

**Northumberland**



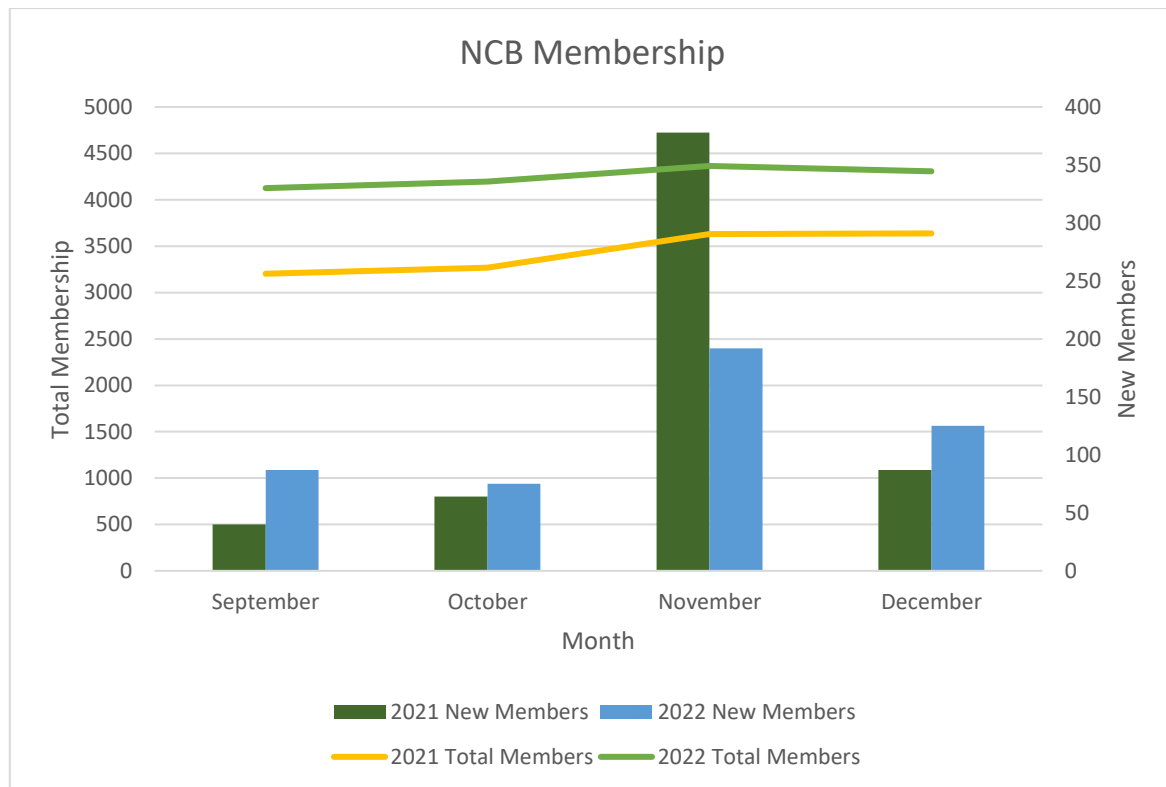
**Community Bank**

**Ashington Town Council  
Progress Report**

**January 2023**

## Membership –

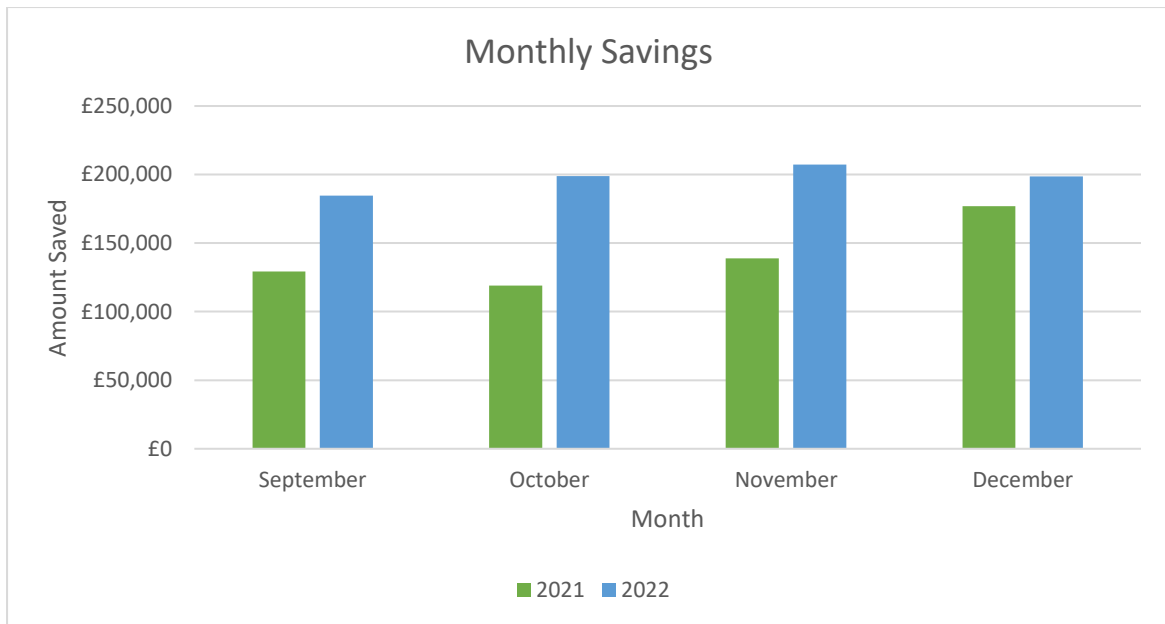
Over the last three months we have seen a fantastic increase in membership and now have over 4400 members; 690 of these members are residents of NE63, and a third of those members have a loan with us.



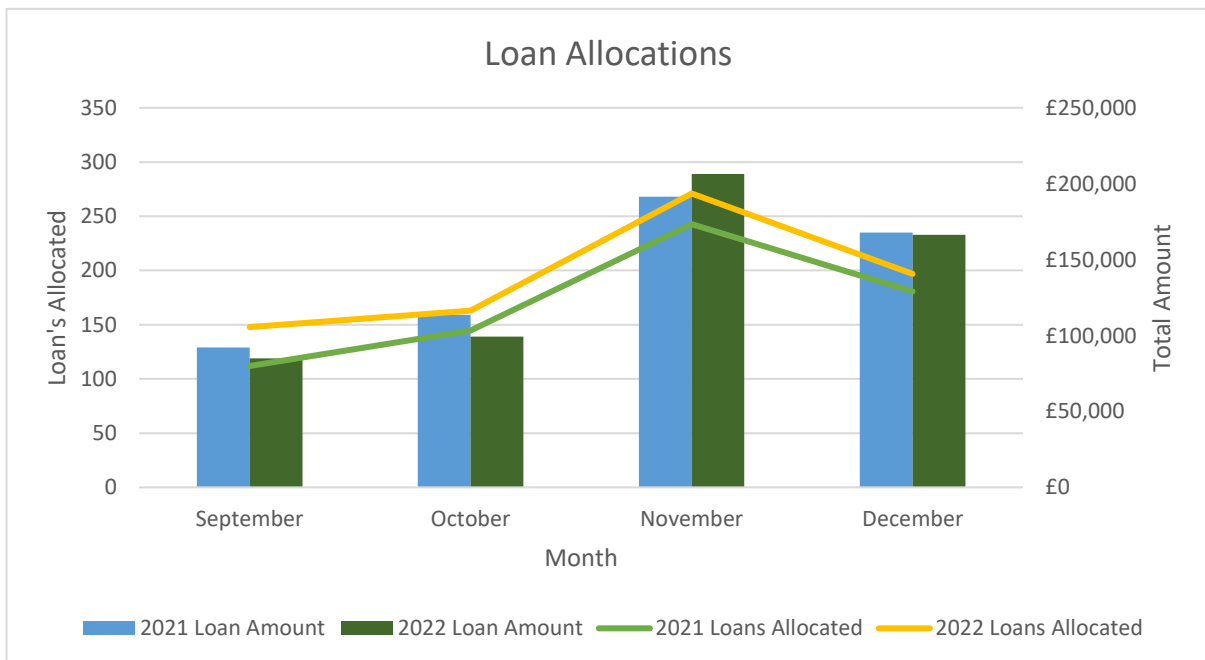
We continue to attend the Full Circle Food Project in Hirst Park once a month where we use our time there to raise awareness of NCB. We continue to work closely with the Illegal Money Lending Team to help educate our members on the dangers of loan sharks; in 2022 we ran several successful campaigns and welcomed over 130 savers through the scheme. We are trying to be more visible in the community, so are open to suggestions on areas/events to attend.

We are currently working with the Northumberland County Council on a Rent Deposit Guarantee Scheme; the scheme enables renters to borrow funds from the Council to pay the bond of a new property and save the deposit back into an account with NCB in order to either repay the Council or use it towards their next property. Since November 2022 we have received 11 referrals from the scheme.

As you can see from the graph below, the amount of savings that we're currently receiving is significantly higher than it was in 2021, meaning we have more funds available to loan out in our community.



The graph below shows the number, and amount, of loans that were allocated from September – December in 2021 and 2022. As you can see, although we allocated a reduced number of loans, a lot of our members are borrowing a higher amount; our average loan size has increased from £636 in 2021, to £679 in 2022.



### **Opening Hours –**

After our meeting with the Town Council on the 1<sup>st</sup> June, we extended our *office* opening hours for face-to-face enquiries/over the counter transactions:

	<b>Office Opening Hours</b>
August 2022 Onwards	Tuesday 10am – 2pm
	Thursday 10am – 2pm

Around 40% of the public approaching the counter are for NCB, and we continue to signpost the other 60% of visitors accordingly. We will continue to monitor our opening hours and adjust these where necessary.

Due to the building work being carried out in Ashington Town Hall during February 2023, we will not be able to allow the public into our offices. All of our members have been informed of this; as we only have one member who visits regularly to deposit into their savings account, we do not anticipate this causing any issues to our membership, however we will work with the individuals who may require additional support during this time.

*Please note that members can access their account 24/7 through their member area, as well as apply for loans. Members can contact the office with their queries through email, telephone and messages, Monday-Friday 10am-4pm.*

### **Staff and Volunteers –**

After having a great end to the year, we were able to offer [REDACTED] a permanent, part time contract; having lived in Ashington for all of his life, [REDACTED] is grateful to be able to continue to provide support to his local community. [REDACTED] has fantastic IT skills and we hope to help him to utilise these to further his career.

[REDACTED] is due to finish her Customer Service Apprenticeship in February 2023 and so she has also been offered a permanent contract. This means that we will continue to run the operations on 4.78FTE for the foreseeable future.

We have taken on a further Member Services Volunteer from Ashington who was being supported by the Bridge Project to get back in to work. [REDACTED] is currently volunteering with us for two days a week. [REDACTED] [REDACTED] has been a great help to the team and is keen to learn more about the organisation.