

Here to help



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Registered Charity 1077828

Collingham Rural
Advice
& Resource
Centre

Registered charity 1008517

Chair's report June 2023 - July 2024 presented at the AGM on 10th July 2024

The Collingham Rural Advice and Resource Centre has continued this year to pursue its aim of improving the conditions of life for people in the community, by commissioning Citizens' Advice to provide help and support to people living in Collingham and the surrounding villages.

Meeting our objectives

Between April 23 and March 24 we helped 183 people with a total of 534 separate issues. Over that period, clients were helped to unlock and access over £200,000 of financial gains. Attendance allowance generated the highest number of issues. Help was also given with personal independence payments, pension credit, carers allowance and council tax reductions plus many other issues.

Our advisor, Kerry, also helped with many Blue Badge applications and made home visits for these and other issues on Tuesday afternoons throughout the year.

People

We were very pleased to welcome a new volunteer and Committee member, William Maycock, who has already made a significant contribution to the work of the Committee. Dr Derek Middlemiss stepped down from the committee after years of solid and much appreciated work for the Centre, but we are very glad that Derek has agreed to stay on as a volunteer. Alison Whiles has stepped down as a volunteer; we are sorry to see her go but wish her well in her future pursuits.

The Centre

A grant of £5,556 from the National Lottery Community Fund has enabled us to refurbish the Centre and improve the approach outside. This amazing facelift has

been achieved almost entirely by the efforts of Nina Young and Derek Middlemiss. It is almost complete, with just one or two finishing touches to come.

What it costs

In response to increasing demand for the service, an extra half day was added to the agreement with Citizens' Advice from May 2023. This took our running costs for 2023-4 to £13,500, including:

£10,304 to Citizens' Advice, £1,380 for accommodation, £481 for phone and broadband, £436 for insurance and £180 accountant's fees.

How we meet the costs

We are very grateful to all the organisations who made grants and donations to us this year. Without them we could not keep the Centre running. The main ones were:

Collingham Village Care grant	£3000
Notts County Council grant	£2440
Severn Trent grant	£5471 (for the extra half day)
Collingham Parish Council grant	£1460
Collingham Medical Centre donation	£300 (for our raffle)
Collingham Methodist Church donation	£200 (from their Coffee mornings)
Other donations	£1187

We also made a profit on our Winter Raffle of £1189. We are very grateful to the Medical Centre staff who allowed us to sell tickets outside their building during flu clinics and were very supportive in many ways.

Moving on

We have recently extended the agreement with Citizens' Advice to two whole days, which now takes our running costs for 2024-5 to over £17,500, all of which must be raised from donations and grants.

We are delighted to have been selected, alongside other community groups, as Community Champions at the Collingham Co-op from September until next March. We hope this will unlock some further fundraising opportunities.

Because demand was at a high level mid-year we decided not to introduce extra publicity, but now that demand is more stable, plans for some new types of publicity are now in hand. We also intend to re-introduce Wellbeing Wednesdays at the Centre, the first on the schedule, probably in the autumn, will be a drop-in for anyone needing basic help with a smartphone or other smart device.

The committee has devoted some time to changing the structure of the charity to a Charitable Incorporated Organisation, which is rather like a simplified version of a limited company for charities. As trustees will no longer have personal liability for debts and costs incurred, we are better placed to retain our trustees and to recruit new people of a high calibre, to continue taking the charity forward.

Thanks again

Once again, heartfelt thanks go to all our donors, large and small, for their generosity and support.

We are extremely grateful to our highly skilled and hardworking Advisor, Kerry, who goes above and beyond the limits of her work to provide a first-rate service to our clients. We also thank Robert George and Jackie Insley at Citizens' Advice, and the rest of the team, for their unfailing support.

To the Memorial Hall committee, especially David Cobb and Mary Hill, we say thank you for their patient responsiveness to all sorts of requests.

To all our volunteers and other supporters who staff the Centre, attend events and turn out to sell tickets and hand out leaflets whatever the weather – we can't thank you enough. Without you it wouldn't happen.

Now we all look forward to another year of providing a much-needed and much-appreciated service for the local community.

Mary Beech