



# THE BUZZ



WINTER 2021 NEWSLETTER



From CEO Christine Moore -



It's that time of year again – I can't believe how quickly this year has flown, despite restrictions!

I hope you are all keeping safe and well and are managing to get through this difficult time.

The pandemic has magnified deep inequalities in our society, and pushed more people, through no fault of their own into financially vulnerable circumstances.

Those with good jobs and reliable incomes have been able to save more than usual, but for those with insecure work or who've been furloughed, things have been very tough. Many of our members have had the added costs of keeping children fed and warm whilst off school due to COVID, which has been made even worse with the rise in energy costs.

Please don't forget that you can talk to us if you need help with your finances. We will do everything we possibly can to help if you are struggling to make ends meet or to meet your loan repayments. Just get in touch as soon as you can and we will do our best to find a way to help.

One of the main reasons the credit union exists is to encourage members to save so that they can build a savings pot to fall back on in an emergency. This is why we encourage everyone to save a little whilst they are paying back their loans. Just a small amount each week or month soon adds up and will give you some financial resilience.

We have done our best to improve our services to members, despite having to close some branches. We have enhanced our digital offering and it is now much easier to keep track of your account or apply for loans using our App and members' area.

I am extremely proud of how the staff team have coped through the pandemic, working from home when self-isolating, being so adaptable and managing all the changes to our processes.

At the end of September we said a sad goodbye to Kath Byrne, one of our long standing staff members who worked in our Beswick office for many years. Members really appreciated the time she took to help with loan applications, ensuring they got the right loan for them. She will be very much missed by everyone.

It is so easy to spend more than you need to at Christmas, especially with the current 'buy now, pay later' trend. Just be aware it might cause problems later in the year.

I hope you all have a lovely Christmas and New Year.



# CREDIT UNION AWARENESS MONTH

During October, we, along with lots of other Credit Unions took part in a month-long campaign to raise awareness of Credit Unions and how they support the local community. Members will have seen lots of adverts on outdoor billboards around Manchester as well as on social media. The campaign was called [#howsyourbalance](#) and it had a double meaning. We challenged members to take part in a fun activity by thinking about their personal financial circumstances whilst balancing something on their head.

Lots of our staff took part and you will have seen the pictures on our social media accounts. We also encouraged members to take part by posting a picture on their social media and tag us in and we would select one which we liked. Beth Harris was chosen and she was delighted to have her account credited with £50 from us.



# MEMBER SURVEY 2021

We recently sent out a survey to our members to learn more about your lifestyle and interests as well as requesting honest feedback on how we are supporting you. We want to use the information to help us understand your opinions and how else we might help you. We were very pleased with the response and wanted to share some of the feedback with you:

- **83% of respondents felt it was important to have some savings when needed**
- **80.6% of respondents who have previously had a loan from MCU said they would apply for another**
- **We are hugely proud of the fact that 98.9% of respondents said they would recommend us to friends and family.**



As a thank you to those who responded we said we would randomly select a member to receive a £250 shopping voucher of their choice. Lyndzey Booth was the lucky winner and we hope she enjoys spending the voucher she requested.

Thank you to all of our members who took the time to complete the survey and provided feedback. It has helped us to understand more about your lifestyles and interests, and allows us to use this information to provide more help and support to you.



# CHRISTMAS OPENING HOURS

Branches close 2pm 24th December and reopen 8am 4th January.

Even though our branches will be closed you can still access your account 24/7 through our App or the members area on our website.

You can check your balance, request a withdrawal or apply for a loan.

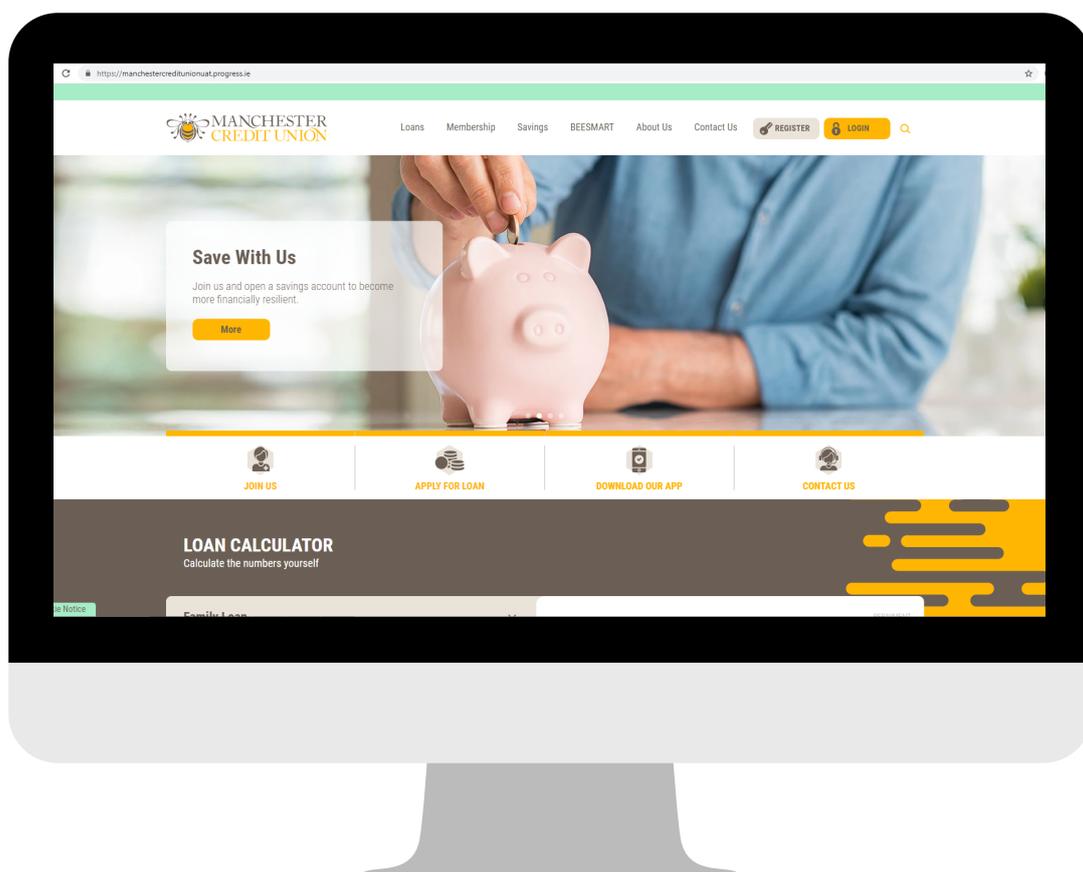
If you need to speak to a member of staff please email us at [info@manchestercreditunion.co.uk](mailto:info@manchestercreditunion.co.uk) and one of the team will contact you.



We would like to remind you about our Christmas Club Savings Account. If you always struggle with the additional costs that Christmas brings please consider saving from January to spread the costs out over the year and make life easier for yourself next December. Please get in touch with us to set it up.



# We have updated our website!



During 2021, we have been spending time developing our website and in November we relaunched it with a fresh new design. All the usual information about our savings accounts and loans are there but we have added in some additional content about MCU and its Board. We have also enhanced the support resources available to you through our partnership with Moneyhelper, the government backed website that offers impartial free advice if you need help over money worries.

Please do take a moment to have a look at our new website and let us know if you have any thoughts or feedback on the new design or content. Equally if there is any information you would find helpful and would like to see on our website, please get in touch.



# New Christmas campaign from the Illegal Money Lending Team

Christmas is on the horizon; an expensive time of year for most families who have to find the money to buy Christmas gifts as well other related expenditure. Budgets often don't stretch to cover the additional costs and many people find themselves having to use credit cards or out of desperation, go to payday lenders or even worse, loan sharks.

We work closely with the Illegal Money Lending Team and they have launched a campaign called #AllIWantForChristmas which aims to encourage families to avoid using loan sharks over the festive period. Their research has found that Christmas is the second highest reason that people borrow money from loan sharks and due to the pandemic there are many more families that have been impacted financially. Illegal lenders will look to take advantage of those in difficult situations and they want to stop this exploitation of vulnerable people.

MCU is supporting their campaign which will run from the 29th November until the 5th December. Apart from encouraging families to report loan sharks if they have been affected, it also focuses on informing people about the help available if they are struggling with debt and safer ways to borrow money including using a credit union.

If you are in the position of needing to borrow money, please come and talk to us to see if we can help. We have a number of loan options and we are a much safer and cheaper option than using payday lenders or loan sharks.

**DON'T LET LOAN SHARKS RUIN YOUR CHRISTMAS**

GET HELP AND SUPPORT  
**0300 555 2222**

**STOP LOAN SHARKS**  
Intervention . Support . Education

#AllIWantForChristmas

 @manchestercreditunion  @CUManchester

 @MANCHESTERCU  Manchester Credit Union

 Visit Us: [www.manchestercreditunion.co.uk](http://www.manchestercreditunion.co.uk)

 Email us - [info@manchestercreditunion.co.uk](mailto:info@manchestercreditunion.co.uk)