioneering new and progressive ways to do philanthropy, by giving the power of decision making directly to young people who are experts by virtue of their experience. For the Co-op Foundation, giving away power is a bold and radical way to make philanthropy more co-operative. It is our ambition to influence the wider funding sector by the example of our practice, to enable philanthropy to become more co-operative and longstanding power balances to be addressed.

We're looking for someone who shares our passion and are looking for a chair who understands the issues relevant to our communities, in particular young people, and instinctively knows how to build positive alliances at a local and national level. You will be a successful leader whose roots come from either the grant giving, social change or philanthropy sectors and will possess a natural and open engagement style and flexible approach to leading and uniting a Board. You will effortlessly leverage stakeholder networks and will understand how to operate within complexity and understands how it manifests in relation to The Co-operative Group and its management framework. You will make connections easily and will ensure we have a strong voice with policy makers, opinion formers, partners and others across the UK.

The Chair also works closely with our Chief Executive, Nick Crofts, and his Executive and Leadership Teams and key members within the Co-operative Group. We are looking for a new Chair who can provide support and constructive challenge around the big strategic decisions, and will bring balance, perspective and insight, quickly becoming an invaluable source of wisdom and guidance, and a trusted critical friend.

In return, we can offer a skilled, knowledgeable and dedicated trustee team along with a rare chance to chair a unique foundation. If this sounds like you, please do get in touch.

Board of Trustees
The Co-op Foundation



Who we are

The Co-op Foundation is a funder with a co-operative difference. We care deeply about how our funding can empower people and we trust our partners to do what matters most. By building relationships, by being honest and open, by learning and by accepting appropriate risk, we will support our partners to make an even greater impact tackling inequality and strengthening communities.

Our vision is of strong communities, where people work co-operatively to make things better.

Our mission is to help disadvantaged communities overcome their challenges by putting co-operative values into practice. We aim to stimulate and strengthen community action that connects and empowers people so they can work together to make things better.

We have three goals:

- we champion young people's ability to contribute positively to their communities and help to strengthen their sense of belonging.
- we're investing in disadvantaged communities' capacity to overcome their social, economic or environmental challenges.
- we're building our reputation as a trusted charity with a co-operative difference, uniting with others to make a sustainable difference in communities.

Our values

<https://www.coopfoundation.org.uk/about-us/values/>

Our strategy

<https://www.coopfoundation.org.uk/strategy-2022-27/>

Our impact

You can watch our Impact Report video by clicking this link [here](#)



Meet our Board

The Board is comprised of eight trustees and led by the Chair, Jamie Ward-Smith. The role of the Board is to govern the organisation, set strategy and provide overall direction to achieve its aims. There are two sub committees (Finance, Audit & Risk and Colleague Wellbeing) which new trustees are also encouraged to join. Our Board includes Co-op colleagues, elected Co-op National Council Members and externally recruited charity sector experts.



Outgoing Chair, **Jamie Ward-Smith MBE**. A social entrepreneur known for innovation in volunteerism and digital transformation, Jamie is a passionate advocate for how technology can enable community change. Jamie co-founded Do-it.org, the UK's first digital volunteering service, which they ran for nine years. Jamie is currently Founder at Charity Hall of Fame, the UK's first Hall of Fame for civil society which honours and preserves the stories of our community changemakers. Previous roles leading Community Participation policy and funding at the Home Office, and Marketing & Communications Director for online youth advice charity, The Mix. Jamie is also a Trustee of the mental health housing charity, Just and the Association of Charitable Foundations (ACF).



Vice Chair, **Sharon Jones**. With more than 15 years' experience in grant making, Sharon is a passionate advocate for investing in people's potential to build strong, vibrant communities. As former Head of Funding at the National Lottery Community Fund, she developed innovative programmes and managed a network of local teams across England. She has actively worked with other funders to address societal issues such as complex safeguarding and youth unemployment. Sharon now runs her own company continuing to support the growth of social value organisations, with a particular focus on using sport for change, and is a Trustee of the Greater Manchester Mayor's Charity.

Sharon, what inspired you to become a Trustee of Co-op Foundation?

I had worked in the trusts and foundation world for many years and was always struck by the impact and reputation that the Co-op Foundation had in the sector. For a relatively small foundation it really held a strong place and kudos, particularly in its work on youth loneliness. Being a corporate charity, hosted by a business with strong values of co-operation and supporting communities, was also very attractive to me.

What do you enjoy about / feel you get from the work?

As a trustee of a very forward-thinking foundation means that I get to realise my ambition to change the way grant making operates in general. There are often huge power dynamics at play between those 'with the money' and those 'that receive the money', and the Co-op Foundation has successfully ventured into more participatory approaches, sharing power with those we're here to support. I love that about the Foundation. The staff team is also amazing and hugely talented!

What surprised you about it, or what didn't you expect?

There's a couple of things that I didn't expect but that pleasantly surprised me. 1) Just how agile and 'up for it' the foundation has been in evolving to a really progressive funder that is leading the way in the how it works with young people. The Future Communities Collective was our first foray into participatory grant making and has generated lots of learning. 2) Working on a board that is so diverse with young trustees is an absolute delight - it's unusual to see that in the UK foundation world.



Treasurer, **Jane Waters** is a qualified accountant with more than 20 years' experience in the Financial Services sector. Jane has been a Co-op colleague for just over seven years. She was firstly responsible for financial and statutory reporting for the underwriting business and more recently as Head of Finance, Risk & Governance for the Insurance distribution business. She has regulatory Board-level responsibility for Finance and Risk reporting. Jane is a passionate advocate for young people, having provided mentoring support to teenage girls through a Manchester charity and ongoing careers guidance for school leavers.



Trustee, **Hope Levy-Shepherd** is co-founder and director of the [Black British City Group](#), a social enterprise connecting junior professionals in the UK with opportunities to volunteer and make a positive community impact in local charities, schools and small businesses. She is also a solicitor at Linklaters LLP, specialising in corporate mergers and acquisitions and has been recognised as a Yahoo EMPOWER Top 100 Future Leader in 2021. She was also a highly commended rising star in the 2019 UK Diversity Legal Awards. Hope brings with her a passion for Co-op Foundation's vision of bringing people together and building strong communities.

So, Hope, what inspired you to become Trustee of Co-op Foundation?

I have always been passionate about maximising opportunities for young people and community building – for me, becoming a Trustee was a fulfilling way to further align my personal values with positive action. As a young person with no background in grant-making, I really wanted to join the Board of a funder with a bold and dynamic approach to participatory grant making.

What do you enjoy about / feel you get from the work?

I love having the opportunity to see what our work does to empower young people in our communities. Another highlight is being able to work collaboratively with a fantastic team to achieve that impact, and I am proud that we are not afraid to have challenging conversations to help us reach the right decisions.

What surprised you about it, or what didn't you expect?

I underestimated how important it is to have a Trustee Board with such a broad range of experiences. Each Trustee brings a uniquely valuable skillset and perspective to the table - whether that be as an experienced grant maker, member of the Co-op business or fellow charity founder.



Trustee, **George Imafidon MBE**. George Imafidon is the CEO of Motivez, supporting thousands of young people aged 14 – 25 to access jobs in STEM and become change-makers. He is also a Performance Engineer with Sir Lewis Hamilton's racing team, and Board Member at The Hamilton Commission improving diversity in STEM and motorsport. As a First Class engineering graduate from University College London (UCL), George is passionate about building products and programmes that improve lives and communities. Over the past five years, he has worked across engineering, technology, consulting, and finance with firms such as Google, Rolls-Royce, William Blair, and McKinsey & Company. As a diversity champion, George leads the #AB1Million campaign raising £1 million for the Amos Bursary to ensure talented men of African and Caribbean descent have the opportunity to excel in education and beyond. George was awarded an MBE for services to engineering, technology and young people in 2023.



Trustee, **Mahalia Flasz**, Mahalia is a Portfolio Insight Analyst for Co-op's Property team, having started her Co-op journey at the Newcastle University Students' Union franchise store while studying for a Masters in Environmental Geoscience. Mahalia has a huge passion for community and is a Member of the Co-op Young Members Group. Here, she champions young voices and inspires a movement of young people to co-operate for a fairer world. Through this role, Mahalia has a seat on Co-op's National Members' Council, representing the Young Members' Group and young voices. She advocates for diversity and inclusion and is part of the Diversity and Inclusion Working Group for the Council.



Outgoing Trustee **Sheila Jane Malley**. Sheila Jane was Director of Grant Making and Policy for BBC Children in Need until 2016. She has served on Boards of numerous other funders and is currently a Trustee of Rosa, the fund for women and girls. An advocate of community development approaches that bring people together to generate solutions to local needs, she has applied this perspective to her extensive grant making experience, both in Northern Ireland (where she lives) and across the UK.



Peter Batt is Managing Director of Nisa, which was acquired by Co-op in 2018. He's worked in retail since 1993, starting out his career as a Graduate Trainee at Sainsburys. In 2015, he made the move to Co-op to become the Divisional Managing Director. He was recently presented with the Retail Week Diversity Champion Silver Award. Alongside his retail career, Peter has spent time as a trustee at Saint Francis Hospice (2015-2022) and sat on the Enterprise Co-operative Trust Board. He was also involved in the Million Pound Mile for MIND, raising more than £1million for the charity. Peter lives in Shalford, in North Essex. He is married to Sam and has two children, Oliver, 13 and Alexandra 11. Peter enjoys watching all sports, 80s music and going to the theatre.



Role Profile

Reporting to

Board of Trustees

Overall purpose

The Chair is a crucial role for the Co-op Foundation and will provide inclusive leadership to the Board of Trustees, holding the Board to account and ensuring that each Trustee fulfils their responsibilities for the effective governance of the Foundation and adherence to its vision, mission and values. The Chair will ensure that the Board functions as a unit and works closely with the Foundation management team to achieve agreed strategic objectives. The Chair will support, and, where appropriate, challenge the Foundation CEO, holding them to account for delivery of the agreed strategy. The Chair will role model the Co-operatives values and principles, and act as an ambassador, particularly in relation to key relationships within the Co-operative Group, and with other external stakeholders as appropriate.

Principal responsibilities

Strategic leadership

- Provide leadership to the Board and the Foundation management team, ensuring that the Foundation has maximum impact for the communities it exists to benefit
- Ensure that Trustees fulfil their duties and responsibilities for the effective governance of the Foundation
- Ensure that the Board operates within its charitable objectives, and provides a clear strategic direction for the Foundation
- Ensure that the Board is able to regularly review major risks and associated opportunities, and satisfy itself that systems are in place to take advantage of opportunities, and manage and mitigate the risks
- Ensure that the Board fulfils its duties to ensure sound financial health of the Foundation, with systems in place to ensure financial accountability
- Safeguard and promote the good name and values of the organisation.

Governance

- Ensure that the Foundation's governance arrangements are embedded and working in the most effective way
- Develop an understanding of the Management Framework arrangement between the Co-op Group and the Foundation
- Develop the knowledge and capability of the Board
- Encourage positive change where appropriate
- Address and resolve any conflicts within the Board
- Ensure that the performance of the Trustees is appraised on an annual basis by working closely with the Foundation Secretary
- Ensure that the trustee body annually reviews its structure and effectiveness, and that it implements agreed changes as necessary
- Define and keep under review selection and performance criteria for Trustees
- Ensure that the Board of Trustees is regularly refreshed and incorporates the right balance of skills, knowledge and experience, and diversity of backgrounds and perspectives needed to govern and lead the Foundation effectively
- Work within any agreed policies adopted by the Foundation.

Stakeholder relationships

- Act as an ambassador for the Foundation and its mission
- Maintain close relationships with key stakeholders within the Co-operative Group, including the Co-operative's Group Company Secretary, the Director of Community & Membership Participation and members of the Group's Board, Executive and Council, and address any potential conflict with stakeholders
- Act as a spokesperson for the Foundation when appropriate
- Represent the Foundation at external functions, meetings, and events.

Efficiency and effectiveness

- Chair meetings of the Board of Trustees effectively and efficiently, bringing impartiality and objectivity to the decision-making process
- Monitor the agreed actions from the Board meetings to ensure that decisions are implemented
- Ensure that Trustees are fully engaged and that the Board takes collective ownership for taking decisions in the best long-term interests of the Foundation's aims
- Foster and maintain constructive relationships with and between the Trustees
- Work closely with the Foundation management team to give direction to Board policy-making and to ensure that meetings are well planned, meaningful and reflect the responsibilities of Trustees;
- Monitor that decisions taken at meetings are implemented.

Relationship with the Foundation CEO

- Establish and build a strong, effective and a constructive working relationship with the Foundation CEO, ensuring they are held to account for achieving agreed strategic objectives
- To develop an understanding of the 'Secondment Agreement' between The Co-operative Group and the Foundation and to provide support to the Foundation CEO to ensure that colleagues within the Foundation are provided with the adequate support by the CEO in line with the Co-operative Group's policies and procedures
- Develop an understanding of the Management Framework arrangement between the Co-op Group and the Foundation
- Support the Foundation CEO, whilst respecting the boundaries which exist between the respective roles of Chair and CEO
- Ensure regular contact with the Foundation CEO and develop and maintain an open and supportive relationship within which each can speak openly about concerns, worries and challenges
- Liaise with the Foundation CEO to maintain an overview of the Foundation's affairs
- In conjunction with the Foundation CEO's 'dotted-line' manager within the Co-operative Group (the Director Community & Membership Participation), and in consultation with other Trustees, conduct annual appraisals for the Foundation CEO in line with the Co-operative Group's performance management procedures
- Ensure that the Foundation CEO has the opportunity for professional development and has appropriate external professional support.

Additional information

The above list is indicative only and not exhaustive. The Chair will be expected to perform all such additional duties as are reasonably commensurate with the role.



Person Specification

In addition to the qualities required of all Trustees (as set out in the Trustee role profile), the Chair must also meet the following requirements.

Experience and knowledge

- Experience of leading a successful organisation or operating at a senior strategic leadership level within an organisation in an executive or non-executive capacity
- Broad knowledge and understanding of the charity sector and issues relevant to the Foundation's work, including grant-making
- Experience of charity governance and working with or as part of a Board of Trustees
- Experience of external representation, delivering presentations and managing stakeholders.

Desirable

- Youth sector experience or insight into the issues affecting young people within their communities
- Corporate Foundation experience
- Good understanding of Corporate Social Responsibility.

Abilities and Skills

- Ability to build strong networks and relationships to aid with the work of the Foundation
- Ability to build strong relationships and magnify opportunities for bilateral relationships with the Co-op Group
- Ability to foster and promote a collaborative team environment
- Able to demonstrate strong influencing skills, well developed interpersonal skills and good powers of judgement, insight and vision
- Strong leadership skills, ability to motivate staff and volunteers and bring people together.

Desirable

- Relevant knowledge and understanding of overseeing budgeting and financial performance
- Risk and Governance experience/expertise
- Experience and knowledge of endowments.

Personal Qualities

- A strong and visible passion and commitment to the Foundation, its mission and strategic objectives
- Personal alignment to Co-operative values & principles
- Personal gravitas and capability to lead the charity
- Strong inter-personal and relationship building abilities and be comfortable in an ambassadorial role
- Tact and diplomacy, with the ability to listen and engage effectively
- Strong networking capabilities that can be utilised for the benefit of the Foundation
- Ability to commit time to conduct the role well, including travel and attending events out of office hours.



Terms of Appointment

Terms

The Chair will be appointed to serve for a period of one term (up to three years), after which, if re-appointed as a Trustee they will be eligible to be re-appointed for a further 3-year term as Chair.

Remuneration

The Chair is a voluntary role and therefore unpaid, however, the Charity will reimburse all out-of-pocket expenses reasonably incurred by the post holder during the course of their duties.

Location

Flexible, with travel to Manchester required at least twice a year.

Time commitment

This role requires around 14 days per year, which includes Board meetings and one full-day strategy session per year, dedicated to strategic planning, held in Manchester.

The Chair will be required to attend the following:

- Sessions agreed as part of a personalised induction plan
- 5 board meetings a year including reading time (held virtually by Teams and In-person)
- One full-day strategy session per year, dedicated to strategic planning, held in Manchester.
- 3 days of 1-to-1 calls with the Foundation CEO and Secretary
- 2 days of engagement with the Co-op Group
- 1 day Co-op AGM
- 2 days Ad hoc partner visits and other events.



How to Apply

We hope you will consider making an application. To make an application, please go to <https://starfishsearch.com/jobs/coop-chair/> and click on the apply now button, with the following prepared:

- Your CV (no more than three sides).
- A supporting statement (no more than two sides) that sets out why you think this role is the right move for you and how you meet the knowledge and experience criteria.

We would also be grateful if you would complete the Equality and Diversity monitoring form on the online application process. This form is for monitoring purposes only and is not treated as part of your application.

Closing date Friday 27th September 2024

Preliminary interviews w/c 7th October 2024

Final Panel interviews w/c 14th October 2024

