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Alison Greaves
Clerk – Oakham Town Council
ROL House, Long Row
Oakham, Rutland
LE15 6LN

10 June 2021

Dear Alison

Further to Duncan Furey's letter in March 2021 I am pleased to attach a copy of our Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP) which gives further details of our activities in 2019-2020. As discussed due to the pandemic we did not produce our normal review of the year brochure and conducted a business-only remote AGM according to the Charity Commissions Covid-19 guidance so we hope the SORP will provide the information required.

As requested I attach an outline bid for what we estimate we will require to make our premises in Oakham safe for staff to return to restart our face to face services for all those that need this as well as welcoming back our volunteers.

As highlighted in our previous letter during the pandemic we successfully transitioned our service to phone, email and recently video advice. Last year we secured a grant to enable all relevant extra IT to be purchased including video and soft phone platforms to enable all staff to give advice from home.

We would be very grateful if Oakham Town Council could consider a possible grant to meet a portion of these anticipated costs which would support our continued work in Rutland.

Yours sincerely


Sheila Fletcher
Chief Operating Officer
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Grant Application to Oakham Town Council

Applicant – Citizens Advice Rutland

Who we are

Citizens Advice Rutland (CAR) has been operating from premises on the High Street in Oakham for over 45 years providing a free, confidential, non-judgemental advice service five days a week to Rutland residents.

The Covid-19 pandemic brought with it unprecedented challenges, but challenges that CAR responded to rapidly. CAR transitioned the service so local residents could continue to receive the help they needed. Staff and volunteers adapted swiftly as CAR expanded the phone, video and email channels for communication. Currently, the offices remain closed due to national Covid restrictions. However, once restrictions are lifted CAR will not be able to use the offices as the advice space is cramped and unventilated.

The benefits to Oakham and Rutland from Citizens Advice Rutland

CAR works across Rutland and in 20/21 we returned £1.7million to the population of Rutland as a result of appeals to government agencies. In addition, For Rutland – our community fundraising arm raised funds to pay for advisers who regained an additional £950,000 in benefits on behalf of people suffering long term health conditions.

Additionally,

- Clients are regularly referred to other agencies with Rutland (foodbank, Legal services, psychosocial support, Health & Wellbeing) to statutory and non-statutory partners within Rutland.
- CAR runs Rutland's principle voluntary sector steering group, convening a monthly information sharing call, providing training to NGOs and providing a volunteer brokerage service. Once conditions allow, a number of in person volunteer fairs within Rutland will be scheduled.
- The Stop Smoking service for Rutland operates from the premises
- CAR regularly refers voluntary groups to funding and training opportunities.

How the grant will be used

The grant will help to create two large interview rooms with appropriate ventilation and lighting within the existing building on the High Street in Oakham.

This application is specifically designed to modernise the public access areas of the premises to allow CAR to continue to provide a highly valued and important service with Rutland. The office space consists of small windowless and unventilated advice rooms, these are no longer appropriate post pandemic.

Members of the public, staff and volunteers will not be able to utilize this space unless modest refurbishments are made.

Advice provision is all about prevention and the sooner support is provided to those experiencing debt, wellbeing, housing benefits and welfare benefits, the better the outcomes will be.

The benefits of the grant

This grant will allow Citizens Advice Rutland to reopen the premises for a face to face service in Oakham following the closure in 2020 due to Covid restrictions.

Once the works have been completed CAR will be able to offer:

- In person advice services to residents of Rutland.
- Train volunteers
- Reopen the physical premises and offer a range of services on the High Street in Oakham that will benefit the entire population of Rutland and specifically assist the most economically and welfare rights disadvantaged within the county.
- The re-opening of the advice centre will, in particular, target those Rutland residents who lack access or capacity to use digital online services; a group who have been particularly affected by the Pandemic.

How the grant would be used

The works that needs to be completed to allow Citizens Advice Rutland to re-open their offices are:

Installing Hepa filters X 2	£3800
Building works, removing plaster board, rebuilding partition walls	£4000
Wiring	£700
Install plexiglass partition reception	£1000
Building Control/Planning	£300
Total	£9800

Further information regarding this grant request is available from the CEO of Citizens Advice Rutland - Duncan Furey (duncan.furey@citizensadvicrutland.org.uk)