

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

**Minutes of the meeting held online at 1pm on Tuesday 26 October 2021**

## **Present**

Tess White MSP; Graham Simpson MSP; Miles Briggs MSP; Daniel Arrowsmith (ABCUL); Niamh Evans (ABCUL); Robert Kelly (ABCUL); Jackie Littlewood (ABCUL); Frances McCann (NCUF); Dawn Vear (UKCU); Cathy Greig (UKCU); Nancy MacGillivray (ACECUS)

## **Apologies**

Paul Sweeney MSP; Stuart McMillan MSP; John Mason MSP; Stephen Kerr MSP

## **Welcome and Introductions**

Introductions were made by MSPs and credit union sector representatives present.

## **Election of Officers**

- It was confirmed that the CPG meeting was quorate, and the present CPG members resolved to elect office bearers for the CPG.
- It was proposed, and agreed, that Tess White, would be the Convener.
- It was proposed, and agreed, that Paul Sweeney MSP would be elected as a Deputy Convener. Paul had previously expressed a keen interest in supporting credit unions and the CPG.
- It was proposed, and agreed, that Stuart McMillan MSP would be elected as a Deputy Convener. Stuart had also previously expressed great interest in supporting the CPG to ABCUL.
- It was proposed, and agreed, that the Association of British Credit Unions (ABCUL) would be Secretariat for the CPG.

## **Confirmation of Purpose of Group**

The purpose of the group was confirmed and agreed as follows: to provide a forum to discuss issues which affect credit unions in Scotland. The CPG will also create a foundation for policy development relating to credit unions and help to form a network of good practice between credit unions and parliamentarians.

## **Discussion of Future Topics for Meetings**

- Key areas of discussion for future meetings were agreed upon as follows:
  - How credit unions fit into the new Scottish Government's agenda and Programme for Government.
  - Where credit unions fit into the Government's financial inclusion agenda.
  - How credit unions can better engage a more diverse and inclusive membership. Improving the access to credit unions across Scotland.
  - Sustainability, promotion, and development of the credit union sector

- Tess White opened the discussion on the agenda for future meetings to all present CPG members.
- Graham Simpson noted the importance of the CPG working towards tangible outcomes and suggested that a piece of work could be produced by the CPG to present to Scottish Government.
- Credit union leaders and trade bodies raised the following key matters for their sector to address in future meetings:
  - Working to change the image of credit unions, by educating and raising awareness of the sector, to both young people and adults
  - Supporting the sustainability and resilience of credit unions
  - Addressing the personal insolvency issues affecting credit unions
  - Understanding credit unions value and contribution to the wellbeing economy, as well as how the sector can support recovery from the pandemic
- ABCUL suggested that the CPG could work towards the aim of increasing the Scottish credit union penetration rate (the percentage of population that are members of a credit union) to a set target, such as 10%.
- Miles Briggs proposed that the CPG could invite Scottish Parliament Ministers to meet during the Parliamentary term to discuss key matters.
- ABCUL agreed to organise a discussion between trade associations following the meeting, to set outcomes for the CPG to work towards.
- Tess White made final comments echoing the importance of discussing credit unions' contribution to wellbeing, supporting credit union's sustainability and the need for education on the sector.
- The meeting was brought to a close.