

## **REPORT TO PICKMERE PARISH COUNCIL**

**3<sup>rd</sup> November 2020**

### **AGENDA ITEM 8.1      CITIZENS ADVICE KNUTSFORD – REQUEST FOR DONATION**

#### **1.      Background**

- 1.1    At your October meeting, Council considered a request from Knutsford Town Council for a grant toward the hosting of a Citizens Advice service in Knutsford, which potentially serves the Pickmere area. Council deferred consideration and requested further information about the service.

#### **2.      Report**

- 2.1    Knutsford Town Council was requested for any information as to the use of the CA service in Knutsford by Pickmere residents in the last year. Apparently, although records are kept of postcodes of users of the service, there were none from Pickmere postcodes in that period.
- 2.2    Since this may largely be a result of Pickmere residents being unaware of the existence and nature of the service, the Town Council was also asked to supply any such information, so that the service can be publicised in Pickmere. Such information has been supplied and has now been posted on this Council's Facebook and Web pages. It is reproduced in Appendix 1 to this report, together with the request from the Town Council for contributions at Appendix 2.

#### **3.      Recommendation**

- 3.1    That members reconsider the request.

**Jack Steel**  
**Clerk to the Parish Council**

## **APPENDIX 1 - Citizens Advice Cheshire North offers free to the point of delivery, an Information, Advice and Advocacy service for people living and working in the northern half of Cheshire East.**

Typically the types of issues we help people with are claims and appealing decisions for welfare benefits, out of control debts, issues at work and housing problems. As well as these types of enquiries, we can help with just about anything else – relationship/family issues, consumer goods, legal and immigration etc.

Although during the Covid crisis we have not been able to see our clients face-to-face, we are still helping more people than ever by telephone, email, webchat or video call. So if anyone has any problem that they would like to discuss with us, we can be contacted by phone or email.

We are taking calls 9-5 Mon to Fri, so If you need help ring: 01625 708608 leave a message and we will call back, alternatively you can also ring Adviceline 03444 111444

Send us an email:

<https://www.citizensadvicecn.org.uk/email/cacn-email-form>

Typical Case Studies:

### **Case Study 1**

CI came with two ex-colleagues; all had been employees of local travel agent recently made redundant and were experiencing difficulties accessing Universal Credit following their redundancies.

As each client's circumstances were different, they were seen individually and their own needs accounted for.

We were able to initially advise on the process for claiming welfare benefits and those benefits that may be better suited to their own situation. As all had been employed for a number of years, they had long National Insurance contribution records and therefore would be entitled to assistance "in their own right", regardless of other income and capital.

We were also able to advise on statutory and contractual redundancy entitlements along with other money they may be due. We also identified the liquidator and process for securing redundancy payments.

At a very stressful time for the clients, they had initially been unable to identify what they were entitled to and what they needed to do to get it. We were able to identify their ex-employers' liabilities and the best options for them regarding welfare benefits.

### **Case Study 2**

Client is separated from ex-partner and mother of his three young children since March 2019. With two days' notice his ex-partner stated that unless the children are able to stay with him for the whole of the next week, she would not allow him to see their children over Christmas. Client works full time and was not able to take a week off with such short notice.

We were able to provide a clear overview of client's rights as a father with parental responsibilities and with that the obligations on his ex-partner, even in the absence of any formal written agreement

or court order around contact. It was felt that although there may be rights that he can enforce in the face of his ex-partners unreasonable behaviour that would be of limited comfort if he is unable to see his children.

We arranged with a local family solicitor to speak with the client over the phone, who in turn agreed to outline the objective legal obligations of both parties in a letter which client was able to share with his ex-partner. Consequently alternative arrangements were agreed for the Christmas period and an appointment for negotiation was agreed for the New Year, as both agreed that there were in fact some other unresolved issues that needed to be addressed.

### **Case Study 3**

Client had been detained under Mental Health Act, but was now at home under Community Treatment Order.

One of her issues that led to her detention was a falling out with her neighbour. Client stated that while her reaction to her neighbour had been “dramatic”, she had a genuine grievance regarding intrusive noise.

The client believed that now her social housing landlord would dismiss any complaints she made as simply a result of her mental health issues. Client noted that when she had mentioned the noise to her landlord the previous day, a housing officer had told her to “be very careful what you say” as there might be consequences for her tenancy.

With the client’s consent, we were able to contact the landlord and addressed three issues:

- (i) Noise from her neighbour
- (ii) Clients rights not to be discriminated against by landlord due to her disability (Equality Act 2010)
- (iii) Landlords duty not to victimise our client as a consequence of her complaint (Equality Act 2010)

The client was immediately allocated to a new housing officer and an appointment was made to explore her complaint about noise. We were also able to liaise with Cheshire East Council regarding noise from neighbours.

After an informal meeting between client’s neighbour and housing officer, our client has reported that the problematic noise has now stopped and that she is able to have some peace. She is able to simply ignore the neighbour and following enquiries made by our team for a possible creative activity our client could take up, she is now looking at pursuing an art therapy class in Stockport and sees this as a way of constructively channelling her frustrations in the future.