

WOKINGHAM AND DISTRICT



Free Confidential Advice

Impartial Independent

Can You Help?

Unemployment Rights

International Multicultural

Family Employment

Holidays Counselling

Sign Here Money

People Disabled

Financial Benefits

Information 1992

Senior Citizens Enquiry

Youth Training Directions

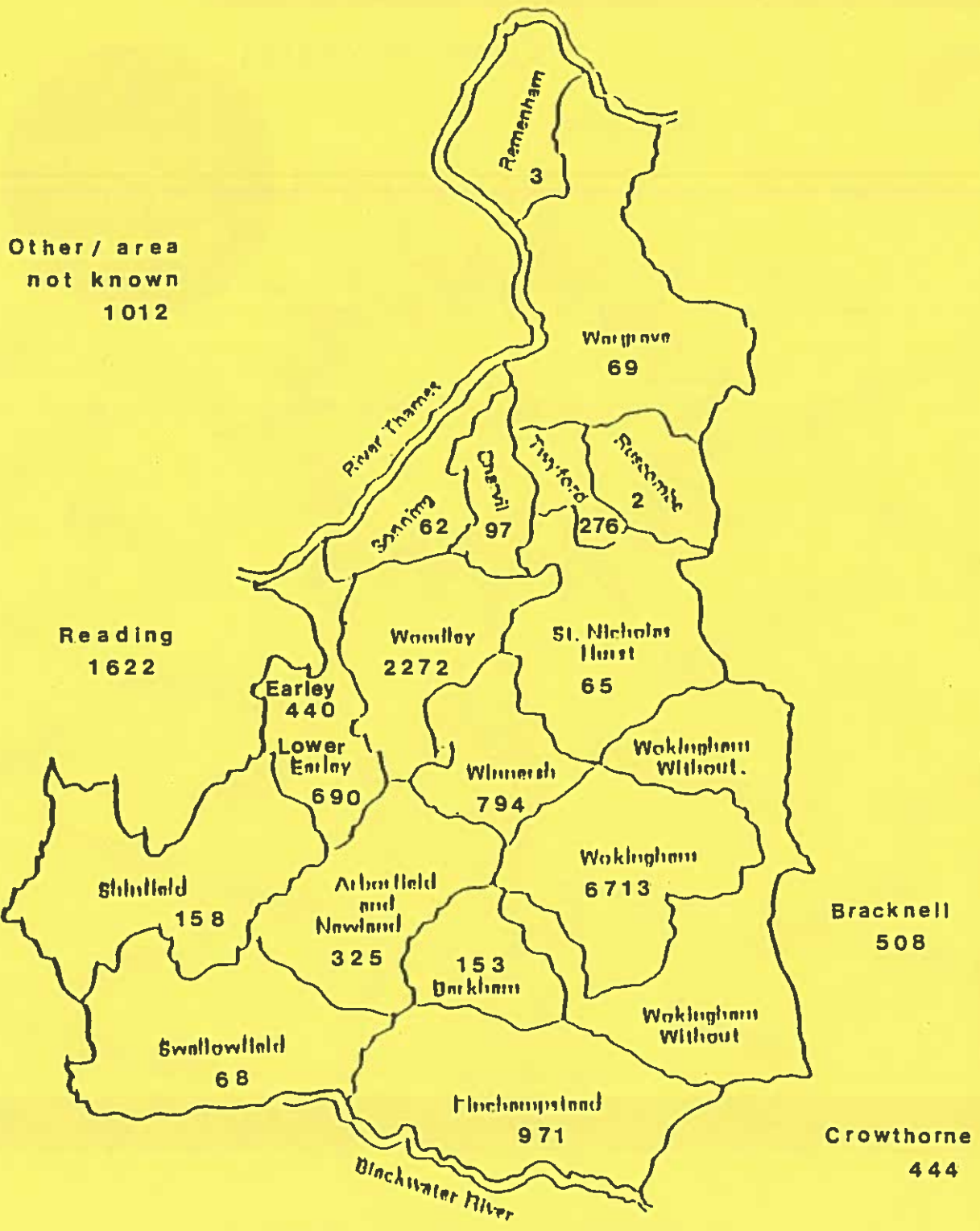
Travel Local

Opening Hours

Annual Report

1991 / 92

Enquiries by Parish



TOTAL: 16,931

The aims of the Citizens' Advice Bureau 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 need effectively.

- To exercise a responsible influence on the development of social policies and services both locally and nationally.

The Citizens' Advice Bureau therefore provides free to all citizens an impartial and confidential service of information guidance and support, which is completely independant and makes responsible use of the experience so gained.

MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

MRS J LE PATOUREL - CHAIR
MR J WATSON - VICE-CHAIR
MR B BOYD - TREASURER
MRS S JACKSON - Bx MANAGER/SECRETARY TO COMMITTEE
MR D EYRIEY - LEGAL REPRESENTATIVE
MRS A POTTS - TRUSTEE
MRS J TOMLIN - DEPUTY MANAGER (WOKINGHAM)
MRS C LLOYD-WILLIAMS - DEPUTY MANAGER (WOODLEY)
MS L MARTIN - BUREAU REPRESENTATIVE
MR J WEST - WOKINGHAM UNITED CHARITIES
MR P HENESY - CO-OPTED
MRS C GREEN - WOKINGHAM TOWN COUNCIL
MR D ANDREW - WOODLEY TOWN COUNCIL
MS R CRINGLE - WOODLEY TOWN COUNCIL
MS G FLANAGAN - SOCIAL SERVICES
MR L SOUTHGATE - WOKINGHAM DISTRICT COUNCIL
MR R CAMPBELL - (LEFT SEPT 1991)
MRS S TOMLINSON - (LEFT JULY 1991)
MR G NEWMAN - (LEFT JAN 1992)

CHAIR'S REPORT

During the past year the CAB service nationally has been under intense, probably unprecedented, pressure. No-one is exempt from the effects of the current recession but, unusually, this time it is the traditionally affluent areas of the South East which are bearing the brunt. Both Bureaux have experienced huge increases in their general workload and in their debt-related enquiries in particular. These require a different approach to the majority of the Bureau work since they are generally multifaceted in nature, requiring more administrative input on the Bureau's part and more return visits on the client's.

All this puts enormous strains on our staff and volunteers. I cannot speak too highly of the commitment and professionalism of all our workers, both waged and non-waged. Their efforts have been truly heroic. Nevertheless the strains are real and must be recognised. We cannot - and must not - expect to go on absorbing this level of increase on current resources in an effort to continue offering our services to everyone in need of them. I am accordingly particularly pleased to report that thanks to the generosity of Wokingham District Council and Earley Charity we are on the point of acquiring paid specialist support to help us deal with debt work.

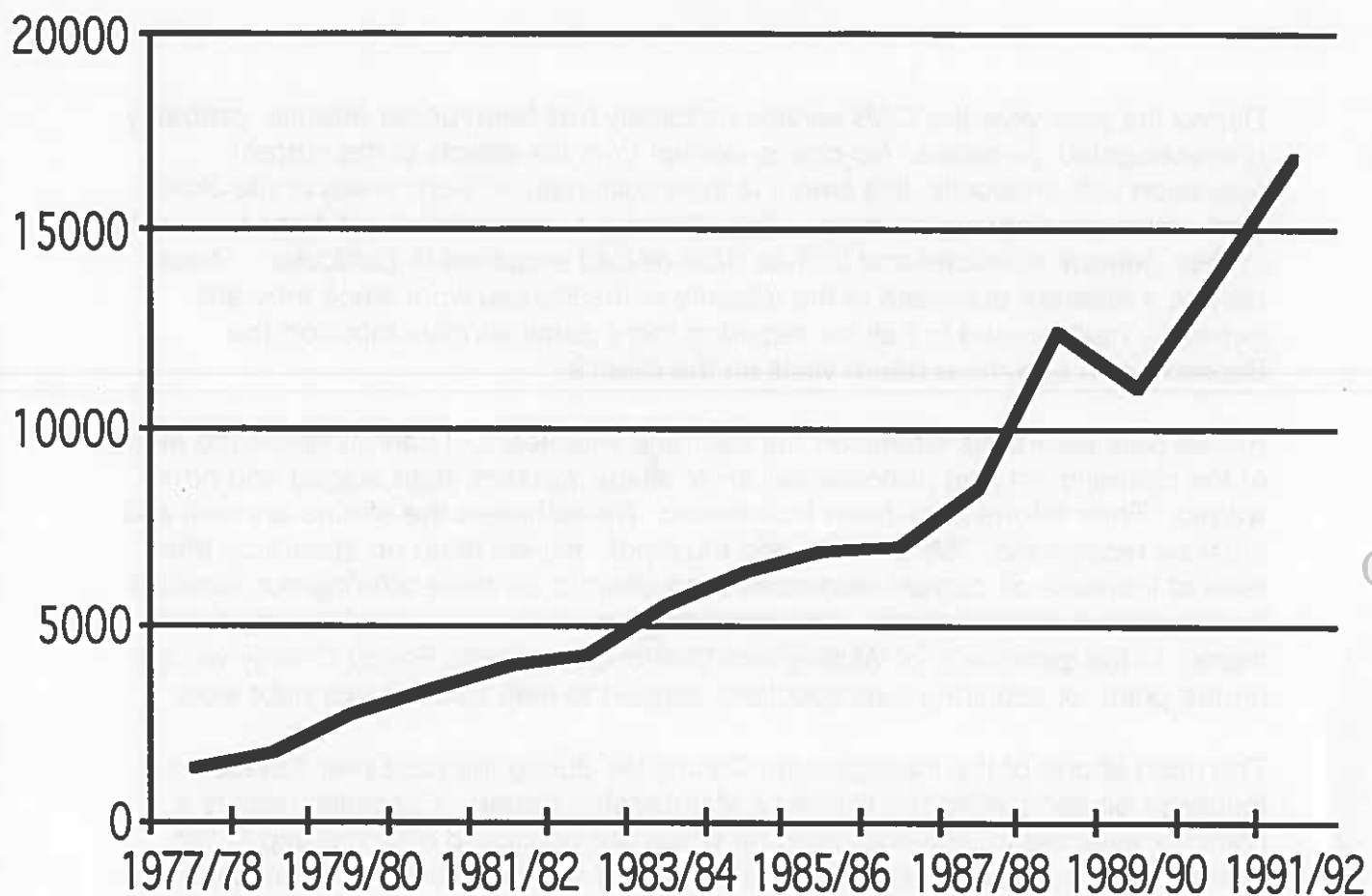
The main efforts of the Management Committee during the past year have been focussed on completing the Bureau's Membership Report. Essentially this is a complex exercise in self-evaluation on which our continued membership of the National Association (NACAB) will be judged. It has involved us in more than two years' background work compiling detailed information about our local community, our clients and the Bureau itself. From this had been distilled a three-year forward plan for the Bureau's activities. As I write, this report has received final approval by the Management Committee and will be considered by NACAB'S Membership Committee in May. May I take this opportunity of thanking everyone who has contributed to its production; a great deal of hard work has gone on both inside and outside the Bureau to achieve the final result.

The whole exercise, whilst not without pain, has been an extremely productive one. However, the Membership visit carried out by Area Office as part of the process confirmed a fundamental problem at Woodley Extension, namely that of lack of confidentiality. Our thanks must go to Wokingham District Council for the speed with which they are helping us to find a solution.

As ever my thanks go to all the staff and volunteers; to Management Committee members; to our funders and to everyone who helps in whatever way to make the Bureau's services so professional and highly regarded.

Janet Le Patourel

FIGURE 1



ANNUAL ENQUIRY FIGURES 1977-1992

YEAR	No. OF ENQUIRIES	% INCREASE
1977/78	1423	
1978/79	1815	27.55%
1979/80	2791	53.77%
1980/81	3533	26.59%
1981/82	4068	15.14%
1982/83	4344	6.78%
1983/84	5529	27.28%
1984/85	6340	14.67%
1985/86	6941	9.48%
1986/87	7030	1.28% (Woodley opened this year)
1987/88	8661	23.20%
1988/89	12557	44.98%
1989/90	11058	- 11.94% (Bureau move/Stats change)
1990/91	13968	26.32%
1991/92	16931	21.21%

MANAGER'S REPORT

The actual number of enquiries has risen steeply this year by 21.2 % and now numbers 16,931. The number of debt enquiries has continued to increase dramatically but this year there has been a slight change in the positions of the other top three subjects. Last year debt and consumer were once again top but second was family and personal, followed by benefit enquiries and employment. This year benefit enquiries were second to debt and consumer, with employment third and family and personal fourth. This has mainly been caused by the enormous increase in redundancies and job losses and the resultant benefit claims. Although these also often include relationship problems and debt which is also a direct result of the same, they are not always the presenting problem and therefore may not be reflected in our statistics. The length of each interview is increasing with the growing number of clients who have multiple debt problems and indeed multiple enquiry problems which are increasingly more complex and time consuming. This really taxes our advisers and everyone is working to their full capacity and indeed more. Their commitment, dedication and professionalism is a credit to them all and the people of Wokingham district are indeed fortunate to have such a competent team of volunteer advisers. At the moment we have 39 advisers working in Wokingham and Woodley and several prospective advisers in the pipeline. We are always anxious to recruit new advisers and the new training programme should help to attract new volunteers as NACAB is working towards accrediting the course.

During the last year we have concentrated on writing our membership report and development plan, which have now been submitted to NACAB for approval. We have also been inspected by NACAB, a representative from whom has spent several days going through the membership requirements and checking our case sheets regarding the quality of advice. I am happy to report that we passed this scrutiny and recommendation has gone forward to NACAB to grant our membership. There was a rider regarding the lack of confidentiality at the Woodley extension premises but as a result of this report negotiations commenced with Wokingham District Council who have found us town centre premises which meet our requirements and Woodley extension will move into them at the end of April.

Last year we asked the Wokingham Town Council for a grant to help pay for secretarial hours. We were also lucky enough to be given a grant by the Earley Charity to enable us to employ a secretary for 20 hours per week. Jennifer Barnes has been in post now since last summer. This appointment has made an enormous difference to everyone working in the Bureau especially for those dealing with debt cases and we really could not manage to continue at this level of work without her.

The Earley Charity has also, generously given us a grant for two years to enable us to employ a part-time debt advice worker. We hope to combine this grant with one from the District Council in order to allow us to employ a full-time debt adviser to work in the Bureau and the extension, to be available to do home visits and some

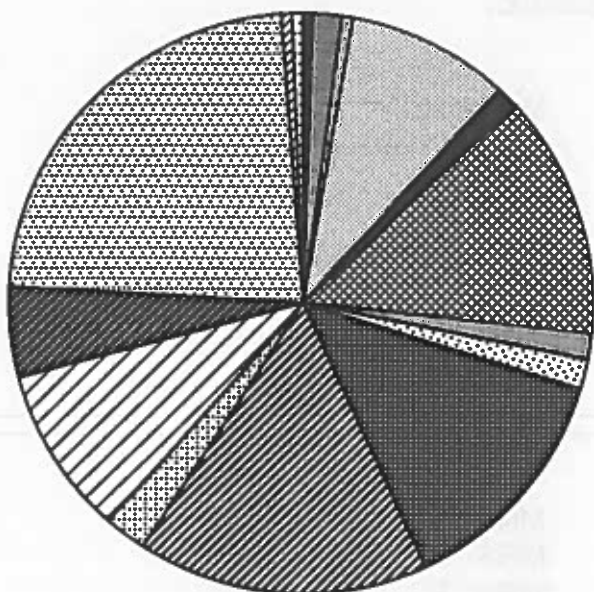
court representation. We hope to make an appointment in the early summer.

We continue to be represented on several local initiatives and committees and have worked hard this year with the Housing Department in looking into them and other local voluntary and statutory agencies at methods of combating homelessness. Homelessness arises not only as a result of young people leaving home and having nowhere to live, but also as a result of relationship breakdown and the growing number of house repossessions in this district. Several of the advisers have accompanied and represented their clients at court hearings with considerable success for the client. We are also negotiating with Reading County Court, at joining forces with Reading CAB, to provide a lay adviser service at the court.

This year has been very exciting for us in terms of development. We have identified areas in which there is room for further improvement but we have also had some considerable successes. This Bureau would not exist without the volunteer adviser team to all of whom I extend my own personal thanks for their dedication, loyalty, commitment and sense of humour, without which I sometimes think we might all drown. My thanks also go to Judy, Charlotte and Jennifer for their constant support.

Sue Jackson

ENQUIRIES PER CATAGORY, 1992



■	COMMUNICATION	0.5%
■	TRAVEL, TRANSPORT & HOLIDAYS	1.7%
■	IMMIGRATION & NATIONALITY	0.5%
■	ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE	9.2%
■	EDUCATION	1%
■	EMPLOYMENT	13.9%
■	NATIONAL & INTERNATIONAL	1.2%
■	LOCAL INFORMATION ENQUIRIES	1.6%
■	FAMILY & PERSONAL	13.5%
■	SOCIAL SECURITY	16.0%
■	HEALTH	2.2%
■	HOUSING, PROPERTY & LAND	9.5%
■	TAXES & DUTIES	5.1%
■	CONSUMER, TRADE & BUSINESS	22.9%
■	LEISURE	0.5%
■	ENQUIRIES ABOUT CAB	0.6%

	A	B	C	D	E
1			1992	1991	% Dif
2	1	COMMUNICATION	92	98	-6.12
3	2	TRAVEL, TRANSPORT & HOLIDAYS	292	261	11.88
4	3	IMMIGRATION & NATIONALITY	80	77	3.90
5	4	ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE	1560	1436	8.64
6	5	EDUCATION	166	120	38.33
7	6	EMPLOYMENT	2347	1891	24.11
8	7	NATIONAL & INTERNATIONAL	201	98	105.10
9	7-4	LOCAL INFORMATION ENQUIRIES	278	317	-12.30
10	8	FAMILY & PERSONAL	2289	2058	11.22
11	9	SOCIAL SECURITY	2715	1903	42.67
12	10	HEALTH	373	361	3.32
13	11	HOUSING, PROPERTY & LAND	1608	1460	10.14
14	12	TAXES & DUTIES	856	777	10.17
15	13	CONSUMER, TRADE & BUSINESS	3884	2807	38.37
16	14	LEISURE	83	104	-20.19
17	15	ENQUIRIES ABOUT CAB	107	200	-46.50
18		TOTALS	16931	13968	21.21

BUREAU STAFF

MRS S JACKSON	-	MANAGER
MRS J TOMLIN	-	DEP MANAGER (WOKINGHAM)
MRS C LLOYD-WILLIAMS	-	DEP MANAGER (WOODLEY)
MRS J BARNES	-	SECRETARY

VOLUNTARY STAFF

WOKINGHAM

MRS J BARNES
MRS W BENNET
MRS P BRYCE (TRAINEE)
MRS M BURT
MRS S COLWILL
MR J COOPER (TRAINEE)
MR E COX
MRS S DART (TRAINEE)
MR J DUDLELY
MRS B HAMILTON
MRS S HANBY
MRS A HARMON
MR D HARRINGTON
MRS E HARVEY
MRS E HILTON
MISS C HOLLAND
MR B MACHIN
MRS C MAKINGS
MISS L MARTIN
MRS S RABBETT
MRS E RAMSEY
MRS L ROBERTS (TRAINEE)
MRS M ROSENBERG
MRS N SAVAGE
MRS A SMITH
MRS F SMITH
MR H SMITH
MRS R STRACHAN
MRS J THOMPSON
MRS M TROTT
MRS A WHITE (TRAINEE)

WOODLEY

MRS S ALBUM
MRS E COOMBES
MRS E HYAMS
MRS J JENNINGS
MR D LEE
MR H MARSHALL
MRS J POOLE
MR D WHITE

VOLUNTARY STAFF ~ LEFT

MRS S GOOK
MRS M STEWART
MRS S COWAN

ADDITIONAL HELPERS

MR J HARVEY
MR K KIRKWOOD
MRS A OXLEY

TRAINING REPORT

This has been an interesting year from the training viewpoint. The new compulsory Basic Training Programme (BTP), which has been introduced throughout the country, consists of a number of modular reading packs and two Area courses. In order to complete the training programme trainees have to be prepared to spend a minimum of six hours a week in the Bureau as well as reading a large amount of training material at home.

In November I attended a two-day residential training course on the BTP for Guidance Tutors and shortly thereafter five prospective volunteers started the Programme. These trainees will not start interviewing clients until the beginning of June, which illustrates the very lengthy compulsory basic training for all CAB volunteers. All the feedback about the new BTP is extremely positive to date.

The increasingly complex problems of our clients demonstrate an evergrowing need for further training for the advisers. This year the Area Office has provided training days on Debt, Homelessness, Security of Tenure, Interviewing Skills and the new Disability Benefits. In-Bureau training sessions have covered basic debt advice so that all volunteers are able to deal with the initial interviews with debt clients, and also all staff have had training in the new Disability Benefits. In addition, Bureau staff meetings have hosted speakers from the Community Health Council, Berkshire Enterprise Agency, the Area's own Social Policy Roadshow and also a District Judge from the County Court.

With the pressures on our advisers in the current economic climate it is essential that training is not neglected, and we look forward to a varied and supportive programme during the forthcoming year.

Judy Tomlin

WOODLEY REPORT

There have been many changes at Woodley this year, big and small. The level of enquiries over the past year has risen by a staggering 48% and there has been an almost total swing away from the quick "signposting" enquiry to long, complicated multi-faceted problems. Woodley, despite the problems of premises, attracts a majority of personal callers and the waiting area is seldom empty. Personal calls are also nearly always more time-consuming than telephone enquiries, possibly because those with emotional problems prefer to discuss them face to face.

The most exciting development is our move to new premises. Wokingham District Council are to open an area office in Woodley and, knowing our problems, have offered to share the premises in Crockhamwell Road. These will consist of three good-sized interview rooms, one with wheel-chair access, an office for our exclusive use, general office and waiting area.

The new premises are opposite the Health Centre and will be more visible and accessible to our clients. We are due to open on 1st May.

We have had a good year from the volunteer point of view, with two trainees completing their Stage IV. Judy organised a Money Advice training day for all Woodley volunteers. We are fortunate to have increased our number of trained workers to eight and now have two clerical staff, but are keenly aware that we urgently need more. The premises move, while essential and greatly appreciated, will exacerbate this situation so recruitment will need to be a priority next year.

It has been a very busy and challenging year and I would like to thank Sue and the volunteers at Woodley for all their support, tolerance, kindness and good humour.

Charlotte Lloyd-Williams

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

LEGAL ROTA SOLICITORS:-

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THE HEAD PARTNERSHIP

Registered Charity No: 274254

OFFICE DETAILS

WOKINGHAM

Old Social Club
Elms Road
Wokingham
Berkshire
RG11 2AA

HOURS	Monday	9.00 - 3.00
	Tuesday	9.00 - 3.00
	Wednesday	9.00 - 3.00
	Thursday	9.00 - 3.00
	Friday	9.00 - 1.00

Tel: 0734 890389

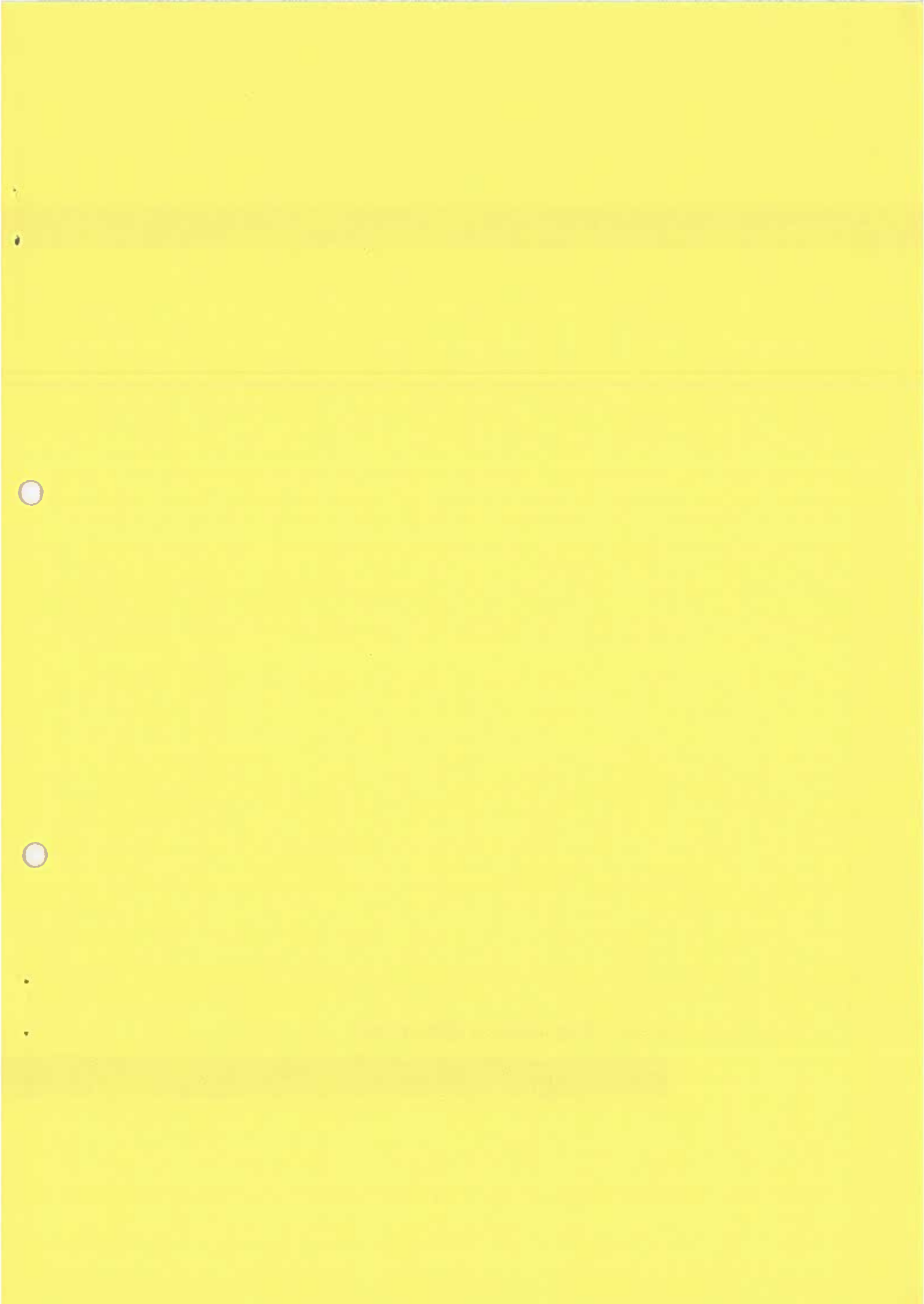
Legal Advice Sessions:
Every Tuesday afternoon
(by appointment only)

WOODLEY

55 Crockhamwell Road
Woodley
Berkshire
RG5 3JP

HOURS	Monday	9.30 - 1.30
	Wednesday	9.30 - 1.30
	Friday	9.30 - 1.30

Tel: 0734 699006



advice that makes a difference