

Gloucestershire Credit Union

Annual Report

2010/2011



**Gloucestershire Credit Union
FSA Firm Reference 214254**

Message from the Directors

The Board of Directors would like to thank all our members and partnership for their support during the year 2010/2011.

This was the year that we decide that in order to survive and thrive we needed both to expand our services and modernise. This will allow us to provide the modern but also caring financial products and services that those who live and work in Gloucestershire.

There is an incredible amount of good will and support for the ongoing success of the Credit Union from organisations and individuals across the county and we very much hope to repay the faith that you have show in us.

We have, unfortunately, seen smaller Credit Unions both in Gloucestershire, in neighbouring counties and more nationally close over the last year, and we are very aware of how we need to move Gloucestershire Credit Union forward to make sure that this does not happen to us.

Thank you again for all your support, and best wishes from all the Directors.

Gloucestershire Credit Union Board.



Review of the Year

2010-2011 was the year that Gloucester Credit Union finally fulfilled its wish to become Gloucestershire Credit Union and seek provide a service for the wider county of Gloucestershire.

We increased out the common bond in February 2011 to allow anyone who lives or works in the county to become a member. This included rebranding ourselves and using a new logo specially designed for the Credit Union. We have updated all our forms and promotional material and produced a new leaflet explaining who we are and what services we offer, to give to existing and prospective members and for use by our partners.

We also strengthened the board, taking on new members with a wide range of skills from local and central government, Gloucestershire housing providers, the co-operative movement and the Primary Care Trust.

Our first task was to try to improve access across the county, and set up a partnership with Gloucestershire Library Service to pilot collection points in Cotswold and Tewkesbury District. We also set up collection points with housing providers, including Gloucester City Homes, Severn Vale Housing, and 2 Rivers. These organisations have been successful in joining membership both amongst their tenants, and their staff.

We have also received grant funding from social housing providers to enable us to employ a development worker to guide us through the strengthening of the board, having a business plan, and increasing our common bond.

Central to this work was the support we had from Lynn Gaskin of LG Associates who did a lot of the supporting work to enable us to increase our areas of operation.

Membership and Financial Position 2010/2011

At 30th September 2011

Total Members Shares	£165,714
Members Loans	£85,152
Number of Members	378
Loan to Share ratio	51%
Dividend Paid	Nil

Membership increased gradually through the second part of the year, mainly due to increasing membership from new collection points, and the increasing use of the Local Housing Allowance transfer scheme with Gloucestershire City Council.

The most important task of the year was to consolidate our financial position and review our business plan to put us on a sure footing for going forwards.

The financial and membership targets for the year 2011/2012 below

Total Members Shares	£220,000
Members Loans	£132,000
Number of Members	600
Loan to Share ratio	60%
Possible Dividend Paid	

The Upcoming Year

2011/2012 is the year that we need to begin to expand the services that we provide to Gloucestershire. This will include the need to both increase our access through a variety of channels as well as to increase the efficiency and robustness of our operational procedures and the ability of our IT system to help us to provide better services to members. Therefore our main tasks for the year are.

- Move our back office to Gloucester Library to save the Credit Union money and to meet our 2010 equalities acts requirements.
- Launch a new web site, which gives better information to members and partners, and has the functionality to allow downloadable forms.
- Recruit the services of a part-time manager to help us to grow and improve our services.
- Upgrade our IT system to provide better member information, automate some practices and improve data security.
- Set up two employee deduction schemes with local employers
- Increase our volunteer base
- Review our policies and procedures
- Review our banking service and investment providers.
- Have functioning Board sub groups.
- Increase the number of Local Housing Allowance accounts we manage from 70 to 140.

Further Opportunities

In January 2012 the law was finally changed to allow Credit Unions to increase our Common Bond. This gives a range of opportunities that we will consider over the following year.

Firstly it enables us to increase our Common Bond to have more than one reason for people to be able to join us, and may provide some good opportunities for our social housing partners. We may be able to increase our common Bond, as well to those who live and work in Gloucestershire but also to tenants of our partner housing providers, who may live outside the county boundary.

The legislative changes also allow us to have corporate members of the Credit Union, including small businesses, charities and social enterprises.

For existing members it will allow us in the future to consider paying an interest rate on savings, and also allowing those who no longer live or work in the area to maintain their membership.

Nationally Credit Unions are becoming more well known and more supported. Credit Unions in Britain have 950,000 members and over £700m in deposits, and with campaigns such as Move your Money raising our profile we are becoming the ethical savings options for more and more people. Our role is to make sure that Gloucestershire Credit Union is fit to provide Gloucestershire with the type of ethical services that it requires.

Board of Directors February 2012