

Credit Unions spotlight

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Fantastic response to Credit Union Awards



Entries for the inaugural National Credit Union Awards for Excellence devised by Unity Trust Bank have been pouring in from all over Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

This fantastic response proves beyond any doubt that there is an overwhelming appetite for a national awards scheme in perpetuity. And importantly, one which crosses boundaries.

The National Credit Union Awards office in London is now busy preparing the applications for onward transmission to the independent panel of judges.

Applications for the awards, which are designed to champion and pay tribute to the extraordinary work of the countless unsung individuals who give their time and expertise to the credit union movement closed in December, extended due to the exceptional weather conditions in some parts of the country.

The shortlisted candidates will be invited to attend a reception in London in February

where the six winners will receive a trophy, a certificate and a cheque for £150. The judges will also choose an overall winner from the six winning entries to receive the Edward Filene Award and a further cheque for £250.

Unity's Press and PR machine will go into overdrive to ensure the winning entries receive the maximum publicity possible in the national and local media.

Kevin Turmore, Managing Director of Unity Trust Bank, said **"I am delighted with the excellent response we have received from the credit union movement and the high calibre of the applications."** Adding, **"I wish to applaud all those who have taken the time to submit an application and I wish them all the very best with their entries."**



Edward Filene



John Hume, Honorary Patron of the awards

The incredible support we received from the movement when we first launched the awards certainly gave us the confidence to take the concept forward. In particular, the encouragement from Pete Crear of the World Council of Credit Unions who said **"We absolutely support the growth of quality credit unions in the UK, and I do hope that your event is a success in furthering that goal."** and Antony MacRow-Wood, ABCUL President who said **"I think the awards are a splendid idea and congratulate Unity Trust Bank on this initiative."**



Pete Crear

Will you be shortlisted? We will be announcing the shortlisted finalists in the New Year at www.creditunionawards.co.uk.



Unity is delighted to have been shortlisted for the 'Best New Prepaid Card Product of the Year' in the 2011 Card & Payments Awards for its ALTO MasterCard® prepaid card. The winners will be announced on 3 February 2011 at the Grosvenor House Hotel in London.

Value for money Fidelity Bond cover catches the eye



When David Brown searched online for a new fidelity and crime bond, a bespoke product from Unity and Finance ReDirect caught his eye.

David, who is the Finance Director of District of Canterbury Credit Union (DCCU), had no hesitation in taking out the bond. "The fidelity bond offered by Unity and Finance ReDirect more than met our needs," he explains. "It offers very good cover - slightly higher than our previous bond - for a cheaper premium."

At a time when the credit union's grants are under pressure as a result of the Government's cuts, value for money was essential. But, for David, it was the quality of the service that really stood out.

"We enjoyed a very good service from Finance ReDirect," he explains. "They answered every query very quickly and sent a specimen policy to us by email within an hour of our enquiry. The clear premium table made it easy for me to work out the cost."

"Within a day or two the Board had decided to go with the bond from Unity and Finance ReDirect." David continues. "All I had to do was fill in the form and send it off."

With time of the essence, David was impressed with the speed of Finance ReDirect's response. "Our old cover was due to expire within days, so we needed it done rapidly," he explains. "Finance

ReDirect emailed the next day to say they had received our paperwork and set up our cover very quickly."

With the fidelity and crime bond taken care of, David and the team at DCCU are free to focus on helping their members. The credit union's initiatives include a Christmas savings account, that pays a bonus in December, and loans to help people with the costs of school uniforms.

For David, the process of buying a fidelity and crime bond proved very straightforward. "I'd certainly recommend Finance ReDirect to other credit unions," he concludes.

"The fidelity bond offered by Unity and Finance ReDirect more than met our needs. It offers good cover and the application process was straightforward and very quick."

David Brown, Finance Director, District of Canterbury Credit Union

The All-Party Parliamentary Group on Credit Unions

The All-Party Parliament Group (APPG) on Credit Unions in Westminster and the Cross Party Group (CPG) on Credit Unions in the Scottish Parliament bring politicians together from all sides of the House to discuss issues affecting the credit union movement and to support their future development.

For those new to the world of credit unions, we have published below details of those who sit on the two parliamentary groups.

The current members of the two groups are:

UK Parliamentary Group

- Chair, Damian Hinds MP, Conservative
- Vice Chair, Simon Hughes MP, Liberal Democrat
- Vice Chair, Madeleine Moon MP, Labour
- Treasurer, Chris Evans MP, Labour
- Secretary, Yvonne Fovargue MP, Labour
- Graham Brady MP, Conservative
- Peter Bottomley MP, Conservative
- Jesse Norman MP, Conservative
- Dr. Therese Coffey MP, Conservative
- Conor Burn MP, Conservative
- Bob Russell MP, Liberal Democrat
- Alex Cunningham MP, Labour
- Andy Love MP, Labour
- Anas Sarwar MP, Labour



Damian Hinds MP (Chair)

- John Woodcock MP, Labour
- Kerry McCarthy MP, Labour
- Sharon Hodgson MP, Labour
- Rosie Cooper MP, Labour

Scottish Cross Party Group on Credit Unions

- Convener, Frank McAveety MSP, Labour
- Vice Convener, John Wilson MSP, SNP
- Vice Convener, Mary Scanlon MSP, Conservative
- Vice Convener, Robert Brown MSP, Liberal Democrat
- Treasurer, James Kelly MSP, Labour
- Derek Brownlee MSP, Conservative
- Bill Butler MSP, Labour



Frank McAveety MSP (Chair)

- Trish Godman MSP, Labour
- Hugh Henry MSP, Labour
- James Kelly MSP, Labour/Co-op
- Johann Lamont MSP, Labour/Co-op
- Ken Macintosh MSP, Labour
- Mary Scanlon MSP, Conservative
- Dave Thompson MSP, Scottish National Party
- Maureen Watt MSP, Scottish National Party
- John Wilson MSP, Scottish National Party

If you would like further information about the work of the two groups you should contact the appropriate group secretary.

Unity shortlisted for prestigious prepaid card award



Members of staff from Citysave Credit Union

Without a doubt it's the most popular thing we've introduced here. 20 members signed up before we'd even started to promote it."

Citysave members will use ALTO cards instead of paying £1.50 to cash cheques - something that's made possible by the efficiency savings ALTO offers. **"From ordering the cards to loading money on to them and managing them online, Unity's service is very efficient,"** says Angela.

For more information about the ALTO Card visit www.unity.co.uk/ALTOcard

When Birmingham-based Citysave Credit Union was looking for an alternative prepaid card, after some disappointing experiences with their previous supplier, it decided to research the market.

From the 19 different options which Citysave considered, Unity's ALTO card stood out.

"There was no comparison," says Citysave's Chief Executive Officer, Angela Clements. **"The ALTO card gives our members the flexibility they need and it's easy for us to manage."**

As the largest community-based credit union in the Midlands, Citysave provides savings, lending and insurance services to over 8,000 members in Birmingham. Angela and her team were quick to recognise the potential of prepaid cards.

"Unfortunately, our old supplier over-promised and under-delivered," says Angela. **"The card proved complicated to use and the service we experienced was poor. Unity's card is completely different.**



Unity Trust Bank welcomes the Government's plans to allow access to credit union services through local post offices



Kevin Turmore

Kevin Turmore, Managing Director of Unity has welcomed the policy statement from The Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) on its plans to secure the long term future of the Post Office®. In particular, he welcomes the Government's commitment to expand affordable and accessible financial services through Post Offices, for example by working with credit unions.

Kevin said **"Making credit union services accessible through the Post Office's® network of over 11,500 outlets would considerably enhance access to affordable credit, safe savings and other financial services."**

The Association of British Credit Unions (ABCUL) said: **"We would like to congratulate the Government for recognising the importance of credit unions by firmly supporting a stronger link up between credit unions and the Post Office® network. More needs to be done to ensure this happens and we welcome the support from Minister Ed Davey for the work we are doing."**

The proposals received support from both sides of the House.



Your chance to attend a credit union masterclass in 2011

The Bank's support for credit unions is recognised throughout the movement and during our 26 year history we have developed many initiatives which have helped make a positive and lasting difference to people's lives.

Our experience throughout these years has shown that credit union managers have a voracious appetite for acquiring advanced business skills which they utilise to improve and develop their credit unions. This is evidenced by the supporting material provided to us by credit unions when applying for grants from our Credit Union Development Fund.

Armed with this knowledge, the Bank has chosen to establish a series of bespoke, one-day, credit union masterclasses to be held at regional centres.

Spaces for these masterclasses will be limited and the fees, which will include lunch, will be fixed at an affordable rate.

Further details will be sent to credit unions in the New Year.



Credit Union Development Fund provides £22,000 of grants in 2010

'People helping people to help themselves' is the motto of the credit union movement and Unity has demonstrated its commitment to this ethos by awarding over £22,000 to 24 credit unions this year and this figure is increasing on a near weekly basis.

These grants came from Unity's Credit Union Development Fund which has provided in excess of £120,000 to individual credit unions since its launch in 1989.

"We will be using the grant to purchase two laptops to be used at collection points and to upgrade our desktop computer. This will greatly improve our capacity to profile our membership allowing us to carry out more accurately targeted marketing."

Pauline Eaton, Treasurer, Hemlington Credit Union

Supporting credit unions has always been a key area for the Bank as part of its commitment to tackling the effects of financial and social exclusion. A credit union is naturally a co-operative structure, which can also reach the financially disenfranchised offering them a way into financial and economic self-sufficiency whilst avoiding the debt spiral which other forms of borrowing often create.

"We are delighted that our application for a grant from Unity Trust Bank was successful. We will be using the money to produce marketing and promotional material aimed at local schools where we are making significant inroads in setting up 'School Saver Clubs'."

Dave Hopkins, Voluntary Director Bedford Credit Union

Among the credit unions that have benefited from the Development Fund this year are:

- St Gregory's Credit Union Ltd - £400
- West Cheshire Credit Union Ltd - £1000
- Tees Credit Union Ltd - £500
- Wolverhampton City Credit Union Ltd - £1000
- Walsall Credit Union Ltd - £1000
- North East Lincolnshire Credit Union Ltd - £1000
- Moneywise Newcastle Credit Union Ltd - £1000
- Prince Bishops Credit Union Ltd - £1000
- Shilton Town Credit Union Ltd - £800
- Harlowsave Credit Union Ltd - £839
- St Gregory's Credit Union Ltd - £500
- South Bank Savings and Credit Union Ltd - £1000
- Nottingham Credit Union Ltd - £1000
- Mid Rossendale Credit Union Ltd - £1000
- Whitehaven Egremont and District Credit Union Ltd - £1000
- HHH Credit Union Ltd - £1000
- Cestria Credit Union Ltd - £1000
- Bacup Credit Union Ltd - £1000
- South Manchester Credit Union Ltd - £1000
- Hemlington Credit Union Ltd - £1000
- Holy Name (Great Barr) Credit Union Ltd - £1000
- Burnley Area Community Credit Union Ltd - £1000
- Bedford Credit Union Ltd - £1000
- Birmingham Inner Circle Community Credit Union Ltd - £1000

TOTAL = £22,039

Take a look at our trophy cabinet:



Winner, Banking Services - Charity Times, 2010



Highly commended, Best Charity Account Provider - Business Moneyfacts, 2010



Winner, Employee Engagement - Business Charity Awards, 2010

Can we help with your banking needs?

If so, please contact Neil or Remi on 0845 155 3355 or cdm@unity.co.uk www.unity.co.uk

Would you like more information on our ALTO MasterCard® prepaid card?

If so, please call us on 0845 155 9876 or email sales@altocard.co.uk www.altocard.co.uk

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