

UK SOCIETY FOR CO-OPERATIVE STUDIES

57TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE



**FOSTERING DIALOGUE, SHARED LEARNING, AND
COLLABORATION AROUND THE FUTURE OF
CO-OPERATION**

FRIDAY 8 – SATURDAY 9 MAY 2026

**HOSTED BY BIRMINGHAM BUSINESS SCHOOL,
UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM, UK**



UK Society for Co-operative Studies is registered in England and Wales as a charitable incorporated organisation, Number 1175295.



UKSCS conferences provide a forum for both scholars and practitioners—across disciplines and perspectives—to advance knowledge and practice related to co-operative organisational forms.

In an international context, co-operatives are increasingly being recognised as integral to discussions on sustainability, democratic participation, and inclusive development.

In the UK, political commitments to double the size of the UK co-operative economy and renewed efforts to grow the broader co-operative movement have shaped the broad theme of this year's conference.

The conference themes address the historical development, contemporary practice, and future possibilities for co-operatives. We believe the conference offers a timely opportunity to explore the role of co-operatives in addressing major societal challenges while contributing meaningfully to economic and social development.

By bringing together research, education, and practice, the conference aims to foster dialogue, shared learning, and collaboration around the future of co-operation. The conference includes contributions from the UK and internationally, with a programme that reflects the diversity and contemporary relevance of current work in the field.

Our keynote speakers



Giuseppe Guerini has authored numerous articles on social policies, social economy, and co-operation and has been a keynote speaker at many conventions and conferences, both in Italy and abroad. He is President of Cooperatives Europe, vice-president of ICA for the European Region, and chair of the EU Coordination Committee. In 2016 he was elected President of CECOP, the European Confederation of Cooperatives in Industries and Services and vice-president of CICOPA, the ICA sectoral organization of Cooperatives in Industry and Services. Since 2012 he has been President of Confcooperative Bergamo.



Dominic Kendal-Ward became Group Secretary and General Counsel of the Co-operative Group in May 2022. He originally joined the Co-op in 2017 as General Counsel of their insurance business. Dominic qualified as a solicitor in 2006. Prior to joining the Co-op, Dominic spent 12 years at the international law firm Linklaters, working for a wide variety of organisations on corporate advice and transactions.

We are pleased to welcome you to the 57th UKSCS Conference, hosted by Birmingham Business School, University of Birmingham.

UKSCS Conference Organising Committee

Elisavet Mantzari, Janette Hurst, and Francesca Gagliardi

We are grateful to our sponsors: Heart of England Co-operative Society, Revolver Co-operative, the Co-operative Group, and the University of Birmingham.

Conference programme

Venue: Edgbaston Park Hotel, 53 Edgbaston Park Road, Birmingham B15 2RS (1st Floor)

Friday 8 May 2026		
TIME	ROOM 1 – Lodge & Corelli (1 st Floor)	ROOM 2 – MacNeice (1 st Floor)
09:00 – 09:45	Registration and refreshments	
09:45 – 10:00	Welcome and opening remarks <i>Including a short tribute to John Butler</i>	
10:00 – 11:00	Keynote Session 1 Giuseppe Guerini, President of Cooperatives Europe Chair: Gagliardi	
11:00 – 12:00	Panel Session Title: Co-operatives, education and research: Opening new conversations Gagliardi, Mangan, Parker & Rowbottom Chair: Moraes	
12:00 – 12:10	Break	
12:10 – 13:00	Policy Session Title: Progress Update on the Government's 'Doubling' Agenda James Wright, Co-operatives UK Chair: Mantzari	
13:00 – 14:00	Lunch – Hotel restaurant	
14:00 – 15:00	Keynote Session 2 Dominic Kendal-Ward, Group Secretary and General Counsel, Co-op Group Chair: Matthews	
15:00 – 16:00 (Parallel Sessions)	<u>Paper Session 1: Platform Co-operatives: Democratic Governance and Regeneration</u> Edward Co-operative regeneration – Insights from multistakeholder platform co-operatives Li & Zhang Making democracy workable at platform speed: Sociocracy as governance infrastructure in platform co-operatives Chair: McCulloch	<u>Paper Session 2: Co-operatives and the 2030 SDG Agenda: Indicators, Institutions, and Impact</u> Gagliardi Co-operatives as commons institutions for advancing sustainable development Rixon & Duguid Using participatory action research with co-operatives to develop indicators for the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals Chair: Hurst
16:00 – 16:15	Break	
16:15 – 17:45 (Parallel Sessions)	<u>Paper Session 3: Credit Unions: Policy, Regulation and Practice</u> Fejós Smart borrowing in the British credit union sector Vik How can policymakers promote credit union growth? A comparative review of effectiveness of regulation and policy levers Chair: Rixon	<u>Paper Session 4: Co-operative Values, Sustainability and Organisational Practice</u> Oyarzún & Rees From co-operative identity to lived sustainability: The PLUS+ methodology as a values-based organisational development approach Mangan Resilience as a craft: Learning from the co-operative model Graby “That just wouldn't be possible somewhere else”: Disabled workers' experiences in workers' co-operatives Chair: Doyle
19:00	Dinner at the Edgbaston Park Hotel – The Composers’ Suite (53 Edgbaston Park Rd, Birmingham B15 2RS)	

Saturday 9 May 2026

TIME	ROOM 1 – Lodge (1 st Floor)	ROOM 2 – Corelli (1 st Floor)
09:00 – 09:30	Registration and refreshments	
09:30 – 11:30 (Parallel Sessions)	<p><u>Paper Session 1: Co-operative Education, Knowledge and Digital Futures</u></p> <p>Talbot, Webster & Wilson Promoting co-operative education in British universities [online]</p> <p>Stack Prefiguring a co-operative higher education for particularly grim times</p> <p>Bibby The Gritstone model: A co-operative alternative to conventional publishing for authors</p> <p>Lakshmi & Abilish Coop Link 360: Operationalising cooperative digital network theory for ethical digital transformation Chair: Mangan</p>	<p><u>Paper Session 2: Co-operative Growth, Development and Performance</u></p> <p>Cronan How realistic is it to aim to ‘double the size of the co-operative sector’? Evidence from the world’s largest co-operatives [online]</p> <p>Galdi & Carini Economic performance heterogeneity and drivers in co-operatives</p> <p>O’Hara Evolving practice in a changing movement: Reflections on 15 years of co-operative development in Northern Ireland</p> <p>Matthews ‘O wad some Power the giftie gie us / To see oursels as ithers see us! / It wad frae monie a blunder free us, / An’ foolish notion’ – Robbie Burns. Chair: Li</p>
11:30 – 12:00	Break	
12:00 – 13:00 (Parallel Sessions)	<p><u>Panel Session</u></p> <p>Dunnett, Farmelo & McEwan The challenges facing large scale community-led housing co-operatives in the 21st century Chair: Di Nunzio</p>	<p><u>Workshop</u></p> <p>Oyarzún & Rees LET’S CO-OPERATE! A game-based workshop for co-operative readiness and capacity-building</p>
13:00 – 13:45	Lunch – Hotel restaurant	
13:45 – 15:45	<p><u>Paper Session 3: Food, Ecology and Co-operative Histories</u></p> <p>Wang Consumers, Co-operative, and colonial labour: The São Tomé Cocoa boycott in the British co-operative movement, 1907–1909</p> <p>Hurst Roots and shoots: Ecological influences and influencers in the co-operative movement</p> <p>Moulton Co-operative agroecology, co-operative agribusiness: Histories of pollution, production, and the more than human</p> <p>Doyle Food and activism: The moral economy of Dublin Food Co-operative Chair: O’Hara</p>	
15:45 – 16:00	Concluding comments and farewell	