

## REPORT TO PICKMERE PARISH COUNCIL

14<sup>th</sup> December 2021

### AGENDA ITEM 9.3      REQUEST FOR CONTRIBUTION TO CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU - KNUTSFORD

#### 1      REPORT

- 1.1    The following request has been received from Knutsford Town Council. Members will recall that a similar request was made this time last year, and Council decided, following a discussion, not to make a donation.

*As you know, Knutsford Town Council has committed to fund the Citizens Advice service for a four year period from 2020-2024. This ensures that our residents have access to a free at point of service advice, information and advocacy service which covers a huge range of issues from Consumer Law, Debt, Employment, Housing, Welfare, Family Law and everything else that would cause a person to seek help. Contrary to popular belief, the Citizens Advice is not a centrally funded service, nor does it receive enough funding from Cheshire East Council to be able to operate across the whole borough. The Cheshire East North CA is based in Macclesfield and in order to operate in other areas relies on funding from the local councils. They have outreach services in Wilmslow, Poynton and because of our funding, in Knutsford too. Without our funding, there would be no service in Knutsford.*

*The Town Council has committed to funding of £20,632 for the 2022/23 financial year to ensure the continuation of two morning sessions per week being delivered from the Council Offices in Knutsford. Obviously, at the moment the service is running remotely due to the impact of coronavirus but we are hoping to be able to restart the face to face sessions soon. Whilst it has been running remotely our residents have still had access to the same level of support.*

*We are provided with usage monitoring data and because of this we know that Knutsford residents only account for between 70-85% of those using the service and we recognise that as a key service centre for neighbouring parishes we are where residents from our neighbouring villages go to access services such as this.*

*In order to reduce the financial burden on Knutsford precept payers, the Town Council requests that neighbouring parishes, whose residents have access to this service, consider making a contribution towards the cost of the funding we provide. You can then promote the service to your community and highlight the support on offer which your council helps fund. The Chief Officer from the Cheshire East North CA would be happy to come to a parish council meeting to discuss how Citizens Advice supports people and the huge advantage that having this service on the doorstep gives to residents.*

*As one of our surrounding parishes, the Town Council would like to request that your parish council considers making a donation in the 2022/23 financial year towards the cost of this service. This would offset the costs our residents pay providing a service to surrounding areas and would be something you can promote in your community. Over the last 12 months 2% of the users of the Knutsford service were Pickmere residents, a commensurate donation would be £350.*

*The Town Council would be grateful if your council would consider this request and if you could let me know the decision reached.*

**2. RECOMMENDATION**

2.1 That Council considers the request.

Jack Steel  
Clerk to the Parish Council