

19th October 2023

Good afternoon,

By now you may be aware that four of the five Citizens Advice across Somerset have merged into one service. This merger is partly in response to the unification of the four Somerset District Councils into a single unitary authority. With the ever changing social and economic environment we wanted to ensure that collectively we can be more agile in our responses to local needs, while ensuring that we create a stronger and more sustainable foundation to stand our services on. We will continue to ensure that there is a local presence in each of our areas, by joining together, we will be able to explore additional ways to enhance our current offer and provide access to our service. The merger has taken 2 years to explore in full, identifying both the opportunities and potential risks. This was taken to each Citizen's Advice trustee board and their CEO for input. It was not a decision taken quickly or lightly, we needed to be absolutely certain it was the best decision for all: our clients, our staff and volunteers and our funders.

In the last year we supported over 25,000 people across the county with over 100,000 different issues and that number keeps rising. We do not envisage any change to the services we offer to you, we believe that by joining together we will be in an improved position to attract funding and deliver projects across a wider front.

How can you help?

We are grateful to already have an excellent relationship with our parish councils and continue to need your support as you have provided it before. You know the local needs and we want to work with you to ensure all residents in your town and surrounding villages can access to our invaluable service when they need it. We are asking that if you are able to support us financially you do so, we have not changed our services and priorities just joined together. We are anticipating a reduction in funding from Somerset County Council and so need to secure funding from other sources. Every amount of support, no matter how small is spent wisely to ensure as a charity we continue to deliver for the residents of our county.

We would like to apply to the Parish Council for a grant towards the cost of providing advice, support and specialist casework that enables the people of Somerset to plan for and manage through key life events and change. If there is a form process I would be grateful if you would link me to it.

We would welcome a contribution towards the running costs of our general advice service which is available by phone, email or community appointment 5 days a week.

The running costs include:

1) Contribution to the salary cost of an expert advice supervisor who oversees our volunteer advisers, £942.30.

This oversight includes approximately 2 hours a week of time in order to quality check the advice given (this audit is required under the Advice Quality Standard) as well as providing expert advice supervision during the volunteer advisers' client work to ensure accuracy and appropriateness whilst working directly with clients. The supervisor also completes training and volunteers adviser appraisal.

2) A contribution towards direct volunteer related overhead expenses including IT licences and cloud based system fees (MS365), phone and insurance etc: £320

We would be happy to submit any further information you might require to support this application, or discuss it in person if you so wish.

Our bank details are :

CAF Bank Ltd
Sort code: 40-52-40
Account: 00005702

Very best wishes,

Laura

Laura Miller
Citizens Advice Somerset



Registered Office: Petters House, Petters Way, Yeovil, Somerset, BA20 1SH
Registered charity no: 1054134
Authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority - FRN: 617741