



**We believe in you**

# Social Impact Report

2021-2022

# Opening thoughts

## from our Chief Executive



**Stephen  
Deakin**

I am delighted to share our latest social impact report for the 2021 – 2022 financial year.

The past year has been focused on kickstarting the recovery of businesses and the economy after Covid 19 took the world by storm in 2020. With almost all businesses plunged into survival mode, it was time to step up and support their return to normal trading conditions,

It has been another challenging year for SMEs across the West Midlands and environs but as always, we have remained steadfast in our commitment to supporting them with access to finance and are delighted to see that the green shoots of positivity appear to be on show.

With social and economic impact at the heart of everything we do I am incredibly

proud that we supported the recovery of 101 local businesses and protected 1,010 jobs.

And yet despite the challenges, by providing SMEs with the funding the need to recover and grow, BCRS also helped to create 450 jobs and generate an extra £45 million of value in the West Midlands and environs economy. This means that for every £1 lent, we generated an additional £5.20 of additional value to the local economy.

As always, we will strive to continue increasing our impact and consider what useful part we can play in the economic, environmental, and social challenges faced by the SME's and communities we support.

I hope you enjoy reading this report as much as I did

# Support During the Road to Recovery.

We continued to pledge our unequivocal support to delivering crucial funding to businesses impacted by the pandemic and became one of the first alternative lenders to be accredited as a delivery partner for the **Recovery Loan Scheme (RLS)** in May 2021.

As an SME ourselves, we understand the challenges businesses are facing and were proud to have delivered £4.1million of funding to 63 businesses across the West Midlands and environs via the Recovery Loan Scheme which safeguarded 552 jobs and generated an extra £21.5 million of additional value to the local economy in FY 2022 with more in the pipeline for a strong start to FY 2023.

The government loan schemes have been a lifeline for businesses over the last two years.

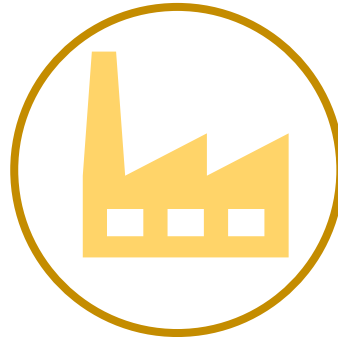


# Statistic Snapshot



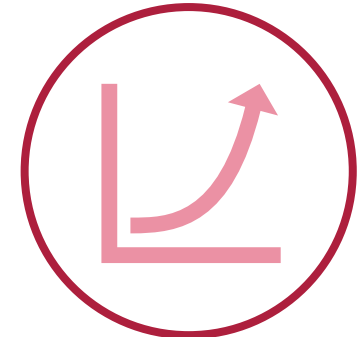
£8.6m

lent



101

businesses supported



£5.20

of additional value generated in the West Midlands and environs economy for every £1 lent.



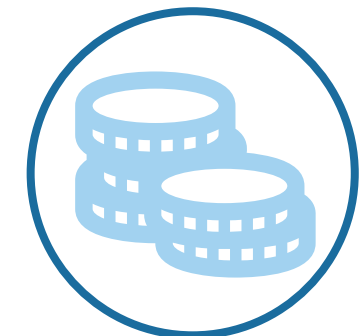
1,010

jobs safeguarded



450

jobs created



£45m

value added to the West Midlands and environs economy\*

\*Our economic impact statistics are calculated using the Responsible Finance Economic Impact Calculator. The calculator was originally prepared by the Centre for Business in Society (CBIS), Coventry University with assistance from James Medhurst, ICF International, with the support of Citi. It was updated in 2019 following a review by Marc Cowling, Brighton Business School, Richard Roberts, Aston University and Steve Walker, Aston Reinvestment Trust (ART).

We have been supporting businesses in West Midlands and environs for over 20 years.



44%

of BCRS' total lending was dispersed into the UK's top 35% most disadvantaged areas according to the Index of Multiple Deprivation.



12%

of BCRS' total lending was dispersed to ethnic minority led businesses. In 2020, 6% of SME employers were ethnic minority group led.



15%

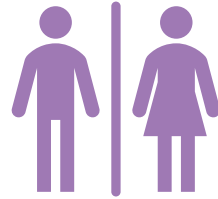
of BCRS' total lending was dispersed to female led businesses. In 2020, 16% of SME employers were female led.

# WE PRACTICE WHAT WE PREACH



Giving young people the career start they need:

In the past 10 years, we have offered roles to three graduates from the University of Wolverhampton and facilitated five internship opportunities.



Gender balance within our team is important to us:

We are pleased that 71% our team are female and currently 33% of our Board are female.



Committed to becoming more sustainable:

78% of suppliers are located within 50 miles of our HQ;  
Our lending managers live in the communities they serve.

# Lending by Area

Area	Number of Loans	Percentage
Birmingham & Solihull	19	16%
Black Country	21	18%
Coventry & Warwickshire	4	3%
Gloucestershire	0	0%
Herefordshire	2	2%
Other	12	11%
Staffordshire	24	21%
Stoke-on-Trent	4	3%
Telford & Shropshire	20	17%
Worcestershire	11	9%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>117</b>	<b>100%</b>

# Sectors Supported

We are proud to support most industry sectors across the West Midlands and environs. The top ten sectors we support by value are as follows:

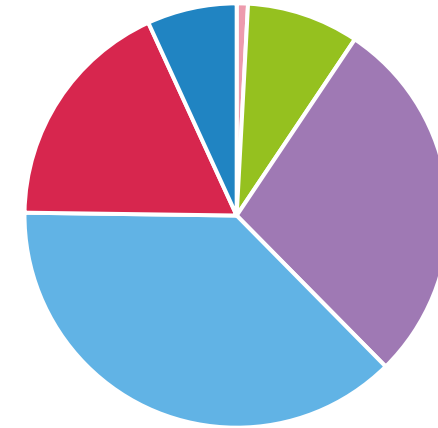
Sector	Lent, £	% of 2021/22 lending
Manufacturing	£1,538,500	18%
Wholesale & Distribution	£884,001	10%
Professional Services	£855,000	10%
Construction	£713,001	8%
Service Industry	£700,000	8%
Retail	£648,002	7%
Motor Trade	£425,000	5%
Care Industry	£340,002	4%
IT	£280,000	3%
Recruitment	£275,001	3%



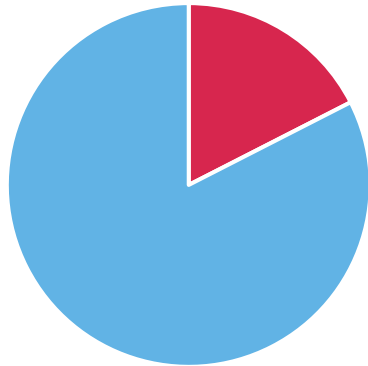


# Detailed Demographics

Age Range	%	No. of Loans	Amount Lent
18-24	<1%	1	£30,000
25-34	9%	10	£544,001
35-44	28%	33	£2,528,003
45-54	38%	44	£3,550,503
55-64	18%	21	£1,590,002
65+	7%	8	£390,002



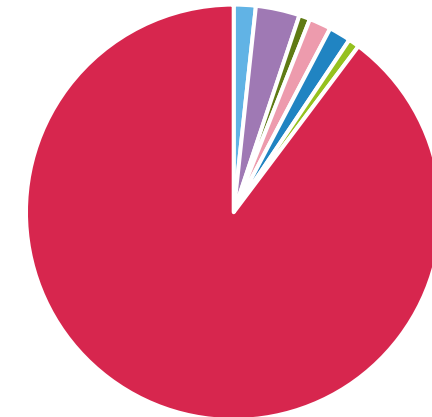
18-24 25-34 35-44 45-54 55-64 65+



Female Male

Gender	%	No. of Loans	Amount Lent
Female	15%	17	£1,217,001
Male	85%	100	£7,415,510

Ethnicity	%	No of Loans	Amount Lent
Asian	2%	2	£258,000
Asian British	4%	4	£443,000
Black	<1%	1	£12,000
Caribbean	2%	2	£50,002
Other Ethnic Group	2%	2	£95,000
Prefer not to say	<1%	1	£125,000
White	90%	105	£7,649,509

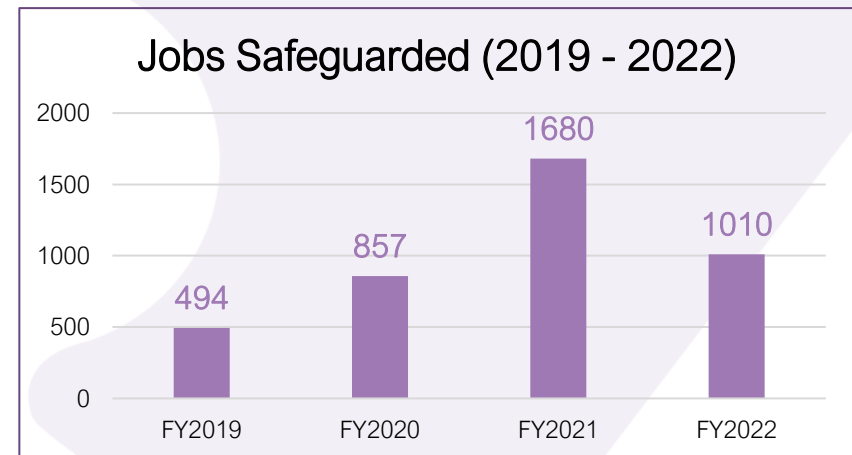
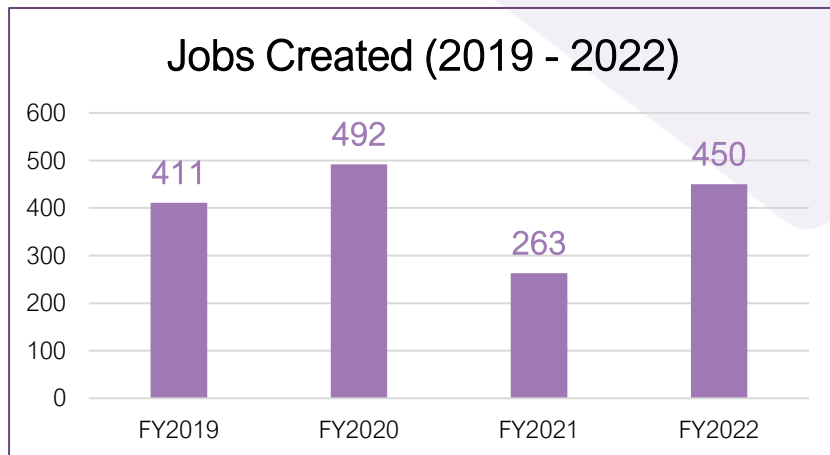
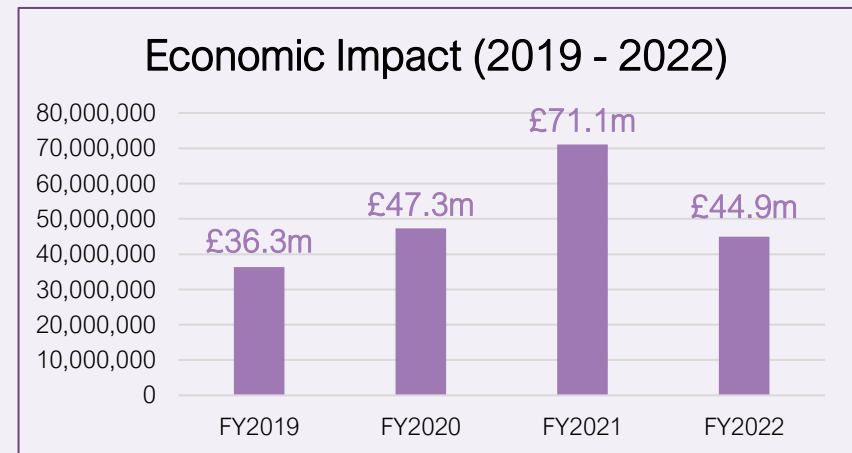
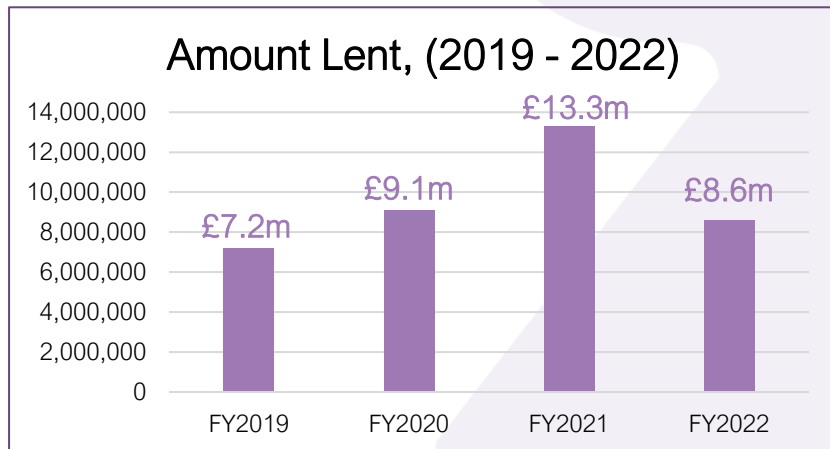


Asian Asian British Caribbean Prefer not to say Black Other Ethnic Group White

# Our Impact Over the Years

As part of our mission to increase support for SMEs based in the West Midlands and environs that are unable to access finance from traditional lenders, we are proud to have **increased our lending by 19.4 per cent** since 2019.

As a business lender dedicated to intentional social and economic impact, our economic impact has **increased by 23.6 per cent** since 2019, while the number of jobs created and safeguarded has risen by 25.5 per cent and 132 per cent respectively.



# We Are a 5 ★ Lender

Over the past year, we are pleased to have built a strong collection of outstanding Trustpilot reviews. We see this as one of the best methods of assessing the success of BCRS Business Loans – by having a positive impact on our customers' lives, demonstrating the belief we have in them and helping them achieve their dreams and ambitions. We have a Trust Score of 4.9 out of 5.

## ★ Trustpilot



### **Another happy business owner**

Really happy with the support we received from BCRS. Super-efficient from day one to the last payment... definitely recommend them.

## ★ Trustpilot



### **Thank you BCRS**

Thank you BCRS for the cash injection that has enabled us to employ more staff for our busy company. The application process was very easy and if I needed help, they were always on the end of the phone to offer support. Top company would highly recommend.

## ★ Trustpilot



### **Simple, supportive, and helpful team**

We worked with Lou and the Team to help us with our Recovery Loan. They were very supportive, helped streamline the process and made it easy to do.

## ★ Trustpilot



### **Very happy with BCRS from start to finish.**

Very happy with BCRS from start to finish. During the worst 2 years of retailing, we worked together to ensure the continued safety and trading of the business. Always easy to contact (unlike so many other companies) Will be using again and recommending.

# UN Sustainability Goals

As a Community Benefit Society, BCRS Business Loans understands that small businesses play a crucial role in supporting inclusive and sustainable growth and are a force for social good in the communities they serve.

The United Nation Sustainable Development Goals act as a blueprint to achieve a bright future for us all. Whilst BCRS is unable to fulfil all goals due to retaining a deliberate focus purely on finance, here are some of the ways we are proud to support the sustainable development goals:



## End poverty in all its forms everywhere.

BCRS is committed to lending into the most deprived areas of the UK, which accounted for 44% of our lending last financial year. Providing funding to support the growth of SMEs enables BCRS to facilitate job creation and improve job security, which is essential in reducing poverty.



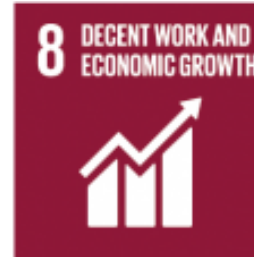
## Achieve gender equality and empower all women and children.

We believe in championing female-led business and empowering women to be successful business leaders. We do this by providing the finance they need to succeed, raising awareness amongst our social media community and practicing what we preach in our own team. We are proud that our Operations & Marketing Director Sarah Moorhouse is Chair of the Black Country Women in Leadership group.



**Access to affordable, reliable, sustainable, and modern energy for all.**

As a Co-operative ourselves, BCRS is passionate about supporting co-operative sustainable energy projects. Offering a scheme whereby BCRS invests £1,000 of withdrawable share capital in such organisations.



**Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all.**

Financial exclusion continues to create significant barriers to growth and long-term prosperity in communities across the UK. Funding from BCRS is a key enabler of sustainable economic development, recognising how important SMEs are in supporting economic prosperity and meaningful employment.



**Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialisation, consumption and production, and foster innovation.**

By delivering affordable business loans, BCRS is proud to be enable small businesses to invest in long term strategies that foster innovation and embed more efficient consumption and production techniques. Funding from BCRS gives the people with the ideas the means to innovate and grow.



**Reduce inequality within and among countries.**

BCRS is a fund manager for regional funds such as the Midlands Engine Investment Fund (MEIF) and Community Investment Enterprise Facility (CIEF), which have been established to address the regional access to finance imbalances in the UK and achieve the government's Levelling Up agenda.



# Navigating Net-Zero



Introducing long-term hybrid working patterns has enabled us to reduce emissions traditionally released by commuting into the office five day per week.



We are proud that in financial year 21/22, 78% of our suppliers were located within 50 miles of our head office in Wolverhampton.



The staff team are encouraged to recycle using the provided paper and plastic recycling bins in our office to reduce the amount of waste that ends up in landfill.



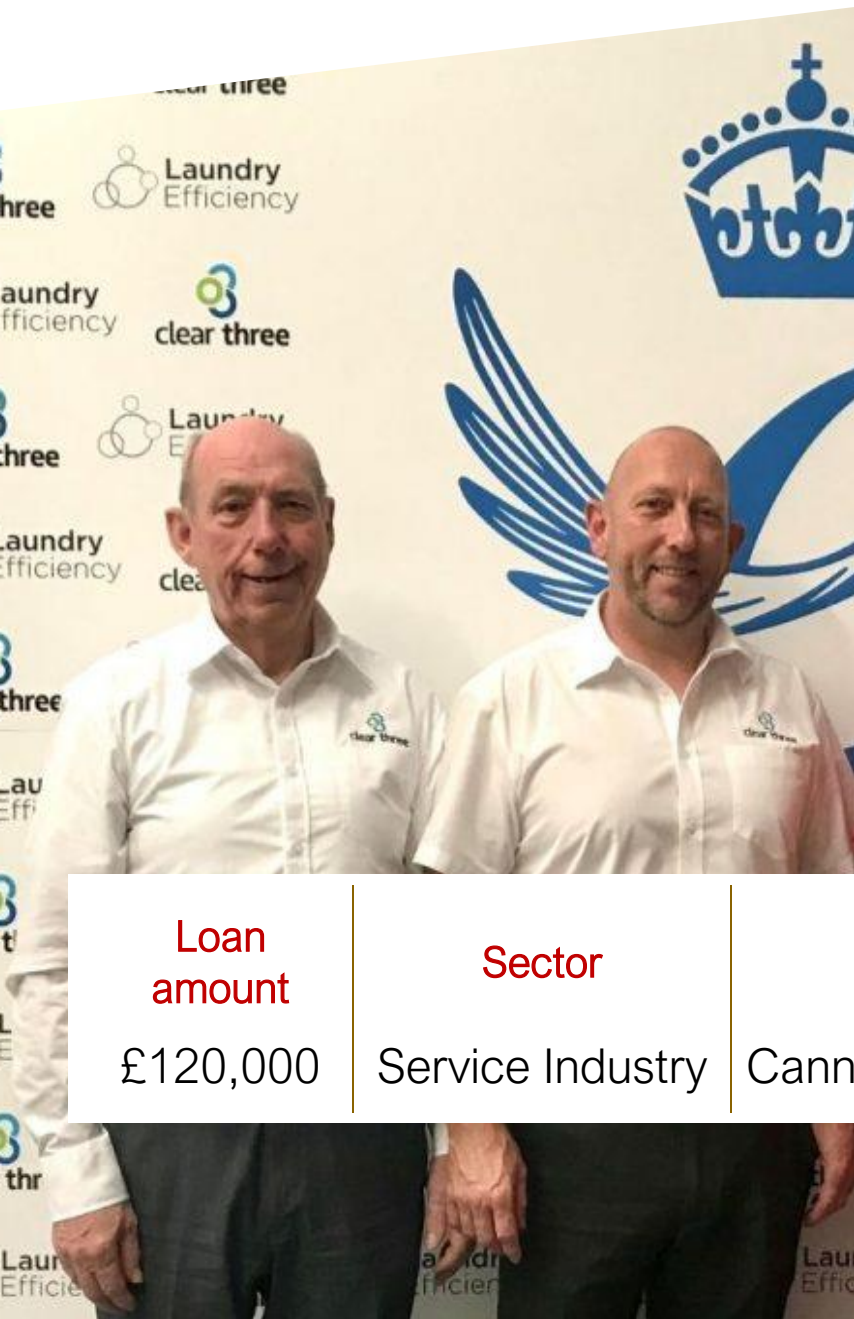
We will reduce the use of plastics for marketing or promotional purposes; aiming to purchase environmentally friendly alternatives instead.



Due to our new hybrid working patterns, we have already reduced our office size by half to cut unnecessary energy consumption.



# Clear Three



A Queens Award-winning laundry efficiency specialist which helps businesses implement more eco-friendly washing systems secured a £120,000 funding boost to innovate, strengthen and expand its consultancy services and look to diversify their technology into new markets.

**Colin Oakley, CEO of the firm, said:**

“The investment fund will allow us to not only recruit additional roles but will enable us to branch into new markets and continue to develop new products.”

Loan amount	Sector	Area	Jobs safeguarded	Jobs created	Economic Impact	UN Sust. Goals
£120,000	Service Industry	Cannock Chase	6 jobs	2 jobs	£648,000	

#FundingStories


# Elizabeth Rocca



A Burton-on-Trent based online retailer of needlework, sewing and craft supplies has secured £30,000 to support growth following an increase in demand for craft products following the pandemic.

**Sarah Gardiner-Harvey said:**

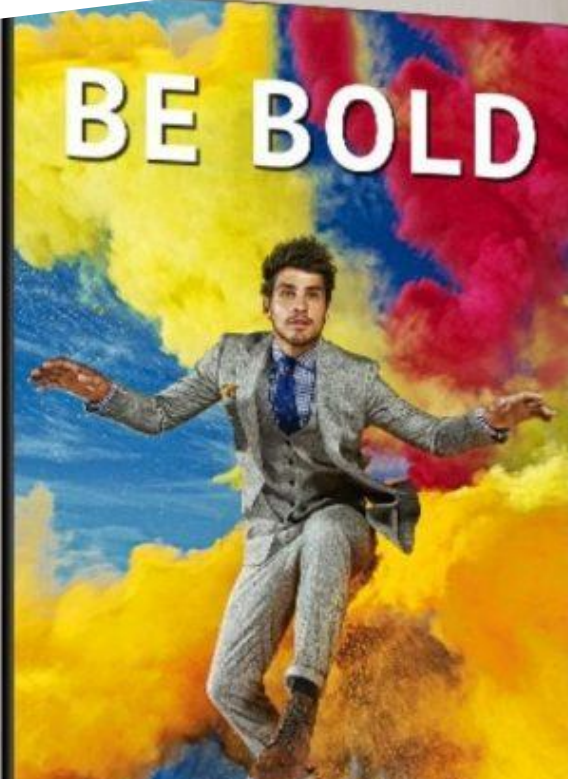
“This funding boost will help Elizabeth Rocca take the next step on its growth journey to purchase additional stock and enhance our website and we are very thankful to BCRS for their support.”

Loan amount	Sector	Area	Jobs safeguarded	Jobs created	Economic Impact	UN Sust. Goals
£30,000	Retail	Burton-on-Trent	3 jobs	1 job	£162,000	

#FundingStories



# Media Group



Media Group, which has been delivering a full suite of marketing support to brands for over 23 years, required a funding boost after experiencing an increase in demand following the disruption initially caused by Covid-19 in 2020.

**Christopher Taylor, Director of the firm said:**

“This will not only allow us to invest in smart marketing technology which will save time, money and provide real-time results for our clients, it will also enable us to employ an additional team member.

Loan amount	Sector	Area	Jobs safeguarded	Jobs created	Economic Impact	UN Sust. Goals
£52,000	Marketing	Dudley	1 job	1 job	£280,000	

#FundingStories

# BCRS in the Community

As a Community Benefit Society ourselves, we like to support local projects and initiatives that are going to benefit the areas we cover. Over the years these have ranged from raising money for charity, offering volunteering opportunity during work time, and investing in local community-led co-operatives. Here's a snapshot of what we've supported in the past year.



We are proud to support grassroots football in our local community.

Currently sponsoring Wyrley Panthers, an 11-a-side girls football team based in Great Wyrley.



Our head of business development, Andrew Hustwit is a board member for the RJS Foundation.

Our chief executive, Stephen Deakin is Chair of the governors at a school in Kidderminster.

Louise Armstrong, one of our business development managers works alongside Aston Centre for Growth to give business advice as part of the Aston Programme for Small Business Growth.



We extend our support to local charities by hosting our own quiz in March 2022 in Birmingham and we regularly attend other charity events across our business network.

# Final Thoughts

## from our Chief Executive

As a Community Benefit Society that was founded in 2002 upon co-operative principles, I think this report highlights that social and economic impact is at the heart of everything we do at BCRS Business Loans. Not only this but we are committed to supporting businesses in their time of need, actioning the levelling up agenda and directing our lending towards under-served communities, geographies and areas.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank the British Business Bank, Big Society Capital, Triodos Bank UK, Social Investment Scotland, Unity Trust Bank and The Co-operative Bank for their unwavering support. Thanks to the successful relationships BCRS has with these funding partners, we are able to support businesses across the West Midlands and environs with the Midlands Engine Investment Fund (MEIF) and the Community Investment Enterprise Facility (CIEF).

I would like to say a special thank you to the small but incredibly mighty team at BCRS for working around the clock to support as many businesses as we possibly could in a year of different but still challenging circumstances. Perhaps most pleasing is every one of our team puts our customers at the forefront of their thinking. I also like to thank our supportive and constructive Board, who continue to provide constructive challenge and support.

As a proud member of Responsible Finance, I would also like to thank them for their ongoing support for our sector, which has been incredibly welcome this year.

Finally, we would like to take this opportunity to thank our customers and introducers. You all contribute to the success of BCRS, and we greatly appreciate your continued support.



[www.bcrs.org.uk](http://www.bcrs.org.uk) | [enquiries@bcrs.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@bcrs.org.uk) | 0345 313 8410

BCRS Business Loans, Technology Centre, Wolverhampton Science Park,  
Glaiser Drive, Wolverhampton, WV10 9RU



@B\_C\_R\_S



BCRS Business Loans



Supported by the  
Regional Growth Fund



BCRS Business Loans Limited is a registered society, number 29393R, under the Co-operative and Community Benefit Societies Act 2014. We are authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA), Firm Reference Number 722855. For more details, please contact the FCA at [register.fca.org.uk](http://register.fca.org.uk) or on 0800 111 6768.



The Midlands Engine Investment Fund project is supported financially by the European Union using funding from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) as part of the European Structural and Investment Funds Growth Programme 2014-2020 and the European Investment Bank. The Recovery Loan Scheme is managed by the British Business Bank on behalf of, and with the financial backing of, the Secretary of State for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy. British Business Bank plc is a development bank wholly owned by HM Government. It is not authorised or regulated by the PRA or the FCA. Visit <http://www.british-business-bank.co.uk/recovery-loan-scheme>