



2021

ANNUAL REPORT

**ACTIVITY REPORT AND FINANCIAL
STATEMENT
PREPARED BY**

THE URBAN CO-OP

**LIMERICK COMMUNITY GROCERY
CLG**

Unit 8 Eastway Business Park, Ballysimon Road, Limerick
CRO: 530119



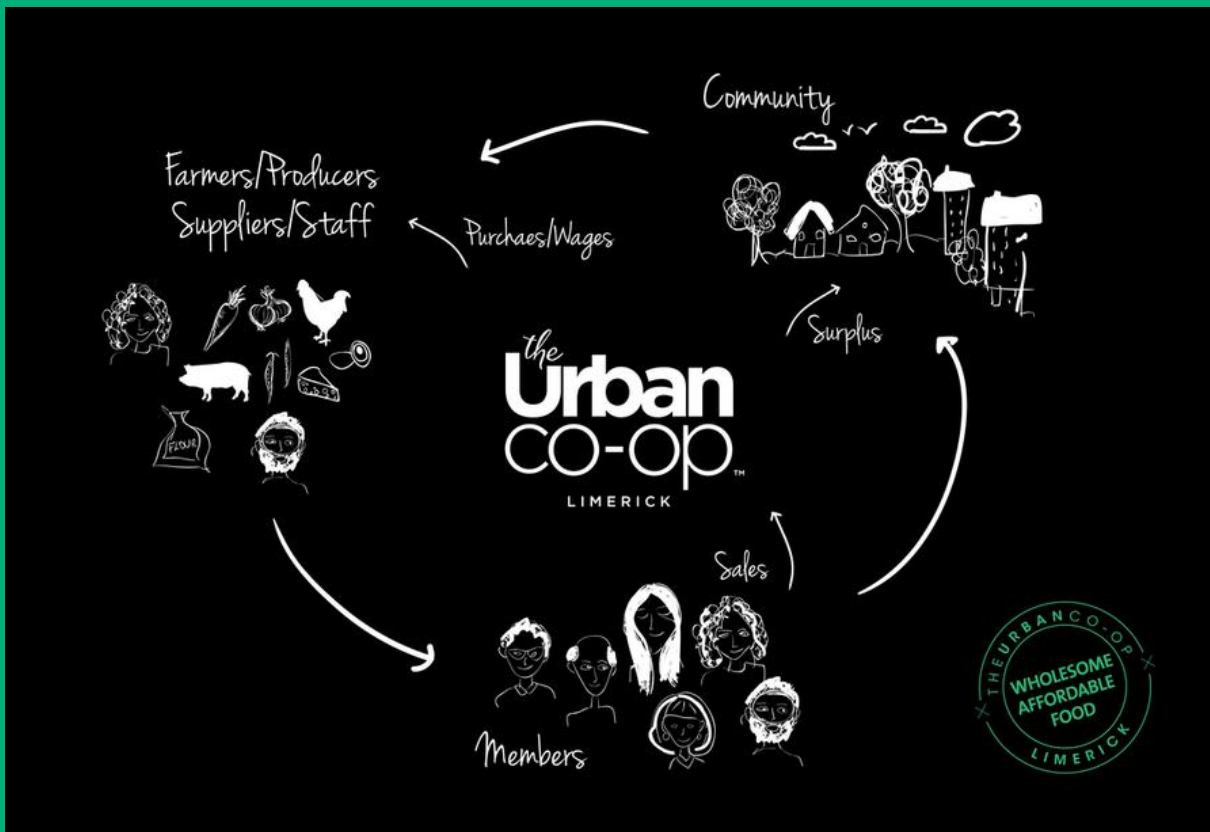
Contents

Contents	2
Our Directors and other information	5
Our Chairperson's Welcome	7
Finance Committee Report	8
Our Managing Director's Report	10
Our Purpose and Our Activities	14
Our Mission	14
Our Values	16
Our Activities	17
Where are we now?	19
Our Income Generation	19
Our Governance	20
Risk Register	20
Key Objectives 2021	20
Objectives	20
Beneficiaries	20
Key Achievements for the Reporting Period	20
Outcomes for the Beneficiaries (and the Community)	21
Main Categories of Activities / Services	22
Education Events	26
Total Beneficiaries: 180	26
Story Exchange	26
Our Social and Financial Impact	28
Our Metrics	28
Our Future Plans	29
The Impact of The Urban Co-op	30
What our members say -	30
Our People	32
Our Employees	32
Our Volunteers	32
Independent Financial Statement	33

Our vision
is to serve as a model
for the development
of Urban co-operatives
in the mid-west
and further afield.

Our Directors and other information

Company	Limerick Community Grocery (CLG) trading as The Urban Co-op
Directors	John Liston (Chairperson) Paul Broderick (resigned April 2021) Kathy MacAndrew Wallace (resigned April 2021) Rachel Wong Linda Mullins Danilly Carvalho
Board Members	Anne Maher Geraldine Fitzpatrick
Company Registration Number	530119
Registered Office & Business Address	Unit 8 Eastway Business Park, Ballysimon Road, Limerick
Telephone	+353 61 294 289
Email	info@theurbanco-op.ie
Social Media	Facebook @TheUrbanCoOp Instagram @urbanco_oplimerick Twitter @theurbanco_op LinkedIn linkedin.com/in/theurbancooplimerick
Company Secretary	Midwest Corporate Services Limited 18 Ashbrook Grove, Ennis Road, Limerick
Independent Auditors	Noonan & O’Cinnede St Michael St., Tipperary
Bankers	Allied Irish Bank, O’Connell Street, Limerick
Solicitors	Kieran Mulcahy Solicitors



Our Chairperson's Welcome

It is my pleasure to introduce the Annual Report for Limerick Community Grocery 2021. On behalf of the Board I would like to thank everyone involved for their commitment to keeping this project safe and going through what became an extended public health crisis. The endurance to keep the show on the road through thick and thin is a testament to the strong determination and dedication we have on the team here at The Urban Co-op. It is encouraging to see the ongoing confidence of the team grow with the experience they have gained. Special mention to Anne & Geraldine who completed their Level 7 Certificate in Social Enterprise Management this year in Waterford Institute of Technology as part of this development.



We acknowledge Kathy MacAndrew Wallace and Paul Broderick who have stepped down from the Board this year. With over 10 years of combined input their impact has been immeasurable for the enterprise and we are grateful for their contribution. Company routines have all been impacted by the restrictions imposed again this year resulting in another virtual AGM. Our Board now has four Directors who continue to offer advisory support for the management team.

Lockdowns had their positive and negative effects on the business. Efforts to restore a normality before Christmas 2020 were quickly scaled back with the new year lockdowns as case numbers of covid had caused us to again focus on just the grocery side of the enterprise. Again we implemented a split roster system and limited hours to support staff and customers through this time. We did note the rise in consumption of good quality food and trading was quite promising in the first half of the year but of course this was echoed by the social reality of lockdowns limiting the access to restaurants etc.

We anticipated that The Urban Co-op would face challenges to maintain the consistent trade when restrictions began to lift mid year and the community had more outlets for consumption. This was the case and we had to balance the requirement of extended trading hours with added employee costs. On the positive side we welcomed back more therapists to avail of the room rental spaces and this side of the business is now showing a remarkable upturn. It was due to this fact that we made the decision to forego the plan to develop the onsite kitchen in order to create a further therapy space to meet the needs of the community as we emerge from covid.

Thank you to the supporters of The Urban Co-op who have helped to guide the enterprise through the unknown territory of the uncertain future. From the growing Social Enterprise networks, the support of the local City and County Council, mentors, volunteers and the growing membership the diversity of this unique enterprise is a welcome reflection of the world we want to live in.

Our strategic plan for 2022-2024 is a confident vision for how we can move forward in the coming years. Sustainability of our food systems underpins our focus here and we see a real opportunity to shape our collective futures using the co-operative model as originally intended by the founders. We believe it is time to look ahead to the horizon.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John Liston'.

John Liston

Finance Committee Report

I am pleased to present to you my report on the financial affairs of The Urban Co-op for the year ended 31 December 2021.

In advance of the AGM, the Financial Statements for the years ended 31 December 2014 to 31 December 2021 have been posted on the Finance Section of The Urban Co-op's website. The format of the financial information and the accounting policies are unchanged from previous years.

Overview of the results for the year ended 31 December 2021

The table below sets out the results for the year compared to financial performance achieved in FY19 and FY20.

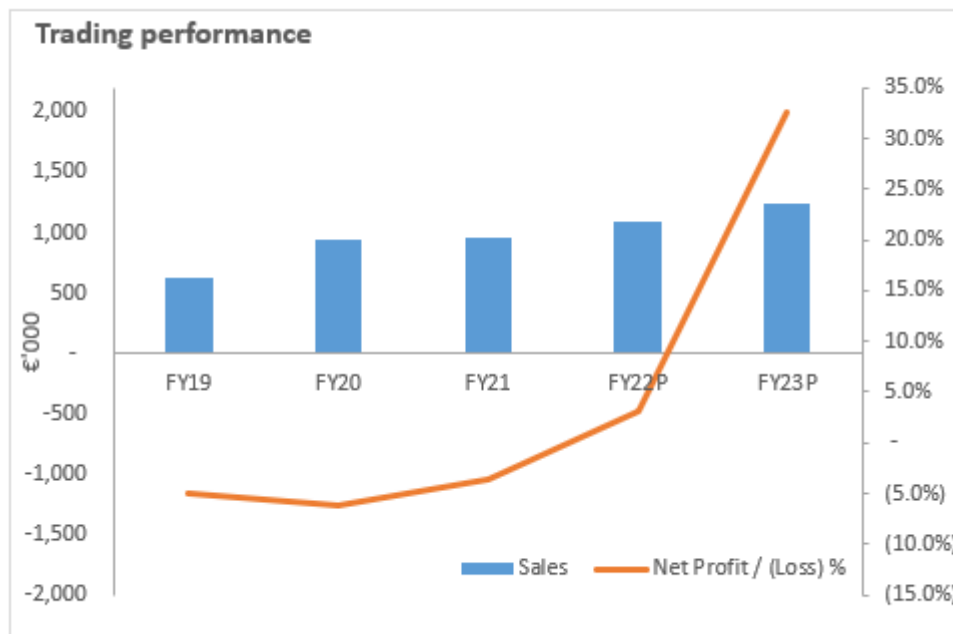
Profit & Loss Summary					
€	FY19	FY20	FY21	FY22P	FY23P
Sales	618030	940424	960053	1093750	1237500
Room Hire/Events/	20081	10243	23364	45000	55000
Grants	24938	5540	3308	30000	
Fundraising/Other Income		2188	1802	40000	800000
Membership Fees		4964	1116	1000	2000
Total Revenue	663049	963359	989643	1209750	2094500
Purchases	468986	717937	709073	776563	878625
Gross Profit	194063	245422	280570	433187	1215875
Wages & PRSI	132470	195391	213011	215868	327936
Rent & Rates	33210	29997	33375	48600	70000
Bank Charges	9001	15491	11357	25000	15000
Electricity	10916	12559	11413	24000	36000
Repairs & Maintenance	9054	9418	14749	15000	15000
Cleaning	2002	3037	4033	5000	5000
IT Costs	4231	7660	7064	10000	15000
Equipment Leasing	6609	7042	6522	10000	20000
Other Costs *	21619	25922	20979	41500	44000
Total Expenses*	229112	306517	322503	394968	547936
Net Profit/(Loss)	-35049	-61095	-41933	38219	667939
Capital Accrual	1733	1733	1733		
Net Profit/(Loss)	-33316	-59362	-40200	38219	667939
Gross Profit % on Sales	29%	25%	28%	36%	58%
Net Profit / (loss) %	-5%	-6%	-4%	3%	54%

* May 2022, errors noted, corrected, and connected totals updated

- Sales: FY21 saw a modest increase in sales due to the continued impact of Covid-19.
- Non-sales related revenue: there was a significant increase in room hire / events income as the Covid-19 restrictions on in-person events and non-essential services were

gradually relaxed. The growth trajectory for this revenue stream is expected to continue going into FY22 and beyond as extra demand for therapies post Covid is noted.

- Gross margin: FY21 gross margin % was 28%, a 3% increase from FY20. This improvement was a result of improvements in data entry.
- Operating costs: the main operating costs of the business remain payroll and rent. Payroll costs as a percentage of revenue have increased in FY21, primarily due to removal of split roster which allowed some income support. Bank charges primarily comprise interest. Decreased bank charges in FY21 were due to cost saving measures.



- Balance sheet: At 31 December 2021, The Co-Up had €7100 in cash, a decrease of 48% compared to 31 December 2020. Debt at 31 December 2021 totalled €93452.

Financial outlook for FY22 and managing our funds

The general outlook for the co-op's finances for FY22 is:

- • Ever increasing inflation in our day to day costs, at around 2% to 3% annually,
- • Strong growth in non-sales related revenue from room rentals and events, due to the resumption of non-essential services and events. Management is of the view that c. €40k can be generated from fundraising and investments in FY22 on the basis that the demand for therapy space has increased significantly.

The long-term challenge for The Urban Co-op is to continue to manage costs and generate sufficient income to cover the costs of the day-to-day operations and generate a sufficient surplus to meet our future development needs.

Our current levels of reserve do not provide an adequate cushion to cover our development needs. To that end, we are seeking alternative sources of funding in the form of member investments and potentially legal change frameworks to access share capital.

Finance Committee

Rachel Wong Kathleen Bourke Anne Maher Geraldine Fitzpatrick

Our Managing Director's Report

As we age the years seem to get shorter and this is certainly a way I will view 2021! A pivotal year for The Urban Co-op in many ways as we have realigned ourselves to continue to serve the needs of our growing community.



I would like to commend the hard work of the team who, despite all the obstacles presented, have managed to help shape a vision for a new future here at The Urban Co-op. It is a proud achievement for Limerick.

It has been an incredibly busy year that continued to challenge our resilience, stamina and energy. It also challenged our thinking to reflect on the role of The Urban Co-op.

Covid continued to alter the focus of our strategic plan throughout the year and like most organisations a mode of survival became the norm. Creating and maintaining an environment of safety and security for our staff and customers during a year that consumed us with public health concerns was a priority. Like all social enterprises that were operating during the year, the real threat of short term closure due to staff illness was constant. Efforts to maintain a back up system with strategic rostering helped us through and staff did make extra efforts to keep the show on the road to ensure customers had access to their weekly groceries.

Open 7 days and employing 11 meaningful jobs we are again welcoming back a number of volunteers to join the team providing much needed experience and social interaction that was a scarce commodity we have now come to appreciate with gusto.

The year has paved the way for radical rethinking of our status quo, plans for the future and how we operate. This was helped with the opportunity to complete a Level 7 Social Enterprise Management course in WIT with my colleague Geraldine. Reflection and broader study time has helped us to form a clearer vision forwards. This year has also taught us to use our imagination to paint and create a world we want to be part of.

Working towards how The Urban Co-op can benefit our community we have noted the need to provide a wider scope of support for community health. From offering select food supplements and extra therapies space we understand the importance of being a consistent support for our communities recovery now from the impact of the pandemic both physically and mentally.

It is the reason we decided to change our focus on developing a kitchen to that of creating an extra therapy space for the latent demand that has risen for this avenue of healthcare support. The Bodytree Community Clinic as one of our anchor therapy providers have created a unique walk in service for therapies such as deep tissue massage, acupuncture etc and as a fledgling social enterprise we are delighted to provide the support to help them reach their potential for contribution to community health and wellbeing.

Efforts to measure the social impact of this enterprise are foremost in our minds. As we have continued to develop, our focus has been to dig deeper to improve the data collection and capture a picture of what we witness every day.

A novel and exciting project we have embarked on in collaboration with Narrative4 in Limerick is a series of interactive Story Exchange events to explore food stories and capture a snap shot in time of our changing food worlds. Our intention is to create a cookbook with these food stories. A huge thank you to Katie Verling and Lizzy O Connell for their work on this project.

Truly the grocery has provided a wonderful portal into the emerging dynamics of a shift in conscious consumerism. World events are a stark reminder that food security is not to be taken for granted and the value of our food resources must be prioritised. Local food security has been on our agenda long before this year. Our platform of social engagement is a timely one to maintain the discussions about where we need to go from here and how communities can be inspired to take real action for sustainability.

In many ways we are reminded to refocus on our priorities and build our communities again after our prolonged isolation from each other. The power of community is potent and we know it. Tapping into the collaborative energy will charge us up to keep going in the difficult times. Connect in with us and let's light the path forward.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Anne Maher".

Anne Maher

A taste of 2021





May/June Book

MEET THE AUTHOR:
Rob Hopkins
30th June 8pm
Online



Join: facebook.com/groups/theurbanbookclub



CO-OP Craft #05

Sunday 1st August 11-3.30pm

Celebrating the best of Local Craft,
Artisan Food & Wellness Therapies,
Organic Coffee & Treats.
FREE Entry

8 Eastway Business Park, Ballysimon Road,
Limerick, V94N193
061-294 289



DROP IN CLINIC
FRIDAY 11.30-7.30



Our Purpose and Our Activities

The Urban Co-op is a community led grocery store and wellness hub. Our objective is:

- **To continue to develop a community grocery cooperative, wellness hub and education space for the benefit of its members, the wider community and the environment.**

Since establishment The Urban Co-op continues to champion organic and local produce and support local suppliers. It is creating community wealth rather than shareholder wealth, by challenging traditional business models, ownership and control. Anyone can become a member, and everyone is welcome to shop.

Our Mission

- Offer a fair and sustainable alternative to commercial profit-oriented business
- Source the best organic, local and sustainable food
- Develop our wellness hub where people can learn, avail of therapies and treatments enhancing the lives of our members, customers and the community
- To be guided by the Principles of Co-operatives



2. Zero Hunger
3. Good Health and Wellbeing
8. Decent work and Economic Growth
12. Responsible Consumption and Production

Our Goals

1. Community Empowerment

By engaging with our community to strengthen human relationships and inspire action

2. Responsible Food System Development

By collaborating and participating with our community to develop sustainable food systems locally

3. Good Health and Wellbeing

By provision of a supportive participatory environment that maintains our community on our wellness journey

4. Economic Resilience

By building on local resources and capacities to ensure economic stability and sustainable livelihoods

5. Nourishing Food Access

By promoting sustainable agriculture and local food security to ensure access to nutritious and appropriate food for all.

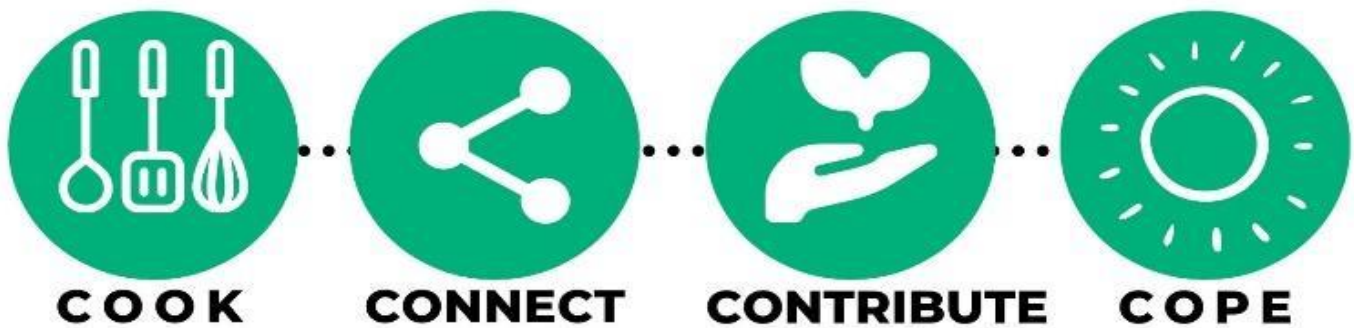
6. Advocacy and Activism

By energising our members to identify and engage with issues affecting the Co-op and the community's future

Our Values

The Urban Co-op success is based on achieving our values not focusing on our balance sheet alone! These are:

- We endeavour to be a responsible and ethical employer
- We offer a diversity of products with an emphasis on organic, minimally processed and healthful foods
- We prefer to buy from local, earth-friendly producers
- We consciously operate towards zero waste and a circular economy
- We promote a holistic approach to wellness and understand that everyone has their own unique journey to make
- We try to lead by example, educating ourselves and others about health and nutrition, cooperation and the environment
- We continuously reflect and try to improve everything we do
- We facilitate volunteerism for marginalised groups in a dynamic environment that enhances educational opportunities and social change



Our Activities

Where it all began! Meitheal Mid West was setup in May 2011 to promote worker cooperatives, and multi stake holder co-op's (MSC) – as sustainable job creation engines in Limerick.

This group worked towards a sustainable job-creation business, in the tradition of the co-operative worker's movement. Opening a shop selling "good healthy wholesome food" was agreed upon being influenced by Cloughjordan Ecovillage.

They had three aspirations for the shop - which was to create around 10 jobs initially. To help the long term unemployed, people with disabilities and have volunteers help the concept develop.

The group sought expressions of interest from people willing to volunteer just two to three hours a week for a maximum of six months to help the concept develop.

Limerick Community Grocery CLG was set up to kickstart the experiment*.

In January 2013, 19 individuals invested €40 each and this investment enabled the of purchase of produce to start the "Buying Club", selling fruit and vegetables, bread and eggs. Limerick Community Grocery began trading to the public on the 11th of July, 2013.

* The intention was to revisit the legal structure at a later date to convert to a co-operative structure

The initial shop was in Mulgrave Street, donated by a founding member. Interest quickly grew and grant funding was obtained through Regeneration Limerick and the JP McManus Benevolent Fund to support the capacity of the project to create jobs. Rebranding to the name The Urban Co-op, the accelerated pace of development and change did prove a challenge to sustainability of the project. From one hour opening to a 6 day operation the Mulgrave St premises closed to the public 3 years practically after it had begun. At that point there were 300 members.

In many ways what was achieved in the first few years was remarkable and with some time for reflection, some gained experience and a drive to not allow the learning be lost, a smaller group of members decided to begin again in another premises.

(In truth, the motivation to continue hinged on a growing field of carrots!)

Tait House in Southill provided an important incubation space for the emerging social enterprise that the project has become. Those two years were a crucial step in development of systems as well as refining the direction of the vision. It was there that the concept of Wellness took root as the natural addition to the offering, led by the needs of the growing membership. National media exposure brought an influx of interest and demand for the quality offering. Membership tripled in this phase of two years and soon more space was needed.

In August 2018 the move to Eastway was the most ambitious one yet but the Board readily recognised the potential it had to help implement the ambitions to provide a range of other services to members. There was ample space to provide a range of Wellness Hub classes, workshops and events, providing a 6-fold increase in the size of our grocery store and parking. Limerick was slowly emerging from the crippling recession.

These three years in Eastway have been no doubt the most turbulent and rewarding as it continues to grow. There is solid experience gained and through a time of extraordinary social change there is a clear recognition that the co-operative model is an appropriate and timely vehicle to support our community into the future.

There is much to still achieve in terms of organisational capacity as recent years have accelerated the demand for the enterprises offering at a pace that challenges us daily with priorities. It also reinforces our resilience to dig deeper and find innovative ways to keep going. It has built our confidence and helped us to be more resourceful. We also recognise there is much more work to do in terms of making this a strong resilient enterprise. The balance of priorities has fallen towards meeting the needs of our community particularly now that food security has added to the community health agenda.

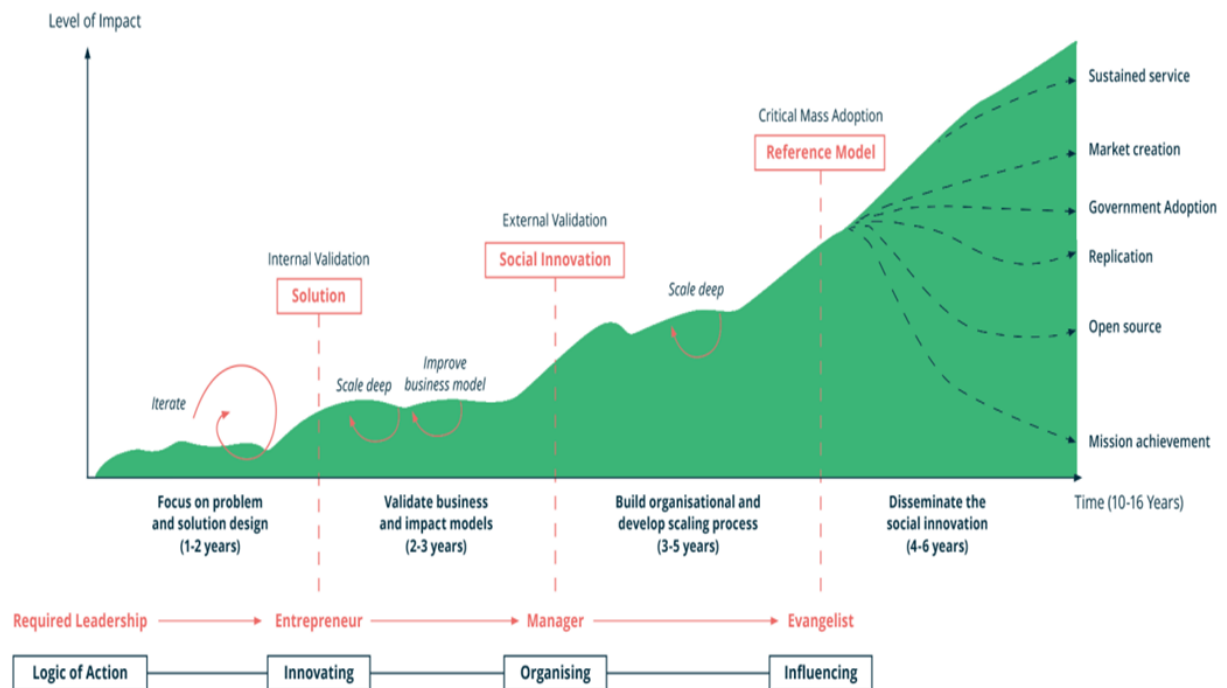
Do you want to be part of this exciting journey of cooperation and collaboration with us as we navigate the uncharted waters of the future?

Our strategic plan for the next three years sets out our plan to scale up by realising the original plan to be the model urban co-operative for the Midwest region and beyond.

***Start where you are
Use what you have
Do what you can***



Scaling 3yr plan + long-term vision



Source: Gugelev, A., 2015. What's Your Endgame? Translated by A. Stern. Stanford Social Innovation Review, (Winter)

Where are we now?

We are proud to be at this point. Between Organising and Influencing. We recognise this is our time to consider scaling up and see the potential for the value of the co-operative model for other communities to consider. The unique position we have organically grown to has been under the framework and stability of a Company Limited by Guarantee. Much discussion about the suitability of the legal framework in recent times again has led us to consider the reality of changing the legal structure to that of a co-operative. This was the original vision of the founders. The timely review of the legalities of co-operatives is also a motivator to consider making this change. With the confidence of experience and the potential possibilities of true people power The Urban Co-op is well on the way to shaping the future for itself and other social enterprises.

Our Income Generation

We generate income through traded goods and services, i.e. shop sales and room rental. The margins, ranging from 20% to 40%, support the enterprise. We are almost at full sustainability. Grant funding is sought for projects such as capital and strategic projects.

We currently also have three fund raising initiatives, based on harnessing the membership. They are:

1. The [Cultivate Membership](#) Fund Raiser
2. [Go Get Funding](#)
3. The [50:50](#) in-house weekly draw

NOTE: Exploratory plans are underway to relook at the legal structure with a view to converting to a Co-operative from a CLG. We are currently seeking legal advice on this route and are acutely aware of the educational role this journey can have for other CLGs in the Social Enterprise sector.

Harnessing share capital from the existing large membership to scale the enterprise in this region and beyond is an exciting opportunity to build the capacity and resources of the enterprise.

Our Governance

We adhere to the Charity Regulators Governance Code and continue to review and update our policies.

Risk Register

A Risk Management Review is a priority for 2022.

Key Objectives 2021

Objectives

1. Maintain the grocery and wellness hub throughout the duration of the pandemic
2. Improvements in data management and metric collection.
3. To develop a demonstration kitchen on site in order to pursue education projects, product innovation and food tourism.
4. Work towards full sustainability and independence.
5. Support for local economy, maintain a strong circular economy and increase food sovereignty
6. Be a model for other communities to follow and provide a community of interest
7. Develop networks of interest and inspiration.

Beneficiaries

- Our members, suppliers, employees, families and community plus the wider society

Key Achievements for the Reporting Period

1. The shop remained open throughout 2021 and achieved a turnover of almost €1M
2. Improvements in margins, data management and stock management.
3. Reassessment of kitchen plan to set up an additional therapy room space.
4. Maintained trading levels of 2020 and 7-day opening.

5. Story Exchange project initiated.
6. Staff training in Social Enterprise Management.
7. Developed frameworks for membership investment in The Urban Co-op
8. Virtual tours held for educational purposes eg UCC Co-operative students, Life Long Learning Festival
9. Established a working relationship with other networks eg Book Club, SERVE, Social Enterprise Limerick Network

Outcomes for the Beneficiaries (and the Community)

1. Only route to market for some suppliers, due to Covid. Larger product offering to members and further monies channelling back into the local economy. Connection between suppliers.
2. Streamlined ordering systems ensures continuity for suppliers and members, thereby reducing waste and deficit
3. Our members have benefitted from the combination of grocery and wellness ease of access.
4. Consistent service for members to reduce food security anxieties.
5. Imaginative and thought provoking social interaction opportunities
6. A coherent and confident approach to management.
7. Opportunities for the Members to invest financially to the development of The Urban Co-op
8. The opportunity to learn about this model in an educational context not limited by geography
9. Our members have greater control on how our food is sourced, local economy benefits from investment and re-investment with less pull on scarce resources.
10. Greater synergy on social impact issues when we work together. Discussing initiatives for member groups.
 - a. New ideas are fostered to add to the range of produce.
 - b. Community activism is realised in a manageable way for a large sector of society.
 - c. Opportunities to volunteer are made available.
 - d. Members have a connection to a growing community of interest.

Main Categories of Activities / Services

Budgeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Developed a set of financial projections aligned with our strategic objectives, which include<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Key income and expenditure assumptions○ Full income statement○ An analysis of our cost profile
Accounting Operations and Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Structuring our accounting operations and practices● Mentoring advice on credit terms for suppliers
Marketing Plans and Brand Recognition	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Maintaining marketing plan through greater social media presence, product placement and floor layout● Craft and Food fair days promotion
Growing Sales and Building Relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Turnover of just under €1M● Support small suppliers through marketing, labelling, barcoding and advertising● Building a network of supportive communities and organisations
Hiring qualified employees & Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Appointment of qualified employees<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ The update of strategic plan○ Understanding and updating EPOS system to achieve accurate and real-time data○ Establishment of online shopping presence○ Improved communication & reporting channels○ Supported employees during Covid through split roster and government policy guidelines○ The initiation of a performance management system and an employee training needs analysis○ Reflecting, reviewing and revising policies as required
Customer Service & Preserving Relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Aid members via customer requests and personal online shopping





CLASSES

PRACTITIONERS

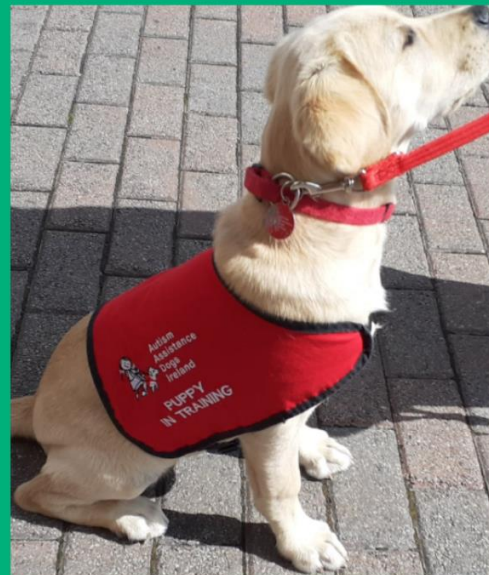
	MON	TUES	WEDS	THURS
	9:45 PILATES w/ COLM 8:00 PILATES w/ ELAINE	9:45 PILATES w/ COLM 11:45 PILATES w/ COLM 12:15 BABY RESPECTFUL 12:45	9:45 PILATES w/ COLM	10:45 PILATES w/ COLM 15:45 INFANT & BABY 16:00 MINDFULNESS w/ RUTH 19:30 THERAPY w/ SARAH
	11:30 PILATES w/ ELAINE CLINICS w/ ELAINE & TRACY	11:30 THERAPY w/ SARAH 11:30 YOGA w/ GAYE CLINICS w/ ELAINE	10:30 YIN YOGA w/ ADIE 19:30 YIN YOGA w/ ADIE	19:30 YIN YOGA w/ ADIE CLINICS w/ ADIE & ADIE
	FRI	SAT	SUN	CONTACT DETAILS FOR ALL PRACTITIONERS & BELOW ↓
	9:45 PILATES w/ COLM 11:30 BODY TALK COMMUNITY CLINIC	10:00 PILATES w/ ELAINE 11:30 SPORTS INJURY CLINIC w/ TRACY	9:30 SPORTS INJURY CLINIC w/ TRACY	

CO-OP Craft Fair

Sunday 13th of February
11am-3.30pm

Celebrating the best of Local Craft,
Artisan Food & Wellness Therapies.
Organic Coffee & Treats.
FREE Entry

9 Eastway Business Park, Ballysimon Road,
Limerick V94N7D3
061-294 289



Education Events

Education is one of the principles of co-operatives and The Urban Co-op is a proud driver of opportunities to educate on many topics related to the enterprise. Remote learning has offered more gateways for a wider audience and we availed of many connections to spread the message about the work of The Urban Co-op. Much informal education is ongoing on a daily basis with customers and members. There is much scope to expand the potential of The Urban Co-op to provide inspirational and motivational talks and tours in this sphere.

Total Beneficiaries: 180

Examples of virtual events held in 2021 included:

- UCC – Centre of Co-operative Studies
- WIT – Social Enterprise Management / Business Students
- Limerick Lifelong Learning Festival – Circular Economy theme for local social enterprises

Story Exchange

An innovative idea that sparked our imaginations and energies in 2021 to explore concepts around food for a proposed cookbook. evolved into an ongoing project that we hope to complete in 2022. Recognising that we are on wave of change regarding our relationships with food we thought it would be an interesting idea to engage groups of people related to The Urban Co-op who may not know each other, using the Story Exchange method (developed by Narrative 4 in Limerick) to gather stories for inspiration on food memories. A series of groups were organised in line with covid guidelines to date. We look forward to bringing this project to completion in the future.

Thank you to Katie Verling and Narrative 4 for their contribution to this exciting project. The events were held to date at Narrative 4 in Limerick and also The Urban Co-op.

4 workshops of proposed 6 have been held to date. Each workshop featured 8- 12 people from a variety of backgrounds. Credit to Deirdre Power for the photos of one of these special events.



Our Social and Financial Impact

Our Metrics

The metrics below are from our strategic plan.

	Our Strategic Plan	What we said we would do	What we actually did
Scale	● Membership	2,500	2,530
	● Average spend per shop	€25	€32
	● Visits per member per year on avg	24	13
Economic Outcomes	● Number of local food suppliers	110	263
	● Invest into local economy	€756K	€781K
Environmental Outcomes	● Product Imported	28%	35%
	● Wastage of food supplies	3%	2%
	● Wasted food used elsewhere	80%	90%

While our membership did increase this year and average spend it is notable that the balance of import to local has shifted away from our target. 28% to 35%.

As import costs increase it will be an interesting journey to chart the progress of Irish consumption towards a larger % of local.

Our Future Plans

The Urban Co-op is recognised as a pioneer in the impetus for social change and it is heartening to see other enterprises also take up this mantle. This year has continued to impact our desire to expand due to Covid, however it has also allowed us to revisit our purpose and has helped us to refocus our priorities for the true needs of the community. The grocery and wellness hub allow us to offer a circular service to our members, in terms of mind, body and spirit. We will develop and expand through:



Nurturing our community:

- Provision of healthful foods to nourish and protect
- Creating a calm shopping environment, making it conducive for information sharing
- New suppliers will be supported through our Food and Craft fairs
- Therapists are offered marketing and advertising opportunities
- Exploration of cooperative routes to social change



Educating our community:

- Through food tourism and product innovation
- Projects such as food security and zero waste education
- Work experience skills through volunteering and education visits



Growing our community:

- Increase our online presence and create distribution channels
- Encouraging membership
- Marketing and PR campaigns
- Open a second shop in Limerick city centre



Building new communities:

- Through engaging with other social enterprises and networks

Please join us on this remarkable journey for social change!

The Impact of The Urban Co-op

What our members say -

- *It's certainly built back up my confidence and it's made me a happier person to realise that yeah there's different facets to my lifea dream come true that I get slowly back into the workforce from being a full time carer* **Eleanor (employee)**
- *Living alone and you can do a lot of negative thinking so this (bodytree) has been my life saver* **Ber (client)**
- *Being able to rent space at the Urban Co-op has been the most wonderful start for my Baby and Child Occupational Therapy service.. Every client comes in to me on their first day reporting to be amazed by the fantastic produce sold in the Urban Co-op, by the information provided in the reception area regarding how to access an abundance of other services who rent space within the building, and how cosy and non-clinical The Kelly Room and The Plunkett Room are. It is worth noting that families who are used to accessing medical/health/therapy services often dread a hospital/clinical type setting. The space available in the Urban Co-op is the opposite to that. Parent shoulders drop with relief, and children's worried little faces immediately brighten when they see the space they are going to have their assessment and intervention in.* **Ruth (therapist)**
- *From a social perspective, this approach offers a valuable solution about how the Co-op could help people stay healthy and, at the same time, support the local farming economy. If "real" food is what matters, this implies that it's not a matter anymore of becoming vegetarian or giving up dairy: it is a matter of creating a market for "real" food and make the farmers match their products with such a market.* **Gianni (customer)**
- *My children are happy and healthy, have remained so during a very difficult time for the world a lot of which I put down to the quality of the food being consumed, some say organic is expensive, can you really put a price on your child's health?* **Alan (customer)**
- *It has become part of me!* **Perry (customer)**
- *Living close by was ideal for me to be able to supply this place with the micro greens and slowly built it up then from there...if it wasn't for the Co-op I probably wouldn't*

*have been able to do it because it would have been harder to find customers
..especially with what happened with Covid...**Graham (supplier)***

- *Going to The Urban Co-op has become our “main” food shop: the weekly menu is determined by what is available. The kids have become more adventurous in their diet and they love to come shopping with me to see what’s on offer and in season. Visits to The Urban Co-op have inspired questions and conversations around the ethical rearing of animals. Veganism, vegetarianism, supporting local producers/crafts and sustainability....I can see a growing awareness in my kids which is priceless. **Sharon (customer)***

Our People

Our Employees

We have a current workforce of 11, consisting of a management team of 4, 3 full-time and 4 part-time grocery operators.

Managing Director	Anne Maher
Wellness Hub / IT Operations Manager	Geraldine Fitzpatrick
Accounts & Payroll Manager	Kathleen Bourke
Retail Manager	Sarah Ryan
Grocery Operators	Paul McLoughlin
	Bernie Corbett
	William O'Dea
	Eleanor Hally
	Liz O'Connell
	Kim Vincent
	Cormac O Farrell

Our Volunteers

Due to Covid restrictions our volunteer numbers have been limited this year. We are grateful for the contribution made by those who were able to help when needed.

- *To me, volunteering at The Urban Co-Op meant finding connection with others at a time when the world had shrunk to contain us all in our homes. It felt like a place that would welcome anybody with open arms. It meant forming a part of a community - something that feels a bit like an act of rebellion in such an atomised world, in a system that, increasingly, seems designed to keep us apart, alone, individualised. It meant the chance to allow my mind to start to open again, to imagine where small steps might take me. It helped build my confidence and my strength. **Kelly***

Independent Financial Statement

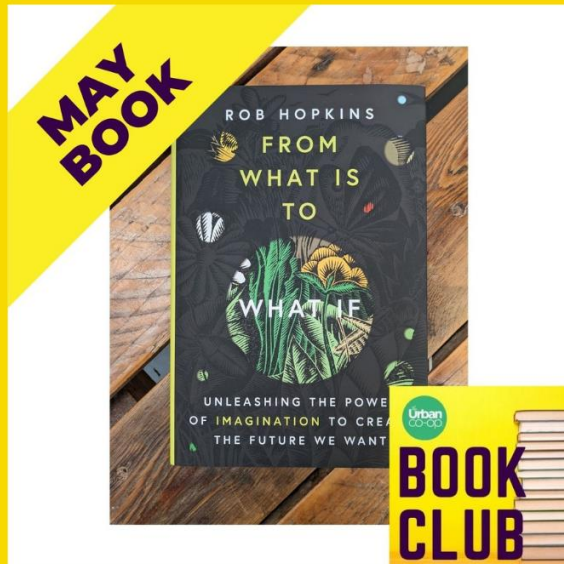
To follow

Zero Waste

1600 +
bottles
avoided



Education



Local Suppliers

