

Hastings & Rother Credit Union Ltd
Minutes of the Annual General Meeting for the year ending 30th September 2020
held online on Wednesday 13th January 2021 at 18:00

1. **To ascertain that a quorum of members is present** (minimum 10 members): 10 members were present at the start of the meeting, an 11th arrived later.
2. **To receive apologies for absence:** Rachel Paynter, Ian Gray, Julie Eason.
3. **To agree the Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held July 2020:** agreed unanimously
4. **To appoint Tellers:** due to online voting, no tellers were required.
5. **Report of the President:** see Appendix
6. **Report of the Senior Office Manager + acceptance of the annual accounts:** see Appendix.
The accounts were accepted unanimously. A vote of thanks to Dawn and other staff was agreed unanimously.
7. **Proposal not to pay a dividend to members:** agreed unanimously.
8. **Report of the Credit Committee:**
Mike Richardson reported that, due to COVID, it had been impossible for the committee to meet since March. They were looking to arrange an online meeting shortly. 56 loans were made during the year, totalling 35,680.
9. **Report of the Supervisory Committee:** see Appendix
10. **Election of Directors**
(The terms of office of Peter Hooper, Mike Richardson and Ken Maitland have ended and all have agreed to accept re-election) All were re-elected unanimously.
11. **Election of Credit Committee:**
Mike Richardson, Richard Hayes and Robert Walpole were re-elected unanimously and Alan Matthews was also elected unanimously.
12. **Election of Supervisory Committee:**
Tracey Garrett agreed to continue until other members could be recruited.
13. **Election of Lottery Committee:**
Peter Hooper, Richard Street and Georgiana de Lussy were re-elected unanimously.
14. **Re-appointment of Auditor:** Ashdown Hurrey agreed unanimously
15. Any Other Business

The meeting ended at 18:38

5. President's Report to AGM for the year 1st October 2019 - 30th September 2020

Last year's AGM was delayed, you will recall, by the national lockdown imposed to deal with the COVID-19 virus. Today I'm reporting to you during the third national lockdown on a year that has been dominated by this deadly virus.

In October we agreed to raise the limit on share accounts from £10,000 to £15,000. The main reason for this is that we have a number of corporate accounts which receive a grant which often exceeds the previous limit when received.

In November, Dawn and I had a meeting with one of Hastings Council's directors, Simon Hubbard, which included a lot of very interesting and promising ideas which we could co-operate on. The following month we met Cllr Chowney, leader of the council, for another very productive meeting. Unfortunately the arrival of COVID and departure of Mr Hubbard from HBC and Cllr Chowney as Council leader mean that we haven't progressed very far on any of them. One of the ideas discussed was a proposal to establish a community bank working with other councils as has happened in the north of England.

After volunteering with us to help Dawn with the accounts, we were pleased to welcome Elena Dan onto our payroll in a part-time capacity.

When the lockdown began in March, we very quickly moved most of our services online with staff working from home where possible. We can't commend Dawn enough for the phenomenal effort she made to ensure this in a very short time. Unfortunately, our weekly Information Points at Renaissance House and the Community Contact Centre had to close.

From May we started holding Board of Directors' meeting via Zoom provided by our national body, ABCUL, which, although far from ideal, has enabled us to keep in touch and continue moving the Credit Union forward.

In May we took the decision to replace the outdated and inadequate IT system, ConAccess, with Incuto which is entirely online including providing the facility for members to access their accounts directly. All we need now is the funding to make this happen and Julie Eason has been making great efforts to apply for grants to achieve this. We have been granted half the cost and expect a decision on the other half very shortly from Magdalen & Lasher. Other credit unions which have adopted this system have found a big increase in membership and made many more loans.

In the summer, Big Local North-East Hastings invited us to make secured interest-free loans to residents in their area who had found themselves in difficulties as a result of COVID. The loans, including administration costs, are made from funding provided by BLN-EH so there is no risk to our members' savings. We're in discussions with the Heart of Sidley for a similar scheme.

Ken Maitland, our Vice-President, has been in discussions for us to join the Rye Hub on the Hill so we can increase our presence in that area though, as with everything else, progress on this has been delayed by COVID. We were also contacted by Cllr Carroll, Rother councillor for Sidley, who was very keen for us to have a presence in his area. Unfortunately this has not yet been progressed for the usual reason.

To conclude I would like to thank my fellow directors and volunteers who, in spite of the unprecedented times we're living, through have continued to support us and help us move the Credit Union forward and most especially Dawn, Elena and Tracy without whom none of this would have been possible.

Richard Street 7th January 2021

6. Senior Manager Report – Annual accounts 2019/2020

A summary of the accounts is shown below. After an extremely challenging year members will note that we have ended with a small surplus. The Covid 19 pandemic impacted over half of the financial year and will unfortunately have an impact on the current year accounts as well. The first lockdown and closure of our office meant that we lost almost all our volunteer resource as our office is so small that despite many attempts to create a safe working environment, we have not been able to work from the

office unless we work in there alone. This is not ideal as there are other offices in the building including children of school age which has meant there are often people in the corridor, and we must share the facilities with other organisations.

We were extremely grateful to receive a grant from Sussex Community Foundation Covid Relief fund for two laptops and we purchased another one ourselves at a cost of over £900.00. The nature of our work means that our laptops must be encrypted and completely secure to protect our members accounts and data. We also had to purchase a printer and other items to enable us to work from home though we anticipate being able to use all this equipment once we return to the office in different ways. We were also very relieved to get a discretionary grant from Hastings Borough Council which enabled us to pay staff members for additional hours to do some of the work that would normally be done by volunteers and a member of staff who had to be furloughed for three months. It also helped cover some of the additional costs as well as the loss in interest income.

One unexpected outcome of the pandemic has been the increase in savings and reduction in borrowing by our members. Whilst this is positive in that it helps increase our assets the reduction in borrowing has had an impact on our income as can be seen in the accounts and this reduction is being felt even more in the current year. We have also been unable to operate our lottery but plan to restart this in February to help raise extra income.

We have worked with numerous agencies over the last year to help people affected by the restrictions and have put our membership process and loan application process online. Whilst we managed to open an interim information point in Muriel Matters House thanks to Hastings Council, we have had to postpone this meaning that anyone wanting to open an account must have access to a computer. However, DWP and other agencies including Seaview have been very helpful in facilitating this for people. But many are going directly to the new 'challenger' banks such as Starling and Monzo because their online offer is much easier to use than ours and we must change our back office system to offer this service to stand any chance of keeping up and being sustainable.

Getting back into our office is a priority and we hope that with the current vaccination programme we will be able to achieve this in the spring. We have been given a grant by Sussex Community Foundation towards the cost of a new back office system and are working hard with another funder to obtain a further grant to cover the other two thirds of the cost. A new system will give members the option to manage their accounts online if they wish and we will be able to use open banking and Experian to make more informed lending decisions. We have significant assets that should be used for members loans area and this will mean we can make less risky decisions and reduce potential bad debt.

On a final note, I would like to thank our auditor Simon Lawrence from Ashdown Hurrey who worked over Christmas to complete our audit. Ashdown Hurrey have much fewer staff than normal, and our audit was carried out far later than planned but it was Simon ensured that he met our deadline for our AGM.

HASTINGS & ROTHER CREDIT UNION LTD**SUMMARISED ACCOUNTS YEAR ENDED 30th SEPTEMBER 2020**

Income / Expenditure		2020	2019
		£	£
Income:	Interest on members loans & investments	9265	13243
	Fees and commissions receivable	43792	27347
	Fees and commissions payable	-5417	-5658
	Grants, donations, and misc. income	13710	13125
	Total Income	61350	48057
Expenditure:	Administration costs	49752	43181
	Other operating expenses	4336	3752
	Losses on loans to members	5447	2453
	Depreciation	665	663
Total expenditure		60200	50049
Surplus / (Deficit) for Year		1150	-1992
Taxation		38	-537
Proposed Dividend to Members		0	0
Transfer to Reserves		1112	-2529