

CANF Newsletter

Citizens Advice New Forest Newsletter

Autumn 2018

Citizens Advice New Forest joins forces with New Forest Libraries.

Ringwood Library has undergone a makeover to improve library facilities as well as providing access to the Citizens Advice Service for the first time under one roof.

Councillor Seán Woodward, Hampshire County Council's Executive Member for Recreation and Heritage, said: "We're really proud of how we're expanding the range of services available for the local community, and we welcome Citizens Advice New Forest on board.

Alison Talbot, newly appointed Chief Officer, Citizens Advice New Forest, said: "We are looking forward to moving into Ringwood Library and complementing existing services. Our staff will be on hand to give free impartial, confidential and independent advice for people of all ages on matters such as scam awareness, pensions, rent and general wellbeing."

Alongside the library's new touch screen machines for customers to quickly and easily borrow and renew items, Citizens Advice New Forest will introduce a new self service terminal so that visitors can look up advice and information by topic.

New Forest District Council also welcome the move and Cllr Diane Andrews, Cabinet member for Community Affairs, said, Citizens Advice have been serving the community in Ringwood for 60 years; this move gives them the opportunity to reach out to even more people and introduce new technologies to help people make informed choices about the problems they face. It is a positive move that I believe will offer an enhanced experience for the community."

NEED INDEPENDENT FINANCIAL ADVICE?

**Speak to an Adviser at New Forest Citizens Advice,
for a referral to our Moneyplan Advisers**



What our clients

say ...

Thank you so much for all your help and advice, support and belief. It's all over now. It was a worry and now it's a relief and that's all down to you and the wonderful C.A.B. office.

Thank you card . Totton office

In this issue...

CANF moves to Ringwood library

New Chief Officer

Scamnesty - keep safe from fraud

Our clients' stories

Universal Credit goes live across the Forest



A new Chief Officer has taken over at CANF, **Alison Talbot**, from Tiptoe, comes from roles working with New Forest District Council benefits team. She has worked before with Citizens Advice New Forest and is pleased to be back. 'I am delighted to be given this opportunity. I know Citizen's Advice does a fantastic job in the community and I am a big fan of all the volunteers who give up their time to help people in need of advice'

Pictured above (l-r) are volunteer Paul Boynton, Alison, Operations Manager Jeff Wiltshire and Treasurer Eric Read.

Have you thought of joining us?

If you are interested in discussing our volunteering opportunities, please get in touch (newforestcab.org.uk).

We are keen that our volunteers reflect the communities we serve and have a good understanding of the issues facing our clients.

There are lots of volunteering opportunities at CANF. Please get in touch.

KEEPING YOU AND YOUR FAMILY SAFER

SCAMNĚSTY.

DON'T LET THEM SCAM YOU!

If you've received any post or flyers that you think might be fraud or a scam, post it here.

Get your Free SCAM SAFER PACK from Citizens Advice

Police and Crime Commissioner Michael Lane has launched a Scamnesty campaign to encourage people to report scams and to provide advice to help local people avoid becoming victims of fraud.

Hampshire Constabulary receives over 700 reports of fraud or attempted fraud each month. Many of these are targeting elderly or vulnerable members of the community, and the consequences can be extremely damaging both financially and emotionally for the victims.

The Police and Crime Commissioner and his team can provide advice on how to identify and avoid fraud, with free Safer Packs which have tips on recognising different types of fraud, and information about how to access support if you think you or someone you know has been a victim. To download and print at home visit www.hampshire-pcc.gov.uk/scamnesty or pick up a pack at your local Citizens Advice Office.

Our offices in Lymington, New Milton and Ringwood all have Scamnesty boxes for you to use to report concerns. In addition, there is a local roadshow to highlight fraud, being held at New Milton Tesco (Caird Avenue) on 19 October.

Why all this matters:

A Client Case Study

All our advice is confidential, so names and details have been changed

Francis had surgery back in 2013 that left him severely incapacitated. Medical complications arose that meant he was no longer able to work. He had substantial debts and was just about keeping his head above water.

He contacted CANF in December with a view to switching energy suppliers through our Energy Best Deal service. We helped him make comparisons and he was able to apply for the Warm Home Discount that he was previously unaware of.

Following the energy assistance we had given the client, he returned to us later that month following a decision made by DWP that he was not entitled to the limited capability for work related activity element of Universal Credit. He had also made an application for Personal Independence Payment that had also been turned down. We assisted him with appealing these decisions and following lengthy waits for the appeals to be heard, he was awarded the limited capability for work related activity element of UC followed by the standard rate of daily living and mobility components of PIP. Both claims were backdated and resulted in a substantial back payment of over a year for both benefits.

Whilst assisting Francis with his benefit appeals, we were also helping him to maintain contact with his creditors,

keeping them updated and stopping them from chasing him directly for payments.

Following the successful appeal result, we discussed options available to him to manage his debts. He decided to apply for bankruptcy. This has enabled him to make a fresh start. His debts were substantial enough that on a benefit only income, it would have taken over 15 years to repay at affordable amounts.

Jeff our Operations Manager explains more:

'Clients often come in with one problem, we build up a relationship with them and often discover that there are more things that we can help with. In this case a relatively straight forward

Energy Best Deal case resulted in on going casework to help with debt and benefits.'



Universal Credit



Universal Credit for the New Forest

Could it affect you?

Universal Credit merges six working age benefits and goes live across the New Forest on 26th September 2018.

Universal Credit could affect anyone of **working age** who is :

- living in a New Forest postcode areas
- claiming Job Seekers Allowance, Child Tax Credit, Employment & Support Allowance, Income Support, Working Tax Credit or Housing Benefit

You can check if you are eligible for Universal Credit by visiting www.gov.uk/universalcredit or ringing the Universal Credit Free-phone Helpline 0800 3285644

You can prepare for Universal Credit by:

- Making sure you have a bank account
- Making sure you can fill in an online form. If you need help with your computer skills our Digital Champion project can help (ask at a New Forest library for a referral)
- Setting up a 'Verify Now' account at www.gov.uk/verify which is a secure means of proving who you are on line. It provides simple fast access to a range of online government services, including Universal Credit.
- Making sure you can manage a monthly budget. Universal Credit will be a monthly payment, paid in arrears. You will be responsible for paying all your bills, including your rent.

If you are already claiming one of these benefits there is no need to do anything right now, you will get a letter from your existing benefit provider.

Contact Us

Looking for advice?

You can call us on

0300 3309 009

or look at our
website

citizensadvice.org.uk



@CABNewForest

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*(We don't give
advice over Twitter)*

We are a local charity working in partnership with other organisations who are able to offer help and support to those in need. We value diversity, promote equality and challenge discrimination.

New Court House. 28 New Street, Lymington, Hampshire SO41 9BQ

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