

Stratfield Mortimer Parish Council

Full Council 09/09/2021

Tadley Citizens Advice Bureau

Agenda item 21/067 5: To consider the request for financial assistance and RESOLVE to make a grant under s.137.

Background

Email received on 29/07/2021

We are writing to ask for your support for our out of hours advice service. External funding for this has recently ended and, in the short term, we are funding this from core costs. However, with a deficit budget for 2021/2022 we will not be able to continue this for much longer and so we are writing to ask if Stratfield Mortimer Parish Council may be able to make a contribution to the running costs.

One day per week, we are currently offering additional appointments with an experienced caseworker outside of our core hours of 10am to 3.30pm. These appointments ensure we remain accessible to many of our clients who may be working or have caring responsibilities.

During the challenging last 12 months we have continued to grow our team, expand our services and are still recruiting new volunteers as we respond to the changing environment and client issues. We expect the demand for our services to increase further as the longer-term impacts of Covid-19 are felt.

Last year we could not do any of our usual fundraising locally in the community and it is unlikely to be much different for most of this year. We know that many grant giving organisations face difficulties themselves and we face a drop in income whilst being busier than ever.

We appreciate that you have limited resources and probably a larger number of requests, but we would be grateful if you could consider this request. To give you some idea of how much we need to raise, it costs approx. £3500 per year to run the out of hours service.

If you have any questions or would prefer to donate via The Good Exchange, where you can view further details of all our projects please do get in touch either by phone on 0118 981 7567 or email co@tadleycab.cabnet.org.uk and we would be pleased to discuss further

Update on the CAB Outreach Service in Mortimer

Two years ago, SMPC were in discussions with Tadley CAB to provide an outreach service in Mortimer. The plans were abruptly put on halt by Covid.

Tadley CAB have reported that the adaptations the service has made during the pandemic has led to a review of all outreach services and how their new ways of giving remote advice can help to make outreach models as efficient as possible. There are several outreach pilots happening across the service at present and the results from these will be used to decide on the best model for the area. Considering this, they hope they can reopen discussions with SMPC when the pilot phase is complete.

Other Information

Document 21-067 5.1 shows a report detailing the work done by Citizens Advice in the ward of Burghfield & Mortimer from March 2020 - April 2021.

As stated by Tadley CAB, regarding the statistics, the following should be noted:

It is difficult to compare this with the previous data we have given you as the pandemic has required different ways of working. This report shows all clients living in your ward who have had help from Citizens Advice, from any local office. This reflects the needs of your community. For example a client from Mortimer who calls for advice may speak to an adviser working for another office when we are closed.

The report demonstrates the move to phone and email advice during the pandemic, however we resumed face to face advice at Tadley in July. Given the public transport facilities in your area we expect your residents to continue to use phone and email advice where they are able too.