

# SOUTH WESTERN (CG) CO-OPERATIVE PARTY

Chair: Ian Martin  
18 third Avenue  
Exeter, EX1 2PJ  
Tel: 01392 664033 or 07980 301058  
e-mail: [cllr.ian.martin@exeter.gov.uk](mailto:cllr.ian.martin@exeter.gov.uk)

Secretary/Treasurer: Saxon Spence  
1 Lancaster Close, Quarry Lane  
Exeter EX2 5SW  
01392 271785  
e-mail: [saxon.spence@devon.gov.uk](mailto:saxon.spence@devon.gov.uk)

---

July, 2008

## Members' Newsletter- no 2

### **Party Council News**

**Local Elections, 2009.** Consultations are ongoing about moving next year's local elections from May to 4<sup>th</sup> June to coincide with the Euro elections. We know there will be crucial elections for Somerset county council, the new unitary Cornwall County Council and possibly in Devon, subject to expected local government reorganisation. **Would you consider being a Labour/Co-operative candidate?**

We are asking all our members to consider putting their names forward for the Co-operative Party panel of candidates. In too many areas it is a struggle to find people willing to stand as Labour, better still Labour/Co-operative. Glyn Ford's re-election depends on mobilising the Labour vote throughout the South West, and we must give more people the opportunity to vote Labour locally in Somerset, Devon and Cornwall. Enclosed with this newsletter is an application form for the S.W. Co-op Party panel. To stand as Labour and Co-operative you need to be on both the Co-op and your local Labour panel. You will then be eligible for a grant from the Party council as well as flying the Co-op flag in our three counties.

**Branch organisation : Somerset** – We now have a date, time and place for the Somerset Branch launch. It will be at the Albemarle Centre, Taunton, on 11.00 am on Saturday, 18<sup>th</sup> October. We will let you have further details in the autumn – in the meantime you can contact Christine Dore by telephone on 01643 821220 or Ian Grady by e-mail on [ian@madasafish.com](mailto:ian@madasafish.com)

**Cornwall** – The party council plans to launch the Cornwall branch of the Co-operative Party at a fringe meeting during the Regional Conference in Cornwall in November. If you are interested in setting up the branch contact: Dave Doyle, 91 Stannary Road, St. Austell, PL26 8ST, e-mail: [dave.doyle@geo2.poptel.org.uk](mailto:dave.doyle@geo2.poptel.org.uk) or Charlotte MacKenzie, 01872 261675, e-mail [Charlotmackenzie@aol.com](mailto:Charlotmackenzie@aol.com)

**FairTrade** – The Devon Steering Committee, on which Saxon represents the Co-op Party, is applying for Fairtrade status for the county next month. Martin Odoch is returning to speak about the benefits of Fairtrade to his local community in Uganda at a regional Fairtrade conference to be held in Exeter on Saturday, 4<sup>th</sup> October. The Party Council and Exeter & Devon Branch have both made grants of £100 to sponsor this conference – more details in the next newsletter.

**Membership** Some good news – five new members have joined the Exeter & Devon branch and all the West Somerset branch members are now paid up for 2008. A reminder if you have yet to pay this year's subscription: the new rates are £15 and the concessionary rate of £13. It would be really helpful if more members paid by direct debit (form enclosed), but this can only be used for the full

sub of £15; **the reduced rate of £13 should be sent to me or Ted Duley, Exeter & Devon Treasurer, 31 Fouracre Close, Exeter.**

**Communication by e-mail** – Please let me have your e-mail address so I can send you the national Co-op Party news as we get it. Below are recent highlights:

**National News - The People's Rail - Network Rail members listen**

"The Co-operative Party has hailed the vote by Network Rail members at their AGM to review the company's structure as a vindication of the People's Rail campaign. A resolution to review the governance of the organisation was carried by a narrow margin, largely opposed by the existing executives. Welcoming the vote, the Chair of Co-operative MPs, Sarah McCarthy-Fry MP, said: "We have to remember this is just the first step of many. Network Rail is still a long way from being accountable to passengers and the public. We will continue this campaign until it is."

"The Co-operative Party's new campaign, **the People's Rail** aims to give the British public real power over its rail network, through co-operative structures. Long-suffering rail users deserve better than a network run for the convenience of managers, with no one taking responsibility when things go wrong. We call on Network Rail to change the way it's run, to give real control to passengers and the public. You can play your part. Visit our campaign website [www.peoplesrail.org.uk](http://www.peoplesrail.org.uk) to send your message of support or for more information

**What we are doing - The national Co-operative Party campaign is already proving effective and West Somerset Branch is campaigning locally. The Party Council is asking the Regional Party to take this up regionally, and we are also contacting Constituency and County Labour Parties to urge them join in the campaign. Let us know what you are doing locally. One way of supporting the campaign is to get signatures on the petition enclosed with this mailing.**

**Make supermarkets play fair overseas** - ActionAid is campaigning to ensure that supermarkets stop exploiting suppliers overseas. This follows the Competition Commission's report which slams the big UK supermarkets for their activities abroad. Poor workers in developing countries have been producing the goods we buy in totally unacceptable conditions. ActionAid are now asking for your help to make sure that the new independent watchdog is set up, to make supermarkets play fair overseas. [Sign up here](#).

**Co-operative Group news.** - The Co-op agrees to buy the Somerfield chain.

**General Secretary appointment** - The Co-operative Party has appointed a new General Secretary to take office from Monday 28 July. Michael Stephenson will be joining the Party from NESTA (National Endowment for Science, Technology & the Arts), where he is currently Executive Director, Corporate Communications.

**Labour Government delivers for co-ops** - Economic Secretary to the Treasury, Kitty Ussher MP, has announced the Government's intention to take immediate steps to update many aspects of co-operative legislation, in response to the major review of mutuals which has been going on. The government will bring forward a range of statutory instruments and legislative reform orders that will update as much legislation as possible, as soon as possible. When government time permits, legislation will be introduced to mop up the rest, but much of the most important business will be in the first wave. The point of the reforms is to allow mutuals to grow, cut red tape and create a level playing field with companies.

Saxon Spence - Secretary/Treasurer