

MAIDSTONE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU

England & Wales · Charity number 299055

Details

Other names CITIZENS ADVICE MAIDSTONE

Status Registered

Legal form Charitable company

Company number [02234220](#)

Registered 1988-07-18

Register [View on the Charity Commission register](#)

Contact

Address Citizen Advice Bureau
2 Bower Terrace
Maidstone
ME16 8RY

Phone 0808 2505 704

Website www.maidstonecab.org.uk

Activities

Objects: FOR THE PROMOTION OF ANY CHARITABLE PURPOSES FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE COMMUNITY IN THE AREA OF THE TOWN OF MAIDSTONE AND IMMEDIATELY SURROUNDING AREAS BY THE ADVANCEMENT OF EDUCATION THE PROTECTION OF HEALTH AND THE RELIEF OF POVERTY, SICKNESS AND DISTRESS.

Activities: The Charity was established on 1st January 1940 to provide information, advice and assistance to the community of Maidstone Borough and surrounding areas. It employs paid staff and volunteers to provide specialist and generalist advice respectively to clients who access the Bureau. The Charity aims to be a first point of contact for people suffering from all sorts of discrimination.

Classification

- **How:** Provides Services, Provides Advocacy/advice/information
- **What:** General Charitable Purposes, Education/training, The Advancement Of Health Or Saving Of Lives, Disability, The Prevention Or Relief Of Poverty, Accommodation/housing, Economic/community Development/employment, Human Rights/religious Or Racial Harmony/equality Or Diversity
- **Who:** Children/young People, Elderly/old People, People With Disabilities, People Of A Particular Ethnic Or Racial Origin, The General Public/mankind

Geography

- **Area of benefit:** THE TOWN OF MAIDSTONE AND IMMEDIATELY SURROUNDING AREAS
- Kent

Finances

Period end	Income	Expenditure	Assets	Employees
2025-03-31	£943,771	£925,929	£376,286	30
2024-03-31	£833,012	£823,773	£361,131	29
2023-03-31	£805,623	£780,515	£350,131	30
2022-03-31	£805,631	£758,097	£323,144	32
2021-03-31	£860,112	£793,704	£254,188	34

Trustees

Name	Role	Appointed
Andrew Breen		2020-03-02
Cllr Simon David Wales		2025-01-22
David Parrish		2021-09-13
IVOR OWEN		
JOHN COBBETT		
Peter James Julier		2025-07-02
Peter Stonely		2022-05-09
Robert Bird		2013-11-15

MAIDSTONE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU

England & Wales - Charity number 299055

Accounts

MAIDSTONE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU
(A company limited by guarantee)

REPORTS AND ACCOUNTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

Registered Charity No. 299055

Company No. 02234220

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MAIDSTONE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU
REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

The Maidstone Citizens Advice Bureau is a company limited by guarantee and a registered charity governed by its Memorandum and Articles of Association (Charity number 299055, Company number 02234220).

Citizens Advice Maidstone is the operating name of Maidstone Citizens Advice Bureau.

The Board of Trustees

The Trustees of the charitable company are its directors for the purposes of company law and throughout this report are collectively referred to as the 'Trustees'.

The members of the Board of Trustees who served during the year and up to the date of this report were as follows:

Elected Trustees

Mr P J Stonely (Chair)
Mr A Breen (Vice-Chair)
Mr S Wales (appointed 22 January 2025) (Co Vice-Chair)
Mr D Parrish (Hon Treasurer)
Mr S Bonny Malhotra
Mr R Bird
Mr J Cobbett
Ms L French (resigned 10 February 2025)
Mr I R Owen
Ms J S Woods
Mr D Thapa Magar (resigned 29 January 2025)
Mr P Julier (appointed 2 July 2025)

Co-opted Members

Cllr P Harper
Ms L Mason

Staff Representatives

Mr P Hardy
Mr S Jones
Mrs T Weber

Senior Leadership Team

Mr P Hardy - CEO
Mrs S Smith - Advice Manager
Mr I Park - Service Manager Projects
Mrs T Weber - Operations Manager

Registered Office and Principal Address

2 Bower Terrace, Tonbridge Road, Maidstone, Kent, ME16 8RY

Statutory Auditors

Azets Audit Services, Globe House, Eclipse Park, Sittingbourne Road, Maidstone, Kent, ME14 3EN

MAIDSTONE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU

TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

The Trustees present their report and the audited financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2025. The Trustees confirm that the annual report and financial statements of Citizens Advice Maidstone comply with current statutory requirements, the requirements of Citizens Advice Maidstone's governing document and the provisions of the Statement of Recommended Practice – Accounting and Reporting by Charities (SORP FRS 102).

Objectives and activities

Citizens Advice Maidstone provides independent, free, confidential, impartial advice to everyone regardless of their race, gender, sexuality or disability. Citizens Advice Maidstone aims to ensure that individuals do not suffer through a lack of knowledge of their rights and responsibilities or of the services available to them, or through an inability to express their needs effectively. The Citizens Advice Maidstone also aims to exercise a responsible influence on the development of social policies and services both locally and nationally through the work of the Research and Campaign team.

Public benefit

The Trustees confirm that they have complied with the duty in section 4 of the Charities Act 2006 to have due regard to the guidance contained in the Charity Commission's general guidance on the public benefit when reviewing the local office aims and objectives and in the planning of future activities.

Achievements and performance

Our goal is to empower clients to solve their problems by themselves; others requiring more support do receive further help through detailed work conducted by our specialists and generalist volunteer advisers. Citizens Advice Maidstone provides free, independent, confidential and impartial advice to everyone on their rights and responsibilities. The organisation values diversity; promotes equity & inclusion and challenges discrimination. This essential work is professionally carried out by our team of paid and voluntary staff helping people to solve their problems and changing their lives. In order to prevent financial problems re-emerging, we also run educational services such as financial capability or energy efficiency training sessions in collaboration with other local offices.

Our office is located on Tonbridge Road. Also we attend Trinity house, Maidstone's community Hub delivering face 2 face appointments. This enables us to connect with a broad and diverse client base within the Borough. Clients can approach our service for advice in the first instance; by telephone; by email or digitally for those who otherwise cannot access us easily. Face-to-face appointments are also available if necessary.

The Citizens Advice Membership Scheme requires each local Citizens Advice to carry out a Leadership Self-Assessment each year. The Board worked together with paid and volunteer staff to look at its policies and procedures and submit its Assessment to the Performance Assessor under the system. The Organisation has been judged to be of a high standard.

Our workforce, both paid and voluntary have produced an excellent set of statistics, the majority of which can be seen in our Annual Report. Suffice to say that we continue to provide our service to many more people than other similar organisations. Financially it has been a better year with us securing funding for new projects. Notwithstanding, our total income for the year was £943,771 (2024 : £833,012) with the expenditure pegged at £925,929 (2024: £823,773) showing a surplus of £17,842 (2024: £9,239) for the 2024/25 financial year. There was a loss on the pension scheme liability of £2,687 (2024 gain: £1,761), which has been separately disclosed, giving an overall surplus for the year of £15,155 (2024: £11,000). At the end of the Financial Year our Restricted Reserves were £26,496 (2024: £48,269) and General Unrestricted Reserves stood at £315,308 (2024 : £278,380).

Demonstrating the value of our work is crucial, as the pressures on the public finances continues to gather pace with national and local spending decreasing further year on year. It is our responsibility to communicate to funders why Citizens Advice is an essential service and not just 'nice to have'. Citizens Advice Maidstone is unique for many reasons: in our team we have a total of 30 paid staff equating to almost 23 FTE, of which 16 FTE work within our various projects and the remainder form part of our core service. Our team of 49 volunteers includes Trustees, advisers, administrators, trainees and assessors.

Our services are provided with funding from a wide variety of sources. A Service Level Agreement with Maidstone Borough Council allows us to provide the essential Core Service of general and specialist advice through digital and face-to-face formats to clients in the Borough of Maidstone also from Colyer-Fergusson and the Cobtree Trust to support the vulnerable. We have contracts with Citizens Advice to provide Pension Wise guidance. Pension Wise provides a telephone service nationally and limited face to face in Maidstone and Hove. Citizens Advice also provide funding for Universal Credit (help to claim). Our work in HMP Maidstone continues to be funded by Henry Smith Charity and latterly also from HMP Maidstone. Funding for our work on the Energy Advice Programme (CMAP & EAP), formerly Energy Best Deal (EBD) came through National Citizens Advice and amongst all these, other smaller projects were funded through smaller grants from external funding sources.

MAIDSTONE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU
TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT (CONTINUED)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

Achievements and performance (continued)

We continue to work with a number of partners within Local Government and Statutory Agencies to improve the policies and practices that affect our communities. We work collectively with other Local Citizens Advice centres in Kent to inform public policy and help regulators, as well as influence private industry to make their services fair for consumers. In addition to Local and National campaigning, with the help of our volunteers we empower clients and communities to engage with society and make a difference to issues that matter. We hope to expand our use of volunteers when it is feasible to do so.

Volunteers are vital to the service provided by Citizens Advice Maidstone. Trustees and our Management Team are working in partnership with our paid and voluntary staff to provide excellent quality advice and support to over 14,000 people up 1000 from last year with over 45,000 different issues up 10,000 from last year achieving £5.5m income gain and debts written off an increase of 3 million on the previous year.

Additionally, Trustees are also engaged in providing direction in the Governance of our office. Our Volunteers are an integral part of the way we deliver our advice, support and service today to the communities of Maidstone, and have been since the inception of Local Citizens Advice (LCAs) over 85 years ago in 1939. The service in Maidstone commenced on the 1st January 1940 and over the years has dealt with around 2 Million problems.

Volunteers have always been integral to the Citizens Advice service and are increasingly involved in delivering services within all areas of advice work. Volunteers bring with them a wealth of experience and skills and it is important for us to recognise the resource we have within the service. Volunteers are vital to the way we deliver our service, allowing us to reach many more people than if we were purely delivering our work through paid staff. Volunteers undertake a range of tasks from assessing and providing advice, supporting the running of our local office, campaigning in the community and serving as Trustees.

Our volunteers come from a wide range of backgrounds, including young people, professionals who want to broaden their horizons, retired people who want to give something back and parents whose children have started school – so we offer a range of support services to meet the needs of all our volunteers too. Our commitment to value diversity, promote equity and inclusion means we can encourage individuals who might not otherwise wish/be able to volunteer.

Understanding our trainee volunteers' needs and expectations is a very important aspect of the training programme. Providing a well-structured training plan helps the trainee to gain better employment prospects as well as offering an opportunity for personal development, increased confidence, self-esteem, and wellbeing.

Providing an active contribution to the day-to-day running of a LCA can develop volunteers' practical skills, such as problem solving, communication and teamwork, as well as boost their confidence and belief in their abilities. This improves employability, presents career development opportunities, and can help those currently unemployed, move into work.

Volunteering provides individuals with an opportunity they might not otherwise have to develop their personal skills and abilities. For those out of work, volunteering keeps them active and motivated, potentially countering the negative impacts of unemployment on mental wellbeing – research shows that one in five jobseeker's allowance claimants experience a mental health disorder.

Volunteering enables people to realise their own potential, supporting priorities around increased social mobility – 29 per cent of volunteers that left the Citizens Advice service did so for paid employment, education or training (National Statistics). It also enables individuals to make an economic contribution to society, one which may be factored into future national Gross Domestic Product and productivity calculations.

Volunteering with Citizens Advice can also develop an individual's softer skills, resilience and other personal attributes. This can have a positive impact on how people feel about themselves, how they respond to others and their capacity to manage life's challenges.

For retired individuals, volunteering may offer different opportunities, provide structure and a sense of purpose as well as help them feel involved in society, all highlighted as vital to personal wellbeing. Ensuring that retired people are mentally and physically active also has wider reaching benefits to society, including reducing the NHS provision required to cope with an ageing population. Volunteering with us does not just have an impact on individuals, it benefits communities too. Our volunteers are local people, and through volunteering, they increase their knowledge about community issues and build relationships with their locality. This creates stronger communities, with engaged and active members, and more social action.

MAIDSTONE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU
TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT (CONTINUED)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

Achievements and performance (continued)

The Citizens Advice service also plays an integral role in supporting and strengthening its local community. We provide a service that meets local needs and reaches out to a broad and diverse client base. We support and strengthen other community-focused organisations, partnering with them to share our insight on how best to support local people. We also use our extensive knowledge to act as an advocate for the local area, mobilising and connecting people with their community. We are a local service, working with local people, for the benefit of the local community.

The value we get from working with volunteers is greater than just our ability to provide a quality advice service. In addition, our investment in developing volunteers, and enabling them to volunteer in their local area, has tangible benefits for the individual, community, and society at large. This is an additional benefit to the community, created through the way we deliver our service.

Both during and in the wake of Covid, we face of an exponential increase in both client demand and the complexity of their queries. At the end of the 2024/25 financial year, as the pandemic fades in to history, we have established a new way of working allowing us to continue to deliver our much-needed service, a lifeline for so many survivors of the epidemic who now face a cost-of-living crisis.

We adopted a strategy encompassing the “best of what we had learned and the best of what did” to work in very different ways and we continue to provide the vast majority of our services remotely, via telephone as well as digital means, reserving Face to Face appointments for the most vulnerable, and complex cases. Fortunately, our staff and volunteers adapted to the new regime extremely well and it is a credit to their dedication and commitment that in this most challenging of times we have helped many more clients with much lower level of resource.

Data

We give advice to people who need help, but we also collect statistical data on all these issues. For example, we can show attendant issues affecting people who come to us with problems around council tax. As a result, we are better able to ascertain the most efficient ways to help people understand their problems more completely. For councils and councillors, this data is powerful. It can help address failure demand, facilitate the consideration of new service options and provide additional insight to the scrutiny process.

Councils are increasingly working together to deliver services in new ways and save costs, whether in shared service arrangements or in combined authorities with devolution deals. This can also unlock funding and address long-standing problems across the county. We want to be able to work with our local government—at parish, district, county level—to inform debate with our data and client stories. More than this, we can provide innovative services that mesh closely with those offered by public authorities. Citizens Advice is working nationally to make this as easy as possible, with new data products for combining output and impact data across variable geography as well as direct support to areas of innovation across our network.

Social Exclusion

People can suffer social exclusion when they face a series of problems such as poor skills, low incomes, bad housing and family breakdown.

As a result of their experiences and development at Citizens Advice Maidstone, our volunteers are better equipped and more confident in their abilities, and hence are more likely to move into employment. This has a true value to society, by moving people closer to the labour market, which may reduce their need to claim benefits related to unemployment. It may also reduce other costs to the state associated with sustained unemployment i.e. mental health, especially for young people not in employment, education or training. Equally, community volunteering enables unemployed individuals to make a form of economic contribution to society, the value of which may be factored into future national GDP and productivity calculations.

Citizens Advice has a major impact on people’s lives, particularly the most vulnerable in society. Our service is best known for solving problems through advice, but we also make a difference by solving the underlying causes of these problems through our research and campaigns volunteers. Our work has also contributed to vital policy changes that will help more people make ends meet.

MAIDSTONE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU
TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT (CONTINUED)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

Achievements and performance (continued)

Pension Wise

Citizens Advice Maidstone is one of the LCAs who have been delivering the government's Pension Wise service for the last nine years. Launched in April 2015, Pension Wise was a new guidance service set up to help people understand their options under the pension freedoms. Citizens Advice Maidstone delivers Pension Wise appointments Nationally. During 2024/25 we have delivered Pension Wise appointments by telephone and face to Face, to people aged 50 and over with a defined contribution pension.

Key statistics (PW)

During 2024/25, demand has remained very high. Since the service started, people have continued to value the high-quality guidance and support they receive. Satisfaction scores have remained over 95%.

Money Advice

National research shows that just over a quarter of adults say that they do not consider themselves to be good at managing money and one third say that they would prefer not to think about planning their finances at all. Many people have poor financial skills, and this often leads them to make ill-informed decisions on their money matters. Citizens Advice has found that the negative effects of a lack of financial awareness especially in the cost of living crisis, can be compounded by limited or poor-quality consumer information and inadequate advice. People can miss out on the growing range of financial products available and fail to make the best use of Government initiatives. However, building the necessary confidence in financial services is an uphill task. Citizens Advice Maidstone helps people resolve their money, legal and other problems by providing information and advice as well as by influencing policymakers. Our service is the largest provider of free money advice in the Borough of Maidstone. We provide specialist level money advice services, helping people resolve a range of money and debt issues. By providing advice and information about money in the heart of our community, we help people resolve a range of debt and personal finance-related problems.

The Citizens Advice service is a network of independent, local charities that helps people resolve their money, legal and other problems. The service is the largest provider of free advice in the UK. Citizens Advice also uses evidence of clients' money problems to campaign for change and is contributing to the Government's plan to provide all UK adults with access to generic financial advice. Citizens Advice wants people to have the skills, knowledge and confidence to make informed decisions across a range of personal money matters. We work with a range of partner agencies to improve the financial skills of people of all ages, particularly those at risk of social or financial exclusion.

Financial skills training can change behaviour - participants become better at budgeting, choosing financial products, saving and making their money go further and these changes persist over time. Developing financial skills not only boosts financial well-being but also confidence and general peace of mind. Tenants who do get into financial difficulty know where to turn to for help, seek out support sooner and as a result, are better equipped to cope.

Prison Work

Citizens Advice Maidstone's strategy aims to increase the capacity of our paid and voluntary staff to deal with our clients' debt and other money problems in order to prevent the financial problems faced by many people becoming major crises. This supports our wider focus of encouraging our team to work with more vulnerable groups such as offenders to meet their finance, benefit and debt needs. In relation to offenders, Citizens Advice is clear that personal debt and other financial problems can be a cause of an individual offending in the first place, and such problems can increase the likelihood of reoffending on release. Being able to manage debt and other financial problems during a prison sentence or upon release into the community could help to reduce re-offending.

Many offenders with families may fall into rent or mortgage arrears caused by a reduction of income during their prison sentence. Stable accommodation can help reduce re-offending by providing a secure environment in which to live, enabling them to open a bank account, receive benefits and find regular employment. Timely access to advice can, among other things, secure accommodation for an offender or their family on release; ensure access to benefits for the payment of rent and advocate on behalf the family if they are refused support from the local authority. Such services can greatly reduce the risk of re-offending. Debt can also present problems for offenders and their families both during their sentence and after release.

MAIDSTONE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU
TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT (CONTINUED)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

Achievements and performance (continued)

Risk Management

Trustees regularly meet to consider the financial and other risks relating to the activities of the charity and take appropriate action as and when required. A comprehensive risk register is maintained and reviewed at every Trustee Board meeting.

Planning for the future

The business strategy adopted by the Trustee Board is to safeguard the Core service with free generalist advice covering a full range of issues. This service has hitherto been funded by a Grant from Maidstone Borough Council. We are most grateful for the Council's continuing support. Citizens Advice Maidstone seeks additional funding from other sources in order to shore up the core service and provide other services if it is financially prudent to do so. Citizens Advice Maidstone's management has been successful in securing such funding from a variety of sources, including national Citizens Advice MAPS (pension Wise) Henry Smith Charity, Colyer-Fergusson and grants from local charities. The management continues to develop new and innovative partnerships with a wide stakeholder group in response to steadily dwindling financial resources. Management also expect additional funding to arise in the following accounting period that is not reflected in this report.

Financial review

The net surplus for the year amounted to £15,155 (2024: £11,000). There was a surplus of £43,891 in relation to unrestricted activities before transfers. As at 31 March 2025 general unrestricted reserves amount to £315,308 (2024: £278,380), designated reserves amount to £34,482 (2024: £34,482) and total restricted reserves amounted to £26,496 (2024: £48,269).

Reserves Policy

The Board of Trustees regularly reviews the finances and reserves of Citizens Advice Maidstone. Each review encompasses the nature of the income and expenditure streams and the need to match variable income with fixed commitments and the nature of reserves. Citizens Advice Maidstone sets aside restricted funds as set out in the Statement of Financial Activities. All restricted funds are applied to the particular restricted activity (project). Restricted funds unspent in a particular financial year are allocated as reserves in statutory accounts at the end of the financial year and will be allocated to that restricted activity (project) during the course of the following financial year or when the activity ends. Restricted funds at 31 March 2025 were £26,496 (2024: £48,269).

Trustees have discussed levels of unrestricted reserves and are agreed that in all circumstances Citizens Advice Maidstone's core services must be secure. A minimum sum of six months unrestricted (core) expenditure with a contingency of 10% will ensure that this aspiration is preserved as an allocation for core management activities to cover certain members of our project staff who support all aspects of the Bureau's activities. Therefore, the total reserves the trustees still aim to hold is £300,000 (2024: £270,000).

As at 31 March 2025 unrestricted general reserves are £315,308 (2024 : £278,380) and designated reserves are £34,482 (2024: £34,482).

MAIDSTONE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU
TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT (CONTINUED)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

Going concern

The Trustees are satisfied that the charity has sufficient resources to meet its liabilities as they fall due for a period of at least twelve months from the date of signing of these financial statements. Accordingly, the Trustees confirm that they consider that the 'going concern' basis remains appropriate.

Structure, governance and management

Citizens Advice Maidstone is a member of Citizens Advice, which provides a framework for standards of advice management as well as monitoring progress against these standards. The Board of Trustees produces an annual report detailing Citizens Advice Maidstone's activities during the year. The report is available on request from the office.

(a) Method of appointment or election of Trustees

In accordance with the Articles of Association (revised 23 September 2013 to bring our Memorandum and Articles of Association in line with the national policy of Citizens Advice and the guidance of the Charity Commission) the Trustee Board consists of a minimum of 3 and a maximum of 15 members. There may be a maximum of 10 elected members, each of whom is elected for a term of three years by the members of the company at its Annual General Meeting. At expiry of their term of office elected Trustees are eligible for re-election. In addition, the Trustee Board may co-opt members, whose number may not exceed one third of the total number of Trustees. No member of the staff of the office whether paid or voluntary can be a member of the Board. However, the Chief Executive, one representative of the paid staff and one representative of the voluntary staff, have the right to attend and speak (but not vote) at meetings of the Board.

(b) Operational structure and decision making

The Trustee Board sets the overall policy and direction of Citizens Advice Maidstone's business within the parameters set by the Citizens Advice Membership Agreement and any Service Level Agreements or contracts currently in being. Operational decisions are made by the Chief Executive subject to any specific Trustee Board directions and referring to the Trustee Board as necessary. The Trustee Board meets once every two months. Financial oversight is delegated to the Finance Committee which meets 14 days before the Trustee Board to appraise financial reports and recommend action to the Trustee Board.

Trustees' responsibilities in relation to the financial statements

The Trustees as directors, are responsible for preparing the Trustees' Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and regulation.

Company law requires the Trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year. Under that law the Trustees have elected to prepare the financial statements in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice (United Kingdom Accounting Standards and applicable law). Under company law the Trustees must not approve the financial statements unless they are satisfied that they give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity and of the results of the charity for that period. In preparing these financial statements, the Trustees are required to:-

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in business.

The Trustees are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that are sufficient to show and explain the charity's transactions and disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with Companies Act 2006 and the Charities Act 2011.

They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

MAIDSTONE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU
TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT (CONTINUED)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

Disclosure of information to auditors

In accordance with company law, as the charity's trustee, we confirm that:

- so far as we are aware, there is no relevant audit information of which the charity's auditors are unaware; and
- as the trustees of the charity, we have taken all the steps that we ought to have taken in order to make ourselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the charity's auditors are aware of that information.

**ON BEHALF OF THE
BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

MR A BREEN

13 October 2025

Registered office
2 Bower Terrace
Tonbridge Road
Maidstone
Kent ME16 8RY

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MAIDSTONE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU

INDEPENDENT AUDITORS' REPORT TO THE MEMBERS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of Maidstone Citizens Advice Bureau (the 'charitable company') for the year ended 31 March 2025 which comprise the Statement of Financial Activities, the Balance Sheet, the Cash Flow Statement and the related notes. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards, including FRS 102 "The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland" (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

In our opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the charitable company's affairs as at 31 March 2025 and of its incoming resources and application of resources, including its income and expenditure, for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice; and have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006.

Basis for opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs (UK)) and applicable law. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of our report. We are independent of the charitable company in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in the UK, including the FRC's Ethical Standard, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Conclusions relating to going concern

In auditing the financial statements, we have concluded that the Trustees' use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

Based on the work we have performed, we have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the charitable company's ability to continue as a going concern for a period of at least twelve months from when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

Our responsibilities and the responsibilities of the Trustees with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this report.

Other information

The other information comprises the information included in the Trustees Annual Report, other than the financial statements and our auditor's report thereon. The Trustees are responsible for the other information contained within the annual report. Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in our report, we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon. Our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the course of the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether this gives rise to a material misstatement in the financial statements themselves. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact.

We have nothing to report in this regard.

Opinions on other matters prescribed by the Companies Act 2006

In our opinion, based on the work undertaken in the course of the audit:

- the information given in the Trustees' Report and the incorporated Strategic Report prepared for the purpose of company law for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements; and
- the Trustees' Report and the incorporated Strategic Report have been prepared in accordance with applicable legal requirements.

MAIDSTONE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU

INDEPENDENT AUDITORS' REPORT TO THE MEMBERS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

Matters on which we are required to report by exception

In the light of the knowledge and understanding of the charitable company and its environment obtained in the course of the audit, we have not identified material misstatements in the Trustees' Report and the incorporated Strategic Report.

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters where the Companies Act 2006 requires us to report to you if, in our opinion:

- adequate accounting records have not been kept, or returns adequate for our audit have not been received from branches not visited by us; or
- the financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or
- certain disclosures of Trustees' remuneration specified by law are not made; or
- we have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit.

Responsibilities of Trustees

As explained more fully in the Statement of Trustees' responsibilities set out on page 15, the Trustees (who are also the directors of the charitable company for the purposes of company law) are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the Trustees determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the Trustees are responsible for assessing the charitable company's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the Trustees either intend to liquidate the charitable company or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

Extent to which the audit was considered capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud

Irregularities, including fraud, are instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations. We design procedures in line with our responsibilities, outlined above and on the Financial Reporting Council's website, to detect material misstatements in respect of irregularities, including fraud.

We obtain and update our understanding of the entity, its activities, its control environment, and likely future developments, including in relation to the legal and regulatory framework applicable and how the entity is complying with that framework. Based on this understanding, we identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion. This includes consideration of the risk of acts by the entity that were contrary to applicable laws and regulations, including fraud.

In response to the risk of irregularities and non-compliance with laws and regulations, including fraud, we designed procedures which included:

- Enquiry of management and those charged with governance around actual and potential litigation and claims as well as actual, suspected and alleged fraud;
- Reviewing minutes of meetings of those charged with governance;
- Assessing the extent of compliance with the laws and regulations considered to have a direct material effect on the financial statements or the operations of the company through enquiry and inspection;
- Reviewing financial statement disclosures and testing to supporting documentation to assess compliance with applicable laws and regulations;
- Performing audit work over the risk of management bias and override of controls, including testing of journal entries and other adjustments for appropriateness, evaluating the business rationale of significant transactions outside the normal course of business and reviewing accounting estimates for indicators of potential bias.

MAIDSTONE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU

INDEPENDENT AUDITORS' REPORT TO THE MEMBERS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

Because of the inherent limitations of an audit, there is a risk that we will not detect all irregularities, including those leading to a material misstatement in the financial statements or non-compliance with regulation. This risk increases the more that compliance with a law or regulation is removed from the events and transactions reflected in the financial statements, as we will be less likely to become aware of instances of non-compliance. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.

As part of an audit in accordance with ISAs (UK), we exercise professional judgment and maintain professional scepticism throughout the audit. We also:

- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the charitable company's internal control.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by the Trustees.
- Conclude on the appropriateness of the Trustees' use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the charitable company's ability to continue as a going concern. If we conclude that a material uncertainty exists, we are required to draw attention in our auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial statements or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify our opinion. Our conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of our auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause the charitable company to cease to continue as a going concern.
- Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial statements, including the disclosures, and whether the financial statements represent the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation (i.e. gives a true and fair view).

We communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that we identify during our audit.

Use of our report

This report is made solely to the charitable company's members, as a body, in accordance with Chapter 3 of Part 16 of the Companies Act 2006. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the charitable company's members those matters we are required to state to them in an auditor's report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the charitable company and the charitable company's members as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

Sarah Jennings FCA (Senior Statutory Auditor)
for and on behalf of Azets Audit Services

14 October 2025
.....

Statutory Auditor

Globe House, Eclipse Park
Sittingbourne Road
Maidstone
Kent
ME14 3EN

MAIDSTONE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES (INCLUDING INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

	Notes	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total 2025 £	Total 2024 £
INCOME:					
Donations and legacies	3	2,018	-	2,018	464
Charitable activities	4	191,733	741,216	932,949	829,058
Investments		8,804	-	8,804	3,490
TOTAL INCOME		<u>202,555</u>	<u>741,216</u>	<u>943,771</u>	<u>833,012</u>
EXPENDITURE:					
Charitable activities	5	155,977	769,952	925,929	823,773
TOTAL EXPENDITURE		<u>155,977</u>	<u>769,952</u>	<u>925,929</u>	<u>823,773</u>
Net surplus/(deficit) before pension scheme		<u>46,578</u>	<u>(28,736)</u>	<u>17,842</u>	<u>9,239</u>
(Losses)/gains on pension scheme	20	(2,687)	-	(2,687)	1,761
Net income/(expenditure) before transfers		<u>43,891</u>	<u>(28,736)</u>	<u>15,155</u>	<u>11,000</u>
Transfers between funds	15	(6,963)	6,963	-	-
NET MOVEMENT ON FUNDS		<u>36,928</u>	<u>(21,773)</u>	<u>15,155</u>	<u>11,000</u>
Total funds at 1 April 2024		312,862	48,269	361,131	350,131
Total funds at 31 March 2025		<u>349,790</u>	<u>26,496</u>	<u>376,286</u>	<u>361,131</u>

All income and expenditure derive from continuing activities.

The Statement of Financial Activities includes all gains and losses recognised during the year.

The notes on pages 16 to 24 form part of these financial statements.

MAIDSTONE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES (INCLUDING INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

Comparative year information

Year ended 31 March 2024

	Notes	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total 2024 £	Total 2023 £
INCOME:					
Donations and legacies	3	464	-	464	505
Charitable activities	4	183,100	645,958	829,058	804,150
Investments		3,490	-	3,490	968
TOTAL INCOME		<u>187,054</u>	<u>645,958</u>	<u>833,012</u>	<u>805,623</u>
EXPENDITURE:					
Charitable activities	5	166,846	656,927	823,773	780,515
TOTAL EXPENDITURE		<u>166,846</u>	<u>656,927</u>	<u>823,773</u>	<u>780,515</u>
Net income/(expenditure) before gains on pension scheme		<u>20,208</u>	<u>(10,969)</u>	<u>9,239</u>	<u>25,108</u>
Gains on pension scheme	20	<u>1,761</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>1,761</u>	<u>1,879</u>
Net income/(expenditure) before transfers		<u>21,969</u>	<u>(10,969)</u>	<u>11,000</u>	<u>26,987</u>
Transfers between funds	15	<u>(797)</u>	<u>797</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
NET MOVEMENT ON FUNDS		<u>21,172</u>	<u>(10,172)</u>	<u>11,000</u>	<u>26,987</u>
Total funds at 1 April 2023		<u>291,690</u>	<u>58,441</u>	<u>350,131</u>	<u>323,144</u>
Total funds at 31 March 2024		<u>312,862</u>	<u>48,269</u>	<u>361,131</u>	<u>350,131</u>

MAIDSTONE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU

BALANCE SHEET

AS AT 31 MARCH 2025

	Notes	£	2025 £	£	2024 £
TANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS	10		-		-
CURRENT ASSETS					
Debtors	11	22,321		32,905	
Cash at bank and in hand		283,877		302,305	
Current asset investment		88,433		45,000	
		<u>394,631</u>		<u>380,210</u>	
CREDITORS: AMOUNTS FALLING DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR	12	14,115		17,536	
NET CURRENT ASSETS			380,516		362,674
Provision for liabilities and charges	20		(4,230)		(1,543)
NET ASSETS			<u>376,286</u>		<u>361,131</u>
General unrestricted funds	13		315,308		278,380
Designated funds	14		34,482		34,482
Restricted funds	15		26,496		48,269
	16		<u>376,286</u>		<u>361,131</u>

Approved by the Board of Trustees on 13 October 2025 and are signed on its behalf by:

.....
MR A BREEN
VICE CHAIR OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

.....
MR D PARRISH
MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Company No. 02234220

The notes on pages 16 to 24 form part of these financial statements.

MAIDSTONE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU

STATEMENT OF CASH FLOW

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

	Notes	2025 £	2024 £
Cash flows from operating activities	18	16,201	(25,086)
Net cash inflow/(outflow) from operating activities		16,201	(25,086)
Investing activities			
Interest received		8,804	3,490
Net cash generated from investing activities		8,804	3,490
Net increase/(decrease) in cash and cash equivalents		25,005	(21,596)
Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of year		347,305	368,901
Cash and cash equivalents at end of year	19	372,310	347,305

The notes on pages 16 to 24 form part of these financial statements.

MAIDSTONE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

1. Accounting policies

a) Basis of accounting

The Maidstone Citizens Advice Bureau (the 'charity') is a charitable company limited by guarantee, registered with the Charity Commission in England & Wales. The address of the registered office is given in the charity information on page 1 of these financial statements. The nature of the charity's operations and principal activities are detailed in page 2 of these financial statements. The charity constitutes a public benefit entity as defined by FRS 102.

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK (FRS102) issued in October 2019, the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the United Kingdom (FRS102), the Charities Act 2011 and UK Generally Accepted Practice.

The financial statements are prepared in sterling which is the functional currency of the charity and rounded to the nearest £1.

The significant accounting policies applied in the preparation of these financial statements are set out below. These policies have been consistently applied to all years presented unless otherwise stated.

The charity has availed itself of Paragraph 4(1) of Schedule 1 of the Small Companies and Groups (Accounts and Directors' Reports) Regulations 2008 and adapted the format of the financial statements to reflect the special nature of the charity's activities.

b) Going Concern

These financial statements are prepared on the going concern basis as the Trustees believe that no material uncertainties exist.

The Trustees have considered the level of reserves and expected level of income and expenditure and are satisfied that the charity has sufficient resources to meet its liabilities as they fall due for a period of at least twelve months from the date of signing of these financial statements. Accordingly, the financial statements are prepared on a going concern basis and do not include any adjustments which would be necessary if this basis of preparation was inappropriate.

c) Fund accounting

Unrestricted funds are those available for use at the discretion of the Trustees in the furtherance of the general objectives of the charity which have not been designated for other purposes. Designated funds are unrestricted funds that have been set aside by the Trustees for particular purposes. Restricted funds are funds which are to be used in accordance with specific restrictions imposed by donors which have been raised by the charity for particular purposes.

d) Income recognition

Grants and service agreement income are recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities when the charity has entitlement to the funds, where the service it relates to has commenced, it is probable that the income will be received and the amount can be measured reliably and is not deferred. Other Income is recognised in the accounts on an accruals basis with the exception of donations which are recognised on a cash received basis.

e) Expenditure

Expenditure is recorded on an accruals basis including irrecoverable VAT and allocated on the following basis:-

- Costs directly allocated - actual basis.
- Support costs - depending on type of cost and the Trustees' best estimate of usage.
- Other costs – actual basis.

f) Tangible fixed assets and depreciation

Individual fixed assets costing £1,000 or more are stated at cost less depreciation. Depreciation is provided on office and computer equipment to write off the cost, less estimated residual value of assets over their expected useful economic life of two or three years. At each reporting period end date, the charity reviews the carrying amounts of its tangible assets to determine whether there is any indication that those assets have suffered an impairment loss. If any such indication exists, the recoverable amount of the asset is estimated in order to determine the extent of the impairment loss (if any).

MAIDSTONE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

1. Accounting policies (continued)

g) Operating leases

Rentals payable under operating leases are charged on a straight line basis over the lease term.

h) Pensions

Contributions payable to the charity's multi-employer pension plan are charged to the income and expenditure account on a payments basis.

The charity recognises a liability for the obligation under the pension plan's recovery plan. The amount recognised is the net present value of the deficit reduction contributions payable under the agreement. The present value is calculated using the discount rate disclosed in note 18.

i) Debtors and creditors receivable/payable within one year

Debtors and creditors with no stated interest rate and receivable or payable within one year are recorded at transaction price. Any losses arising from impairment are recognised in the statement of financial activities under expenditure arising on charitable activities.

j) Employee benefits

When employees have rendered service to the charity, short-term employee benefits to which the employees are entitled are recognised at the undiscounted amount expected to be paid in exchange for that service.

k) Taxation

The charity is an exempt charity within the meaning of Schedule 3 of the Charities Act 2011 and is considered to pass the tests set out in Paragraph 1 Schedule 6 Finance Act 2010 and therefore it meets the definition of a charitable company for UK corporation tax purposes.

2. Judgements and key sources of estimation uncertainty

In the application of the charity's accounting policies, the Trustees are required to make judgements, estimates and assumptions about the carrying amount of assets and liabilities that are not readily apparent from other sources. The estimates and associated assumptions are based on historical experience and other factors that are considered to be relevant. There are no judgements or key sources of estimation uncertainty.

3. Income from donations and legacies

	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total 2025 £	Total 2024 £
Donations	2,018	-	2,018	464
	<u>2,018</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>2,018</u>	<u>464</u>

4. Income from charitable activities

	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total 2025 £	Total 2024 £
Maidstone Borough Council grants	157,090	-	157,090	133,100
Energy Outreach Project	-	6,422	6,422	-
Golding Homes	15,000	-	15,000	-
Colyer Fergusson Charitable Trust	-	10,000	10,000	10,000
Pension Wise	-	393,194	393,194	368,398
Henry Smith Charity	-	40,500	40,500	40,500
HMP Maidstone	-	15,500	15,500	15,500
Carbon Monoxide Advice Project	-	23,400	23,400	48,077
Energy Advice Programme	-	26,250	26,250	-
Universal Credit – Help to Claim	-	225,950	225,950	163,483
Other projects	19,643	-	19,643	50,000
	<u>191,733</u>	<u>741,216</u>	<u>932,949</u>	<u>829,058</u>

MAIDSTONE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU
NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS (CONTINUED)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

5. Analysis of expenditure

	Direct costs £	Support costs £	Total 2025 £	Total 2024 £
Citizens advice services	151,753	4,225	155,978	166,846
Health advice	10,000	-	10,000	10,000
Prison support	50,421	12,675	63,096	51,966
Energy advice	53,108	10,562	63,670	42,371
Water advice	-	-	-	2,500
Pension advice	277,649	126,746	404,395	385,810
Benefit advice	171,754	57,036	228,790	164,280
	<u>714,685</u>	<u>211,244</u>	<u>925,929</u>	<u>823,773</u>

6. Support costs

	2025 £	2024 £
Staff costs	74,758	77,717
Premises costs	47,265	39,445
General office costs	73,992	67,776
Bank charges	417	208
Governance costs (note 7)	14,812	10,588
	<u>211,244</u>	<u>195,734</u>

7. Governance costs

	2025 £	2024 £
Auditors' remuneration	12,250	8,750
Auditors' remuneration – non audit services	2,562	1,838
	<u>14,812</u>	<u>10,588</u>

8. Net income

This is stated after charging:

	2025 £	2024 £
Rent payable on property under operating leases	29,302	28,750
Auditors' remuneration	12,250	8,750
	<u>41,552</u>	<u>37,500</u>

MAIDSTONE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

9. Staff costs

	2025	2024
	£	£
Wages and salaries	689,440	616,711
Social security costs	57,896	49,626
Employer pension costs	32,108	31,419
	<u>779,444</u>	<u>697,756</u>

The key management personnel of the charity comprise the Trustees and the bureau managers.

The Trustees received no remuneration for the year ended 31 March 2025 (2024: £Nil). During the year, none (2024: none) of the Trustees had expenses reimbursed by the charity. The total expenses reimbursed to the Trustees amounted to nil (2024: £Nil). In the prior year these costs related to sundry stationery and consumable supplies for staff members as well as travel and parking costs.

The total remuneration including pension contributions and employers' national insurance received by key management personnel for their service to the charity was £119,661 (2024: £122,681).

The average number of salaried employees during the year was 30 (2024: 29).

There were no employees (2024: none) who received total employee benefits (excluding employer pension costs) of more than £60,000.

10. Tangible fixed assets

	Office and computer equipment
	£
Cost	
At 1 April 2024 and at 31 March 2025	96,327
Depreciation	
At 1 April 2024 and at 31 March 2025	(96,327)
Net book value	
At 1 April 2024 and at 31 March 2025	-

11. Debtors

	2025	2024
	£	£
Prepayments	6,635	9,113
Accrued income	15,686	23,792
	<u>22,321</u>	<u>32,905</u>

12. Creditors : amounts falling due within one year

	2025	2024
	£	£
Accruals	14,115	12,300
Other creditors	-	5,236
	<u>14,115</u>	<u>17,536</u>

MAIDSTONE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU
NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS (CONTINUED)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

13. General unrestricted funds

	2025 £	2024 £
Balance at 1 April 2024	278,380	257,208
Net Income before transfers	43,891	21,969
Transfer to restricted funds	(6,963)	(797)
Balance at 31 March 2025	315,308	278,380

14. Designated funds

	Balance at 1 April 2024 £	New designations £	Designations released £	Balance at 31 March 2025 £
Premises and development fund	34,482	-	-	34,482
Comparative year information:				
	Balance at 1 April 2023 £	New designations £	Designations released £	Balance at 31 March 2024 £
Premises and development fund	34,482	-	-	34,482

The Premises and Development Fund has been designated to provide for future resources in these two areas.

15. Restricted funds

	Balance at 1 April 2024 £	Income £	Expenditure £	Transfers £	Balance at 31 March 2025 £
Maidstone Prison Advice Project	4,866	56,000	(63,096)	2,230	-
Pension Wise	37,697	393,194	(404,395)	-	26,496
Universal Credit – Help to Claim	-	225,950	(228,790)	2,840	-
Carbon Monoxide Advice Project	5,706	56,072	(63,671)	1,893	-
Colyer Fergusson Charitable Trust	-	10,000	(10,000)	-	-
	48,269	741,216	(769,952)	6,963	26,496

Comparative Information

	Balance at 1 April 2023 £	Income £	Expenditure £	Transfers £	Balance at 31 March 2024 £
Maidstone Prison Advice Project	832	56,000	(51,966)	-	4,866
Energy advice	-	3,077	(3,077)	-	-
Pension Wise	55,109	368,398	(385,810)	-	37,697
South East Water Forum	2,500	-	(2,500)	-	-
Universal Credit – Help to Claim	-	163,483	(164,280)	797	-
Carbon Monoxide Advice Project	-	45,000	(39,294)	-	5,706
Colyer Fergusson Charitable Trust	-	10,000	(10,000)	-	-
	58,441	645,958	(656,927)	797	48,269

MAIDSTONE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

15. Restricted funds (continued)

The objective of the Maidstone Prison Advice Project is to provide advice and support to prisoners, staff and their families. This fund is supported by the Henry Smith Charity and HMP Maidstone. Details of income received in the year can be found in Note 4.

The objective of Energy Advice is to inform consumers how to reduce energy bills by efficiency savings or switching suppliers and to provide information about the help available from energy suppliers and government for consumers struggling to pay energy bills.

The objective of Pension Wise is to provide impartial pension advice and guidance.

The objective of the Carbon Monoxide Advice Project is to deliver one on one carbon monoxide awareness and energy advice.

The objective of the Universal Credit – Help to Claim Fund is to provide advice and assistance to persons requiring financial support. The transfer to this fund from unrestricted funds covers the overspend on the project during the year to 31 March 2025.

The objective of the Colyer Fergusson Charitable Trust grant is to provide sustained support and advice on money/debt, entitlements, housing and employment matters to clients with mental health issues, in partnership with Blackthorn Trust.

16. Analysis of net assets between funds

	Unrestricted funds 2025 £	Restricted funds 2025 £	Total 2025 £
Current assets	355,500	39,131	394,631
Current liabilities	(1,480)	(12,635)	(14,115)
Provisions	(4,230)	-	(4,230)
	<u>349,790</u>	<u>26,496</u>	<u>376,286</u>
	Unrestricted funds 2024 £	Restricted funds 2024 £	Total 2024 £
Current assets	314,611	65,599	380,210
Current liabilities	(206)	(17,330)	(17,536)
Provisions	(1,543)	-	(1,543)
	<u>312,862</u>	<u>48,269</u>	<u>361,131</u>

17. Financial commitments

The charity had commitments under non-cancellable operating leases as follows:

	Land and buildings 2025 £	Land and buildings 2024 £
Expiry within one year	28,750	28,750
Expiry in 2 to 5 years	115,000	115,000
Expiry in over 5 years	64,353	93,103
	<u>208,103</u>	<u>236,853</u>

MAIDSTONE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU
NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS (CONTINUED)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

18. Cash generated from operations

	2025	2024
	£	£
Net income	15,155	11,000
Adjustments for:		
Investment income	(8,804)	(3,490)
Decrease/(increase) in debtors	10,584	(18,567)
(Decrease) in creditors	(3,421)	(12,268)
Increase/(decrease) in pension provision	2,687	(1,761)
Cashflow from operating activities	<u>16,201</u>	<u>(25,086)</u>

19. Analysis of changes in net debt

	Balance at	Cashflows	Other non-	Balance at
	1 April 2024	cash changes	cash changes	31 March 2025
	£	£	£	£
Cash	302,305	(18,428)	-	283,877
Current asset investments	45,000	43,433	-	88,433
	<u>347,305</u>	<u>25,005</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>372,310</u>

20. Pension commitments

TPT Retirement Solutions – The Growth Plan

The charity participates in the scheme, a multi-employer scheme which provides benefits to some 638 non-associated participating employers. The scheme is a defined benefit scheme in the UK. It is not possible for the charity to obtain sufficient information to enable it to account for the scheme as a defined benefit scheme. Therefore it accounts for the scheme as a defined contribution scheme.

The scheme is subject to the funding legislation outlined in the Pensions Act 2004 which came into force on 30 December 2005. This, together with documents issued by the Pensions Regulator and Technical Actuarial Standards issued by the Financial Reporting Council, set out the framework for funding defined benefit occupational pension schemes in the UK.

The scheme is classified as a 'last-man standing arrangement'. Therefore the charity is potentially liable for other participating employers' obligations if those employers are unable to meet their share of the scheme deficit following withdrawal from the scheme. Participating employers are legally required to meet their share of the scheme deficit on an annuity purchase basis on withdrawal from the scheme.

A full actuarial valuation for the scheme was carried out at 30 September 2023. This valuation showed assets of £514.9m, liabilities of £531.0m and a deficit of £16.1m. To eliminate this funding shortfall, the Trustee has asked the participating employers to pay additional contributions to the scheme as follows:

Deficit contributions

From 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2028: £2,100,000 per annum (payable monthly).

Unless a concession has been agreed with the Trustee the term to 31 March 2028 applies.

MAIDSTONE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

20. Pension commitments (continued)

Deficit contributions (continued)

Note that the scheme's previous valuation was carried out with an effective date of 30 September 2020. This valuation showed assets of £800.3m, liabilities of £831.9m and a deficit of £31.6m. To eliminate this funding shortfall, the Trustee asked the participating employers to pay additional contributions to the scheme as follows:

From 1 April 2022 to 31 January 2025: £3,312,000 per annum (payable monthly).

The recovery plan contributions are allocated to each participating employer in line with their estimated share of the Series 1 and Series 2 scheme liabilities.

Where the scheme is in deficit and where the charity has agreed to a deficit funding arrangement the charity recognises a liability for this obligation. The amount recognised is the net present value of the deficit reduction contributions payable under the agreement that relates to the deficit. The present value is calculated using the discount rate detailed in these disclosures. The unwinding of the discount rate is recognised as a finance cost.

Present values of provision

	31 March 2025	31 March 2024	31 March 2023
Present value of provision	<u>£4,230</u>	<u>£1,543</u>	<u>£3,304</u>

Reconciliation of opening and closing provision

	2025 £	2024 £
Provision at start of period	1,543	3,304
Unwinding of the discount factor (interest expense)	41	126
Deficit contribution paid	(1,574)	(1,888)
Remeasurements – impact of any change in assumptions	27	1
Remeasurements – amendments to contribution schedule	4,193	-
Provision at end of period	<u>4,230</u>	<u>1,543</u>

Income and expenditure impact

	2025 £	2024 £
Interest expense	41	126
Remeasurements – impact of any change in assumptions	27	1
Remeasurements – amendments to contribution schedule	4,193	-
	<u>4,261</u>	<u>127</u>

Assumptions

	31 March 2025	31 March 2024	31 March 2023
Rate of discount (per annum)	<u>4.84%</u>	<u>5.31%</u>	<u>5.52%</u>

The discount rates shown above are the equivalent single discount rates which, when used to discount the future recovery plan contributions due, would give the same results as using a full AA corporate bond yield curve to discount the same recovery plan contributions.

MAIDSTONE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU
NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS (CONTINUED)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

20. Pension commitments (continued)

Deficit contributions schedule

The following schedule details the deficit contributions agreed between the charity and the scheme at each year end period:

	31 March 2025	31 March 2024	31 March 2023
Year 1	1,509	1,574	1,888
Year 2	1,509	-	1,574
Year 3	1,509	-	-

21. Related party transactions

No transactions with related parties were undertaken during the year (2024: none), other than those stipulated in Note 9.

MAIDSTONE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU
DETAILED INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

		Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total 2025 £	Total 2024 £
Income					
Maidstone Borough Council		157,090	-	157,090	133,100
Colyer Fergusson Charitable Trust		-	10,000	10,000	10,000
Pension Wise		-	393,194	393,194	368,398
Donations		2,018	-	2,018	464
Deposit account interest		8,804	-	8,804	3,490
Golding Homes		15,000	-	15,000	-
Energy advice		-	-	-	3,077
Carbon Monoxide Advice Project		-	56,072	56,072	45,000
HMP Maidstone		-	15,500	15,500	15,500
Henry Smith Charity		-	40,500	40,500	40,050
Universal Credit – Help to Claim		-	225,950	225,950	163,483
Other projects		19,643	-	19,643	50,000
		<u>202,555</u>	<u>741,216</u>	<u>943,771</u>	<u>833,012</u>
Expenditure					
	Schedule				
Establishment expenses	1	936	46,329	47,265	39,445
Administration expenses	2	154,608	706,472	861,080	767,464
Sundry expenses	3	433	17,151	17,584	16,864
		<u>155,977</u>	<u>769,952</u>	<u>925,929</u>	<u>823,773</u>
Net surplus/(deficit) before gains on pension scheme		<u>46,578</u>	<u>(28,736)</u>	<u>17,842</u>	<u>9,239</u>
(Losses)/gains on pension scheme		(2,687)	-	(2,687)	1,761
Surplus/(deficit) for the year		<u>43,891</u>	<u>(28,736)</u>	<u>15,155</u>	<u>11,000</u>

MAIDSTONE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU

SCHEDULES TO THE DETAILED INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total 2025 £	Total 2024 £
1. Establishment expenses				
Rent	586	28,716	29,302	28,750
Insurance - premises	25	1,226	1,251	1,149
Water	22	1,085	1,107	575
Gas	47	2,312	2,359	1,876
Electricity	67	3,300	3,367	3,671
Repairs and renewals - premises	31	2,248	2,279	1,403
Cleaning and cleaning materials	158	7,442	7,600	2,021
	<u>936</u>	<u>46,329</u>	<u>47,265</u>	<u>39,445</u>
2. Administration expenses				
Salaries and social security costs	124,793	571,713	696,506	619,543
Pension scheme contributions	23,477	59,461	82,938	78,212
Travel costs	94	3,756	3,850	2,985
Training	67	3,423	3,490	494
Health and safety	22	611	633	399
Books, information and IT systems	1,480	21,481	22,961	14,468
Telephone	3,686	11,233	14,919	15,442
Printing and stationery	48	2,334	2,382	3,077
Postage	12	571	583	836
Advertising and publicity	4	195	199	199
Computer and office expenses	117	11,065	11,182	11,966
Other office costs	705	1,019	1,724	1,037
Insurance	68	3,332	3,400	3,108
Equipment Hire	35	1,728	1,763	1,763
Hire of rooms	-	4,550	4,550	5,935
The Blackthorn Trust support	-	-	-	8,000
Dover/Deal supervision	-	10,000	10,000	-
	<u>154,608</u>	<u>706,472</u>	<u>861,080</u>	<u>767,464</u>
3. Sundry expenses				
Bank charges	8	408	416	208
Auditors' remuneration	296	14,516	14,812	10,588
AGM and other meetings	(56)	2,174	2,118	930
Professional fees	185	53	238	5,138
	<u>433</u>	<u>17,151</u>	<u>17,584</u>	<u>16,864</u>

MAIDSTONE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU

England & Wales - Charity number 299055

Accounts

MAIDSTONE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU
(A company limited by guarantee)

REPORTS AND ACCOUNTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

Registered Charity No. 299055

Company No. 02234220

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MAIDSTONE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU

REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

The Maidstone Citizens Advice Bureau is a company limited by guarantee and a registered charity governed by its Memorandum and Articles of Association (Charity number 299055, Company number 02234220).

Citizens Advice Maidstone is the operating name of Maidstone Citizens Advice Bureau.

The Board of Trustees

The Trustees of the charitable company are its directors for the purposes of company law and throughout this report are collectively referred to as the 'Trustees'.

The members of the Board of Trustees who served during the year were as follows:

Elected Trustees

Mr S Bonny Malhotra (Chair)
Mr P J Stonely (Vice-Chair)
Mr D Parrish (Hon Treasurer)
Mr R Bird
Mr A Breen
Mr J Cobbett
Ms L French
Mr I R Owen
Ms J S Woods
Mr D Thapa Magar (appointed 17 January 2024)
Mrs W Foster (resigned 18 March 2024)

Co-opted Members

Cllr P Harper
Ms L Mason

Staff Representatives

Mr P Hardy
Mr S Jones
Mrs T Weber

Senior Leadership Team

Mr P Hardy - CEO
Mrs S Smith - Advice Manager
Mr I Park - Service Manager Projects
Mrs T Weber - Operations Manager

Registered Office and Principal Address

2 Bower Terrace, Tonbridge Road, Maidstone, Kent, ME16 8RY

Statutory Auditors

Azets Audit Services, Globe House, Eclipse Park, Sittingbourne Road, Maidstone, Kent, ME14 3EN

MAIDSTONE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU

TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

The Trustees present their report and the audited financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2024. The Trustees confirm that the annual report and financial statements of Citizens Advice Maidstone comply with current statutory requirements, the requirements of Citizens Advice Maidstone's governing document and the provisions of the Statement of Recommended Practice – Accounting and Reporting by Charities (SORP FRS 102).

Objectives and activities

Citizens Advice Maidstone provides independent, free, confidential, impartial advice to everyone regardless of their race, gender, sexuality or disability. Citizens Advice Maidstone aims to ensure that individuals do not suffer through a lack of knowledge of their rights and responsibilities or of the services available to them, or through an inability to express their needs effectively. The Citizens Advice Maidstone also aims to exercise a responsible influence on the development of social policies and services both locally and nationally through the work of the Research and Campaign team.

Public benefit

The Trustees confirm that they have complied with the duty in section 4 of the Charities Act 2006 to have due regard to the guidance contained in the Charity Commission's general guidance on the public benefit when reviewing the local office aims and objectives and in the planning of future activities.

Achievements and performance

Our goal is to empower clients solving their problems by themselves; others requiring more support do receive further help through detailed work conducted by our specialists and generalist volunteer advisers. Citizens Advice Maidstone provides free, independent, confidential and impartial advice to everyone on their rights and responsibilities. The organisation values diversity; promotes equity & inclusion and challenges discrimination. This essential work is professionally carried out by our team of paid and voluntary staff helping people to solve their problems and changing their lives. In order to prevent financial problems re-emerging, we also run educational services such as financial capability or energy efficiency training sessions in collaboration with other local offices.

Our office is located on Tonbridge Road. Also we attend Trinity house, Maidstone's community Hub delivering face 2 face appointments. This enables us to connect with a broad and diverse client base within the Borough. Clients can approach our service for face-to-face advice; by telephone; by email or digitally for those who otherwise cannot access us easily.

The Citizens Advice Membership Scheme requires each local Citizens Advice to carry out a Leadership Self-Assessment each year. The Board worked together with paid and volunteer staff to look at its policies and procedures and submitted its Assessment to the Performance Assessor under the system. The Organisation has been judged to be at a high standard.

Our workforce, both paid and voluntary have produced an excellent set of statistics, the majority of which can be seen in our Annual Report. Suffice to say that we continue to provide our service to many more people than other similar organisations. Financially it has been a better year with us securing funding for new projects. Notwithstanding, our total income for the year was £833,012 (2023 : £805,623) with the expenditure pegged at £823,773 (2023 : £780,515) showing a surplus of £9,239 (2023 : £25,108) for the 2023/24 financial year. There was a gain on the pension scheme liability of £1,761 (2023 : £1,879, which has been separately disclosed, giving an overall surplus for the year of £11,000 (2023 : £26,987). At the end of the Financial Year our Restricted Reserves were £48,482 (2023 : £58,441) and Unrestricted Reserves stood at £278,380 (2023 : £291,690).

Demonstrating the value of our work is crucial, as the pressures on the public finances continues to gather pace with national and local spending decreasing further year on year. It is our responsibility to communicate to funders why Citizens Advice is an essential service and not just 'nice to have'. Citizens Advice Maidstone is unique for many reasons: in our team we have a total of 29 paid staff equating to almost 21 FTE, of which 16 FTE work within our various projects and the remainder form part of our core service. Our team of 38 volunteers includes Trustees, advisers, administrators, trainees and assessors.

Our services are provided with funding from a wide variety of sources. A Service Level Agreement with Maidstone Borough Council allows us to provide the essential Core Service of general and specialist advice through digital and face-to-face formats to clients in the Borough of Maidstone also from Colyer-Fergusson and the cobtree trust to support the vulnerable. We have contracts with Citizens Advice to provide Pension Wise guidance. Pension Wise provides a telephone service Nationally and limited face 2 face in Maidstone and Hove. Citizens Advice also provide funding for Universal Credit (help to claim). Our work in HMP Maidstone continues to be funded by Henry Smith Charity and latterly also from HMP Maidstone. Funding for our work on the Energy Advice Programme (CMAP & EAP), formerly Energy Best Deal (EBD) came through National Citizens Advice and amongst all these, other smaller projects were funded through smaller grants from external funding sources.

MAIDSTONE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU
TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT (CONTINUED)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

Achievements and performance (continued)

We continue to work with a number of partners within Local Government and Statutory Agencies to improve the policies and practices that affect our communities. We work collectively with other Local Citizens Advice centres in Kent to inform public policy and help regulators, as well as influence private industry to make their services fair for consumers. In addition to Local and National campaigning, with the help of our volunteers we empower clients and communities to engage with society and make a difference to issues that matter. We hope to expand our use of volunteers as feasible to do so.

Volunteers are vital to the service in Citizens Advice Maidstone. Trustees and our Management Team are working in partnership with our paid and voluntary staff to provide excellent quality advice and support to over 14,000 people up 1000 from last year, with over 45,000 different issues up 10,000 from last year achieving £5.5m income gain and debts written off an increase of 3 million on the previous year

Additionally, Trustees are also engaged in providing direction in the Governance of our office. Our Volunteers are an integral part of the way we deliver our advice, support and service today to the communities of Maidstone, and have been since the conception of Local Citizens Advice (LCAs) over 85 years ago in 1939. The service in Maidstone commenced on the 1st January 1940 and over the years has dealt with around 2 Million problems.

Volunteers have always been integral to the Citizens Advice service and are increasingly involved in delivering services within all areas of advice work. Volunteers bring with them a wealth of experience and skills and it is important for us to recognise the resource we have within the service. Volunteers are vital to the way we deliver our service, allowing us to reach many more people than if we were purely delivering our work through paid staff. Volunteers undertake a range of tasks from assessing and providing advice, supporting the running of our local office, campaigning in the community and acting as Trustees.

Our volunteers come from a wide range of backgrounds, including young people, professionals who want to broaden their horizons, retired people who want to give something back and mothers whose children have started school – so we offer a range of support services to meet the needs of all our volunteers too. Our commitment to value diversity, promote equity and inclusion means we can encourage individuals who might not otherwise wish/be able to volunteer.

Understanding our trainee volunteers' needs and expectations is a very important aspect of the training programme. Providing a well-structured training plan helps the trainee to gain better employment prospects as well as offering an opportunity for personal development, increased confidence, self-esteem, and wellbeing.

Providing an active contribution to the day-to-day running of a LCA can develop volunteers' practical skills, such as problem solving, communication and teamwork, as well as boost their confidence and belief in their abilities. This improves employability, presents career development opportunities, and can help those currently unemployed, move into work.

Volunteering provides individuals with an opportunity they might not otherwise have to develop their personal skills and abilities. For those out of work, volunteering keeps them active and motivated, potentially countering the negative impacts of unemployment on mental wellbeing – research shows that one in five jobseeker's allowance claimants experience a mental health disorder.

Volunteering enables people to realise their own potential, supporting priorities around increased social mobility – 29 per cent of volunteers that left the Citizens Advice service did so for paid employment, education or training (National Statistics). It also enables individuals to make an economic contribution to society, one which may be factored into future national Gross Domestic Product and productivity calculations.

Volunteering with Citizens Advice can also develop an individual's softer skills, resilience and other personal attributes. This can have a positive impact on how people feel about themselves, how they respond to others and their capacity to manage life's challenges.

For retired individuals, volunteering may offer different opportunities, provide structure and a sense of purpose as well as help them feel involved in society, all highlighted as vital to personal wellbeing. Ensuring that retired people are mentally and physically active also has wider reaching benefits to society, including reducing the NHS provision required to cope with an ageing population. Volunteering with us does not just have an impact on individuals, it benefits communities too. Our volunteers are local people, and through volunteering, they increase their knowledge about community issues and build relationships with their locality. This creates stronger communities, with engaged and active members, and more social action.

MAIDSTONE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU
TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT (CONTINUED)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

Achievements and performance (continued)

The Citizens Advice service also plays an integral role in supporting and strengthening its local community. We provide a service that meets local needs and reaches out to a broad and diverse client base. We support and strengthen other community-focused organisations, partnering with them to share our insight on how best to support local people. We also use our extensive knowledge to act as an advocate for the local area, mobilising and connecting people with their community. We are a local service, working with local people, for the benefit of the local community.

The value we get from working with volunteers is greater than just our ability to provide a quality advice service. In addition, our investment in developing volunteers, and enabling them to volunteer in their local area, has tangible benefits for the individual, community, and society at large. This is an additional benefit to the community, created through the way we deliver our service.

At the end of the 2023/24 financial year, we have established a new way of working after being faced with perhaps our biggest challenge yet (Covid-19), how to continue to deliver our much-needed service, a lifeline for so many, in the wake of the epidemic, into a cost of living crisis.

We adopted the "best of what we had learned and the best of what did" to work in very different ways and provide the vast majority of our services remotely, via telephone as well as digital means, and reserving Face 2 Face for the vulnerable, and complex cases. Fortunately, our staff and volunteers adapted to the new regime extremely well and it is a credit to their dedication and commitment that in this most demanding of times we have helped many more clients with much lower level of resource.

Data

We give advice to people who need help, but we also collect statistical data on all these issues. For example, we can show attendant issues affecting people who come to us with problems around council tax. As a result, we are better able to ascertain the most efficient ways to help people understand their problems more completely. For councils and councillors, this data is powerful. It can help address failure demand, facilitate the consideration of new service options and provide additional insight to the scrutiny process.

Councils are increasingly working together to deliver services in new ways and save costs, whether in shared service arrangements or in combined authorities with devolution deals. This can also unlock funding and address long-standing problems across the county. We want to be able to work with our local government—at parish, district, county level—to inform debate with our data and client stories. More than this, we can provide innovative services that mesh closely with those offered by public authorities. Citizens Advice is working nationally to make this as easy as possible, with new data products for combining output and impact data across variable geography as well as direct support to areas of innovation across our network.

Social Exclusion

People can suffer social exclusion when they face a series of problems such as poor skills, low incomes, bad housing and family breakdown.

As a result of their experiences and development at Citizens Advice Maidstone, our volunteers are better equipped and more confident in their abilities, and hence are more likely to move into employment. This has a true value to society, by moving people closer to the labour market, which may reduce their need to claim benefits related to unemployment. It may also reduce other costs to the state associated with sustained unemployment ie mental health, especially for young people not in employment, education or training. Equally, community volunteering enables unemployed individuals to make a form of economic contribution to society, the value of which may be factored into future national GDP and productivity calculations.

Citizens Advice has a major impact on people's lives, particularly the most vulnerable in society. Our service is best known for solving problems through advice, but we also make a difference by solving the underlying causes of these problems through our research and campaigns volunteers. Our work has also contributed to vital policy changes that will help more people make ends meet.

MAIDSTONE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU
TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT (CONTINUED)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

Achievements and performance (continued)

Pension Wise

Citizens Advice Maidstone is one of the LCAs who have been delivering the government's Pension Wise service for the last seven years. Launched in April 2015, Pension Wise was a new guidance service set up to help people understand their options under the pension freedoms. Citizens Advice Maidstone delivers Pension Wise appointments Nationally. During 2023/24 we have delivered Pension Wise appointments by telephone and face to face, to people aged 50 and over with a defined contribution pension.

Key statistics (PW)

During 2023/24, demand has remained very high. Since the service started, people have continued to value the high-quality guidance and support they receive. Satisfaction scores have remained over 95%.

Money Advice

National research shows that just over a quarter of adults say that they do not consider themselves to be good at managing money and one third say that they would prefer not to think about planning their finances at all. Many people have poor financial skills, and this often leads them to make ill-informed decisions on their money matters. Citizens Advice has found that the negative effects of a lack of financial awareness especially in the cost of living crisis, can be compounded by limited or poor-quality consumer information and inadequate advice. People can miss out on the growing range of financial products available and fail to make the best use of Government initiatives. However, building the necessary confidence in financial services is an uphill task. Citizens Advice Maidstone helps people resolve their money, legal and other problems by providing information and advice as well as by influencing policymakers. Our service is the largest provider of free money advice in the Borough of Maidstone. We provide specialist level money advice services, helping people resolve a range of money and debt issues. By providing advice and information about money in the heart of our community, we help people resolve a range of debt and personal finance-related problems.

The Citizens Advice service is a network of independent, local charities that helps people resolve their money, legal and other problems. The service is the largest provider of free advice in the UK. Citizens Advice also uses evidence of clients' money problems to campaign for change and is contributing to the Government's plan to provide all UK adults with access to generic financial advice. Citizens Advice wants people to have the skills, knowledge and confidence to make informed decisions across a range of personal money matters. We work with a range of partner agencies to improve the financial skills of people of all ages, particularly those at risk of social or financial exclusion.

Financial skills training can change behaviour - participants become better at budgeting, choosing financial products, saving and making their money go further and these changes persist over time. Developing financial skills not only boosts financial well-being but also confidence and general peace of mind. Tenants who do get into financial difficulty know where to turn to for help, seek out support sooner and as a result, are better equipped to cope.

Prison Work

Citizens Advice Maidstone's strategy aims to increase the capacity of our paid and voluntary staff to deal with our clients' debt and other money problems in order to prevent the financial problems faced by many people becoming major crises. This supports our wider focus of encouraging our team to work with more vulnerable groups such as offenders to meet their finance, benefit and debt needs. In relation to offenders, Citizens Advice is clear that personal debt and other financial problems can be a cause of an individual offending in the first place, and such problems can increase the likelihood of reoffending on release. Being able to manage debt and other financial problems during a prison sentence or upon release into the community could help to reduce re-offending.

Many offenders with families may fall into rent or mortgage arrears caused by a reduction of income during their prison sentence. Stable accommodation can help reduce re-offending by providing a secure environment in which to live, enabling them to open a bank account, receive benefits and find regular employment. Timely access to advice can, among other things, secure accommodation for an offender or their family on release; ensure access to benefits for the payment of rent and advocate on behalf the family if they are refused support from the local authority. Such services can greatly reduce the risk of re-offending. Debt can also present problems for offenders and their families both during their sentence and after release.

MAIDSTONE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU
TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT (CONTINUED)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

Achievements and performance (continued)

Risk Management

Trustees regularly meet to consider the financial and other risks relating to the activities of the charity and take appropriate action as and when required. A comprehensive risk register is maintained and reviewed at every Trustee meeting.

Planning for the future

The business strategy adopted by the Trustee Board is to safeguard the Core service with free generalist advice covering a full range of issues. This service has hitherto been funded by a Grant from Maidstone Borough Council. We are most grateful for the Council's continuing support. Citizens Advice Maidstone seeks additional funding from other sources in order to shore up the core service and provide other services if it is financially prudent to do so. Citizens Advice Maidstone's management has been successful in securing such funding from a variety of sources, including national Citizens Advice MAPS (pension Wise) Henry Smith Colyer-Fergusson and grants from local charities. The management continues to develop new and innovative partnerships with a wide stakeholder group in response to steadily dwindling financial resources.

Financial review

The net surplus for the year amounted to £11,000 (2023 : £26,987). There was a surplus of £21,969 in relation to unrestricted activities before transfers. As at 31 March 2024 general unrestricted reserves amount to £278,380 (2023 : £257,208), designated reserves amount to £34,482 (2023 : £34,482) and total restricted reserves amounted to £48,269 (2023: £58,441).

Reserves Policy

The Board of Trustees regularly reviews the finances and reserves of Citizens Advice Maidstone. Each review encompasses the nature of the income and expenditure streams and the need to match variable income with fixed commitments and the nature of reserves. Citizens Advice Maidstone sets aside restricted funds as set out in the Statement of Financial Activities. All restricted funds are applied to the particular restricted activity (project). Restricted funds unspent in a particular financial year are allocated as reserves in statutory accounts at the end of the financial year and will be allocated to that restricted activity (project) during the course of the following financial year or when the activity ends. Restricted funds at 31 March 2024 were £48,269 (2023: £58,441).

Trustees have discussed levels of unrestricted reserves and are agreed that in all circumstances Citizens Advice Maidstone's core services must be secure. A minimum sum of six months unrestricted (core) expenditure with a contingency of 10% will ensure that this aspiration is preserved as an allocation for core management activities to cover certain members of our project staff who support all aspects of the Bureau's activities. Therefore, the total reserves the trustees still aim to hold is £270,000 (2023 : £270,000).

As at 31 March 2024 unrestricted general reserves are £278,380 (2023 : £257,208) and designated reserves are £34,482 (2023 : £34,482).

MAIDSTONE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU
TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT (CONTINUED)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

Going concern

The Trustees are satisfied that the charity has sufficient resources to meet its liabilities as they fall due for a period of at least twelve months from the date of signing of these financial statements. Accordingly, the Trustees confirm that they consider that the 'going concern' basis remains appropriate.

Structure, governance and management

Citizens Advice Maidstone is a member of Citizens Advice, which provides a framework for standards of advice management as well as monitoring progress against these standards. The Board of Trustees produces an annual report detailing Citizens Advice Maidstone's activities during the year. The report is available on request from the office.

(a) Method of appointment or election of Trustees

In accordance with the Articles of Association (revised 23 September 2013 to bring our Memorandum and Articles of Association in line with the national policy of Citizens Advice and the guidance of the Charity Commission) the Trustee Board consists of a minimum of 3 and a maximum of 15 members. There may be a maximum of 10 elected members, each of whom is elected for a term of three years by the members of the company at its Annual General Meeting. At expiry of their term of office elected Trustees are eligible for re-election. In addition, the Trustee Board may co-opt members, whose number may not exceed one third of the total number of Trustees. No member of the staff of the office whether paid or voluntary can be a member of the Board. However, the Chief Executive, one representative of the paid staff and one representative of the voluntary staff, have the right to attend and speak (but not vote) at meetings of the Board.

(b) Operational structure and decision making

The Trustee Board sets the overall policy and direction of Citizens Advice Maidstone's business within the parameters set by the Citizens Advice Membership Agreement and any Service Level Agreements or contracts currently in being. Operational decisions are made by the Chief Executive subject to any specific Trustee Board directions and referring to the Trustee Board as necessary. The Trustee Board meets once every two months. Financial oversight is delegated to the Finance Committee which meets 14 days before the Trustee Board to appraise financial reports and recommend action to the Trustee Board.

Trustees' responsibilities in relation to the financial statements

The Trustees as directors are responsible for preparing the Trustees' Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and regulation.

Company law requires the Trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year. Under that law the Trustees have elected to prepare the financial statements in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice (United Kingdom Accounting Standards and applicable law). Under company law the Trustees must not approve the financial statements unless they are satisfied that they give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity and of the results of the charity for that period. In preparing these financial statements, the Trustees are required to:-

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in business.

The Trustees are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that are sufficient to show and explain the charity's transactions and disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with Companies Act 2006 and the Charities Act 2011.

They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

MAIDSTONE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU
TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT (CONTINUED)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

Disclosure of information to auditors

In accordance with company law, as the charity's trustee, we confirm that:

- so far as we are aware, there is no relevant audit information of which the charity's auditors are unaware; and
- as the trustees of the charity, we have taken all the steps that we ought to have taken in order to make ourselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the charity's auditors are aware of that information.

**ON BEHALF OF THE
BOARD OF TRUSTEES**



MR P J STONELY

30 September 2024

Registered office
2 Bower Terrace
Tonbridge Road
Maidstone
Kent ME16 8RY

MAIDSTONE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU
INDEPENDENT AUDITORS' REPORT TO THE MEMBERS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of Maidstone Citizens Advice Bureau (the 'charitable company') for the year ended 31 March 2024 which comprise the Statement of Financial Activities, the Balance Sheet, the Cash Flow Statement and the related notes. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards, including FRS 102 "The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland" (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

In our opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the charitable company's affairs as at 31 March 2024 and of its incoming resources and application of resources, including its income and expenditure, for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice; and have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006.

Basis for opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs (UK)) and applicable law. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of our report. We are independent of the charitable company in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in the UK, including the FRC's Ethical Standard, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Conclusions relating to going concern

In auditing the financial statements, we have concluded that the Trustees' use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

Based on the work we have performed, we have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the charitable company's ability to continue as a going concern for a period of at least twelve months from when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

Our responsibilities and the responsibilities of the Trustees with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this report.

Other information

The other information comprises the information included in the Trustees Annual Report, other than the financial statements and our auditor's report thereon. The Trustees are responsible for the other information contained within the annual report. Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in our report, we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon. Our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the course of the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether this gives rise to a material misstatement in the financial statements themselves. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact.

We have nothing to report in this regard.

Opinions on other matters prescribed by the Companies Act 2006

In our opinion, based on the work undertaken in the course of the audit:

- the information given in the Trustees' Report and the incorporated Strategic Report prepared for the purpose of company law for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements; and
- the Trustees' Report and the incorporated Strategic Report have been prepared in accordance with applicable legal requirements.

MAIDSTONE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU

INDEPENDENT AUDITORS' REPORT TO THE MEMBERS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

Matters on which we are required to report by exception

In the light of the knowledge and understanding of the charitable company and its environment obtained in the course of the audit, we have not identified material misstatements in the Trustees' Report and the incorporated Strategic Report.

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters where the Companies Act 2006 requires us to report to you if, in our opinion:

- adequate accounting records have not been kept, or returns adequate for our audit have not been received from branches not visited by us; or
- the financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or
- certain disclosures of Trustees' remuneration specified by law are not made; or
- we have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit.

Responsibilities of Trustees

As explained more fully in the Statement of Trustees' responsibilities set out on page 15, the Trustees (who are also the directors of the charitable company for the purposes of company law) are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the Trustees determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the Trustees are responsible for assessing the charitable company's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the Trustees either intend to liquidate the charitable company or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

Extent to which the audit was considered capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud

Irregularities, including fraud, are instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations. We design procedures in line with our responsibilities, outlined above and on the Financial Reporting Council's website, to detect material misstatements in respect of irregularities, including fraud.

We obtain and update our understanding of the entity, its activities, its control environment, and likely future developments, including in relation to the legal and regulatory framework applicable and how the entity is complying with that framework. Based on this understanding, we identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion. This includes consideration of the risk of acts by the entity that were contrary to applicable laws and regulations, including fraud.

In response to the risk of irregularities and non-compliance with laws and regulations, including fraud, we designed procedures which included:

- Enquiry of management and those charged with governance around actual and potential litigation and claims as well as actual, suspected and alleged fraud;
- Reviewing minutes of meetings of those charged with governance;
- Assessing the extent of compliance with the laws and regulations considered to have a direct material effect on the financial statements or the operations of the company through enquiry and inspection;
- Reviewing financial statement disclosures and testing to supporting documentation to assess compliance with applicable laws and regulations;
- Performing audit work over the risk of management bias and override of controls, including testing of journal entries and other adjustments for appropriateness, evaluating the business rationale of significant transactions outside the normal course of business and reviewing accounting estimates for indicators of potential bias.

MAIDSTONE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU

INDEPENDENT AUDITORS' REPORT TO THE MEMBERS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

Because of the inherent limitations of an audit, there is a risk that we will not detect all irregularities, including those leading to a material misstatement in the financial statements or non-compliance with regulation. This risk increases the more that compliance with a law or regulation is removed from the events and transactions reflected in the financial statements, as we will be less likely to become aware of instances of non-compliance. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.

As part of an audit in accordance with ISAs (UK), we exercise professional judgment and maintain professional scepticism throughout the audit. We also:

- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the charitable company's internal control.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by the Trustees.
- Conclude on the appropriateness of the Trustees' use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the charitable company's ability to continue as a going concern. If we conclude that a material uncertainty exists, we are required to draw attention in our auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial statements or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify our opinion. Our conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of our auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause the charitable company to cease to continue as a going concern.
- Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial statements, including the disclosures, and whether the financial statements represent the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation (i.e. gives a true and fair view).

We communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that we identify during our audit.

Use of our report

This report is made solely to the charitable company's members, as a body, in accordance with Chapter 3 of Part 16 of the Companies Act 2006. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the charitable company's members those matters we are required to state to them in an auditor's report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the charitable company and the charitable company's members as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

Azets Audit Services

**Sarah Jennings FCA (Senior Statutory Auditor)
for and on behalf of Azets Audit Services**

3 October 2024

Statutory Auditor

Globe House, Eclipse Park
Sittingbourne Road
Maidstone
Kent
ME14 3EN

MAIDSTONE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES (INCLUDING INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

	Notes	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total 2024 £	Total 2023 £
INCOME:					
Donations and legacies	3	464	-	464	505
Charitable activities	4	183,100	645,958	829,058	804,150
Investments		3,490	-	3,490	968
TOTAL INCOME		<u>187,054</u>	<u>645,958</u>	<u>833,012</u>	<u>805,623</u>
EXPENDITURE:					
Charitable activities	5	<u>166,846</u>	<u>656,927</u>	<u>823,773</u>	<u>780,515</u>
TOTAL EXPENDITURE		<u>166,846</u>	<u>656,927</u>	<u>823,773</u>	<u>780,515</u>
Net income/(expenditure) before gains on pension scheme		<u>20,208</u>	<u>(10,969)</u>	<u>9,239</u>	<u>25,108</u>
Gains on pension scheme	18	<u>1,761</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>1,761</u>	<u>1,879</u>
Net income/(expenditure) before transfers		<u>21,969</u>	<u>(10,969)</u>	<u>11,000</u>	<u>26,987</u>
Transfers between funds	14	<u>(797)</u>	<u>797</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
NET MOVEMENT ON FUNDS		<u>21,172</u>	<u>(10,172)</u>	<u>11,000</u>	<u>26,987</u>
Total funds at 1 April 2023		<u>291,690</u>	<u>58,441</u>	<u>350,131</u>	<u>323,144</u>
Total funds at 31 March 2024		<u><u>312,862</u></u>	<u><u>48,269</u></u>	<u><u>361,131</u></u>	<u><u>350,131</u></u>

All income and expenditure derive from continuing activities.

The Statement of Financial Activities includes all gains and losses recognised during the year.

The notes on pages 16 to 24 form part of these financial statements.

MAIDSTONE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES (INCLUDING INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

Comparative year information

Year ended 31 March 2023

	Notes	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total 2023 £	Total 2022 £
INCOME:					
Donations and legacies	3	505	-	505	955
Charitable activities	4	150,660	653,490	804,150	804,629
Investments		968	-	968	47
TOTAL INCOME		<u>152,133</u>	<u>653,490</u>	<u>805,623</u>	<u>805,631</u>
EXPENDITURE:					
Charitable activities	5	124,660	655,855	780,515	758,097
TOTAL EXPENDITURE		<u>124,660</u>	<u>655,855</u>	<u>780,515</u>	<u>758,097</u>
Net surplus/(deficit) before gains on pension scheme		<u>27,473</u>	<u>(2,365)</u>	<u>25,108</u>	<u>47,534</u>
Gains on pension scheme	18	<u>1,879</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>1,879</u>	<u>21,422</u>
Net surplus/(deficit) before transfers		<u>29,352</u>	<u>(2,365)</u>	<u>26,987</u>	<u>68,956</u>
Transfers between funds	14	<u>(5,892)</u>	<u>5,892</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
NET MOVEMENT ON FUNDS		<u>23,460</u>	<u>3,527</u>	<u>26,987</u>	<u>68,956</u>
Total funds at 1 April 2022		<u>268,230</u>	<u>54,914</u>	<u>323,144</u>	<u>254,188</u>
Total funds at 31 March 2023		<u>291,690</u>	<u>58,441</u>	<u>350,131</u>	<u>323,144</u>

MAIDSTONE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU

BALANCE SHEET

AS AT 31 MARCH 2024

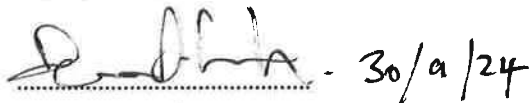
	Notes	2024 £	2023 £
TANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS	10	-	-
CURRENT ASSETS			
Accrued income and prepayments	32,905	14,338	
Cash at bank and in hand	302,305	368,901	
Current asset investment	45,000	-	
		<u>380,210</u>	<u>383,239</u>
CREDITORS: AMOUNTS FALLING DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR	11	<u>17,536</u>	<u>29,804</u>
NET CURRENT ASSETS		362,674	353,435
Provision for liabilities and charges	18	<u>(1,543)</u>	<u>(3,304)</u>
NET ASSETS		<u>361,131</u>	<u>350,131</u>
General unrestricted funds	12	278,380	257,208
Designated funds	13	34,482	34,482
Restricted funds	14	48,269	58,441
	15	<u>361,131</u>	<u>350,131</u>

30 September 2024

Approved by the Board of Trustees on and are signed on its behalf by:



MR P J STONELY
VICE CHAIR OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

 - 30/9/24

MR D PARRISH
MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Company No. 02234220

The notes on pages 16 to 24 form part of these financial statements.

MAIDSTONE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU

STATEMENT OF CASH FLOW

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

	Notes	2024 £	2023 £
Cash flows from operating activities	17	<u>(25,086)</u>	<u>34,741</u>
Net cash inflow/(outflow) from operating activities		(25,086)	34,741
Investing activities			
Interest received		<u>3,490</u>	<u>968</u>
Net cash generated from investing activities		<u>3,490</u>	<u>968</u>
Net (decrease)/increase in cash and cash equivalents		<u>(21,596)</u>	<u>35,709</u>
Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of year		<u>368,901</u>	<u>333,192</u>
Cash and cash equivalents at end of year		<u><u>347,305</u></u>	<u><u>368,901</u></u>

The notes on pages 16 to 25 form part of these financial statements.

MAIDSTONE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

1. Accounting policies

a) Basis of accounting

The Maidstone Citizens Advice Bureau (the 'charity') is a charitable company limited by guarantee, registered with the Charity Commission in England & Wales. The address of the registered office is given in the charity information on page 1 of these financial statements. The nature of the charity's operations and principal activities are detailed in page 2 of these financial statements. The charity constitutes a public benefit entity as defined by FRS 102.

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK (FRS102) issued in October 2019, the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the United Kingdom (FRS102), the Charities Act 2011 and UK Generally Accepted Practice.

The financial statements are prepared in sterling which is the functional currency of the charity and rounded to the nearest £1.

The significant accounting policies applied in the preparation of these financial statements are set out below. These policies have been consistently applied to all years presented unless otherwise stated.

The charity has availed itself of Paragraph 4(1) of Schedule 1 of the Small Companies and Groups (Accounts and Directors' Reports) Regulations 2008 and adapted the format of the financial statements to reflect the special nature of the charity's activities.

b) Going Concern

These financial statements are prepared on the going concern basis as the Trustees believe that no material uncertainties exist.

The Trustees have considered the level of reserves and expected level of income and expenditure and are satisfied that the charity has sufficient resources to meet its liabilities as they fall due for a period of at least twelve months from the date of signing of these financial statements. Accordingly, the financial statements are prepared on a going concern basis and do not include any adjustments which would be necessary if this basis of preparation was inappropriate.

c) Fund accounting

Unrestricted funds are those available for use at the discretion of the Trustees in the furtherance of the general objectives of the charity which have not been designated for other purposes. Designated funds are unrestricted funds that have been set aside by the Trustees for particular purposes. Restricted funds are funds which are to be used in accordance with specific restrictions imposed by donors which have been raised by the charity for particular purposes.

d) Income recognition

Grants and service agreement income are recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities when the charity has entitlement to the funds, where the service it relates to has commenced, it is probable that the income will be received and the amount can be measured reliably and is not deferred. Other Income is recognised in the accounts on an accruals basis with the exception of donations which are recognised on a cash received basis.

e) Expenditure

Expenditure is recorded on an accruals basis including irrecoverable VAT and allocated on the following basis:-

- Costs directly allocated - actual basis.
- Support costs - depending on type of cost and the Trustees' best estimate of usage.
- Other costs – actual basis.

f) Tangible fixed assets and depreciation

Individual fixed assets costing £1,000 or more are stated at cost less depreciation. Depreciation is provided on office and computer equipment to write off the cost, less estimated residual value of assets over their expected useful economic life of two or three years. At each reporting period end date, the charity reviews the carrying amounts of its tangible assets to determine whether there is any indication that those assets have suffered an impairment loss. If any such indication exists, the recoverable amount of the asset is estimated in order to determine the extent of the impairment loss (if any).

MAIDSTONE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU
NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS (CONTINUED)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

1. Accounting policies (continued)

g) Operating leases

Rentals payable under operating leases are charged on a straight line basis over the lease term.

h) Pensions

Contributions payable to the charity's multi-employer pension plan are charged to the income and expenditure account on a payments basis.

The charity recognises a liability for the obligation under the pension plan's recovery plan. The amount recognised is the net present value of the deficit reduction contributions payable under the agreement. The present value is calculated using the discount rate disclosed in note 18.

i) Debtors and creditors receivable/payable within one year

Debtors and creditors with no stated interest rate and receivable or payable within one year are recorded at transaction price. Any losses arising from impairment are recognised in the statement of financial activities under expenditure arising on charitable activities.

j) Employee benefits

When employees have rendered service to the charity, short-term employee benefits to which the employees are entitled are recognised at the undiscounted amount expected to be paid in exchange for that service.

k) Taxation

The charity is an exempt charity within the meaning of Schedule 3 of the Charities Act 2011 and is considered to pass the tests set out in Paragraph 1 Schedule 6 Finance Act 2010 and therefore it meets the definition of a charitable company for UK corporation tax purposes.

2. Judgements and key sources of estimation uncertainty

In the application of the charity's accounting policies, the Trustees are required to make judgements, estimates and assumptions about the carrying amount of assets and liabilities that are not readily apparent from other sources. The estimates and associated assumptions are based on historical experience and other factors that are considered to be relevant. There are no judgements or key sources of estimation uncertainty.

3. Income from donations and legacies

	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total 2024 £	Total 2023 £
Donations	464	-	464	505
	<u>464</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>464</u>	<u>505</u>

4. Income from charitable activities

	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total 2024 £	Total 2023 £
Maidstone Borough Council grants	133,100	-	133,100	133,100
Energy Advice - CMAP	-	3,077	3,077	-
Golding Homes	-	-	-	7,500
Colyer Ferguson	-	10,000	10,000	-
Pension Wise	-	368,398	368,398	418,018
Henry Smith (MDS Prison)	-	56,000	56,000	56,000
Energy advice	-	-	-	17,545
Carbon Monoxide Advice Project	-	45,000	45,000	17,190
Universal Credit – Help to Claim	-	163,483	163,483	142,237
South East Water Forum	-	-	-	2,500
Other projects	50,000	-	50,000	10,060
	<u>183,100</u>	<u>645,958</u>	<u>829,058</u>	<u>804,150</u>

MAIDSTONE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

5. Analysis of expenditure

	Direct costs £	Support costs £	Total 2024 £	Total 2023 £
Citizens advice services	147,088	19,758	166,846	124,660
Health advice	10,000	-	10,000	-
Prison support	36,981	14,985	51,966	67,373
Energy advice	3,077	-	3,077	17,545
Carbon monoxide advice	27,695	11,599	39,294	17,190
Water advice	2,500	-	2,500	14,000
Pension advice	274,080	111,730	385,810	391,618
Benefit advice	126,618	37,662	164,280	148,129
	<u>628,039</u>	<u>195,734</u>	<u>823,773</u>	<u>780,515</u>

6. Support costs

	2024 £	2023 £
Staff costs	77,717	89,092
Premises costs	39,445	58,456
General office costs	67,776	51,865
Bank charges	208	181
Governance costs (note 7)	10,588	8,403
	<u>195,734</u>	<u>207,997</u>

7. Governance costs

	2024 £	2023 £
Auditors' remuneration	10,588	8,403
	<u>10,588</u>	<u>8,403</u>

8. Net income

This is stated after charging:

	2024 £	2023 £
Rent payable on property under operating leases	28,750	26,660
Auditors' remuneration	10,588	8,403
	<u>39,338</u>	<u>35,063</u>

MAIDSTONE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU
NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS (CONTINUED)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

9. Staff costs

	2024	2023
	£	£
Wages and salaries	616,711	595,978
Social security costs	49,626	36,171
Employer pension costs	31,419	29,462
	697,756	661,611
	697,756	661,611

The key management personnel of the charity comprise the Trustees and the bureau managers.

The Trustees received no remuneration for the year ended 31 March 2024 (2023 : £Nil). During the year, none (2023: none) of the Trustees had expenses reimbursed by the charity. The total expenses reimbursed to the Trustees amounted to nil (2023: £Nil). In the prior year these costs related to sundry stationery and consumable supplies for staff members as well as travel and parking costs.

The total remuneration including pension contributions and employers' national insurance received by key management personnel for their service to the charity was £122,681 (2023 : £118,817).

The average number of salaried employees during the year was 29 (2023: 30).

There were no employees (2023: none) who received total employee benefits (excluding employer pension costs) of more than £60,000.

10. Tangible fixed assets

	Office and computer equipment
	£
Cost	
At 1 April 2023 and at 31 March 2024	96,327
Depreciation	
At 1 April 2023 and at 31 March 2024	(96,327)
Net book value	
At 1 April 2023 and at 31 March 2024	-

11. Creditors : amounts falling due within one year

	2024	2023
	£	£
Accruals	12,300	8,370
Other creditors	5,236	6,434
Deferred income	-	15,000
	17,536	29,804
	17,536	29,804

MAIDSTONE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

12. General unrestricted funds

	2024 £	2023 £
Balance at 1 April 2023	257,208	233,748
Net Income	21,969	29,352
Transfer to restricted funds	(797)	(5,892)
Balance at 31 March 2024	<u>278,380</u>	<u>257,208</u>

13. Designated funds

	Balance at 1 April 2023 £	New designations £	Designations released £	Balance at 31 March 2024 £
Premises and development fund	<u>34,482</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>34,482</u>
Comparative year information:				
	Balance at 1 April 2022 £	New designations £	Designations released £	Balance at 31 March 2023 £
Premises and development fund	<u>34,482</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>34,482</u>

The Premises and Development Fund has been designated to provide for future resources in these two areas.

14. Restricted funds

	Balance at 1 April 2023 £	Income £	Expenditure £	Transfers £	Balance at 31 March 2024 £
Henry Smith (MDS Prison)	832	56,000	(51,966)	-	4,866
Energy advice	-	3,077	(3,077)	-	-
Pension Wise	55,109	368,398	(385,810)	-	37,697
South East Water Forum	2,500	-	(2,500)	-	-
Universal Credit – Help to Claim	-	163,483	(164,280)	797	-
Carbon Monoxide Advice Project	-	45,000	(39,294)	-	5,706
Colyer Fergusson	-	10,000	(10,000)	-	-
	<u>58,441</u>	<u>645,958</u>	<u>(656,927)</u>	<u>797</u>	<u>48,269</u>

Comparative Information

	Balance at 1 April 2022 £	Income £	Expenditure £	Transfers £	Balance at 31 March 2023 £
Henry Smith (MDS Prison)	12,205	56,000	(67,373)	-	832
Energy advice	-	17,545	(17,545)	-	-
Carbon Monoxide Advice Project	-	17,190	(17,190)	-	-
Pension Wise	28,709	418,018	(391,618)	-	55,109
Money Advice Service	-	-	-	-	-
South East Water Forum	14,000	2,500	(14,000)	-	2,500
Universal Credit – Help to Claim	-	142,237	(148,129)	5,892	-
	<u>54,914</u>	<u>653,490</u>	<u>(655,855)</u>	<u>5,892</u>	<u>58,441</u>

MAIDSTONE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

14. Restricted funds (continued)

The objective of the Henry Smith Fund (Maidstone Prison Advice Project) is to provide advice and support to prisoners, staff and their families.

The objective of Energy Advice is to inform consumers how to reduce energy bills by efficiency savings or switching suppliers and to provide information about the help available from energy suppliers and government for consumers struggling to pay energy bills.

The objective of Pension Wise is to provide impartial pension advice and guidance.

The objective of the Carbon Monoxide Advice Project is to deliver one on one carbon monoxide awareness and energy advice.

The objective of the Universal Credit – Help to Claim Fund is to provide advice and assistance to persons requiring financial support. The transfer to this fund from unrestricted funds covers the overspend on the project during the year to 31 March 2024.

The objective of the Colyer Fergusson grant is to provide sustained support and advice on money/debt, entitlements, housing and employment matters to clients with mental health issues, in partnership with Blackthorn Trust.

15. Analysis of net assets between funds

	Unrestricted funds 2024 £	Restricted funds 2024 £	Total 2024 £
Current assets	314,611	65,599	380,210
Amounts falling due within one year	(206)	(17,330)	(17,536)
Provisions	(1,543)	-	(1,543)
	312,862	48,269	361,131

	Unrestricted funds 2023 £	Restricted funds 2023 £	Total 2023 £
Current assets	302,683	80,556	383,239
Amounts falling due within one year	(7,689)	(22,115)	(29,804)
Provisions	(3,304)	-	(3,304)
	291,690	58,441	350,131

16. Financial commitments

The charity had commitments under non-cancellable operating leases as follows:

	Land and buildings 2024 £	Land and buildings 2023 £
Expiry within one year	28,750	28,750
Expiry in 2 to 5 years	115,000	115,000
Expiry in over 5 years	93,103	121,932
	236,853	265,682

MAIDSTONE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

17. Cash generated from operations

	2024 £	2023 £
Net income	11,000	26,987
Adjustments for:		
Investment income	(3,490)	(968)
Increase in debtors	(18,567)	(9,598)
(Decrease)/Increase in creditors	(12,268)	20,199
Decrease in pension provision	(1,761)	(1,879)
Cashflow from operating activities	<u>(25,086)</u>	<u>34,741</u>

18. Pension commitments

TPT Retirement Solutions – The Growth Plan

The charity participates in the scheme, a multi-employer scheme which provides benefits to some 638 non-associated participating employers. The scheme is a defined benefit scheme in the UK. It is not possible for the charity to obtain sufficient information to enable it to account for the scheme as a defined benefit scheme. Therefore it accounts for the scheme as a defined contribution scheme.

The scheme is subject to the funding legislation outlined in the Pensions Act 2004 which came into force on 30 December 2005. This, together with documents issued by the Pensions Regulator and Technical Actuarial Standards issued by the Financial Reporting Council, set out the framework for funding defined benefit occupational pension schemes in the UK.

The scheme is classified as a 'last-man standing arrangement'. Therefore the charity is potentially liable for other participating employers' obligations if those employers are unable to meet their share of the scheme deficit following withdrawal from the scheme. Participating employers are legally required to meet their share of the scheme deficit on an annuity purchase basis on withdrawal from the scheme.

A full actuarial valuation for the scheme was carried out at 30 September 2020. This valuation showed assets of £800.3m, liabilities of £831.9m and a deficit of £31.6m. To eliminate this funding shortfall, the Trustee has asked the participating employers to pay additional contributions to the scheme as follows:

Deficit contributions

From 1 April 2022 to 31 January 2025: £3,312,000 per annum (payable monthly).

Unless a concession has been agreed with the Trustee the term to 31 January 2025 applies.

Note that the scheme's previous valuation was carried out with an effective date of 30 September 2017. This valuation showed assets of £794.9m, liabilities of £926.4m and a deficit of £131.5m. To eliminate this funding shortfall, the Trustee asked the participating employers to pay additional contributions to the scheme as follows:

Deficit contributions

From 1 April 2019 to 30 September 2025: £11,243,000 per annum (payable monthly and increasing by 3% each on 1st April).

The recovery plan contributions are allocated to each participating employer in line with their estimated share of the Series 1 and Series 2 scheme liabilities.

Where the scheme is in deficit and where the charity has agreed to a deficit funding arrangement the charity recognises a liability for this obligation. The amount recognised is the net present value of the deficit reduction contributions payable under the agreement that relates to the deficit. The present value is calculated using the discount rate detailed in these disclosures. The unwinding of the discount rate is recognised as a finance cost.

MAIDSTONE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

18. Pension commitments (continued)

Present values of provision

	31 March 2024	31 March 2023	31 March 2022
Present value of provision	<u>£1,543</u>	<u>£3,304</u>	<u>£5,183</u>

Reconciliation of opening and closing provision

	2024		2023
	£		£
Provision at start of period	3,304		5,183
Unwinding of the discount factor (interest expense)	126		97
Deficit contribution paid	(1,888)		(1,888)
Remeasurements – impact of any change in assumptions	1		(88)
Remeasurements – amendments to contribution schedule	-		-
Provision at end of period	<u>1,543</u>		<u>3,304</u>

Income and expenditure impact

	2024		2023
	£		£
Interest expense	126		97
Remeasurements – impact of any change in assumptions	1		(88)
Remeasurements – amendments to contribution schedule	-		-
	<u>127</u>		<u>9</u>

Assumptions

	31 March 2024	31 March 2023	31 March 2022
Rate of discount (per annum)	<u>5.31%</u>	<u>5.52%</u>	<u>2.35%</u>

The discount rates shown above are the equivalent single discount rates which, when used to discount the future recovery plan contributions due, would give the same results as using a full AA corporate bond yield curve to discount the same recovery plan contributions.

Deficit contributions schedule

The following schedule details the deficit contributions agreed between the charity and the scheme at each year end period:

	31 March 2024	31 March 2023	31 March 2022
Year 1	1,574	1,888	1,888
Year 2	-	1,574	1,888
Year 3	-	-	1,574
Year 4	-	-	-
Year 5	-	-	-

MAIDSTONE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU
NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS (CONTINUED)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

19. Analysis of changes in net debt

	Balance at 1 April 2023 £	Cashflows £	Other non- cash changes £	Balance at 31 March 2024 £
Cash	<u>368,901</u>	<u>(21,596)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>347,305</u>

20. Related party transactions

No transactions with related parties were undertaken during the year (2023 : none), other than those stipulated in Note 9.

MAIDSTONE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU
DETAILED INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

		Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total 2024 £	Total 2023 £
Income					
Maidstone Borough Council		133,100	-	133,100	133,100
Colyer Fergusson		-	10,000	10,000	-
Pension Wise		-	368,398	368,398	418,018
Donations		464	-	464	505
Deposit account interest		3,490	-	3,490	968
Golding Homes		-	-	-	7,500
Energy advice		-	3,077	3,077	17,545
Carbon Monoxide Advice Project		-	45,000	45,000	17,190
Henry Smith (MDS Prison)		-	56,000	56,000	56,000
Universal Credit – Help to Claim		-	163,483	163,483	142,237
South East Water Forum		-	-	-	2,500
Other projects		50,000	-	50,000	10,060
		<u>187,054</u>	<u>645,958</u>	<u>833,012</u>	<u>805,623</u>
Expenditure					
	Schedule				
Establishment expenses	1	789	38,656	39,445	58,455
Administration expenses	2	164,036	603,428	767,464	711,896
Sundry expenses	3	2,021	14,843	16,864	10,164
		<u>166,846</u>	<u>656,927</u>	<u>823,773</u>	<u>780,515</u>
Net income before gains on pension scheme		<u>20,208</u>	<u>(10,969)</u>	<u>9,239</u>	<u>25,108</u>
Gains on pension scheme		1,761	-	1,761	1,879
Surplus for the year		<u><u>21,969</u></u>	<u><u>(10,969)</u></u>	<u><u>11,000</u></u>	<u><u>26,987</u></u>

MAIDSTONE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU

SCHEDULES TO THE DETAILED INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total 2024 £	Total 2023 £
1. Establishment expenses				
Rent	575	28,175	28,750	26,660
Insurance - premises	23	1,126	1,149	994
Water	12	563	575	421
Gas	38	1,838	1,876	2,129
Electricity	73	3,598	3,671	2,995
Repairs and renewals - premises	28	1,375	1,403	23,776
Cleaning and cleaning materials	40	1,981	2,021	1,480
	<u>789</u>	<u>38,656</u>	<u>39,445</u>	<u>58,455</u>
2. Administration expenses				
Salaries and social security costs	137,342	482,201	619,543	591,105
Pension scheme contributions	25,463	52,749	78,212	70,505
Travel costs	51	2,933	2,984	1,908
Training	10	484	494	741
Health and safety	8	391	399	566
Books, information and IT systems	290	14,178	14,468	10,912
Telephone	324	15,118	15,442	16,746
Printing and stationery	62	3,015	3,077	1,880
Postage	17	819	836	859
Advertising and publicity	4	195	199	377
Computer and office expenses	4,030	7,936	11,966	7,735
Other office costs	21	1,016	1,037	2,351
Insurance	62	3,046	3,108	2,872
Equipment Hire	35	1,728	1,763	-
Hire of rooms	13	5,922	5,935	2,142
The Blackthorn Trust support	-	8,000	8,000	-
Universal Credit – Citizens Advice	-	-	-	1,197
	<u>164,036</u>	<u>603,428</u>	<u>767,464</u>	<u>711,896</u>
3. Sundry expenses				
Bank charges	4	204	208	181
Auditors' remuneration	212	10,376	10,588	8,403
AGM and other meetings	19	911	930	810
Professional fees	1,786	3,352	5,138	770
	<u>2,021</u>	<u>14,843</u>	<u>16,864</u>	<u>10,164</u>

MAIDSTONE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU

England & Wales - Charity number 299055

Accounts

Citizens Advice Maidstone

a registered charity



Helping You Turn the Page

Annual Report
2022/23

Free

Confidential

Impartial

Independent

Citizens Advice Maidstone is the operating name of Maidstone Citizens Advice
Charity Reg. No. 299055 Citizens Advice Membership No. 75/004 Company Reg. No. 2234220

2 Bower Terrace, Tonbridge Road, Maidstone ME16 8RY
Advice Line: (Freephone) 0808 250 5704
Email Advice: advice@maidstonecab.org.uk
Website: www.maidstonecab.org.uk

Trustee Board 2022-23

President: The Mayor of Maidstone, Cllr Gordon Newton

Elected Members:

Mr S B Malhotra: *Chair*
Mrs S Hawkins: *co Vice-Chair (to February 2023)*
Mr R Bird: *co Vice-Chair*
Mr D Parrish: *Hon. Treasurer*
Mr J Cobbett
Mrs W Foster
Mr I Owen
Mr A Breen
Mrs J Woods
Mrs L Mason (*from November 2022*)
Mr P Stonely (*from November 2022*)

Co-opted Members:

Cllr Mr P Harper: Maidstone Borough Council

Staff Representatives:

Chief Executive: Mr P Hardy
Volunteers: Mr S Jones
Paid Staff: Ms T Weber

Governance:

Through regular reviews the Trustee Board endeavours to reflect on and apply the principles of Organisational Purpose; Leadership; Integrity; Decision Making, Risk and Control; Board Effectiveness, Diversity, Openness and Accountability contained in the Code of Governance in order to facilitate continuous improvement.

**Challenging discrimination Valuing diversity
Promoting equity and inclusion**

Chair's Report

Another year has flown by -- once again -- it seems time passes quickly

a) when you are having fun

b) as you are getting older

I suppose both could be true, but if I could choose, I would prefer a) although b) seems to be closer to the truth!

We are now in the second year of my stewardship as Chair and I must say it is business as usual. We came out of various Lockdowns and hoped to continue providing our service to the Community pretty much as before. Rules and regulations meant that we could only start very slowly opening our doors to the public of Maidstone. Slow and steady as she goes!

Our CEO, Paul Hardy, really lives up to his name. He decided that the pandemic had taught us good lessons. Staff working from home were trusted that they would be as effective as they were in the office.

My own impression has been that they excelled, delivering a commensurate service to Clients on the 'phones and online. Suffice to say that even with reduced resources we continue to provide our service to many more people than other similar organisations.

Demonstrating the value of our work is crucial, as the pressures on the public finances continues to gather pace, with national and local spending decreasing further year on year. It is our responsibility to communicate to funders why Citizens Advice is an essential service and not just an optional extra. There is enough statistical evidence in this report to demonstrate this.

When the restrictions were lifted and we came back into the office, Paul decided that we will use the lessons from the pandemic and offer a hybrid type of service to our Clients. We adopted the "best of what we had learned and the best of what did" to work in different ways and provide most of our services remotely -- via telephone as well as digitally -- and reserving face-to-face for the vulnerable and more complex cases. Fortunately, our staff and volunteers adapted to the new regime extremely well and it is a credit to their dedication and commitment that in this most demanding of times we have helped 30% more clients despite our having a lower level of resource.

Volunteer Advisers predominantly work at the office whilst Paid Staff provide a mix from home and office. This system works very well as senior staff can be contacted wherever they are working from. Support, supervision, and training can still be offered remotely so that no one feels they are working out there on their own. Our goal is to empower clients solving their problems by themselves; others requiring more support do receive further help through detailed work by our Specialists.

All Projects have been delivering according to each funder's satisfaction, and as all those personnel delivering these services can also work from home, it seems to me that we have picked out the best of both worlds.

PensionWise is still conducted predominantly on the 'phone although some face-to-face appointments are carried out in Maidstone or Brighton. Similarly, too, Help to Claim became initially an online service and Citizens Advice National is encouraging the funders, DWP, to start moving towards a face-to-face service again.

Senior staff continue to be guided and supported by the Trustee Board who were quickly on board with the changing circumstances. Our Board has continued to function as usual with meetings moving seamlessly, working both via face-to-face and established online platforms. Similarly, staff meetings have successfully continued by using a hybrid model of personal attendance or joining online.

We continue to work with several partners within Local Government and Statutory Agencies to improve the policies and practices that affect our communities. We have been working collectively with other Local Citizens Advice centres in Kent to inform public policy and help regulators, as well as influence private industry to make their services fair for consumers.

Our service moves from strength to strength as we have been successful in securing further contracts from existing and new funders. Paul and his team have been successful in finding additional funds for us to offer a weekly service for the residents and users of Trinity Foyer. Another project works with funds from the

Colyer-Fergusson Charitable Trust to deliver services to the Clients of Blackthorn Trust under the Mental Health banner.

We are slowly starting to welcome new volunteers to our Service who come from a wide range of backgrounds, including young people, professionals who want to broaden their horizons, retired people who want to give something back and parents whose children have started school – so we offer a range of support services to meet the needs of all our volunteers too. Our commitment to value diversity, promote equity and inclusion means we are encouraging individuals who might not otherwise wish/be able to volunteer to come and join our vibrant team.

Our service has a major impact on people's lives, particularly the most vulnerable in society. Our service is best known for solving problems through advice, but we also make a difference by solving the underlying causes of these problems through our research and campaigns volunteers. Our team working within the Social Policy department has contributed to vital policy changes that will help more people make ends meet. The team collects Client information to enable us to work with our local government—at parish, district, county level—to inform debate with our data and client stories.

I finish by giving my thanks to all those who support this Organisation, whether by working in it; by providing funds to ensure we continue as before; or by donating their time and energy in any way they can.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I commend this Report to you.

Thank You.

Bonny Malhotra, Trustee Board Chair

An Office Co-ordinators View

The wheel was first used by the Sumerians in the 4th millennium BC in Lower Mesopotamia (what is now modern-day Iraq) and along with the light bulb and the printing press, is often cited as one of the most important inventions of all time.

Having said that, crucial to the performance and efficiency of the wheel is its axle, the size and shape of which has to be just right in order to ensure fluidity of movement and speed of motion, in any direction and under all circumstances.

And that is how I see the role of the Office Co-ordinator within the Admin function at Citizens Advice Maidstone.

Our Service is like a well-oiled and constantly rotating wheel, agile enough to be able to deal with most obstacles in its path.

However, this is only made possible by the smoothness and versatility of the operation of the Admin department, which acts as the linchpin for the entire organisation, enabling us to comfortably traverse any and all terrain and deal effectively with matters both big and small.

Certainly, Covid proved to be a major bump in the road, as is the current 'Cost of Living' crisis and the resulting sacrifices that continue to be made by so many will not be forgotten.

Never-the-less, I am confident that with the help and support of a dedicated team of paid staff and volunteers, as well as the good will and continued backing of our friends and funders, we can continue to help our clients deal with just about anything that life throws at them.

After all, as Victor Hugo said, the future has many names: For the weak it means the unattainable; for the craven it means the unknown but for the courageous, it means opportunity!

Office Co-ordinator

Employment Advice

As we continue to help more clients through our new way of working, so we see more clients needing help with employment issues. Employment queries have risen again this year, and continue to play a large part in our daily work.

Unfortunately the current themes affecting so many people in their daily lives also affect their employers. Rent increases, energy costs and rising prices mean businesses as well as households are struggling, one consequence being rising numbers of dismissals through redundancy.

According to government figures (Monthly Insolvency Statistics June 2023) company insolvencies were 27% higher than the same period in 2022, and the highest since 2009. In other circumstances, rival businesses are taking over struggling companies and employees are confused as to where they stand, as often neither the transferring or transferred employer correctly applies Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations (TUPE).

Nonetheless, this – like so much EU derived employment law – continues to protect workers' rights and we have been able to provide our clients with the advice they need in often complicated circumstances.

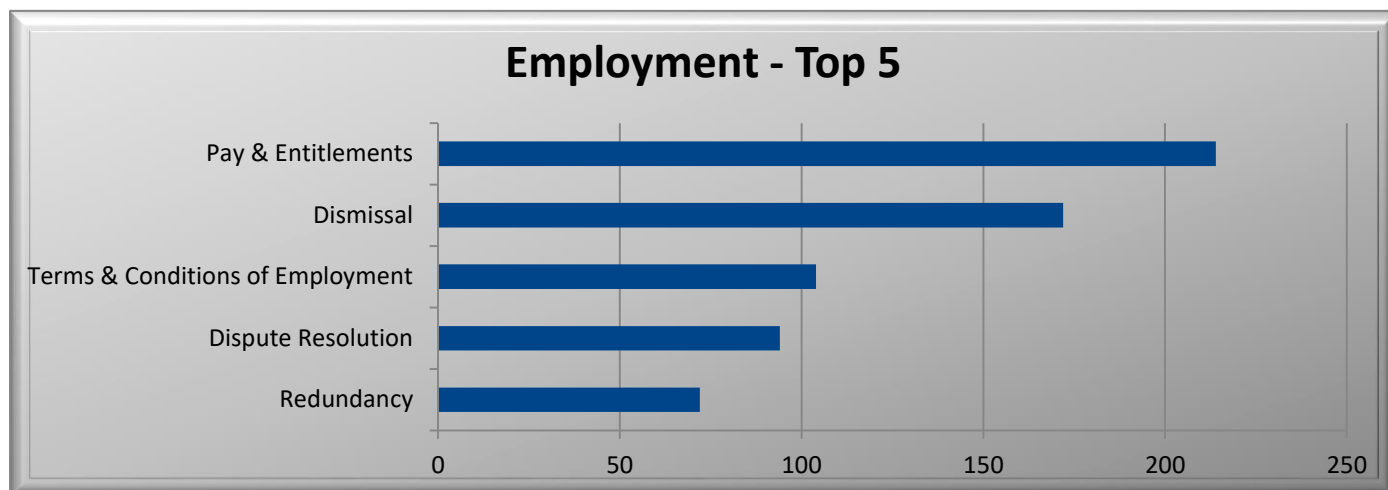
Inevitably we also see employers continuing to attempt to save money by underpaying their employees or altering their terms and conditions, often without the employees' consent.

Discrimination continues to be an issue in many cases, often leading to the above problems or causing the client to leave their job as the employers' unfair behaviour makes it impossible to remain.

Clients with employment queries rarely have one single problem with their employers, however our advisers are skilled in identifying these issues and supporting the clients, not just in terms of identifying their rights in the employment situation, but also recognising the impact that the reduction in income will have on the clients' housing and other areas of life.

What may start as a query about whether it was fair for the employer to sack them or cut their hours will often result in the client being guided into making a claim for benefits or helped with their housing situation, as well as being fully advised on their employment rights.

Employment Adviser



Energy

We successfully obtained a new contract with Citizens Advice funded to deliver energy advice and were able to assist many people during very testing times when energy prices have been at an unprecedented high.

Under the contract, we have been able to issue fuel vouchers for those on prepayment meters to help with the rising costs as, even with the government assistance of £67 per month, such clients were still struggling to ensure that they had enough credit to get them through the week, let alone the winter.

In addition, we are also trying to inform people of the dangers of Carbon Monoxide poisoning. Many people know of it as the “silent killer” but are unaware of what symptoms they need to look out for and we were able to offer our clients Carbon Monoxide monitors free of charge where there was not one already present in the home,

Our office has been able to deliver full energy advice and help members of the public to examine their behaviour when it comes to using energy. Advising people that even relatively minor changes such as turning off sockets and using a draught excluder at the bottom of the door can help keep costs down and overall, we advised 145 clients on the subject of Carbon Monoxide and sent 43 alarms to clients who did not previously have one in place.

We also set up outreach sessions in an attempt to capture clients who may have missed out on receiving energy advice by other means.

Our energy team has worked hard to get as much advice and assistance out to people who have been in dire need as possible and I would like to take this opportunity to thank them all for achieving our target over all areas of energy advice.

We hope that prices will eventually fall and with the implementation, following advice from us, of some small behavioural changes, people will be in a position to manage a little better.

Energy Adviser

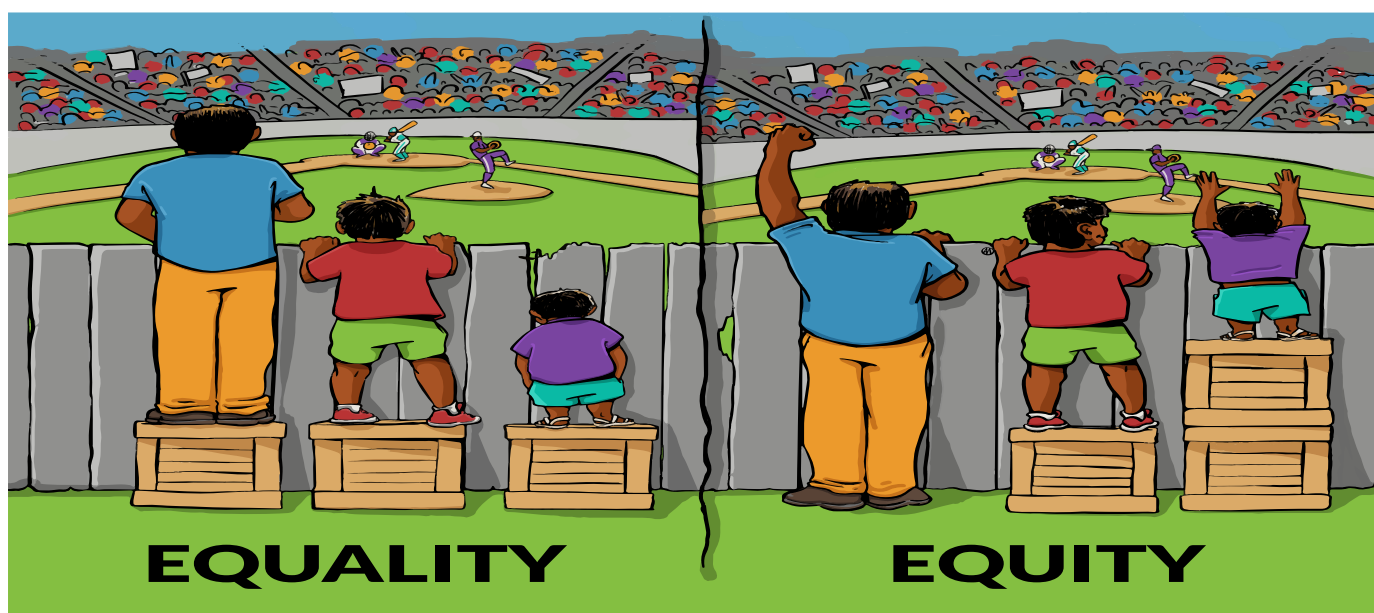
Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

Equity, diversity and inclusion is the bedrock of our service. We want our service to be accessible to anybody who needs us, we want to provide them with the service that they need. We also want to be an organisation that people want to work for, because of our values and what we do. But what do these words mean?

Equity is about treating everyone justly and according to their circumstances, we will adapt our services to their needs. This is often confused with equality which simply means treating everyone the same. The picture below shows the difference far better than any words.

The population of Maidstone is diverse, and we aim to ensure that they feel confident to use our services whoever they are. This goes for everyone who works for us too, we want to attract the best talent and their diversity will give confidence to our clients. We all benefit from an inclusive service reflecting different social and ethnic backgrounds and different ages, gender and sexual orientation.

These are goals that we may never meet fully, but are committed to build upon all that we have already achieved. This year we will look at how we might better serve some of the harder to reach groups as well as reflecting on the profiles of our own people.



Housing Advice

Issues around housing are a consistent presence in society and, therefore, our clients need to know their rights and responsibilities. The number of individuals experiencing difficulties regarding their housing has been exacerbated in the wake of the pandemic and the consequential steady rise in the cost of living.

People from all walks of life are finding day to day living more of a struggle, which has a direct impact on the affordability of bills, the biggest of which being housing costs and rent.

The provision of practical housing advice is therefore imperative, and can be very complex in nature. Citizens Advice work alongside other agencies in the local area; having strong ties, of course, with our local council, in order to meet the ever- growing needs of our clients.

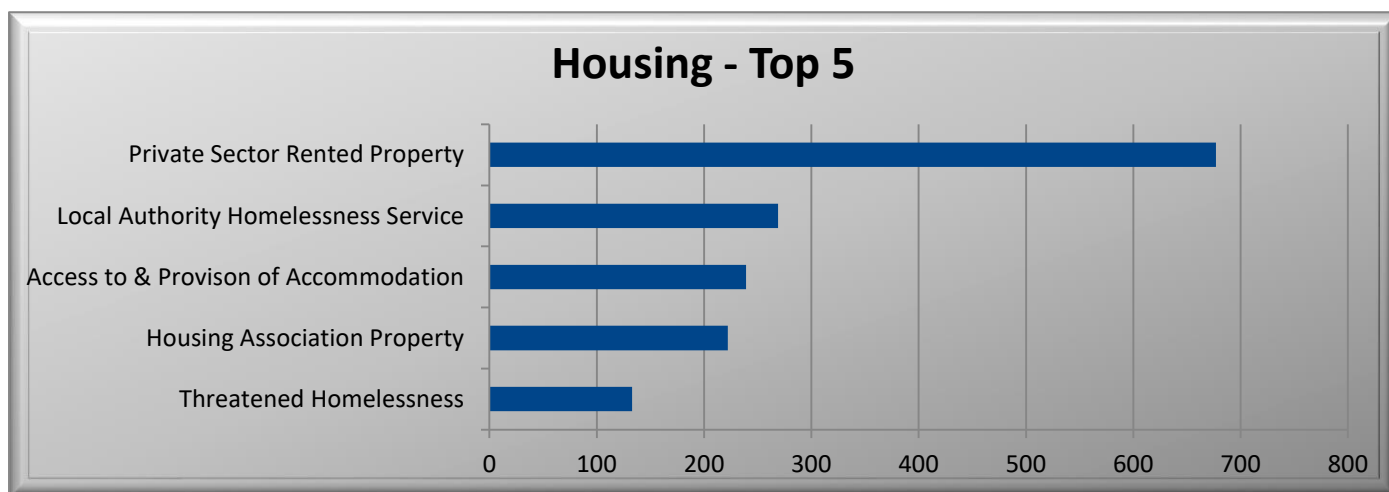
Cooperative working such as this, has allowed us to see more clients, especially those that are potentially more vulnerable, in a face to face setting at Trinity Church. Working in tandem with the housing team at Maidstone Borough Council, we are able to highlight and address client's other needs while navigating their housing concerns.

Ensuring clients are getting the best information in order to prevent homelessness is at the forefront of our housing advice service; making sure they know their rights when faced with a section 21 notice and are aware of the support organizations available. Clients also need to be aware of how their rental deposits should be protected and the impact this can have if this is not done so properly.

We are here to help people tackle problems with landlords, in terms of what their rights and responsibilities are and what support they can get if repairs are not being addressed.

The introduction of the Social Housing Act in 2023 aims to regulate this sector of the industry more profoundly, dealing with landlords who are failing their tenants and not providing suitable, safe housing that can truly feel like a home.

Housing Adviser



Maidstone Prison Advice Service

This year saw a gradual return to normal operations in HMP Maidstone with face to face appointments increasing as the Prison Service further reduces restrictions due to the pandemic. We initially use a paper based advice system and will arrange appointments for more complex issues and for clients who need additional support. We work closely with the Resettlement Team in the prison where there have been changes in staff, which initially affected service delivery as they became used to our unique requirements. Demand for our services remains high.

The prison is designated a Foreign National Prison where most inmates face deportation at the end of their sentence. English is not usually their first spoken or written language. Interpretation is normally through using other prisoners with better grasp of English. We can also access "The Big Word" telephone translation service.

Our role is intended to help clients deal with issues on the outside of prison in order to prepare for release either in the UK or abroad. In other words "Helping you to turn the page" for a better life.

During 2022/23, we helped 240 prisoners in 489 interactions dealing with 247 issues including 747 letters sent to and for clients. The main work remains trying to obtain the return of property from enforcement agencies (171 requests). Other issues included housing, debt, benefits, Tax & NI, Finance, immigration, health, legal and employment issues. We are not necessarily informed about the results of our actions but we do know of 85 positive outcomes on behalf of prisoners and £8,500 in financial gains.

Prison Advisers

Money Advice

Talking about a financial problem can be very distressing for some clients as they find it embarrassing to find themselves overwhelmed by debt and creditors chasing them for money.

They may have been contemplating calling for help for some time.

Once a client is assisted to fully understand their financial situation often a sense of relief is felt, as they are no longer alone in their situation.

At Citizens Advice we empower our clients and offer options to help clients understand their options for dealing with Priority and Non Priority debts.

Clients are offered a benefit check to help to maximise their income and we assist the client to complete a budget sheet to show income and expenditure.

Often clients have never previously engaged with budgeting and have always paid the creditor who shouts the loudest.

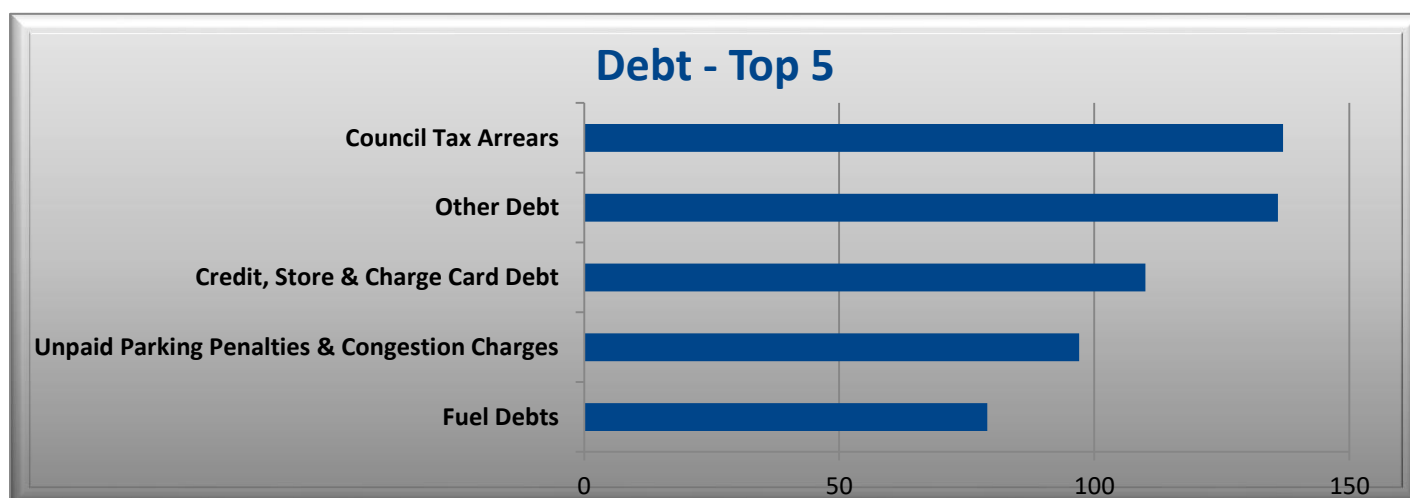
We encourage our clients to engage in collecting information to empower them to be involved in looking at options to deal with their debts.

Clients are helped to understand that it is never too late to deal with a creditor and that there are several options available to start dealing with their debts.

Clients may be eligible for a Debt Relief Order (DRO) to write off their debts or a debt management plan, IVA or in extreme cases Bankruptcy along with several other remedies.

It is extremely satisfying to assist a client to start their journey to “Turn the Page “and manage their ongoing finances to become debt free.

Money Adviser



An Operations Manager's View

2022 – 2023 has been interestingly eventful in Bower Terrace: Citizens Advice Maidstone has been implementing a new way of working since the pandemic, and although we no longer need to observe the various protocols associated with lockdown and social distancing, we have found that maintaining our service over the phone rather than face to face has resulted in more clients being helped, with better targeted advice.

We have offered face to face appointments to clients who need them since July 2021, and this has been working well for advisers as well as the clients they help. We have also returned to a limited number of Pension Wise appointments in the building and welcomed a number of new faces as the *Help to Claim* service, and team, expanded.

This coincided with the introduction of a new phone system, initially for *Help to Claim* before being extended to *Pension Wise* and latterly *Adviceline*, which has on occasion tested everyone's inner strength.

Our volunteers have taken all the changes in their stride, and more than met the challenge, and we have also seen an increase in the numbers of applicants interested in joining them, several of whom are either now advising or in training.

Alongside this, we are continuing to deal with many email enquiries and at the end of the year 22-23, are about to start working in Trinity House one day a week helping Maidstone Borough Council clients by appointment.

As the restrictions imposed on us by the pandemic recede into the distance we can definitely say that we have turned a page, and we are now working far more effectively than we did before, and helping many more clients turn their own pages.

Operations Manager

Pension Wise

Citizens Advice Maidstone is one of 38 local Citizens Advice who have been delivering the government's Pension Wise service for the last 8 years. Launched in April 2015, Pension Wise was a new guidance service set up to help people understand their options under the pension freedoms. Pension Wise is a service from *MoneyHelper*.

Citizens Advice Maidstone delivers Pension Wise appointments to people aged 50 and over with a defined contribution pension.

Key statistics

For 2022/23, Pension Wise has delivered 70,454 appointments across the service in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

People visiting Pension Wise have remained highly satisfied with the guidance they are receiving with satisfaction ratings remaining consistently high. For 2022/23, Citizens Advice achieved a satisfaction score above 95%.

The above article has been vetted and approved for publication by the Citizens Advice Pension Wise communications team

Citizens Advice Maidstone's Projects and Supplementary Services 2022-2023

It is important to first acknowledge that without our core grant from Maidstone Borough Council which provides essential funding towards our general advice service for local residents, we would not be able to operate. The grant also enables us to seek additional funding for projects and other important services to support residents.

We have been fortunate in this in recent years, often bidding successfully against stiff opposition, as charities across the UK are increasingly obliged to compete with each other for limited or diminishing funds.

We anticipate this unwelcome national trend will continue for the foreseeable future but have confidence in our own abilities to plan and succeed in this highly competitive market.

We are currently providing a wide range of additional services for residents that are funded from sources outside of our core grant and which constitute the majority of our annual funding. Some of these services may also be reported on in more detail elsewhere in this document.

Key projects and services in 2022-2023 are outlined below:

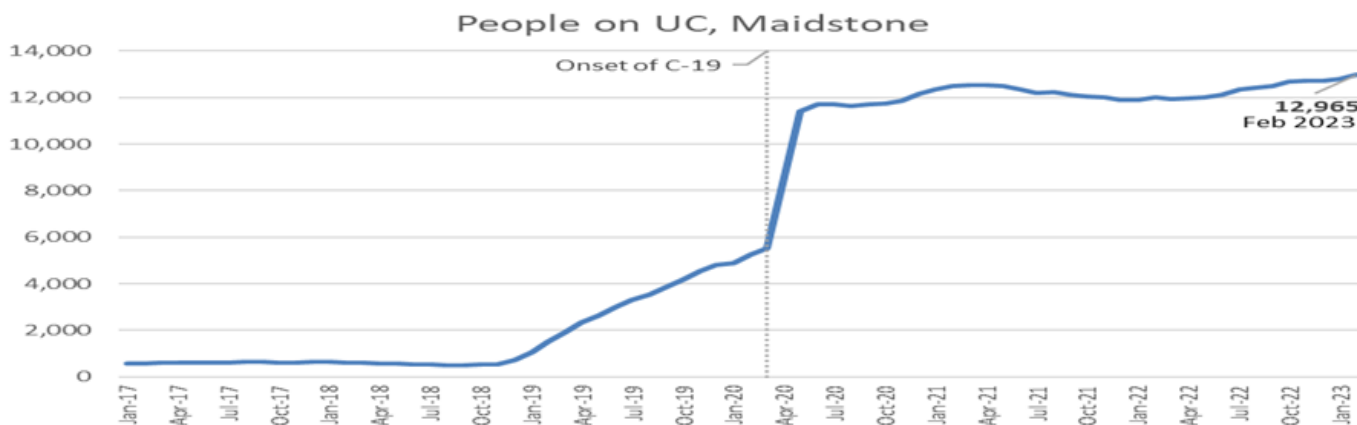
- Pension Wise Service for Kent and East Sussex
- Help to Claim Universal Credit Service (and Lead for Kent)
- Prison Advice Service for HMP Maidstone
- Energy Advice Programme and CO Awareness Programme
- Council Tax Support for Maidstone Borough residents
- Management of South East Financial Capability Forum

Many thanks to all our funders without whom none of this would be possible. Specific funder information is available elsewhere in this document

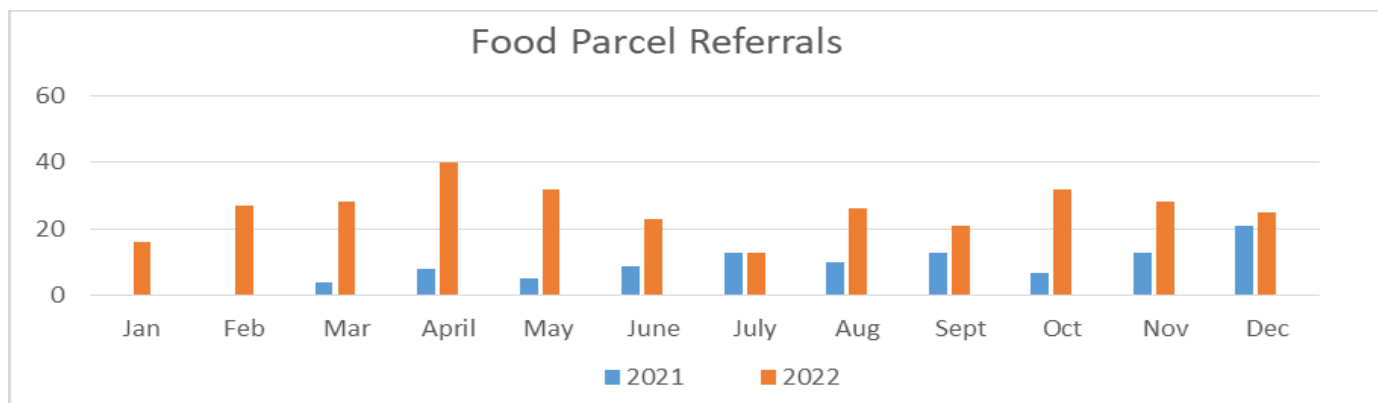
Service Manager – Projects

Research and Campaigns

The team’s main focus this year has been on Cost of Living issues: taking part in the national campaign and working with local partners. We have supported meetings with the Borough Council and other charities and services, and lobbied local MPs on issues such as energy costs, household debt and housing allowances. Some examples of this work are shown here. We also reviewed comparative utility costs by region, and produced data on Ukrainian residents in Kent for the LCA cluster group.



Source: DWP, Stats-xplore, People on Universal Credit



Our participation in the national Help to Claim Universal Credit research project has continued, and we have researched local community advice needs and prepared economic and social forecasts to inform the local business plan and project proposals.

Research & Campaigns Team

Advice Giving

It is comforting to note that as we turned the page to face the financial year 2022 – 2023, the Covid pandemic had subsided and we were able to advise our clients on our new “normal” service.

We had a team of loyal volunteer advisers who had stuck with us through all the difficulties of 2020 – 2022, but the team has shrunk compared to the pre-Covid years, which means that we have had to continue to adjust the method by which we offer advice.

We still have an insufficient number of advisers to operate a drop-in advice service but we continue to offer as many face to face appointments in our local office as resources allow. These appointments have to be booked via our Adviceline service. They have proved invaluable for clients who have literacy issues or those for whom English is not their first language. Being able to see the client does help to break down barriers and establish a rapport quicker, which can be especially important when dealing with long, personal and complicated forms.

We have been and continue to be pleasantly surprised at just how successful giving advice over the telephone is. Many clients have done some research themselves before contacting us and some simply require confirmation that they have understood the situation correctly. At least clients can sit in the comfort of their own homes while they benefit from our advice without having to trek to our office and queue, as used to happen.

Throughout the year we have been able to maintain an advice service through answering emails sent by Maidstone residents. This is an often imperfect way of dealing with clients' queries as they are not always aware of the information that we require to provide the correct advice relevant to their circumstances.

Let's hope that the current year does not present us with too many crises and challenges!

Advice Manager

Volunteering

I started volunteering with Citizens Advice Maidstone when I retired, as a way of keeping my mind active and giving something back to the community in exchange for my civil service pension.

The staff and volunteers at Citizens Advice Maidstone are a great bunch of people, and we have fun. However, we all get serious when it is a question of helping someone. It's the reason we all turn up.

When someone calls with seemingly overwhelming problems and you can find a way out for them, it is a mix of relief, pleasure and a small amount of pride!

We have moved to giving most of our advice via the telephone since the Covid epidemic and the problems presented are varied. There are the regular problems of homelessness, rented housing, getting benefits, especially if you are disabled, and managing on the same money, as prices rise. Then there are the odd problems that you have not come across before that require quite a bit of research to find an answer.

However, there is always support available from the specialists when you start and for difficult problems, your colleagues are happy to share their experience as usually someone has met the question before.

Volunteer

Welfare Benefits Advice

The client was referred to the Bureau with substantial debt problems that meant she was at risk of losing her property. As a routine part of the debt advice process -i.e. seeking to maximise the client's income – she was given a full benefits check.

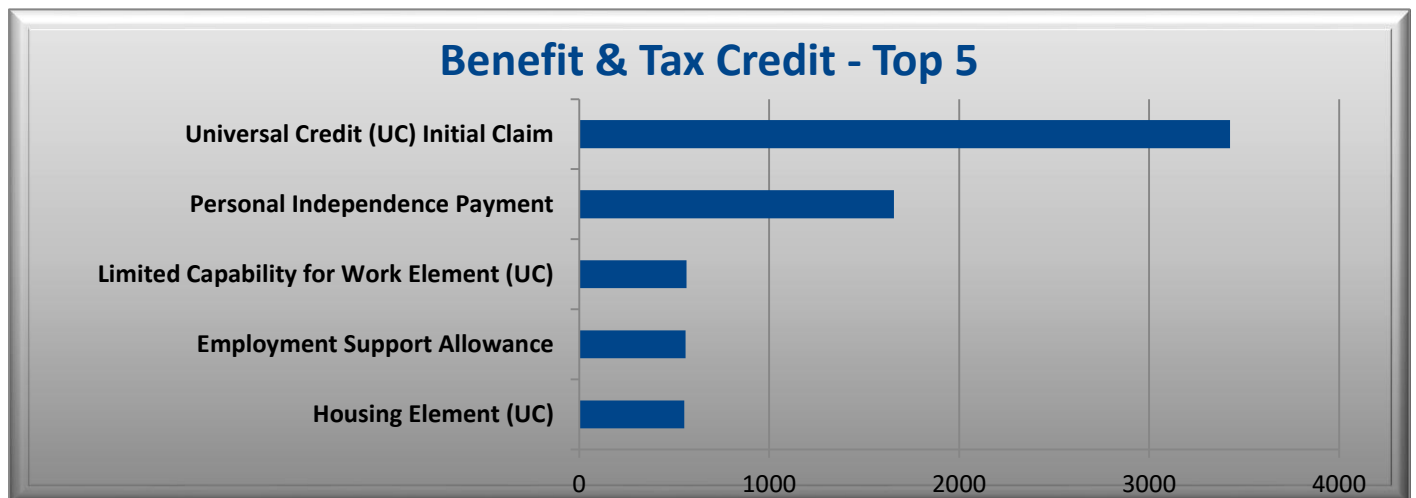
An in-depth exploration of her circumstances revealed that although she had long been claiming contributory Employment and Support Allowance, she had also been entitled to income related ESA ie premiums which she had not received. A claim for a backdated payment was made and the DWP have agreed a payment in the region of - wait for it - twenty thousand pounds! This will be enough to keep her in her property and to clear all her debts.

Furthermore, the additional eligibility for Income-Related ESA entitles her to a cost-of-living payment of £900 for the current tax year, and £650 for the previous year.

It also now passports her to full Housing Benefit (albeit still capped to the Local Housing Allowance), and she has therefore been advised to apply to the Local Authority for a Discretionary Housing Payment towards her rent.

To avoid the possibility of her getting back into debt she has been offered further budgeting advice on reducing her broadband, water and energy bills. So it can truly be said that Citizens Advice has helped her turn a page in her life and given her hope, as well as material assistance, for a better future.

Welfare Benefits Adviser



Chief Executive's Report

Ever since the Coronavirus pandemic it seems that we live in a world which, in order to survive, necessitates that we remain in an almost constant state of vigilance and preparedness, poised to react to any and all changes in events no matter how trivial or idiosyncratic they may seem. As a result, the working definition of that well-worn phrase the "new normal" has changed so many times over recent years as to render it almost meaningless.

This was never more true than back in April 2022 when, under the guise of a shift from parliamentary restriction to personal responsibility, the latest curve ball pitched up in our general direction by HM Government, was the removal of the legal requirement to self-isolate.

The change applied both to people who knew that they had Covid and those they had been in close contact with. However, in order to minimise the risk of passing it on to others, the related guidance recommended that although you were no longer required by law to self-isolate, if you had been unlucky enough to contract Coronavirus, you should still stay at home and avoid contact with other people.

We at Citizens Advice Maidstone have always been of the opinion that prevention is better than cure and had worked hard over the previous two years to keep Bower Terrace free from the virus so that we were able to maintain delivery of a level of Service that bore some resemblance to the one enjoyed by the residents of the borough of Maidstone prior to the pandemic.

Consequently, we found ourselves somewhat in limbo as we were not about to potentially jeopardise all our endeavours by relaxing the protocols in place around the wearing of face coverings and social distancing any time soon and whilst circumstances may have changed in the wider world as a result of the government's latest edict, at Citizens Advice Maidstone, the view from the trenches remained very much one of, "if it ain't broke, don't fix it".

Therefore, with the pandemic still far from over, we continued to conduct most of our work remotely, with the majority of our paid staff working from home and only those clients who genuinely could not be helped by any other means, being offered an appointment to see an advisor face-to-face and then, only under tightly regulated conditions.

However, as the year progressed and the incidence of Coronavirus decreased, eventually reaching an all-time post-pandemic infection rate low of 1 in 40 people nationwide, we began to take an increasing number of tentative steps down the bumpy road to normality and started to welcome more and more people (both paid and volunteer staff as well as clients) back to Bower Terrace on a regular basis.

We had suffered a number of 'casualties' along the way with some members of staff who by that time had been away from our Service for almost two years, choosing for a variety of reasons not to return but a significant number of volunteers have stuck with us and their ongoing loyalty and dedication to the cause is humbling and elicit feelings of admiration and inspiration in equal measure.

We have come a long way since then. However, despite the gradual relaxation of the rules and regulations surrounding Covid, not just nationally but world-wide and the resulting "opening up" of society as a whole, we still live in challenging times and I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the backing and assistance I have received from my colleagues on the Trustee Board, whose continued unwavering support has enabled us to not only maintain our level of service throughout this entire period but also branch out in to pastures new.

My sincere gratitude goes to them all as they have helped to make a challenging job much easier and in particular, on behalf of myself and all her colleagues on the Board and at Citizens Advice Maidstone as a whole, I would like to thank Mrs Sharon Hawkins, who stepped down as a Trustee in March of this year after 16 years of dedicated service, initially as our Honorary Solicitor before in 2009, taking on additional responsibilities as the Board's Vice Chair.

You do, as they say, get less for murder and Sharon's only 'crime' was to demonstrate an unstinting commitment to our cause throughout the duration of her tenure as a Trustee for which both I and my predecessor as CEO now Chair of our Trustee Board, Bonny Malhotra, are eternally grateful and believe that such a display of unbridled altruism should not go unrecognised.

Indeed, those prepared to stand shoulder to shoulder with you through good times and bad, come what may are without doubt, true friends and Citizens Advice Maidstone is fortunate enough to have more than its fair share, both in and outside the organisation.

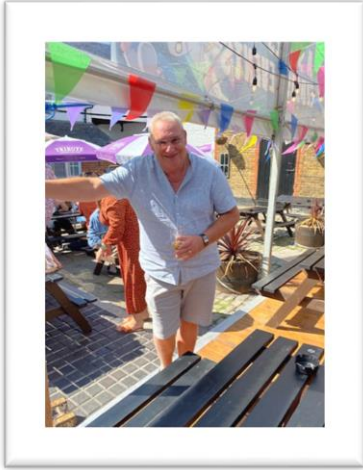
To that end, I would like to thank the staff, both volunteer and paid, as it is because of their willingness and ability to adjust and adapt to different ways of working that we have been able to maintain an excellent advice and support service for the inhabitants of our borough and continue to deliver our objectives according to all currently held contracts.

In addition, we owe a great debt of gratitude to all of our funders, including Maidstone Borough Council, as without their ongoing support and understanding, we would be hard pressed to provide anything but a very basic core service and last but by no means least, a big thank you goes as always to National Citizens Advice for their enduring sponsorship and patronage.

It is thanks to the good will and generosity of all those who continue to place their trust in us that we can look to the future with a renewed sense of optimism and due to the public endorsement of our Service that their backing demonstrates, there is a real possibility that we will soon be able to turn the page and consign the dark days of Coronavirus to the annals of history.

Paul Hardy, Chief Executive

**Social & Recreational –
Summer Bar-b-que - August 2022**



Christmas Buffet - December 2022



Key Statistics

Maidstone (member)

01/04/2022 31/03/2023

citizens advice

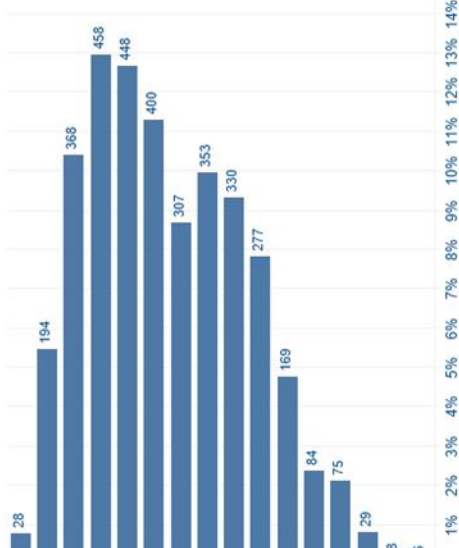
Summary

Clients	4,179
Quick client contacts	3,186
Issues	19,133
Activities	7,500
Cases	4,221
Outcomes	
Income gain	£1,728,602
Re-imbursments, services, loans	£13,150
Debts written off	£51,911
Other	£22,741

Issues

Issues	Clients
Benefits & tax credits	1,265
Benefits Universal Credit	1,661
Charitable Support & Food Ban...	247
Consumer goods & services	103
Debt	301
Education	30
Employment	351
Financial services & capability	130
GVA & Hate Crime	64
Health & community care	95
Housing	625
Immigration & asylum	101
Legal	459
Other	39
Relationships & family	427
Tax	82
Travel & transport	87
Utilities & communications	255
Grand Total	19,133

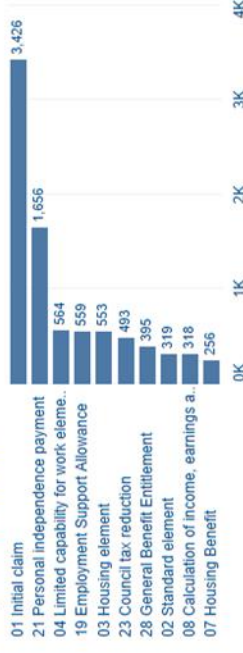
Age



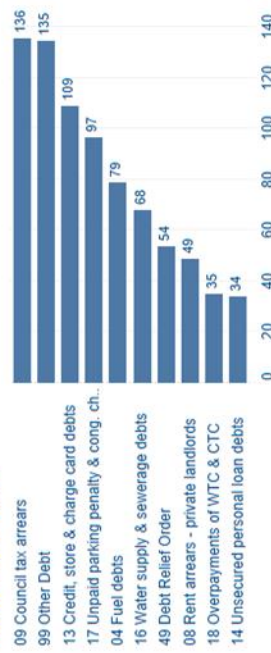
Channel



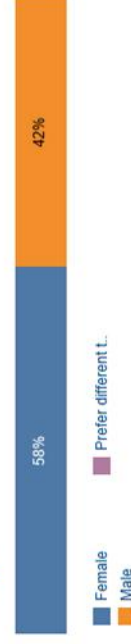
Top benefit issues



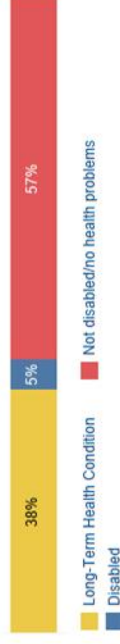
Top debt issues



Gender



Disability / Long-term health



Ethnicity



1) Five key cost of living Issues

citizens advice

Filters

Date: 01/04/2022 00:00:00 to 31/0...

Government Region: South East

Member: Maidstone (member)

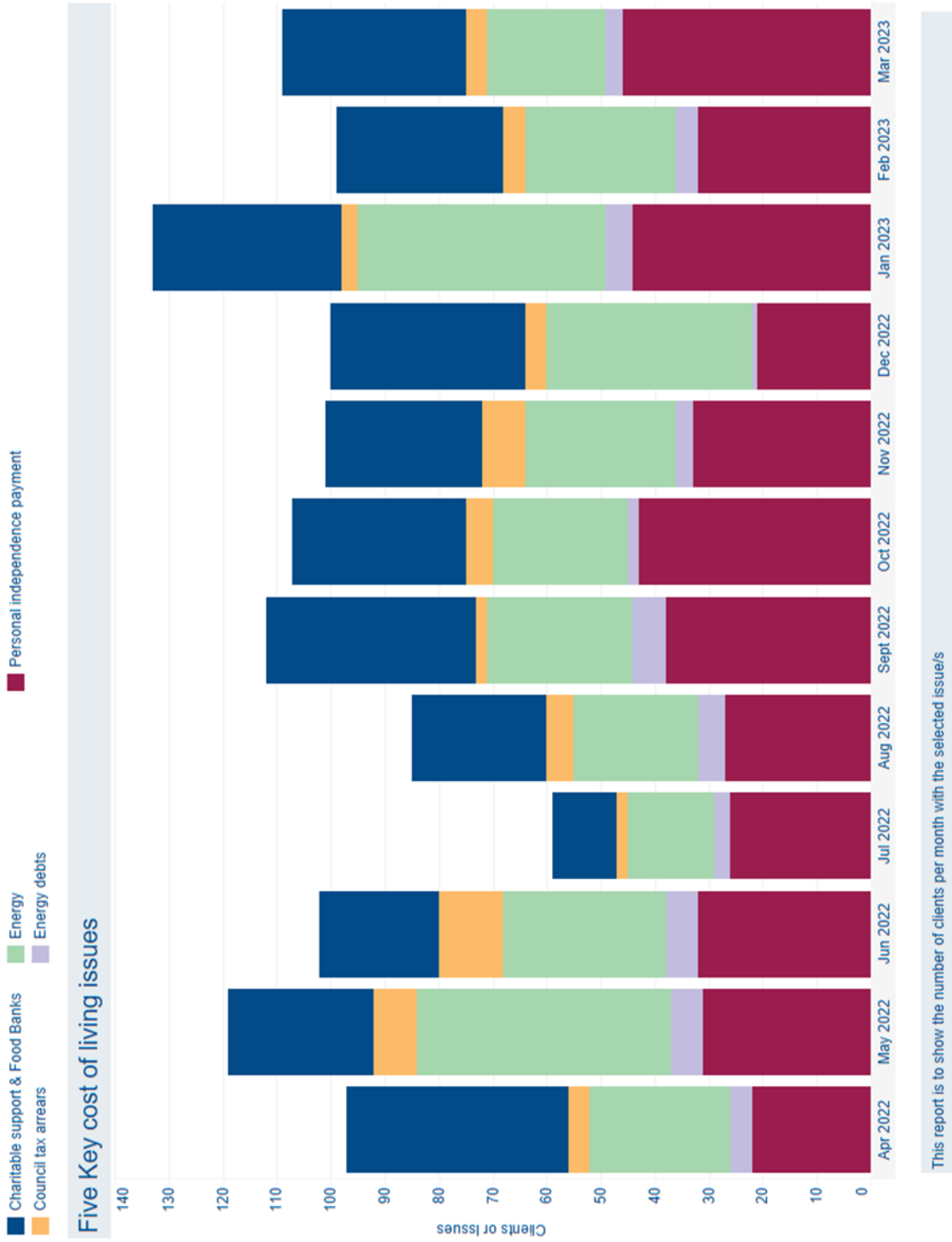
Funder: All

Local Authority: Maidstone

Select Issue:

- Charitable support & Food ..
- Council tax arrears
- Energy
- Energy debts
- Personal independence pay..

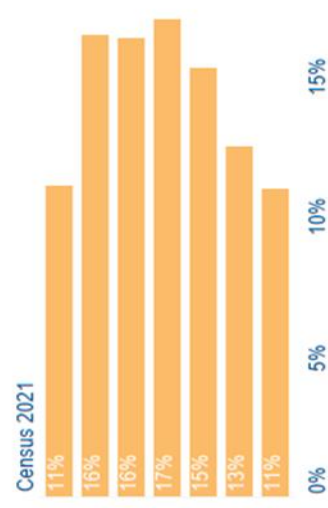
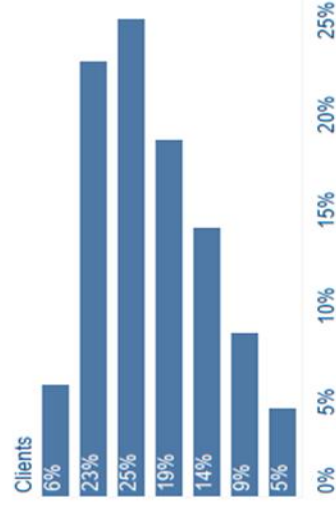
Select an issue above, if all issues is selected the graph will be stacked and the same client may be counted in more than one issue



Clients compared to Census 2021 data

Maidstone (member)

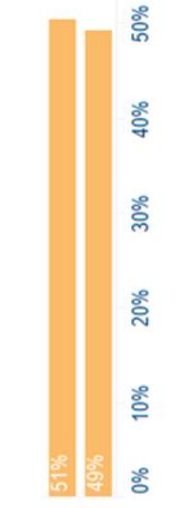
Age	Clients	Census
16-24	5.9%	11.1%
25-34	22.8%	16.5%
35-44	25.0%	16.4%
45-54	18.7%	17.1%
55-64	14.1%	15.3%
65-74	8.7%	12.5%
75+	4.7%	11.0%
Grand Total	100.0%	



Disability	Clients	Census
Disabled	5.2%	15.9%
Long-Term Health Condition	38.0%	7.4%
Not disabled/no health problems	56.7%	76.7%
Grand Total	100.0%	



Gender	Clients	Census
Female	53.4%	50.5%
Male	46.6%	49.5%
Prefer different term (Other)	0.0%	
Grand Total	100.0%	



Ethnicity	Clients	Census
People of Colour	17.8%	10.2%
White	82.2%	89.8%
Grand Total	100.0%	

Filters

Dates	01/04/2022 00:00:00 to 31/10/2022
Office Group	Maidstone (member)
Local Authority	Maidstone
Census Local Authorities	Maidstone

A couple of examples of the effectiveness of the work that we do:

A Scam:

The client contacted us after receiving an email appearing to come from Scottish Power saying they owed £4,000 in electricity and had been requested to set up a standing order to repay the amount owed.

The client rang the telephone number on the email about the amount owed and said they wanted to check with their local Citizens Advice as they were paying a lot for electricity already.

The client was told by the person who answered the call, not to contact Citizens Advice and that they would call the client back later that day to set up a standing order.

Fortunately however, the client did ring us and when we checked the number given in the email, we were able to establish that this was in fact a scam.

We gave the client the correct contact details for Scottish Power and advised them to report the scam and confirm with their supplier, whether they did in fact owe any monies to them.

The client came back to us to advise that their Scottish Power account was up to date with no outstanding charges and that they were very happy with the advice given.

A Housing Issue:

The client had received a section 21 notice as their landlord needed to move back into the property they were renting.

The client was concerned that they had not been given enough time to look and move to alternative accommodation especially as their partner had serious medical and mental health issues.

The client was given additional advice about the section 21 processes and advised as to what further action they could take.

We received an email from the client at a later date, thanking the adviser for their time, patience and advice saying that it helped how they were feeling and enabled them to better address their situation.

The Citizens Advice Service provides free, independent, confidential and impartial advice to everyone on their rights and responsibilities. It values diversity, promotes equality and challenges discrimination.

The Service aims:

- to provide the advice people need for the problems they face
- to improve the policies and practices that affect people's lives

GENERALIST ADVICE

Benefits Consumer Debt Education Employment
 Finance Health Housing Immigration (Level One)
 Relationships Travel Utilities

SPECIALIST ADVICE

Debt Employment Welfare Benefits Energy

Acknowledgements

The Trustees, Management, Staff and Clients would like to thank all the individuals and organisations who have assisted and supported Citizens Advice Maidstone in the past year.

Volunteering with Citizens Advice Maidstone

You can make a real difference in helping your communities by volunteering with Citizens Advice.

Teams of volunteers across England and Wales are vital to the work conducted by Citizens Advice, helping people access information and giving them the advice they need to move forward with their lives.

Citizens Advice believes everyone deserves access to independent, free advice to help them deal with life's problems and challenges and you can help us do that.

Volunteers are at the heart of how we deliver the Citizens Advice service, whether it's:

- helping people online, over the phone, or in person
- raising funds
- researching and campaigning for policy change
- helping the service to run smoothly in our admin and customer service roles
- as a trustee

Visit our website at www.maidstonecab.org.uk for further details and an application form.

Financial Support was received from:

Chart Sutton Parish Council
 Citizens Advice:
 (Help to Claim – Universal Credit/MAS Debt Advice Project/Pension Wise/Energy Advice Programme/Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy funding)
 Cobtree Charity Trust
 DWP (MAPS) Pension Wise
 Golding Homes
 HMP Maidstone
 Involve Kent
 Maidstone Borough Council
 Money & Pensions Service (MAPS)
 North & West Kent Citizens Advice
 Southern Housing Group
 South East Water
 Staplehurst Parish Council
 The Henry Smith Charity

Donations from the public, clients and staff

Our special thanks go to:

Members & Officers of Maidstone Borough Council
 DWP (MAPS) Pension Wise
 HMP Maidstone
 Money & Pensions Service (MAPS)
 Citizens Advice Central Office staff

MAIDSTONE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU
(A company limited by guarantee)

REPORTS AND ACCOUNTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

Registered Charity No. 299055

Company No. 02234220

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MAIDSTONE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU

REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

The Maidstone Citizens Advice Bureau is a company limited by guarantee and a registered charity governed by its Memorandum and Articles of Association (Charity number 299055, Company number 02234220).

Citizens Advice Maidstone is the operating name of Maidstone Citizens Advice Bureau.

The Board of Trustees

The Trustees of the charitable company are its directors for the purposes of company law and throughout this report are collectively referred to as the 'Trustees'.

The members of the Board of Trustees who served during the year were as follows:

Elected Trustees

Mr S Bonny Malhotra (Chair)
Mrs S Hawkins (Co Vice-Chair; resigned 6 March 2023)
Mr R Bird (Vice-Chair)
Mr D Parrish (Hon Treasurer)
Mr J Cobbett
Mrs W Foster
Mr I R Owen
Mr A Breen
Ms J S Woods

Co-opted Members

Cllr P Harper
Ms L Mason
Mr P J Stonely

Staff Representatives

Mr P Hardy
Mr S Jones
Mrs T Weber

Senior Leadership Team

Mr P Hardy - CEO
Mrs S Smith - Advice Manager
Mr I Park - Service Manager Projects
Mrs T Weber - Operations Manager

Registered Office and Principal Address

2 Bower Terrace, Tonbridge Road, Maidstone, Kent, ME16 8RY

Statutory Auditors

Azets Audit Services, Globe House, Eclipse Park, Sittingbourne Road, Maidstone, Kent, ME14 3EN

MAIDSTONE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU

TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

The Trustees present their report and the audited financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2023. The Trustees confirm that the annual report and financial statements of Citizens Advice Maidstone comply with current statutory requirements, the requirements of Citizens Advice Maidstone's governing document and the provisions of the Statement of Recommended Practice – Accounting and Reporting by Charities (SORP FRS 102).

Objectives and activities

Citizens Advice Maidstone provides independent, free, confidential, impartial advice to everyone regardless of their race, gender, sexuality or disability. Citizens Advice Maidstone aims to ensure that individuals do not suffer through a lack of knowledge of their rights and responsibilities or of the services available to them, or through an inability to express their needs effectively. The Citizens Advice Maidstone also aims to exercise a responsible influence on the development of social policies and services both locally and nationally through the work of the Research and Campaign team.

Public benefit

The Trustees confirm that they have complied with the duty in section 4 of the Charities Act 2006 to have due regard to the guidance contained in the Charity Commission's general guidance on the public benefit when reviewing the local office aims and objectives and in the planning of future activities.

Achievements and performance

Our goal is to empower clients solving their problems by themselves; others requiring more support do receive further help through detailed work conducted by our specialists and generalist volunteer advisers. Citizens Advice Maidstone provides free, independent, confidential and impartial advice to everyone on their rights and responsibilities. The organisation values diversity; promotes equity & inclusion and challenges discrimination. This essential work is professionally carried out by our team of paid and voluntary staff helping people to solve their problems and changing their lives. In order to prevent financial problems re-emerging, we also run educational services such as financial capability or energy efficiency training sessions in collaboration with other local offices.

Our office is located on Tonbridge Road. A number of outreach sessions are also provided at certain parishes in the Borough by appointment. This enables us to connect with a broad and diverse client base within the Borough. Clients can approach our service for face-to-face advice; by telephone; by email or digitally for those who otherwise cannot access us easily.

The Citizens Advice Membership Scheme requires each local Citizens Advice to carry out a Leadership Self-Assessment each year. The Board worked together with paid and volunteer staff to look at its policies and procedures and submitted its Assessment to the Performance Assessor under the system. The Organisation has been judged to be at a good standard.

Our workforce, both paid and voluntary have produced an excellent set of statistics, the majority of which can be seen in our Annual Report. Suffice to say that we continue to provide our service to many more people than other similar organisations. Financially it has been a better year with us securing funding for new projects. Notwithstanding, our total income for the year was £805,623 (2022:£ 805,631) with the expenditure pegged at £780,515 (2022:£ 758,097) showing a surplus of £25,108 (2022:£ 47,534) for the 2022/23 financial year. There was a gain on the pension scheme liability of £1,879, which has been separately disclosed this year, giving an overall surplus for the year of £26,987 (2022: £68,956). At the end of the Financial Year our Restricted Reserves were £58,441 (2022: £54,914) and Unrestricted Reserves stood at £291,690 (2022: £268,230).

Demonstrating the value of our work is crucial, as the pressures on the public finances continues to gather pace with national and local spending decreasing further year on year. It is our responsibility to communicate to funders why Citizens Advice is an essential service and not just 'nice to have'. Citizens Advice Maidstone is unique for many reasons: in our team we have a total of 28 paid staff equating to almost 21 FTE, of which 16 FTE work within our various projects and the remainder form part of our core service. Our team of 40 volunteers includes Trustees, advisers, administrators, trainees and assessors.

Our services are provided with funding from a wide variety of sources. A Service Level Agreement with Maidstone Borough Council allows us to provide the essential Core Service of general and specialist advice through digital and face-to-face formats to clients in the Borough of Maidstone. Additional funding from Golding Homes helps to add services to their tenants in the Town. We have contracts with Citizens Advice to provide PensionWise guidance. Pension Wise provides a service throughout Kent and East Sussex. Citizens Advice also provide funding for Universal Credit (help to claim). Our work in HMP Maidstone continues to be funded by Henry Smith Charity and latterly also from HMP Maidstone. Funding for our work on the Energy Advice Programme (CMAP), formerly Energy Best Deal (EBD) came through National Citizens Advice and amongst all these, other smaller projects were funded through smaller grants from external funding sources.

MAIDSTONE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU
TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT (CONTINUED)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

Achievements and performance (continued)

We continue to work with a number of partners within Local Government and Statutory Agencies to improve the policies and practices that affect our communities. We work collectively with other Local Citizens Advice centres in Kent to inform public policy and help regulators, as well as influence private industry to make their services fair for consumers. In addition to Local and National campaigning, with the help of our volunteers we empower clients and communities to engage with society and make a difference to issues that matter. We hope to expand our use of volunteers as feasible to do so.

Volunteers are vital to the service in Citizens Advice Maidstone. Trustees and our Management Team are working in partnership with our paid and voluntary staff to provide excellent quality advice and support to over 13,000 a people up 30% from last year , with over 35,000 different issues achieving nearly £2m income gain and debts written off in the Borough of Maidstone.

Additionally, Trustees are also engaged in providing direction in the Governance of our office. Our Volunteers are an integral part of the way we deliver our advice, support and service today to the communities of Maidstone, and have been since the conception of Local Citizens Advice (LCAs) over 80 years ago in 1939. The service in Maidstone commenced on the 1st January 1940 and over the years has dealt with around 1.5 Million problems.

Volunteers have always been integral to the Citizens Advice service and are increasingly involved in delivering services within all areas of advice work. Volunteers bring with them a wealth of experience and skills and it is important for us to recognise the resource we have within the service. Volunteers are vital to the way we deliver our service, allowing us to reach many more people than if we were purely delivering our work through paid staff. Volunteers undertake a range of tasks from assessing and providing advice, supporting the running of our local office, campaigning in the community and acting as Trustees.

Our volunteers come from a wide range of backgrounds, including young people, professionals who want to broaden their horizons, retired people who want to give something back and mothers whose children have started school – so we offer a range of support services to meet the needs of all our volunteers too. Our commitment to value diversity, promote equity and inclusion means we can encourage individuals who might not otherwise wish/be able to volunteer.

Understanding our trainee volunteers' needs and expectations is a very important aspect of the training programme. Providing a well-structured training plan helps the trainee to gain better employment prospects as well as offering an opportunity for personal development, increased confidence, self-esteem, and wellbeing.

Providing an active contribution to the day-to-day running of a LCA can develop volunteers' practical skills, such as problem solving, communication and teamwork, as well as boost their confidence and belief in their abilities. This improves employability, presents career development opportunities, and can help those currently unemployed, move into work.

Volunteering provides individuals with an opportunity they might not otherwise have to develop their personal skills and abilities. For those out of work, volunteering keeps them active and motivated, potentially countering the negative impacts of unemployment on mental wellbeing – research shows that one in five jobseeker's allowance claimants experience a mental health disorder.

Volunteering enables people to realise their own potential, supporting priorities around increased social mobility – 29 per cent of volunteers that left the Citizens Advice service did so for paid employment, education or training (National Statistics). It also enables individuals to make an economic contribution to society, one which may be factored into future national Gross Domestic Product and productivity calculations.

Volunteering with Citizens Advice can also develop an individual's softer skills, resilience and other personal attributes. This can have a positive impact on how people feel about themselves, how they respond to others and their capacity to manage life's challenges.

For retired individuals, volunteering may offer different opportunities, provide structure and a sense of purpose as well as help them feel involved in society, all highlighted as vital to personal wellbeing. Ensuring that retired people are mentally and physically active also has wider reaching benefits to society, including reducing the NHS provision required to cope with an ageing population. Volunteering with us does not just have an impact on individuals, it benefits communities too. Our volunteers are local people, and through volunteering, they increase their knowledge about community issues and build relationships with their locality. This creates stronger communities, with engaged and active members, and more social action.

MAIDSTONE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU
TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT (CONTINUED)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

Achievements and performance (continued)

The Citizens Advice service also plays an integral role in supporting and strengthening its local community. We provide a service that meets local needs and reaches out to a broad and diverse client base. We support and strengthen other community-focused organisations, partnering with them to share our insight on how best to support local people. We also use our extensive knowledge to act as an advocate for the local area, mobilising and connecting people with their community. We are a local service, working with local people, for the benefit of the local community.

The value we get from working with volunteers is greater than just our ability to provide a quality advice service. In addition, our investment in developing volunteers, and enabling them to volunteer in their local area, has tangible benefits for the individual, community, and society at large. This is an additional benefit to the community, created through the way we deliver our service.

As we approached the end of the 2022/23 financial year, we have established a new way of working after being faced with perhaps our biggest challenge yet (Covid-19), how to continue to deliver our much-needed service, a lifeline for so many, in the wake of the epidemic, into a cost of living crisis.

We adopted the "best of what we had learned and the best of what did" to work in very different ways and provide the vast majority of our services remotely, via telephone as well as digital means, and reserving Face 2 Face for the vulnerable, and complex cases. Fortunately, our staff and volunteers adapted to the new regime extremely well and it is a credit to their dedication and commitment that in this most demanding of times we have helped 30% more clients with much lower level of resource.

Data

We give advice to people who need help, but we also collect statistical data on all these issues. For example, we can show attendant issues affecting people who come to us with problems around council tax. As a result, we are better able to ascertain the most efficient ways to help people understand their problems more completely. For councils and councillors, this data is powerful. It can help address failure demand, facilitate the consideration of new service options and provide additional insight to the scrutiny process.

Councils are increasingly working together to deliver services in new ways and save costs, whether in shared service arrangements or in combined authorities with devolution deals. This can also unlock funding and address long-standing problems across the county. We want to be able to work with our local government—at parish, district, county level—to inform debate with our data and client stories. More than this, we can provide innovative services that mesh closely with those offered by public authorities. Citizens Advice is working nationally to make this as easy as possible, with new data products for combining output and impact data across variable geography as well as direct support to areas of innovation across our network.

Social Exclusion

People can suffer social exclusion when they face a series of problems such as poor skills, low incomes, bad housing and family breakdown.

As a result of their experiences and development at Citizens Advice Maidstone, our volunteers are better equipped and more confident in their abilities, and hence are more likely to move into employment. This has a true value to society, by moving people closer to the labour market, which may reduce their need to claim benefits related to unemployment. It may also reduce other costs to the state associated with sustained unemployment, especially for young people not in employment, education or training. Equally, community volunteering enables unemployed individuals to make a form of economic contribution to society, the value of which may be factored into future national GDP and productivity calculations.

Citizens Advice has a major impact on people's lives, particularly the most vulnerable in society. Our service is best known for solving problems through advice, but we also make a difference by solving the underlying causes of these problems through our research and campaigns volunteers. Our work has also contributed to vital policy changes that will help more people make ends meet.

MAIDSTONE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU
TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT (CONTINUED)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

Achievements and performance (continued)

Pension Wise

Citizens Advice Maidstone is one of the LCAs who have been delivering the government's Pension Wise service for the last seven years. Launched in April 2015, Pension Wise was a new guidance service set up to help people understand their options under the pension freedoms. Citizens Advice Maidstone delivers Pension Wise appointments throughout Kent, Medway and East Sussex. During 2022/23 we have delivered Pension Wise appointments by telephone and face to face, to people aged 50 and over with a defined contribution pension.

Key statistics (PW)

During 2022/23, demand has remained very high. Since the service started, people have continued to value the high-quality guidance and support they receive. Satisfaction scores have remained over 95%.

Money Advice

National research shows that just over a quarter of adults say that they do not consider themselves to be good at managing money and one third say that they would prefer not to think about planning their finances at all. Many people have poor financial skills, and this often leads them to make ill-informed decisions on their money matters. Citizens Advice has found that the negative effects of a lack of financial awareness can be compounded by limited or poor-quality consumer information and inadequate advice. People can miss out on the growing range of financial products available and fail to make the best use of Government initiatives. However, building the necessary confidence in financial services is an uphill task. Citizens Advice Maidstone helps people resolve their money, legal and other problems by providing information and advice as well as by influencing policymakers. Our service is the largest provider of free money advice in the Borough of Maidstone. We provide specialist level money advice services, helping people resolve a range of money and debt issues. By providing advice and information about money in the heart of our community, we help people resolve a range of debt and personal finance-related problems.

The Citizens Advice service is a network of independent, local charities that helps people resolve their money, legal and other problems. The service is the largest provider of free advice in the UK. Citizens Advice also uses evidence of clients' money problems to campaign for change and is contributing to the Government's plan to provide all UK adults with access to generic financial advice. Citizens Advice wants people to have the skills, knowledge and confidence to make informed decisions across a range of personal money matters. We work with a range of partner agencies to improve the financial skills of people of all ages, particularly those at risk of social or financial exclusion.

Financial skills training can change behaviour - participants become better at budgeting, choosing financial products, saving and making their money go further and these changes persist over time. Developing financial skills not only boosts financial well-being but also confidence and general peace of mind. Tenants who do get into financial difficulty know where to turn to for help, seek out support sooner and as a result, are better equipped to cope.

Prison Work

Citizens Advice Maidstone's strategy aims to increase the capacity of our paid and voluntary staff to deal with our clients' debt and other money problems in order to prevent the financial problems faced by many people becoming major crises. This supports our wider focus of encouraging our team to work with more vulnerable groups such as offenders to meet their finance, benefit and debt needs. In relation to offenders, Citizens Advice is clear that personal debt and other financial problems can be a cause of an individual offending in the first place, and such problems can increase the likelihood of reoffending on release. Being able to manage debt and other financial problems during a prison sentence or upon release into the community could help to reduce re-offending.

Many offenders with families may fall into rent or mortgage arrears caused by a reduction of income during their prison sentence. Stable accommodation can help reduce re-offending by providing a secure environment in which to live, enabling them to open a bank account, receive benefits and find regular employment. Timely access to advice can, among other things, secure accommodation for an offender or their family on release; ensure access to benefits for the payment of rent and advocate on behalf the family if they are refused support from the local authority. Such services can greatly reduce the risk of re-offending. Debt can also present problems for offenders and their families both during their sentence and after release.

MAIDSTONE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU
TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT (CONTINUED)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

Achievements and performance (continued)

As the Social Exclusion Unit report identified; finance, benefit and debt issues are inextricably tied to many other key factors which exacerbate reoffending. Ensuring ex-offenders have enough lawfully obtained money to live on is key to their rehabilitation and to reducing temptation into re-offending, but many face significant problems achieving financial security. Low incomes, debt, disrupted access to benefits advice and insufficient income on release from prison all add to the problem. The National Offender Management Services (NOMS') aim is to ensure that offenders in custody and the prison community have access to financial and advice services that will address money-related issues, maximise income and reduce debt to help prevent re-offending. A key element of this work is to develop close partnership working between prison and probation services, and voluntary and community sector providers who are willing to work with offenders.

Risk Management

Trustees regularly meet to consider the financial and other risks relating to the activities of the charity and take appropriate action as and when required. A comprehensive risk register is maintained and reviewed at every Trustee meeting. During the year we have had to limit face to face interviews to where there is no other way to help clients due to restrictions caused by resource shortages, although the Citizens Advice Maidstone managed to maintain a service by offering advice digitally by telephone and online. Some consideration has been given to the issues which may result from events over the past 3 years, and these include debt, mental health problems, and domestic violence.

Planning for the future

The business strategy adopted by the Trustee Board is to safeguard the Core service with free generalist advice covering a full range of issues. This service has hitherto been funded by a Grant from Maidstone Borough Council. We are most grateful for the Council's continuing support. Citizens Advice Maidstone seeks additional funding from other sources in order to shore up the core service and provide other services if it is financially prudent to do so. Citizens Advice Maidstone's management has been successful in securing such funding from a variety of sources, including national Citizens Advice MAPS Henry Smith Colyer-Fergusson and grants from local charities. The management continues to develop new and innovative partnerships with a wide stakeholder group in response to steadily dwindling financial resources.

Financial review

The net surplus for the year amounted to £26,987 (2022: £68,956). There was a surplus of £29,352 in relation to unrestricted activities before transfers. As at 31 March 2023 general unrestricted reserves amount to £261,690 (2022: £268,230) and total restricted reserves amounted to £58,441 (2022: £54,914).

Reserves Policy

The Board of Trustees regularly reviews the finances and reserves of Citizens Advice Maidstone. Each review encompasses the nature of the income and expenditure streams and the need to match variable income with fixed commitments and the nature of reserves. Citizens Advice Maidstone sets aside restricted funds as set out in the Statement of Financial Activities. All restricted funds are applied to the particular restricted activity (project). Restricted funds unspent in a particular financial year are allocated as reserves in statutory accounts at the end of the financial year and will be allocated to that restricted activity (project) during the course of the following financial year or when the activity ends. Restricted funds at 31 March 2023 were £58,441 (2022:£ 54,914).

Trustees have discussed levels of unrestricted reserves and are agreed that in all circumstances Citizens Advice Maidstone's core services must be secure. A minimum sum of six months unrestricted (core) expenditure with a contingency of 10% will ensure that this aspiration is preserved as an allocation for core management activities to cover certain members of our project staff who support all aspects of the Bureau's activities. Therefore, the total reserves the trustees aim to hold is £270,000 (2022: £230,000).

As at 31 March 2023 unrestricted general reserves are £257,208 (2022: £233,748) and designated reserves are £34,482 (2022: £34,482).

MAIDSTONE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU
TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT (CONTINUED)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

Going concern

The Trustees are satisfied that the charity has sufficient resources to meet its liabilities as they fall due for a period of at least twelve months from the date of signing of these financial statements. Accordingly, the Trustees confirm that they consider that the 'going concern' basis remains appropriate.

Structure, governance and management

Citizens Advice Maidstone is a member of Citizens Advice, which provides a framework for standards of advice management as well as monitoring progress against these standards. The Board of Trustees produces an annual report detailing Citizens Advice Maidstone's activities during the year. The report is available on request from the office.

(a) Method of appointment or election of Trustees

In accordance with the Articles of Association (revised 23 September 2013 to bring our Memorandum and Articles of Association in line with the national policy of Citizens Advice and the guidance of the Charity Commission) the Trustee Board consists of a minimum of 3 and a maximum of 15 members. There may be a maximum of 10 elected members, each of whom is elected for a term of three years by the members of the company at its Annual General Meeting. At expiry of their term of office elected Trustees are eligible for re-election. In addition, the Trustee Board may co-opt members, whose number may not exceed one third of the total number of Trustees. No member of the staff of the office whether paid or voluntary can be a member of the Board. However, the Chief Executive, one representative of the paid staff and one representative of the voluntary staff, have the right to attend and speak (but not vote) at meetings of the Board.

(b) Operational structure and decision making

The Trustee Board sets the overall policy and direction of Citizens Advice Maidstone's business within the parameters set by the Citizens Advice Membership Agreement and any Service Level Agreements or contracts currently in being. Operational decisions are made by the Chief Executive subject to any specific Trustee Board directions and referring to the Trustee Board as necessary. The Trustee Board meets once every two months. Financial oversight is delegated to the Finance Committee which meets 14 days before the Trustee Board to appraise financial reports and recommend action to the Trustee Board.

Trustees' responsibilities in relation to the financial statements

The Trustees as directors are responsible for preparing the Trustees' Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and regulation.

Company law requires the Trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year. Under that law the Trustees have elected to prepare the financial statements in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice (United Kingdom Accounting Standards and applicable law). Under company law the Trustees must not approve the financial statements unless they are satisfied that they give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity and of the results of the charity for that period. In preparing these financial statements, the Trustees are required to:-

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in business.

The Trustees are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that are sufficient to show and explain the charity's transactions and disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with Companies Act 2006 and the Charities Act 2011.

They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

MAIDSTONE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU
TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT (CONTINUED)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

Disclosure of information to auditors

In accordance with company law, as the charity's trustee, we confirm that:

- so far as we are aware, there is no relevant audit information of which the charity's auditors are unaware; and
- as the trustees of the charity, we have taken all the steps that we ought to have taken in order to make ourselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the charity's auditors are aware of that information.

ON BEHALF OF THE
BOARD OF TRUSTEES


MR S BONNY MALHOTRA

Registered office
2 Bower Terrace
Tonbridge Road
Maidstone
Kent ME16 8RY

21 September 2023

MAIDSTONE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU
INDEPENDENT AUDITORS' REPORT TO THE MEMBERS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of Maidstone Citizens Advice Bureau (the 'charitable company') for the year ended 31 March 2023 which comprise the Statement of Financial Activities, the Balance Sheet, the Cash Flow Statement and the related notes. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards, including FRS 102 "The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland" (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

In our opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the charitable company's affairs as at 31 March 2023 and of its incoming resources and application of resources, including its income and expenditure, for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice; and have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006.

Basis for opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs (UK)) and applicable law. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of our report. We are independent of the charitable company in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in the UK, including the FRC's Ethical Standard, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Conclusions relating to going concern

In auditing the financial statements, we have concluded that the Trustees' use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

Based on the work we have performed, we have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the charitable company's ability to continue as a going concern for a period of at least twelve months from when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

Our responsibilities and the responsibilities of the Trustees with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this report.

Other information

The other information comprises the information included in the Trustees Annual Report, other than the financial statements and our auditor's report thereon. The Trustees are responsible for the other information contained within the annual report. Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in our report, we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon. Our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the course of the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether this gives rise to a material misstatement in the financial statements themselves. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact.

We have nothing to report in this regard.

Opinions on other matters prescribed by the Companies Act 2006

In our opinion, based on the work undertaken in the course of the audit:

- the information given in the Trustees' Report and the incorporated Strategic Report prepared for the purpose of company law for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements; and
- the Trustees' Report and the incorporated Strategic Report have been prepared in accordance with applicable legal requirements.

MAIDSTONE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU

INDEPENDENT AUDITORS' REPORT TO THE MEMBERS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

Matters on which we are required to report by exception

In the light of the knowledge and understanding of the charitable company and its environment obtained in the course of the audit, we have not identified material misstatements in the Trustees' Report and the incorporated Strategic Report.

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters where the Companies Act 2006 requires us to report to you if, in our opinion:

- adequate accounting records have not been kept, or returns adequate for our audit have not been received from branches not visited by us; or
- the financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or
- certain disclosures of Trustees' remuneration specified by law are not made; or
- we have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit.

Responsibilities of Trustees

As explained more fully in the Statement of Trustees' responsibilities set out on page 15, the Trustees (who are also the directors of the charitable company for the purposes of company law) are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the Trustees determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the Trustees are responsible for assessing the charitable company's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the Trustees either intend to liquidate the charitable company or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

Extent to which the audit was considered capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud

Irregularities, including fraud, are instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations. We design procedures in line with our responsibilities, outlined above and on the Financial Reporting Council's website, to detect material misstatements in respect of irregularities, including fraud.

We obtain and update our understanding of the entity, its activities, its control environment, and likely future developments, including in relation to the legal and regulatory framework applicable and how the entity is complying with that framework. Based on this understanding, we identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion. This includes consideration of the risk of acts by the entity that were contrary to applicable laws and regulations, including fraud.

In response to the risk of irregularities and non-compliance with laws and regulations, including fraud, we designed procedures which included:

- Enquiry of management and those charged with governance around actual and potential litigation and claims as well as actual, suspected and alleged fraud;
- Reviewing minutes of meetings of those charged with governance;
- Assessing the extent of compliance with the laws and regulations considered to have a direct material effect on the financial statements or the operations of the company through enquiry and inspection;
- Reviewing financial statement disclosures and testing to supporting documentation to assess compliance with applicable laws and regulations;
- Performing audit work over the risk of management bias and override of controls, including testing of journal entries and other adjustments for appropriateness, evaluating the business rationale of significant transactions outside the normal course of business and reviewing accounting estimates for indicators of potential bias.

MAIDSTONE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU

INDEPENDENT AUDITORS' REPORT TO THE MEMBERS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

Because of the inherent limitations of an audit, there is a risk that we will not detect all irregularities, including those leading to a material misstatement in the financial statements or non-compliance with regulation. This risk increases the more that compliance with a law or regulation is removed from the events and transactions reflected in the financial statements, as we will be less likely to become aware of instances of non-compliance. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.

As part of an audit in accordance with ISAs (UK), we exercise professional judgment and maintain professional scepticism throughout the audit. We also:

- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the charitable company's internal control.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by the Trustees.
- Conclude on the appropriateness of the Trustees' use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the charitable company's ability to continue as a going concern. If we conclude that a material uncertainty exists, we are required to draw attention in our auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial statements or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify our opinion. Our conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of our auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause the charitable company to cease to continue as a going concern.
- Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial statements, including the disclosures, and whether the financial statements represent the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation (i.e. gives a true and fair view).

We communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that we identify during our audit.

Use of our report

This report is made solely to the charitable company's members, as a body, in accordance with Chapter 3 of Part 16 of the Companies Act 2006. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the charitable company's members those matters we are required to state to them in an auditor's report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the charitable company and the charitable company's members as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

Azets Audit Services Limited

**Michelle Wilkes FCA (Senior Statutory Auditor)
for and on behalf of Azets Audit Services**

27 September 2023

Statutory Auditor

Globe House, Eclipse Park
Sittingbourne Road
Maidstone
Kent
ME14 3EN

MAIDSTONE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES (INCLUDING INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

	Notes	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total 2023 £	Total 2022 £
INCOME:					
Donations and legacies	3	505	-	505	955
Charitable activities	4	150,660	653,490	804,150	804,629
Investments		968	-	968	47
TOTAL INCOME		<u>152,133</u>	<u>653,490</u>	<u>805,623</u>	<u>805,631</u>
EXPENDITURE:					
Charitable activities	5	124,660	655,855	780,515	758,097
TOTAL EXPENDITURE		<u>124,660</u>	<u>655,855</u>	<u>780,515</u>	<u>758,097</u>
Net surplus/(deficit) before gains on pension scheme		<u>27,473</u>	<u>(2,365)</u>	<u>25,108</u>	<u>47,534</u>
Gains on pension scheme	18	<u>1,879</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>1,879</u>	<u>21,422</u>
Net surplus/(deficit) before transfers		<u>29,352</u>	<u>(2,365)</u>	<u>26,987</u>	<u>68,956</u>
Transfers between funds	14	<u>(5,892)</u>	<u>5,892</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
NET MOVEMENT ON FUNDS		<u>23,460</u>	<u>3,527</u>	<u>26,987</u>	<u>68,956</u>
Total funds at 1 April 2022		268,230	54,914	323,144	254,188
Total funds at 31 March 2023		<u>291,690</u>	<u>58,441</u>	<u>350,131</u>	<u>323,144</u>

All income and expenditure derive from continuing activities.

The Statement of Financial Activities includes all gains and losses recognised during the year.

The notes on pages 16 to 24 form part of these financial statements.

MAIDSTONE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES (INCLUDING INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

Comparative year information
Year ended 31 March 2022

	Notes	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total 2022 £	Total 2021 £
INCOME:					
Donations and legacies	3	955	-	955	7,091
Charitable activities	4	178,371	626,258	804,629	852,838
Investments		47	-	47	183
TOTAL INCOME		<u>179,373</u>	<u>626,258</u>	<u>805,631</u>	<u>860,112</u>
EXPENDITURE:					
Charitable activities	5	126,204	631,893	758,097	793,704
TOTAL EXPENDITURE		<u>126,204</u>	<u>631,893</u>	<u>758,097</u>	<u>793,704</u>
Net income before gains on pension scheme		<u>53,169</u>	<u>(5,635)</u>	<u>47,534</u>	<u>66,408</u>
Gains on pension scheme	18	<u>21,422</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>21,422</u>	<u>-</u>
NET MOVEMENT ON FUNDS		<u>74,591</u>	<u>(5,635)</u>	<u>68,956</u>	<u>66,408</u>
Total funds at 1 April 2021		193,639	60,549	254,188	187,780
Total funds at 31 March 2022		<u>268,230</u>	<u>54,914</u>	<u>323,144</u>	<u>254,188</u>

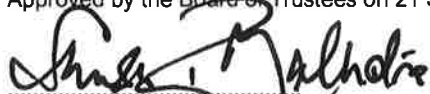
MAIDSTONE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU

BALANCE SHEET

AS AT 31 MARCH 2023

	Notes	£	2023 £	£	2022 £
TANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS	10		-		-
CURRENT ASSETS					
Accrued income and prepayments		14,338		4,740	
Cash at bank and in hand		<u>368,901</u>		<u>333,192</u>	
		<u>383,239</u>		<u>337,932</u>	
CREDITORS: AMOUNTS FALLING DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR	11	<u>29,804</u>		<u>9,605</u>	
NET CURRENT ASSETS			353,435		328,327
Provision for liabilities and charges	18		<u>(3,304)</u>		<u>(5,183)</u>
NET ASSETS			<u>350,131</u>		<u>323,144</u>
General unrestricted funds	12		257,208		233,748
Designated funds	13		34,482		34,482
Restricted funds	14		<u>58,441</u>		<u>54,914</u>
	15		<u>350,131</u>		<u>323,144</u>

Approved by the Board of Trustees on 21 September 2023 and are signed on its behalf by:



MR S BONNY MALHOTRA
CHAIR OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES



MR D PARRISH
MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Company No. 02234220

The notes on pages 16 to 24 form part of these financial statements.

MAIDSTONE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU

STATEMENT OF CASH FLOW

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

	Notes	2023 £	2022 £
Cash flows from operating activities	17	<u>34,741</u>	<u>(2,763)</u>
Net cash inflow/(outflow) from operating activities		34,741	(2,763)
Investing activities			
Interest received	<u>968</u>	<u>47</u>	
Net cash generated from investing activities		968	47
Net increase/(decrease) in cash and cash equivalents		35,709	(2,716)
Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of year		<u>333,192</u>	<u>335,908</u>
Cash and cash equivalents at end of year		<u><u>368,901</u></u>	<u><u>333,192</u></u>

The notes on pages 16 to 25 form part of these financial statements.

MAIDSTONE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

1. Accounting policies

a) Basis of accounting

The Maidstone Citizens Advice Bureau (the 'charity') is a charitable company limited by guarantee, registered with the Charity Commission in England & Wales. The address of the registered office is given in the charity information on page 1 of these financial statements. The nature of the charity's operations and principal activities are detailed in page 2 of these financial statements. The charity constitutes a public benefit entity as defined by FRS 102.

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK (FRS102) issued in October 2019, the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the United Kingdom (FRS102), the Charities Act 2011 and UK Generally Accepted Practice.

The financial statements are prepared in sterling which is the functional currency of the charity and rounded to the nearest £1.

The significant accounting policies applied in the preparation of these financial statements are set out below. These policies have been consistently applied to all years presented unless otherwise stated.

The charity has availed itself of Paragraph 4(1) of Schedule 1 of the Small Companies and Groups (Accounts and Directors' Reports) Regulations 2008 and adapted the format of the financial statements to reflect the special nature of the charity's activities.

b) Going Concern

These financial statements are prepared on the going concern basis as the Trustees believe that no material uncertainties exist.

The Trustees have considered the level of reserves and expected level of income and expenditure and are satisfied that the charity has sufficient resources to meet its liabilities as they fall due for a period of at least twelve months from the date of signing of these financial statements. Accordingly, the financial statements are prepared on a going concern basis and do not include any adjustments which would be necessary if this basis of preparation was inappropriate.

c) Fund accounting

Unrestricted funds are those available for use at the discretion of the Trustees in the furtherance of the general objectives of the charity which have not been designated for other purposes. Designated funds are unrestricted funds that have been set aside by the Trustees for particular purposes. Restricted funds are funds which are to be used in accordance with specific restrictions imposed by donors which have been raised by the charity for particular purposes.

d) Income recognition

Grants and service agreement income are recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities when the charity has entitlement to the funds, where the service it relates to has commenced, it is probable that the income will be received and the amount can be measured reliably and is not deferred. Other Income is recognised in the accounts on an accruals basis with the exception of donations which are recognised on a cash received basis.

e) Expenditure

Expenditure is recorded on an accruals basis including irrecoverable VAT and allocated on the following basis:-

- Costs directly allocated - actual basis.
- Support costs - depending on type of cost and the Trustees' best estimate of usage.
- Other costs – actual basis.

f) Tangible fixed assets and depreciation

Individual fixed assets costing £1,000 or more are stated at cost less depreciation. Depreciation is provided on office and computer equipment to write off the cost, less estimated residual value of assets over their expected useful economic life of two or three years. At each reporting period end date, the charity reviews the carrying amounts of its tangible assets to determine whether there is any indication that those assets have suffered an impairment loss. If any such indication exists, the recoverable amount of the asset is estimated in order to determine the extent of the impairment loss (if any).

MAIDSTONE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

1. Accounting policies (continued)

g) Operating leases

Rentals payable under operating leases are charged on a straight line basis over the lease term.

h) Pensions

Contributions payable to the charity's multi-employer pension plan are charged to the income and expenditure account on a payments basis.

The charity recognises a liability for the obligation under the pension plan's recovery plan. The amount recognised is the net present value of the deficit reduction contributions payable under the agreement. The present value is calculated using the discount rate disclosed in note 18.

i) Debtors and creditors receivable/payable within one year

Debtors and creditors with no stated interest rate and receivable or payable within one year are recorded at transaction price. Any losses arising from impairment are recognised in the statement of financial activities under expenditure arising on charitable activities.

j) Employee benefits

When employees have rendered service to the charity, short-term employee benefits to which the employees are entitled are recognised at the undiscounted amount expected to be paid in exchange for that service.

k) Taxation

The charity is an exempt charity within the meaning of Schedule 3 of the Charities Act 2011 and is considered to pass the tests set out in Paragraph 1 Schedule 6 Finance Act 2010 and therefore it meets the definition of a charitable company for UK corporation tax purposes.

2. Judgements and key sources of estimation uncertainty

In the application of the charity's accounting policies, the Trustees are required to make judgements, estimates and assumptions about the carrying amount of assets and liabilities that are not readily apparent from other sources. The estimates and associated assumptions are based on historical experience and other factors that are considered to be relevant. There are no judgements or key sources of estimation uncertainty.

3. Income from donations and legacies

	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total 2023 £	Total 2022 £
Donations	505	-	505	955
	<u>505</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>505</u>	<u>955</u>

4. Income from charitable activities

	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total 2023 £	Total 2022 £
Maidstone Borough Council grants	133,100	-	133,100	151,100
Money Advice Service	-	-	-	52,168
Golding Homes	7,500	-	7,500	5,000
Pension Wise	-	418,018	418,018	355,027
Henry Smith (MDS Prison)	-	56,000	56,000	55,592
Energy advice	-	17,545	17,545	22,890
Carbon Monoxide Advice Project	-	17,190	17,190	-
Universal Credit – Help to Claim	-	142,237	142,237	126,581
South East Water Forum	-	2,500	2,500	14,000
Other projects	10,060	-	10,060	22,271
	<u>150,660</u>	<u>653,490</u>	<u>804,150</u>	<u>804,629</u>

MAIDSTONE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

5. Analysis of expenditure

	Direct costs £	Support costs £	Total 2023 £	Total 2022 £
Citizens advice services	103,162	21,498	124,660	126,204
Prison support	39,404	27,969	67,373	61,174
Energy advice	17,545	-	17,545	22,890
Carbon monoxide advice	17,190	-	17,190	-
Water advice	9,000	5,000	14,000	-
Pension advice	284,721	106,897	391,618	368,131
Financial advice	-	-	-	52,168
Benefit advice	101,496	46,633	148,129	127,530
	<u>572,518</u>	<u>207,997</u>	<u>780,515</u>	<u>758,097</u>

6. Support costs

	2023 £	2022 £
Staff costs	89,092	83,238
Premises costs	58,456	31,846
General office costs	51,865	44,170
Bank charges	181	133
Governance costs (note 7)	8,403	7,423
	<u>207,997</u>	<u>166,810</u>

7. Governance costs

	2023 £	2022 £
Auditors' remuneration	8,403	7,423
	<u>8,403</u>	<u>7,423</u>

8. Net expenditure

This is stated after charging:

	2023 £	2022 £
Rent payable on property under operating leases	26,660	23,000
Auditors' remuneration	8,403	7,423

MAIDSTONE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU
NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS (CONTINUED)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

9. Staff costs

	2023	2022
	£	£
Wages and salaries	595,978	574,676
Social security costs	36,171	42,127
Employer pension costs	29,462	36,734
	<u>661,611</u>	<u>653,537</u>

The key management personnel of the charity comprise the Trustees and the bureau managers.

The Trustees received no remuneration for the year ended 31 March 2023 (2022: £Nil). During the year, none (2022: two) of the Trustees had expenses reimbursed by the charity. The total expenses reimbursed to the Trustees amounted to nil (2022: £70). In the prior year these costs related to sundry stationery and consumable supplies for staff members as well as travel and parking costs.

The total remuneration including pension contributions and employers' national insurance received by key management personnel for their service to the charity was £118,817 (2022: £123,915).

The average number of salaried employees during the year was 30 (2022: 32).

There were no employees (2022: none) who received total employee benefits (excluding employer pension costs) of more than £60,000.

10. Tangible fixed assets

	Office and computer equipment
	£
Cost	
At 1 April 2022 and at 31 March 2023	96,327
Depreciation	
At 1 April 2022 and at 31 March 2023	96,327
At 31 March 2023	-
Net book value	
At 1 April 2022 and at 31 March 2023	-

11. Creditors : amounts falling due within one year

	2023	2022
	£	£
Accruals	8,370	6,544
Other creditors	6,434	3,061
Deferred income	15,000	-
	<u>29,804</u>	<u>9,605</u>

MAIDSTONE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

12. General unrestricted funds

	2023 £	2022 £
Balance at 1 April 2022	233,748	159,157
Net Income	29,352	74,591
Transfer to restricted funds	(5,892)	-
Balance at 31 March 2023	<u>257,208</u>	<u>233,748</u>

13. Designated funds

	Balance at 1 April 2022 £	New designations £	Designations released £	Balance at 31 March 2023 £
Premises and development fund	<u>34,482</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>34,482</u>

Comparative year information:

	Balance at 1 April 2021 £	New designations £	Designations released £	Balance at 31 March 2022 £
Premises and development fund	<u>34,482</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>34,482</u>

The Premises and Development Fund has been designated to provide for future resources in these two areas.

14. Restricted funds

	Balance at 1 April 2022 £	Income £	Expenditure £	Transfers £	Balance at 31 March 2023 £
Henry Smith (MDS Prison)	12,205	56,000	(67,373)	-	832
Energy advice	-	17,545	(17,545)	-	-
Carbon Monoxide Advice Project	-	17,190	(17,190)	-	-
Pension Wise	28,709	418,018	(391,618)	-	55,109
Money Advice Service	-	-	-	-	-
South East Water Forum	14,000	2,500	(14,000)	-	2,500
Universal Credit – Help to Claim	-	142,237	(148,129)	5,892	-
	<u>54,914</u>	<u>653,490</u>	<u>(655,855)</u>	<u>5,892</u>	<u>58,441</u>

Comparative year information:

	Balance at 1 April 2021 £	Income £	Expenditure £	Transfers £	Balance at 31 March 2022 £
Henry Smith (MDS Prison)	17,787	55,592	(61,174)	-	12,205
Energy Best Deal	-	22,890	(22,890)	-	-
Pension Wise	41,813	355,027	(368,131)	-	28,709
Money Advice Service	-	52,168	(52,168)	-	-
South East Water Forum	-	14,000	-	-	14,000
Universal Credit – Help to Claim	949	126,581	(127,530)	-	-
	<u>60,549</u>	<u>626,258</u>	<u>(631,893)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>54,914</u>

MAIDSTONE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

14. Restricted funds (continued)

The objective of the Henry Smith Fund (Maidstone Prison Advice Project) is to provide advice and support to prisoners, staff and their families.

The objective of Energy Advice is to inform consumers how to reduce energy bills by efficiency savings or switching suppliers and to provide information about the help available from energy suppliers and government for consumers struggling to pay energy bills.

The objective of Pension Wise is to provide impartial pension advice and guidance.

The objective for the Money Advice Service is to provide free and impartial money advice.

The objective of the South East Water Forum is to provide free advice to manage water consumption and bills.

The objective of the Universal Credit – Help to Claim Fund is to provide advice and assistance to persons requiring financial support. The transfer to this fund from unrestricted funds covers the overspend on the project during the year to 31 March 2023.

The objective of the Carbon Monoxide Advice Project is to deliver one to one carbon monoxide awareness and energy advice.

15. Analysis of net assets between funds

	Unrestricted funds 2023 £	Restricted funds 2023 £	Total 2023 £
Current assets	302,683	80,556	383,239
Amounts falling due within one year	(7,689)	(22,115)	(29,804)
Provisions	(3,304)	-	(3,304)
	<u>291,690</u>	<u>58,441</u>	<u>350,131</u>

	Unrestricted funds 2022 £	Restricted funds 2022 £	Total 2022 £
Current assets	274,394	63,538	337,932
Amounts falling due within one year	(981)	(8,624)	(9,605)
Provisions	(5,183)	-	(5,183)
	<u>268,230</u>	<u>54,914</u>	<u>323,144</u>

16. Financial commitments

The charity had commitments under non-cancellable operating leases as follows:

	Land and buildings 2023 £	Land and buildings 2022 £
Expiry within one year	28,750	23,000
Expiry in 2 to 5 years	115,000	92,000
Expiry in over 5 years	121,932	120,750
	<u>265,682</u>	<u>235,750</u>

MAIDSTONE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU
NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS (CONTINUED)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

17. Cash generated from operations

	2023	2022
	£	£
Net income	26,987	68,956
Adjustments for:		
Investment income	(968)	(47)
Increase in debtors	(9,598)	(4,740)
Increase/(decrease) in creditors	20,199	(45,510)
Decrease in pension provision	(1,879)	(21,422)
Cashflow from operating activities	34,741	(2,763)

18. Pension commitments

TPT Retirement Solutions – The Growth Plan

The charity participates in the scheme, a multi-employer scheme which provides benefits to some 638 non-associated participating employers. The scheme is a defined benefit scheme in the UK. It is not possible for the charity to obtain sufficient information to enable it to account for the scheme as a defined benefit scheme. Therefore it accounts for the scheme as a defined contribution scheme.

The scheme is subject to the funding legislation outlined in the Pensions Act 2004 which came into force on 30 December 2005. This, together with documents issued by the Pensions Regulator and Technical Actuarial Standards issued by the Financial Reporting Council, set out the framework for funding defined benefit occupational pension schemes in the UK.

The scheme is classified as a 'last-man standing arrangement'. Therefore the charity is potentially liable for other participating employers' obligations if those employers are unable to meet their share of the scheme deficit following withdrawal from the scheme. Participating employers are legally required to meet their share of the scheme deficit on an annuity purchase basis on withdrawal from the scheme.

A full actuarial valuation for the scheme was carried out at 30 September 2020. This valuation showed assets of £800.3m, liabilities of £831.9m and a deficit of £31.6m. To eliminate this funding shortfall, the Trustee has asked the participating employers to pay additional contributions to the scheme as follows:

Deficit contributions

From 1 April 2022 to 31 January 2025: £3,312,000 per annum (payable monthly).

Unless a concession has been agreed with the Trustee the term to 31 January 2025 applies.

Note that the scheme's previous valuation was carried out with an effective date of 30 September 2017. This valuation showed assets of £794.9m, liabilities of £926.4m and a deficit of £131.5m. To eliminate this funding shortfall, the Trustee asked the participating employers to pay additional contributions to the scheme as follows:

Deficit contributions

From 1 April 2019 to 30 September 2025: £11,243,000 per annum (payable monthly and increasing by 3% each on 1st April).

The recovery plan contributions are allocated to each participating employer in line with their estimated share of the Series 1 and Series 2 scheme liabilities.

Where the scheme is in deficit and where the charity has agreed to a deficit funding arrangement the charity recognises a liability for this obligation. The amount recognised is the net present value of the deficit reduction contributions payable under the agreement that relates to the deficit. The present value is calculated using the discount rate detailed in these disclosures. The unwinding of the discount rate is recognised as a finance cost.

MAIDSTONE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU
NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS (CONTINUED)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

18. Pension commitments (continued)

Present values of provision	31 March 2023	31 March 2022	31 March 2021
Present value of provision	<u>£3,304</u>	<u>£5,183</u>	<u>£26,605</u>

Reconciliation of opening and closing provision

	2023	2022
	£	£
Provision at start of period	5,183	26,605
Unwinding of the discount factor (interest expense)	97	153
Deficit contribution paid	(1,888)	(6,733)
Remeasurements – impact of any change in assumptions	(88)	(119)
Remeasurements – amendments to contribution schedule	-	(14,723)
Provision at end of period	<u>3,304</u>	<u>5,183</u>

Income and expenditure impact

	2023	2022
	£	£
Interest expense	97	153
Remeasurements – impact of any change in assumptions	(88)	(119)
Remeasurements – amendments to contribution schedule	-	(14,723)
	<u>9</u>	<u>14,689</u>

Assumptions

	31 March 2023	31 March 2022	31 March 2021
Rate of discount (per annum)	<u>5.52%</u>	<u>2.35%</u>	<u>0.66%</u>

The discount rates shown above are the equivalent single discount rates which, when used to discount the future recovery plan contributions due, would give the same results as using a full AA corporate bond yield curve to discount the same recovery plan contributions.

Deficit contributions schedule

The following schedule details the deficit contributions agreed between the charity and the scheme at each year end period:

	31 March 2023	31 March 2022	31 March 2021
Year 1	1,888	1,888	6,733
Year 2	1,574	1,888	6,935
Year 3	-	1,574	7,143
Year 4	-	-	6,131
Year 5	-	-	-

MAIDSTONE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU
NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS (CONTINUED)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

19. Analysis of changes in net debt

	Balance at 1 April 2022 £	Cashflows £	Other non- cash changes £	Balance at 31 March 2023 £
Cash	<u>333,192</u>	<u>35,709</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>368,901</u>

20. Related party transactions

No transactions with related parties were undertaken during the year (2022: none), other than those stipulated in Note 9.

MAIDSTONE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU
DETAILED INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

		Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total 2023 £	Total 2022 £
Income					
Maidstone Borough Council		133,100	-	133,100	151,100
Money Advice Service		-	-	-	52,168
Pension Wise		-	418,018	418,018	355,027
Donations		505	-	505	955
Deposit account interest		968	-	968	47
Golding Homes		7,500	-	7,500	5,000
Energy Best deal		-	17,545	17,545	22,890
Carbon Monoxide Advice Project		-	17,190	17,190	-
Henry Smith (MDS Prison)		-	56,000	56,000	55,592
Universal Credit – Help to Claim		-	142,237	142,237	126,581
South East Water Forum		-	2,500	2,500	14,000
Other projects		10,060	-	10,060	22,271
		<u>152,133</u>	<u>653,490</u>	<u>805,623</u>	<u>805,631</u>
Expenditure					
	Schedule				
Establishment expenses	1	7,031	51,424	58,455	31,846
Administration expenses	2	116,225	595,671	711,896	717,883
Sundry expenses	3	1,404	8,760	10,164	8,368
		<u>124,660</u>	<u>655,855</u>	<u>780,515</u>	<u>758,097</u>
Net income before gains on pension scheme		<u>27,473</u>	<u>(2,365)</u>	<u>25,108</u>	<u>47,534</u>
Gains on pension scheme		1,879	-	1,879	21,422
Surplus for the year		<u>29,352</u>	<u>(2,365)</u>	<u>26,987</u>	<u>68,956</u>

MAIDSTONE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU

SCHEDULES TO THE DETAILED INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total 2023 £	Total 2022 £
1. Establishment expenses				
Rent	2,639	24,021	26,660	23,000
Insurance - premises	149	845	994	836
Water	53	368	421	131
Gas	246	1,883	2,129	1,887
Electricity	382	2,613	2,995	1,532
Repairs and renewals - premises	3,356	20,420	23,776	2,958
Cleaning and cleaning materials	206	1,274	1,480	1,502
	<u>7,031</u>	<u>51,424</u>	<u>58,455</u>	<u>31,846</u>
2. Administration expenses				
Salaries and social security costs	90,665	500,440	591,105	582,365
Pension scheme contributions	19,499	51,006	70,505	71,171
Travel costs	143	1,765	1,908	2,407
Training	108	633	741	126
Health and safety	58	508	566	796
Books, information and IT systems	1,537	9,375	10,912	19,050
Telephone	2,454	14,292	16,746	13,340
Printing and stationery	253	1,627	1,880	600
Postage	128	731	859	684
Advertising and publicity	47	330	377	387
Computer and office expenses	375	7,360	7,735	4,603
Other office costs	322	2,029	2,351	1,965
Insurance	431	2,441	2,872	84
Hire of rooms	55	2,087	2,142	212
Universal Credit – Citizens Advice	150	1,047	1,197	20,093
	<u>116,225</u>	<u>595,671</u>	<u>711,896</u>	<u>717,883</u>
3. Sundry expenses				
Bank charges	23	158	181	133
Auditors' remuneration	1,260	7,143	8,403	7,423
Sundry expenses	-	-	-	-
AGM and other meetings	102	708	810	507
Professional fees	19	751	770	305
	<u>1,404</u>	<u>8,760</u>	<u>10,164</u>	<u>8,368</u>

MAIDSTONE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU
(A company limited by guarantee)

REPORTS AND ACCOUNTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

Registered Charity No. 299055

Company No. 02234220

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MAIDSTONE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU

REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

The Maidstone Citizens Advice Bureau is a company limited by guarantee and a registered charity governed by its Memorandum and Articles of Association (Charity number 299055, Company number 02234220).

Citizens Advice Maidstone is the operating name of Maidstone Citizens Advice Bureau.

The Board of Trustees

The Trustees of the charitable company are its directors for the purposes of company law and throughout this report are collectively referred to as the 'Trustees'.

The members of the Board of Trustees who served during the year were as follows:

Elected Trustees

Mr S Bonny Malhotra (Chair)
Mrs S Hawkins (Co Vice-Chair; resigned 6 March 2023)
Mr R Bird (Vice-Chair)
Mr D Parrish (Hon Treasurer)
Mr J Cobbett
Mrs W Foster
Mr I R Owen
Mr A Breen
Ms J S Woods

Co-opted Members

Cllr P Harper
Ms L Mason
Mr P J Stonely

Staff Representatives

Mr P Hardy
Mr S Jones
Mrs T Weber

Senior Leadership Team

Mr P Hardy - CEO
Mrs S Smith - Advice Manager
Mr I Park - Service Manager Projects
Mrs T Weber - Operations Manager

Registered Office and Principal Address

2 Bower Terrace, Tonbridge Road, Maidstone, Kent, ME16 8RY

Statutory Auditors

Azets Audit Services, Globe House, Eclipse Park, Sittingbourne Road, Maidstone, Kent, ME14 3EN

MAIDSTONE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU

TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

The Trustees present their report and the audited financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2023. The Trustees confirm that the annual report and financial statements of Citizens Advice Maidstone comply with current statutory requirements, the requirements of Citizens Advice Maidstone's governing document and the provisions of the Statement of Recommended Practice – Accounting and Reporting by Charities (SORP FRS 102).

Objectives and activities

Citizens Advice Maidstone provides independent, free, confidential, impartial advice to everyone regardless of their race, gender, sexuality or disability. Citizens Advice Maidstone aims to ensure that individuals do not suffer through a lack of knowledge of their rights and responsibilities or of the services available to them, or through an inability to express their needs effectively. The Citizens Advice Maidstone also aims to exercise a responsible influence on the development of social policies and services both locally and nationally through the work of the Research and Campaign team.

Public benefit

The Trustees confirm that they have complied with the duty in section 4 of the Charities Act 2006 to have due regard to the guidance contained in the Charity Commission's general guidance on the public benefit when reviewing the local office aims and objectives and in the planning of future activities.

Achievements and performance

Our goal is to empower clients solving their problems by themselves; others requiring more support do receive further help through detailed work conducted by our specialists and generalist volunteer advisers. Citizens Advice Maidstone provides free, independent, confidential and impartial advice to everyone on their rights and responsibilities. The organisation values diversity; promotes equity & inclusion and challenges discrimination. This essential work is professionally carried out by our team of paid and voluntary staff helping people to solve their problems and changing their lives. In order to prevent financial problems re-emerging, we also run educational services such as financial capability or energy efficiency training sessions in collaboration with other local offices.

Our office is located on Tonbridge Road. A number of outreach sessions are also provided at certain parishes in the Borough by appointment. This enables us to connect with a broad and diverse client base within the Borough. Clients can approach our service for face-to-face advice; by telephone; by email or digitally for those who otherwise cannot access us easily.

The Citizens Advice Membership Scheme requires each local Citizens Advice to carry out a Leadership Self-Assessment each year. The Board worked together with paid and volunteer staff to look at its policies and procedures and submitted its Assessment to the Performance Assessor under the system. The Organisation has been judged to be at a good standard.

Our workforce, both paid and voluntary have produced an excellent set of statistics, the majority of which can be seen in our Annual Report. Suffice to say that we continue to provide our service to many more people than other similar organisations. Financially it has been a better year with us securing funding for new projects. Notwithstanding, our total income for the year was £805,623 (2022:£ 805,631) with the expenditure pegged at £780,515 (2022:£ 758,097) showing a surplus of £25,108 (2022:£ 47,534) for the 2022/23 financial year. There was a gain on the pension scheme liability of £1,879, which has been separately disclosed this year, giving an overall surplus for the year of £26,987 (2022: £68,956). At the end of the Financial Year our Restricted Reserves were £58,441 (2022: £54,914) and Unrestricted Reserves stood at £291,690 (2022: £268,230).

Demonstrating the value of our work is crucial, as the pressures on the public finances continues to gather pace with national and local spending decreasing further year on year. It is our responsibility to communicate to funders why Citizens Advice is an essential service and not just 'nice to have'. Citizens Advice Maidstone is unique for many reasons: in our team we have a total of 28 paid staff equating to almost 21 FTE, of which 16 FTE work within our various projects and the remainder form part of our core service. Our team of 40 volunteers includes Trustees, advisers, administrators, trainees and assessors.

Our services are provided with funding from a wide variety of sources. A Service Level Agreement with Maidstone Borough Council allows us to provide the essential Core Service of general and specialist advice through digital and face-to-face formats to clients in the Borough of Maidstone. Additional funding from Golding Homes helps to add services to their tenants in the Town. We have contracts with Citizens Advice to provide PensionWise guidance. Pension Wise provides a service throughout Kent and East Sussex. Citizens Advice also provide funding for Universal Credit (help to claim). Our work in HMP Maidstone continues to be funded by Henry Smith Charity and latterly also from HMP Maidstone. Funding for our work on the Energy Advice Programme (CMAP), formerly Energy Best Deal (EBD) came through National Citizens Advice and amongst all these, other smaller projects were funded through smaller grants from external funding sources.

MAIDSTONE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU
TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT (CONTINUED)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

Achievements and performance (continued)

We continue to work with a number of partners within Local Government and Statutory Agencies to improve the policies and practices that affect our communities. We work collectively with other Local Citizens Advice centres in Kent to inform public policy and help regulators, as well as influence private industry to make their services fair for consumers. In addition to Local and National campaigning, with the help of our volunteers we empower clients and communities to engage with society and make a difference to issues that matter. We hope to expand our use of volunteers as feasible to do so.

Volunteers are vital to the service in Citizens Advice Maidstone. Trustees and our Management Team are working in partnership with our paid and voluntary staff to provide excellent quality advice and support to over 13,000 a people up 30% from last year , with over 35,000 different issues achieving nearly £2m income gain and debts written off in the Borough of Maidstone.

Additionally, Trustees are also engaged in providing direction in the Governance of our office. Our Volunteers are an integral part of the way we deliver our advice, support and service today to the communities of Maidstone, and have been since the conception of Local Citizens Advice (LCAs) over 80 years ago in 1939. The service in Maidstone commenced on the 1st January 1940 and over the years has dealt with around 1.5 Million problems.

Volunteers have always been integral to the Citizens Advice service and are increasingly involved in delivering services within all areas of advice work. Volunteers bring with them a wealth of experience and skills and it is important for us to recognise the resource we have within the service. Volunteers are vital to the way we deliver our service, allowing us to reach many more people than if we were purely delivering our work through paid staff. Volunteers undertake a range of tasks from assessing and providing advice, supporting the running of our local office, campaigning in the community and acting as Trustees.

Our volunteers come from a wide range of backgrounds, including young people, professionals who want to broaden their horizons, retired people who want to give something back and mothers whose children have started school – so we offer a range of support services to meet the needs of all our volunteers too. Our commitment to value diversity, promote equity and inclusion means we can encourage individuals who might not otherwise wish/be able to volunteer.

Understanding our trainee volunteers' needs and expectations is a very important aspect of the training programme. Providing a well-structured training plan helps the trainee to gain better employment prospects as well as offering an opportunity for personal development, increased confidence, self-esteem, and wellbeing.

Providing an active contribution to the day-to-day running of a LCA can develop volunteers' practical skills, such as problem solving, communication and teamwork, as well as boost their confidence and belief in their abilities. This improves employability, presents career development opportunities, and can help those currently unemployed, move into work.

Volunteering provides individuals with an opportunity they might not otherwise have to develop their personal skills and abilities. For those out of work, volunteering keeps them active and motivated, potentially countering the negative impacts of unemployment on mental wellbeing – research shows that one in five jobseeker's allowance claimants experience a mental health disorder.

Volunteering enables people to realise their own potential, supporting priorities around increased social mobility – 29 per cent of volunteers that left the Citizens Advice service did so for paid employment, education or training (National Statistics). It also enables individuals to make an economic contribution to society, one which may be factored into future national Gross Domestic Product and productivity calculations.

Volunteering with Citizens Advice can also develop an individual's softer skills, resilience and other personal attributes. This can have a positive impact on how people feel about themselves, how they respond to others and their capacity to manage life's challenges.

For retired individuals, volunteering may offer different opportunities, provide structure and a sense of purpose as well as help them feel involved in society, all highlighted as vital to personal wellbeing. Ensuring that retired people are mentally and physically active also has wider reaching benefits to society, including reducing the NHS provision required to cope with an ageing population. Volunteering with us does not just have an impact on individuals, it benefits communities too. Our volunteers are local people, and through volunteering, they increase their knowledge about community issues and build relationships with their locality. This creates stronger communities, with engaged and active members, and more social action.

MAIDSTONE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU
TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT (CONTINUED)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

Achievements and performance (continued)

The Citizens Advice service also plays an integral role in supporting and strengthening its local community. We provide a service that meets local needs and reaches out to a broad and diverse client base. We support and strengthen other community-focused organisations, partnering with them to share our insight on how best to support local people. We also use our extensive knowledge to act as an advocate for the local area, mobilising and connecting people with their community. We are a local service, working with local people, for the benefit of the local community.

The value we get from working with volunteers is greater than just our ability to provide a quality advice service. In addition, our investment in developing volunteers, and enabling them to volunteer in their local area, has tangible benefits for the individual, community, and society at large. This is an additional benefit to the community, created through the way we deliver our service.

As we approached the end of the 2022/23 financial year, we have established a new way of working after being faced with perhaps our biggest challenge yet (Covid-19), how to continue to deliver our much-needed service, a lifeline for so many, in the wake of the epidemic, into a cost of living crisis.

We adopted the "best of what we had learned and the best of what did" to work in very different ways and provide the vast majority of our services remotely, via telephone as well as digital means, and reserving Face 2 Face for the vulnerable, and complex cases. Fortunately, our staff and volunteers adapted to the new regime extremely well and it is a credit to their dedication and commitment that in this most demanding of times we have helped 30% more clients with much lower level of resource.

Data

We give advice to people who need help, but we also collect statistical data on all these issues. For example, we can show attendant issues affecting people who come to us with problems around council tax. As a result, we are better able to ascertain the most efficient ways to help people understand their problems more completely. For councils and councillors, this data is powerful. It can help address failure demand, facilitate the consideration of new service options and provide additional insight to the scrutiny process.

Councils are increasingly working together to deliver services in new ways and save costs, whether in shared service arrangements or in combined authorities with devolution deals. This can also unlock funding and address long-standing problems across the county. We want to be able to work with our local government—at parish, district, county level—to inform debate with our data and client stories. More than this, we can provide innovative services that mesh closely with those offered by public authorities. Citizens Advice is working nationally to make this as easy as possible, with new data products for combining output and impact data across variable geography as well as direct support to areas of innovation across our network.

Social Exclusion

People can suffer social exclusion when they face a series of problems such as poor skills, low incomes, bad housing and family breakdown.

As a result of their experiences and development at Citizens Advice Maidstone, our volunteers are better equipped and more confident in their abilities, and hence are more likely to move into employment. This has a true value to society, by moving people closer to the labour market, which may reduce their need to claim benefits related to unemployment. It may also reduce other costs to the state associated with sustained unemployment, especially for young people not in employment, education or training. Equally, community volunteering enables unemployed individuals to make a form of economic contribution to society, the value of which may be factored into future national GDP and productivity calculations.

Citizens Advice has a major impact on people's lives, particularly the most vulnerable in society. Our service is best known for solving problems through advice, but we also make a difference by solving the underlying causes of these problems through our research and campaigns volunteers. Our work has also contributed to vital policy changes that will help more people make ends meet.

MAIDSTONE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU
TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT (CONTINUED)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

Achievements and performance (continued)

Pension Wise

Citizens Advice Maidstone is one of the LCAs who have been delivering the government's Pension Wise service for the last seven years. Launched in April 2015, Pension Wise was a new guidance service set up to help people understand their options under the pension freedoms. Citizens Advice Maidstone delivers Pension Wise appointments throughout Kent, Medway and East Sussex. During 2022/23 we have delivered Pension Wise appointments by telephone and face to face, to people aged 50 and over with a defined contribution pension.

Key statistics (PW)

During 2022/23, demand has remained very high. Since the service started, people have continued to value the high-quality guidance and support they receive. Satisfaction scores have remained over 95%.

Money Advice

National research shows that just over a quarter of adults say that they do not consider themselves to be good at managing money and one third say that they would prefer not to think about planning their finances at all. Many people have poor financial skills, and this often leads them to make ill-informed decisions on their money matters. Citizens Advice has found that the negative effects of a lack of financial awareness can be compounded by limited or poor-quality consumer information and inadequate advice. People can miss out on the growing range of financial products available and fail to make the best use of Government initiatives. However, building the necessary confidence in financial services is an uphill task. Citizens Advice Maidstone helps people resolve their money, legal and other problems by providing information and advice as well as by influencing policymakers. Our service is the largest provider of free money advice in the Borough of Maidstone. We provide specialist level money advice services, helping people resolve a range of money and debt issues. By providing advice and information about money in the heart of our community, we help people resolve a range of debt and personal finance-related problems.

The Citizens Advice service is a network of independent, local charities that helps people resolve their money, legal and other problems. The service is the largest provider of free advice in the UK. Citizens Advice also uses evidence of clients' money problems to campaign for change and is contributing to the Government's plan to provide all UK adults with access to generic financial advice. Citizens Advice wants people to have the skills, knowledge and confidence to make informed decisions across a range of personal money matters. We work with a range of partner agencies to improve the financial skills of people of all ages, particularly those at risk of social or financial exclusion.

Financial skills training can change behaviour - participants become better at budgeting, choosing financial products, saving and making their money go further and these changes persist over time. Developing financial skills not only boosts financial well-being but also confidence and general peace of mind. Tenants who do get into financial difficulty know where to turn to for help, seek out support sooner and as a result, are better equipped to cope.

Prison Work

Citizens Advice Maidstone's strategy aims to increase the capacity of our paid and voluntary staff to deal with our clients' debt and other money problems in order to prevent the financial problems faced by many people becoming major crises. This supports our wider focus of encouraging our team to work with more vulnerable groups such as offenders to meet their finance, benefit and debt needs. In relation to offenders, Citizens Advice is clear that personal debt and other financial problems can be a cause of an individual offending in the first place, and such problems can increase the likelihood of reoffending on release. Being able to manage debt and other financial problems during a prison sentence or upon release into the community could help to reduce re-offending.

Many offenders with families may fall into rent or mortgage arrears caused by a reduction of income during their prison sentence. Stable accommodation can help reduce re-offending by providing a secure environment in which to live, enabling them to open a bank account, receive benefits and find regular employment. Timely access to advice can, among other things, secure accommodation for an offender or their family on release; ensure access to benefits for the payment of rent and advocate on behalf the family if they are refused support from the local authority. Such services can greatly reduce the risk of re-offending. Debt can also present problems for offenders and their families both during their sentence and after release.

MAIDSTONE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU
TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT (CONTINUED)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

Achievements and performance (continued)

As the Social Exclusion Unit report identified; finance, benefit and debt issues are inextricably tied to many other key factors which exacerbate reoffending. Ensuring ex-offenders have enough lawfully obtained money to live on is key to their rehabilitation and to reducing temptation into re-offending, but many face significant problems achieving financial security. Low incomes, debt, disrupted access to benefits advice and insufficient income on release from prison all add to the problem. The National Offender Management Services (NOMS') aim is to ensure that offenders in custody and the prison community have access to financial and advice services that will address money-related issues, maximise income and reduce debt to help prevent re-offending. A key element of this work is to develop close partnership working between prison and probation services, and voluntary and community sector providers who are willing to work with offenders.

Risk Management

Trustees regularly meet to consider the financial and other risks relating to the activities of the charity and take appropriate action as and when required. A comprehensive risk register is maintained and reviewed at every Trustee meeting. During the year we have had to limit face to face interviews to where there is no other way to help clients due to restrictions caused by resource shortages, although the Citizens Advice Maidstone managed to maintain a service by offering advice digitally by telephone and online. Some consideration has been given to the issues which may result from events over the past 3 years, and these include debt, mental health problems, and domestic violence.

Planning for the future

The business strategy adopted by the Trustee Board is to safeguard the Core service with free generalist advice covering a full range of issues. This service has hitherto been funded by a Grant from Maidstone Borough Council. We are most grateful for the Council's continuing support. Citizens Advice Maidstone seeks additional funding from other sources in order to shore up the core service and provide other services if it is financially prudent to do so. Citizens Advice Maidstone's management has been successful in securing such funding from a variety of sources, including national Citizens Advice MAPS Henry Smith Colyer-Fergusson and grants from local charities. The management continues to develop new and innovative partnerships with a wide stakeholder group in response to steadily dwindling financial resources.

Financial review

The net surplus for the year amounted to £26,987 (2022: £68,956). There was a surplus of £29,352 in relation to unrestricted activities before transfers. As at 31 March 2023 general unrestricted reserves amount to £261,690 (2022: £268,230) and total restricted reserves amounted to £58,441 (2022: £54,914).

Reserves Policy

The Board of Trustees regularly reviews the finances and reserves of Citizens Advice Maidstone. Each review encompasses the nature of the income and expenditure streams and the need to match variable income with fixed commitments and the nature of reserves. Citizens Advice Maidstone sets aside restricted funds as set out in the Statement of Financial Activities. All restricted funds are applied to the particular restricted activity (project). Restricted funds unspent in a particular financial year are allocated as reserves in statutory accounts at the end of the financial year and will be allocated to that restricted activity (project) during the course of the following financial year or when the activity ends. Restricted funds at 31 March 2023 were £58,441 (2022:£ 54,914).

Trustees have discussed levels of unrestricted reserves and are agreed that in all circumstances Citizens Advice Maidstone's core services must be secure. A minimum sum of six months unrestricted (core) expenditure with a contingency of 10% will ensure that this aspiration is preserved as an allocation for core management activities to cover certain members of our project staff who support all aspects of the Bureau's activities. Therefore, the total reserves the trustees aim to hold is £270,000 (2022: £230,000).

As at 31 March 2023 unrestricted general reserves are £257,208 (2022: £233,748) and designated reserves are £34,482 (2022: £34,482).

MAIDSTONE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU
TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT (CONTINUED)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

Going concern

The Trustees are satisfied that the charity has sufficient resources to meet its liabilities as they fall due for a period of at least twelve months from the date of signing of these financial statements. Accordingly, the Trustees confirm that they consider that the 'going concern' basis remains appropriate.

Structure, governance and management

Citizens Advice Maidstone is a member of Citizens Advice, which provides a framework for standards of advice management as well as monitoring progress against these standards. The Board of Trustees produces an annual report detailing Citizens Advice Maidstone's activities during the year. The report is available on request from the office.

(a) Method of appointment or election of Trustees

In accordance with the Articles of Association (revised 23 September 2013 to bring our Memorandum and Articles of Association in line with the national policy of Citizens Advice and the guidance of the Charity Commission) the Trustee Board consists of a minimum of 3 and a maximum of 15 members. There may be a maximum of 10 elected members, each of whom is elected for a term of three years by the members of the company at its Annual General Meeting. At expiry of their term of office elected Trustees are eligible for re-election. In addition, the Trustee Board may co-opt members, whose number may not exceed one third of the total number of Trustees. No member of the staff of the office whether paid or voluntary can be a member of the Board. However, the Chief Executive, one representative of the paid staff and one representative of the voluntary staff, have the right to attend and speak (but not vote) at meetings of the Board.

(b) Operational structure and decision making

The Trustee Board sets the overall policy and direction of Citizens Advice Maidstone's business within the parameters set by the Citizens Advice Membership Agreement and any Service Level Agreements or contracts currently in being. Operational decisions are made by the Chief Executive subject to any specific Trustee Board directions and referring to the Trustee Board as necessary. The Trustee Board meets once every two months. Financial oversight is delegated to the Finance Committee which meets 14 days before the Trustee Board to appraise financial reports and recommend action to the Trustee Board.

Trustees' responsibilities in relation to the financial statements

The Trustees as directors are responsible for preparing the Trustees' Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and regulation.

Company law requires the Trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year. Under that law the Trustees have elected to prepare the financial statements in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice (United Kingdom Accounting Standards and applicable law). Under company law the Trustees must not approve the financial statements unless they are satisfied that they give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity and of the results of the charity for that period. In preparing these financial statements, the Trustees are required to:-

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in business.

The Trustees are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that are sufficient to show and explain the charity's transactions and disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with Companies Act 2006 and the Charities Act 2011.

They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

MAIDSTONE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU
TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT (CONTINUED)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

Disclosure of information to auditors

In accordance with company law, as the charity's trustee, we confirm that:

- so far as we are aware, there is no relevant audit information of which the charity's auditors are unaware; and
- as the trustees of the charity, we have taken all the steps that we ought to have taken in order to make ourselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the charity's auditors are aware of that information.

ON BEHALF OF THE
BOARD OF TRUSTEES


MR S BONNY MALHOTRA

Registered office
2 Bower Terrace
Tonbridge Road
Maidstone
Kent ME16 8RY

21 September 2023

MAIDSTONE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU
INDEPENDENT AUDITORS' REPORT TO THE MEMBERS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of Maidstone Citizens Advice Bureau (the 'charitable company') for the year ended 31 March 2023 which comprise the Statement of Financial Activities, the Balance Sheet, the Cash Flow Statement and the related notes. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards, including FRS 102 "The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland" (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

In our opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the charitable company's affairs as at 31 March 2023 and of its incoming resources and application of resources, including its income and expenditure, for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice; and have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006.

Basis for opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs (UK)) and applicable law. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of our report. We are independent of the charitable company in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in the UK, including the FRC's Ethical Standard, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Conclusions relating to going concern

In auditing the financial statements, we have concluded that the Trustees' use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

Based on the work we have performed, we have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the charitable company's ability to continue as a going concern for a period of at least twelve months from when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

Our responsibilities and the responsibilities of the Trustees with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this report.

Other information

The other information comprises the information included in the Trustees Annual Report, other than the financial statements and our auditor's report thereon. The Trustees are responsible for the other information contained within the annual report. Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in our report, we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon. Our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the course of the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether this gives rise to a material misstatement in the financial statements themselves. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact.

We have nothing to report in this regard.

Opinions on other matters prescribed by the Companies Act 2006

In our opinion, based on the work undertaken in the course of the audit:

- the information given in the Trustees' Report and the incorporated Strategic Report prepared for the purpose of company law for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements; and
- the Trustees' Report and the incorporated Strategic Report have been prepared in accordance with applicable legal requirements.

MAIDSTONE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU

INDEPENDENT AUDITORS' REPORT TO THE MEMBERS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

Matters on which we are required to report by exception

In the light of the knowledge and understanding of the charitable company and its environment obtained in the course of the audit, we have not identified material misstatements in the Trustees' Report and the incorporated Strategic Report.

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters where the Companies Act 2006 requires us to report to you if, in our opinion:

- adequate accounting records have not been kept, or returns adequate for our audit have not been received from branches not visited by us; or
- the financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or
- certain disclosures of Trustees' remuneration specified by law are not made; or
- we have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit.

Responsibilities of Trustees

As explained more fully in the Statement of Trustees' responsibilities set out on page 15, the Trustees (who are also the directors of the charitable company for the purposes of company law) are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the Trustees determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the Trustees are responsible for assessing the charitable company's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the Trustees either intend to liquidate the charitable company or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

Extent to which the audit was considered capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud

Irregularities, including fraud, are instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations. We design procedures in line with our responsibilities, outlined above and on the Financial Reporting Council's website, to detect material misstatements in respect of irregularities, including fraud.

We obtain and update our understanding of the entity, its activities, its control environment, and likely future developments, including in relation to the legal and regulatory framework applicable and how the entity is complying with that framework. Based on this understanding, we identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion. This includes consideration of the risk of acts by the entity that were contrary to applicable laws and regulations, including fraud.

In response to the risk of irregularities and non-compliance with laws and regulations, including fraud, we designed procedures which included:

- Enquiry of management and those charged with governance around actual and potential litigation and claims as well as actual, suspected and alleged fraud;
- Reviewing minutes of meetings of those charged with governance;
- Assessing the extent of compliance with the laws and regulations considered to have a direct material effect on the financial statements or the operations of the company through enquiry and inspection;
- Reviewing financial statement disclosures and testing to supporting documentation to assess compliance with applicable laws and regulations;
- Performing audit work over the risk of management bias and override of controls, including testing of journal entries and other adjustments for appropriateness, evaluating the business rationale of significant transactions outside the normal course of business and reviewing accounting estimates for indicators of potential bias.

MAIDSTONE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU

INDEPENDENT AUDITORS' REPORT TO THE MEMBERS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

Because of the inherent limitations of an audit, there is a risk that we will not detect all irregularities, including those leading to a material misstatement in the financial statements or non-compliance with regulation. This risk increases the more that compliance with a law or regulation is removed from the events and transactions reflected in the financial statements, as we will be less likely to become aware of instances of non-compliance. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.

As part of an audit in accordance with ISAs (UK), we exercise professional judgment and maintain professional scepticism throughout the audit. We also:

- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the charitable company's internal control.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by the Trustees.
- Conclude on the appropriateness of the Trustees' use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the charitable company's ability to continue as a going concern. If we conclude that a material uncertainty exists, we are required to draw attention in our auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial statements or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify our opinion. Our conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of our auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause the charitable company to cease to continue as a going concern.
- Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial statements, including the disclosures, and whether the financial statements represent the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation (i.e. gives a true and fair view).

We communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that we identify during our audit.

Use of our report

This report is made solely to the charitable company's members, as a body, in accordance with Chapter 3 of Part 16 of the Companies Act 2006. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the charitable company's members those matters we are required to state to them in an auditor's report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the charitable company and the charitable company's members as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

Azets Audit Services Limited

Michelle Wilkes FCA (Senior Statutory Auditor)
for and on behalf of Azets Audit Services

27 September 2023

Statutory Auditor

Globe House, Eclipse Park
Sittingbourne Road
Maidstone
Kent
ME14 3EN

MAIDSTONE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES (INCLUDING INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

	Notes	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total 2023 £	Total 2022 £
INCOME:					
Donations and legacies	3	505	-	505	955
Charitable activities	4	150,660	653,490	804,150	804,629
Investments		968	-	968	47
TOTAL INCOME		<u>152,133</u>	<u>653,490</u>	<u>805,623</u>	<u>805,631</u>
EXPENDITURE:					
Charitable activities	5	124,660	655,855	780,515	758,097
TOTAL EXPENDITURE		<u>124,660</u>	<u>655,855</u>	<u>780,515</u>	<u>758,097</u>
Net surplus/(deficit) before gains on pension scheme		<u>27,473</u>	<u>(2,365)</u>	<u>25,108</u>	<u>47,534</u>
Gains on pension scheme	18	<u>1,879</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>1,879</u>	<u>21,422</u>
Net surplus/(deficit) before transfers		<u>29,352</u>	<u>(2,365)</u>	<u>26,987</u>	<u>68,956</u>
Transfers between funds	14	(5,892)	5,892	-	-
NET MOVEMENT ON FUNDS		<u>23,460</u>	<u>3,527</u>	<u>26,987</u>	<u>68,956</u>
Total funds at 1 April 2022		268,230	54,914	323,144	254,188
Total funds at 31 March 2023		<u>291,690</u>	<u>58,441</u>	<u>350,131</u>	<u>323,144</u>

All income and expenditure derive from continuing activities.

The Statement of Financial Activities includes all gains and losses recognised during the year.

The notes on pages 16 to 24 form part of these financial statements.

MAIDSTONE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES (INCLUDING INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

Comparative year information
Year ended 31 March 2022

	Notes	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total 2022 £	Total 2021 £
INCOME:					
Donations and legacies	3	955	-	955	7,091
Charitable activities	4	178,371	626,258	804,629	852,838
Investments		47	-	47	183
TOTAL INCOME		<u>179,373</u>	<u>626,258</u>	<u>805,631</u>	<u>860,112</u>
EXPENDITURE:					
Charitable activities	5	126,204	631,893	758,097	793,704
TOTAL EXPENDITURE		<u>126,204</u>	<u>631,893</u>	<u>758,097</u>	<u>793,704</u>
Net income before gains on pension scheme		<u>53,169</u>	<u>(5,635)</u>	<u>47,534</u>	<u>66,408</u>
Gains on pension scheme	18	<u>21,422</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>21,422</u>	<u>-</u>
NET MOVEMENT ON FUNDS		<u>74,591</u>	<u>(5,635)</u>	<u>68,956</u>	<u>66,408</u>
Total funds at 1 April 2021		193,639	60,549	254,188	187,780
Total funds at 31 March 2022		<u>268,230</u>	<u>54,914</u>	<u>323,144</u>	<u>254,188</u>

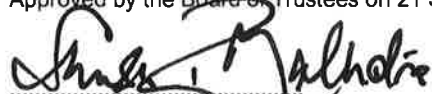
MAIDSTONE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU

BALANCE SHEET

AS AT 31 MARCH 2023

	Notes	£	2023 £	£	2022 £
TANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS	10		-		-
CURRENT ASSETS					
Accrued income and prepayments		14,338		4,740	
Cash at bank and in hand		<u>368,901</u>		<u>333,192</u>	
		<u>383,239</u>		<u>337,932</u>	
CREDITORS: AMOUNTS FALLING DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR	11	<u>29,804</u>		<u>9,605</u>	
NET CURRENT ASSETS			353,435		328,327
Provision for liabilities and charges	18		<u>(3,304)</u>		<u>(5,183)</u>
NET ASSETS			<u>350,131</u>		<u>323,144</u>
General unrestricted funds	12		257,208		233,748
Designated funds	13		34,482		34,482
Restricted funds	14		<u>58,441</u>		<u>54,914</u>
	15		<u>350,131</u>		<u>323,144</u>

Approved by the Board of Trustees on 21 September 2023 and are signed on its behalf by:



MR S BONNY MALHOTRA
CHAIR OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES



MR D PARRISH
MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Company No. 02234220

The notes on pages 16 to 24 form part of these financial statements.

MAIDSTONE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU

STATEMENT OF CASH FLOW

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

	Notes	2023 £	2022 £
Cash flows from operating activities	17	<u>34,741</u>	<u>(2,763)</u>
Net cash inflow/(outflow) from operating activities		34,741	(2,763)
Investing activities			
Interest received	<u>968</u>	<u>47</u>	
Net cash generated from investing activities		968	47
Net increase/(decrease) in cash and cash equivalents		35,709	(2,716)
Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of year		<u>333,192</u>	<u>335,908</u>
Cash and cash equivalents at end of year		<u><u>368,901</u></u>	<u><u>333,192</u></u>

The notes on pages 16 to 25 form part of these financial statements.

MAIDSTONE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

1. Accounting policies

a) Basis of accounting

The Maidstone Citizens Advice Bureau (the 'charity') is a charitable company limited by guarantee, registered with the Charity Commission in England & Wales. The address of the registered office is given in the charity information on page 1 of these financial statements. The nature of the charity's operations and principal activities are detailed in page 2 of these financial statements. The charity constitutes a public benefit entity as defined by FRS 102.

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK (FRS102) issued in October 2019, the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the United Kingdom (FRS102), the Charities Act 2011 and UK Generally Accepted Practice.

The financial statements are prepared in sterling which is the functional currency of the charity and rounded to the nearest £1.

The significant accounting policies applied in the preparation of these financial statements are set out below. These policies have been consistently applied to all years presented unless otherwise stated.

The charity has availed itself of Paragraph 4(1) of Schedule 1 of the Small Companies and Groups (Accounts and Directors' Reports) Regulations 2008 and adapted the format of the financial statements to reflect the special nature of the charity's activities.

b) Going Concern

These financial statements are prepared on the going concern basis as the Trustees believe that no material uncertainties exist.

The Trustees have considered the level of reserves and expected level of income and expenditure and are satisfied that the charity has sufficient resources to meet its liabilities as they fall due for a period of at least twelve months from the date of signing of these financial statements. Accordingly, the financial statements are prepared on a going concern basis and do not include any adjustments which would be necessary if this basis of preparation was inappropriate.

c) Fund accounting

Unrestricted funds are those available for use at the discretion of the Trustees in the furtherance of the general objectives of the charity which have not been designated for other purposes. Designated funds are unrestricted funds that have been set aside by the Trustees for particular purposes. Restricted funds are funds which are to be used in accordance with specific restrictions imposed by donors which have been raised by the charity for particular purposes.

d) Income recognition

Grants and service agreement income are recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities when the charity has entitlement to the funds, where the service it relates to has commenced, it is probable that the income will be received and the amount can be measured reliably and is not deferred. Other Income is recognised in the accounts on an accruals basis with the exception of donations which are recognised on a cash received basis.

e) Expenditure

Expenditure is recorded on an accruals basis including irrecoverable VAT and allocated on the following basis:-

- Costs directly allocated - actual basis.
- Support costs - depending on type of cost and the Trustees' best estimate of usage.
- Other costs – actual basis.

f) Tangible fixed assets and depreciation

Individual fixed assets costing £1,000 or more are stated at cost less depreciation. Depreciation is provided on office and computer equipment to write off the cost, less estimated residual value of assets over their expected useful economic life of two or three years. At each reporting period end date, the charity reviews the carrying amounts of its tangible assets to determine whether there is any indication that those assets have suffered an impairment loss. If any such indication exists, the recoverable amount of the asset is estimated in order to determine the extent of the impairment loss (if any).

MAIDSTONE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

1. Accounting policies (continued)

g) Operating leases

Rentals payable under operating leases are charged on a straight line basis over the lease term.

h) Pensions

Contributions payable to the charity's multi-employer pension plan are charged to the income and expenditure account on a payments basis.

The charity recognises a liability for the obligation under the pension plan's recovery plan. The amount recognised is the net present value of the deficit reduction contributions payable under the agreement. The present value is calculated using the discount rate disclosed in note 18.

i) Debtors and creditors receivable/payable within one year

Debtors and creditors with no stated interest rate and receivable or payable within one year are recorded at transaction price. Any losses arising from impairment are recognised in the statement of financial activities under expenditure arising on charitable activities.

j) Employee benefits

When employees have rendered service to the charity, short-term employee benefits to which the employees are entitled are recognised at the undiscounted amount expected to be paid in exchange for that service.

k) Taxation

The charity is an exempt charity within the meaning of Schedule 3 of the Charities Act 2011 and is considered to pass the tests set out in Paragraph 1 Schedule 6 Finance Act 2010 and therefore it meets the definition of a charitable company for UK corporation tax purposes.

2. Judgements and key sources of estimation uncertainty

In the application of the charity's accounting policies, the Trustees are required to make judgements, estimates and assumptions about the carrying amount of assets and liabilities that are not readily apparent from other sources. The estimates and associated assumptions are based on historical experience and other factors that are considered to be relevant. There are no judgements or key sources of estimation uncertainty.

3. Income from donations and legacies

	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total 2023 £	Total 2022 £
Donations	505	-	505	955
	<u>505</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>505</u>	<u>955</u>

4. Income from charitable activities

	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total 2023 £	Total 2022 £
Maidstone Borough Council grants	133,100	-	133,100	151,100
Money Advice Service	-	-	-	52,168
Golding Homes	7,500	-	7,500	5,000
Pension Wise	-	418,018	418,018	355,027
Henry Smith (MDS Prison)	-	56,000	56,000	55,592
Energy advice	-	17,545	17,545	22,890
Carbon Monoxide Advice Project	-	17,190	17,190	-
Universal Credit – Help to Claim	-	142,237	142,237	126,581
South East Water Forum	-	2,500	2,500	14,000
Other projects	10,060	-	10,060	22,271
	<u>150,660</u>	<u>653,490</u>	<u>804,150</u>	<u>804,629</u>

MAIDSTONE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

5. Analysis of expenditure

	Direct costs £	Support costs £	Total 2023 £	Total 2022 £
Citizens advice services	103,162	21,498	124,660	126,204
Prison support	39,404	27,969	67,373	61,174
Energy advice	17,545	-	17,545	22,890
Carbon monoxide advice	17,190	-	17,190	-
Water advice	9,000	5,000	14,000	-
Pension advice	284,721	106,897	391,618	368,131
Financial advice	-	-	-	52,168
Benefit advice	101,496	46,633	148,129	127,530
	<u>572,518</u>	<u>207,997</u>	<u>780,515</u>	<u>758,097</u>

6. Support costs

	2023 £	2022 £
Staff costs	89,092	83,238
Premises costs	58,456	31,846
General office costs	51,865	44,170
Bank charges	181	133
Governance costs (note 7)	8,403	7,423
	<u>207,997</u>	<u>166,810</u>

7. Governance costs

	2023 £	2022 £
Auditors' remuneration	8,403	7,423
	<u>8,403</u>	<u>7,423</u>

8. Net expenditure

This is stated after charging:

	2023 £	2022 £
Rent payable on property under operating leases	26,660	23,000
Auditors' remuneration	8,403	7,423

MAIDSTONE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU
NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS (CONTINUED)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

9. Staff costs

	2023	2022
	£	£
Wages and salaries	595,978	574,676
Social security costs	36,171	42,127
Employer pension costs	29,462	36,734
	<u>661,611</u>	<u>653,537</u>

The key management personnel of the charity comprise the Trustees and the bureau managers.

The Trustees received no remuneration for the year ended 31 March 2023 (2022: £Nil). During the year, none (2022: two) of the Trustees had expenses reimbursed by the charity. The total expenses reimbursed to the Trustees amounted to nil (2022: £70). In the prior year these costs related to sundry stationery and consumable supplies for staff members as well as travel and parking costs.

The total remuneration including pension contributions and employers' national insurance received by key management personnel for their service to the charity was £118,817 (2022: £123,915).

The average number of salaried employees during the year was 30 (2022: 32).

There were no employees (2022: none) who received total employee benefits (excluding employer pension costs) of more than £60,000.

10. Tangible fixed assets

	Office and computer equipment
	£
Cost	
At 1 April 2022 and at 31 March 2023	96,327
Depreciation	
At 1 April 2022 and at 31 March 2023	96,327
At 31 March 2023	-
Net book value	
At 1 April 2022 and at 31 March 2023	-

11. Creditors : amounts falling due within one year

	2023	2022
	£	£
Accruals	8,370	6,544
Other creditors	6,434	3,061
Deferred income	15,000	-
	<u>29,804</u>	<u>9,605</u>

MAIDSTONE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

12. General unrestricted funds

	2023 £	2022 £
Balance at 1 April 2022	233,748	159,157
Net Income	29,352	74,591
Transfer to restricted funds	(5,892)	-
Balance at 31 March 2023	<u>257,208</u>	<u>233,748</u>

13. Designated funds

	Balance at 1 April 2022 £	New designations £	Designations released £	Balance at 31 March 2023 £
Premises and development fund	<u>34,482</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>34,482</u>

Comparative year information:

	Balance at 1 April 2021 £	New designations £	Designations released £	Balance at 31 March 2022 £
Premises and development fund	<u>34,482</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>34,482</u>

The Premises and Development Fund has been designated to provide for future resources in these two areas.

14. Restricted funds

	Balance at 1 April 2022 £	Income £	Expenditure £	Transfers £	Balance at 31 March 2023 £
Henry Smith (MDS Prison)	12,205	56,000	(67,373)	-	832
Energy advice	-	17,545	(17,545)	-	-
Carbon Monoxide Advice Project	-	17,190	(17,190)	-	-
Pension Wise	28,709	418,018	(391,618)	-	55,109
Money Advice Service	-	-	-	-	-
South East Water Forum	14,000	2,500	(14,000)	-	2,500
Universal Credit – Help to Claim	-	142,237	(148,129)	5,892	-
	<u>54,914</u>	<u>653,490</u>	<u>(655,855)</u>	<u>5,892</u>	<u>58,441</u>

Comparative year information:

	Balance at 1 April 2021 £	Income £	Expenditure £	Transfers £	Balance at 31 March 2022 £
Henry Smith (MDS Prison)	17,787	55,592	(61,174)	-	12,205
Energy Best Deal	-	22,890	(22,890)	-	-
Pension Wise	41,813	355,027	(368,131)	-	28,709
Money Advice Service	-	52,168	(52,168)	-	-
South East Water Forum	-	14,000	-	-	14,000
Universal Credit – Help to Claim	949	126,581	(127,530)	-	-
	<u>60,549</u>	<u>626,258</u>	<u>(631,893)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>54,914</u>

MAIDSTONE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

14. Restricted funds (continued)

The objective of the Henry Smith Fund (Maidstone Prison Advice Project) is to provide advice and support to prisoners, staff and their families.

The objective of Energy Advice is to inform consumers how to reduce energy bills by efficiency savings or switching suppliers and to provide information about the help available from energy suppliers and government for consumers struggling to pay energy bills.

The objective of Pension Wise is to provide impartial pension advice and guidance.

The objective for the Money Advice Service is to provide free and impartial money advice.

The objective of the South East Water Forum is to provide free advice to manage water consumption and bills.

The objective of the Universal Credit – Help to Claim Fund is to provide advice and assistance to persons requiring financial support. The transfer to this fund from unrestricted funds covers the overspend on the project during the year to 31 March 2023.

The objective of the Carbon Monoxide Advice Project is to deliver one to one carbon monoxide awareness and energy advice.

15. Analysis of net assets between funds

	Unrestricted funds 2023 £	Restricted funds 2023 £	Total 2023 £
Current assets	302,683	80,556	383,239
Amounts falling due within one year	(7,689)	(22,115)	(29,804)
Provisions	(3,304)	-	(3,304)
	<u>291,690</u>	<u>58,441</u>	<u>350,131</u>

	Unrestricted funds 2022 £	Restricted funds 2022 £	Total 2022 £
Current assets	274,394	63,538	337,932
Amounts falling due within one year	(981)	(8,624)	(9,605)
Provisions	(5,183)	-	(5,183)
	<u>268,230</u>	<u>54,914</u>	<u>323,144</u>

16. Financial commitments

The charity had commitments under non-cancellable operating leases as follows:

	Land and buildings 2023 £	Land and buildings 2022 £
Expiry within one year	28,750	23,000
Expiry in 2 to 5 years	115,000	92,000
Expiry in over 5 years	121,932	120,750
	<u>265,682</u>	<u>235,750</u>

MAIDSTONE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU
NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS (CONTINUED)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

17. Cash generated from operations

	2023	2022
	£	£
Net income	26,987	68,956
Adjustments for:		
Investment income	(968)	(47)
Increase in debtors	(9,598)	(4,740)
Increase/(decrease) in creditors	20,199	(45,510)
Decrease in pension provision	(1,879)	(21,422)
Cashflow from operating activities	34,741	(2,763)

18. Pension commitments

TPT Retirement Solutions – The Growth Plan

The charity participates in the scheme, a multi-employer scheme which provides benefits to some 638 non-associated participating employers. The scheme is a defined benefit scheme in the UK. It is not possible for the charity to obtain sufficient information to enable it to account for the scheme as a defined benefit scheme. Therefore it accounts for the scheme as a defined contribution scheme.

The scheme is subject to the funding legislation outlined in the Pensions Act 2004 which came into force on 30 December 2005. This, together with documents issued by the Pensions Regulator and Technical Actuarial Standards issued by the Financial Reporting Council, set out the framework for funding defined benefit occupational pension schemes in the UK.

The scheme is classified as a 'last-man standing arrangement'. Therefore the charity is potentially liable for other participating employers' obligations if those employers are unable to meet their share of the scheme deficit following withdrawal from the scheme. Participating employers are legally required to meet their share of the scheme deficit on an annuity purchase basis on withdrawal from the scheme.

A full actuarial valuation for the scheme was carried out at 30 September 2020. This valuation showed assets of £800.3m, liabilities of £831.9m and a deficit of £31.6m. To eliminate this funding shortfall, the Trustee has asked the participating employers to pay additional contributions to the scheme as follows:

Deficit contributions

From 1 April 2022 to 31 January 2025: £3,312,000 per annum (payable monthly).

Unless a concession has been agreed with the Trustee the term to 31 January 2025 applies.

Note that the scheme's previous valuation was carried out with an effective date of 30 September 2017. This valuation showed assets of £794.9m, liabilities of £926.4m and a deficit of £131.5m. To eliminate this funding shortfall, the Trustee asked the participating employers to pay additional contributions to the scheme as follows:

Deficit contributions

From 1 April 2019 to 30 September 2025: £11,243,000 per annum (payable monthly and increasing by 3% each on 1st April).

The recovery plan contributions are allocated to each participating employer in line with their estimated share of the Series 1 and Series 2 scheme liabilities.

Where the scheme is in deficit and where the charity has agreed to a deficit funding arrangement the charity recognises a liability for this obligation. The amount recognised is the net present value of the deficit reduction contributions payable under the agreement that relates to the deficit. The present value is calculated using the discount rate detailed in these disclosures. The unwinding of the discount rate is recognised as a finance cost.

MAIDSTONE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU
NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS (CONTINUED)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

18. Pension commitments (continued)

Present values of provision	31 March 2023	31 March 2022	31 March 2021
Present value of provision	<u>£3,304</u>	<u>£5,183</u>	<u>£26,605</u>

Reconciliation of opening and closing provision

	2023	2022
	£	£
Provision at start of period	5,183	26,605
Unwinding of the discount factor (interest expense)	97	153
Deficit contribution paid	(1,888)	(6,733)
Remeasurements – impact of any change in assumptions	(88)	(119)
Remeasurements – amendments to contribution schedule	-	(14,723)
Provision at end of period	<u>3,304</u>	<u>5,183</u>

Income and expenditure impact

	2023	2022
	£	£
Interest expense	97	153
Remeasurements – impact of any change in assumptions	(88)	(119)
Remeasurements – amendments to contribution schedule	-	(14,723)
	<u>9</u>	<u>14,689</u>

Assumptions

	31 March 2023	31 March 2022	31 March 2021
Rate of discount (per annum)	<u>5.52%</u>	<u>2.35%</u>	<u>0.66%</u>

The discount rates shown above are the equivalent single discount rates which, when used to discount the future recovery plan contributions due, would give the same results as using a full AA corporate bond yield curve to discount the same recovery plan contributions.

Deficit contributions schedule

The following schedule details the deficit contributions agreed between the charity and the scheme at each year end period:

	31 March 2023	31 March 2022	31 March 2021
Year 1	1,888	1,888	6,733
Year 2	1,574	1,888	6,935
Year 3	-	1,574	7,143
Year 4	-	-	6,131
Year 5	-	-	-

MAIDSTONE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU
NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS (CONTINUED)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

19. Analysis of changes in net debt

	Balance at 1 April 2022 £	Cashflows £	Other non- cash changes £	Balance at 31 March 2023 £
Cash	<u>333,192</u>	<u>35,709</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>368,901</u>

20. Related party transactions

No transactions with related parties were undertaken during the year (2022: none), other than those stipulated in Note 9.

MAIDSTONE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU
DETAILED INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

		Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total 2023 £	Total 2022 £
Income					
Maidstone Borough Council		133,100	-	133,100	151,100
Money Advice Service		-	-	-	52,168
Pension Wise		-	418,018	418,018	355,027
Donations		505	-	505	955
Deposit account interest		968	-	968	47
Golding Homes		7,500	-	7,500	5,000
Energy Best deal		-	17,545	17,545	22,890
Carbon Monoxide Advice Project		-	17,190	17,190	-
Henry Smith (MDS Prison)		-	56,000	56,000	55,592
Universal Credit – Help to Claim		-	142,237	142,237	126,581
South East Water Forum		-	2,500	2,500	14,000
Other projects		10,060	-	10,060	22,271
		<u>152,133</u>	<u>653,490</u>	<u>805,623</u>	<u>805,631</u>
Expenditure					
	Schedule				
Establishment expenses	1	7,031	51,424	58,455	31,846
Administration expenses	2	116,225	595,671	711,896	717,883
Sundry expenses	3	1,404	8,760	10,164	8,368
		<u>124,660</u>	<u>655,855</u>	<u>780,515</u>	<u>758,097</u>
Net income before gains on pension scheme		<u>27,473</u>	<u>(2,365)</u>	<u>25,108</u>	<u>47,534</u>
Gains on pension scheme		1,879	-	1,879	21,422
Surplus for the year		<u>29,352</u>	<u>(2,365)</u>	<u>26,987</u>	<u>68,956</u>

MAIDSTONE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU

SCHEDULES TO THE DETAILED INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total 2023 £	Total 2022 £
1. Establishment expenses				
Rent	2,639	24,021	26,660	23,000
Insurance - premises	149	845	994	836
Water	53	368	421	131
Gas	246	1,883	2,129	1,887
Electricity	382	2,613	2,995	1,532
Repairs and renewals - premises	3,356	20,420	23,776	2,958
Cleaning and cleaning materials	206	1,274	1,480	1,502
	<u>7,031</u>	<u>51,424</u>	<u>58,455</u>	<u>31,846</u>
2. Administration expenses				
Salaries and social security costs	90,665	500,440	591,105	582,365
Pension scheme contributions	19,499	51,006	70,505	71,171
Travel costs	143	1,765	1,908	2,407
Training	108	633	741	126
Health and safety	58	508	566	796
Books, information and IT systems	1,537	9,375	10,912	19,050
Telephone	2,454	14,292	16,746	13,340
Printing and stationery	253	1,627	1,880	600
Postage	128	731	859	684
Advertising and publicity	47	330	377	387
Computer and office expenses	375	7,360	7,735	4,603
Other office costs	322	2,029	2,351	1,965
Insurance	431	2,441	2,872	84
Hire of rooms	55	2,087	2,142	212
Universal Credit – Citizens Advice	150	1,047	1,197	20,093
	<u>116,225</u>	<u>595,671</u>	<u>711,896</u>	<u>717,883</u>
3. Sundry expenses				
Bank charges	23	158	181	133
Auditors' remuneration	1,260	7,143	8,403	7,423
Sundry expenses	-	-	-	-
AGM and other meetings	102	708	810	507
Professional fees	19	751	770	305
	<u>1,404</u>	<u>8,760</u>	<u>10,164</u>	<u>8,368</u>

MAIDSTONE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU

England & Wales - Charity number 299055

Accounts

MAIDSTONE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU
(A company limited by guarantee)

REPORTS AND ACCOUNTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

Registered Charity No. 299055

Company No. 02234220

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MAIDSTONE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU
REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

The Maidstone Citizens Advice Bureau is a company limited by guarantee and a registered charity governed by its Memorandum and Articles of Association (Charity number 299055, Company number 02234220).

Citizens Advice Maidstone is the operating name of Maidstone Citizens Advice Bureau.

The Board of Trustees

The Trustees of the charitable company are its directors for the purposes of company law and throughout this report are collectively referred to as the 'Trustees'.

The members of the Board of Trustees who served during the year were as follows:

Elected Trustees

Mr S Bonny Malhotra (Chair)
Mrs S Hawkins (Co Vice-Chair)
Mr R Bird (Co Vice-Chair)
Mr D Parrish (Hon Treasurer; appointed 13 September 2021)
Mr J Cobbett
Mrs W Foster
Mr I R Owen
Mr A Breen
Ms J S Woods (appointed 13 September 2021)
Mr M F Ford (resigned 13 September 2021)

Co-opted Members

Cllr P Harper
Ms L Mason (appointed 9 May 2022)
Mr P J Stonely (appointed 9 May 2022)

Staff Representatives

Mr P Hardy
Mr S Jones
Mrs T Weber

Senior Leadership Team

Mr P Hardy - CEO
Mrs S Smith - Advice Manager
Mr I Park - Service Manager Projects
Mrs T Weber - Operations Manager
Mrs J Woods - Administration Manager (left 31 July 2021)

Registered Office and Principal Address

2 Bower Terrace, Tonbridge Road, Maidstone, Kent, ME16 8RY

Statutory Auditors

Azets Audit Services, Globe House, Eclipse Park, Sittingbourne Road, Maidstone, Kent, ME14 3EN

MAIDSTONE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU

TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

The Trustees present their report and the audited financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2022. The Trustees confirm that the annual report and financial statements of Citizens Advice Maidstone comply with current statutory requirements, the requirements of Citizens Advice Maidstone's governing document and the provisions of the Statement of Recommended Practice – Accounting and Reporting by Charities (SORP FRS 102).

Objectives and activities

Citizens Advice Maidstone provides independent, free, confidential, impartial advice to everyone regardless of their race, gender, sexuality or disability. Citizens Advice Maidstone aims to ensure that individuals do not suffer through a lack of knowledge of their rights and responsibilities or of the services available to them, or through an inability to express their needs effectively. The Citizens Advice Maidstone also aims to exercise a responsible influence on the development of social policies and services both locally and nationally through the work of the Research and Campaign team.

Public benefit

The Trustees confirm that they have complied with the duty in section 4 of the Charities Act 2006 to have due regard to the guidance contained in the Charity Commission's general guidance on the public benefit when reviewing the local office aims and objectives and in the planning of future activities.

Achievements and performance

Our goal is to empower clients solving their problems by themselves; others requiring more support do receive further help through detailed work conducted by our specialists and generalist volunteer advisers. Citizens Advice Maidstone provides free, independent, confidential and impartial advice to everyone on their rights and responsibilities. The organisation values diversity; promotes equity & inclusion and challenges discrimination. This essential work is professionally carried out by our team of paid and voluntary staff helping people to solve their problems and changing their lives. In order to prevent financial problems re-emerging, we also run educational services such as financial capability or energy efficiency training sessions in collaboration with other local offices.

Our office is located on Tonbridge Road. A number of outreach sessions are also provided at certain parishes in the Borough by appointment. This enables us to connect with a broad and diverse client base within the Borough. Clients can approach our service for face-to-face advice; by telephone; by email or digitally for those who otherwise cannot access us easily.

The Citizens Advice Membership Scheme requires each local Citizens Advice to carry out a Leadership Self-Assessment each year. The Board worked together with paid and volunteer staff to look at its policies and procedures and submitted its Assessment to the Performance Assessor under the system. The Organisation has been judged to be at a good standard.

Our workforce, both paid and voluntary have produced an excellent set of statistics, the majority of which can be seen in our Annual Report. Suffice to say that we continue to provide our service to many more people than other similar organisations. Financially it has been a better year with us securing funding for new projects. Notwithstanding, our total income for the year was £805,631 (2021:£860,112) with the expenditure pegged at £758,097 (2021:£793,704) showing a surplus of £47,534 (2021:£66,408) for the 2021/22 financial year. There was a gain on the pension scheme liability of £21,422, which has been separately disclosed this year, giving an overall surplus for the year of £68,956. At the end of the Financial Year our Restricted Reserves were £54,914 (2021:£60,549) and Unrestricted Reserves stood at £268,230 (2021:£193,639).

Demonstrating the value of our work is crucial, as the pressures on the public finances continues to gather pace with national and local spending decreasing further year on year. It is our responsibility to communicate to funders why Citizens Advice is an essential service and not just 'nice to have'. Citizens Advice Maidstone is unique for many reasons: in our team we have a total of 30 paid staff equating to almost 22 FTE, of which 16 FTE work within our various projects and the remainder form part of our core service. Our team of 40+ volunteers includes Trustees, advisers, administrators, trainees and assessors.

Our services are provided with funding from a wide variety of sources. A Service Level Agreement with Maidstone Borough Council allows us to provide the essential Core Service of general and specialist advice through digital and face-to-face formats to clients in the Borough of Maidstone. Additional funding from Golding Homes helps to add services to their tenants in the Town. We have contracts with Citizens Advice to provide PensionWise guidance and Money Advice. Pension Wise provides a service throughout Kent and East Sussex. Citizens Advice also provide funding for Universal Credit (help to claim). Our work in HMP Maidstone continues to be funded by Henry Smith Charity and latterly also from HMP Maidstone. Funding for our work on the Energy Advice Programme (EAP), formerly Energy Best Deal (EBD) came through National Citizens Advice and amongst all these, other smaller projects were funded through smaller grants from external funding sources.

MAIDSTONE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU
TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT (CONTINUED)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

Achievements and performance (continued)

We continue to work with a number of partners within Local Government and Statutory Agencies to improve the policies and practices that affect our communities. We work collectively with other Local Citizens Advice centres in Kent to inform public policy and help regulators, as well as influence private industry to make their services fair for consumers. In addition to Local and National campaigning, with the help of our volunteers we empower clients and communities to engage with society and make a difference to issues that matter. We hope to expand our use of volunteers as feasible to do so.

Volunteers are vital to the service in Citizens Advice Maidstone. Trustees and our Management Team are working in partnership with our paid and voluntary staff to provide excellent quality advice and support to over 10,000 people, with over 27,000 different issues in the Borough of Maidstone.

Additionally, Trustees are also engaged in providing direction in the Governance of our office. Our Volunteers are an integral part of the way we deliver our advice, support and service today to the communities of Maidstone, and have been since the conception of Local Citizens Advice (LCAs) over 80 years ago in 1939. The service in Maidstone commenced on the 1st January 1940 and over the years has dealt with around 1.5 Million problems.

Volunteers have always been integral to the Citizens Advice service and are increasingly involved in delivering services within all areas of advice work. Volunteers bring with them a wealth of experience and skills and it is important for us to recognise the resource we have within the service. Volunteers are vital to the way we deliver our service, allowing us to reach many more people than if we were purely delivering our work through paid staff. Volunteers undertake a range of tasks from assessing and providing advice, supporting the running of our local office, campaigning in the community and acting as Trustees.

Our volunteers come from a wide range of backgrounds, including young people, professionals who want to broaden their horizons, retired people who want to give something back and mothers whose children have started school – so we offer a range of support services to meet the needs of all our volunteers too. Our commitment to value diversity, promote equity and inclusion means we can encourage individuals who might not otherwise wish/be able to volunteer.

Understanding our trainee volunteers' needs and expectations is a very important aspect of the training programme. Providing a well-structured training plan helps the trainee to gain better employment prospects as well as offering an opportunity for personal development, increased confidence, self-esteem, and wellbeing.

Providing an active contribution to the day-to-day running of a LCA can develop volunteers' practical skills, such as problem solving, communication and teamwork, as well as boost their confidence and belief in their abilities. This improves employability, presents career development opportunities, and can help those currently unemployed, move into work.

Volunteering provides individuals with an opportunity they might not otherwise have to develop their personal skills and abilities. For those out of work, volunteering keeps them active and motivated, potentially countering the negative impacts of unemployment on mental wellbeing – research shows that one in five jobseeker's allowance claimants experience a mental health disorder.

Volunteering enables people to realise their own potential, supporting priorities around increased social mobility – 29 per cent of volunteers that left the Citizens Advice service did so for paid employment, education or training (National Statistics). It also enables individuals to make an economic contribution to society, one which may be factored into future national Gross Domestic Product and productivity calculations.

Volunteering with Citizens Advice can also develop an individual's softer skills, resilience and other personal attributes. This can have a positive impact on how people feel about themselves, how they respond to others and their capacity to manage life's challenges.

For retired individuals, volunteering may offer different opportunities, provide structure and a sense of purpose as well as help them feel involved in society, all highlighted as vital to personal wellbeing. Ensuring that retired people are mentally and physically active also has wider reaching benefits to society, including reducing the NHS provision required to cope with an ageing population. Volunteering with us does not just have an impact on individuals, it benefits communities too. Our volunteers are local people, and through volunteering, they increase their knowledge about community issues and build relationships with their locality. This creates stronger communities, with engaged and active members, and more social action.

MAIDSTONE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU
TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT (CONTINUED)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

Achievements and performance (continued)

The Citizens Advice service also plays an integral role in supporting and strengthening its local community. We provide a service that meets local needs and reaches out to a broad and diverse client base. We support and strengthen other community-focused organisations, partnering with them to share our insight on how best to support local people. We also use our extensive knowledge to act as an advocate for the local area, mobilising and connecting people with their community. We are a local service, working with local people, for the benefit of the local community.

The value we get from working with volunteers is greater than just our ability to provide a quality advice service. In addition, our investment in developing volunteers, and enabling them to volunteer in their local area, has tangible benefits for the individual, community, and society at large. This is an additional benefit to the community, created through the way we deliver our service.

As we approached the end of the 2021/22 financial year, we were faced with perhaps our biggest challenge yet – how to continue to deliver our much-needed service, a lifeline for so many, in the wake of the Coronavirus epidemic. This was truly an unprecedented situation, forcing us to work in very different ways and provide the vast majority of our services remotely, via telephone as well as digital means. Fortunately, our staff and volunteers adapted to the new regime extremely well and it is a credit to their dedication and commitment that in this most demanding of times. We are very proud that we were only unable to deliver our service to the public for one working day since the government announced the nationwide lockdown measures in March 2020.

Data

We give advice to people who need help, but we also collect statistical data on all these issues. For example, we can show attendant issues affecting people who come to us with problems around council tax. As a result, we are better able to ascertain the most efficient ways to help people understand their problems more completely. For councils and councillors, this data is powerful. It can help address failure demand, facilitate the consideration of new service options and provide additional insight to the scrutiny process.

Councils are increasingly working together to deliver services in new ways and save costs, whether in shared service arrangements or in combined authorities with devolution deals. This can also unlock funding and address long-standing problems across the county. We want to be able to work with our local government—at parish, district, county level—to inform debate with our data and client stories. More than this, we can provide innovative services that mesh closely with those offered by public authorities. Citizens Advice is working nationally to make this as easy as possible, with new data products for combining output and impact data across variable geography as well as direct support to areas of innovation across our network.

Social Exclusion

People can suffer social exclusion when they face a series of problems such as poor skills, low incomes, bad housing and family breakdown.

As a result of their experiences and development at Citizens Advice Maidstone, our volunteers are better equipped and more confident in their abilities, and hence are more likely to move into employment. This has a true value to society, by moving people closer to the labour market, which may reduce their need to claim benefits related to unemployment. It may also reduce other costs to the state associated with sustained unemployment, especially for young people not in employment, education or training. Equally, community volunteering enables unemployed individuals to make a form of economic contribution to society, the value of which may be factored into future national GDP and productivity calculations.

Citizens Advice has a major impact on people's lives, particularly the most vulnerable in society. Our service is best known for solving problems through advice, but we also make a difference by solving the underlying causes of these problems through our research and campaigns volunteers. Our work has also contributed to vital policy changes that will help more people make ends meet.

MAIDSTONE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU
TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT (CONTINUED)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

Achievements and performance (continued)

Pension Wise

Citizens Advice Maidstone is one of the LCAs who have been delivering the government's Pension Wise service for the last 6 years. Launched in April 2015, Pension Wise was a new guidance service set up to help people understand their options under the pension freedoms. Citizens Advice Maidstone delivers Pension Wise appointments throughout Kent, Medway and East Sussex. During 2021/22 we have delivered Pension Wise appointments by telephone to people aged 50 and over with a defined contribution pension.

Key statistics (PW)

During 2021/22, Citizens Advice nationally delivered 70,835 appointments across England, Wales and Northern Ireland. Since the service started, people have continued to value the high-quality guidance and support they receive. Satisfaction scores have remained over 95% for 2021/22.

Money Advice

National research shows that just over a quarter of adults say that they do not consider themselves to be good at managing money and one third say that they would prefer not to think about planning their finances at all. Many people have poor financial skills, and this often leads them to make ill-informed decisions on their money matters. Citizens Advice has found that the negative effects of a lack of financial awareness can be compounded by limited or poor-quality consumer information and inadequate advice. People can miss out on the growing range of financial products available and fail to make the best use of Government initiatives. However, building the necessary confidence in financial services is an uphill task. Citizens Advice Maidstone helps people resolve their money, legal and other problems by providing information and advice as well as by influencing policymakers. Our service is the largest provider of free money advice in the Borough of Maidstone. We provide specialist level money advice services, helping people resolve a range of money and debt issues. By providing advice and information about money in the heart of our community, we help people resolve a range of debt and personal finance-related problems.

The Citizens Advice service is a network of independent, local charities that helps people resolve their money, legal and other problems. The service is the largest provider of free advice in the UK. Citizens Advice also uses evidence of clients' money problems to campaign for change and is contributing to the Government's plan to provide all UK adults with access to generic financial advice. Citizens Advice wants people to have the skills, knowledge and confidence to make informed decisions across a range of personal money matters. We work with a range of partner agencies to improve the financial skills of people of all ages, particularly those at risk of social or financial exclusion.

Financial skills training can change behaviour - participants become better at budgeting, choosing financial products, saving and making their money go further and these changes persist over time. Developing financial skills not only boosts financial well-being but also confidence and general peace of mind. Tenants who do get into financial difficulty know where to turn to for help, seek out support sooner and as a result, are better equipped to cope.

Prison Work

Citizens Advice Maidstone's strategy aims to increase the capacity of our paid and voluntary staff to deal with our clients' debt and other money problems in order to prevent the financial problems faced by many people becoming major crises. This supports our wider focus of encouraging our team to work with more vulnerable groups such as offenders to meet their finance, benefit and debt needs. In relation to offenders, Citizens Advice is clear that personal debt and other financial problems can be a cause of an individual offending in the first place, and such problems can increase the likelihood of reoffending on release. Being able to manage debt and other financial problems during a prison sentence or upon release into the community could help to reduce re-offending.

Many offenders with families may fall into rent or mortgage arrears caused by a reduction of income during their prison sentence. Stable accommodation can help reduce re-offending by providing a secure environment in which to live, enabling them to open a bank account, receive benefits and find regular employment. Timely access to advice can, among other things, secure accommodation for an offender or their family on release; ensure access to benefits for the payment of rent and advocate on behalf the family if they are refused support from the local authority. Such services can greatly reduce the risk of re-offending. Debt can also present problems for offenders and their families both during their sentence and after release.

MAIDSTONE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU
TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT (CONTINUED)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

Achievements and performance (continued)

As the Social Exclusion Unit report identified; finance, benefit and debt issues are inextricably tied to many other key factors which exacerbate reoffending. Ensuring ex-offenders have enough lawfully obtained money to live on is key to their rehabilitation and to reducing temptation into re-offending, but many face significant problems achieving financial security. Low incomes, debt, disrupted access to benefits advice and insufficient income on release from prison all add to the problem. The National Offender Management Services (NOMS') aim is to ensure that offenders in custody and the prison community have access to financial and advice services that will address money-related issues, maximise income and reduce debt to help prevent re-offending. A key element of this work is to develop close partnership working between prison and probation services, and voluntary and community sector providers who are willing to work with offenders.

Risk Management

Trustees regularly meet to consider the financial and other risks relating to the activities of the charity and take appropriate action as and when required. A comprehensive risk register is maintained and reviewed at every Trustee meeting. During the year we have had to limit face to face interviews to where there is no other way to help clients due to restrictions caused by resource shortages, although the Citizens Advice Maidstone managed to maintain a service by offering advice digitally by telephone and online with staff working from home. Some consideration has been given to the issues which may result from the Coronavirus pandemic and these include debt, mental health problems, and domestic violence.

Planning for the future

The business strategy adopted by the Trustee Board is to safeguard the Core service with free generalist advice covering a full range of issues. This service has hitherto been funded by a Grant from Maidstone Borough Council. This is now steadily being reduced; nevertheless, we are most grateful for the Council's continuing support. Citizens Advice Maidstone seeks additional funding from other sources in order to shore up the core service and provide other services if it is financially prudent to do so. Citizens Advice Maidstone's management has been successful in securing such funding from a variety of sources, including the Citizens Advice/Treasury (Department of Works & Pensions), Henry Smith Charity, Money Advice Service and Energy (Citizens Advice). The management continues to develop new and innovative partnerships with a wide stakeholder group in response to steadily dwindling financial resources.

Financial review

The net surplus for the year amounted to £68,956 (2021:£66,408). There was a surplus of £74,591 in relation to unrestricted business. As at 31 March 2022 general unrestricted reserves amount to £268,230 (2021:£193,639) and total restricted reserves amounted to £54,914 (2021:£60,549).

Reserves Policy

The Board of Trustees regularly reviews the finances and reserves of Citizens Advice Maidstone. Each review encompasses the nature of the income and expenditure streams and the need to match variable income with fixed commitments and the nature of reserves. Citizens Advice Maidstone sets aside restricted funds as set out in the Statement of Financial Activities. All restricted funds are applied to the particular restricted activity (project). Restricted funds unspent in a particular financial year are allocated as reserves in statutory accounts at the end of the financial year and will be allocated to that restricted activity (project) during the course of the following financial year or when the activity ends. Restricted funds at 31 March 2022 were £54,914 (2021:£60,549).

Trustees have discussed levels of unrestricted reserves and are agreed that in all circumstances Citizens Advice Maidstone's core services must be secure. A minimum sum of six months unrestricted (core) expenditure with a contingency of 10% will ensure that this aspiration is preserved, as at 31 March 2022 this was estimated to be £92k (2021: three months only £40k). In addition to this further reserves will be held as an allocation for core management activities to cover certain members of our project staff who support all aspects of the Bureau's activities, as at 31 March 2022 this was estimated to be £138k. Therefore the total reserves the trustees aim to hold is £230,000.

As at 31 March 2022 unrestricted general reserves are £233,748 (2021: £159,157) and designated reserves are £34,482 (2021: £34,482).

MAIDSTONE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU
TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT (CONTINUED)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

Going concern

The Trustees have considered the impact of the COVID-19 virus on the future activity of the charity. The Trustees do not expect a reduction in activity in the long term. As a consequence of this factor and other evidence available to the Trustees in respect of the charity's activities and level of reserves, the Trustees are satisfied that the charity has sufficient resources to meet its liabilities as they fall due for a period of at least twelve months from the date of signing of these financial statements. Accordingly, the Trustees confirm that they consider that the 'going concern' basis remains appropriate.

Structure, governance and management

Citizens Advice Maidstone is a member of Citizens Advice, which provides a framework for standards of advice management as well as monitoring progress against these standards. The Board of Trustees produces an annual report detailing Citizens Advice Maidstone's activities during the year. The report is available on request from the office.

(a) Method of appointment or election of Trustees

In accordance with the Articles of Association (revised 23 September 2013 to bring our Memorandum and Articles of Association in line with the national policy of Citizens Advice and the guidance of the Charity Commission) the Trustee Board consists of a minimum of 3 and a maximum of 15 members. There may be a maximum of 10 elected members, each of whom is elected for a term of three years by the members of the company at its Annual General Meeting. At expiry of their term of office elected Trustees are eligible for re-election. In addition, the Trustee Board may co-opt members, whose number may not exceed one third of the total number of Trustees. No member of the staff of the office whether paid or voluntary can be a member of the Board. However, the Chief Executive, one representative of the paid staff and one representative of the voluntary staff, have the right to attend and speak (but not vote) at meetings of the Board.

(b) Operational structure and decision making

The Trustee Board sets the overall policy and direction of Citizens Advice Maidstone's business within the parameters set by the Citizens Advice Membership Agreement and any Service Level Agreements or contracts currently in being. Operational decisions are made by the Chief Executive subject to any specific Trustee Board directions and referring to the Trustee Board as necessary. The Trustee Board meets once every two months. Financial oversight is delegated to the Finance Committee which meets 14 days before the Trustee Board to appraise financial reports and recommend action to the Trustee Board.

Trustees' responsibilities in relation to the financial statements

The Trustees as directors are responsible for preparing the Trustees' Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and regulation.

Company law requires the Trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year. Under that law the Trustees have elected to prepare the financial statements in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice (United Kingdom Accounting Standards and applicable law). Under company law the Trustees must not approve the financial statements unless they are satisfied that they give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity and of the results of the charity for that period. In preparing these financial statements, the Trustees are required to:-

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in business.

The Trustees are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that are sufficient to show and explain the charity's transactions and disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with Companies Act 2006 and the Charities Act 2011.

They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

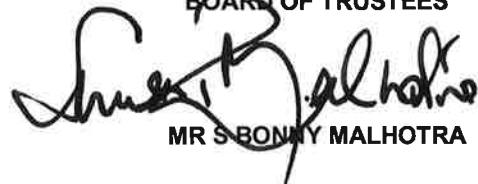
MAIDSTONE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU
TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT (CONTINUED)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

Disclosure of information to auditors

In accordance with company law, as the company's directors, we confirm that:

- so far as we are aware, there is no relevant audit information of which the charity's auditors are unaware; and
- as the directors of the company, we have taken all the steps that we ought to have taken in order to make ourselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the charity's auditors are aware of that information.

ON BEHALF OF THE
BOARD OF TRUSTEES


MR S BONNY MALHOTRA

Registered office
2 Bower Terrace
Tonbridge Road
Maidstone
Kent ME16 8RY

Date 23 September 2022

MAIDSTONE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU

INDEPENDENT AUDITORS' REPORT TO THE MEMBERS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of Maidstone Citizens Advice Bureau (the 'charitable company') for the year ended 31 March 2022 which comprise the Statement of Financial Activities, the Balance Sheet, the Cash Flow Statement and the related notes. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards, including FRS 102 "The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland" (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

In our opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the charitable company's affairs as at 31 March 2022 and of its incoming resources and application of resources, including its income and expenditure, for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice; and have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006.

Basis for opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs (UK)) and applicable law. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of our report. We are independent of the charitable company in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in the UK, including the FRC's Ethical Standard, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Conclusions relating to going concern

In auditing the financial statements, we have concluded that the Trustees' use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

Based on the work we have performed, we have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the charitable company's ability to continue as a going concern for a period of at least twelve months from when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

Our responsibilities and the responsibilities of the Trustees with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this report.

Other information

The other information comprises the information included in the Trustees Annual Report, other than the financial statements and our auditor's report thereon. The Trustees are responsible for the other information contained within the annual report. Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in our report, we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon. Our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the course of the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether this gives rise to a material misstatement in the financial statements themselves. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact.

We have nothing to report in this regard.

Opinions on other matters prescribed by the Companies Act 2006

In our opinion, based on the work undertaken in the course of the audit:

- the information given in the Trustees' Report and the incorporated Strategic Report prepared for the purpose of company law for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements; and
- the Trustees' Report and the incorporated Strategic Report have been prepared in accordance with applicable legal requirements.

MAIDSTONE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU

INDEPENDENT AUDITORS' REPORT TO THE MEMBERS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

Matters on which we are required to report by exception

In the light of the knowledge and understanding of the charitable company and its environment obtained in the course of the audit, we have not identified material misstatements in the Trustees' Report and the incorporated Strategic Report.

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters where the Companies Act 2006 requires us to report to you if, in our opinion:

- adequate accounting records have not been kept, or returns adequate for our audit have not been received from branches not visited by us; or
- the financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or
- certain disclosures of Trustees' remuneration specified by law are not made; or
- we have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit.

Responsibilities of Trustees

As explained more fully in the Statement of Trustees' responsibilities set out on page 15, the Trustees (who are also the directors of the charitable company for the purposes of company law) are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the Trustees determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the Trustees are responsible for assessing the charitable company's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the Trustees either intend to liquidate the charitable company or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

Extent to which the audit was considered capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud

Irregularities, including fraud, are instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations. We design procedures in line with our responsibilities, outlined above and on the Financial Reporting Council's website, to detect material misstatements in respect of irregularities, including fraud.

We obtain and update our understanding of the entity, its activities, its control environment, and likely future developments, including in relation to the legal and regulatory framework applicable and how the entity is complying with that framework. Based on this understanding, we identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion. This includes consideration of the risk of acts by the entity that were contrary to applicable laws and regulations, including fraud.

In response to the risk of irregularities and non-compliance with laws and regulations, including fraud, we designed procedures which included:

- Enquiry of management and those charged with governance around actual and potential litigation and claims as well as actual, suspected and alleged fraud;
- Reviewing minutes of meetings of those charged with governance;
- Assessing the extent of compliance with the laws and regulations considered to have a direct material effect on the financial statements or the operations of the company through enquiry and inspection;
- Reviewing financial statement disclosures and testing to supporting documentation to assess compliance with applicable laws and regulations;
- Performing audit work over the risk of management bias and override of controls, including testing of journal entries and other adjustments for appropriateness, evaluating the business rationale of significant transactions outside the normal course of business and reviewing accounting estimates for indicators of potential bias.

MAIDSTONE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU

INDEPENDENT AUDITORS' REPORT TO THE MEMBERS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

Because of the inherent limitations of an audit, there is a risk that we will not detect all irregularities, including those leading to a material misstatement in the financial statements or non-compliance with regulation. This risk increases the more that compliance with a law or regulation is removed from the events and transactions reflected in the financial statements, as we will be less likely to become aware of instances of non-compliance. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.

As part of an audit in accordance with ISAs (UK), we exercise professional judgment and maintain professional scepticism throughout the audit. We also:

- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the charitable company's internal control.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by the Trustees.
- Conclude on the appropriateness of the Trustees' use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the charitable company's ability to continue as a going concern. If we conclude that a material uncertainty exists, we are required to draw attention in our auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial statements or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify our opinion. Our conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of our auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause the charitable company to cease to continue as a going concern.
- Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial statements, including the disclosures, and whether the financial statements represent the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation (i.e. gives a true and fair view).

We communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that we identify during our audit.

Use of our report

This report is made solely to the charitable company's members, as a body, in accordance with Chapter 3 of Part 16 of the Companies Act 2006. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the charitable company's members those matters we are required to state to them in an auditor's report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the charitable company and the charitable company's members as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.



Michelle Wilkes FCA (Senior Statutory Auditor)
for and on behalf of Azets Audit Services

6 October 2022.....

Statutory Auditor

Globe House, Eclipse Park
Sittingbourne Road
Maidstone
Kent
ME14 3EN

MAIDSTONE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES (INCLUDING INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

	Notes	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total 2022 £	Total 2021 £
INCOME:					
Donations and legacies	3	955	-	955	7,091
Charitable activities	4	178,371	626,258	804,629	852,838
Investments		47	-	47	183
TOTAL INCOME		<u>179,373</u>	<u>626,258</u>	<u>805,631</u>	<u>860,112</u>
EXPENDITURE:					
Charitable activities	5	126,204	631,893	758,097	793,704
TOTAL EXPENDITURE		<u>126,204</u>	<u>631,893</u>	<u>758,097</u>	<u>793,704</u>
Net income before gains on pension scheme		<u>53,169</u>	<u>(5,635)</u>	<u>47,534</u>	<u>66,408</u>
Gains on pension scheme	18	<u>21,422</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>21,422</u>	<u>-</u>
NET MOVEMENT ON FUNDS		74,591	(5,635)	68,956	66,408
Total funds at 1 April 2021		<u>193,639</u>	<u>60,549</u>	<u>254,188</u>	<u>187,780</u>
Total funds at 31 March 2022		<u>268,230</u>	<u>54,914</u>	<u>323,144</u>	<u>254,188</u>

All income and expenditure derive from continuing activities.

The Statement of Financial Activities includes all gains and losses recognised during the year.

The notes on pages 16 to 24 form part of these financial statements.

MAIDSTONE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES (INCLUDING INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

Comparative year information

Year ended 31 March 2021

	Notes	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total 2021 £	Total 2020 £
INCOME:					
Donations and legacies	3	7,091	-	7,091	8,141
Charitable activities	4	147,931	704,907	852,838	938,868
Investments		183	-	183	330
TOTAL INCOME		<u>155,205</u>	<u>704,907</u>	<u>860,112</u>	<u>947,339</u>
EXPENDITURE:					
Charitable activities	5	<u>135,586</u>	658,118	793,704	835,814
TOTAL EXPENDITURE		<u>135,586</u>	<u>658,118</u>	<u>793,704</u>	<u>835,814</u>
NET MOVEMENT ON FUNDS		19,619	46,789	66,408	111,525
Transfers	14	(5,386)	5,386	-	-
Total funds at 1 April 2020		<u>179,406</u>	8,374	187,780	76,255
Total funds at 31 March 2021		<u><u>193,639</u></u>	<u><u>60,549</u></u>	<u><u>254,188</u></u>	<u><u>187,780</u></u>

MAIDSTONE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU

BALANCE SHEET

AS AT 31 MARCH 2022

	Notes	£	2022 £	£	2021 £
TANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS	10		-		-
CURRENT ASSETS					
Accrued income		4,740		-	
Cash at bank and in hand		<u>333,192</u>		<u>335,908</u>	
		<u>337,932</u>		<u>335,908</u>	
CREDITORS: AMOUNTS FALLING DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR					
Accruals, other creditors and deferred income	11	<u>9,605</u>		<u>55,115</u>	
NET CURRENT ASSETS			328,327		280,793
Provision for liabilities and charges	18		<u>5,183</u>		<u>26,605</u>
NET ASSETS			<u><u>323,144</u></u>		<u><u>254,188</u></u>
General unrestricted funds	12		233,748		159,157
Designated funds	13		34,482		34,482
Restricted funds	14		<u>54,914</u>		<u>60,549</u>
	15		<u><u>323,144</u></u>		<u><u>254,188</u></u>

Approved by the Board of Trustees on 23 September 2022, and are signed on its behalf by:



.....
MR S BONNY MALHOTRA
CHAIR OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES



.....
MR D PARRISH
MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Company No. 02234220

The notes on pages 16 to 25 form part of these financial statements.

MAIDSTONE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU

STATEMENT OF CASH FLOW

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

	Notes	2022 £	2021 £
Cash flows from operating activities	17	<u>(2,763)</u>	<u>77,130</u>
Net cash (outflow)/inflow from operating activities		(2,763)	77,130
Investing activities			
Interest received	<u>47</u>	<u>183</u>	
Net cash generated from investing activities		47	183
Net (decrease)/increase in cash and cash equivalents		<u>(2,716)</u>	<u>77,313</u>
Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of year		<u>335,908</u>	<u>258,595</u>
Cash and cash equivalents at end of year		<u><u>333,192</u></u>	<u><u>335,908</u></u>

The notes on pages 16 to 25 form part of these financial statements.

MAIDSTONE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

1. Accounting policies

a) Basis of accounting

The Maidstone Citizens Advice Bureau (the 'charity') is a charitable company limited by guarantee, registered with the Charity Commission in England & Wales. The address of the registered office is given in the charity information on page 1 of these financial statements. The nature of the charity's operations and principal activities are detailed in page 2 of these financial statements. The charity constitutes a public benefit entity as defined by FRS 102.

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK (FRS102) issued in October 2019, the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the United Kingdom (FRS102), the Charities Act 2011 and UK Generally Accepted Practice.

The financial statements are prepared in sterling which is the functional currency of the charity and rounded to the nearest £1.

The significant accounting policies applied in the preparation of these financial statements are set out below. These policies have been consistently applied to all years presented unless otherwise stated.

The charity has availed itself of Paragraph 4(1) of Schedule 1 of the Small Companies and Groups (Accounts and Directors' Reports) Regulations 2008 and adapted the format of the financial statements to reflect the special nature of the charity's activities.

b) Going Concern

These financial statements are prepared on the going concern basis as the Trustees believe that no material uncertainties exist.

The Trustees have considered the level of reserves and expected level of income and expenditure and are satisfied that the charity has sufficient resources to meet its liabilities as they fall due for a period of at least twelve months from the date of signing of these financial statements. Accordingly, the financial statements are prepared on a going concern basis and do not include any adjustments which would be necessary if this basis of preparation was inappropriate.

c) Fund accounting

Unrestricted funds are those available for use at the discretion of the Trustees in the furtherance of the general objectives of the charity which have not been designated for other purposes. Designated funds are unrestricted funds that have been set aside by the Trustees for particular purposes. Restricted funds are funds which are to be used in accordance with specific restrictions imposed by donors which have been raised by the charity for particular purposes.

d) Income recognition

Grants and service agreement income are recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities when the charity has entitlement to the funds, where the service it relates to has commenced, it is probable that the income will be received and the amount can be measured reliably and is not deferred. Other Income is recognised in the accounts on an accruals basis with the exception of donations which are recognised on a cash received basis.

e) Expenditure

Expenditure is recorded on an accruals basis including irrecoverable VAT and allocated on the following basis:-

- Costs directly allocated - actual basis.
- Support costs - depending on type of cost and the Trustees' best estimate of usage.
- Other costs – actual basis.

f) Tangible fixed assets and depreciation

Individual fixed assets costing £1,000 or more are stated at cost less depreciation. Depreciation is provided on office and computer equipment to write off the cost, less estimated residual value of assets over their expected useful economic life of two or three years. At each reporting period end date, the charity reviews the carrying amounts of its tangible assets to determine whether there is any indication that those assets have suffered an impairment loss. If any such indication exists, the recoverable amount of the asset is estimated in order to determine the extent of the impairment loss (if any).

MAIDSTONE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU
NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS (CONTINUED)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

1. Accounting policies (continued)

g) Operating leases

Rentals payable under operating leases are charged on a straight line basis over the lease term.

h) Pensions

Contributions payable to the charity's multi-employer pension plan are charged to the income and expenditure account on a payments basis.

The charity recognises a liability for the obligation under the pension plan's recovery plan. The amount recognised is the net present value of the deficit reduction contributions payable under the agreement. The present value is calculated using the discount rate disclosed in note 18.

i) Debtors and creditors receivable/payable within one year

Debtors and creditors with no stated interest rate and receivable or payable within one year are recorded at transaction price. Any losses arising from impairment are recognised in the statement of financial activities under expenditure arising on charitable activities.

j) Employee benefits

When employees have rendered service to the charity, short-term employee benefits to which the employees are entitled are recognised at the undiscounted amount expected to be paid in exchange for that service.

k) Taxation

The charity is an exempt charity within the meaning of Schedule 3 of the Charities Act 2011 and is considered to pass the tests set out in Paragraph 1 Schedule 6 Finance Act 2010 and therefore it meets the definition of a charitable company for UK corporation tax purposes.

2. Judgements and key sources of estimation uncertainty

In the application of the charity's accounting policies, the Trustees are required to make judgements, estimates and assumptions about the carrying amount of assets and liabilities that are not readily apparent from other sources. The estimates and associated assumptions are based on historical experience and other factors that are considered to be relevant. There are no judgements or key sources of estimation uncertainty.

3. Income from donations and legacies

	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total 2022 £	Total 2021 £
Fundraising	-	-	-	1,305
Donations	955	-	955	5,786
	<u>955</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>955</u>	<u>7,091</u>

4. Income from charitable activities

	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total 2022 £	Total 2021 £
Maidstone Borough Council grants	151,100	-	151,100	142,100
Money Advice Service	-	52,168	52,168	53,169
Golding Homes	5,000	-	5,000	5,000
Pension Wise	-	355,027	355,027	442,386
Henry Smith (MDS Prison)	-	55,592	55,592	53,008
Energy Best Deal	-	22,890	22,890	26,485
Universal Credit – Help to Claim	-	126,581	126,581	129,859
Refund of overpayment of legal services commissions	-	-	-	(24,000)
South East Water Forum	-	14,000	14,000	
Other projects	22,271	-	22,271	24,831
	<u>178,371</u>	<u>626,258</u>	<u>804,629</u>	<u>852,838</u>

MAIDSTONE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

5. Analysis of expenditure

	Direct costs £	Support costs £	Total 2022 £	Total 2021 £
Citizens advice services	100,797	25,407	126,204	142,606
Prison support	43,556	17,618	61,174	43,508
Energy advice	22,890	-	22,890	19,465
Pension advice	281,714	86,417	368,131	400,573
Financial advice	40,795	11,373	52,168	58,555
Benefit advice	101,535	25,995	127,530	128,997
	<u>591,287</u>	<u>166,810</u>	<u>758,097</u>	<u>793,704</u>

6. Support costs

	Note	2022 £	2021 £
Staff costs		83,238	82,712
Premises costs		31,846	37,023
General office costs		44,170	56,623
Bank charges		133	101
Governance costs	7	7,423	5,913
		<u>166,810</u>	<u>182,372</u>

7. Governance costs

	2022 £	2021 £
Auditors' remuneration	7,423	5,913
	<u>7,423</u>	<u>5,913</u>

8. Net expenditure

This is stated after charging:

	2022 £	2021 £
Auditor's remuneration	7,423	5,913
Rent payable on property under operating leases	23,000	23,000
	<u>30,423</u>	<u>28,913</u>

MAIDSTONE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU
NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS (CONTINUED)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

9. Staff costs

	2022	2021
	£	£
Wages and salaries	574,676	574,147
Social security costs	42,127	41,069
Employer pension costs	36,734	32,788
	653,537	648,004
	653,537	648,004

The key management personnel of the charity comprise the Trustees and the bureau managers.

The Trustees received no remuneration for the year ended 31 March 2022 (2021: £Nil). During the year, two (2021: one) of the Trustees had expenses reimbursed by the charity. The total expenses reimbursed to the Trustees amounted to £70 (2021: £132). These costs related to sundry stationery and consumable supplies for staff members as well as travel and parking costs.

The total remuneration including pension contributions and employers' national insurance received by key management personnel for their service to the charity was £123,915 (2021: £125,662).

The average number of salaried employees during the year was 32 (2021: 34).

There were no employees (2021: none) who received total employee benefits (excluding employer pension costs) of more than £60,000.

10. Tangible fixed assets

	Office and computer equipment
	£
Cost	
At 1 April 2021 and at 31 March 2022	96,327
Depreciation	
At 1 April 2021 and at 31 March 2022	96,327
At 31 March 2022	-
Net book value	
At 1 April 2021 and at 31 March 2022	-

11. Accruals and deferred income

	2022	2021
	£	£
Accruals	6,544	8,715
Other creditors	3,061	24,000
Deferred income	-	22,400
	9,605	55,115
	9,605	55,115

MAIDSTONE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

12. General unrestricted funds

	2022 £	2021 £
Balance at 1 April	159,157	144,924
Net Income	74,591	19,619
Transfer to restricted funds	-	(5,386)
Balance at 31 March	<u>233,748</u>	<u>159,157</u>

13. Designated funds

	Balance at 1 April 2021 £	New designations £	Designations released £	Balance at 31 March 2022 £
Premises and development fund	<u>34,482</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>34,482</u>
Comparative year information:				
	Balance at 1 April 2020 £	New designations £	Designations released £	Balance at 31 March 2021 £
Premises and development fund	<u>34,482</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>34,482</u>

The Premises and Development Fund has been designated to provide for future resources in these two areas.

14. Restricted funds

	Balance at 1 April 2021 £	Income £	Expenditure £	Transfers £	Balance at 31 March 2022 £
Henry Smith (MDS Prison)	17,787	55,592	(61,174)	-	12,205
Energy Best Deal	-	22,890	(22,890)	-	-
Pension Wise	41,813	355,027	(368,131)	-	28,709
Money Advice Service	-	52,168	(52,168)	-	-
South East Water Forum	-	14,000	-	-	14,000
Universal Credit – Help to Claim	949	126,581	(127,530)	-	-
	<u>60,549</u>	<u>626,258</u>	<u>(631,893)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>54,914</u>
Comparative year information:					
	Balance at 1 April 2020 £	Income £	Expenditure £	Transfers £	Balance at 31 March 2021 £
Henry Smith (MDS Prison)	8,287	53,008	(43,508)	-	17,787
Energy Best Deal	-	26,485	(26,485)	-	-
Pension Wise	-	442,386	(400,573)	-	41,813
Money Advice Service	-	53,169	(58,555)	5,386	-
Universal Credit – Help to Claim	87	129,859	(128,997)	-	949
	<u>8,374</u>	<u>704,907</u>	<u>(658,118)</u>	<u>5,386</u>	<u>60,549</u>

MAIDSTONE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU
NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS (CONTINUED)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

14. Restricted funds (continued)

The objective of the Henry Smith Fund (Maidstone Prison Advice Project) is to provide advice and support to prisoners, staff and their families.

The objective of Energy Best Deal is to inform consumers how to reduce energy bills by efficiency savings or switching suppliers and to provide information about the help available from energy suppliers and government for consumers struggling to pay energy bills.

The objective of Pension Wise is to provide impartial pension advice and guidance.

The objective for the Money Advice Service is to provide free and impartial money advice.

The objective of the South East Water Forum is to provide free advice to manage water consumption and bills.

The objective of the Universal Credit – Help to Claim Fund is to provide advice and assistance to persons requiring financial support.

15. Analysis of net assets between funds

	Unrestricted funds 2022 £	Restricted funds 2022 £	Total 2022 £
Current assets	274,394	63,538	337,932
Amounts falling due within one year	(981)	(8,624)	(9,605)
Provisions	(5,183)	-	(5,183)
	<u>268,230</u>	<u>54,914</u>	<u>323,144</u>
	Unrestricted funds 2021 £	Restricted funds 2021 £	Total 2021 £
Current assets	255,419	79,949	335,908
Amounts falling due within one year	(35,175)	(19,400)	(55,115)
Provisions	(26,605)	-	(26,605)
	<u>193,639</u>	<u>60,549</u>	<u>254,188</u>

16. Financial commitments

The charity had commitments under non-cancellable operating leases as follows:

	Land and buildings 2022 £	Land and buildings 2021 £
Expiry within one year	23,000	23,000
Expiry in 2 to 5 years	92,000	92,000
Expiry in over 5 years	120,750	143,750
	<u>235,750</u>	<u>258,750</u>

MAIDSTONE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

17. Cash generated from operations

	2022	2021
	£	£
Net income	68,956	66,408
Adjustments for:		
Investment income	(47)	(183)
(Increase)/decrease in debtors	(4,740)	400
(Decrease)/increase in creditors	(45,510)	15,424
Decrease in pension provision	(21,422)	(4,919)
Cashflow from operating activities	<u>(2,763)</u>	<u>77,130</u>

18. Pension commitments

TPT Retirement Solutions – The Growth Plan

The charity participates in the scheme, a multi-employer scheme which provides benefits to some 638 non-associated participating employers. The scheme is a defined benefit scheme in the UK. It is not possible for the charity to obtain sufficient information to enable it to account for the scheme as a defined benefit scheme. Therefore it accounts for the scheme as a defined contribution scheme.

The scheme is subject to the funding legislation outlined in the Pensions Act 2004 which came into force on 30 December 2005. This, together with documents issued by the Pensions Regulator and Technical Actuarial Standards issued by the Financial Reporting Council, set out the framework for funding defined benefit occupational pension schemes in the UK.

The scheme is classified as a 'last-man standing arrangement'. Therefore the charity is potentially liable for other participating employers' obligations if those employers are unable to meet their share of the scheme deficit following withdrawal from the scheme. Participating employers are legally required to meet their share of the scheme deficit on an annuity purchase basis on withdrawal from the scheme.

A full actuarial valuation for the scheme was carried out at 30 September 2020. This valuation showed assets of £800.3m, liabilities of £831.9m and a deficit of £31.6m. To eliminate this funding shortfall, the Trustee has asked the participating employers to pay additional contributions to the scheme as follows:

Deficit contributions

From 1 April 2022 to 31 January 2025: £3,312,000 per annum (payable monthly).

Unless a concession has been agreed with the Trustee the term to 31 January 2025 applies.

Note that the scheme's previous valuation was carried out with an effective date of 30 September 2017. This valuation showed assets of £794.9m, liabilities of £926.4m and a deficit of £131.5m. To eliminate this funding shortfall, the Trustee asked the participating employers to pay additional contributions to the scheme as follows:

Deficit contributions

From 1 April 2019 to 30 September 2025: £11,243,000 per annum (payable monthly and increasing by 3% each on 1st April).

The recovery plan contributions are allocated to each participating employer in line with their estimated share of the Series 1 and Series 2 scheme liabilities.

Where the scheme is in deficit and where the charity has agreed to a deficit funding arrangement the charity recognises a liability for this obligation. The amount recognised is the net present value of the deficit reduction contributions payable under the agreement that relates to the deficit. The present value is calculated using the discount rate detailed in these disclosures. The unwinding of the discount rate is recognised as a finance cost.

MAIDSTONE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU
NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS (CONTINUED)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

18. Pension commitments (continued)

Present values of provision	31 March 2022	31 March 2021	31 March 2020
Present value of provision	<u>£5,183</u>	<u>£26,605</u>	<u>£31,524</u>

Reconciliation of opening and closing provision

	2022	2021
	£	£
Provision at start of period	26,605	31,524
Unwinding of the discount factor (interest expense)	153	708
Deficit contribution paid	(6,733)	(6,537)
Remeasurements – impact of any change in assumptions	(119)	910
Remeasurements – amendments to contribution schedule	(14,723)	-
Provision at end of period	<u>5,183</u>	<u>26,605</u>

Income and expenditure impact

	2022	2021
	£	£
Interest expense	153	708
Remeasurements – impact of any change in assumptions	(119)	910
Remeasurements – amendments to contribution schedule	(14,723)	-
	<u>14,689</u>	<u>1,618</u>

Assumptions

	31 March 2022	31 March 2021	31 March 2020
Rate of discount (per annum)	<u>2.35%</u>	<u>0.66%</u>	<u>2.53%</u>

The discount rates shown above are the equivalent single discount rates which, when used to discount the future recovery plan contributions due, would give the same results as using a full AA corporate bond yield curve to discount the same recovery plan contributions.

Deficit contributions schedule

The following schedule details the deficit contributions agreed between the charity and the scheme at each year end period:

	31 March 2022	31 March 2021	31 March 2020
Year 1	1,888	6,733	6,537
Year 2	1,888	6,935	6,733
Year 3	1,574	7,143	6,935
Year 4	-	6,131	7,143
Year 5	-	-	6,131

MAIDSTONE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU
NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS (CONTINUED)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

19. Analysis of changes in net debt

	Balance at 1 April 2021 £	Cashflows £	Other non- cash changes £	Balance at 31 March 2022 £
Cash	<u>335,908</u>	<u>(2,716)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>333,192</u>

20. Related party transactions

No transactions with related parties were undertaken during the year (2021: none), other than those stipulated in Note 9.

MAIDSTONE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU
DETAILED INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

		Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total 2022 £	Total 2021 £
Income					
Maidstone Borough Council		151,100	-	151,100	142,100
Money Advice Service		-	52,168	52,168	53,169
Pension Wise		-	355,027	355,027	442,386
Donations		955	-	955	5,786
Deposit account interest		47	-	47	183
Golding Homes		5,000	-	5,000	5,000
Fundraising		-	-	-	1,305
Energy Best deal		-	22,890	22,890	26,485
Henry Smith (MDS Prison)		-	55,592	55,592	53,008
Universal Credit – Help to Claim		-	126,581	126,581	129,859
Refund of overpayment of legal services commissions		-	-	-	(24,000)
South East Water Forum		-	14,000	14,000	-
Other projects		22,271	-	22,271	24,831
		<u>179,373</u>	<u>626,258</u>	<u>805,631</u>	<u>860,112</u>
Expenditure					
	Schedule				
Establishment expenses	1	5,276	26,570	31,846	37,023
Administration expenses	2	119,668	598,215	717,883	748,510
Sundry expenses	3	1,260	7,108	8,368	8,171
		<u>126,204</u>	<u>631,893</u>	<u>758,097</u>	<u>793,704</u>
Net income before gains on pension scheme		<u>53,169</u>	<u>(5,635)</u>	<u>47,534</u>	<u>66,408</u>
Gains on pension scheme		21,422	-	21,422	-
Surplus for the year		<u><u>74,591</u></u>	<u><u>(5,635)</u></u>	<u><u>68,956</u></u>	<u><u>66,408</u></u>

MAIDSTONE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU

SCHEDULES TO THE DETAILED INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total 2022 £	Total 2021 £
1. Establishment expenses				
Rent	3,450	19,550	23,000	23,000
Insurance - premises	125	711	836	862
Water	20	111	131	381
Gas	283	1,604	1,887	1,690
Electricity	230	1,302	1,532	2,412
Repairs and renewals - premises	753	2,205	2,958	7,390
Cleaning and cleaning materials	415	1,087	1,502	1,288
	<u>5,276</u>	<u>26,570</u>	<u>31,846</u>	<u>37,023</u>
2. Administration expenses				
Salaries and social security costs	92,191	490,174	582,365	584,422
Pension scheme contributions	21,091	50,080	71,171	63,582
Travel costs	222	2,185	2,407	3,209
Training	19	107	126	291
Health and safety	-	796	796	-
Books, information and IT systems	2,845	16,205	19,050	16,205
Telephone	2,006	11,334	13,340	14,763
Printing and stationery	114	486	600	1,133
Postage	118	566	684	1,038
Advertising and publicity	58	329	387	-
Computer and office expenses	676	3,927	4,603	11,352
Other office costs	269	1,696	1,965	2,281
Insurance	13	71	84	4,194
Hire of rooms	32	180	212	26,216
Universal Credit – Citizens Advice	14	20,079	20,093	19,824
	<u>119,668</u>	<u>598,215</u>	<u>717,883</u>	<u>748,510</u>
3. Sundry expenses				
Bank charges	20	113	133	101
Auditors' remuneration	1,113	6,310	7,423	5,913
Sundry expenses	-	-	-	1,883
AGM and other meetings	73	434	507	-
Professional fees	54	251	305	274
	<u>1,260</u>	<u>7,108</u>	<u>8,368</u>	<u>8,171</u>

MAIDSTONE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU

England & Wales - Charity number 299055

Accounts

Citizens Advice Maidstone

a registered charity



A Light in the Dark

Annual Report
2020/21

Free

Confidential

Impartial

Independent

Citizens Advice Maidstone is the operating name of Maidstone Citizens Advice Bureau

Citizens Advice Maidstone is supported by Maidstone Borough Council

2 Bower Terrace, Tonbridge Road, Maidstone ME16 8RY
and
The Town Hall, High Street, Maidstone ME14 1TF
Advice Line: 0344 848 7978
Email Advice: advice@maidstonecab.org.uk
Website: www.maidstonecab.org.uk

Trustee Board 2020-21

President: The Mayor of Maidstone, Cllr Fay Gooch

Elected Members:

Mr R Bird: *Chair*

Mrs S Hawkins: *co Vice-Chair*

Mr S B Malhotra: *co Vice-Chair (from October 2020)*

Mr J Cobbett: *Hon. Treasurer*

Mrs W Foster née Tull

Mr I Owen

Mr M Ford

Mr A Breen (*from October 2020*)

Co-opted Members:

Cllr Mr P Harper: Maidstone Borough Council

Bureau Representatives:

Chief Executive: Mr P Hardy

Volunteers: Mr S Jones

Paid Staff: Ms T Weber (*from May 2020*)

In Memoriam

It is with great sadness and deep regret that we report the passing of Barrett Manning and Peter Green, both of whom gave many years of valuable service to our organisation as advisors and also as members of our Trustee Board.

Barrett and Peter were highly valued and well respected members of our team, committed to the work of the Bureau, who always displayed a keen social conscience and a willingness to help the wider community in any way they could.

They are both remembered with great fondness by all those who knew them.

Citizens Advice Maidstone is the operating name of Maidstone Citizens Advice Bureau

Charity Reg. No. 299055 Citizens Advice Membership No. 75/004 Company Reg. No. 2234220

Challenging discrimination Valuing diversity
Promoting equality

Chair's Report

This is my last report as Chair of the Citizens Advice Maidstone Trustee Board, as under Citizens Advice rules, I am obliged to step down in September having been in post for 6 years.

It has been a great pleasure to witness, first hand, the amazing work of the bureau over the past 6 years. We have a wonderful group of staff, both paid employees and volunteers, who continually demonstrate their determination to help clients through life's many challenges. It comes as no surprise that the bureau has consistently received superlative positive feedback from clients. We should be very proud of all our staff. In particular, I would like to record my appreciation for two exceptional Chief Executives. Bonny Malhotra led the bureau with great distinction for 21 years before retiring in 2019; I am delighted that he has returned to support the bureau as a Trustee. Paul Hardy stepped into his shoes seamlessly and has deftly steered the bureau through the unparalleled challenges of the pandemic with great fortitude. It has been a great honour and pleasure to work with them both.

It has also been a privilege to work with a Trustee Board who are all committed to ensuring that Maidstone has a first class Citizens Advice service. I am very grateful for the support and contribution of each Board Member.

The past year has been dominated by the pandemic. Despite all the difficulties in keeping staff safe and complying with Government guidelines, there has only been one day when Citizens Advice Maidstone has not been open for business. This has been achieved through the adaptability and resourcefulness of our bureau employees, with most staff working from home.

During the past year, most of our client advice has been provided over the phone or digitally through email and webchat. In many respects, the lockdown has brought forward the modernisation of our service delivery to reflect the changing needs of our clients.

Nonetheless, we have been acutely aware that there are clients who would prefer face-to-face meetings, or for whom this is more appropriate. As circumstances permit, we are gradually bringing back a limited face-to-face service, by appointment only. However, we are constrained by the available space at Bower Terrace as the Borough Council is not yet in a position to re-open our office space in Maidstone Town Hall.

Unfortunately, it was not feasible for our volunteer staff to provide advice services from home. However, we are very pleased that so many volunteers have been keen to maintain contact with the bureau. It has been good to see some of them return to Bower Terrace in recent weeks and we look forward to see many more coming back as soon as safety considerations and government guidance permit.

At the time of writing, we have been in pandemic conditions for nearly a year and a half. It feels like much longer. We have been assured that the long-awaited 'Freedom Day' will take place in July, but we do not yet know how much further relaxation of restrictions this will bring. Notwithstanding, the successful vaccination programme, Covid remains a pernicious and serious threat. Although, thankfully, the risks of severe illness appear to have been much reduced, it is clear that we will need to be cautious for some time to come.

The future is still very uncertain, but it is clear that the legacy of Covid and the impact on our communities will be with us for a very long while. The bureau will need to continue to operate under challenging and, at times, difficult circumstances for some time to come. We have shown that we have adapted in the past. We can be confident that Citizens Advice Maidstone has the ability and the determination to adapt to future challenges, whatever they may be.

Rob Bird, Chair

Admin in the time of Covid – a lone worker's perspective

As I type, I am sitting alone in an office which, prior to 23rd March 2020, used to accommodate three additional colleagues, ably supported by a number of dedicated volunteers, each one beavering away at their designated tasks, helping to keep the Bureau on an even keel and ploughing a steady course.

Then we were hit head on by an almighty bow wave called Covid-19 and nothing has been quite the same since.

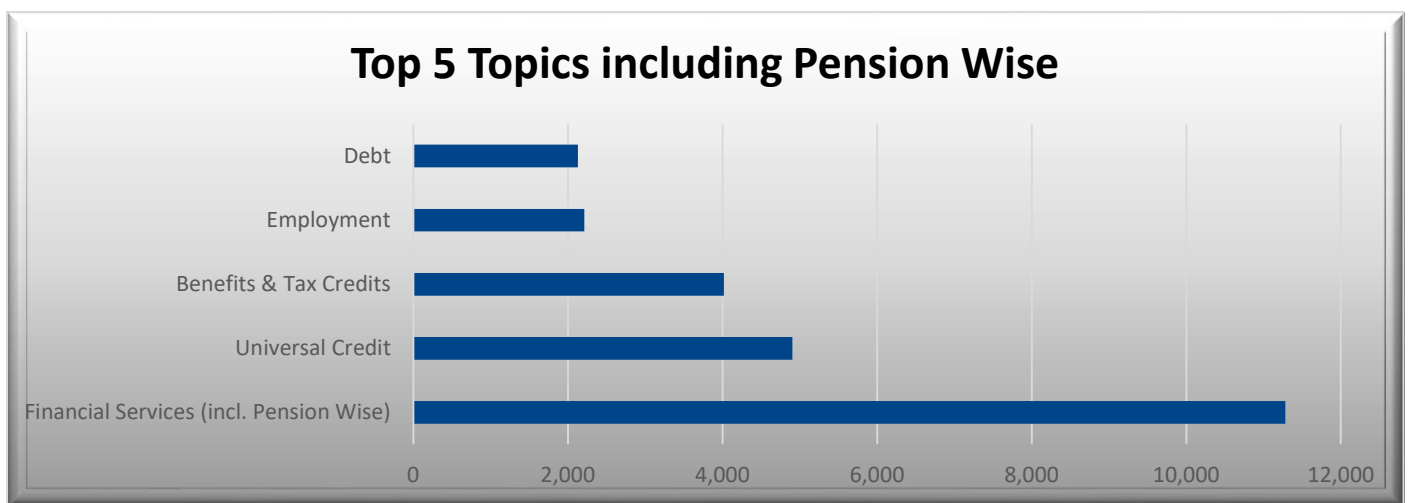
In the wake of the pandemic, my colleagues have been scattered to the four winds, each of them however continuing to work effectively but remotely from their respective homes and at time of writing (June 2021), I have inhabited this office essentially alone for the last 15 months and I have never been busier!

Not that I am complaining mind you. I didn't think I'd ever say (type?) it out loud but I'm fairly certain that working at Citizens Advice Maidstone has kept me sane over the last year and a bit.

As sad as it may sound, the routine has given me purpose and a reason to get out of bed in the morning and has allowed me to continue to feel that I am making a difference.

Whilst I would never purport to be a 'Key Worker', it gives me a sense of satisfaction to know that despite having had to both adapt and adopt new ways of working often at very short notice, the Bureau has only had to remain closed on one of its duty days since the start of the pandemic and as a result, we can say with a high degree of certainty that no client has suffered detriment or been adversely effected.

Admin



Employment Advice

Writing this at the beginning of summer, it is cheering to think we have managed to stay open and helping clients throughout the past year.

This has definitely been a light in the darkness for them, as we have been able to advise most of our clients as effectively by using the phone as we could in person.

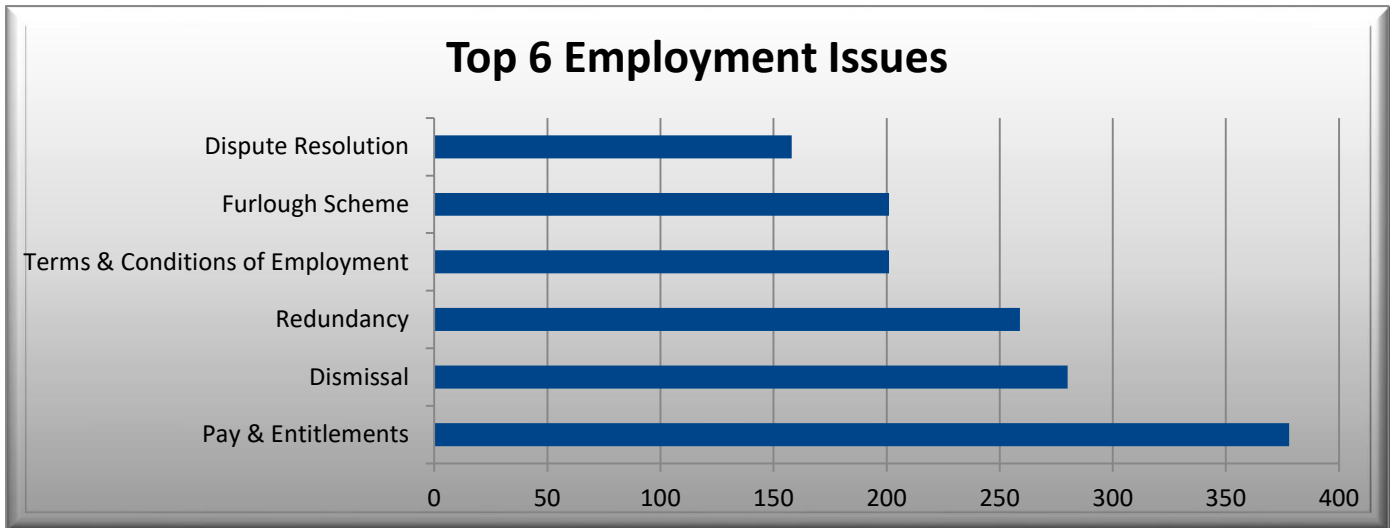
Although many employment queries turn on the question "what's in your contract?" it is a sad reflection on employers that many do not provide their employees with written terms and conditions (despite the legal requirement to do so), and so our inability to see the paperwork tends not to affect how we can help the client. In the few cases where it is imperative to see contracts, correspondence or payslips, we are fortunate enough to have a secure method of document transmission so we can still help the client, at a safe distance.

We are also fortunate – and another light in the darkness – that our volunteers are so able and willing.

Despite considerable trepidation on their part, e.g. would they be able to remember how to advise (or even their own passwords), they have been up and running with all their usual skill and ability within minutes of getting back to work.

Since employment queries have come thick and fast (failing businesses, furlough, exploitative employers not least amongst the issues) this has been a very welcome discovery - it's as if they had never been away and speaking as the employment specialist I am enormously grateful for that, as well as delighted to see them again.

Employment Adviser



Housing Advice

The year saw the unprecedented impact of the Coronavirus pandemic on daily life.

Recognising the issues arising out of the pandemic, the Government introduced new legislation and guidance in 2020 to help address the implications for both rented and owner-occupied property and this evolved as the pandemic progressed.

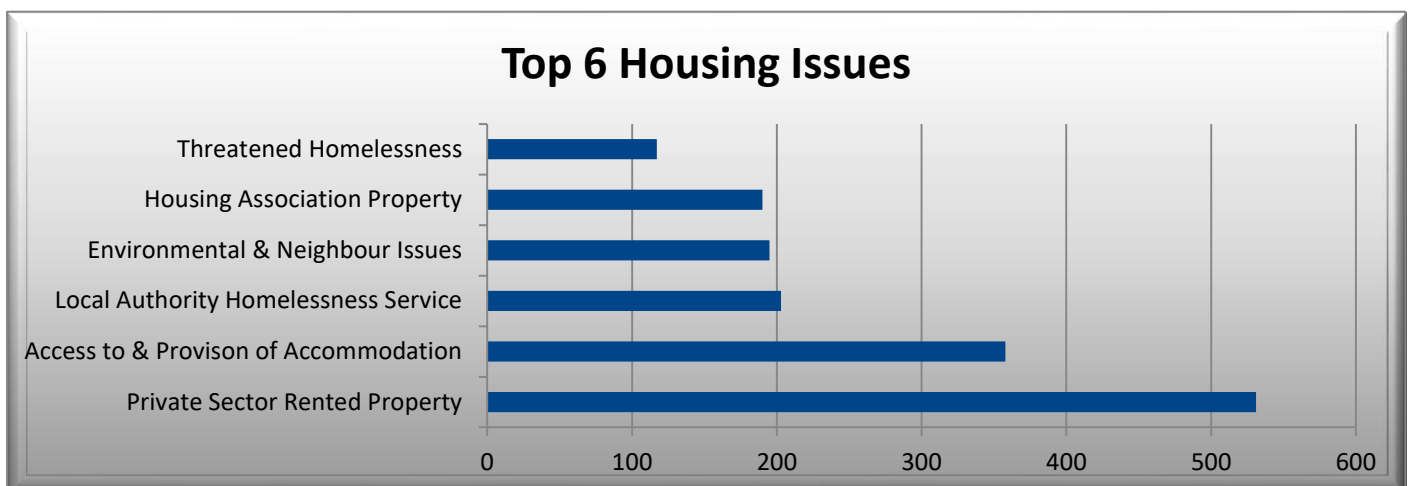
Enforcement of lender repossession action was prevented through legislation from November in all but exceptional cases. As well as helping owner-occupiers having difficulties paying their mortgage, it also helped landlords of privately rented accommodation (and hence their tenants) where landlord income (and mortgage repayments) might be an issue.

In the privately rented sector, as well as a suspension of ongoing possession action, the coronavirus act introduced extended notice periods in most cases, which varied through the year with the required notice being three months from March – August, then six months from September. Legislation was also introduced that prevented bailiff enforcement of evictions.

As a result of these actions, the bureau experienced fewer housing cases than we would traditionally expect, although we did see an increase after the lifting of the repossession moratorium in September.

Away from the pandemic, the Government have continued with their consultation on abolishing ‘no fault’ Section 21 notices. It appears that this would be alongside amendments to Section 8, but it is unclear how these changes will help improve renter’s security and opinion seems to be broadly divided, with tenant organisations supporting the abolition of Section 21 while landlord bodies oppose it.

Housing



Maidstone Prison Advice Service

This year has been an exceptional one for everyone with the pandemic, this has had a major impact on the operation of the prison project, and our ability to help our clients, both prisoners and staff employed in the prison.

The immediate impact was the virtual closure in March 2020 of all services within the prison except for essential welfare and management of prisoners who were for a long time confined to their floors on the wings.

We were unable to attend and due to lockdown restrictions, we were unable to provide any sort of service.

By September 2020, we had devised and put in operation a paper based system. At last, we were able to help our clients most of whom are foreign nationals and English is not their first spoken or written language.

This has restricted the level of advice and support for clients; however, the system is filling a gap until our return to face-to-face appointments – “the light at the end of the tunnel”.

During 2020/21, we helped 61 prisoners with 116 activities including 99 letters to and for clients. The main work is trying to obtain the return of property from enforcement agencies (41 requests).

Other issues included housing, debt, benefits, Tax & NI, finance, immigration, health, legal and employment matters.

The prison authority and prisoners as well as we are very keen for our return as soon as restrictions allow.

Prison Caseworkers

Money Advice

Who would have believed the adaptations we have made in the past year!!

Working from home has become the “norm “but this has not stopped us providing our clients with the same comprehensive, independent, confidential advice that they have always received.

We may not have been able to see people “face to face “but this has not stopped us working with our clients, creditors and partner organisations to find resolutions to the complex issues that we have been presented with.

Systems have been put in place so that our clients can receive full comprehensive advice on dealing with their money issues by telephone, email and web chat.

Some of the issues are historic but many are new issues that have arisen due to the difficult times that we have all had to adapt too.

Clients have been helped to check their benefit entitlements, compile budgets and save money by using tools to check how much they can save by changing their utility suppliers.

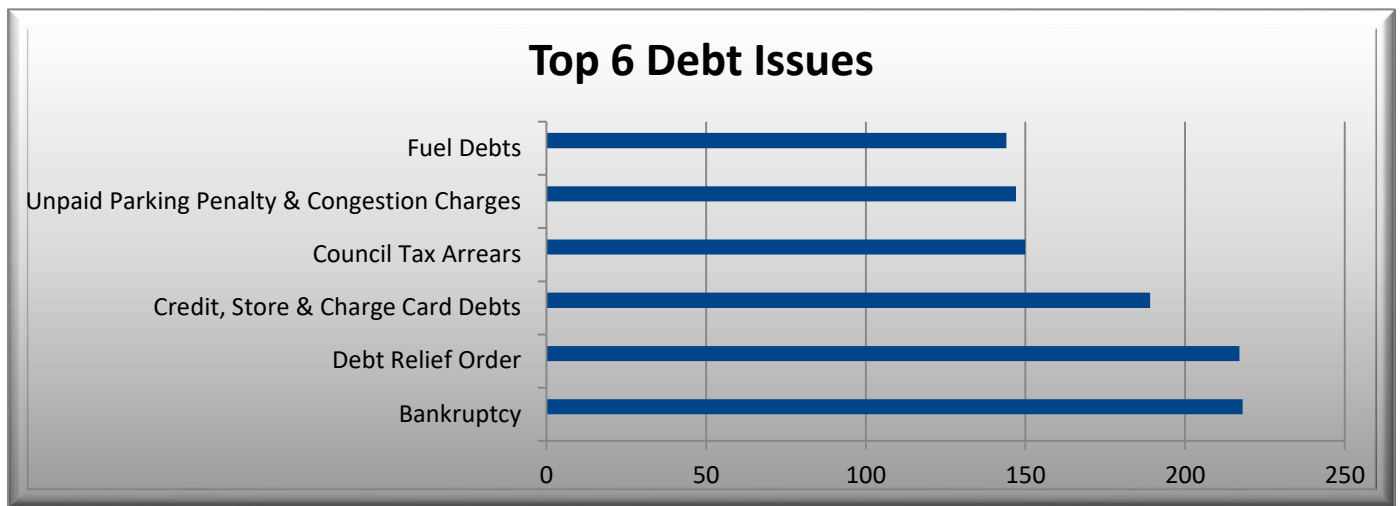
Clients have been assisted to access food banks as reduced income due to furlough has meant that many have been forced as first time users to access these services.

Great excitement is felt with every Zoom staff meeting invitation!!!

This has helped us maintain the same team spirit which we have always had in the office and the comradery that we still all share.

It is a privilege to work with such a great team.

Money Adviser



Pension Wise

Citizens Advice Maidstone is one of 38 local Citizens Advice who has been delivering the Pension Wise service for the last 6 years.

We provide people with free, impartial guidance to help savers understand their options under the pensions freedoms.

During 2020/21 we delivered Pension Wise appointments by telephone to people aged 50 and over with a defined contribution pension.

Key statistics

During 2020/21, Citizens Advice delivered 77,631 appointments across England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Since the service started, people have continued to value the high-quality guidance and support they receive.

Client satisfaction scores have remained over 95% for 2020/21.

The Pension Wise Team

Bureau Projects and Supplementary Services 2020-2021

In addition to our core generalist advice work, for which Maidstone Borough Council provides a contribution, we continue to deliver a number of specialist services to local residents, which are funded from a variety of other sources as a result of our successful bids.

It is important to note that continuation funding for core services is not generally available from charitable funders, and without the core service it would not be possible to bid successfully for additional specialist work.

A number of our key specialist services are outlined in more detail elsewhere in this annual report. Services include

- The Pension Wise Service for Kent and East Sussex
- Maidstone Prison Advice Service
- Money Advice Service Debt Advice Project
- Specialist Energy Advice
- Help to Claim Universal Credit
- Kent Best Practice Lead for Help to Claim (joint post with North and West Kent CA)
- Support for Clients with Mental Health Problems (Live Well Kent project)
- Specialist Support for Clients with MS, and their Families
- South East Water Pilot Scheme for Fast-tracking Vulnerable Customers
- Management of South East Water Vulnerable Customers Stakeholder Group
- Management of the South East Financial Capability Forum

The impact of Covid has made this a challenging year for our specialist services and our clients seeking them but we have been able to continue to provide them all remotely, though sometimes necessarily at a slower pace than we would wish.

We would like to thank all our funders who have continued to show understanding at a difficult time for everyone. We look forward this year to the end of debilitating lockdowns, a return to greater flexibility and new opportunities for the development and delivery of our specialist services.

Service Manager - Projects

Research and Campaigns

It has not proved possible for the team to research securely held data remotely this year.

Though resulting data security issues have temporarily restricted our work, we hope these problems will be resolved with our return to the office as pandemic conditions ease.

Despite these Covid-induced barriers, the team has taken a leading role in producing the latest Community Needs Analysis for the Bureau, and provided key support in producing our revised Business Plan.

The team has produced evidence to local MPs as part of the Citizens Advice national campaign regarding debt and the extension of the £20 uplift for Universal Credit claimants. We have also provided evidence and support for the Kent wide campaign on blue badges.

As a result of our role in providing the Best Practice Lead role for Kent in Help to Claim Universal Credit, (shared with North and West Kent CA) the Bureau has played a key role this year in researching and producing national reports for Citizens Advice on a range of important topics, including immigration barriers affecting Universal Credit claimants; UC claimants' experience of advance payments during the pandemic; and issues affecting disabled UC claimants.

We have also provided local case studies for Citizens Advice illustrating a number of issues affecting Universal Credit claimants.

The Research & Campaigns Team

Advice Giving

The year 2020 – 2021 has to rate as the strangest year that most of us have experienced. However, I'm pleased to say that with the exception of Tuesday 24 March, the day after the initial lockdown was announced, we have provided the clients of Maidstone with advice.

Unfortunately, from Wednesday 25 March, the advice offered has only been via the phone on our Adviceline service or via email as we have been shut to personal callers throughout, which we are aware is not ideal for a percentage of our clients.

Those of us who have offered advice via the phone have been pleased with the quality and depth of advice we have been able to provide and as a result, the majority of our clients have been satisfied with the answers.

Our Chief Executive has been aware throughout that he has a duty of care to his paid staff, volunteers and our clients and we were glad to welcome ten volunteers back for three months from mid-August – mid-November 2020, to augment the service offered.

We did not see them again until the end of April 2021, however the paid staff rose to the challenge of providing the advice needed during the periods we had to ask the volunteers to stand down.

It is still undecided how our service will look in the future when the "new normal" settles down, but rest assured we will do our best to offer light in the dark to our clients who need assistance in resolving their problems.

Advice Manager

Training

What a year! No one could have foreseen a worldwide pandemic that hit us all this year which had different impacts on many people around the world.

This had an effect on our training, which sadly had to stop as I was moved into different resources to ensure the residents of Maidstone were still able to access the service at an ever-changing time, which was probably more significant to them at this time.

Many were new clients who had never accessed the service previously so hopefully they now know how invaluable a service we all provide from all our volunteers to paid staff.

We have all learnt new ways of working and continuous learning due to this pandemic working from home and dealing with technology, furlough schemes and maximising incomes are just a few things that come to mind.

It has also made us look at different ways to engage with people and this may be a new way of working and evolving for our volunteers in the future. However, face to face will always have its place in our service.

Our trainees have stayed engaged with us during these tough times by attending virtual meetings etc which shows their commitment to our service and I would like to offer my thanks to them all.

They always say there is light at the end of the tunnel and as I remain an optimist, I really do hope that we find a way we can learn to live with this new "normal" and have a better year.

Training Officer

Volunteering

It is interesting to reflect on the differences between pre- and post-pandemic advising. No Face-to-Face, of course, simply AdviceLine (and emails). There were two tranches of advisor availability. August to November 2020. Then April to now 2021. The first tranche was rather busy. The second notably quiet. Until July – despite Wimbledon and Soccer.

First to notice – how safe management had made the office environment. I have never washed my hands so often. Nor the equipment. The car park is so empty. Parking a doddle. The atmosphere in the building is so much more relaxed. Being quiet there is much more time to chat between advising/write-ups. It is neither rushed, noisy nor pressurised.

All to the benefit of the clients. Much easier to focus on their issues and discuss with readily available Supervisors and Specialists.

So many clients provide warm thanks for the advice and information discussed. It is clear that many of them simply want to be pointed to available information to read in their own time.

Returning to advise for the first tranche was a daunting prospect. How much would be forgotten? Would the dam burst with an overload of client calls? Not at all. AdviceLine and Tasks are excellent processes to increase experience over a range of topics.

Topics were chronologically typified by the progress of the pandemic's effects. Initially many Consumer issues (cancelled holidays), then Employer issues (compulsory masks and furlough), followed by Relationships (separations due to isolations?) before Benefits issues finally began to arise.

I now await the deluge of Debt, Evictions and Homelessness that will follow in the wake of Mr Covid.

Volunteer

As a volunteer, Coronavirus hit on March 17th 2020, as my advice session started at Maidstone Town Hall.

The session was ended prematurely and I was not invited back to give advice until August 18th 2020.

There were regular updates from the CEO and consultation on my views on returning when the time was right.

So, on August 18th I did return to Bower Terrace to give phone advice only and was presented with my own personal headset.

It was strange to work basically in isolation and with so few people present in such a large building. There was a high regard for safety measures and the environment did feel really safe.

It was possible to give effective advice and obtain the support I needed via telephone. Sadly, it wasn't to last and after November 10th 2020, I was in enforced absence again.

My next return was on May 27th 2021 for telephone advice with my trusted personal headset again and the same limited numbers in the building. And so it continues for now.

In normal times giving advice is a collaborative affair with frequent face to face consultations with specialists and other volunteer advisors, as well as face to face interviews with clients.

This model could not work over the last year but I have been very happy to be able to contribute via telephone advice sessions with the associated support. I miss the social interaction with my colleagues most of all and look forward to its return.

Volunteer

I have been volunteering at Maidstone for some years. As a retired librarian I have always enjoyed researching information, and being able to help our clients is very worthwhile.

There has always been a need to keep up to date both with changing information sources, and our own procedures, whether it be moving from Petra to Casebook, working at the Town Hall, or getting used to advising by telephone from the public website.

The last year though has certainly been the most challenging of all. After the first lockdown I was delighted to return last summer. I was quite nervous at first and it felt very much like the first day back at school! Not only did I have to remember all the passwords, protocols etc from before, but I also had to learn the new ways of working in the office in a Covid-safe way

As someone who lives on their own, it was difficult at first to be working with other people again. And of course I had to get up to date with the many implications of Covid for our clients, and learn a whole new language such as 'furlough'. Gradually I got back into the swing of things, helped tremendously by the support of Sally and Tania.

Then in Autumn came the second lockdown, which I found hard to cope with on my own at home with very limited social contact. It was very welcome to be able to return to the Bureau at the end of April this year and return to some degree of normality, and I look forward to being able to meet with clients face to face again before too long.

I enjoy the work, and find it very rewarding to be able to help people deal with their issues. Every client, and every issue they present, is different in some way.

I would like to add a personal thank you to all the Bureau staff who provide their expertise and support to us volunteers with unfailing patience and good humour.

Volunteer

Welfare Benefits Advice

The past year has presented the Bureau and the Welfare Benefits department in particular, with unprecedented challenges and demands. We have had to adapt to a whole new way of working at the same time as dealing with a new set of circumstances and a host of totally new and untried regulations.

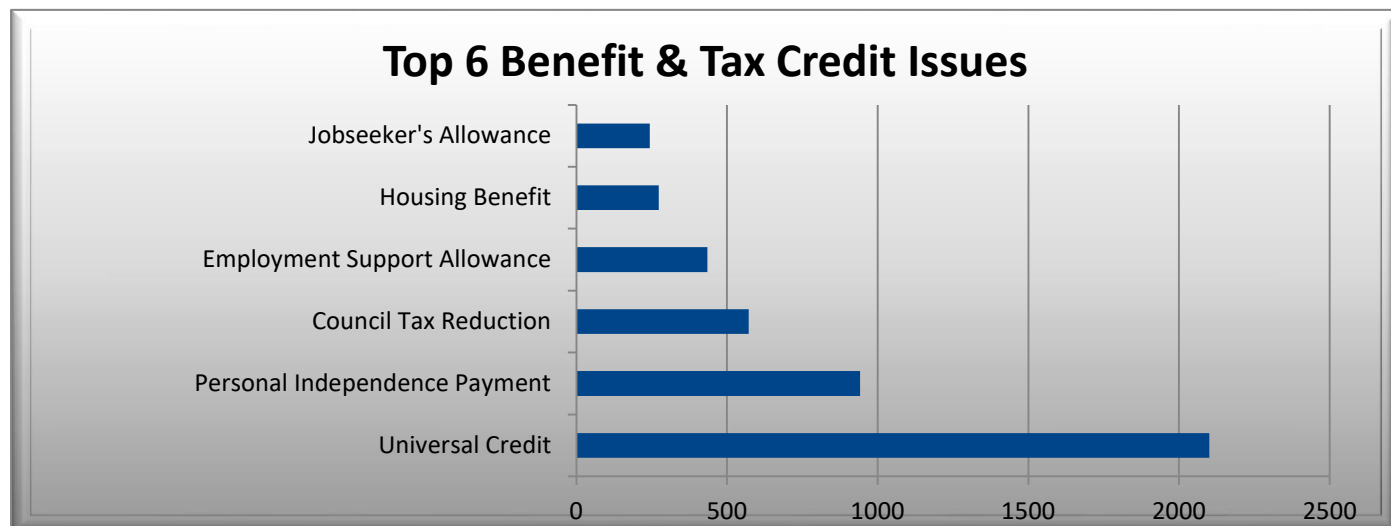
Complex new rules resulting from the decision to leave the EU have affected the status of many existing benefit claimants, while the Covid pandemic has impacted the lives of people who have never before had any contact with the benefits system.

Many of these new rules and regulations, such as those relating to furlough payments etc., have been brought in at short notice and without being adequately communicated to the public at large, who have therefore applied to the Bureau for help and advice.

Because we have often had to operate without volunteers, it has fallen to specialist advisers to deal directly with a large proportion of enquiries. Without face-to-face interviews we have necessarily had to deal with all enquiries by phone, and although this has sometimes led to difficulties, such as with the production of documents, or obtaining authority from the client to act on their behalf, this has for the most part worked extremely well, thanks in no small part to the efforts and ingenuity of the Bureau Admin Department.

The standard of advice given has therefore remained extremely high, and will no doubt continue to do so whatever new challenges the coming year may bring.

Welfare Benefits Adviser



Chief Executive's Report

The situation we found ourselves in at Citizens Advice Maidstone following the Prime Minister's announcement in March 2020 imploring each of us to stay at home, protect our NHS and save lives as the Coronavirus pandemic spread around the world was in many ways similar to most, in that we suffered a seismic shift to our very existence, resulting in new methods of living and working having to be developed and implemented at short notice.

The scenario was changing on an almost daily basis and this presented us with a number of challenges as we sought to transfer the majority of our services to a digital format in order to enable those of our paid staff who could, to work from home.

However, thanks to their willingness to embrace new ways of working, in a relatively short period of time, we have been able to get 95% of our paid staff working remotely and it is my firm belief that our clients have in no way suffered as a result. Indeed, it is a source of great personal pride that in the days and weeks of uncertainty and confusion following that initial announcement, Citizens Advice Maidstone has only been unable to offer its services to the public on one of its duty days.

I would also like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to the patience and understanding of our volunteers, most of whom have been unable to attend the Bureau for the best part of a year and it has not been possible to for them to advise remotely but never-the-less they have stuck with us, attended the regular virtual update meetings that have taken place and are keen to get back to what they do best - helping those less fortunate than themselves.

As has always been the case, without their ongoing dedication to the cause, very little of what we do would be possible.

My thanks also go to the members of our Trustee Board who, like all of us, have had their own issues and concerns to deal with during the pandemic but despite this, have continued to provide both myself and the Bureau with unfailing help and support throughout this challenging time.

On a personal note, I would like to thank Rob Bird, who will be stepping down in September after 6 years as Chair of our Trustee Board. The guidance and leadership that Rob has given to the Bureau during his tenure and to me since I have been Chief Executive, has been invaluable and I sincerely hope that he will continue to be involved with our organisation in some capacity for many years to come.

I owe a similar debt of gratitude to my predecessor, Bonny Malhotra who, despite retiring as CEO in 2019 for a well-earned rest after 21 years at the helm, has continued to allow the Bureau to benefit from his wisdom and experience by agreeing to join us as a Trustee.

The pandemic has been a pivotal moment in human history, offering us an unparalleled opportunity to consider our future as well as examine our past and whilst we remain a source of strength and support to all who seek our assistance – a light in the dark, in order to achieve this it has been necessary for us to adapt and in some cases invent new ways of working, often under extremely challenging circumstances and with a very short lead time.

In all such situations, we have endeavoured to retain the most effective elements of our previous methods of service delivery and marry them with a number of unique amendments and innovations - the best of the old, with the best of the new.

Doing so has enabled us to develop an approach that allows us to maintain levels of best practice, whilst at the same time providing the flexibility to adapt as and when necessary. None of which would have been possible without the patience and understanding of a dedicated and supportive team of volunteers, paid staff and trustees and I would again like to thank them all for their hard work and commitment.

They have helped to make what has at times been a very challenging job, much easier.

My thanks also go to Maidstone Borough Council for its long standing support, without which it would be very difficult if not impossible for us to deliver any kind of core service and to all the many friends of the Bureau including all those mentioned elsewhere in this document, who continue to place their trust in us.

Last but by no means least, a thank you goes to National Citizens Advice for their ongoing assistance and backing.

Paul Hardy, Chief Executive

Key Statistics

Maidstone (member)

01/04/2020 31/03/2021



Summary

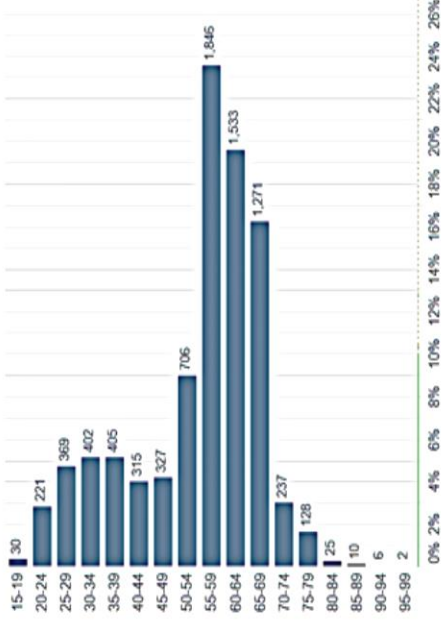
Clients	8,795
Quick client contacts	
Issues	29,586
Activities	15,653
Cases	8,839
Outcomes	

Income gain	£85,739
Re-imbursments, services, loans	£1,300
Debts written off	£38,993
Repayments rescheduled	£1,212
Other	£8,686

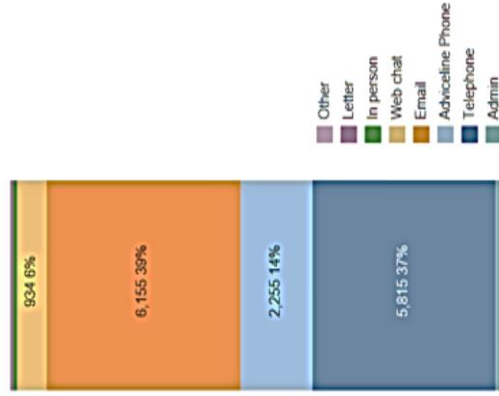
Issues

Issues	Clients
Benefits & tax credits	1,218
Benefits Universal Credit	1,317
Consumer goods & services	153
Debt	327
Discrimination & Hate & GVA	125
Education	30
Employment	717
Financial services & capability	5,040
Health & community care	74
Housing	672
Immigration & asylum	80
Legal	441
Other	196
Relationships & family	426
Tax	82
Travel & transport	65
Utilities & communications	258
Grand Total	29,586

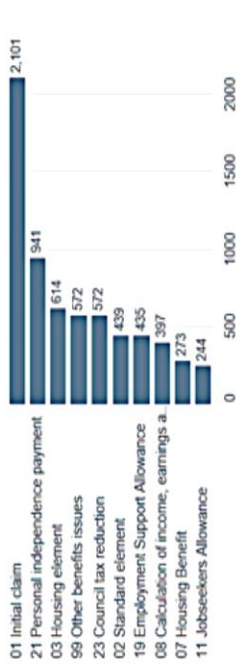
Age



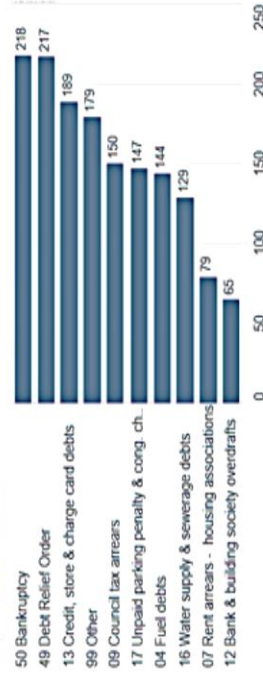
Channel



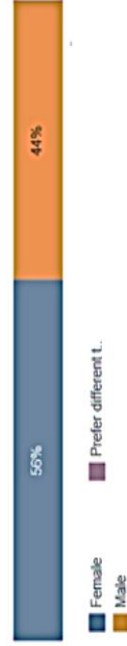
Top benefit issues



Top debt issues



Gender



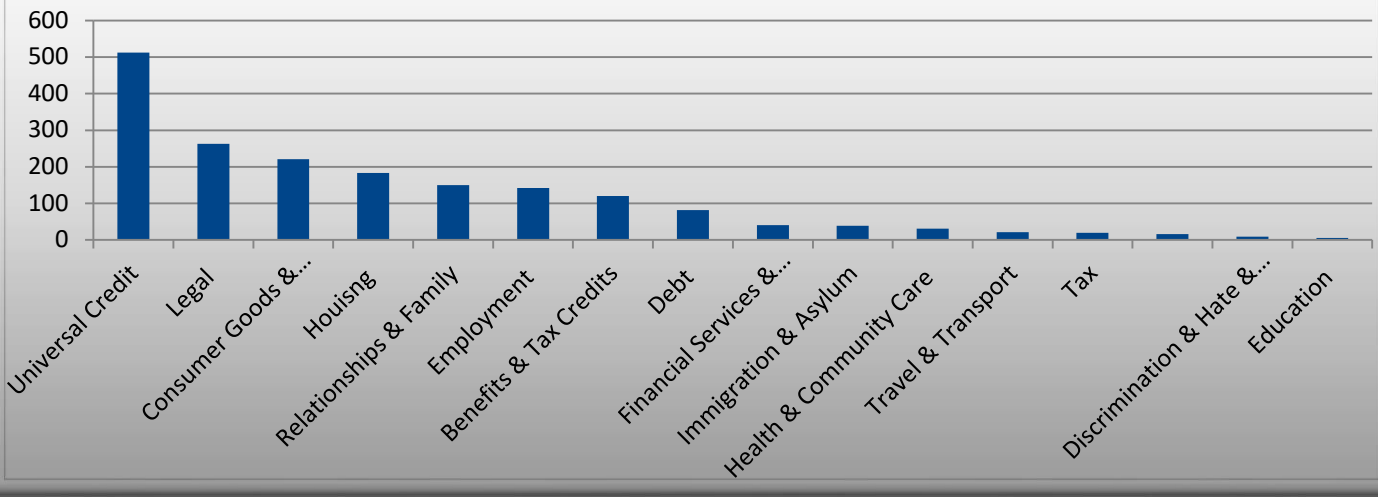
Disability / Long-term health



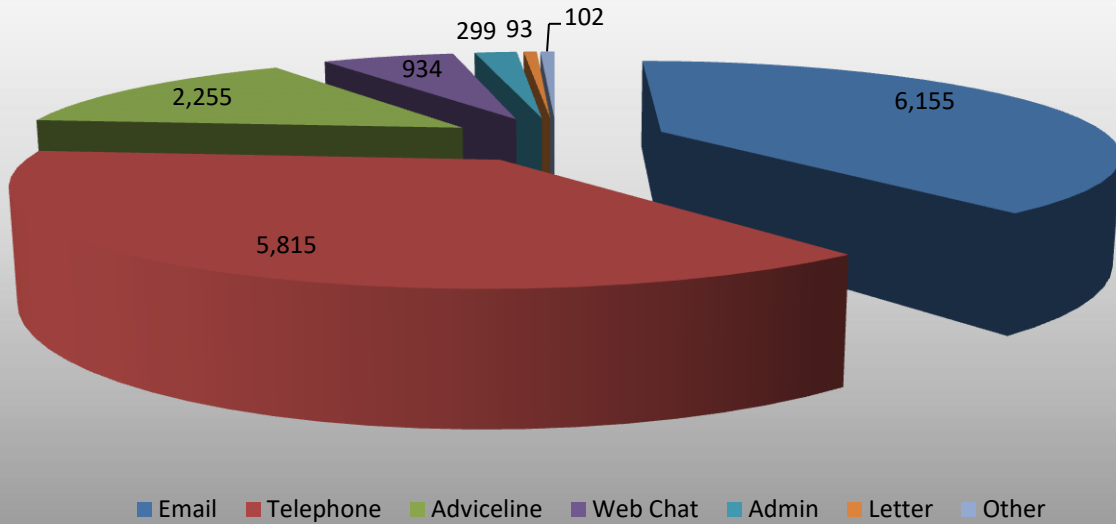
Ethnicity



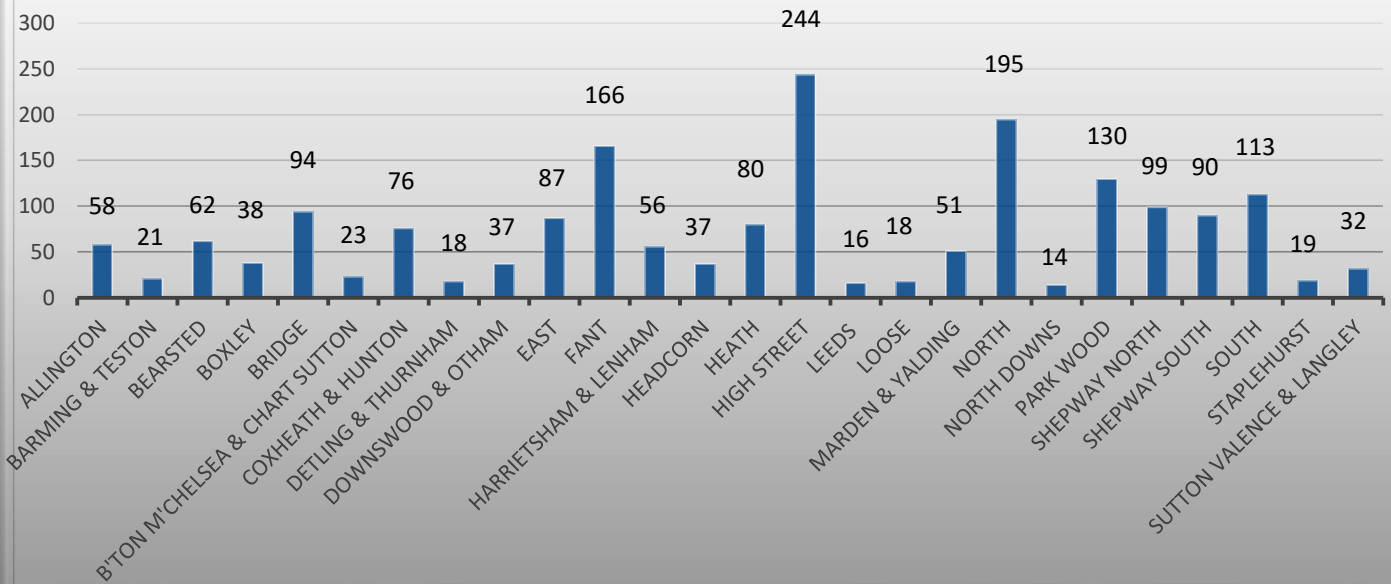
Number of Simple Query Issues - April '20 - March '21



Total Client Activities per Channel - April '20 - March '21



Number of Activities by Ward - April '20 - March '21



The Citizens Advice Service provides free, independent, confidential and impartial advice to everyone on their rights and responsibilities. It values diversity, promotes equality and challenges discrimination.

The Service aims:

- to provide the advice people need for the problems they face
- to improve the policies and practices that affect people’s lives

GENERALIST ADVICE

Benefits Consumer Debt Education Employment
 Finance Health Housing Immigration Legal
 Relationships Tax Travel Utilities

SPECIALIST ADVICE

Debt Housing Employment Welfare Benefits

Acknowledgements

The Trustees, Management, Staff and Clients would like to thank all the individuals and organisations who have assisted and supported the Bureau in the past year.

<p>Our special thanks go to:</p> <p>Members & Officers of Maidstone Borough Council DWP (MAPS) Pension Wise HMP Maidstone Money & Pensions Service (MAPS)</p> <p>Citizens Advice Central Office staff</p> <p>Berry & Lamberts LLP for arranging the Solicitors’ rota and all Solicitors who participate in the rota</p> <p>Azets Chartered Accountants (formerly Wilkins Kennedy LLP) for arranging the Accountant’s rota and all Accountants who participate in the rota</p> <p>On behalf of the Trustees, staff and volunteers of Citizens Advice Maidstone, we would like to take this opportunity to again thank the many friends of the Bureau, including all those mentioned here, whose continued support during the pandemic has enabled us to maintain and deliver a much needed service to the residents of the borough of Maidstone.</p> <p>On a personal note, our CEO, Paul Hardy, would like to pay tribute to the patience, understanding and dedication of all staff, both paid and volunteer, whose ability and willingness to adapt to new methods and ways of working during what has been a difficult time for us all, has helped to make a very challenging job much easier.</p>	<p>Financial Support was received from:</p> <p>Burham Parish Council Chart Sutton Parish Council Citizens Advice: (Help to Claim – Universal Credit/MAS Debt Advice Project/Pension Wise/Energy Advice Programme/Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy funding) Citizens Advice Canterbury Citizens Advice Tunbridge Wells Cobtree Charity Trust DWP (MAPS) Pension Wise Edward Gostling Foundation Golding Homes Headcorn Parish Council HMP Maidstone Kent Community Foundation Money & Pensions Service (MAPS) Staplehurst Parish Council The Henry Smith Charity West Kent Housing Association</p> <p>Donations from the public, clients and staff</p>
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MAIDSTONE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU
(A company limited by guarantee)

REPORTS AND ACCOUNTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

Registered Charity No. 299055

Company No. 02234220

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MAIDSTONE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU
REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

The Maidstone Citizens Advice Bureau is a company limited by guarantee and a registered charity governed by its Memorandum and Articles of Association (Charity number 299055, Company number 02234220).

Citizens Advice Maidstone is the operating name of Maidstone Citizens Advice Bureau.

The Board of Trustees

The Trustees of the charitable company are its directors for the purposes of company law and throughout this report are collectively referred to as the Trustees.

The members of the Board of Trustees who served during the year were as follows:

Elected Trustees

Mr S Bonny Malhotra - (Chair)
Mr D Parrish – (Hon Treasurer) (appointed 13 September 2021)
Mr R Bird
Mr J Cobbett
Mr M F Ford (resigned 13 September 2021)
Mrs S Hawkins – (Hon Solicitor)
Mr I Owen
Mrs W Foster née Tull
Mr A Breen
Mr A D Larkin (resigned 7 July 2020)
Mr M Fitzgerald (resigned 6 July 2020)

Co-opted Members

Cllr P Harper

Staff Representatives

Mr P Hardy
Mr S Jones
Mrs T Weber

Senior Leadership Team

Mr P Hardy - CEO
Mrs S Smith - Advice Manager
Mr I Park - Service Manager Projects
Mrs T Weber - Operations Manager
Mrs J Woods - Administration Manager

Registered Office and Principal Address

2 Bower Terrace, Tonbridge Road, Maidstone, Kent, ME16 8RY

Statutory Auditors

Azets Audit Services, Globe House, Eclipse Park, Sittingbourne Road, Maidstone, Kent, ME14 3EN

MAIDSTONE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU

TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

The Trustees present their report and the audited financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2021. The Trustees confirm that the annual report and financial statements of Citizens Advice Maidstone comply with current statutory requirements, the requirements of Citizens Advice Maidstone's governing document and the provisions of the Statement of Recommended Practice – Accounting and Reporting by Charities (SORP FRS 102).

Objectives and activities

Citizens Advice Maidstone provides independent, free, confidential, impartial advice to everybody regardless of race, gender, sexuality or disability. Citizens Advice Maidstone aims to ensure that individuals do not suffer through a lack of knowledge of their rights and responsibilities or of the services available to them, or through an inability to express their needs effectively.

The Citizens Advice Maidstone also aims to exercise a responsible influence on the development of social policies and services both locally and nationally.

Public benefit

The Trustees confirm that they have complied with the duty in section 4 of the Charities Act 2006 to have due regard to the guidance contained in the Charity Commission's general guidance on the public benefit when reviewing the local office aims and objectives and in the planning of future activities.

Achievements and performance

It is our goal to empower clients to solve their problems by themselves; others requiring more support do receive further help through casework conducted by our specialists or generalist volunteer advisers. Citizens Advice Maidstone provides free, independent, confidential and impartial advice to everyone on their rights and responsibilities. The organisation values diversity, promotes equality and challenges discrimination. This essential work, professionally carried out by our team of paid and voluntary staff helps people to solve their problems and changes their lives. In order to prevent financial problems re-emerging, we also run educational services such as financial capability or energy efficiency training sessions in collaboration with other local offices.

Our main offices are located on the Tonbridge Road with an extension at the Town Hall in the High Street. A number of outreach sessions are also provided at certain parishes in the Borough. This enables us to connect with a broad and diverse client base within the Borough. Clients can access our service for face-to-face advice as well as by telephone or email for those who cannot otherwise partners.

The new Membership Scheme required each local Citizens Advice to carry out a Leadership Self-Assessment each year. The Board worked together with paid and volunteer staff to look at its policies and procedures and submitted its Second Assessment to the Performance Assessor under the new system. The Organisation is judged to be at a good standard.

Our workforce, both paid and voluntary have produced an excellent set of statistics, the majority of which can be seen in our Annual Report. Suffice to say that we continue to provide our service to many more people than other similar organisations. We have continued to secure funding for new projects. Our total income for the year was £860,112 with the expenditure pegged at £793,704 showing a surplus of £66,408 for the 20/21 financial year. At the end of the Financial Year our Restricted Reserves were £60,549 and Unrestricted Reserves stood at £193,639.

Demonstrating the value of our work is crucial as the pressures on the public finances continues to gather pace with national and local spending decreasing further year on year. It is our responsibility to communicate to funders why Citizens Advice is an essential service and not just 'nice to have'. Citizens Advice Maidstone is unique for many reasons: in our team we have a total of 34 paid staff equating to almost 24 FTE, of which 16 FTE work within our various projects and the remainder form part of our core service. Our team of 65+ volunteers includes Trustees, advisers, administrative, trainees and assessors.

Our services are provided with funding from a wide variety of sources. A Service Level Agreement with Maidstone Borough Council allows us to provide an essential Core Service of general and specialist advice through digital and face-to-face to clients in the Borough of Maidstone. Additional funding from Golding Homes helps to add services to their tenants in the Town. We have Contracts with Citizens Advice to provide PensionWise guidance and Money Advice. Pension Wise provides a service throughout Kent and East Sussex. Citizens Advice also provide funding for Universal Credit (help to claim). Funding from The Edward Gostling Foundation allows us to continue to provide our service to people suffering from MS. Our work in HMP Maidstone continues to be funded by Henry Smith Charity and latterly also from HMP Maidstone. Funding for our work on the Energy Advice Programme (EAP), formerly Energy Best Deal (EBD) came through National Citizens Advice and amongst all these, other smaller projects were funded through smaller grants from external funding sources.

MAIDSTONE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU
TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT (CONTINUED)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

Achievements and performance (continued)

We continue to work with a number of partners within Local Government and Statutory Agencies to improve the policies and practices that affect our communities. We work collectively with other Citizens Advice Centres in Kent to inform public policy and help regulators, as well as influence private industry to make their services fair for consumers. In addition to Local and National campaigning, with the help of our volunteers we empower clients and communities to engage with society and make a difference to issues that matter. We hope to expand our use of volunteers as feasible to do so.

Volunteers are vital to the service in Citizens Advice Maidstone. Trustees and our Management Team are working in partnership with our paid and voluntary staff to provide excellent quality advice and support nearly 9,000 people, with over 33,000 different issues in the Borough of Maidstone.

Additionally, Trustees are also engaged in providing direction in the Governance of our office. Our Volunteers are an integral part of the way we deliver our advice, support and service today to the communities of Maidstone, and have been since the conception of Local Citizens Advice (LCAs) over 80 years ago in 1939. The service in Maidstone commenced on the 1st January 1940 and has dealt with over 1 Million problems.

Volunteers have always been integral to the Citizens Advice service and are increasingly involved in delivering within all areas of advice work. Volunteers bring with them a wealth of experience and skills and it is important for us to recognise the resource we have within the service. Volunteers are vital to the way we deliver our service, allowing us to reach many more people than if we were purely delivering our work through paid staff. Volunteers undertake a range of tasks from assessing and providing advice, supporting the running of our local office, campaigning in the community and acting as Trustees.

Our volunteers come from a wide range of backgrounds, including young people, professionals who want to broaden their horizons, retired people who want to give something back and mothers whose children have started school – so we offer a range of support services to meet the needs of all our volunteers. Our commitment to value diversity, promote equality and inclusion means we can encourage individuals who might not otherwise wish/be able to volunteer.

Understanding our trainee volunteers' needs and expectations is a very important aspect of the training programme. Providing a well-structured training plan helps the trainee to gain better employment prospects as well as offering an opportunity for personal development, increased confidence, self-esteem, and wellbeing.

Providing an active contribution to the day-to-day running of a CAB can develop volunteers' practical skills, such as problem solving, communication and team work, as well as boost their confidence and belief in their abilities. This improves employability, presents career development opportunities, and can help those currently unemployed, move into work.

Volunteering provides individuals with an opportunity they might not otherwise have to develop their personal skills and abilities. For those out of work, volunteering keeps them active and motivated, potentially countering the negative impacts of unemployment on mental wellbeing – research shows that one in five jobseeker's allowance claimants experience a mental health disorder.

Volunteering enables people to realise their own potential, supporting priorities around increased social mobility – 29 per cent of volunteers that left the CAB service did so for paid employment, education or training (National Statistics). It also enables individuals to make an economic contribution to society, one which may be factored into future national Gross Domestic Product and productivity calculations.

Volunteering with Citizens Advice can also develop an individual's softer skills, resilience and other personal attributes. This can have a positive impact on how people feel about themselves, how they respond to others and their capacity to manage life's challenges.

MAIDSTONE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU
TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT (CONTINUED)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

Achievements and performance (continued)

For retired individuals, volunteering may offer new opportunities, provide structure and a sense of purpose as well as help them feel involved in society, all highlighted as vital to personal wellbeing. Ensuring that retired people are mentally and physically active also has wider reaching benefits to society, including reducing the NHS provision required to cope with an ageing population. Volunteering with us does not just have an impact on individuals, it benefits their communities too. Our volunteers are local people, and through volunteering, they increase their knowledge about community issues and build relationships with their locality. This creates stronger communities, with engaged and active members, and more social action.

The Citizens Advice Service also plays an integral role in supporting and strengthening its local community. We provide a service that meets local needs and reaches out to a broad and diverse client base. We support and strengthen other community-focused organisations, partnering with them to share our insight on how best to support local people. We also use our extensive knowledge to act as an advocate for the local area, mobilising and connecting people with their community. We are a local service, working with local people, for the benefit of the local community.

The value we get from working with volunteers is greater than just our ability to provide a quality advice service. In addition, our investment in developing volunteers, and enabling them to volunteer in their local area, has tangible benefits for the individual, community, and society at large. This is an additional benefit to the community, created through the way we deliver our service.

As we approached the end of the 2020/21 financial year we were faced with perhaps our biggest challenge yet – how to continue to deliver our much needed service, a lifeline for so many, in the wake of the Coronavirus epidemic. This was truly an unprecedented situation, forcing us to work in very different ways and provide the vast majority of our services remotely, via telephone as well as digital means. Fortunately, our staff and volunteers adapted to the new regime extremely well and it is a credit to their dedication and commitment that in this most demanding of times. We are very proud that we were only unable to deliver our service to the public for one working day since the government announced the nationwide lockdown measures in March 2020.

Data

We give advice to people who need help, but we also collect statistical data on all these issues. For example, we can show attendant issues affecting people who come to us with problems around council tax. As a result, we are better able to ascertain the most efficient ways to help people understand their problems more completely. For councils and councillors, this data is powerful. It can help address failure demand, facilitate the consideration of new service options and provide additional insight to the scrutiny process.

Councils are increasingly working together to deliver services in new ways and save costs, whether in shared service arrangements or in combined authorities with devolution deals. This can also unlock funding and address long-standing problems across the county. We want to be able to work with our local government—at parish, district, county level—to inform debate with our data and client stories. More than this, we can provide innovative services that mesh closely with those offered by public authorities. Citizens Advice is working nationally to make this as easy as possible, with new data products for combining output and impact data across variable geography as well as direct support to areas of innovation across our network.

Social Exclusion

People can suffer social exclusion when they face a series of problems such as poor skills, low incomes, bad housing and family breakdown.

As a result of their experiences and development, our volunteers are better equipped and more confident in their abilities, and hence are more likely to move into employment. This has a value to society, by moving people closer to the labour market, which may reduce their need to claim benefits related to unemployment. It may also reduce other costs to the state associated with sustained unemployment, especially for young people not in employment, education or training. Equally, community volunteering enables unemployed individuals to make a form of economic contribution to society, the value of which may be factored into future national GDP and productivity calculations.

Citizens Advice has a major impact on people's lives, particularly the most vulnerable in society. Our service is best known for solving problems through advice but we also make a difference by solving the underlying causes of these problems through our research and campaigns volunteers. Our work has also contributed to vital policy changes that will help more people make ends meet, such as the government's proposal to ban letting agent fees. Through cutting-edge research, our Research and Campaign volunteers contributed our own unique data as one of the 29 districts who sent in feedback to Citizens Advice concerning letting agents and their overt and covert charging policies.

MAIDSTONE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU
TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT (CONTINUED)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

Achievements and performance (continued)

Pension Wise

Citizens Advice Maidstone is one of the LCAs who have been delivering the government's Pension Wise service for the last five years. Launched in April 2015, Pension Wise was a new guidance service set up to help people understand their options under the pension freedoms. Citizens Advice Maidstone delivers Pension Wise appointments throughout Kent, Medway and East Sussex.

During 2020/21 we delivered Pension Wise appointments by telephone to people aged 50 and over with a defined contribution pension.

Key statistics

During 2020/21, Citizens Advice delivered 77631 appointments across England, Wales and Northern Ireland. Since the service started, people have continued to value the high-quality guidance and support they receive. Satisfaction scores have remained over 95% for 2020/21.

Money Advice

National research shows that just over a quarter of adults say that they do not consider themselves to be good at managing money and one third say that they would prefer not to think about planning their finances at all. Many people have poor financial skills and this often leads them to make ill-informed decisions on their money matters. Citizens Advice has found that the negative effects of a lack of financial awareness can be compounded by limited or poor quality consumer information and inadequate advice. People can miss out on the growing range of financial products available and fail to make the best use of Government initiatives. However, building the necessary confidence in financial services is an uphill task. Citizens Advice Maidstone helps people resolve their money, legal and other problems by providing information and advice as well as by influencing policymakers. Our service is the largest provider of free money advice in the Borough of Maidstone. We provide specialist level money advice services, helping people resolve a range of money and debt issues. By providing advice and information about money in the heart of our community, we help people resolve a range of debt and personal finance-related problems.

The Citizens Advice (CA) service is a network of independent, local charities that helps people resolve their money, legal and other problems. The CA service is the largest provider of free advice in the UK. CA also uses evidence of CA clients' money problems to campaign for change and is contributing to the Government's plan to provide all UK adults with access to generic financial advice. CA wants people to have the skills, knowledge and confidence to make informed decisions across a range of personal money matters. We work with a range of partner agencies to improve the financial skills of people of all ages, particularly those at risk of social or financial exclusion.

Financial skills training can change behaviour - participants become better at budgeting, choosing financial products, saving and making their money go further and these changes persist over time. Developing financial skills not only boosts financial well-being but also confidence and general peace of mind. Tenants who do get into financial difficulty know where to turn to for help, seek out support sooner and as a result, are better equipped to cope.

Prison Work

Citizens Advice Maidstone's strategy aims to increase the capacity of our paid and voluntary staff to deal with our Clients' debt and other money problems in order to prevent the financial problems faced by many people becoming major crises. This supports our wider focus of encouraging our team to work with more vulnerable groups such as offenders to meet their finance, benefit and debt needs. In relation to offenders, Citizens Advice is clear that personal debt and other financial problems can be a cause of an individual offending in the first place, and such problems can increase the likelihood of reoffending on release. Being able to manage debt and other financial problems during a prison sentence or upon release into the community could help to reduce re-offending.

Many offenders with families may fall into rent or mortgage arrears caused by a reduction of income during the prison sentence. Stable accommodation can help reduce re-offending by providing a secure environment in which to live, enabling them to open a bank account, receive benefits and find regular employment. Timely access to advice can, among other things, secure accommodation for an offender or their family on release; ensure access to benefits for the payment of rent and advocate on behalf the family if they are refused support from the local authority. Such services can greatly reduce the risk of re-offending. Debt can also present problems for offenders and their families both during their sentence and after release.

MAIDSTONE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU
TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT (CONTINUED)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

Achievements and performance (continued)

As the Social Exclusion Unit report identified, finance, benefit and debt issues are inextricably tied to many other key factors which exacerbate reoffending. Ensuring ex-offenders have enough lawfully-obtained money to live on is key to their rehabilitation and to reducing temptation into re-offending, but many face significant problems achieving financial security. Low incomes, debt, disrupted access to benefits advice and insufficient income on release from prison all add to the problem. The National Offender Management Services (NOMS') aim is to ensure that offenders in custody and the prison community have access to financial and advice services that will address money-related issues, maximise income and reduce debt to help prevent re-offending. A key element of this work is to develop close partnership working between prison and probation services, and voluntary and community sector providers who are willing to work with offenders.

Risk Management

Trustees regularly meet to consider the financial and other risks relating to the activities of the charity and take appropriate action as and when required. A comprehensive risk register is maintained and reviewed at every Trustee meeting. During the year we have had to limit face to face interviews to where there is no other way to help clients due to restrictions caused by the Corona Virus pandemic, although the Maidstone CA managed to maintain a service by offering advice by telephone and online with staff working from home. Some consideration has been given to the issues which may result from the lockdown and these include debt, mental health problems, and domestic violence.

Planning for the future

The business strategy adopted by the Trustee Board is to safeguard the Core service with free generalist advice covering a full range of issues. This service has hitherto been funded by a Grant from Maidstone Borough Council. This is now steadily being reduced; nevertheless, we are most grateful for the Council's continuing support. Maidstone CA seeks additional funding from other sources in order to shore up the core service and provide other services if it is financially prudent to do so. Maidstone CA management has been successful in securing such funding from a variety of sources, including the Citizens Advice/Treasury (Department of Works & Pensions), Henry Smith Charity, Money Advice Service and Energy (Citizens Advice). The management continues to develop new and innovative partnerships with a wide stakeholder group in response to steadily dwindling financial resources.

Financial review

During September 2021 a resolution was achieved with the Legal Aid Agency regarding a refund of disputed overpaid fees that had been in dispute for a number of years. It was agreed to repay £24,000 in order to achieve closure and this had been provided in the financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2021. Prior to September 2021 no reasonable assessment of the provision was available.

The net surplus for the year amounted to £66,408. There was a surplus of £19,619 in relation to core business before transfers. As at 31 March 2021 general unrestricted reserves amount to £159,157, designated unrestricted funds amounted to £34,482 and total restricted reserves amounted to £60,549.

Reserves Policy

The Board of Trustees regularly reviews the finances and reserves of Citizens Advice Maidstone. Each review encompasses the nature of the income and expenditure streams and the need to match variable income with fixed commitments and the nature of reserves. Citizens Advice Maidstone sets aside restricted funds as set out in the Statement of Financial Activities. All restricted funds are applied to the particular restricted activity (project). Restricted funds unspent in a particular financial year are allocated as reserves in statutory accounts at the end of the financial year and will be allocated to that restricted activity (project) during the course of the following financial year or when the activity ends. Restricted funds at 31 March 2021 were £60,549 (2020:£8,374).

Trustees have discussed levels of unrestricted reserves and are agreed that in all circumstances Citizens Advice Maidstone's core services must be secure. A minimum sum of three months unrestricted (core) expenditure with a contingency of 10% will ensure that this aspiration is preserved. This figure equates to £40,000 (2020:£26,000). In the opinion of the Trustees the present level of unrestricted reserves of £159,157 (2020: £144,924) is at a sufficient level to maintain the activities of the Citizens Advice Maidstone in the event of an unforeseen crisis or interruption of income for a period of time during which any adverse situation would be appropriately addressed. In light of the pandemic, the Trustees will review the reserve policy to ensure it provides a sufficient level of reserves as the current policy only covers core cost.

MAIDSTONE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU
TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT (CONTINUED)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

Going concern

The Trustees have considered the impact of the COVID-19 virus on the future activity of the charity. The Trustees do not expect a reduction in activity in the long term. As a consequence of this factor and other evidence available to the Trustees in respect of the charity's activities and level of reserves, the Trustees are satisfied that the charity has sufficient resources to meet its liabilities as they fall due for a period of at least twelve months from the date of signing of these financial statements. Accordingly, the Trustees confirm that they consider that the 'going concern' basis remains appropriate.

Structure, governance and management

Maidstone Citizens Advice is a member of Citizens Advice, which provides a framework for standards of advice and casework management as well as monitoring progress against these standards. The Board of Trustees produces an annual report detailing Maidstone CA activities during the year. The report is available on request from the office.

(a) Method of appointment or election of Trustees

In accordance with the Articles of Association (revised 23 September 2013 to bring our Memorandum and Articles of Association in line with the national policy of Citizens Advice and the guidance of the Charity Commission) the Trustee Board consists of a minimum of 3 and a maximum of 15 members. There may be a maximum of 10 elected members, each of whom is elected for a term of three years by the members of the company at its Annual General Meeting. At expiry of their term of office elected Trustees are eligible for re-election. In addition the Trustee Board may co-opt members, whose number may not exceed one third of the total number of Trustees. No member of the staff of the office whether paid or voluntary can be a member of the Board. However, the Chief Executive, one representative of the paid staff and one representative of the voluntary staff, have the right to attend and speak (but not vote) at meetings of the Board.

(b) Operational structure and decision making

The Trustee Board sets the overall policy and direction of Maidstone CA business within the parameters set by the Citizens Advice Membership Agreement and any Service Level Agreements or Contracts currently in being. Operational decisions are made by the Chief Executive subject to any specific Trustee Board directions and referring to the Trustee Board as necessary. The Trustee Board meets once every two months. Financial oversight is delegated to the Finance Committee which meets 14 days before the Trustee Board to appraise financial reports and recommend action to the Trustee Board.

Trustees' responsibilities in relation to the financial statements

The Trustees as directors are responsible for preparing the Trustees' Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and regulation.

Company law requires the Trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year. Under that law the Trustees have elected to prepare the financial statements in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice (United Kingdom Accounting Standards and applicable law). Under company law the Trustees must not approve the financial statements unless they are satisfied that they give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity and of the results of the charity for that period. In preparing these financial statements, the Trustees are required to:-

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in business.

The Trustees are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that are sufficient to show and explain the charity's transactions and disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with Companies Act 2006 and the Charities Act 2011.

They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.


MAIDSTONE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU
TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT (CONTINUED)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

Disclosure of information to auditors

In accordance with company law, as the company's directors, we confirm that:

- so far as we are aware, there is no relevant audit information of which the charity's auditors are unaware; and
- as the directors of the company we have taken all the steps that we ought to have taken in order to make ourselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the charity's auditors are aware of that information.

**ON BEHALF OF THE
BOARD OF TRUSTEES**


MR S BONNY MALHOTRA

Registered office
2 Bower Terrace
Tonbridge Road
Maidstone
Kent ME16 8RY

Date

11/10/21

MAIDSTONE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU
INDEPENDENT AUDITORS' REPORT TO THE MEMBERS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of Maidstone Citizens Advice Bureau (the 'charitable company') for the year ended 31 March 2021 which comprise the Statement of Financial Activities, the Balance Sheet, the Cash Flow Statement and the related notes. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards, including FRS 102 "The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland" (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

In our opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the charitable company's affairs as at 31 March 2021 and of its incoming resources and application of resources, including its income and expenditure, for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice; and have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006.

Basis for opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs (UK)) and applicable law. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of our report. We are independent of the charitable company in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in the UK, including the FRC's Ethical Standard, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Conclusions relating to going concern

In auditing the financial statements, we have concluded that the Trustees' use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

Based on the work we have performed, we have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the charitable company's ability to continue as a going concern for a period of at least twelve months from when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

Our responsibilities and the responsibilities of the Trustees with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this report.

Other information

The other information comprises the information included in the Trustees Annual Report, other than the financial statements and our auditor's report thereon. The Trustees are responsible for the other information contained within the annual report. Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in our report, we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon. Our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the course of the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether this gives rise to a material misstatement in the financial statements themselves. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact.

We have nothing to report in this regard.

Opinions on other matters prescribed by the Companies Act 2006

In our opinion, based on the work undertaken in the course of the audit:

- the information given in the Trustees' Report and the incorporated Strategic Report prepared for the purpose of company law for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements; and
- the Trustees' Report and the incorporated Strategic Report have been prepared in accordance with applicable legal requirements.

MAIDSTONE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU

INDEPENDENT AUDITORS' REPORT TO THE MEMBERS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

Matters on which we are required to report by exception

In the light of the knowledge and understanding of the charitable company and its environment obtained in the course of the audit, we have not identified material misstatements in the Trustees' Report and the incorporated Strategic Report.

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters where the Companies Act 2006 requires us to report to you if, in our opinion:

- adequate accounting records have not been kept, or returns adequate for our audit have not been received from branches not visited by us; or
- the financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or
- certain disclosures of Trustees' remuneration specified by law are not made; or
- we have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit.

Responsibilities of Trustees

As explained more fully in the Statement of Trustees' responsibilities set out on page 15, the Trustees (who are also the directors of the charitable company for the purposes of company law) are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the Trustees determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the Trustees are responsible for assessing the charitable company's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the Trustees either intend to liquidate the charitable company or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

Extent to which the audit was considered capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud

Irregularities, including fraud, are instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations. We design procedures in line with our responsibilities, outlined above and on the Financial Reporting Council's website, to detect material misstatements in respect of irregularities, including fraud.

We obtain and update our understanding of the entity, its activities, its control environment, and likely future developments, including in relation to the legal and regulatory framework applicable and how the entity is complying with that framework. Based on this understanding, we identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion. This includes consideration of the risk of acts by the entity that were contrary to applicable laws and regulations, including fraud.

In response to the risk of irregularities and non-compliance with laws and regulations, including fraud, we designed procedures which included:

- Enquiry of management and those charged with governance around actual and potential litigation and claims as well as actual, suspected and alleged fraud;
- Reviewing minutes of meetings of those charged with governance;
- Assessing the extent of compliance with the laws and regulations considered to have a direct material effect on the financial statements or the operations of the company through enquiry and inspection;
- Reviewing financial statement disclosures and testing to supporting documentation to assess compliance with applicable laws and regulations;
- Performing audit work over the risk of management bias and override of controls, including testing of journal entries and other adjustments for appropriateness, evaluating the business rationale of significant transactions outside the normal course of business and reviewing accounting estimates for indicators of potential bias.

MAIDSTONE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU

INDEPENDENT AUDITORS' REPORT TO THE MEMBERS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

Because of the inherent limitations of an audit, there is a risk that we will not detect all irregularities, including those leading to a material misstatement in the financial statements or non-compliance with regulation. This risk increases the more that compliance with a law or regulation is removed from the events and transactions reflected in the financial statements, as we will be less likely to become aware of instances of non-compliance. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.

As part of an audit in accordance with ISAs (UK), we exercise professional judgment and maintain professional scepticism throughout the audit. We also:

- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the charitable company's internal control.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by the Trustees.
- Conclude on the appropriateness of the Trustees' use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the charitable company's ability to continue as a going concern. If we conclude that a material uncertainty exists, we are required to draw attention in our auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial statements or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify our opinion. Our conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of our auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause the charitable company to cease to continue as a going concern.
- Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial statements, including the disclosures, and whether the financial statements represent the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation (ie. gives a true and fair view).

We communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that we identify during our audit.

Use of our report

This report is made solely to the charitable company's members, as a body, in accordance with Chapter 3 of Part 16 of the Companies Act 2006. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the charitable company's members those matters we are required to state to them in an auditor's report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the charitable company and the charitable company's members as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

Azets Audit Services

Michelle Wilkes FCA (Senior Statutory Auditor)
for and on behalf of Azets Audit Services

Statutory Auditor

28/10/21

.....
Globe House, Eclipse Park
Sittingbourne Road
Maidstone
Kent
ME14 3EN

MAIDSTONE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES (INCLUDING INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

	Notes	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total 2021 £	Total 2020 £
INCOME:					
Donations and legacies	3	7,091	-	7,091	8,141
Charitable activities	4	147,931	704,907	852,838	938,868
Investments		183	-	183	330
TOTAL INCOME		<u>155,205</u>	<u>704,907</u>	<u>860,112</u>	<u>947,339</u>
EXPENDITURE:					
Charitable activities	5	<u>135,586</u>	<u>658,118</u>	<u>793,704</u>	<u>835,814</u>
TOTAL EXPENDITURE		<u>135,586</u>	<u>658,118</u>	<u>793,704</u>	<u>835,814</u>
NET MOVEMENT ON FUNDS		19,619	46,789	66,408	111,525
Transfers	14	(5,386)	5,386	-	-
Total funds at 1 April 2020		<u>179,406</u>	<u>8,374</u>	<u>187,780</u>	<u>76,255</u>
Total funds at 31 March 2021		<u><u>193,639</u></u>	<u><u>60,549</u></u>	<u><u>254,188</u></u>	<u><u>187,780</u></u>

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES (INCLUDING INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2020

	Notes	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total 2020	Total 2019
INCOME:					
Donations and legacies	3	8,141	-	8,141	6,617
Charitable activities	4	194,463	744,405	938,868	661,954
Investments		330	-	330	156
TOTAL INCOME		<u>202,934</u>	<u>744,405</u>	<u>947,339</u>	<u>668,727</u>
EXPENDITURE:					
Charitable activities	5	<u>95,128</u>	<u>740,686</u>	<u>835,814</u>	<u>639,396</u>
TOTAL EXPENDITURE		<u>95,128</u>	<u>740,686</u>	<u>835,814</u>	<u>639,396</u>
NET MOVEMENT ON FUNDS		107,806	3,719	111,525	29,331
Transfers	14	(1,403)	1,403	-	-
Total funds at 1 April 2019		<u>73,003</u>	<u>3,252</u>	<u>76,255</u>	<u>46,924</u>
Total funds at 31 March 2020		<u><u>179,406</u></u>	<u><u>8,374</u></u>	<u><u>187,780</u></u>	<u><u>76,255</u></u>

All income and expenditure derive from continuing activities.

The Statement of Financial Activities includes all gains and losses recognised during the year.

The notes on page 15 to 22 form part of these accounts.

MAIDSTONE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU

BALANCE SHEET

AS AT 31 MARCH 2021

	Notes	£	2021 £	£	2020 £
TANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS	10		-		-
CURRENT ASSETS					
Other debtors and prepayments		-		400	
Cash at bank		335,734		258,300	
Cash in hand		174		295	
		<u>335,908</u>		<u>258,995</u>	
CREDITORS: AMOUNTS FALLING DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR					
Accruals and deferred income	11	55,115		39,691	
NET CURRENT ASSETS			280,793		219,304
Provision for liabilities and charges	18		<u>26,605</u>		<u>31,524</u>
NET ASSETS			<u>254,188</u>		<u>187,780</u>
General unrestricted funds	12		159,157		144,924
Designated funds	13		34,482		34,482
Restricted funds	14		<u>60,549</u>		<u>8,374</u>
	15		<u>254,188</u>		<u>187,780</u>

Approved by the Board of Trustees on 11/03/21 and are signed on its behalf by:



MR S BONNY MALHOTRA
CHAIR OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES



MR D PARRISH
MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Company No. 02234220

The notes on page 15 to 22 form part of these accounts.

MAIDSTONE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU

STATEMENT OF CASH FLOW

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

	Notes	2021 £	2020 £
Cash flows from operating activities	17	<u>77,130</u>	<u>54,395</u>
Net cash inflow from operating activities		77,130	54,395
Investing activities			
Interest received	<u>183</u>	<u>330</u>	
Net cash generated from investing activities		<u>183</u>	<u>330</u>
Net increase in cash and cash equivalents		77,313	54,725
Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of year		<u>258,595</u>	<u>203,870</u>
Cash and cash equivalents at end of year		<u><u>335,908</u></u>	<u><u>258,595</u></u>

The notes on page 15 to 22 form part of these accounts.

MAIDSTONE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

1. Accounting policies

a) Basis of accounting

The Maidstone Citizens Advice Bureau (the 'charity') is a charity registered with the Charity Commission in the United Kingdom. The address of the registered office is given in the charity information on page 1 of these financial statements. The nature of the charity's operations and principal activities are detailed in page 2 of these financial statements. The charity constitutes a public benefit entity as defined by FRS 102.

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK (FRS102) issued in October 2019, the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the United Kingdom (FRS102), the Charities Act 2011 and UK Generally Accepted Practice.

The financial statements are prepared in sterling which is the functional currency of the charity and rounded to the nearest £1.

The significant accounting policies applied in the preparation of these financial statements are set out below. These policies have been consistently applied to all years presented unless otherwise stated.

The charity has availed itself of Paragraph 4(1) of Schedule 1 of the Small Companies and Groups (Accounts and Directors' Reports) Regulations 2008 and adapted the format of the financial statements to reflect the special nature of the charity's activities.

b) Going Concern

These financial statements are prepared on the going concern basis. The Trustees have a reasonable expectation that the charity will continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future.

The Trustees have considered the impact of the COVID-19 virus on the future activity of the charity. The Trustees do not expect a reduction in activity in the long term. As a consequence of this factor and other evidence available to the Trustees in respect of the charity's activities and level of reserves, the Trustees are satisfied that the charity has sufficient resources to meet its liabilities as they fall due for a period of at least twelve months from the date of signing of these financial statements. Accordingly, the financial statements are prepared on a going concern basis and do not include any adjustments which would be necessary if this basis of preparation was inappropriate.

c) Fund accounting

Unrestricted funds are those available for use at the discretion of the Trustees in the furtherance of the general objectives of the charity which have not been designated for other purposes. Designated funds are unrestricted funds that have been set aside by the Trustees for particular purposes. Restricted funds are funds which are to be used in accordance with specific restrictions imposed by donors which have been raised by the charity for particular purposes.

d) Income recognition

Grants and service agreement income are recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities when the charity has entitlement to the funds, where the service it relates to has commenced, it is probable that the income will be received and the amount can be measured reliably and is not deferred. Other Income is recognised in the accounts on an accruals basis with the exception of donations which are recognised on a cash received basis.

e) Expenditure

Expenditure is recorded on an accruals basis including irrecoverable VAT and allocated on the following basis:-

- Costs directly allocated - actual basis.
- Support costs - depending on type of cost and the Trustees' best estimate of usage.
- Other costs – actual basis.

f) Tangible fixed assets and depreciation

Individual fixed assets costing £1,000 or more are stated at cost less depreciation. Depreciation is provided on office and computer equipment to write off the cost, less estimated residual value of assets over their expected useful economic life of two or three years. At each reporting period end date, the charity reviews the carrying amounts of its tangible assets to determine whether there is any indication that those assets have suffered an impairment loss. If any such indication exists, the recoverable amount of the asset is estimated in order to determine the extent of the impairment loss (if any).

MAIDSTONE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

1. Accounting policies (continued)

g) Operating leases

Rentals payable under operating leases are charged on a straight line basis over the lease term.

h) Pensions

Contributions payable to the charity's multi-employer pension plan are charged to the income and expenditure account on a payments basis.

The charity recognises a liability for the obligation under the pension plan's recovery plan. The amount recognised is the net present value of the deficit reduction contributions payable under the agreement. The present value is calculated using the discount rate disclosed in note 18.

i) Debtors and creditors receivable/payable within one year

Debtors and creditors with no stated interest rate and receivable or payable within one year are recorded at transaction price. Any losses arising from impairment are recognised in the statement of financial activities under expenditure arising on charitable activities.

j) Employee benefits

When employees have rendered service to the charity, short-term employee benefits to which the employees are entitled are recognised at the undiscounted amount expected to be paid in exchange for that service.

2. Judgements and key sources of estimation uncertainty

In the application of the charity's accounting policies, the Trustees are required to make judgements, estimates and assumptions about the carrying amount of assets and liabilities that are not readily apparent from other sources. The estimates and associated assumptions are based on historical experience and other factors that are considered to be relevant. There are no judgements or key sources of estimation uncertainty.

3. Income from donations and legacies

	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total 2021 £	Total 2020 £
Fundraising	1,305	-	1,305	5,300
Donations	5,786	-	5,786	2,841
	<u>7,091</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>7,091</u>	<u>8,141</u>

4. Income from charitable activities

	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total 2021 £	Total 2020 £
Maidstone Borough Council grants	142,100	-	142,100	151,100
Money Advice Service	-	53,169	53,169	58,417
Golding Homes	5,000	-	5,000	5,000
Pension Wise	-	442,386	442,386	454,228
Henry Smith (MDS Prison)	-	53,008	53,008	54,200
Energy Best Deal	-	26,485	26,485	14,277
Universal Credit – Help to Claim	-	129,859	129,859	163,283
A B Charitable Trust	-	-	-	10,000
Refund of overpayment of legal services commissions	(24,000)	-	(24,000)	-
Other projects	24,831	-	24,831	28,363
	<u>147,931</u>	<u>704,907</u>	<u>852,838</u>	<u>938,868</u>

MAIDSTONE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

5. Analysis of expenditure

	Direct costs £	Support costs £	Total 2021 £	Total 2020 £
Citizens advice services	96,885	45,721	142,606	95,128
Prison support	29,755	13,753	43,508	48,413
Energy advice	19,465	-	19,465	11,732
Pension advice	313,963	86,610	400,573	458,505
Financial advice	47,350	11,205	58,555	59,034
Benefit advice	103,914	25,083	128,997	163,002
	<u>611,332</u>	<u>182,372</u>	<u>793,704</u>	<u>835,814</u>

6. Support costs

	Note	2021 £	2020 £
Staff costs		82,712	49,180
Premises costs		37,023	34,527
General office costs		56,623	92,108
Bank charges		101	60
Governance costs	7	5,913	9,941
		<u>182,372</u>	<u>185,816</u>

7. Governance costs

	2021 £	2020 £
Auditors' remuneration	5,913	5,412
Auditors' remuneration under provision in previous year	-	1,812
Meeting costs	-	2,717
	<u>5,913</u>	<u>9,941</u>

8. Net expenditure

This is stated after charging:

	2021 £	2020 £
Auditor's remuneration	5,913	7,224
Rent payable on property under operating leases	23,000	23,000
	<u>28,913</u>	<u>30,224</u>

MAIDSTONE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

9. Staff costs

	2021	2020
	£	£
Wages and salaries	574,147	569,639
Social security costs	41,069	41,038
Employer pension costs	32,788	28,922
	648,004	639,599
	648,004	639,599

The key management personnel of the charity comprise the Trustees and the bureau managers.

The Trustees received no remuneration for the year ended 31 March 2021 (2020: £Nil). During the year, one of the Trustees had expenses reimbursed by the charity. The total expenses reimbursed to the Trustee amounted to £132 (2020: £472). These costs related to sundry supplies of refreshments for staff members as well as parking costs.

The total remuneration including pension contributions and employers national insurance received by key management personnel for their service to the charity was £125,662 (2020: £128,727).

The average number of salaried employees during the year was 34 (2020: 33).

There were no employees (2019: none) who received total employee benefits (excluding employer pension costs) of more than £60,000.

10. Tangible fixed assets

	Office and computer equipment
	£
Cost	
At 1 April 2020 and at 31 March 2021	96,327
Depreciation	
At 1 April 2020 and at 31 March 2021	96,327
At 31 March 2021	-
Net book value	
At 1 April 2020 and at 31 March 2021	-

11. Accruals and deferred income

	2021	2020
	£	£
Accruals	8,715	5,412
Other creditors	24,000	-
Deferred income	22,400	34,279
	55,115	39,691
	55,115	39,691

MAIDSTONE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

12. General unrestricted funds

	2021 £	2020 £
Balance at 1 April	144,924	38,521
Net income	19,619	107,806
Transfer to restricted funds	(5,386)	(1,403)
Balance at 31 March	<u>159,157</u>	<u>144,924</u>

13. Designated funds

	Balance at 1 April 2020 £	New designations £	Designations released £	Balance at 31 March 2021 £
Premises and development fund	<u>34,482</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>34,482</u>

Comparative year information:

	Balance at 1 April 2019 £	New designations £	Designations released £	Balance at 31 March 2020 £
Premises and development fund	<u>34,482</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>34,482</u>

The Premises and Development Fund has been designated to provide for future resources in these two areas.

14. Restricted funds

	Balance at 1 April 2020 £	Income £	Expenditure £	Transfers £	Balance at 31 March 2021 £
Henry Smith (MDS Prison)	8,287	53,008	(43,508)	-	17,787
Energy Best Deal	-	26,485	(26,485)	-	-
Pension Wise	-	442,386	(400,573)	-	41,813
Money Advice Service	-	53,169	(58,555)	5,386	-
Universal Credit – Help to Claim	87	129,859	(128,997)	-	949
	<u>8,374</u>	<u>704,907</u>	<u>(658,118)</u>	<u>5,386</u>	<u>60,549</u>

Comparative year information:

	Balance at 1 April 2019 £	Income £	Expenditure £	Transfers £	Balance at 31 March 2020 £
Henry Smith (MDS Prison)	2,500	54,200	(48,413)	-	8,287
Energy Best Deal	(2,545)	14,277	(11,732)	-	-
Pension Wise	2,680	454,228	(458,505)	1,597	-
Money Advice Service	617	58,417	(59,034)	-	-
Universal Credit – Help to Claim	-	163,283	(163,002)	(194)	87
	<u>3,252</u>	<u>744,405</u>	<u>(740,686)</u>	<u>1,403</u>	<u>8,374</u>

MAIDSTONE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2020

14. Restricted funds (continued)

The objective of the Henry Smith Fund (Maidstone Prison Advice Project) is to provide advice and support to prisoners, staff and their families.

The objective of Energy Best Deal is to inform consumers how to reduce energy bills by efficiency savings or switching suppliers and to provide information about the help available from energy suppliers and government for consumers struggling to pay energy bills. The funding has been extended for 2019/2020 and the deficit incurred by excess case loads will be cleared.

The objective of Pension Wise is to provide impartial pension advice and guidance.

The objective for the Money Advice Service is to provide free and impartial money advice.

The objective of the Universal Credit – Help to Claim Fund is to provide advice and assistance to persons requiring financial support.

15. Analysis of net assets between funds

	Unrestricted funds 2021 £	Restricted funds 2021 £	Total 2021 £
Current assets	255,419	79,949	335,908
Amounts falling due within one year	(35,175)	(19,400)	(55,115)
Provisions	(26,605)	-	(26,605)
	<u>193,639</u>	<u>60,549</u>	<u>254,188</u>

	Unrestricted funds 2020 £	Restricted funds 2020 £	Total 2020 £
Current assets	222,821	36,174	258,995
Amounts falling due within one year	(11,891)	(27,800)	(39,691)
Provisions	(31,524)	-	(31,524)
	<u>179,406</u>	<u>8,374</u>	<u>187,780</u>

16. Financial commitments

The charity had commitments under non-cancellable operating leases as follows:

	Land and buildings 2021 £	Land and buildings 2020 £
Expiry within one year	23,000	23,000
Expiry in 2 to 5 years	92,000	92,000
Expiry in over 5 years	143,750	166,750
	<u>258,750</u>	<u>281,750</u>

MAIDSTONE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

17. Cash generated from operations

	2021	2020
	£	£
Net income	66,408	111,525
Adjustments for:		
Investment income	(183)	(330)
Decrease in debtors	400	2,989
(Decrease)/Increase in creditors	15,424	(53,072)
Decrease in pension provision	(4,919)	(6,717)
Cashflow from operating activities	77,130	54,395

18. Pension commitments

TPT Retirement Solutions – The Growth Plan

The charity participates in the scheme, a multi-employer scheme which provides benefits to some 1,300 non-associated participating employers. The scheme is a defined benefit scheme in the UK. It is not possible for the charity to obtain sufficient information to enable it to account for the scheme as a defined benefit scheme. Therefore, it accounts for the scheme as a defined contribution scheme.

The scheme is subject to the funding legislation outlined in the Pensions Act 2004 which came into force on 30 December 2005. This, together with documents issued by the Pensions Regulator and Technical Actuarial Standards issued by the Financial Reporting Council, set out the framework for funding defined benefit occupational pension schemes in the UK.

The scheme is classified as a 'last-man standing arrangement'. Therefore, the charity is potentially liable for other participating employers' obligations if those employers are unable to meet their share of the scheme deficit following withdrawal from the scheme. Participating employers are legally required to meet their share of the scheme deficit on an annuity basis on withdrawal from the scheme.

A full actuarial valuation for the scheme was carried out at 30 September 2017. This valuation showed assets of £794.9m, liabilities of £926.4m and a deficit of £131.5m. To eliminate this funding shortfall, the pension plan trustee has asked the participating employers to pay additional contributions to the scheme as follows:

Deficit contributions

From 1 April 2019 to 31 January 2025: £11,243,000 pa (payable monthly and increasing by 3% on each 1 April)

Unless a concession has been agreed with the Trustee the term to 31 January 2025 applies.

Note that the Scheme's previous valuation was carried out with an effective date of 30 September 2014. This valuation showed assets of £793.4m, liabilities of £969.9m and a deficit of £176.5m. To eliminate this funding shortfall, the pension plan trustee has asked the participating employers to pay additional contributions to the scheme as follows:

Deficit contributions

From 1 April 2016 to 30 September 2025: £12,945,440 pa (payable monthly and increasing by 3% on each 1 April)

From 1 April 2016 to 30 September 2028: £54,560 pa (payable monthly and increasing by 3% on each 1 April)

The recovery plan contributions are allocated to each participating employer in line with their estimated share of the Series 1 and Series 2 scheme liabilities.

Where the scheme is in deficit and where the charity has agreed to a deficit funding arrangement the charity recognises a liability for this obligation. The amount recognised is the net present value of the deficit reduction contributions payable under the agreement that relates to the deficit. The present value is calculated using the discount rate detailed in these disclosures. The unwinding of the discount rate is recognised as a pension cost.

MAIDSTONE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

18. Pension commitments (continued)

Present values of provision	31 March 2021	31 March 2020	31 March 2019
Present value of provision	<u>26,605</u>	<u>£31,524</u>	<u>£38,241</u>

Reconciliation of opening and closing provision

	2021 £	2020 £
Provision at start of period	31,524	38,241
Unwinding of the discount factor (interest expense)	708	484
Deficit contribution paid	(6,537)	(6,346)
Re-measurements – impact of any change in assumptions	910	(855)
Provision at end of period	<u>26,605</u>	<u>31,524</u>

Income and expenditure impact

	2021 £	2020 £
Interest expense	708	484
Re-measurements – impact of any change in assumptions	910	(855)
	<u>1,618</u>	<u>(371)</u>

Assumptions

	31 March 2021	31 March 2020	31 March 2019
Rate of discount	<u>0.66%</u>	<u>2.53%</u>	<u>1.39%</u>

The discount rates shown above are the equivalent single discount rates which, when used to discount the future recovery plan contributions due, would give the same results as using a full AA corporate bond yield curve to discount the same recovery plan contributions.

19. Analysis of changes in net debt

	Balance at 1 April 2020 £	Cashflows £	Other non- cash changes £	Balance at 31 March 2021 £
Cash	<u>258,595</u>	<u>77,313</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>335,908</u>

20. Related party transactions

No transactions with related parties were undertaken during the year.

21. Events after the end of the reporting period

During September 2021 a resolution was achieved with the Legal Aid Agency regarding a refund of disputed overpaid fees that had been in dispute for a number of years. It was agreed to repay £24,000 in order to achieve closure and this had been provided in the financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2021. Prior to September 2021 no reasonable assessment of the provision was available.

MAIDSTONE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU
DETAILED INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

		Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total 2021 £	Total 2020 £
Income					
Maidstone Borough Council					
- annual grant		142,100	-	142,100	151,100
- welfare reform initiative		-	-	-	-
Money Advice Service		-	53,169	53,169	58,417
Pension Wise		-	442,386	442,386	454,228
Donations		5,786	-	5,786	2,841
Deposit account interest		183	-	183	330
Golding Homes		5,000	-	5,000	5,000
Fundraising		1,305	-	1,305	5,300
Energy Best deal		-	26,485	26,485	14,277
Henry Smith (MDS Prison)		-	53,008	53,008	54,200
Universal Credit – Help to Claim		-	129,859	129,859	163,283
AB Charitable Trust		-	-	-	10,000
Refund of overpayment of legal services commissions		(24,000)	-	(24,000)	-
Other projects		24,831	-	24,831	28,363
		<u>155,205</u>	<u>704,907</u>	<u>860,112</u>	<u>947,339</u>
Expenditure					
	Schedules				
Establishment expenses	1	9,969	27,054	37,023	34,527
Administration expenses	2	122,566	625,944	748,510	790,615
Sundry expenses	3	3,051	5,120	8,171	10,672
		<u>135,586</u>	<u>658,118</u>	<u>793,704</u>	<u>835,814</u>
Surplus for the year		<u>19,619</u>	<u>46,789</u>	<u>66,408</u>	<u>111,525</u>

MAIDSTONE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU

SCHEDULES TO THE DETAILED INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total 2021 £	Total 2020 £
1. Establishment expenses				
Rent	4,944	18,056	23,000	23,000
Insurance - premises	207	655	862	898
Water	77	304	381	742
Gas	285	1,405	1,690	1,618
Electricity	452	1,960	2,412	2,133
Repairs and renewals - premises	3,734	3,656	7,390	3,852
Cleaning and cleaning materials	270	1,018	1,288	2,284
	<u>9,969</u>	<u>27,054</u>	<u>37,023</u>	<u>34,527</u>
2. Administration expenses				
Salaries and social security costs	95,655	488,767	584,422	585,464
Pension scheme contributions	9,903	53,679	63,582	54,135
Travel costs	393	2,816	3,209	27,068
Training	19	272	291	153
Books, information and IT systems	3,823	12,382	16,205	16,459
Telephone	5,079	9,684	14,763	7,977
Printing and stationery	225	908	1,133	4,759
Postage	175	863	1,038	752
Advertising and publicity	-	-	-	580
Computer and office expenses	6,084	5,268	11,352	10,052
Other office costs	403	1,878	2,281	4,409
Insurance	807	3,387	4,194	1,949
Hire of rooms	-	26,216	26,216	44,011
Project costs	-	-	-	336
Universal Credit – Citizens Advice	-	19,824	19,824	19,500
Money Advice Service – Citizens Advice	-	-	-	13,011
	<u>122,566</u>	<u>625,944</u>	<u>748,510</u>	<u>790,615</u>
3. Sundry expenses				
Bank charges	21	80	101	60
Auditors' remuneration	1,106	4,807	5,913	7,224
Sundry expenses	1,883	-	1,883	-
AGM and other meetings	-	-	-	2,717
Professional fees	41	233	274	671
	<u>3,051</u>	<u>5,120</u>	<u>8,171</u>	<u>10,672</u>

MAIDSTONE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU
(A company limited by guarantee)

REPORTS AND ACCOUNTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

Registered Charity No. 299055

Company No. 02234220

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MAIDSTONE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU
REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

The Maidstone Citizens Advice Bureau is a company limited by guarantee and a registered charity governed by its Memorandum and Articles of Association (Charity number 299055, Company number 02234220).

Citizens Advice Maidstone is the operating name of Maidstone Citizens Advice Bureau.

The Board of Trustees

The Trustees of the charitable company are its directors for the purposes of company law and throughout this report are collectively referred to as the Trustees.

The members of the Board of Trustees who served during the year were as follows:

Elected Trustees

Mr S Bonny Malhotra - (Chair)
Mr D Parrish – (Hon Treasurer) (appointed 13 September 2021)
Mr R Bird
Mr J Cobbett
Mr M F Ford (resigned 13 September 2021)
Mrs S Hawkins – (Hon Solicitor)
Mr I Owen
Mrs W Foster née Tull
Mr A Breen
Mr A D Larkin (resigned 7 July 2020)
Mr M Fitzgerald (resigned 6 July 2020)

Co-opted Members

Cllr P Harper

Staff Representatives

Mr P Hardy
Mr S Jones
Mrs T Weber

Senior Leadership Team

Mr P Hardy - CEO
Mrs S Smith - Advice Manager
Mr I Park - Service Manager Projects
Mrs T Weber - Operations Manager
Mrs J Woods - Administration Manager

Registered Office and Principal Address

2 Bower Terrace, Tonbridge Road, Maidstone, Kent, ME16 8RY

Statutory Auditors

Azets Audit Services, Globe House, Eclipse Park, Sittingbourne Road, Maidstone, Kent, ME14 3EN

MAIDSTONE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU

TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

The Trustees present their report and the audited financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2021. The Trustees confirm that the annual report and financial statements of Citizens Advice Maidstone comply with current statutory requirements, the requirements of Citizens Advice Maidstone's governing document and the provisions of the Statement of Recommended Practice – Accounting and Reporting by Charities (SORP FRS 102).

Objectives and activities

Citizens Advice Maidstone provides independent, free, confidential, impartial advice to everybody regardless of race, gender, sexuality or disability. Citizens Advice Maidstone aims to ensure that individuals do not suffer through a lack of knowledge of their rights and responsibilities or of the services available to them, or through an inability to express their needs effectively.

The Citizens Advice Maidstone also aims to exercise a responsible influence on the development of social policies and services both locally and nationally.

Public benefit

The Trustees confirm that they have complied with the duty in section 4 of the Charities Act 2006 to have due regard to the guidance contained in the Charity Commission's general guidance on the public benefit when reviewing the local office aims and objectives and in the planning of future activities.

Achievements and performance

It is our goal to empower clients to solve their problems by themselves; others requiring more support do receive further help through casework conducted by our specialists or generalist volunteer advisers. Citizens Advice Maidstone provides free, independent, confidential and impartial advice to everyone on their rights and responsibilities. The organisation values diversity, promotes equality and challenges discrimination. This essential work, professionally carried out by our team of paid and voluntary staff helps people to solve their problems and changes their lives. In order to prevent financial problems re-emerging, we also run educational services such as financial capability or energy efficiency training sessions in collaboration with other local offices.

Our main offices are located on the Tonbridge Road with an extension at the Town Hall in the High Street. A number of outreach sessions are also provided at certain parishes in the Borough. This enables us to connect with a broad and diverse client base within the Borough. Clients can access our service for face-to-face advice as well as by telephone or email for those who cannot otherwise partners.

The new Membership Scheme required each local Citizens Advice to carry out a Leadership Self-Assessment each year. The Board worked together with paid and volunteer staff to look at its policies and procedures and submitted its Second Assessment to the Performance Assessor under the new system. The Organisation is judged to be at a good standard.

Our workforce, both paid and voluntary have produced an excellent set of statistics, the majority of which can be seen in our Annual Report. Suffice to say that we continue to provide our service to many more people than other similar organisations. We have continued to secure funding for new projects. Our total income for the year was £860,112 with the expenditure pegged at £793,704 showing a surplus of £66,408 for the 20/21 financial year. At the end of the Financial Year our Restricted Reserves were £60,549 and Unrestricted Reserves stood at £193,639.

Demonstrating the value of our work is crucial as the pressures on the public finances continues to gather pace with national and local spending decreasing further year on year. It is our responsibility to communicate to funders why Citizens Advice is an essential service and not just 'nice to have'. Citizens Advice Maidstone is unique for many reasons: in our team we have a total of 34 paid staff equating to almost 24 FTE, of which 16 FTE work within our various projects and the remainder form part of our core service. Our team of 65+ volunteers includes Trustees, advisers, administrative, trainees and assessors.

Our services are provided with funding from a wide variety of sources. A Service Level Agreement with Maidstone Borough Council allows us to provide an essential Core Service of general and specialist advice through digital and face-to-face to clients in the Borough of Maidstone. Additional funding from Golding Homes helps to add services to their tenants in the Town. We have Contracts with Citizens Advice to provide PensionWise guidance and Money Advice. Pension Wise provides a service throughout Kent and East Sussex. Citizens Advice also provide funding for Universal Credit (help to claim). Funding from The Edward Gostling Foundation allows us to continue to provide our service to people suffering from MS. Our work in HMP Maidstone continues to be funded by Henry Smith Charity and latterly also from HMP Maidstone. Funding for our work on the Energy Advice Programme (EAP), formerly Energy Best Deal (EBD) came through National Citizens Advice and amongst all these, other smaller projects were funded through smaller grants from external funding sources.

MAIDSTONE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU
TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT (CONTINUED)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

Achievements and performance (continued)

We continue to work with a number of partners within Local Government and Statutory Agencies to improve the policies and practices that affect our communities. We work collectively with other Citizens Advice Centres in Kent to inform public policy and help regulators, as well as influence private industry to make their services fair for consumers. In addition to Local and National campaigning, with the help of our volunteers we empower clients and communities to engage with society and make a difference to issues that matter. We hope to expand our use of volunteers as feasible to do so.

Volunteers are vital to the service in Citizens Advice Maidstone. Trustees and our Management Team are working in partnership with our paid and voluntary staff to provide excellent quality advice and support nearly 9,000 people, with over 33,000 different issues in the Borough of Maidstone.

Additionally, Trustees are also engaged in providing direction in the Governance of our office. Our Volunteers are an integral part of the way we deliver our advice, support and service today to the communities of Maidstone, and have been since the conception of Local Citizens Advice (LCAs) over 80 years ago in 1939. The service in Maidstone commenced on the 1st January 1940 and has dealt with over 1 Million problems.

Volunteers have always been integral to the Citizens Advice service and are increasingly involved in delivering within all areas of advice work. Volunteers bring with them a wealth of experience and skills and it is important for us to recognise the resource we have within the service. Volunteers are vital to the way we deliver our service, allowing us to reach many more people than if we were purely delivering our work through paid staff. Volunteers undertake a range of tasks from assessing and providing advice, supporting the running of our local office, campaigning in the community and acting as Trustees.

Our volunteers come from a wide range of backgrounds, including young people, professionals who want to broaden their horizons, retired people who want to give something back and mothers whose children have started school – so we offer a range of support services to meet the needs of all our volunteers. Our commitment to value diversity, promote equality and inclusion means we can encourage individuals who might not otherwise wish/be able to volunteer.

Understanding our trainee volunteers' needs and expectations is a very important aspect of the training programme. Providing a well-structured training plan helps the trainee to gain better employment prospects as well as offering an opportunity for personal development, increased confidence, self-esteem, and wellbeing.

Providing an active contribution to the day-to-day running of a CAB can develop volunteers' practical skills, such as problem solving, communication and team work, as well as boost their confidence and belief in their abilities. This improves employability, presents career development opportunities, and can help those currently unemployed, move into work.

Volunteering provides individuals with an opportunity they might not otherwise have to develop their personal skills and abilities. For those out of work, volunteering keeps them active and motivated, potentially countering the negative impacts of unemployment on mental wellbeing – research shows that one in five jobseeker's allowance claimants experience a mental health disorder.

Volunteering enables people to realise their own potential, supporting priorities around increased social mobility – 29 per cent of volunteers that left the CAB service did so for paid employment, education or training (National Statistics). It also enables individuals to make an economic contribution to society, one which may be factored into future national Gross Domestic Product and productivity calculations.

Volunteering with Citizens Advice can also develop an individual's softer skills, resilience and other personal attributes. This can have a positive impact on how people feel about themselves, how they respond to others and their capacity to manage life's challenges.

MAIDSTONE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU
TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT (CONTINUED)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

Achievements and performance (continued)

For retired individuals, volunteering may offer new opportunities, provide structure and a sense of purpose as well as help them feel involved in society, all highlighted as vital to personal wellbeing. Ensuring that retired people are mentally and physically active also has wider reaching benefits to society, including reducing the NHS provision required to cope with an ageing population. Volunteering with us does not just have an impact on individuals, it benefits their communities too. Our volunteers are local people, and through volunteering, they increase their knowledge about community issues and build relationships with their locality. This creates stronger communities, with engaged and active members, and more social action.

The Citizens Advice Service also plays an integral role in supporting and strengthening its local community. We provide a service that meets local needs and reaches out to a broad and diverse client base. We support and strengthen other community-focused organisations, partnering with them to share our insight on how best to support local people. We also use our extensive knowledge to act as an advocate for the local area, mobilising and connecting people with their community. We are a local service, working with local people, for the benefit of the local community.

The value we get from working with volunteers is greater than just our ability to provide a quality advice service. In addition, our investment in developing volunteers, and enabling them to volunteer in their local area, has tangible benefits for the individual, community, and society at large. This is an additional benefit to the community, created through the way we deliver our service.

As we approached the end of the 2020/21 financial year we were faced with perhaps our biggest challenge yet – how to continue to deliver our much needed service, a lifeline for so many, in the wake of the Coronavirus epidemic. This was truly an unprecedented situation, forcing us to work in very different ways and provide the vast majority of our services remotely, via telephone as well as digital means. Fortunately, our staff and volunteers adapted to the new regime extremely well and it is a credit to their dedication and commitment that in this most demanding of times. We are very proud that we were only unable to deliver our service to the public for one working day since the government announced the nationwide lockdown measures in March 2020.

Data

We give advice to people who need help, but we also collect statistical data on all these issues. For example, we can show attendant issues affecting people who come to us with problems around council tax. As a result, we are better able to ascertain the most efficient ways to help people understand their problems more completely. For councils and councillors, this data is powerful. It can help address failure demand, facilitate the consideration of new service options and provide additional insight to the scrutiny process.

Councils are increasingly working together to deliver services in new ways and save costs, whether in shared service arrangements or in combined authorities with devolution deals. This can also unlock funding and address long-standing problems across the county. We want to be able to work with our local government—at parish, district, county level—to inform debate with our data and client stories. More than this, we can provide innovative services that mesh closely with those offered by public authorities. Citizens Advice is working nationally to make this as easy as possible, with new data products for combining output and impact data across variable geography as well as direct support to areas of innovation across our network.

Social Exclusion

People can suffer social exclusion when they face a series of problems such as poor skills, low incomes, bad housing and family breakdown.

As a result of their experiences and development, our volunteers are better equipped and more confident in their abilities, and hence are more likely to move into employment. This has a value to society, by moving people closer to the labour market, which may reduce their need to claim benefits related to unemployment. It may also reduce other costs to the state associated with sustained unemployment, especially for young people not in employment, education or training. Equally, community volunteering enables unemployed individuals to make a form of economic contribution to society, the value of which may be factored into future national GDP and productivity calculations.

Citizens Advice has a major impact on people's lives, particularly the most vulnerable in society. Our service is best known for solving problems through advice but we also make a difference by solving the underlying causes of these problems through our research and campaigns volunteers. Our work has also contributed to vital policy changes that will help more people make ends meet, such as the government's proposal to ban letting agent fees. Through cutting-edge research, our Research and Campaign volunteers contributed our own unique data as one of the 29 districts who sent in feedback to Citizens Advice concerning letting agents and their overt and covert charging policies.

MAIDSTONE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU
TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT (CONTINUED)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

Achievements and performance (continued)

Pension Wise

Citizens Advice Maidstone is one of the LCAs who have been delivering the government's Pension Wise service for the last five years. Launched in April 2015, Pension Wise was a new guidance service set up to help people understand their options under the pension freedoms. Citizens Advice Maidstone delivers Pension Wise appointments throughout Kent, Medway and East Sussex.

During 2020/21 we delivered Pension Wise appointments by telephone to people aged 50 and over with a defined contribution pension.

Key statistics

During 2020/21, Citizens Advice delivered 77631 appointments across England, Wales and Northern Ireland. Since the service started, people have continued to value the high-quality guidance and support they receive. Satisfaction scores have remained over 95% for 2020/21.

Money Advice

National research shows that just over a quarter of adults say that they do not consider themselves to be good at managing money and one third say that they would prefer not to think about planning their finances at all. Many people have poor financial skills and this often leads them to make ill-informed decisions on their money matters. Citizens Advice has found that the negative effects of a lack of financial awareness can be compounded by limited or poor quality consumer information and inadequate advice. People can miss out on the growing range of financial products available and fail to make the best use of Government initiatives. However, building the necessary confidence in financial services is an uphill task. Citizens Advice Maidstone helps people resolve their money, legal and other problems by providing information and advice as well as by influencing policymakers. Our service is the largest provider of free money advice in the Borough of Maidstone. We provide specialist level money advice services, helping people resolve a range of money and debt issues. By providing advice and information about money in the heart of our community, we help people resolve a range of debt and personal finance-related problems.

The Citizens Advice (CA) service is a network of independent, local charities that helps people resolve their money, legal and other problems. The CA service is the largest provider of free advice in the UK. CA also uses evidence of CA clients' money problems to campaign for change and is contributing to the Government's plan to provide all UK adults with access to generic financial advice. CA wants people to have the skills, knowledge and confidence to make informed decisions across a range of personal money matters. We work with a range of partner agencies to improve the financial skills of people of all ages, particularly those at risk of social or financial exclusion.

Financial skills training can change behaviour - participants become better at budgeting, choosing financial products, saving and making their money go further and these changes persist over time. Developing financial skills not only boosts financial well-being but also confidence and general peace of mind. Tenants who do get into financial difficulty know where to turn to for help, seek out support sooner and as a result, are better equipped to cope.

Prison Work

Citizens Advice Maidstone's strategy aims to increase the capacity of our paid and voluntary staff to deal with our Clients' debt and other money problems in order to prevent the financial problems faced by many people becoming major crises. This supports our wider focus of encouraging our team to work with more vulnerable groups such as offenders to meet their finance, benefit and debt needs. In relation to offenders, Citizens Advice is clear that personal debt and other financial problems can be a cause of an individual offending in the first place, and such problems can increase the likelihood of reoffending on release. Being able to manage debt and other financial problems during a prison sentence or upon release into the community could help to reduce re-offending.

Many offenders with families may fall into rent or mortgage arrears caused by a reduction of income during the prison sentence. Stable accommodation can help reduce re-offending by providing a secure environment in which to live, enabling them to open a bank account, receive benefits and find regular employment. Timely access to advice can, among other things, secure accommodation for an offender or their family on release; ensure access to benefits for the payment of rent and advocate on behalf the family if they are refused support from the local authority. Such services can greatly reduce the risk of re-offending. Debt can also present problems for offenders and their families both during their sentence and after release.

MAIDSTONE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU
TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT (CONTINUED)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

Achievements and performance (continued)

As the Social Exclusion Unit report identified, finance, benefit and debt issues are inextricably tied to many other key factors which exacerbate reoffending. Ensuring ex-offenders have enough lawfully-obtained money to live on is key to their rehabilitation and to reducing temptation into re-offending, but many face significant problems achieving financial security. Low incomes, debt, disrupted access to benefits advice and insufficient income on release from prison all add to the problem. The National Offender Management Services (NOMS') aim is to ensure that offenders in custody and the prison community have access to financial and advice services that will address money-related issues, maximise income and reduce debt to help prevent re-offending. A key element of this work is to develop close partnership working between prison and probation services, and voluntary and community sector providers who are willing to work with offenders.

Risk Management

Trustees regularly meet to consider the financial and other risks relating to the activities of the charity and take appropriate action as and when required. A comprehensive risk register is maintained and reviewed at every Trustee meeting. During the year we have had to limit face to face interviews to where there is no other way to help clients due to restrictions caused by the Corona Virus pandemic, although the Maidstone CA managed to maintain a service by offering advice by telephone and online with staff working from home. Some consideration has been given to the issues which may result from the lockdown and these include debt, mental health problems, and domestic violence.

Planning for the future

The business strategy adopted by the Trustee Board is to safeguard the Core service with free generalist advice covering a full range of issues. This service has hitherto been funded by a Grant from Maidstone Borough Council. This is now steadily being reduced; nevertheless, we are most grateful for the Council's continuing support. Maidstone CA seeks additional funding from other sources in order to shore up the core service and provide other services if it is financially prudent to do so. Maidstone CA management has been successful in securing such funding from a variety of sources, including the Citizens Advice/Treasury (Department of Works & Pensions), Henry Smith Charity, Money Advice Service and Energy (Citizens Advice). The management continues to develop new and innovative partnerships with a wide stakeholder group in response to steadily dwindling financial resources.

Financial review

During September 2021 a resolution was achieved with the Legal Aid Agency regarding a refund of disputed overpaid fees that had been in dispute for a number of years. It was agreed to repay £24,000 in order to achieve closure and this had been provided in the financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2021. Prior to September 2021 no reasonable assessment of the provision was available.

The net surplus for the year amounted to £66,408. There was a surplus of £19,619 in relation to core business before transfers. As at 31 March 2021 general unrestricted reserves amount to £159,157, designated unrestricted funds amounted to £34,482 and total restricted reserves amounted to £60,549.

Reserves Policy

The Board of Trustees regularly reviews the finances and reserves of Citizens Advice Maidstone. Each review encompasses the nature of the income and expenditure streams and the need to match variable income with fixed commitments and the nature of reserves. Citizens Advice Maidstone sets aside restricted funds as set out in the Statement of Financial Activities. All restricted funds are applied to the particular restricted activity (project). Restricted funds unspent in a particular financial year are allocated as reserves in statutory accounts at the end of the financial year and will be allocated to that restricted activity (project) during the course of the following financial year or when the activity ends. Restricted funds at 31 March 2021 were £60,549 (2020:£8,374).

Trustees have discussed levels of unrestricted reserves and are agreed that in all circumstances Citizens Advice Maidstone's core services must be secure. A minimum sum of three months unrestricted (core) expenditure with a contingency of 10% will ensure that this aspiration is preserved. This figure equates to £40,000 (2020:£26,000). In the opinion of the Trustees the present level of unrestricted reserves of £159,157 (2020: £144,924) is at a sufficient level to maintain the activities of the Citizens Advice Maidstone in the event of an unforeseen crisis or interruption of income for a period of time during which any adverse situation would be appropriately addressed. In light of the pandemic, the Trustees will review the reserve policy to ensure it provides a sufficient level of reserves as the current policy only covers core cost.

MAIDSTONE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU
TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT (CONTINUED)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

Going concern

The Trustees have considered the impact of the COVID-19 virus on the future activity of the charity. The Trustees do not expect a reduction in activity in the long term. As a consequence of this factor and other evidence available to the Trustees in respect of the charity's activities and level of reserves, the Trustees are satisfied that the charity has sufficient resources to meet its liabilities as they fall due for a period of at least twelve months from the date of signing of these financial statements. Accordingly, the Trustees confirm that they consider that the 'going concern' basis remains appropriate.

Structure, governance and management

Maidstone Citizens Advice is a member of Citizens Advice, which provides a framework for standards of advice and casework management as well as monitoring progress against these standards. The Board of Trustees produces an annual report detailing Maidstone CA activities during the year. The report is available on request from the office.

(a) Method of appointment or election of Trustees

In accordance with the Articles of Association (revised 23 September 2013 to bring our Memorandum and Articles of Association in line with the national policy of Citizens Advice and the guidance of the Charity Commission) the Trustee Board consists of a minimum of 3 and a maximum of 15 members. There may be a maximum of 10 elected members, each of whom is elected for a term of three years by the members of the company at its Annual General Meeting. At expiry of their term of office elected Trustees are eligible for re-election. In addition the Trustee Board may co-opt members, whose number may not exceed one third of the total number of Trustees. No member of the staff of the office whether paid or voluntary can be a member of the Board. However, the Chief Executive, one representative of the paid staff and one representative of the voluntary staff, have the right to attend and speak (but not vote) at meetings of the Board.

(b) Operational structure and decision making

The Trustee Board sets the overall policy and direction of Maidstone CA business within the parameters set by the Citizens Advice Membership Agreement and any Service Level Agreements or Contracts currently in being. Operational decisions are made by the Chief Executive subject to any specific Trustee Board directions and referring to the Trustee Board as necessary. The Trustee Board meets once every two months. Financial oversight is delegated to the Finance Committee which meets 14 days before the Trustee Board to appraise financial reports and recommend action to the Trustee Board.

Trustees' responsibilities in relation to the financial statements

The Trustees as directors are responsible for preparing the Trustees' Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and regulation.

Company law requires the Trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year. Under that law the Trustees have elected to prepare the financial statements in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice (United Kingdom Accounting Standards and applicable law). Under company law the Trustees must not approve the financial statements unless they are satisfied that they give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity and of the results of the charity for that period. In preparing these financial statements, the Trustees are required to:-

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in business.

The Trustees are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that are sufficient to show and explain the charity's transactions and disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with Companies Act 2006 and the Charities Act 2011.

They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

MAIDSTONE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU
TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT (CONTINUED)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

Disclosure of information to auditors

In accordance with company law, as the company's directors, we confirm that:

- so far as we are aware, there is no relevant audit information of which the charity's auditors are unaware; and
- as the directors of the company we have taken all the steps that we ought to have taken in order to make ourselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the charity's auditors are aware of that information.

**ON BEHALF OF THE
BOARD OF TRUSTEES**


MR S BONNY MALHOTRA

Registered office
2 Bower Terrace
Tonbridge Road
Maidstone
Kent ME16 8RY

Date

11/10/21

MAIDSTONE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU
INDEPENDENT AUDITORS' REPORT TO THE MEMBERS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of Maidstone Citizens Advice Bureau (the 'charitable company') for the year ended 31 March 2021 which comprise the Statement of Financial Activities, the Balance Sheet, the Cash Flow Statement and the related notes. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards, including FRS 102 "The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland" (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

In our opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the charitable company's affairs as at 31 March 2021 and of its incoming resources and application of resources, including its income and expenditure, for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice; and have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006.

Basis for opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs (UK)) and applicable law. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of our report. We are independent of the charitable company in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in the UK, including the FRC's Ethical Standard, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Conclusions relating to going concern

In auditing the financial statements, we have concluded that the Trustees' use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

Based on the work we have performed, we have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the charitable company's ability to continue as a going concern for a period of at least twelve months from when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

Our responsibilities and the responsibilities of the Trustees with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this report.

Other information

The other information comprises the information included in the Trustees Annual Report, other than the financial statements and our auditor's report thereon. The Trustees are responsible for the other information contained within the annual report. Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in our report, we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon. Our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the course of the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether this gives rise to a material misstatement in the financial statements themselves. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact.

We have nothing to report in this regard.

Opinions on other matters prescribed by the Companies Act 2006

In our opinion, based on the work undertaken in the course of the audit:

- the information given in the Trustees' Report and the incorporated Strategic Report prepared for the purpose of company law for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements; and
- the Trustees' Report and the incorporated Strategic Report have been prepared in accordance with applicable legal requirements.

MAIDSTONE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU

INDEPENDENT AUDITORS' REPORT TO THE MEMBERS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

Matters on which we are required to report by exception

In the light of the knowledge and understanding of the charitable company and its environment obtained in the course of the audit, we have not identified material misstatements in the Trustees' Report and the incorporated Strategic Report.

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters where the Companies Act 2006 requires us to report to you if, in our opinion:

- adequate accounting records have not been kept, or returns adequate for our audit have not been received from branches not visited by us; or
- the financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or
- certain disclosures of Trustees' remuneration specified by law are not made; or
- we have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit.

Responsibilities of Trustees

As explained more fully in the Statement of Trustees' responsibilities set out on page 15, the Trustees (who are also the directors of the charitable company for the purposes of company law) are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the Trustees determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the Trustees are responsible for assessing the charitable company's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the Trustees either intend to liquidate the charitable company or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

Extent to which the audit was considered capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud

Irregularities, including fraud, are instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations. We design procedures in line with our responsibilities, outlined above and on the Financial Reporting Council's website, to detect material misstatements in respect of irregularities, including fraud.

We obtain and update our understanding of the entity, its activities, its control environment, and likely future developments, including in relation to the legal and regulatory framework applicable and how the entity is complying with that framework. Based on this understanding, we identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion. This includes consideration of the risk of acts by the entity that were contrary to applicable laws and regulations, including fraud.

In response to the risk of irregularities and non-compliance with laws and regulations, including fraud, we designed procedures which included:

- Enquiry of management and those charged with governance around actual and potential litigation and claims as well as actual, suspected and alleged fraud;
- Reviewing minutes of meetings of those charged with governance;
- Assessing the extent of compliance with the laws and regulations considered to have a direct material effect on the financial statements or the operations of the company through enquiry and inspection;
- Reviewing financial statement disclosures and testing to supporting documentation to assess compliance with applicable laws and regulations;
- Performing audit work over the risk of management bias and override of controls, including testing of journal entries and other adjustments for appropriateness, evaluating the business rationale of significant transactions outside the normal course of business and reviewing accounting estimates for indicators of potential bias.

MAIDSTONE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU

INDEPENDENT AUDITORS' REPORT TO THE MEMBERS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

Because of the inherent limitations of an audit, there is a risk that we will not detect all irregularities, including those leading to a material misstatement in the financial statements or non-compliance with regulation. This risk increases the more that compliance with a law or regulation is removed from the events and transactions reflected in the financial statements, as we will be less likely to become aware of instances of non-compliance. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.

As part of an audit in accordance with ISAs (UK), we exercise professional judgment and maintain professional scepticism throughout the audit. We also:

- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the charitable company's internal control.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by the Trustees.
- Conclude on the appropriateness of the Trustees' use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the charitable company's ability to continue as a going concern. If we conclude that a material uncertainty exists, we are required to draw attention in our auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial statements or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify our opinion. Our conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of our auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause the charitable company to cease to continue as a going concern.
- Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial statements, including the disclosures, and whether the financial statements represent the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation (ie. gives a true and fair view).

We communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that we identify during our audit.

Use of our report

This report is made solely to the charitable company's members, as a body, in accordance with Chapter 3 of Part 16 of the Companies Act 2006. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the charitable company's members those matters we are required to state to them in an auditor's report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the charitable company and the charitable company's members as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

Azets Audit Services

Michelle Wilkes FCA (Senior Statutory Auditor)
for and on behalf of Azets Audit Services

Statutory Auditor

28/10/21

.....
Globe House, Eclipse Park
Sittingbourne Road
Maidstone
Kent
ME14 3EN

MAIDSTONE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES (INCLUDING INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

	Notes	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total 2021 £	Total 2020 £
INCOME:					
Donations and legacies	3	7,091	-	7,091	8,141
Charitable activities	4	147,931	704,907	852,838	938,868
Investments		183	-	183	330
TOTAL INCOME		<u>155,205</u>	<u>704,907</u>	<u>860,112</u>	<u>947,339</u>
EXPENDITURE:					
Charitable activities	5	<u>135,586</u>	<u>658,118</u>	<u>793,704</u>	<u>835,814</u>
TOTAL EXPENDITURE		<u>135,586</u>	<u>658,118</u>	<u>793,704</u>	<u>835,814</u>
NET MOVEMENT ON FUNDS		19,619	46,789	66,408	111,525
Transfers	14	(5,386)	5,386	-	-
Total funds at 1 April 2020		<u>179,406</u>	<u>8,374</u>	<u>187,780</u>	<u>76,255</u>
Total funds at 31 March 2021		<u><u>193,639</u></u>	<u><u>60,549</u></u>	<u><u>254,188</u></u>	<u><u>187,780</u></u>

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES (INCLUDING INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2020

	Notes	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total 2020	Total 2019
INCOME:					
Donations and legacies	3	8,141	-	8,141	6,617
Charitable activities	4	194,463	744,405	938,868	661,954
Investments		330	-	330	156
TOTAL INCOME		<u>202,934</u>	<u>744,405</u>	<u>947,339</u>	<u>668,727</u>
EXPENDITURE:					
Charitable activities	5	<u>95,128</u>	<u>740,686</u>	<u>835,814</u>	<u>639,396</u>
TOTAL EXPENDITURE		<u>95,128</u>	<u>740,686</u>	<u>835,814</u>	<u>639,396</u>
NET MOVEMENT ON FUNDS		107,806	3,719	111,525	29,331
Transfers	14	(1,403)	1,403	-	-
Total funds at 1 April 2019		<u>73,003</u>	<u>3,252</u>	<u>76,255</u>	<u>46,924</u>
Total funds at 31 March 2020		<u><u>179,406</u></u>	<u><u>8,374</u></u>	<u><u>187,780</u></u>	<u><u>76,255</u></u>

All income and expenditure derive from continuing activities.

The Statement of Financial Activities includes all gains and losses recognised during the year.

The notes on page 15 to 22 form part of these accounts.

MAIDSTONE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU

BALANCE SHEET

AS AT 31 MARCH 2021

	Notes	£	2021 £	£	2020 £
TANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS	10		-		-
CURRENT ASSETS					
Other debtors and prepayments		-		400	
Cash at bank		335,734		258,300	
Cash in hand		174		295	
		<u>335,908</u>		<u>258,995</u>	
CREDITORS: AMOUNTS FALLING DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR					
Accruals and deferred income	11	55,115		39,691	
NET CURRENT ASSETS			280,793		219,304
Provision for liabilities and charges	18		<u>26,605</u>		<u>31,524</u>
NET ASSETS			<u>254,188</u>		<u>187,780</u>
General unrestricted funds	12		159,157		144,924
Designated funds	13		34,482		34,482
Restricted funds	14		<u>60,549</u>		<u>8,374</u>
	15		<u>254,188</u>		<u>187,780</u>

Approved by the Board of Trustees on 11/03/21 and are signed on its behalf by:



MR S BONNY MALHOTRA
CHAIR OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES



MR D PARRISH
MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Company No. 02234220

The notes on page 15 to 22 form part of these accounts.

MAIDSTONE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU

STATEMENT OF CASH FLOW

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

	Notes	2021 £	2020 £
Cash flows from operating activities	17	<u>77,130</u>	<u>54,395</u>
Net cash inflow from operating activities		77,130	54,395
Investing activities			
Interest received	<u>183</u>	<u>330</u>	
Net cash generated from investing activities		<u>183</u>	<u>330</u>
Net increase in cash and cash equivalents		77,313	54,725
Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of year		<u>258,595</u>	<u>203,870</u>
Cash and cash equivalents at end of year		<u><u>335,908</u></u>	<u><u>258,595</u></u>

The notes on page 15 to 22 form part of these accounts.

MAIDSTONE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

1. Accounting policies

a) Basis of accounting

The Maidstone Citizens Advice Bureau (the 'charity') is a charity registered with the Charity Commission in the United Kingdom. The address of the registered office is given in the charity information on page 1 of these financial statements. The nature of the charity's operations and principal activities are detailed in page 2 of these financial statements. The charity constitutes a public benefit entity as defined by FRS 102.

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK (FRS102) issued in October 2019, the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the United Kingdom (FRS102), the Charities Act 2011 and UK Generally Accepted Practice.

The financial statements are prepared in sterling which is the functional currency of the charity and rounded to the nearest £1.

The significant accounting policies applied in the preparation of these financial statements are set out below. These policies have been consistently applied to all years presented unless otherwise stated.

The charity has availed itself of Paragraph 4(1) of Schedule 1 of the Small Companies and Groups (Accounts and Directors' Reports) Regulations 2008 and adapted the format of the financial statements to reflect the special nature of the charity's activities.

b) Going Concern

These financial statements are prepared on the going concern basis. The Trustees have a reasonable expectation that the charity will continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future.

The Trustees have considered the impact of the COVID-19 virus on the future activity of the charity. The Trustees do not expect a reduction in activity in the long term. As a consequence of this factor and other evidence available to the Trustees in respect of the charity's activities and level of reserves, the Trustees are satisfied that the charity has sufficient resources to meet its liabilities as they fall due for a period of at least twelve months from the date of signing of these financial statements. Accordingly, the financial statements are prepared on a going concern basis and do not include any adjustments which would be necessary if this basis of preparation was inappropriate.

c) Fund accounting

Unrestricted funds are those available for use at the discretion of the Trustees in the furtherance of the general objectives of the charity which have not been designated for other purposes. Designated funds are unrestricted funds that have been set aside by the Trustees for particular purposes. Restricted funds are funds which are to be used in accordance with specific restrictions imposed by donors which have been raised by the charity for particular purposes.

d) Income recognition

Grants and service agreement income are recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities when the charity has entitlement to the funds, where the service it relates to has commenced, it is probable that the income will be received and the amount can be measured reliably and is not deferred. Other Income is recognised in the accounts on an accruals basis with the exception of donations which are recognised on a cash received basis.

e) Expenditure

Expenditure is recorded on an accruals basis including irrecoverable VAT and allocated on the following basis:-

- Costs directly allocated - actual basis.
- Support costs - depending on type of cost and the Trustees' best estimate of usage.
- Other costs – actual basis.

f) Tangible fixed assets and depreciation

Individual fixed assets costing £1,000 or more are stated at cost less depreciation. Depreciation is provided on office and computer equipment to write off the cost, less estimated residual value of assets over their expected useful economic life of two or three years. At each reporting period end date, the charity reviews the carrying amounts of its tangible assets to determine whether there is any indication that those assets have suffered an impairment loss. If any such indication exists, the recoverable amount of the asset is estimated in order to determine the extent of the impairment loss (if any).

MAIDSTONE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

1. Accounting policies (continued)

g) Operating leases

Rentals payable under operating leases are charged on a straight line basis over the lease term.

h) Pensions

Contributions payable to the charity's multi-employer pension plan are charged to the income and expenditure account on a payments basis.

The charity recognises a liability for the obligation under the pension plan's recovery plan. The amount recognised is the net present value of the deficit reduction contributions payable under the agreement. The present value is calculated using the discount rate disclosed in note 18.

i) Debtors and creditors receivable/payable within one year

Debtors and creditors with no stated interest rate and receivable or payable within one year are recorded at transaction price. Any losses arising from impairment are recognised in the statement of financial activities under expenditure arising on charitable activities.

j) Employee benefits

When employees have rendered service to the charity, short-term employee benefits to which the employees are entitled are recognised at the undiscounted amount expected to be paid in exchange for that service.

2. Judgements and key sources of estimation uncertainty

In the application of the charity's accounting policies, the Trustees are required to make judgements, estimates and assumptions about the carrying amount of assets and liabilities that are not readily apparent from other sources. The estimates and associated assumptions are based on historical experience and other factors that are considered to be relevant. There are no judgements or key sources of estimation uncertainty.

3. Income from donations and legacies

	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total 2021 £	Total 2020 £
Fundraising	1,305	-	1,305	5,300
Donations	5,786	-	5,786	2,841
	<u>7,091</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>7,091</u>	<u>8,141</u>

4. Income from charitable activities

	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total 2021 £	Total 2020 £
Maidstone Borough Council grants	142,100	-	142,100	151,100
Money Advice Service	-	53,169	53,169	58,417
Golding Homes	5,000	-	5,000	5,000
Pension Wise	-	442,386	442,386	454,228
Henry Smith (MDS Prison)	-	53,008	53,008	54,200
Energy Best Deal	-	26,485	26,485	14,277
Universal Credit – Help to Claim	-	129,859	129,859	163,283
A B Charitable Trust	-	-	-	10,000
Refund of overpayment of legal services commissions	(24,000)	-	(24,000)	-
Other projects	24,831	-	24,831	28,363
	<u>147,931</u>	<u>704,907</u>	<u>852,838</u>	<u>938,868</u>

MAIDSTONE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

5. Analysis of expenditure

	Direct costs £	Support costs £	Total 2021 £	Total 2020 £
Citizens advice services	96,885	45,721	142,606	95,128
Prison support	29,755	13,753	43,508	48,413
Energy advice	19,465	-	19,465	11,732
Pension advice	313,963	86,610	400,573	458,505
Financial advice	47,350	11,205	58,555	59,034
Benefit advice	103,914	25,083	128,997	163,002
	<u>611,332</u>	<u>182,372</u>	<u>793,704</u>	<u>835,814</u>

6. Support costs

	Note	2021 £	2020 £
Staff costs		82,712	49,180
Premises costs		37,023	34,527
General office costs		56,623	92,108
Bank charges		101	60
Governance costs	7	5,913	9,941
		<u>182,372</u>	<u>185,816</u>

7. Governance costs

	2021 £	2020 £
Auditors' remuneration	5,913	5,412
Auditors' remuneration under provision in previous year	-	1,812
Meeting costs	-	2,717
	<u>5,913</u>	<u>9,941</u>

8. Net expenditure

This is stated after charging:

	2021 £	2020 £
Auditor's remuneration	5,913	7,224
Rent payable on property under operating leases	23,000	23,000
	<u>28,913</u>	<u>30,224</u>

MAIDSTONE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

9. Staff costs

	2021	2020
	£	£
Wages and salaries	574,147	569,639
Social security costs	41,069	41,038
Employer pension costs	32,788	28,922
	648,004	639,599
	648,004	639,599

The key management personnel of the charity comprise the Trustees and the bureau managers.

The Trustees received no remuneration for the year ended 31 March 2021 (2020: £Nil). During the year, one of the Trustees had expenses reimbursed by the charity. The total expenses reimbursed to the Trustee amounted to £132 (2020: £472). These costs related to sundry supplies of refreshments for staff members as well as parking costs.

The total remuneration including pension contributions and employers national insurance received by key management personnel for their service to the charity was £125,662 (2020: £128,727).

The average number of salaried employees during the year was 34 (2020: 33).

There were no employees (2019: none) who received total employee benefits (excluding employer pension costs) of more than £60,000.

10. Tangible fixed assets

	Office and computer equipment
	£
Cost	
At 1 April 2020 and at 31 March 2021	96,327
Depreciation	
At 1 April 2020 and at 31 March 2021	96,327
At 31 March 2021	-
Net book value	
At 1 April 2020 and at 31 March 2021	-

11. Accruals and deferred income

	2021	2020
	£	£
Accruals	8,715	5,412
Other creditors	24,000	-
Deferred income	22,400	34,279
	55,115	39,691
	55,115	39,691

MAIDSTONE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

12. General unrestricted funds

	2021 £	2020 £
Balance at 1 April	144,924	38,521
Net income	19,619	107,806
Transfer to restricted funds	(5,386)	(1,403)
Balance at 31 March	<u>159,157</u>	<u>144,924</u>

13. Designated funds

	Balance at 1 April 2020 £	New designations £	Designations released £	Balance at 31 March 2021 £
Premises and development fund	<u>34,482</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>34,482</u>

Comparative year information:

	Balance at 1 April 2019 £	New designations £	Designations released £	Balance at 31 March 2020 £
Premises and development fund	<u>34,482</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>34,482</u>

The Premises and Development Fund has been designated to provide for future resources in these two areas.

14. Restricted funds

	Balance at 1 April 2020 £	Income £	Expenditure £	Transfers £	Balance at 31 March 2021 £
Henry Smith (MDS Prison)	8,287	53,008	(43,508)	-	17,787
Energy Best Deal	-	26,485	(26,485)	-	-
Pension Wise	-	442,386	(400,573)	-	41,813
Money Advice Service	-	53,169	(58,555)	5,386	-
Universal Credit – Help to Claim	87	129,859	(128,997)	-	949
	<u>8,374</u>	<u>704,907</u>	<u>(658,118)</u>	<u>5,386</u>	<u>60,549</u>

Comparative year information:

	Balance at 1 April 2019 £	Income £	Expenditure £	Transfers £	Balance at 31 March 2020 £
Henry Smith (MDS Prison)	2,500	54,200	(48,413)	-	8,287
Energy Best Deal	(2,545)	14,277	(11,732)	-	-
Pension Wise	2,680	454,228	(458,505)	1,597	-
Money Advice Service	617	58,417	(59,034)	-	-
Universal Credit – Help to Claim	-	163,283	(163,002)	(194)	87
	<u>3,252</u>	<u>744,405</u>	<u>(740,686)</u>	<u>1,403</u>	<u>8,374</u>

MAIDSTONE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2020

14. Restricted funds (continued)

The objective of the Henry Smith Fund (Maidstone Prison Advice Project) is to provide advice and support to prisoners, staff and their families.

The objective of Energy Best Deal is to inform consumers how to reduce energy bills by efficiency savings or switching suppliers and to provide information about the help available from energy suppliers and government for consumers struggling to pay energy bills. The funding has been extended for 2019/2020 and the deficit incurred by excess case loads will be cleared.

The objective of Pension Wise is to provide impartial pension advice and guidance.

The objective for the Money Advice Service is to provide free and impartial money advice.

The objective of the Universal Credit – Help to Claim Fund is to provide advice and assistance to persons requiring financial support.

15. Analysis of net assets between funds

	Unrestricted funds 2021 £	Restricted funds 2021 £	Total 2021 £
Current assets	255,419	79,949	335,908
Amounts falling due within one year	(35,175)	(19,400)	(55,115)
Provisions	(26,605)	-	(26,605)
	<u>193,639</u>	<u>60,549</u>	<u>254,188</u>

	Unrestricted funds 2020 £	Restricted funds 2020 £	Total 2020 £
Current assets	222,821	36,174	258,995
Amounts falling due within one year	(11,891)	(27,800)	(39,691)
Provisions	(31,524)	-	(31,524)
	<u>179,406</u>	<u>8,374</u>	<u>187,780</u>

16. Financial commitments

The charity had commitments under non-cancellable operating leases as follows:

	Land and buildings 2021 £	Land and buildings 2020 £
Expiry within one year	23,000	23,000
Expiry in 2 to 5 years	92,000	92,000
Expiry in over 5 years	143,750	166,750
	<u>258,750</u>	<u>281,750</u>

MAIDSTONE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

17. Cash generated from operations

	2021	2020
	£	£
Net income	66,408	111,525
Adjustments for:		
Investment income	(183)	(330)
Decrease in debtors	400	2,989
(Decrease)/Increase in creditors	15,424	(53,072)
Decrease in pension provision	(4,919)	(6,717)
Cashflow from operating activities	77,130	54,395

18. Pension commitments

TPT Retirement Solutions – The Growth Plan

The charity participates in the scheme, a multi-employer scheme which provides benefits to some 1,300 non-associated participating employers. The scheme is a defined benefit scheme in the UK. It is not possible for the charity to obtain sufficient information to enable it to account for the scheme as a defined benefit scheme. Therefore, it accounts for the scheme as a defined contribution scheme.

The scheme is subject to the funding legislation outlined in the Pensions Act 2004 which came into force on 30 December 2005. This, together with documents issued by the Pensions Regulator and Technical Actuarial Standards issued by the Financial Reporting Council, set out the framework for funding defined benefit occupational pension schemes in the UK.

The scheme is classified as a 'last-man standing arrangement'. Therefore, the charity is potentially liable for other participating employers' obligations if those employers are unable to meet their share of the scheme deficit following withdrawal from the scheme. Participating employers are legally required to meet their share of the scheme deficit on an annuity basis on withdrawal from the scheme.

A full actuarial valuation for the scheme was carried out at 30 September 2017. This valuation showed assets of £794.9m, liabilities of £926.4m and a deficit of £131.5m. To eliminate this funding shortfall, the pension plan trustee has asked the participating employers to pay additional contributions to the scheme as follows:

Deficit contributions

From 1 April 2019 to 31 January 2025: £11,243,000 pa (payable monthly and increasing by 3% on each 1 April)

Unless a concession has been agreed with the Trustee the term to 31 January 2025 applies.

Note that the Scheme's previous valuation was carried out with an effective date of 30 September 2014. This valuation showed assets of £793.4m, liabilities of £969.9m and a deficit of £176.5m. To eliminate this funding shortfall, the pension plan trustee has asked the participating employers to pay additional contributions to the scheme as follows:

Deficit contributions

From 1 April 2016 to 30 September 2025: £12,945,440 pa (payable monthly and increasing by 3% on each 1 April)

From 1 April 2016 to 30 September 2028: £54,560 pa (payable monthly and increasing by 3% on each 1 April)

The recovery plan contributions are allocated to each participating employer in line with their estimated share of the Series 1 and Series 2 scheme liabilities.

Where the scheme is in deficit and where the charity has agreed to a deficit funding arrangement the charity recognises a liability for this obligation. The amount recognised is the net present value of the deficit reduction contributions payable under the agreement that relates to the deficit. The present value is calculated using the discount rate detailed in these disclosures. The unwinding of the discount rate is recognised as a pension cost.

MAIDSTONE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

18. Pension commitments (continued)

Present values of provision	31 March 2021	31 March 2020	31 March 2019
Present value of provision	<u>26,605</u>	<u>£31,524</u>	<u>£38,241</u>

Reconciliation of opening and closing provision

	2021 £	2020 £
Provision at start of period	31,524	38,241
Unwinding of the discount factor (interest expense)	708	484
Deficit contribution paid	(6,537)	(6,346)
Re-measurements – impact of any change in assumptions	910	(855)
Provision at end of period	<u>26,605</u>	<u>31,524</u>

Income and expenditure impact

	2021 £	2020 £
Interest expense	708	484
Re-measurements – impact of any change in assumptions	910	(855)
	<u>1,618</u>	<u>(371)</u>

Assumptions

	31 March 2021	31 March 2020	31 March 2019
Rate of discount	<u>0.66%</u>	<u>2.53%</u>	<u>1.39%</u>

The discount rates shown above are the equivalent single discount rates which, when used to discount the future recovery plan contributions due, would give the same results as using a full AA corporate bond yield curve to discount the same recovery plan contributions.

19. Analysis of changes in net debt

	Balance at 1 April 2020 £	Cashflows £	Other non- cash changes £	Balance at 31 March 2021 £
Cash	<u>258,595</u>	<u>77,313</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>335,908</u>

20. Related party transactions

No transactions with related parties were undertaken during the year.

21. Events after the end of the reporting period

During September 2021 a resolution was achieved with the Legal Aid Agency regarding a refund of disputed overpaid fees that had been in dispute for a number of years. It was agreed to repay £24,000 in order to achieve closure and this had been provided in the financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2021. Prior to September 2021 no reasonable assessment of the provision was available.

MAIDSTONE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU
DETAILED INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

		Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total 2021 £	Total 2020 £
Income					
Maidstone Borough Council					
- annual grant		142,100	-	142,100	151,100
- welfare reform initiative		-	-	-	-
Money Advice Service		-	53,169	53,169	58,417
Pension Wise		-	442,386	442,386	454,228
Donations		5,786	-	5,786	2,841
Deposit account interest		183	-	183	330
Golding Homes		5,000	-	5,000	5,000
Fundraising		1,305	-	1,305	5,300
Energy Best deal		-	26,485	26,485	14,277
Henry Smith (MDS Prison)		-	53,008	53,008	54,200
Universal Credit – Help to Claim		-	129,859	129,859	163,283
AB Charitable Trust		-	-	-	10,000
Refund of overpayment of legal services commissions		(24,000)	-	(24,000)	-
Other projects		24,831	-	24,831	28,363
		<u>155,205</u>	<u>704,907</u>	<u>860,112</u>	<u>947,339</u>
Expenditure					
	Schedules				
Establishment expenses	1	9,969	27,054	37,023	34,527
Administration expenses	2	122,566	625,944	748,510	790,615
Sundry expenses	3	3,051	5,120	8,171	10,672
		<u>135,586</u>	<u>658,118</u>	<u>793,704</u>	<u>835,814</u>
Surplus for the year		<u>19,619</u>	<u>46,789</u>	<u>66,408</u>	<u>111,525</u>

MAIDSTONE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU

SCHEDULES TO THE DETAILED INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total 2021 £	Total 2020 £
1. Establishment expenses				
Rent	4,944	18,056	23,000	23,000
Insurance - premises	207	655	862	898
Water	77	304	381	742
Gas	285	1,405	1,690	1,618
Electricity	452	1,960	2,412	2,133
Repairs and renewals - premises	3,734	3,656	7,390	3,852
Cleaning and cleaning materials	270	1,018	1,288	2,284
	<u>9,969</u>	<u>27,054</u>	<u>37,023</u>	<u>34,527</u>
2. Administration expenses				
Salaries and social security costs	95,655	488,767	584,422	585,464
Pension scheme contributions	9,903	53,679	63,582	54,135
Travel costs	393	2,816	3,209	27,068
Training	19	272	291	153
Books, information and IT systems	3,823	12,382	16,205	16,459
Telephone	5,079	9,684	14,763	7,977
Printing and stationery	225	908	1,133	4,759
Postage	175	863	1,038	752
Advertising and publicity	-	-	-	580
Computer and office expenses	6,084	5,268	11,352	10,052
Other office costs	403	1,878	2,281	4,409
Insurance	807	3,387	4,194	1,949
Hire of rooms	-	26,216	26,216	44,011
Project costs	-	-	-	336
Universal Credit – Citizens Advice	-	19,824	19,824	19,500
Money Advice Service – Citizens Advice	-	-	-	13,011
	<u>122,566</u>	<u>625,944</u>	<u>748,510</u>	<u>790,615</u>
3. Sundry expenses				
Bank charges	21	80	101	60
Auditors' remuneration	1,106	4,807	5,913	7,224
Sundry expenses	1,883	-	1,883	-
AGM and other meetings	-	-	-	2,717
Professional fees	41	233	274	671
	<u>3,051</u>	<u>5,120</u>	<u>8,171</u>	<u>10,672</u>