

Lincolnshire



Half Year Report

Period ended 6 March 2021



OUR PURPOSE

Bringing together
**ideas, energy
and resources** to
make **life better in
our communities.**



DIRECTORS AND OFFICERS

President: **Stuart Parker** BSc (Eng)

Directors: **Jane Moate** (Vice President), **Reverend Barbara Hutchinson**
Margaret Tranter, **Stephen Hughes** BPharm (Hons), CDir, FloD, **Julia Romney**,
Claudia Nel LLB (Hons) MIoD, **Nicola Berry** FCMI, **Richard Wills** BSc, CEng, FICE, MIoD, FRSA
Ian Haldenby FCA, **David Cowell** BSc (Hons), MBA, FCIM, FloD

Chief Executive Officer: **Ursula Lidbetter** OBE BSc (Hons) FCG DL

Group Secretary: **Jane Powell** LLB (Hons) MBA FCG

JOIN OUR BOARD

Our Board oversees strategy and business performance to ensure we're a successful co-op. We're looking for experienced and knowledgeable individuals with high level commercial acumen from a range of diverse backgrounds to stand for election to join our Board of Directors.

Want to find out more? For more information, please visit lincolnshire.coop/joinourboard

HALF YEAR REPORT



SALES AND FINANCIAL

We have adapted to lockdowns and pandemic restrictions to continue progress on all our important projects while being deeply involved in Covid response. Thanks to members for supporting this work, including the 393 people who came to our first virtual Annual Members Meeting in December. It was interesting to have feedback from attendees, especially through the queries asked in our Q&A session.

The pandemic continues to impact us all and though the national economy shows signs of recovery, we are mindful of the long-term effects on different business sectors.

Many of our businesses remained open and trading throughout the half year, despite two national lockdowns.

Strong performances came from food stores, with sales going up by 11.6%. Pharmacy income grew by 2.5% although 1.8% fewer prescriptions were dispensed, in line with the national picture.

Our funeral teams supported families brilliantly, guiding them through the restrictions placed on ceremonies. We also offer a memorial service for those who wish to celebrate the life of their loved one when it is safe to do so.

Sales were £170.7m – up 3.4% on the same period last year. However, travel agency and petrol station sales were dramatically affected by restrictions on travelling.

Group trading surplus was £8.2m, up £1.97m from the same period last year.

Our post offices are important community services so we subsidise them across our area. Many have seen a drop in footfall over the pandemic. We hope to see customer numbers increase again, but we remain



concerned about the pressures faced by all sub-postmasters.

The pandemic's bearing on our travel and property businesses is significant and unfortunately, the hard times are not over yet.

The overall loss in our travel branches this half year was £930,000 and in total, since the pandemic struck, is over £3.3m.

We have no doubt that when people want to travel again, the expert service and security of booking with a travel agent will be in demand and we'll continue to support our teams through this uncertain time.

Throughout the pandemic, many of our commercial tenants have faced closures due to national trading restrictions. We've been working with them all individually on how we can support them, including rent concessions, payment plans and practical help.

We are grateful for the government funding which has helped us to keep colleagues in our network of travel branches and give rent concessions to our local tenants who have been most affected by trading restrictions – local businesses and organisations trading on high streets across our area.

"I would just like to extend our appreciation for this and the other rent rebates you have given us during this difficult time. It really has been a huge help in ensuring we survive as a business and that we keep our team in employment."

Paul Beatty, Beauty at the Gate, Holton le Clay



PROVIDING AND SUPPORTING VALUED SERVICES

After the closure of our host store Oldrids in **Boston**, our team of **travel experts** moved to a new home. They can now be found inside the Downtown Home Superstore at Wyberton Chain Bridge.

Work progressed on several new food stores, including in Keelby near Grimsby, which is due to open later this year, and on the site of a former pub in Retford.

Just after the half year, our **new food store in Whittlesey – our first in Cambridgeshire** – started serving customers. In another first, we held a virtual opening ceremony with representatives from the community attending.

Two of our post offices transferred to a new operator during the half year. Spalding Post Office and Sincil Street Post Office in Lincoln are now under the control of VPS Group, which runs a number of other post offices in the East Midlands.

Our hard-working teams have done an incredible job during the pandemic and we have continued to support and reward them for their work to keep valued services in their communities running.

They've received bonuses totalling over a week and a half's extra wages in the past year. We've also given them gifts to boost morale – ranging from tubes of hand cream and reusable water bottles to packets of Gadsby's mince pies.

We held a virtual **Colleague Awards Week**, celebrating our teams on our in-house app and intranet. We awarded our Branches of the Year prizes and gave individual honours to 23 of our colleagues who had gone the extra mile.

It culminated in every one of our **2,900-strong team being named a Colleague of the Year** with a special £50 award for them all.



We held a virtual Colleague Awards Week to thank our teams. Honours given out included a Gold Branch of the Year award for Swineshead Pharmacy (above) and a Community Difference award to Emma Bell of Queen Elizabeth Food Store in Lincoln (below).





HELPING TO GROW THE LOCAL ECONOMY

Our **Love Local** range is still thriving and we're also rolling out new packaging in our own bakery **Gadsby's**, designed to show off more of the delicious artisan products. New baked goods in the range include craft breads like crusty baguette and tiger loaf.

Our **Get Into Retail** scheme, run with charity the Prince's Trust, is a great way of helping work-ready young people develop their skills and explore a career in retail. The two cohorts run during the half year were completed by 21 people, with 12 gaining employment with us.

During the half year, we signed up to the **Government's Kickstart** scheme and started the process of recruiting 30 people to roles in our Gadsby's Bakery, Pharmacy Warehouse and food stores across the area. The initiative aims to help young people at the risk of long-term unemployment gain valuable skills and experience in the workplace.

Food poverty is a big issue which we are keen to help tackle, working alongside other organisations in the area.

We were able to give seven tonnes of food and **more than £18,700** to **40 local food banks and community larders** following our Food Bank Advent Calendar campaign at the end of 2020. Shoppers gifted tins, packets and toiletries to the initiative and donated their dividend. We're still encouraging donations with collection points in every one of our food stores.



"Donations are vital to us. If the local community didn't support us, we wouldn't be able to do our job and help others."

Jenni Harding, Newark Food Bank

We have introduced new products to our Gadsby's range including crusty bread and rolls (below).



LOOKING AFTER OUR LOCAL ENVIRONMENT

Our properties are in the heart of communities and we aim to invest in schemes that bring new services or improve the local area.

Ongoing projects include a scheme to develop the site of the former **Moorland Centre** in **Lincoln**, with parking, a new supermarket and a drive-thru unit. We're also engaged in two projects to upgrade local **GP surgeries in Welton and Monks Road in Lincoln**.

Our **Cornhill Quarter** restoration project in Lincoln has continued with new businesses opening despite the restrictions of Covid. We are also on-site building phase two of our science park, reclaiming former industrial land for innovative and science based companies.

We recycle old IT equipment and this year we took another step towards being greener technologically when we switched our

business-wide search engine to Ecosia. This ethical search engine plants a tree every 45 online searches so we'll be able to make a real difference over time.

Just after the half year, we were able to introduce **100% compostable bags** into food stores. These can be reused for shopping and can also line home food composting caddies.



An artist's impression of the refurbished surgery we are working with the NHS to create in the Monks Road area of Lincoln (above).

We have now introduced 100% compostable carrier bags in our food stores (Below).





CARING FOR OUR HEALTH AND WELLBEING

We ran **community flu clinics** at eight public venues in the autumn – vaccinating 446 people – and we also offered our colleagues a free vaccination, with over 560 of them taking one up. In total, our pharmacy teams protected 11,485 people from flu – an increase of 73 per cent on the year before.

Our experience came in useful when we were given the go-ahead to set up a **Covid-19 Vaccination Hub** at our Newland Pharmacy in Lincoln. Delivering up to 80 vaccinations a day, we're pleased to offer people in the area an accessible city centre option for their job.

Throughout the vaccination programme, our pharmacists have been working at the mass-vaccination centre at Lincolnshire Showground, helping to mix doses. And members of our Community team have helped with marshalling and recruiting volunteers at sites in Lincoln, Spilsby, Spalding, Mablethorpe and Grimsby.

Our Community Champions scheme raised over £150,381 to fund life-saving resources in our area.

It will be spent on around 20 new community

defibrillators, as well as the upkeep of approximately 40 existing defibrillators, with the rest shared between local first responder groups.



"To all the colleagues, members, and shoppers from Lincolnshire Co-op, thank you! Your support allows us to continue serving the community before, during and after its toughest times. It wouldn't be possible without you."

Responder Aaron Goss from the Lincolnshire Community Assistance Team, which covers North Lincolnshire

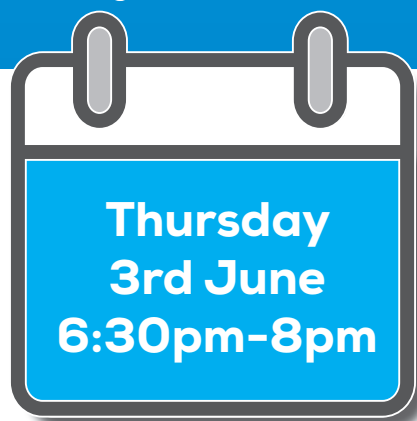
Our Community teams have helped at Covid 19 vaccination centres across the county (below).



Your online Half Yearly Members' Meeting



Join us



To watch the meeting live go to
lincolnshire.coop/halfyearlymeeting

If there are multiple members in your household, you'll need to sign in on separate devices to be able to participate and vote in the event.



Half Yearly Members' Meeting Agenda:

1. Minutes of the Annual Members' Meeting held on 10th December 2020
2. Directors' Half Yearly Report

Special Meeting:

1. To approve proposed changes to our Rules*

Half Yearly Members Meeting: (continued)

3. To accept the recommendation of the Board of Directors in relation to directors' fees*

*Further information and an explanatory note on the proposed rule changes and in relation to directors' fees are available by emailing secretariat@lincolnshire.coop or on our website lincolnshire.coop/halfyearlymeeting

Any member who has joined within the last 6 months will not be entitled to vote.

Written questions on the Directors' Half Yearly Report must be submitted in advance to secretariat@lincolnshire.coop 48 hours before the meeting. Questions for the live Q&A session can be submitted on the night.

For and on behalf of the Board of Directors: J.Powell, Secretary.

Talk to us after the meeting in our Zoom breakout rooms about important topics

