

15<sup>th</sup> July 2024

Dear Michelle

### **Application for Grant support from Wallingford Town Council for 24/25**

I would like to apply to the Town Council for a grant of **£2200** to support the local Citizens Advice Service in the Town in 2024/25. Wallingford Town Council has been very supportive of Citizens Advice and we are very grateful. We have requested slightly more funds this year, since 2014 we have requested £2000 p/a which you have always kindly granted, however, we are asking for a small increase to help us address rising costs. We do appreciate the financial pressures the Town Council are also under.

During 23-24, we dealt with **269 cases** from the Wallingford ward. Cases are becoming more complex and our trained volunteers dealt with **874** issues (an **increase of 34%** on previous year), resulting in **644** activities by our volunteer workforce. We work with some clients for many months and sometimes years. The most common issues we deal with in Wallingford are:

- Access to Benefits & Tax Credits (Personal Independence Payments, Attendance Allowance)
- Initial Claim for Universal Credit
- Housing (homelessness (threatened & actual) access to accommodation, issues with housing associations and private landlords)

Last year we facilitated **£132,174** income gain to those we supported (e.g., Benefit or Tax Credit gain, access to charitable funds, social welfare), this is a **65% increase** on 22/23. This is practical, measurable, real support for those most in need in our community. It also goes to show what good value for money your investment in Citizens Oxfordshire South & Vale is.

We deal with the most vulnerable people in our community, **5%** of clients in Wallingford are disabled and **43%** have a long-term health condition.

We are still the front line in helping people navigate the cost-of-living crisis and delighted that our drop-in service is well established again at the Wallingford Baptist Church on alternate Wednesdays after an extend hiatus during Covid. However, most Wallingford residents' access via telephone (65%), emails (21%) webchat and are also used. We also have a website providing 24/7 access to information. We continue to work hard to find ways we can increase our capacity to help us meet the growing demand and make sure people have access to the support they need. We recently added a chatbot to our website to help people access the advice they need more quickly, and improved the way people access advice via email. Our aim is that those that can help themselves do, which leaves the 'in person' support for those that need it the most.

Funding from District Councils only represents about 36% of our income, so your continued support is vital to ensure we meet the growing demand on our services. We run a very lean organisation and are powered by our volunteer workforce.

I do hope you will consider our application favourably and please do not hesitate to contact me if you require any further information.

I attach our most recent Annual Report and examined Accounts which are year end 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023, our 23/24 accounts are currently with the Auditors and we will make sure you have a copy as soon as they are available.

Best wishes,



Debbie Watts (Chief Officer)

[debbie.watts@citizensadviceosav.org.uk](mailto:debbie.watts@citizensadviceosav.org.uk)

**Our Trustees are:**

Philip Baker (Chair)

Jo Cartwright (Vice-Chair)

David Baron (Treasurer)

Faith Gidlow (Secretary)

Denise Haylor

Kay Honner

Edith Scott Rose

Alan Arnfeld

Alan Hayes

**Our bank details are:**

Account Name: Oxfordshire South & Vale CAB

Sort Code: 40-52-40

Account Number: 00023048