

MEMBERS' NEWSLETTER September 2017

2018 ACE Conference & AGM heading for York



The 2018 ACE Conference & AGM will take place at the Park Inn by Radisson in York City Centre on the 11th-12th May 2018. The Park Inn is a 3* hotel that offers a city centre location overlooking the River Ouse and is a short walk from the train station. The Park Inn has **200 bedrooms** some of which have views of the river. Conference will be held in the main Henley Regatta Suite on the first floor and next to the hotel bar

can easily accommodate 60 ACE delegates and 12 exhibition stalls which will be located either in the same room or in the reception area next to the main Conference hall. There is on-site secure **car parking** (with a 2m height restriction) at a cost of £9 for delegates. There are also 5 disabled parking spaces that are available free of charge. Additional parking is available at the NCP car park on Tanner Row. Conference delegates will need to confirm attendance 6 weeks before Conference date after which the Park Inn will open the rooms that ACE has provisionally booked to the general public. Late bookers may be disappointed if the rooms are sold or they may be charged extra.

Timing of Annual General Meeting

After some discussion between directors at a Board meeting held in August 2017, it was agreed that we should change the time of the ACE AGM from 8.30am on the Saturday morning of the Conference to 12 noon until 1 pm on the Saturday, to ensure that the maximum number of delegates would be available and that the AGM will be seen more obviously to be a part of Conference rather than just an add-on.

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Falkirk District Credit Union gets congratulatory parliamentary motion

Falkirk District Credit Union has been awarded a Big Lottery Fund grant in order to refurbish its former bank premises in Grangemouth. In recognition of this achievement Angus MacDonald, MSP for the Falkirk East Constituency and highlighted this award with a congratulatory motion in Parliament which has received cross party support. The motion which was lodged on the 28th June 2017 read:

"That the Parliament congratulates Falkirk District Credit Union, which is based in Grangemouth, on receiving a Big Lottery Fund Awards for All Scotland grant of £9,981 that will be used to refurbish its office; recognises the vital importance of credit unions to communities by providing access to affordable credit; notes that the mission statement of the FDCU is to promote the financial wellbeing of the community by offering ethical financial products and services at affordable rates, in a friendly and professional manner and looks forward to seeing its refurbished office."

New members for ACE: Unify CU + Grampian CU + Knowsley Mutual CU

ACE is delighted to welcome three new credit unions to membership for 2017-2018, with the addition of Unify Credit Union (based in Wigan), Grampian Credit Union (based in Aberdeen) and Knowsley Mutual Credit Union (based in the north east area of Liverpool).

Knowsley Mutual Credit Union

Knowsley Mutual (KMCU), formerly Northwood CU, has been serving the community of Kirkby since 1990, in the 1990's Kirkby was served by four credit unions, Northwood, Southdene, West vale and Towerhill, KMCU is one of two remaining of the four credit unions.

In 2007 Northwood Credit Union had an active membership of 205; growth had peaked, the board agreed in order to grow and develop it was important to extend services to the wider community. In order to achieve this goal it was identified the need for the common bond extension, central premises and staff. Therefore in 2007 the board of the then Northwood CU successfully applied to the Big lottery to fund a three year project with the focus of growth in both membership and loan book in order to realise a sustainable credit union.

The main project outcome was to achieve membership growth from 205 to 3,000 by 2010. Growth expectations we surpassed but sustainability was still yet to be realised.

Until August 2007 the credit union was managed solely by volunteers, 20 in total, over the years volunteer representation declined with sole focus at board level, all operational matters led by the manager and supported by 6 paid members of staff.

Since 2007 KMCU has changed name twice and merged twice, mergers with West vale CU in 2009 and Fazakerley CU 2015

Unify Credit Union

The first credit union in Wigan was established in 1989, when Platt Bridge Credit Union was registered, serving one of the most deprived communities in Wigan. Three further community credit unions were registered in the 1990s, Pemberton, North West Wigan and Worsley Mesnes, along with a work based credit union, Welcome. The community credit unions struggled to build membership and assets and three of them (Platt Bridge, Pemberton and NW Wigan) decided to join forces to form Unify in 2002. The common bond was extended to cover the whole of Wigan Borough and funding was obtained to open shop front premises and purchase software to support the planned growth. In 2009 Worsley Mesnes Credit Union transferred its engagements to Unify, followed by Welcome in 2017.

Unify now has four branches located in Wigan, Leigh, Chorley and Ince and employs 23 staff. Since Unify was formed in 2002, it has loaned more than £22m, has active adult memberships of more than 8000 and over 1400 junior members. Unify delivers projects in



Like most credit unions KMCU has embraced the opportunity to offer a range of loan and savings products, involved, albeit in latter stages of DWP Growth fund, this provided KMCU with the platform, along with the changes in the interest cap, to realise the opportunity to become a sustainable business.

Knowsley MCU has a wide common bond to include Knowsley, Liverpool, Sefton and West Lancashire, with offices in Kirkby, Fazakerley, Netherton and Skelmersdale.

As of September 25th 2017 KMCU had a membership of 9581 of this 4260 active, combined loan book of £1,139,365 generating £357,700 income.

local primary schools to encourage children and their parents to save and works in partnership with local statutory and voluntary organisations to support residents.

In 2017 Unify purchased its own premises at 90 Bradshawgate, Leigh, a proud moment for the staff and volunteers who have worked tirelessly to build the credit union over the years.



Grampian Credit Union

Grampian Credit Union Ltd was set up in 1993 for employees of the then Grampian Regional council now Aberdeen city, Aberdeenshire and Moray councils. We later took on those working for NHS Grampian, and in 2007 the courageous decision to widen our common bond again allowing anyone living or working within the Grampian area to join up and access our savings and loans.

With over 4300 active members enjoying a wide range of products, 9 directors and staff of 6, Grampian Credit Union aims to achieve growth and expansion in a friendly, ethical and professional manner by continuing to develop sound business practices within the framework of a strong financial institution, and treating our members fairly.



Welsh Credit Union Collaboration Group

Welsh credit unions have reported some promising progress to Welsh Government officials at a recent meeting of the Welsh Credit Union Collaboration Group held in Trefforest. The Welsh Government has once again supported credit unions in Wales in the 2017-2018 financial year to help them deliver a number of commitments in the recently revised Welsh Financial Inclusion Strategy. A total of £432,757 was awarded to 21 credit union led projects, four of which were collaborative projects involving up to 11 credit unions. The collaborative projects include Marketing Credit Unions in Wales and a joint Payroll Development project. The Marketing project will deliver a Welsh Credit Union Awards event at the Senedd on the 19th October 2017 to promote all Welsh credit unions on International Credit Union Day. The event will be hosted by Welsh Hi-De-Hi legend Ruth Madoc. A number of ACE credit unions have benefited from this funding and are delivering projects such as the School Savings and Community Engagement project and expanding financial products available to financially excluded members. The Welsh Government is currently reviewing its budgets for 2018-2019 and although there are no guarantees that funding support will continue the results of this years funded projects have been impressive.

ACE Board Structure

Following the 2017 AGM, ACE now has 8 elected Directors, including the CEO. In addition to the elected members ACE has also recruited 2 Associate members who have specific skills and areas of expertise that will be of benefit to ACE and its members. The current Board is made up of:

- Alan Robson, Chair (N.Tyneside Employees CU)
- Nancy MacGillivray, Treasurer (W. Lothian CU)
- Malcolm Richards, Director (Falkirk District CU)
- John Richards, Director (Newport CU)
- Wyndham Conniff, Director (Newport CU)
- Robert Buckley, Director (Moneywise CU)
- David Eadie, Director (Falkirk District CU)
- Sue Gurney, Director (Clivey CU)
- Bill Hudson, Director (CEO)

Associates:

- Fiona Archbold (Tusmor)
- Kathryn Burgess-Gould (Barclays)

Current position of ACE

ACE IS a self-sustaining trade association that covers all of its expenses from income generated from members affiliation fees. Although ACE is likely to lose some credit unions because of mergers, the overall membership position is strong with the recent arrival of Unify CU. Grampian CU and Knowsley Mutual CU. As things stand ACE has 3 credit unions with 8,000 + members, 5 credit unions with between 4,000 to 8,000 members, 9 credit unions with between 2,000 and 4,000 members, 6 credit unions with between 1,000 and 2,000 members and 12 affiliated members with less than 1,000 members.

Regional meetings to be supported by ACE Board members

At a Strategic Planning Day meeting held in Wallsend in August 2017, it was suggested that the holding of Regional meetings for ACE credit unions would be a good way of improving communication between ACE and its members. All directors present thought that this would be a positive move. Directors in the identified regions will endeavour to call regional meetings throughout the year. The identifiable ACE regions and lead directors currently are:

Wales - 8 Credit Unions - Bill Hudson, CEO

Scotland - 4 Credit Unions - Nancy MacGillivray, West Lothian Credit Union

North-East England - 4 Credit Unions - Alan Robson, North Tyneside Employees Credit Union

North-West England - 9 Credit Unions, Bill Hudson, CEO

South-West England - 6 Credit Unions - Sue Gurney, Clivey Credit Union

Midlands - 4 Credit Unions, Bill Hudson, CEO

The named Directors will be in touch shortly to arrange the first round of Regional meetings.

Towards a financially inclusive society in the UK: “What needs to be done?”

This event, which was held at the Royal Society in London, was led by Professor Karen Rowlingson from the University of Birmingham and included as guest speakers Baroness Claire Tyler, chair of the House of Lords Select Committee on Financial Exclusion, Christopher Woodward, Executive FCA Board member and Sir Brian Pomeroy, former Chair of the Financial Inclusion Taskforce.



Baroness Tyler highlighted some of the key recommendations of the Select Committee's report on Financial Exclusion which included more leadership from Government and the appointment of a Minister for Financial Inclusion. Although the Government has not yet responded to the Select Committee report it had already been announced that Guy Opperman had been appointed Minister for Pensions and Financial Inclusion although it was too early for any Government strategy or agenda to be announced. The Select Committee also called for the FCA to be given a Statutory Duty to promote Financial Inclusion. Financial Education and Financial Capability were also highlighted as key components in the tackling of Financial Exclusion as was the need to address the issue of financial exclusion in vulnerable groups including those with mental health problems, older people and disabled people. After hearing that the UK economy had been experiencing strong employment growth combined with a lack of growth in wages and an increase in inflation it was suggested that financial exclusion would remain a challenge for policy makers. Christopher Woolard, from the FCA Executive Board announced that the FCA had just published its Occasional Paper “Ageing Population and Financial Services” that highlighted some of the challenges that Financial Services would be faced with one in four people likely to be aged over 65 by 2050. Further papers were due to be published by the FCA on high cost credit products and on the way that financial services deal with customers with mental health problems.

Sir Brian Pomeroy concluded the day by highlighting what still needs to be done to tackle financial exclusion including; pushing for a Government supported Financial Inclusion Strategy; the need to add Financial Resilience to such a strategy; the importance of promoting financial capability and the reasons why so many people (17%) are still turned down when they apply for a basic bank account.

ACE Credit Union Services office relocation

ACE Credit Union Services has now moved office a short distance from the previous offices in Cardiff. The new contact details are:

1st Floor
Mariners House
East Moors Road
Cardiff
CF24 5TD
Telephone: **029 20 107599**

