

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 needs effectively.

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

The Citizens Advice Bureau therefore provides 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.

Office details:

Wokingham Town Hall
Market Place
Wokingham
Berks.
RG11 1AS
Tel. 781883

Hours: Monday - Friday
10.00am - 2.00pm
Legal Advice Sessions:
Alternate Tuesday afternoons
(appointments only)
Financial Advice: Fridays
(appointment only)

Woodley Coronation Hall (rear)
Headley Road,
Woodley,
Reading,
Berks.
Tel. 699006

Hours: Mondays and Wednesdays
10.00am - 2.00pm.

CHAIRMAN'S COMMENT

This year marks 10 years of C.A.B. in Wokingham and I am very pleased to have been associated with it from the beginning. The idea for a bureau in Wokingham was first put forward by Wokingham Town Council, who have supported it both financially and in providing accommodation from the start. Within the last four years the District Council have given us their full support and we are now able to employ a 'part-time' organiser, part-time being a very loose term as C.A.B. is not just a job, more a way of life.

Funding is by far the biggest headache for The Bureau, as we rely on our volunteers to carry out the advice giving which can only be done after extensive and continuing training. This involves considerable personal sacrifice and leaves no time to run charity shops, market stalls and other fund raising activities which would be required to provide our current annual need of £12000+. Over the years some financial support has been forthcoming from local businesses but, with few exceptions for which we are extremely grateful, the overall response is poor.

In my capacity as Chairman of the Management Committee, I have pleasure in paying tribute to our present organiser Wendy Hughes who works extremely hard and is totally devoted to improving and expanding the excellent base established by the previous and first organiser Brenda Alder, who served The Bureau from its inception and for the ensuing 8 years. Our growth rate has been around 1000 extra clients a year and now that a second Bureau has been opened at Woodley, with the full support of Woodley Town Council, this growth seems set to increase even more rapidly.

Finally I say to all who work so hard to make our Bureau the quality advice centre it undoubtedly is, a big thank you, and may the next 10 years be at least as successful as the first.

JOHN WATSON.

MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

MR. J. WATSON - CHAIRMAN
MR. A. A. HARVEY - TREASURER
MRS. P. ROBINS - SECRETARY
MR. D. EYRIEY - LEGAL REPRESENTATIVE
MRS. A. POTTS - TRUSTEE
MRS. W. HUGHES - BUREAUX ORGANISER
MRS. J. TOMLIN - DEPUTY WOKINGHAM
MRS. G. DEAN - DEPUTY WOODLEY

MR. J. WEST - FIRST MEMBER

MR. D. LEWIS - SUB COMMITTEE - FUND RAISING
MR. B. BOYD - SUB COMMITTEE - NEW PREMISES

MRS. S. RABBETT - VOLUNTEER REPRESENTATIVE
MRS. J. MAYERS - REPRESENTATIVE WOKINGHAM DISTRICT COUNCIL
MRS. J. BURNETT-WILSON - REPRESENTATIVE WOKINGHAM TOWN COUNCIL
MRS. V. WATERS - REPRESENTATIVE WOODLEY TOWN COUNCIL
MR. J. DAVIDSON - WOKINGHAM ROTARY REPRESENTATIVE
MRS. C. FLANAGAN - SOCIAL SERVICES REPRESENTATIVE

MR. R. CAMPBELL - CO-OPTED
MRS. M. KNOX - CO-OPTED
MR. M. KINLOCK - CO-OPTED

BUREAUX STAFF.

ORGANISER	MRS.W.HUGHES
DEPUTY (WOKINGHAM)	MRS.J.TOMLIN
DEPUTY (WOODLEY)	MRS.G.DEAN
	MRS.S.HUNT (LEFT DEC.1986)

WOKINGHAM VOLUNTARY WORKERS.

MR.R.BOYD
MRS.M.CHATTING (LEFT DECEMBER 1986)
MRS.S.COLWIL
MRS.G.DAVIDSON (LEFT DECEMBER 1986)
MRS.B.GIFFORD
MRS.E.HARVEY
MRS.H.LEE
MRS.S.MACLIN
MRS.S.RABBETT
MRS.E.RAMSEY
MRS.E.REASEY
MRS.J.RHODES
MRS.M.ROSENBERG
MRS.P.SEELEY
MR.H.SMITH
MRS.J.THOMPSON.

WOODLEY VOLUNTARY WORKERS.

MRS.S.ALBUM
MRS.P.GOILLON (LEFT JANUARY 1987)
MRS.J.JENNINGS) STAGE 3 TRAINING
MRS.T.McADDEN)
MRS.J.CRAWFORD) STAGE 1 TRAINING
MRS.S.MONCUR)

CLERICAL ASSISTANTS.

MRS.P. ROBINS	MRS.J.LEWIS
MR.H.JONES	MRS.J.JONES

ORGANISER/MANAGERS REPORT

The past year has been a year of adjustment and change throughout the Bureau. The major difference was probably the appointment of a very 'green' organiser who was salaried. With no previous C.A.B. experience and only the excellent reputation of the Organisation to go on, I felt thrown in at the deep end! It would be dishonest of me if I did not admit that on more than one occasion I would drown! Here I must pay tribute to Judy, my Deputy at Wokingham. I can only say she is a first class life saver who not only revived me but rescued us all from my inexperience. Adjustments have had to be made as I have taken on a more administrative role with my time proportionately divided between Wokingham and Woodley. The Manager/Organiser role proving to be almost full. There have been changes, too, at the Area Office. A new Area Officer and a new Advisory Officer have been appointed bringing with them new ideas etc.

The one constant in this time of change is the urgent need for staff. Much time is spent trying to spread the word and encourage people to take up the C.A.B. challenge. We find we are only able to recruit to replace the staff who have left us. We do not have the luxury of a surplus to enable us to expand our service as we would wish.

We have a new training programme both within the Bureau and at Area level thus enabling us to continue to raise the standard of advice we give. This, together with our volunteer In Bureau Tutor and Woodley Town Council's generous permission to use the Coronation Hall for training purposes, is most encouraging for future training. Two trainees have just completed their Stage I and two more are due to complete their Stage IV Area training. Experienced interviewers have attended external courses dealing with Marriage - Second Time Around and Women and Violence. C.A.B. Courses have included Debt and Advanced Debt Counselling, Housing, Consumer Employment and Interviewing. Visits for both experienced and trainee interviewers have been made to the Department of Health and Social Security in Bracknell, the Housing Benefit Office of Wokingham District Council, the Job Centre and Unemployment Benefit Office in Wokingham.

The number of enquiries dealt with at Wokingham have not risen quite as much as we would have liked. This is due, I feel, to various factors. Firstly - thanks to our extensive and continuous training we offer an ever higher standard of advice. The result of this is a longer interview with most of our clients. Secondly, we do not have a waiting room so we constantly have to request potential enquirers to come back. (We have no way of checking how many do return and out of those with a problem now greater than the original.) Thirdly, the shortage of staff prevents

us from extending our opening hours to recapture some of the 'Please, come back' people or to hold a session just for telephone calls. Last, but not least, the Woodley office now deals with their share of the enquiries once dealt with at Wokingham.

The lack of a waiting room highlights the need for larger premises. We all find it very inhibiting to answer a telephone enquiry with clients waiting in the main office area. One is constantly aware of the possible breach of confidentiality although every care is taken to avoid this. Some things are just too personal to discuss with other people around. However, plans have been filed at Shire Hall with a written request for us to be considered in any appropriate development planned within the vicinity of the Town Centre. A similar request has been made to Woodley Town Council. Ideally, we should have apart from the necessary interview rooms, a waiting room, a general office, an Organiser's office and a storage area as a minimum. The vast assortment of booklets, leaflets etc., we have to hold is a nightmare. It would be a joy to use new photo-copier without getting tangled up with the doors of the leaflet cupboard.

54 people were advised free of charge at the Rota Sessions. We are indebted to the Solicitors who provide this service.

Financial Advice has continued to be given by volunteer Mr. Boyd who has helped a great number of people.

Inevitably members of the Bureau come and go. We welcomed Jill Crawford and Sandra Moncur for training and sadly said goodbye to Gill Davidson and Mollie Chätting from Wokingham and to Patsy Goillon and Sarah Hunt from Woodley. Mrs. Mayne and Dr. Paris have resigned from the Management Committee having now left the area. Sarah has not forsaken C.A.B. but moved to the Reading Bureau as a salaried Deputy. We very much appreciate all their efforts and commitment to C.A.B. and our very best wishes go with them. Sadly, the British Legion representative, Major Wells, passed away. Sympathies were sent on behalf of the Management Committee and Bureau staff to his family and I represented us at the funeral service.

The Wokingham Bureau celebrates its' 10th Anniversary this year having weathered many changes during that time including the move from the original premises in the Town Hall to Langborough Road and back to the Town Hall again. It is said that from the smallest acorn great oak trees grow. So from the original recognition that Wokingham needed a Citizens Advice Bureau we have our present Bureau, still weathering the storms but now established like the oak trees of the Town. Our 'sapling' at Woodley looks firmly planted. We must now do all we can to encourage it to grow.

WOKINGHAM DEPUTY ORGANISERS REPORT

As Deputy Organiser of the Wokingham Bureau, I am responsible for the day to day running of the Bureau.

This includes:- preparing the Rota and ensuring there are sufficient volunteers on duty; monitoring the case records to ensure that standards are maintained; keeping our quarterly stocks of leaflets up-to-date; preparing the monthly and quarterly statistics.

In addition, I frequently interview clients when we are short-staffed which is good practice, and also keeps me in touch with the problems of the local community. This in turn helps me to support the Bureau volunteers, which I see as one of the important aspects of my work.

I have been Deputy Organiser at the Bureau for 18 months now, during which time there have been several changes.

We only have 16 volunteers at the present time which is barely sufficient - we really need about 20 to maintain the current opening hours and to enable us to consider opening the Bureau for longer periods on a couple of days a week - something we should now be looking forward to during the forthcoming year. However, looking on the bright side, we do have several prospective volunteers in the 'pipeline' which means that we hope to have additional trained staff working in the Bureau by Christmas.

Our new system of case recording which we introduced in April seems to be working well, and makes the second aim policy work, which is an essential and important part of our work, much easier to monitor and pursue.

We now stock more leaflets than we could previously - thanks mainly to the provision of an additional storage rack, but we still need more space for these.

We continually work towards providing an improved and ever more efficient service which we hope caters for the needs of the community we serve.

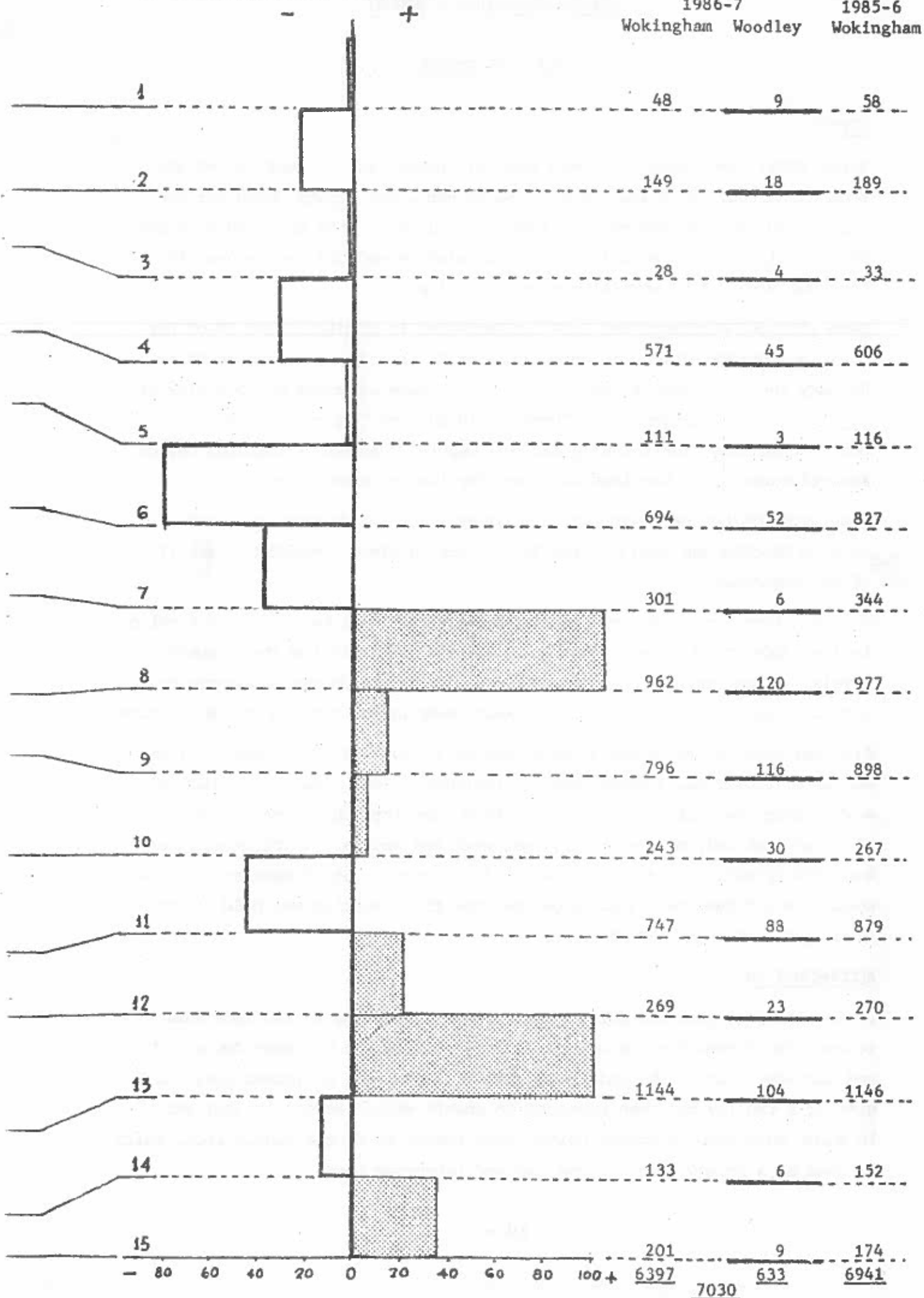
JUDY TOMLIN
DEPUTY ORGANISER.

Comparison of Enquiries 1986-7
& 1985-86 Wokingham + Woodley

Total no Enquiries
1986-87 7030
1985-86 6941

1986-7
Wokingham Woodley

1985-6
Wokingham



DEPUTY ORGANISER'S REPORT

WOODLEY ANNEXE

STAFF

Since April 1986 there have been several changes in the staffing of the Woodley Bureau. Most importantly, Sarah Hunt, the Deputy Organiser who left us on the 17th December to take up employment with the Reading Bureau. Patsy Goillon took time off to nurse a relative and has decided not to continue with C.A.B. work at the present time.

Gwen attended Easthampstead Park in September to complete Part IV of her training. Sandra Album completed her Part IV training at Bournemouth in January 1987. Volunteers at Woodley Bureau have attended various cluster days and other training days. These included Debt Counselling, Advanced Debt Counselling, Interviewing Skills, Deputy Organiser's Training Day on Assertiveness and a Marriage Guidance day 'Second time around'.

Joan Jennings has been working at Woodley since 1st January 1987 and Theresa McAdden has been working at the Bureau since completing Part II of her training.

Gwen has been acting Deputy Organiser since 18th December 1986. A service is just able to be given on two mornings per week with the above staffing levels. There are more trainees in the pipeline which could promote the idea for opening on a third morning each week in the not too distant future.

Clerical back-up has become more necessary because of the increase in the number of enquiries, leaving trained volunteers less time to do clerical work. Over the past year two people have come into the Bureau to do clerical work only on one morning per week and pre Part I volunteers have kept the up-dating of the information files going. Staff meetings for the Woodley staff have been instigated and the first meeting was held in the Woodley Bureau on 4th March 1987.

ACCOMMODATION

During the past year the Bureau has increased from one to two interview rooms. The Bureau has the use of the end room, which has been decorated and carpeted. It is the only room that equipment can be locked away in. A gift of a trolley has been received to enable easier access to leaflets. In March this year telephone points were installed in the middle room, which is used as a reception area, and the end interview room.

A double socket has been installed in the end room where a fan heater can now be used on very cold days.

A good sturdy sandwich board sign with directional arrows has been received and is placed by the side of the footpath at the rear of the Coronation Hall at opening times.

ENQUIRIES

APRIL/MAY/JUNE 1986

Employment	11
Family & Personal	30
Social Security	19
Housing	14
Consumer	18
Others	32
	<hr/>
	124
	<hr/>

JULY/AUGUST/SEPTEMBER 1986

Employment	4
Family & Personal	14
Social Security	27
Housing	21
Consumer	23
Others	38
	<hr/>
	127
	<hr/>

OCTOBER/NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 1986

Employment	13
Family & Personal	23
Social Security	19
Housing	12
Consumer	19
Others	35
	<hr/>
	121
	<hr/>

JANUARY/FEBRUARY/MARCH 1987

Employment	24
Family & Personal	52
Social Security	51
Housing	41
Consumer	44
Others	49
	<hr/>
	261
	<hr/>

Enquires have originated from the following towns and parishes:

Caversham
Charvil
Crowthorne
Earley
Lower Earley
Pangbourne
Reading
Ruscombe

Shinfield
Sonning
Swallowfield
Twyford
Wokingham
Woodley

TREASURERS REPORT

With the resignation of Mrs. Alder, who had been our Organiser since the inception of the Bureau, we experienced considerable difficulty, finally proving impossible, to find a volunteer willing to take on her responsibilities, together with the long hours necessary. Fortunately, the District Council agreed to enter into a partnership arrangement with the National Association, under which they would share responsibility for the major part of the cost of employing a salaried Officer. This has introduced the Treasurer to the niceties of PAYE and National Insurance.

With the departure of some of the Bureau's stalwarts and the need to recruit additional advisors, because of the growing workload, expenditure on training is inevitably increasing. With the need for some soundproofing in the Wokingham Office, a new photocopier, after the old one had finally broken down, a new case recording system, and for additional funds to meet generally rising prices, the financial position was at one time not too happy. However, Wokingham Town Council agreed to a grant that covered the bulk of the cost of the case recording system, N.A.C.A.B. advanced money for the soundproofing, donations were unexpectedly generous, and the Lions presented us with £195, collected by them in atrocious weather, as the proceeds of their "CAB Flag Day". All this has meant that for the first time in several years, income has exceeded expenditure - not by much, but sufficient to ensure that 1987 bills, falling due before any grant is received, can be paid. During the year all Bureau staff have been very much aware of the cash problems and I am grateful to them for containing expenditure so well.

The Bureau is most grateful to all who have given us financial support during the year, Wokingham District Council and Wokingham and Woodley Town Councils, who have provided accomodation and generous grants, the Woodley and Sonning charities who helped to finance the new Woodley office, the Lions for their Flag Day venture, and all the firms and organisations listed overleaf for their very much appreciated support.

A.S. HARVEY.

MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE SUB COMMITTEE REPORTS

NEW ACCOMODATION

The continuing increase in the number of enquiries with, in many cases, more complexity, has meant our present accomodation is not sufficient.

Enquiries so far have not been successful due to the very high costs of any space in the centre of either Wokingham or Woodley.

However, the present best opportunities in Wokingham appear to be either some accomodation in the new County Council complex near Wokingham Library, or a site with planning permission from the District Council for a complex of Terrapin-type buildings. In Woodley the best opportunity appeared to be a redundant school, but this accomodation has now been allocated.

The search continues but any help will be most appreciated.

R. BOYD

PUBLICITY AND FUND RAISING

Our first experience of Fund Raising was with the help of the Wokingham Lions who kindly offered to hold a flag day for us. The day was February 14th and freezing cold. They were indeed 'Lionhearted' and by the end of the day had raised just under £200.

We are due to have a stall at the Donkey Derby in April, manned by members of the Management Committee. This will be a Public Relations exercise.

We hope to hold a Barn Dance in the Autumn.

D. LEWIS

TRAINING OFFICER'S REPORT

Training has taken on a more formalised schedule over the last year and is now the same for all Bureau in the Southern Area.

The Training Programme is divided into four Stages.

Stage I is based on 8 or 9 weeks formal training in the Bureau, which includes sessions with the In-Bureau Tutor. Each session requires four or five hours of preparation. Visits have to be made to the Magistrates Court, County Court, Housing Department, Unemployment Benefit Office, Job Centre and the Department of Health and Social Security.

Stage II requires the Trainees to attend an Area-based course, usually in Reading, and this lasts for 9 sessions, spread over 7 weeks.

Stage III sees the Trainees returning to the Bureau where they begin supervised interviewing for a total of 40 hours.

Stage IV is the final part of the Basic Training lasting for 3 days and arranged at Area level. Upon completion of this Stage the Trainees are considered fully trained.

I have very much enjoyed my first batch of Trainees and hope that they will have benefitted from the more regulated and intense training programme.

PAT SEELEY
IN BUREAU TUTOR.

STAFF SNIPPETS.

Betty Gifford - Original Bureau Worker.

Betty is one of our original interviewers so it is appropriate that we start with a contribution from her:-

The idea of opening a Citizens Advice Bureau in Wokingham came from Richard Rees Jones, a Town Councillor in 1977. A meeting was held to find out if enough people were interested and willing to help. There was a good response and eventually 15 people were selected for training, which consisted of attending six lectures on the Citizens Advice Bureau Procedure sitting in once or twice at Bracknell and Reading Bureaux and an interview with the Management Committee.

In June 1977 the first volunteers went into action as Wokingham's Citizens Advice Bureau. Our experience was minimal, but we had three main attributes - enthusiasm, common sense and a desire to try and help people with whatever problems they brought to us.

The questions people asked were varied, ranging from "Where is Market Place Chambers?" to how to exercise an unquiet spirit.

Over the ten years new people have come along. There are only three of the original twelve left. Training now takes a year, but the aim is the same, to provide a free, confidential service and a sympathetic ear to the people of Wokingham and the local district.

BETTY GIFFORD
INTERVIEWER
COMMENCED APRIL 1977.

Jill Crawford - Trainee For Wokingham

Since my first encounter with the Citizens Advice Bureau as a Management Committee member, in my capacity as Wokingham Ladies Circle Chairman, the training has changed tremendously with in-bureau and area training, as well as organised visits to local courts, D.H.S.S., Housing Department, Job Centre and Benefits Office. This will have taken six months to complete.

As every aspect of people's lives seems to get more complicated and, with the ever increasing population in the area, this more intensive training programme can only help the Bureau meet the demands.

JILL CRAWFORD.

Sandra Moncur - Trainee for Woodley.

As a newcomer to C.A.B. I have appreciated the pre-training I have been given. It was a lot more work than I had imagined and it certainly took more time than I had expected.

I have enjoyed the visits to the DHSS, Jobcentre, Unemployment and Housing Offices and the Courts. I feel that they will be very beneficial. We were made very welcome and felt that they all appreciated the work C.A.B. do and expressed a willingness to help whenever necessary.

I am about to enter Stage II and especially feel the need for training in interviewing skills which I feel is very important. I look forward putting it all into practice.

SANDRA MONCUR.

WOKINGHAM/WOODLEY CITIZENS' ADVICE BUREAU

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on Wednesday, 18th June, 1986
in Wokingham Town Hall.

Present. Mr. John Watson was in the Chair
Chairman of WDC Cllr. Southgate.
Mayor of Wokingham Cllr. M. Ferguson-Kelly.
District Councillors.
Town Councillors.
Woodley Representatives.
Members of the Management Committee
Bureau Staff
and many other names on file.

Apologies Names on File.

Minutes of the last meeting were agreed and signed.

Chairman's Report.

Mr. Watson said that it had been an eventful year with many changes. The Office at Woodley had been opened, the need had been proved and it was expected that enquiries would increase steadily. Mrs. Judy Tomlin had been appointed as Deputy Organiser at Wokingham. The Chairman, Treasurer and Organiser had met members of the WDC and explained fully the work and commitments of CAB. As a result, the WDC entered into a partnership with CAB, thus enabling a proper salary to be paid to the Organiser in future. Mrs. Alder had resigned as Organiser and Mrs. Wendy Hughes had been appointed in her place, on salary and working more hours. The work load at Wokingham was increasingly rapidly and the need for larger accommodation was a matter of concern: any suggestions would be welcome. The accommodation at Woodley was not ideal but a start had been made and the prospect of a better site was being investigated. Mr. Watson said that Mrs. Alder had worked very hard in the Bureau and her efforts were very much appreciated, a bouquet was presented to her to reinforce that feeling. He thanked the Officers and members of the Management Committee and all the Bureau staff for their work and support throughout the year, indeed, without them there could not be a Bureau in Wokingham. He also thanked the staff for organising the lunch.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

THE VOLUNTEERS: Without the freely volunteered hours of the Bureau Staff we would be unable to offer our Service to the Public in the Wokingham District. We cannot offer them enough appreciation and thanks for their time. Recognition should also be given to the two Deputies whose dedication and loyalty can only be described as 'Beyond the call of Duty'.

THE LEGAL ROTA SOLICITORS:

Clifton Ingram
C.J. Giles & Co.
Malley & Co.
Neale, Evans & Co.
Ratcliffe, Duce & Gammer
Southorns
M. Stroud

FINANCIAL ADVICE: Mr. R Boyd

Our thanks to the Solicitors and Mr. Boyd from both the Bureau and our Clients for your continued freely given help and time.

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Wine for the AGM donated by a local professional firm.