

Ash Citizens Advice Bureau Annual Report 2017/2018

Throughout this past year, Ash Citizens Advice Staff and Volunteers have yet again worked tirelessly to provide residents in Ash with help and assistance, to deal with the problems they face.

I reported last year that the CAB Manager Vicky intended to retire after 27 years at the Bureau. However, following an exhaustive Interview procedure, we were delighted to appoint a new Chief Office in Julia Butler. A secret "Farewell Party" for Vicky was held where many friends, Staff and Volunteers of today and 'yesterday' came to wish Vicky a happy retirement.

The interview process for the Trustee Board to appoint a new Chief Officer was a challenging project for the Trustee Board. However, we were only too delighted to welcome the new Chief Officer Julia to this challenging role.

Julia has proved to be an extremely competent CO and a great Team Leader. She is much liked and admired by Staff, Volunteers and Trustees. Although Julia was a well-known face at the Bureau (as an internal candidate), she has 'stepped up' to a fantastically difficult role, with all the challenges in Bureau life through 2017/18.

Ash CA has also welcomed many other new Staff, Volunteers and two new Trustees during the course of this hectic year. Our new Administrator, Rachel (also a part-time trainee Advisor), has brought so many skills to support the team.

However, we also received the sad news recently that Alderman Rosemary Hall aged 94 years had passed away. The fact is that without this dedicated Parish and Borough Councilor (also Mayor of Guildford), there would doubtfully ever have been an Ash Citizens Advice Bureau. Although standing only 4ft10 inches tall, this lady was the original 'iron fist in a velvet glove'. In the History of Ash Citizens Advice Bureau it was reported "At a public meeting sponsored by Ash Parish Council in January 1979, it was agreed that Ash should have its own Citizen Advice Bureau". Rosemary was the prime leader in this whole project, and it is mainly thanks to her dogged determination that today we have such a wonderful facility in Ash CA.

We have been extremely lucky with some of our fundraising this year. The husband of Karen, one of our supervisors, cycled the Prudential London Sponsored Cycle Race, bringing much needed funding from his efforts. Dave Brown at Victoria Hall donated the monies raised from one of his renowned & well-known Quiz Nights. We have also been selected by the local Co-op as one of their Ash-based charities, giving Ash CA 1% per own-brand spend of products and services, to fund a "Be Money Fit" project at Ash Grange Children's Centre. The current financial climate with numerous cut-backs means we need to continue to fund raise in order to be able to operate at the level we do.

As the Ash Parish Council Representative, I am extremely proud to serve on the Trustee Board of Ash CAB, and would like to thank all the Staff and Volunteers, together with all the Members of the Trustee Board, for all their hard work and dedication to this worthwhile and wonderful service.

Councillor Patricia Scott
Ash Parish Council – Ash Wharf