

Minutes of Lewisham Plus Credit Union Annual General Meeting held at 6.00pm on 24 February 2021

1. Welcome and introduction

Mark Plummer (Acting President) opened the meeting and thanked everyone for attending. He noted that this was the first time that the Annual General Meeting had been held electronically. Jackie Littlewood from the Association of British Credit Unions, who were hosting the meeting, explained how the technology would work.

Mark explained that he was chairing the meeting in the absence of Frank Whittle, who had decided to step down from the board at the AGM, due to ill health. Mark paid tribute to Frank's dedication to the credit union over the years. Frank had been a founding member of the credit union in 1992, and acted as Assistant Treasurer until 2007. He then re-joined the board in 2015, becoming President in 2017, since which time he had led the credit union with great skill, commitment and enthusiasm. Mark expressed, on behalf of everyone involved with the credit union, best wishes to Frank for his recovery, and thanked him for his outstanding contribution. Mark then led those present in a recitation of the credit union invocation.

2. Presentation from Gillian Hart from the 170 Community Project

Gillian explained her work on the 170 Project, which provides invaluable assistance to individuals across a range of different financial and related matters, such as form filling and referrals to other appropriate organisations. Gillian explained that the 170 Project was partnering with the credit union, supported by funding from the grant received from the Covid-19 Community-led Organisations Recovery Scheme. She noted the hardship being experienced by many at present due to the pandemic, and was pleased that there was such a positive partnership between the credit union, 170 Project and the New Cross Library (which Gillian founded, and which now hosts the latest Lewisham Plus branch).

3. Approval of the minutes of the 2020 Annual General Meeting

Barney Hearnden (Secretary) referred the meeting to the minutes of the last annual general meeting which had been published on the credit union website. He acknowledged that many members present today would not have been at the 2020 AGM. The meeting resolved to approve the minutes, with 24 members voting in favour, two against and 26 abstentions.

4. Report from the LPCU Board of Directors

Mark Plummer gave an overview of the activities and key initiatives of the credit union over the previous year. He expressed his thanks to staff, led by CEO, Ravi Ravindran, for their dedication which had allowed the credit union to keep its branches and services running during the pandemic. He noted that the Fairbanking Foundation had awarded a five star rating for our two main loan products, and the credit union had also secured a number of financial grants which had helped it to remain financially strong. Mark expressed his appreciation for the support that the credit union had received from its various partners, including councils and housing associations. He noted that there had been continuing developments in IT, to enable

the credit union to provide an enhanced online experience whilst still maintaining a strong branch presence.

5. Report from the Treasurer

Paul Treece (Treasurer) provided an overview of the finances of the credit union, and how these had developed during the year. The pandemic had resulted in a reduction in the rate of membership growth, and had led to a large increase in savings, due to reductions in spending as a result of restrictions on activities. The pandemic had also affected lending. Broadly the credit union was still lending to the same number of individuals, but the aggregate amount of lending was lower (in other words, each borrower was tending to borrow a smaller amount). This had had an impact of approximately £75,000 on the income of the credit union during the last financial year, which had been covered by a grant from Fair4All Finance. A similar trend was continuing in the current financial year, due to lockdown restrictions.

Paul then took members through the make up of the credit union balance sheet, noting that total assets reached £10m on the last day of the financial year, which was a significant milestone. However, the credit union had managed to maintain its capital at 10% of its total assets, which provided a strong platform for the future. He also explained the principal elements of income and expenditure, as shown in the accounts. He noted that the board was cautious about the current and next financial years, given uncertainty over when lockdown would end, and the risks associated with the end of the furlough scheme.

6. Report from the Auditors

Kevin Booth of Alexander Sloan spoke briefly to describe the work of the auditors. He confirmed that they had been satisfied again this year that the accounts showed a true and fair view of the financial position of the credit union, and that the credit union had complied with applicable law and regulation. This had enabled them to issue an unqualified opinion with respect to the accounts, and he thanked the Treasurer and his team for their openness and efficiency.

7. Approval of the Accounts

Following the report from the auditors, the meeting resolved to approve the audited accounts for the year ended 30 September 2020, with fifty members voting in favour, none against, and two abstentions.

8. Declaration of Dividend

Paul Treece explained that there were two elements to the dividend. The board had resolved to pay a dividend of 0.75% to junior savers, broadly reflecting their share of the money earned from deposits with banks. The board was proposing a reduced dividend of 0.25% for adult and corporate members (as compared with 0.75% in the previous year), and Paul explained the background to this reduction. He noted that 0.25% was lower than the board would like, and the board was hoping to pay a higher dividend in future, but there could be no guarantee of that. He explained that members had the option either to approve the dividend, or to reduce it, but could not approve a higher figure.

On a vote, the meeting resolved to approve the dividend, with 57 members voting in favour, none against and one abstention.

9. Appointment of Auditors

Paul Treece explained that the board was recommending the reappointment of Alexander Sloan. On a vote, the meeting resolved to approve the reappointment of Alexander Sloan, with 52 members voting in favour, none against and two abstentions.

10. Report from the Lewisham Plus Supervisory Committee

Barney Wanstall gave a brief overview of the work of the Supervisory Committee. He noted that it had been a challenging year for the directors and the credit union, and the Supervisory Committee was satisfied with how the board had steered the credit union through these difficulties, keeping branches open, and balancing the traditional physical service with increased digital services. Mark Plummer thanked the Supervisory Committee for their work and oversight during the year.

11. Election of Officers

Barney Hearnden explained the process under the credit union's rules for appointment of board members and members of the Supervisory Committee, and introduced those who were standing for re-election. On a vote, the meeting resolved to reappoint the directors with 55 members voting in favour, none against and no abstentions; and also resolved to approve the reappointment of Barney Wanstall to the Supervisory Committee, with 53 members voting in favour, none against and no abstentions.

12. Any Other Business

Mark Plummer invited all members to submit questions, to the extent that they had not already done so, and he and other board members answered those questions which had been received, covering matters such as the steps under way to improve the diversity of the board and the potential for the credit union to make charitable donations rather than paying dividends to members. Several members commented that they had found the AGM useful and interesting. Mark then thanked everyone for attending and brought the meeting to a close.