

WOKINGHAM CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU
TOWN HALL
MARKET PLACE
WOKINGHAM RG11 1AS

TEL: 781883

OPENING HOURS: MONDAY TO FRIDAY 10.0 am to 2.0 pm

LEGAL ROTA: Tuesdays from 2.30 pm

FINANCIAL ADVICE: Fridays 10.30 am to 1.30 pm

The aims of the Citizens Advice Bureau Service are:

- to ensure that individuals do not suffer through ignorance of their rights and responsibilities or of the services available; or through an inability to express their needs effectively.
- to exercise a responsible influence on the development of social policies and services, both nationally and locally.

The Service therefore provides free to all individuals an impartial service of information, guidance and support, and makes responsible use of the experience so gained.

THE STAFF

Mrs B Alder (Organiser)

Mrs C Pointer (Deputy)

Mr R Boyd

Mrs M Chatting

Mrs G Davidson

Mrs M Dodd

Mrs J Franklin

Mrs B Gifford

Mrs E Harvey

Mrs H Lee

Mrs S Macklin

Mrs S Rabbett

Mrs J Rhodes

Mr G Robins

Mrs J Thompson

Mrs C Odds (Clerical Assistant)

THE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Mr J Watson	Chairman
Dr H.W Parris	Secretary
Mr J Davidson	Treasurer
Mrs B M Alder	Organiser
Mrs C Pointer	Deputy Organiser
Mrs D Binney	Ladies Circle
Mr R F Board-Jones	Wokingham United Charities
Mrs J Branch	National Council of Women
Mr R Bushell	Jobcentre
Mrs L P Cattran	Wokingham Town Council
Mrs C J Dyer	
Mr D G Eyriey	Legal Representative
Mr M Hunter	
Mr P Howe	Social Services
Mr M Jameson	Cliffords Dairies
Mr B Marks	West Forest Round Table
Mrs J Mayers	District Council
Mrs M M Mayne	First member
Mrs A Potts	Town Clerk and Trustee
Mrs S Rabbett	Workers' representative
Mrs N Randall	Wokingham Without Parish Council
Mrs M Tattersall	WADE
Mr H R Wells	All Saints Church
Mr E J West	First member

ORGANISER'S REPORT - 1st April 1983 to 31st March 1984

Our return to the Town Hall has been marked by a notable increase in the number of people seeking help from the bureau. The fall in enquiries in some categories which was noted in my report last year, has not continued, indeed numbers have gone up in every category except one. The total for the year was 5529, an increase of 1185, or 27%, overall on the previous year. What does this mean in practical terms? Let us look at the principal categories:

Top again was Consumer, Trade and Business. This includes not only the obvious problems about faulty goods and services of all kinds, but also difficulties with Insurance, banks, firms which go into liquidation, and credit problems. People contact us to enquire about price marking and sale goods, and often want to know where they stand before they buy.

Family and Personal covers a multitude of subjects from the cradle to the grave, including the law relating to children, marriage problems, change of name, and bereavement.

Housing, Property and Land includes both private and public sector housing. There is a steady flow of enquiries concerning neighbours; noise, bonfires and the like, as well as disputes over boundaries. Rented Accommodation is still in very short supply, especially for those on low incomes. We are getting just enough queries about Housing Benefit to realise what a headache this must be for the Council to administer. People in Employment often want help with clarifying their position regarding their terms and conditions of employment. We have had many enquiries from those wanting to go self-employed, most of whom have seen our financial adviser. There seems to have been a reduction in the number of redundancies, and we hope this will be a continuing trend.

STAFF AND TRAINING

A new Deputy Organiser, Mrs Christine Pointer, has been appointed and has settled down well into her new duties. She was formerly a bureau worker at Bracknell.

Training has been held on Insurance, Consumer Advice, Bereavement, Company Pensions, Marriage Guidance and Employment. Two workers went on the residential training course at Easthampstead Park.

All workers attended at least 6 staff meetings during the year, and 3 were at a full complement of 10 meetings.

Visits are being made on a regular basis to the WADE Day Centre by Mrs Lee

I never cease to be impressed by the hard work and dedication of the voluntary workers, and their ability to cope with the difficult and sometimes distressing problems with which they are often called on to help.

SPECIALIST ADVICE

Twenty-one sessions were held by the Solicitors' Rota and forty-six clients advised. We are putting fewer people forward for this service; I think it is due to the fact that, with experience, the volunteers have become better able to sort out which enquirers have to engage a solicitor and are advising them accordingly. Nevertheless the rota still has an important place and we are indebted to the solicitors who provide this free service, and who are also willing to answer a quick question on the telephone sometimes.

Financial advice has been given on almost every Friday throughout the year, and although Mr Boyd has suffered some health problems he has soldiered on helping others who come for assistance.

PUBLICITY

I have given talks on the work of the CAB to Arthritis Care, Emmbrook School Sixth Form, Woodley

Wesley Group, and Norreys Young Women's Group.

We have had advertisement pages in the programmes of Wokingham Carnival and the Auto-Sunday Rally, both of which reach many hundreds of people.

FUTURE PLANS

We feel that although the bureau is serving the needs of the people of Wokingham, it is not reaching out enough into the District. With this in mind we are researching the possibility of opening an extension in Woodley, an area with a large residential population, few of whom contact us, but who tend to go to Reading instead. If it is possible we should like to get this underway in 1985.

THANKS are due to all those who support us, whether financially or in other ways, and especially the Town Council, who give us our biggest grant and also allow us to use our excellent office, rent free, right in the town centre.

TRAVEL EXPENSES

It is a policy of this bureau to pay voluntary workers mileage for their cars when coming to do duty at the bureau, and parking fees. This used to be paid out of the petty cash, but as the cost has now reached £45 - £55 a month, it will, from now on, be paid and accounted for as a separate item.

Parking, at 50p a session, accounts for £168 of our expenses annually, so if anyone can supply one or two free parking spaces, or has any other ideas, we might be able to free this money for other purposes. We would also be grateful for any offers of places where workers could keep bicycles under cover.

ENQUIRIES

	1983/84	1982/83	
Consumer, Trade & Business	1041	792	+249
Family & Personal	790	646	+144
Housing, Property & Land	700	572	+128
Employment	600	514	+ 86
Social Security	520	467	+ 53
Administration of Justice	457	315	+142
Taxes & Duties	248	204	+ 44
National & International	241	161	+ 80
Health	238	190	+ 48
Travel, Transport & Holidays	201	129	+ 72
Leisure Activities	181	101	+ 80
Enquiries about CAB	134	110	+ 24
Immigration & Nationality	36	36	0
Communications	34	30	+ 4
Total	5529	4344	+1185

HOME OF ENQUIRER

	1983/84	1982/83
Wokingham	3479	2820
Wokingham Without	188	150
Winnersh	154	143
Crowthorne	135	117
Woodley	110	not recorded
Finchampstead	96	80
Arborfield	78	61
Other or Unknown	1289	973
	5529	4344

INCOME

<u>GRANTS</u>	£	
Wokingham Town Council	1500	
Wokingham District Council	845	
Berks County Council	231	2576
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Wokingham Ladies Circle	50	
REME Garrison	50	
Cliffords Dairies	30	
Chamber of Trade	30	
Wokingham Lions	30	
Wokingham Without Parish Council	30	
Wokingham Rotary	25	
Barkham Parish Council	20	
Ex-Lax Ltd	15	
Hewlett Packard	15	
National Council of Women	15	
Boots the Chemist	10	
Finchampstead Parish Council	10	
Haye and Reid	10	
High and Mighty	10	
Intereurope	10	
Shinfield Parish Council	10	
Stroud and Leuty	10	
Winnersh Parish Council	10	
Wokingham & District Assoc. of Churches	10	
All Saints Church	5	
Buckland and Co.	5	
Strange and Son	5	
CAB Donations Box	153.59	568.59
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3144.59

TREASURER'S REPORT

This has been the first full year in our new accommodation and as such it is not possible to compare costs on an historic basis. In fiscal terms costs have risen despite our efforts to contain them. Our spending is not the only item to increase, the number of enquiries has also moved ahead by some 27%, which gives a costing of 64 pence per enquiry. This creditable figure would be much higher but for the peppercorn rent charged by the Town Council and the 100% rate relief given by the District Council, my thanks to them both.

Overleaf there is a list showing the source of this years' funding, and I would like to express my grateful thanks to all who have supported the working of the bureau so generously.

Finally, as Treasurer, I acknowledge that not all help is measured in pounds and pence, and for the special help given by the Bureau staff I would like to convey an equally special thank you.

J. Davidson

Hon. Treasurer

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting, held on
Wednesday 29th June 1983.

Present: Mr G Newman (in the chair)
The Town Mayor (Councillor D Ireland)
Col J R Cole
Mrs Alder
Mrs Binney
Mr Board-Jones
Mr Boyd
Mr Davidson
Mrs Dyer
Mr Eyrie
Mr Howe

Mr Illingworth
Mrs Mayers
Dr Parris
Mrs Potts
Mrs Rabbett
Mrs Tattersall
Mr Watson

and many others.

Minutes of the last AGM, the name of Mrs Potts being added to those present, were accepted as a correct record.

Chairman's Report The Chairman announced that he would not be standing for re-election. He thanked all those who had helped to make his tenure of the office enjoyable. A vote of thanks was moved by Mr Watson and carried by acclamation.

Treasurer's Report The Treasurer reported that expenditure had risen by 77%, as compared with the previous year, mainly as a result of the temporary change of accommodation brought about by the refurbishing of the Town Hall. To balance this, grants had been received from Berkshire County Council, Wokingham District Council, Wokingham Town Council and NACAB. Donations had also shown a welcome upward trend.

Organiser's Report The total number of enquiries was 4344 - 276 up on the previous year in spite of the disruption caused by the temporary change of

premises. Mrs Odds had replaced Mrs J Jones as deputy organiser, but had unfortunately had to give up through serious illness at the end of April. Mrs Macklin had taken over her duties. Three new workers had completed their basic training and been passed by the selection committee. 22 sessions had been held by the legal rota, and 60 clients had received advice. Once again, our grateful thanks went to the solicitors who provide this service to the public free of charge. Specialist advice on financial matters had been provided by Mr Boyd, to whom our thanks were also due, as indeed they were to all the volunteer workers.

Appeals Committee The Chairman (Mr Watson) reported on progress to date. 31 letters had been sent out, and 3 replies had been received.

Election of Officers

- Chairman: Mr Watson, nominated by Mr Newman,
seconded by Mrs Tattersall,
and carried nem con.
- Secretary: Dr Parris, nominated by Mr Watson,
seconded by Mrs Mayers,
and carried nem con.
- Treasurer: Mr Davidson, nominated by Mr Watson,
seconded by Mr Eyriey,
and carried nem con.
- Committee: re-elected en bloc.

There being no other business, the meeting closed at 1.50 pm.