

Unity Trust Bank attracts key sponsor for Credit Union Awards

Submitted by: Unity Trust Bank

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Unity Trust Bank (<http://www.unity.co.uk>) is delighted to announce MasterCard Worldwide as the major sponsor of the 2011 National Credit Union Awards (<http://www.creditunionawards.co.uk>.) for Excellence.

Now in its second year, these unique awards are open to any credit union in the UK. They were introduced to champion and pay tribute to the extraordinary work of the countless unsung individuals who give their time and expertise to the credit union movement, many on a pro-bono basis.

In addition to supporting the awards, MasterCard Worldwide is sponsoring a new, individual category award, for Innovation. This category was included to offer credit unions an opportunity to showcase how they have introduced inventive and original approaches to benefit their membership.

Matthew Lanford, MasterCard Worldwide's Head of Prepaid Europe, said, "We recognise Unity's history of supporting credit unions and see these awards as a natural fit with our own commitment to encouraging financial inclusion. As a corporate citizen, we are constantly working to improve the communities in which we live and work and we see our involvement as a very positive way to contribute to society throughout the UK."

John Brooks, Unity's Sales and Marketing Director, said, "This sponsorship marks a very important moment for the Credit Union Awards. We're delighted that MasterCard Worldwide has come on board to support our initiative which, at its heart, is a celebration of the invaluable contribution delivered by credit unions across the UK in tackling financial exclusion. We are looking forward to working in partnership with them to make the awards even better than last year!"

Last year saw an impressive calibre of entries submitted by a broad cross-section of the credit union movement.

Entries are now open for the 2011 National Credit Union Awards for Excellence. For more information and to see the categories visit www.creditunionawards.co.uk.

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Notes to Editors:

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About Unity Trust Bank

Unity Trust Bank ("Unity") is the leading provider of banking services to civil society organisations, social enterprises, trades unions and small to medium sized enterprises.

Unity was established in 1984. The organisation has a deserved reputation for its knowledge of the

particular requirements of its customers and the delivery of a first class portfolio of services.

Unity has an impressive track record of working in partnership with many organisations that campaign for progressive social change and develop new and innovative ways of improving civil society. It also works in partnership with statutory bodies.

For more than 25 years Unity has worked with its credit union customers and trade bodies to develop initiatives to help make a positive and lasting difference.

Unity's commitment to credit unions is evidenced by the fact that almost 45% of all credit unions choose to bank with them, and a number of Unity staff are both members of and on the board of credit unions in their own right. In 1997, Unity joined with one of its trade union shareholders, the Bakers Food and Allied Workers Union, to help them form a credit union of their own. This successful credit union was the first trade union credit union in the UK to have a national common bond. Since then, Unity has advised a number of other trades unions such as the GMB, PCS and RMT on how to establish credit unions of their own. And, since it was launched in 1998, Unity's Credit Union Development Fund has put more than £100,000 to the movement through grants to individual credit unions.

About the Awards

The National Credit Union Awards for Excellence from Unity Trust Bank were devised to recognise outstanding contributions to credit unions.

Credit unions are co-operative financial institutions, owned and controlled by their members and operated for the purpose of promoting thrift, providing credit at reasonable rates, and providing other financial services to their members.

Credit unions differ from banks and other financial institutions in that the members who have accounts in the credit union own the credit union, electing their board of directors on the basis of one-person-one-vote, irrespective of the amount of money invested in the credit union.

Since July 2002, UK credit unions are regulated by the Financial Services Authority.

The categories for the 2011 National Credit Union Awards for Excellence are:

- Active partnerships
- Community mobilisation
- Credit union education
- Credit union innovation
- Fundraising - raising additional capital
- Fundraising - on behalf of a charity
- Marketing
- Photography
- Single benefactor
- Young leader of the year (17-35)
- Young saver of the year (under 16)

Filene Award

The judges will choose an overall winner from one of these categories to be the recipient of the Filene Award for Social Entrepreneurship, named in honour of Edward Filene, one of the 'founders and benefactors' of the credit union movement.

This award will be presented to the person or credit union who has done the most to promote the concept of credit unions.

For further information about Unity Trust Bank please visit www.unity.co.uk.

