

# **Cross-Party Group on Credit Union**

## **Minutes of the virtual meeting held on Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> June 2020**

### **Present**

Angela Constance MSP (Convener)	Pete Duncan (Glasgow CU)
Claudia Beamish MSP (Convener)	Frances McCann (Scotwest CU)
Sandra Neill (Scot Govt)	Karen Grieve (Scot Govt)
Karen Hurst (ABCUL)	Joe Ochei (Grampian CU)
Chinyere Adeniyi-Alade (Grampian CU)	Catherine Davenport (Capital CU)
John McClay (West Lothian CU)	Robert Kelly (ABCUL)
David Ross (Glasgow CU)	Ruth Dorman (NHS CU)
Nancy MacGillivray (West Lothian CU)	Maria Paterson (Baillieston CU)
Bill Hudson (ACE CU Services)	Julie Reddin (Mosshill CU)
Graeme Mullins (East Kilbride CU)	Sofia Dogan (Kingdom CU)
Elizabeth Degning (NHS CU)	Carol McHarg (1 <sup>st</sup> Alliance Ayrshire CU)
Cathy Greig (Vale of Leven CU)	Craig Clark (Transport CU)
Charles Meehan (Dalmuir CU)	Peter Gavin (West Lothian CU)
Karen Wallace (Right Move CU)	Pauline Cunningham (Stirling CU)
Elaine Rae (NHS CU)	Andy Wright (1 <sup>st</sup> Class CU)
Patricia Butler (Drumchapel Community CU)	Jim Lee (Lanarkshire CU)
Lorna Creswell (Moray Firth CU)	Ann Robertson (1 <sup>st</sup> Alliance Ayrshire CU)
Gail Reid (1 <sup>st</sup> Alliance (Ayrshire) CU)	Natalie McQuade (ABCUL)
Liz Campbell (Castlemilk CU)	Norman Crawford (Dalmuir CU)

### ***Introduction***

Claudia Beamish opened the meeting, giving an update on the AGM that took place since the last full meeting of the group in October 2019.

### ***Update on actions from previous meeting***

1. Karen Hurst, ABCUL, noted the minutes of the previous meeting had been circulated and approved by email.
2. Following the last meeting there was a commitment from ABCUL to review their position on the use of digital signatures for the Book of Council and Session (BCS). ABCUL subsequently launched a mini call for evidence and received a good amount of responses. Following a full review ABCUL remain of the view that this is not a priority at this time. This position has been communicated to other trade associations and those who were concerned about the matter.
3. ABCUL last contacted the Registrars of Scotland in January 2020 for an update, and they confirmed the situation remained the same in terms of legislation.
4. At the last meeting it was agreed that the group would write to the Scottish Government relating to concerns about Protected Trust Deeds. Immediately following the last meeting there was a lot of activity in this area, including the fact that the Economy Committee launched an inquiry into the matter. CU associations worked together on a joint response, and representatives from ABCUL and Scotwest CU gave evidence in person. The report was recently published, and recommended a number of changes to address the concerns raised about PTDs. There has also been a lot of activity relating to the regulation of Insolvency (which is a reserved matter), in which credit unions have been active. Credit union trade associations are continuing to press for change.

### ***General discussion about the impact of Covid 19***

5. Angela Constance joined the meeting following technical difficulties, and noted her keenness to work with the sector to affect real change.

6. Some attendees noted that it had been difficult to apply for the Third Sector Resilience Fund, and it would have been helpful to understand more about why they had been unsuccessful.
7. Scottish Govt representatives confirmed that over £81 million of applications were received for the TSRF, which made it difficult to give individual feedback. However over £800,000 was awarded to credit unions.
8. A question was raised about the status of the Dormant Asset money allocation to Scotland, following the UK Govt's announcement that more than £95 million would be used to increase the provision of affordable credit in England.
9. The Scottish Govt confirmed that dormant asset money in Scotland is allocated to the National Lottery Community Fund Scotland, and is ringfenced for children and young people. However, they are currently exploring whether there is any flexibility in this.
10. It was noted that Just Enterprise may be able to assist in applying for grants.
11. There was a question about the CU Resilience Fund. The Scottish Govt confirmed that 25 applications were received, totaling more than £3million. To date over £1.77million has been granted. A further £500,000 will be allocated to the fund. They are currently exploring how best to allocate that.
12. It was noted that Irish CUs have created a video to promote the ethos of 'shop local, borrow local'. This might be something for Scottish credit unions to consider.
13. The NHS Credit Union confirmed this had already been started by Glasgow's credit unions, but would be applicable Scotland wide. If anyone wishes to be involved they should email [mark.russell@nhscreditunion.com](mailto:mark.russell@nhscreditunion.com). They are currently seeking volunteers to appear in the video.
14. A question was raised about whether CUs had experienced any difficulty in obtaining a Small Business Interruption Grant from Councils.
15. One credit union shared they had successfully challenged a rejected application. They agreed to share information with any credit union that has been unsuccessful.
16. There was a question about the impact of the FCA's decision on mortgage and personal loan payment holidays on the sector. Scotwest CU to share data on this.
17. Glasgow CU shared details of a recent meeting with the Scottish Govt, and is keen for anyone with ideas of 'bounce back better' to share them. It is not necessarily in relation to financial assistance.
18. It was suggested that there could be support to allow credit unions adapt to a different way of working, for example Perspex screens and laptops. The Scottish Government confirmed that they were looking at how they could help at every stage of recovery.
19. Bill Hudson, ACE CUs shared details of a letter to the Welsh Government regarding the dormant assets fund in Wales. He agreed to share details of the response.
20. Angela Constance noted the importance of financial support and inclusion in communities, being able to compete with the technology offerings of high street lenders, and thinking about what will enable credit unions to grow and provide a brighter light to communities.
21. There was no other business and the meeting was brought to a close.