



## **The New Leaf Co-op: Background Information**

### **What we do:**

The New Leaf Co-op is a vegetarian wholefood shop based in the Marchmont area of Edinburgh. We specialise in selling a wide range of unpackaged foods such as pulses, nuts, grains, dried fruits, tea, coffee and spices. Our nut butter grinding machine is one of our unique selling points, as is our extremely popular range of refillable body and home cleaning products. We also sell a large range of seasonal fruit and veg from five different farms/suppliers. Stocking good quality, local and ethically sourced food is our speciality and we are passionate in supporting exciting local producers; making products from Kimchi and chocolate, to candles and cards. We stock fresh bread from an array of Edinburgh's renegade bakers, on a mission to bring real bread back to the tables of Edinburgh residents.

We opened our doors to the public in October 2012. Since opening we have seen year on year growth and are envisioning exciting and ambitious changes on the horizon.

### **Our Values:**

We aim to promote local produce and local suppliers. We have created our own ethical buying policy and will boycott producers or companies failing to meet the standards we see as acceptable for fair and ethical trade. We oppose the genetic modification of food, and do not stock any products containing genetically modified organisms. We also aim to be as affordable as possible and price all our staples fairly and transparently.

As a workers' co-op, the business is run non-hierarchically, with all members having an equal responsibility for the business.

### **Our Structure:**

There are currently six members in the Co-op, as well as a team of part-time cover staff.

We believe it is important for each member to have a good overview of how the business works, so all members will be involved with the essential aspects of running a food retail outlet such as stock management, customer service, ordering and shop floor facilitation. Each team takes on the management of other more specialised roles within the business, and these are rotated from time to time (timescale appropriate to the role). Most members are in three to four teams covering different aspects of running the business. The teams cover areas such as finance, fruit and veg, human resources, external comms and more.

We have a Co-op meeting every two weeks on Tuesday mornings from 9.00am-12:00pm. It is important that all members are available these meetings, except during unavoidable absences / annual leave. This is where we set our strategic priorities for the business, make consensus decisions and offer feedback and reviews for members and working processes. All members also communicate via their own allotted email address and work on administrative projects.

## **Financial Position:**

The New Leaf Co-op is a successful and growing business, with our turn over increasing rapidly year on year. We are working hard and considering the possibilities of future expansion so it is certainly exciting to be part of the business at this stage, but it also requires a strong commitment to building and developing the business. We currently pay ourselves £18,000 a year pro rata (35 Hrs FTE)– and members are entitled to 6 weeks of holiday per year.

## **Our Aims:**

Currently our short-term aims include expanding our membership, continuously adapting to the Covid-19 situation, expanding our ranges of products and increasing our social media and marketing presence.

In the medium- to long-term, we are hoping to expand our operations by moving to bigger premises and/or opening another shop.

Our ongoing aims include: providing more opportunities to buy local, zero-waste, organic, vegan and ethical products; connect with and support other co-operatives; solidarity with local, global and political initiatives in line with our ethos; being a responsible, respectful and holistic local employer.

## **Work pattern:**

Members work an average of 24-30h per week dependent on contract:

- 3 regular shop floor shifts during the week, adding up to 24h (normally 1 morning shift 9-5pm, and two closing 12-8pm shifts. However, these shifts include between 1 and 2h for some e-mail checking and admin tasks;
- 2 out of every 6 Saturdays, a full day shift of 9.30am-7pm;
- 1 shift per week for business development and administration (6 hours);
- And our bi-weekly Co-op meeting on Wednesday mornings (3h)

During the new members probationary period, they will work entirely on the shop floor (across 4 shifts) so that they are confident and comfortable in the day to day running of the shop, before taking up any big projects or roles.

It is possible for members to work 22h/week. This will be granted by the co-operative on a case-by-case basis. In this case, there would be 2 instead of 3 shop floor shifts during the week – adding up to 16 shop floor hours. Some roles such as veg, bulk food management and branded food management require additional shifts.

# The Co-operative Principles

At The New Leaf Co-op, we follow the 7 Co-operative Principles which are followed by many co-ops around the world. They are inspired by the Rochdale Pioneers, who formed one of the first co-operatives in 1844. The principles are as follows:

## **1. Voluntary and Open Membership**

Co-operatives are voluntary organizations, open to all people able to use its services\* and willing to accept the responsibilities of membership, without gender, social, racial, political or religious discrimination.

## **2. Democratic Member Control**

Co-operatives are democratic organizations controlled by their members—those who buy the goods or use the services of the co-operative—who actively participate in setting policies and making decisions.

## **3. Members' Economic Participation**

Members contribute equally to, and democratically control, the capital of the co-operative. This benefits members in proportion to the business\* they conduct with the co-operative rather than on the capital invested.

## **4. Autonomy and Independence**

co-operatives are autonomous, self-help organizations controlled by their members. If the co-op enters into agreements with other organizations or raises capital from external sources, it is done so based on terms that ensure democratic control by the members and maintains the co-operatives autonomy.

## **5. Education, Training and Information**

co-operatives provide education and training for members, elected representatives, managers and employees so they can contribute effectively to the development of their co-operative. Members also inform the general public about the nature and benefits of co-operatives.

## **6. Cooperation among Co-operatives**

co-operatives serve their members most effectively and strengthen the co-operative movement by working together through local, national, regional and international structures.

## **7. Concern for Community**

While focusing on member needs, co-operatives work for the sustainable development of communities through policies and programs accepted by the members.