

## DIDCOT TOWN COUNCIL – GRANT REPORT JUNE 2021

### Citizens Advice Oxfordshire South and Vale

#### Background

1. In November 2020, Didcot Town Council's Finance and General Purposes Committee awarded Citizens Advice a grant of £10,000. We are grateful to the Town Council for this funding; it is essential to our financial security. We receive no core funding from the national Citizens Advice charity or any other national source. All our core income is raised locally.

This report sets out what the funding has been used for.

#### Purposes for which the grant is being used

2. We are using the grant as a contribution to (a) the premises & offices costs of our Didcot Advice Centre and (b) volunteer expenses.

**Volunteer expenses** (mainly travel to the Didcot Advice Centre) **£1,956**

**Office costs** (Reference materials, IT equipment & support, telephone, office equipment, printing and stationary, postage,  
**£1,682**

**Premises costs** (Heat and light, rent, rates, insurance, cleaning, repairs) **£10,344**

**Total annual costs** of volunteer expenses, office and premises costs **£13,982**

**Grant awarded** **£10,000**

This grant enables us to maintain a high quality service to residents from Didcot and the surrounding area.

**NB Our annual costs were** reduced by 20% from 2019 -20 to take account of anticipated reduced use of office and less travel caused by the Covid pandemic.

#### Our clients in Didcot

3. We reach a large number of people from the **Didcot Citizens Advice Centre** (in Dales, 9-15 High Street Didcot OX11 8EQ). During **2020/21**:

<b>Clients served from Didcot Advice Centre</b>	<b>1,871</b>
<b>Issues /problems raised by these clients</b>	<b>3,157</b>
<b>Clients from Didcot wards</b>	<b>1,150</b>

4. The difference between the total number of clients served by the *Didcot Advice Centre* and the number of clients from *Didcot wards* is explained by the fact that some clients who work in Didcot but live elsewhere may use the service, as will clients from the surrounding Parishes. The Town Council will be interested to know that many Parish Councils are now contributing towards our costs.
5. **Covid-19.** Since March 23<sup>rd</sup> 2020, all our Advice Centres have been closed to the public and our advisers and supervisors are operating our AdviceLine service from home. Our specialist staff have equipped them with the necessary equipment to maintain our strict security and confidentiality protocols.
6. We partially reopened the Didcot Advice Centre in Sept. 2020 to accommodate advisers who cannot work from home and to complete the training of new advisers on site. We have recruited more new advisers than ever and several started in Didcot last month, having completed our trainer-led course on Zoom.
7. We will be opening the Advice Centre during the summer for limited Face to Face advice. We will of course do this in a way that is consistent with Covid security rules so we maintain the safety of our staff, advisers and clients.

## 8. **Some facts about Citizens Advice**

### **Top 5 main topics people bring to us:**

- Benefits and tax credits
- Debt
- Employment
- Housing
- Relationships /family

## **Our costs in Didcot**

**£**

- Approx cost of each client advice session:  
36.00
- Total cost of CA service in Didcot (1,871x 36): 67,000
- District Council covers approx. 60% of total cost: 40,413
- Didcot Town Council grant: 10,000
- Amount to be raised from Parish Councils / Trusts: 9,587

## **Our Impact (across South and Vale)**

- Likely to recommend Citizens Advice\* 93%
- Helped to find a way forward\*  
90%
- Problem resolved (13-18 weeks after)\* **81%**
- Stressed / depressed before advice\*\* 2 in 3
- Less stressed/ depressed after advice\*\* 4 in 5

\*Based on independent phone survey of South and Vale clients 13-18 weeks after advice Q3 2020/21

\*\*Citizens Advice (2014) findings from national outcomes and impact research.

## **Oxfordshire South and Vale Citizens Advice June 2021**