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News Release

The Co-operative Bank helps to protect Christmas for thousands of customers

The Co-operative Bank is ensuring that Variety Christmas Savings Club's 50,000 customers have a merry Christmas by opening a trust account to keep their money safe during the run-up to Christmas.

Based in Newton Le Willows, Variety Christmas Saving Club allows customers to save money each month which they then receive back at the end of the year in the form of gift vouchers for some of the UK's leading stores including Debenhams, Argos, Toys 'R' Us, Marks & Spencer, Woolworths and Currys.

The Co-operative Bank's Manchester Corporate Banking Centre has also set up facilities to allow customers to make deposits at the Post Office to make saving money even easier.

The Variety Christmas Saving Club, a family owned business, started 30 years ago and now has over 4,000 agents who operate schemes for friends and family throughout the UK.

Sean Polding, Director, said "Despite the reduced confidence in Christmas saving schemes, at Variety Christmas Saving Club we have maintained a strong and loyal customer base. We are confident that our money will be safe with The Co-operative Bank and we are very pleased with the work that they have done to allow customers to make deposits easily and quickly."

Valerie Leah, Business Development Manager for The Co-operative Bank, said: "Following the incident with Farepak two years ago and today's uncertain economic climate, many

customers are cautious about Christmas saving schemes. However we are in a strong position to provide secure saving for existing and new customers.

”At The Co-operative Bank we are always keen to support local family businesses and Variety Christmas Club helps those who sometimes struggle financially at Christmas to save money all through the year. This means that everyone has the opportunity for a very merry Christmas.”

For more information on Variety Christmas Club, or to become an agent and start earning commission visit www.save4xmas.com or call 0800 62 68 76.

Ends

Notes to editors:

- ISDN facilities are available for broadcast media interviews.

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