

Business for Good West Yorkshire Study Visit Programme 2024

Details taken from <https://www.stirtoaction.com/blog-posts/business-for-good-study-visits> on 03/09/2024.

Background

During [Co-op Fortnight](#) 2024 [Stir to Action](#) in partnership with [Co-operatives UK](#) invited people to visit and learn from an exciting range of co-operatives across West Yorkshire. The study visit programme formed part of the [Business for Good West Yorkshire partnership](#) – an 18-month programme of accelerators, business coaching, and other training free specialist support to help people start or grow organisations that help make communities in West Yorkshire into better places to live and work.

The visits allowed participants to meet the founders and workers, and find out about how they got started, their growth model, where they get business support, how they make decisions as a democratic business, their routes to finance, and how they connect their business model to social purpose.

Included cooperatives were:

- [Suma Wholefoods](#), Elland HX5 9DB
- [Headingley Enterprise & Arts Centre](#), Leeds LS6 3HN
- [Horton Community Farm](#), Bradford BD7 3BW
- [Leeds Bread Co-op](#), Leeds LS7 2AW – **Monday 1st July**
- [Hebden Bridge Town Hall](#), Hebden Bridge HX7 7BY – **Tuesday 2nd July**
- [Holmfirth Tech](#), 140 Huddersfield Rd, Holmfirth HD9 3AR - **Friday 5th July**

[Suma](#)

Sector: Food & wholesale

Location: G15, Lowfields Business Park, Lacy Way, Elland HX5 9DB

Started in 1977, Suma Wholefoods now has a turnover of around £60m, over 200 worker members, and is recognised as the largest equal pay co-op in Europe. Even as a big business, their members still participate in job rotation, where delivery drivers might also work in accounts and product development.

This inspiring business delivers over 7,000 vegetarian, natural, and responsibly sourced products to businesses and communities across the UK and internationally, and is a great example of a successful co-op that is continuously expanding its products, locations, and marketplace.

[Headingley Enterprise & Arts Centre](#)

Sector: Arts & retail

Location: HEART, Bennett Road, Leeds LS6 3HN

Founded in 2005, Headingley Development Trust is a member-led organisation with more than 1,000 members. As one of the largest development trusts in the UK, their vision is to create a sustainable, balanced community that is welcoming and neighbourly, offering a

good mix of housing, a successful and diverse local economy, and an attractive place to live, work, and visit.

This inspiring business recently raised almost £500,000 in community shares to expand their Headingley Homes portfolio, to acquire local businesses – including the Headingley Greengrocer – and to host cultural institutions such as Headingley Enterprise & Arts Centre, which features a bar and kitchen, and several venue spaces.

[Horton Community Farm](#)

Sector: Food growing

Location: Cecil Ave, Bradford BD7 3BW

Horton Community Farm is a two-acre green oasis in inner-city Bradford, which was transformed from abandoned allotments blighted by decades of fly-tipping, vandalism, and allotment junk, into a valuable community resource.

It has grown from a group of volunteers in 2009 into a not-for-profit co-operative run by three paid directors. The site now features cabins for storage, a therapy garden, wildlife areas, an orchard, a compost toilet, and a special play area with a willow dome and clambering boulders.

This inspiring business hosts programmes of activities that are aimed at sanctuary seekers, families with children under five years, people living with mental health problems, and children of all ages on free school meals.

[Leeds Bread Co-op](#)

Sector: Food

Location: Unit 11 Penraevon Trading Estate, Leeds LS7 2AW

Established in 2012, Leeds Bread Co-op is an independent artisan bakery and workers' co-operative, with a passion for making slowly fermented sourdough bread with simple, high-quality ingredients, in an ethical and empowering workplace.

It was founded with the desire to make delicious and healthy bread available to people in and around Leeds, and is now baking for wholesale, local markets, bread subscribers, local retailers, and their bakery shop.

This inspiring business is focused on providing an ethical and enjoyable livelihood and workplace for its employees, producing real bread in a socially and environmentally responsible way, and being a socially conscious community bakery for the benefit of Leeds residents.

[Hebden Bridge Town Hall](#)

Sector: Event venue & cafe

Location: St George's St, Hebden Bridge HX7 7BY

Completing an asset transfer in 2010, one of the earliest of its kind, Hebden Town Hall is now owned and run by Hebden Bridge Community Association – a charity and company limited by guarantee formed in 2008 specifically to take on the asset transfer of the former council offices in Hebden Bridge from the Local Authority (Calderdale MBC).

With a 125-year lease, this community-owned venue has been fully let ever since adding co-worker provision to its business units, with a high demand for room hires, lots of weddings and celebration events, and a successful profitable subsidiary café.

[Holmfirth Tech](#)

Sector: Arts, Learning, Wellbeing, and Enterprise

Location: The Tech, 140 Huddersfield Rd, Holmfirth HD9 3AR

A great example of a community benefit society, a group of people joined together in 2017 to purchase, protect and promote their beautiful Victorian building. They launched a successful community share issue in 2021, raising £150,000 which was matched by Coops UK.

The Tech is now run by local people for local people and is the place where people of all ages come together for arts, learning wellbeing and enterprise. With a packed programme and a wide range of classes, events, meetings, exhibitions and space for local businesses, this place is sure to leave you feeling inspired.

Business for Good West Yorkshire is led by [TSL Kirklees](#) and delivered by a partnership of local providers - [Participate Projects](#), [Voluntary Action Leeds](#), [SEE Ahead](#), [Co-op Culture](#) and [Stir to Action](#), and is supported by national organisations [Co-operatives UK](#) and [School for Social Entrepreneurs](#). This project is funded by the UK Government through the [UK Shared Prosperity Fund](#).