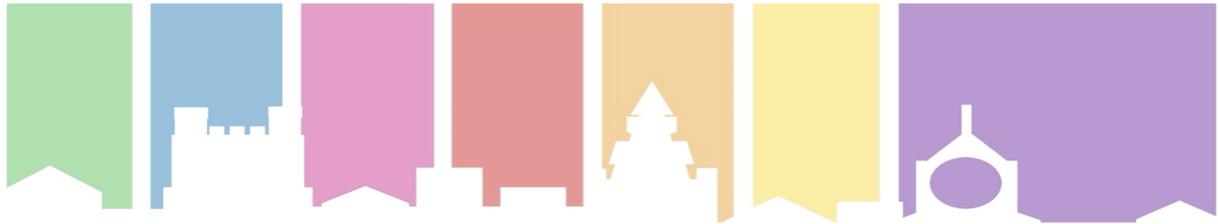




WEST CHESHIRE CREDIT UNION
NON-EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RECRUITMENT PACK



West Cheshire Credit Union

Non-Executive Director

An introduction from the Chair of the West Cheshire Credit Union Board

Thank you for your interest in becoming a non-executive director with West Cheshire Credit Union, a successful and dynamic business providing savings and loans to members within Cheshire West and Chester, Cheshire East, and Flintshire council boundaries (our common bond).

Your interest to join our board coincides with West Cheshire Credit Union entering an exciting stage of its development. We have all undergone many changes over the last year and West Cheshire Credit Union is no exception. The business has had to respond rapidly to maintain service delivery in response to COVID-19 restricting access to our branches. Our colleagues and board have taken these challenges and turned them into opportunities to improve our business and broaden ways in which members can access our services.

The Board has set itself the challenge of developing and implementing a new strategy to take West Cheshire Credit Union to a secure and sustainable future. We are also putting in place new governance, performance, and risk management processes to ensure we discharge our corporate responsibilities on behalf of our members and partners as well as complying with the regulators (Prudential Regulation Authority and the Financial Conduct Authority).

We are now looking for the right individuals to help us on this journey. You might be an experienced non-executive director or looking to take your first board steps, either way you will gain valuable board level experience in helping the growth and development of a dynamic and community focused business, whilst we will benefit from your skills, experience, and knowledge. I look forward to receiving your application.



Anthony Lewis
Chair, West Cheshire Credit Union



Introduction

West Cheshire Credit Union is a thriving business that responds to the needs of its members through providing loans and savings that high street banks may not meet and an alternative to “pay-day” and doorstep loan companies.

Our business has strong relations with a range of local partners including housing associations, the NHS, Cheshire West, and Chester Council in addition to a range of large employers within our common bond. These links emphasise the high importance and reputation we have at a strategic level in ensuring access to fair and competitive financial services.

A Brief History of the West Cheshire Credit Union

Credit Unions have held a presence in the Chester District since the 1980's with two small community-based operations located in Blacon and Lache, run and overseen by volunteers of the community.

Chester City Council identified the need for a larger credit union and supported an application to the Financial Conduct Authority to launch the 'Chester Credit Union'. This required at least 1% of the district population providing written confirmation that they supported the idea, a lengthy process!

Approval to trade as Chester Credit Union and receive deposits was granted from the FSA in March of 2004 and soon after the first official Membership Centre was opened in a small community café in the Kingsway and Newton area. The original two smaller credit unions of Blacon and Lache then merged into the Chester Credit Union.

At the time Chester Credit Union employed one full time member of staff (Neil, our general manager) supported by around 20 volunteers, all playing a critical part in the facilitation of the business.

The neighbouring credit union of Ellesmere Port and Neston approached the Chester Credit Union to consider a merger of the two operations and in 2008 agreement was reached.

In line with the merger a new brand was developed to reflect the wider geographic spread and 'West Cheshire Credit Union' was born.

Our membership base continued to grow, with more than 2500 members, needing further paid staff recruitment to support our volunteers.

The development of partnerships with key local housing associations and the NHS provided funding streams which complemented that provided by Cheshire West and Chester Council to support our operations as well as allow the expansion of systems and facilities to support growth.

To complement the head office in Chester, a supporting branch in the Ellesmere Port area was required, with premises on Whitby Road opening in 2014.

A long-time ambition to take the Head Office to a high street location led to a lease being taken on the current Brookdale Place premises close to Chester city centre and easily accessible on foot and by public transport.



The business has continued to expand since this time with an agreement with a partner organisation to have a presence within a Winsford shopping centre outlet which provides access to our services on the east boundaries of Cheshire West and Chester.

In December 2020, approval was given to expand our common bond into Flintshire to support parts of north east Wales which naturally face towards Chester for their services.

Today, with a membership of nearly 4,000, 3 high street locations, 11 employed colleagues, a popular loan product and a means for people to save safely, the business continues to strive forward in line with its documented strategies, missions and aims.

West Cheshire Credit Union Board

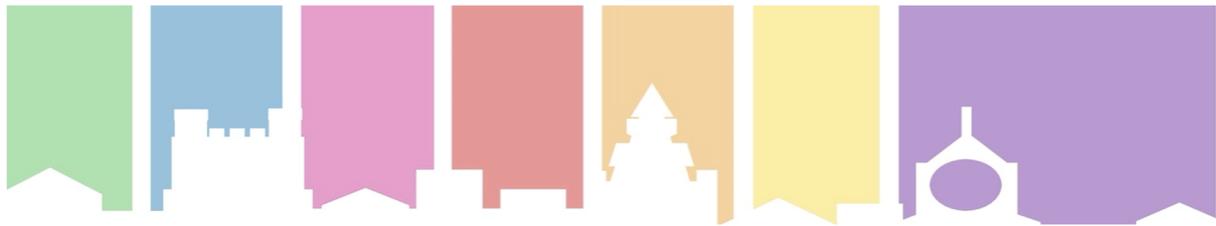
Our board is a voluntary body, made up of non-executive directors from a range of backgrounds and interests. We are now looking for individuals to join our board who have the expertise, commitment and passion to help us deliver our strategic objectives, provide appropriate corporate governance and ensure performance management processes are in place.

The board has undergone significant renewal over the last 18 months. This has coincided with major changes to the way our business operates due to many factors including, response to COVID-19, changing needs of our members, greater reliance on IT, less reliance on physical “high street” presence, opportunity to expand our common bond, greater competition from a range of providers. The Board has responded to these challenges and developed a strategic business plan to move our business to a sustainable future which better serves the needs of our members. It will achieve this through:

- Sustainable growth in the loan book,
- Greater use of technology to improve member access to our services and making back-office processes more efficient.
- Ensuring our colleagues have the necessary skills, capabilities and capacity to deliver high quality services to our members
- Renewed focus on marketing activities and member communications
- Strong governance, audit and risk management
- expansion of our common bond.

Why Join our Board

As a member of the Board, you will help set the strategic direction of the organisation, using your skills and experience to support the management and gain satisfaction from helping thousands of families access secure savings and loans. There are many challenges which we must respond to and the board has stepped up to this task, creating a strategy to take West Cheshire Credit Union to the next stages of its development. The Board has identified the specific skill sets to help us deliver this and you will have the opportunity to actively use your skills and knowledge for the benefit of our members. We would welcome applications from experienced NEDs and those just starting out on their non-executive career who have the relevant senior management experience for the roles outlined below.



Board Composition

The Board comprises a Chair, Vice Chair, and directors, elected by the members at the AGM, comprising a range of skills and experience to provide appropriate corporate governance, performance oversight, and risk assurance. The directors develop the strategic objectives for the business and provide advice and support to the General Manager who attends the board meetings in the delivery of these objectives, particularly in area of their specific expertise.

Our internal audit function is carried out by a supervisory committee who provide oversight of the Board's and West Cheshire Credit Union's activities and attend board meetings.

The Board recognises the importance of diversity and inclusivity in its directors and employees as it generates a wider pool of talent by reflecting the broadest range of human attributes, experience and backgrounds. It also supports good decision making and reduces the risk of groupthink by providing different viewpoints, ideas and challenge.

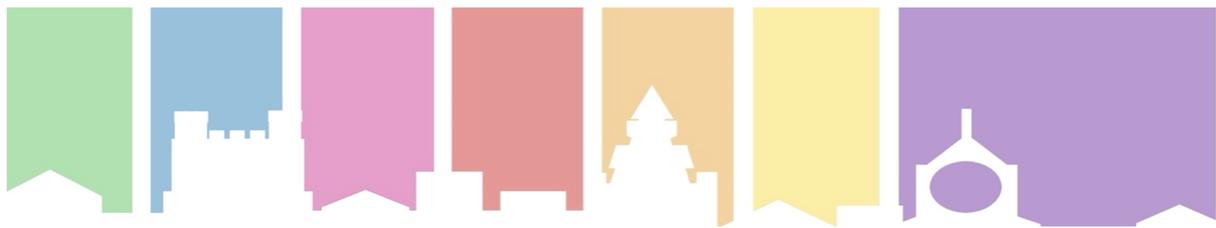
Role Purpose

The purpose of this role is to:

- Set policy, develop the Credit Union's strategic and tactical plans
- Ensure that the Credit Union operates within the law
- Ensure that the Credit Union is maintained in a sound financial condition
- Review the Credit Union's mission, long term objectives and strategies through a comprehensive business planning cycle
- Communicate with members in order to inform the business planning process and provide feedback to members
- Review the progress of the Credit Union towards its business plan objectives
- Evaluate the services that the Credit Union provides
- Report to the members at the Annual General Meeting and at appropriate opportunities throughout the year.

Role Specific Expertise

In addition to the above general board roles, we need a mix of skills, knowledge, and experience to support the delivery of our corporate responsibilities and strategic objectives. We have identified key areas where the current mix of skill and experience currently in the Board could be increased. The following is a brief description of the key roles and associated skills and experiences.

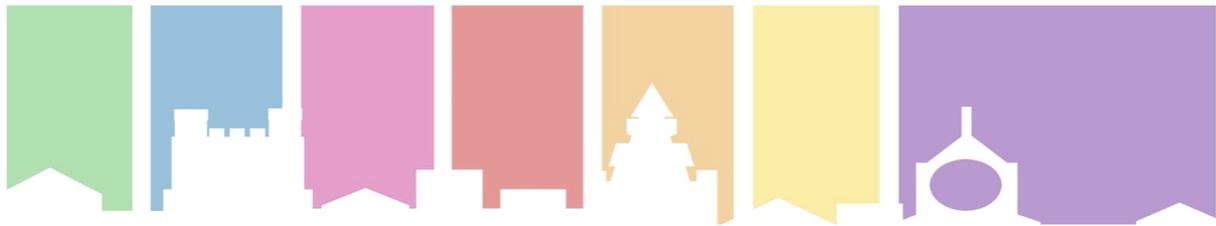


Audit and Risk Management

As the business grows, we will need to develop our Risk Management Framework and ensure it is embedded across the business. We will need to identify and manage risks to the business at a strategic and operational level and ensure there is a focus on risk and risk appetite in all our activities. A key part of this to ensure that our processes, systems and interactions with our members are compliant as failures and breaches can be at the heart of many risks (e.g. reputational, financial, regulatory). With this key area of the business being essential to our growth it should have a Board Director with recognised skills and experience in this field.

Linked to this (and often given joint oversight through an 'Audit and Risk Committee' in larger companies) is the internal audit process, one of the key functions the regulator expects us to carry out. At present the process is carried out by the Supervisory Committee however we do not have a Board Director who is responsible for its planning and oversight, ensuring it supports our strategic direction. This is an important function that requires dedicated focus, with the Board Director and the Leader of the Supervisory Committee working closely together (potentially forming an Audit Committee when/if appropriate).

	Essential	Desirable
Strong experience in audit and risk control management ideally in financial services	X	
Experience and understanding of Prudential and Conduct regulation	X	
Strong financial acumen and an understanding of financial governance	X	
Experience in leading an internal audit function and building/managing an audit programme		X
Experience of building and embedding a risk management culture in a B2C business		X
Experience of being a member/chair of a Board Audit and/or Risk Committee		X



Marketing and B2C Customer Management

West Cheshire Credit Union operates within a crowded marketplace for financial services with consumers facing a bewildering range of services and providers. But not everyone can or wants to use services provided by high street banks or those operated by “door-step” lenders, but do want to find a safe, ethical and above all an affordable place for loans and savings that aligns with their circumstances. That’s our role. We already have a strong reputation with our members but now we need to build on this, broadening our base and exploring ways in which we can connect with new and existing members. We therefore need the skills and expertise at board level to support the management in developing marketing strategies to target growth to new and existing members and expand our reach into new territories. This will also focus on exploring the products we provide, the means of accessing our services and data analysis to allow the board and management to make strategic decisions for future growth.

	Essential	Desirable
Marketing experience ideally from a consumer financial services related background	X	
Experience of developing and launching marketing campaigns ideally within consumer financial services	X	
Experience in undertaking market research to determine new products, services and customer access.		X
Experience in the development and launch of on-line financial services, including Apps, client facing web services etc		X
Experience in growing and expanding small businesses		X
Experience in CRM and use of data bases to provide trend analysis, marketing tracking, return on marketing investment etc	X	



Human Resources

Our colleagues provide the vital link between the services we provide and our members. The high regard our colleagues are held in is reflected in the feedback and the high level of repeat business we get. We want to ensure the board provides the necessary support to our management and colleagues to undertake their duties and importantly enjoy what they do. The response to COVID-19 has demonstrated the need for our staff to be adaptable, well trained and well supported. In this regard we want to ensure the board has the necessary skills to guide our HR strategy, in what is a fast changing and complex area.

Desired experience and skills (in addition to generic Board requirements):

	Essential	Desirable
Experienced HR manager, ideally within a public facing and/or financial services organisation	X	
Membership of relevant professional body (e.g., CIPD).	X	
Up to date knowledge of relevant HR legislation, relevant to our sector	X	
Experience of HR change management		X
Experience in setting and reviewing remuneration systems		X
Experienced in the setting/oversight of training and development programmes		X

Time Commitment

The Board role would require a minimum time commitment of 2 -3 days per month.

The Board holds one Board Meeting every month. During COVID-19, these have successfully transferred to video calls, but will resume in person as soon as practical.

We also hold a Board development session once a month, though as the Board strategy is confirmed and adopted then these may become more ad-hoc around specific training or development issues.

Ad-hoc commitments such as AGM, engagement with partners etc may occur from time to time.

Applicants should live, work or study within the Common Bond.

Next Steps

If you would like to apply, please submit a copy of your CV together with a covering letter supporting your suitability for the role.

Email your details or questions to:

Anthony.lewis@wccu.co.uk or Stephen.spall@wccu.co.uk

The closing date for applications is Wednesday 21st April 2021

West Cheshire Credit Union

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