Social Impact Report 2025

ACCORN Community Bank



"Ethical finance for stronger communities"

Introduction & purpose



Our mission

"At Acorn, our mission is simple: to give everyone access to fair and affordable financial services, no matter their background."



Purpose of this report



Share the measurable difference we've made in 2025.



Show how our ethical, member-owned model benefits our communities.



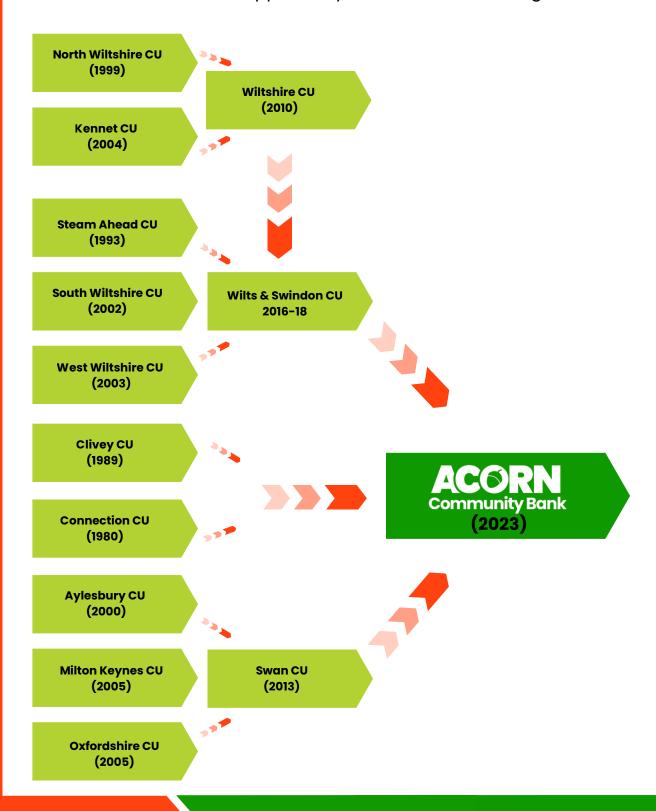
Provide transparency and accountability to members, partners and stakeholders.





Our Journey

We have brought ten credit unions together to form a strong and ambitious organisation focused on serving the many communities in Wiltshire, Berkshire, Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire. We have a history dating back to the 1980s and a fantastic future of opportunity and service stretching ahead of us.







Our Common Bond

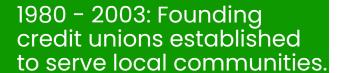
We serve people who live and work in Wiltshire, Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire.







Our Growth Story



2023: Expanded to cover new regions and serve more people.

2024: Introduced new processes allowing us to help people with benefits.

2025: Launched new website and online banking phone app for better accessibility.

Reached 10,000 members with over £5m in assets.



Our Objective



- Promote budgeting and help members to save regularly.
- Provide affordable, fair loans to all, especially those excluded by mainstream banks.
- Support financial education and well-being for all.
- Strengthen community resilience through partnerships and local investment.





Our membership



Key growth highlights



10,400 members.





- Acorn helped me take control of my debts.
- Acorn helped me plan ahead and it changed everything.
- They treated me like a person.
- They helped me get back on track.
- They didn't judge me but they cared.
- Acorn taught me to plan and budget and stay in control.



49% of loan applicants are unemployed or on benefits.



Average savings of around £500 per member.



£3.8m on loan to around 4,000 members.





Our loans



Family & Benefit Loans

Family and benefit loans which members can repay using their child and other benefits up to, £1,000.



Acorn Loans

Acorn loans up to £15,000 for members who wish to borrow for larger purchases, often using their existing Acorn savings to receive a lower interest rate.



Payroll Loans

Payroll loans up to £15,000 for members who work for over 20 payroll partners, and can repay their loans via salary deductions.



Acorn Difference



Why our Loans Stand Out



Every
application is
reviewed
individually.
No one size fits
all
decisions.



Members build savings while repaying loans, Supporting long-term resilience.



We always
assess
repayment
ability to ensure
responsible
lending.

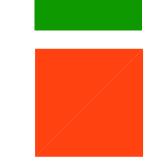


Loans are only offered when they're truly in the member's best interest.



If repayment becomes difficult, we provide support, not penalties.

Rate Comparison



Ethical and community driven lending

- Typical rates for a small loan from pay day lenders are around 100% APR.
- In the year to September 2025, Acorn lent £2.8M to its members at an average rate of 16.5%.
- We saved our members around £2.3m in interest payments which they would otherwise have had to make.
- This money was returned to the local economy, rather than going to shareholders' pockets.
- Around 4,000 borrowing members, each saved an average of £575 each in interest payments by borrowing fairly from Acorn instead.



Your Community Bank, working for YOU with YOU!

Financial Inclusion



Working in Salisbury

From April 2024 to April 2025, we delivered a financial inclusion initiative in Salisbury with support from Wiltshire Council's Health Inequality Fund. Financial stress is a major driver of poor health, strained relationships, and workplace difficulties. We aimed to reduce this stress by:

- Helping people stabilise and manage their finances.
- Ensuring they claimed the benefits they were entitled to.
- Supporting them to create and manage household budgets.

Our local Impact

- Partnered with over 20 front-line agencies to reach those most in need.
- Supported around 250 people through personalised sessions.
- Helped secure thousands of pounds in unclaimed entitlements money that now benefits vulnerable households and wider local economy.

Looking Ahead

We aim to secure long-term funding and expand the initiative, beyond Salisbury into other areas of deprivation across the region.

What people told us

"Julie and Jade are such an invaluable help to all of us, and supported me with so much patience and grace."

"It helps me mentally and has stopped me from being isolated."

"Thank you so much -I don't know what I would do without your help. I hope one day I can give back too."

"I am extremely grateful for your support today."

Survey Results





Highlights

- 95% of our members said they would recommend us to their family and friends.
- 94% of our members said that Acorn motivates them to save money regularly.
- Our team received a rating of 95% from our members for being knowledgeable and helpful.
- 97% members using the app said it was easy to use with good features.



Member Feedback



- "Acorn is simply the best, better than most banks".
- "Staff are lovely, polite and very helpful. The interest is not too high".
- "Thank you for your commitment to help the community in this financially difficult era".
- "I don't hesitate to recommend Acorn to my friends. The loan I got came at the right time".
- "Acorn are fantastic they have helped me through some very tough times and also taught me a lot on how to save and budget".
- "I save from NHS payroll and am pleased how my savings build up. It has helped me manage bills, dental visits, car repairs and is a safety net for emergencies".



Acorn in the Workplace

With more than one in three adults in the UK living with low financial resilience, access to fair and reliable financial services in the workplace is a powerful way to build long-term financial well-being.

Why does it matter?

- **Lower stress & better well-being;** reduces money worries that impact health and work.
- Safe, affordable credit; access to fair loans instead of high-cost lenders
- Stronger savings habits; staff build regular savings for financial resilience.
- Valuable, no-cost benefit; employers can support staff without extra expense.

Our Partnerships

Acorn is currently working with over 20 employers across the region:



Local government authorities



NHS trusts



Local charities











Our Reach in 2025



Nearly 500 payroll members.



Over £1.2 million saved collectively.



Around **£900,000 affordable loans** issued.



Reduced reliance on high-cost lenders and **increased resilience**.

By embedding ethical financial services at work, Acorn helps promote staff well-being. This helps employers offer a reliable financial partner, to their employees, leading to a better retention rate and reduced absenteeism.



Junior Memberships



Junior members under 18 have always held a significant place within the Acorn family. They represent the future generation of savers, and we are committed to providing them with the tools and resources necessary to embark on their financial journey, making saving and planning a fundamental part of their lives from an early age.

This year, we have **enhanced** our junior **membership processes** to simplify account opening and management for our younger members, allowing them to **start saving** for their future. Members can apply to open junior savers for their family members directly through our website, and these accounts will be linked and visible in the app for **easier management.**

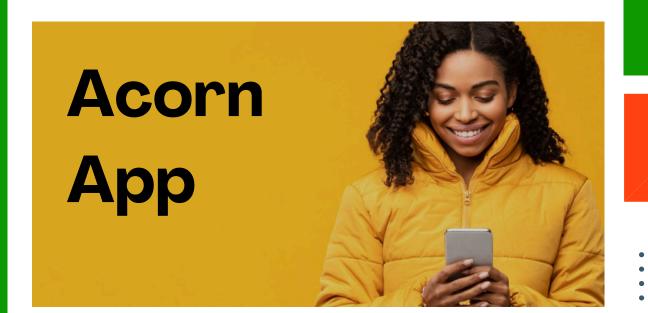
Benefits

- Easy to open the Junior saver and start saving for their future.
- Online access to linked family accounts making it easy to manage the account.
- Quick access to savings through seamless withdrawal facility.
- Simple to top-up savings by transferring money between accounts.









We launched our new phone app in May 2025. In our Survey, over 97% of our members using it said it's very helpful and easy to use.



App features



View accounts, check balances, transfer money between accounts.



Set up savings pots with targets to plan for future purchases.



Make
withdrawals to
linked bank
accounts.



Apply for loans, check loan application status.



Manage linked junior accounts set up for kids/grandkids.



Our Win



We won

We were honoured to be named Best Credit Union (South) 2025 by Smart Money People. What makes this award especially meaningful is that it was decided entirely by our members - based on their satisfaction and ratings, with no judging panel involved.

Our members' outstanding 4.95 out of 5 rating helped bring this title home, and the stories they shared truly highlight the difference Acorn makes. Their feedback inspires us, and we remain committed to delivering the same level of care and support

At the heart of our work is the credit union ethos of people helping people, and we're proud to see the real impact this has on our members' lives.

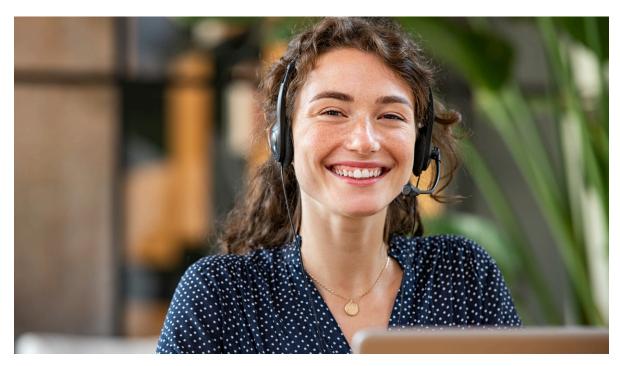


Thanks to you

- "Acorn taught me that small, regular savings add up. I now budget better and avoid debt during emergencies."
- "As a single mum automatic savings changed everything-my first year with Christmas and Uniform money saved in advance."
- "Acorn's friendly team processed my urgent loan quickly, helping me get home to see my dad before we passed."
- "Easy to join, great communication, and savings that support the community rather than shareholders -exactly what I value.
- "The app makes saving simple, and helpful staff ensure accessing savings or loans is always smooth and stress-free".
- "Acorn's savings schemes like Christmas and uniform savers are brilliant- encouraging regular savings with helpful bonuses".



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