



29 June 2020

## A statement of solidarity from retail societies during Co-op Fortnight

Our co-operatives and the communities which we serve have faced immense challenges throughout the COVID-19 crisis. Co-operatives have always thrived in periods of social and economic change, when needs go unmet and people look to themselves and others for support.

All co-operatives share the principle 'Concern for the community', and this has been at the heart of our response to this crisis. Individually and collectively, we have all stepped up to protect our people, keep our communities served and our partners supported. None of this could have been achieved without co-operation and collaboration.

We now have a unique opportunity to work together to rebuild our economy and communities with responsibility, fairness and kindness at its core. Let's build something better together.

As co-operatives we believe it is important that we play our part locally but also globally. That's why we are all supporting the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which are in effect the 'to do list' for the world, focusing on, and addressing, the world's biggest challenges and a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure that all people enjoy peace and prosperity.

The COVID-19 crisis has touched most, if not all of these Goals, having a disproportionate impact on communities already disadvantaged by pre-existing inequalities. The achievement of these goals is now more important than ever and reinforces the need for urgent, large-scale action.

We recognise that the global societal and environmental challenges we face can't be achieved alone and that there is power in co-operation. We remain committed to continuing to work together as co-operatives and with others, so we build a better future together.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Steve Murrells'.

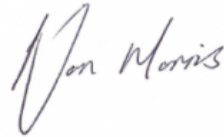
**Steve Murrells**  
CEO, The Co-op Group

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Phil Ponsonby'.

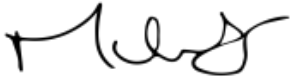
**Phil Ponsonby**  
Group Chief Executive, Midcounties Co-operative



**Ursula Lidbetter, OBE  
CEO, Lincolnshire Co-op**



**Don Morris, Chair, Co-operatives UK and  
Chief Executive/Secretary, Radstock Co-  
operative Society**



**Mark Smith  
CEO, Southern Co-op**



**Ali Kurji  
Chief Executive, Heart of England Co-  
operative**



**John Brodie, Chief Executive Officer,  
Scotmid Co-operative**



**Debbie Robinson and Elaine Dean  
Chief Executive and President, Central  
England Co-operative**



**Barry Wood, Chief Executive,  
Chelmsford Star Co-operative**



**Mark Cox, Acting CEO  
Channel Islands Co-operative**



**Niall O'Keefe  
Joint Chief Executive, East of England Co-op**