

Item 18 – Councillors Reports

**Report on the official opening of the Citizens Advice New Forest Hub in
Lymington Town Hall on 21st November 2019**

1. I attended, on behalf of Parish Council, the official opening of the new Citizens Advice New Forest (CANF) Hub by Lady Montagu, on the afternoon of Thursday 21st November 2019.
2. The event opened with a short film giving examples of how CANF had been able to help people with a host of issues. This was followed by a short slide presentation by Alison Talbot (CO of CANF) about the work of CANF. Alison was ably assisted by a couple of volunteers, who gave examples of how they had been able to help people on one particular day.
3. Of special note was the work of the “Macmillan” volunteer, who job was to help people with cancer resolve their issues.
4. This was followed by the presentation of awards to the volunteers (and a photo opportunity) by Lady Montagu.
5. We were then invited to take part in a short tour of the new CANF Hub. I was taken round by one of the new volunteers, who explained that she was currently undergoing a very comprehensive training programme.

Of particular note from the above presentations:

- CAB has been running for 80 years
 - 7,000 people in New Forest area were helped this year with 16,000 issues
 - Top 5 issues were: benefits, debt, employment, relationships and housing
 - Funded projects saved amazing amounts of money (see below)
 - Debt Advice Project, rescheduled and wrote off peoples debts totalling £2,074,424
 - Macmillan Cancer Support Project , helped clients with outcomes worth £1,140,790
 - CANF volunteers gave over 33,000 hours to the charity totalling an estimated value of £625,000
6. Please also see below a copy of the annual report for CANF for 2018/2019, which provides a good overview of all their activities.
 7. Finally there was a big thank you to all CANF funders and also a personal plea to me from a volunteer for funding from Copythorne Parish Council.

Annual Report 2018/19

Citizens Advice New Forest Annual Report

November 2019

We are Citizens Advice New Forest and we're here for everyone

We may all face problems that seem complicated or intimidating. At Citizens Advice, we believe no one should have to face these problems without good quality, Independent, advice. Citizens Advice New Forest is part of a network of over 270 independent local Citizens Advice charities that offer confidential advice online, over the 'phone and in person, free – from over 2,550 locations across England and Wales.

When we say we're for everyone, we mean it. People rely on us for advice, because we're independent and totally impartial. The way we deliver advice has changed over the years and, as we have looked back this year to reflect on 80 years of advice, we have also been moving forward to embrace new technologies and new ways of working. In 2019, new services were added to our core advice. **Pension Wise** now operates from our Totton and Ringwood offices, the **Help to Claim** service is available at all our locations, via phone and webchat, and we have expanded and developed our debt advice funded by the **Money & Pensions Service**. We have also taken part in more national campaigns than ever before, helping raise awareness of Scams, Consumer Rights and Energy Best Deal.



Chief Officer Alison Talbot



"It's been a busy year at CANF. I would like to thank the staff, volunteers and trustees for all their support and hard work during 2019."

Looking back on 80 years of advice has shown us that how we delivery advice has changed a lot but the impact of our work - and the difference it can make to people's lives - continues to be as relevant and important as ever."

Our impact in 2018/19



This year we're marking being there for everyone for 80 years. In 2018/19 alone:



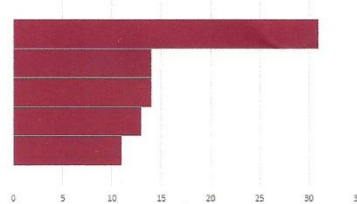
We helped 7,000 people face -to-face, over the telephone, by email and Webchat.



44% visited us in person
29% used our New Forest Adviceline
27% used email, webchat & mail



We helped people with **over 16,000 issues**.
Our clients came to us with increasingly complex problems.



The Top 5 Issues:

Help with benefits was top at 31%, then debt 14%, employment 14%, relationships 13%, and housing 11%.

Advice Quality:

We work to the national Advice Quality Standards.
In 2018/19, our advice service achieved the top (green) rating on an independent audit.

Charity Governance:

We are a local independent charity.
We achieved top audit scores for the way we run our charity and the way we manage our finances.

Our Projects

In 2018/19 funded projects were an important part of the service we offered to clients. They are a source of additional funding and bring in expertise, training and link to national delivery programmes. These are the funded projects we ran in 2018/19:

Debt Advice



Money &
Pensions
Service

Funding from the Money & Pensions Service allowed us to employ a full-time debt advice case worker to support our debt advice service. This national project has also provided specialist training. All our offices provide guidance to people seeking help for a wide range of debt concerns, including credit card debt, rent arrears and unsecured loans.

Debt can have a huge impact on people's lives and working alongside people to help lift the burden of debt can make a big difference to people's general well-being and help them move on with their lives.

In 2018/19 we helped 118 clients to reschedule their debts and 131 clients had their debts written off.

This totalled £2,074,424

Macmillan

MACMILLAN.
CANCER SUPPORT

Funding from Macmillan allowed us to employ a full-time specialist case worker to work alongside families affected by cancer. This Hampshire-wide service works closely with doctors' surgeries, hospices and hospitals to ensure people get the help and support they need at a very vulnerable time. **In 2018/19 the New Forest caseworker helped 275 clients, with outcomes worth £1,140,790.**

Pensions Advice



Pensionwise

Citizens Advice New Forest provides the base for face-to-face Pensionwise services in the New Forest. Trained pension guiders offer free advice to those over 55 who are referred through the national Pensionwise service. In 2019 we opened the first Friday service in Totton which has been so popular **we now have 2 advisers.**

Energy Best Deal

Our free 1:1 energy advice appointments proved another popular service. There were **40 appointments** with clients over the October – March period, which helped to make savings on household energy bills, enabled applications for Warm Home Discounts, supporting people who are in fuel poverty.

Our Volunteers



Here are many of our wonderful volunteers, hosted by our generous patron, Lady Montagu at Palace House, Beaulieu to celebrate of 80 years of public service by Citizen's Advice.

We would not be able to help all our clients, without these volunteers. In 2018/19, our volunteers gave around 33,480 hours the charity. The value of this help is estimated to have been £625,180. So **thank you** to all our volunteers, for all you do. We couldn't do it without you.

Our Funders

Without the help of our generous funders we could not help our clients. So a big thank you to our funders, who include :-

- ♦ New Forest District Council
- ♦ Local Town and Parish Councils
- ♦ The Money and Pensions Service
- ♦ The Beauford Beaulieu Foundation
- ♦ The Dibden Allotments Association
- ♦ Tesco plc
- ♦ Churchill plc
- ♦ Waitrose plc
- ♦ New Forest Rotary
- ♦ ExxonMobil

Contact Us

Looking for advice?

You can call us on

0300 3309 009

or look at our website:

citizensadvice.org.uk

Follow us:

@CABNewForest



@NewForestCitizensAdvice



Citizens Advice New Forest is an operating name of New Forest Citizens Advice Bureau, a company limited by guarantee, registered at Companies House No. **06983394**.

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