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# LIMERICK LEADER

## Limerick volunteers sought for mission to Manchester

by **Nick Rabbitts** 8 Jan 2013

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**A GROUP of city businessmen looking to set up Ireland's first workers cooperative grocery store will later this month travel to Manchester to see one in action.**

A GROUP of city businessmen looking to set up Ireland's first workers cooperative grocery store will later this month travel to Manchester to see one in action.

And they want members of the public to join them on the mission.

The group - codenamed Meitheal Mid-West - hope to open the first cooperative store in the city in 2013.

A workers cooperative movement is one owned and controlled by those who work in it.

It is argued that it can lead to better pay and conditions, with the top earner only allowed to earn a small multiple of the lowest earner.

The group are modelling the grocery on the Unicorn Grocery Coop in Manchester.

And they will travel to Britain later this month to study the techniques the store has used since opening in 1996.

Unicorn is staffed by 49 worker/owners who provide local produce. It is hoped 10 staff will work in Limerick's cooperative grocery once it is set up, with the support of other volunteers.

The plan to open in Limerick is being supported by the newly amalgamated council, and those behind it are seeking European funding worth some €2.5m.

Meitheal are seeking two types of people for the field trip - those who see themselves working in a cooperative retail outlet, and those who would like to help the venture succeed.

"This is an ideal opportunity for Limerick people to experience a working day in a workers cooperative. The first day will include a tour, an introduction to Unicorn, meetings with those involved in commodity and fresh buying, HR, marketing and co-op structure. The second day is a practical working day giving the participants a chance to work in various areas of the shop - the shop floor, the deli and packing facility," said Bill Kelly, secretary of the group.

For more information on the trip, or to volunteer, visit [www.meitheal-midwest.org](http://www.meitheal-midwest.org)

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