

# EAST DORSET

## Citizens Advice Bureaux

mer • debts • employment • legal • housing • relationships • benefits • consumer • debts • employment • legal

**citizens  
advice  
bureau**



## Annual Report 2004 - 2005

Chairman's Report  
Manager's Report  
Friends of EDCAB  
Training  
Tribunals  
Debt  
*... and much more*

### *Our Aim...*

*... to ensure that individuals do not suffer through lack of knowledge of their rights and responsibilities or of the services available to them, or through an inability to express their needs effectively*

*... to exercise a responsible influence on the development of social policies and service, both locally and nationally.*



## Board of Directors

### ELECTED MEMBERS

**Alan Honnor**

Chairman

**Geoff Partington**

Treasurer

**John Rynne**

Company Secretary

**Margaret Lewis**

Chairman of Friends of EDCAB

### REPRESENTATIVE MEMBERS

**Maureen Godfrey**

East Dorset District Council

**Barbara Manuel**

East Dorset District Council

**John A Muggleton**

Ferndown Town Council

**Mike Daymond**

Verwood Town Council

**Diann March**

Wimborne Town Council

**Albert Whittle**

Wimborne & Ferndown Lions Club

### CO-OPTED

**Steve Potts**

### STAFF MEMBERS

**Hilary Forrest**

Bureau Manager

**Maggie Pope**

Deputy Bureau Manager

**Jenny James**

Staff Representative (W)

**Eddie Hawkins**

Staff Representative (F)

**Princecroft Willis**

AUDITOR

# Chairman's Report

## Computerisation

The CAB's paper information system which for many years has been the bible from which our advisers worked, is being phased out, and from May 2005 only the electronic system will be available.

Obviously advances in IT are beneficial overall. However, these changes have necessitated considerable and ongoing capital expenditure to update equipment. I am pleased to report that an additional grant from East Dorset District Council (EDDC) under the Implementing Electronic Government scheme, for which we are extremely grateful, has made it possible to maintain the high level of technical equipment which is now required.

We also need to say a very big thank you to Alan Hart, a volunteer whose expertise has been invaluable, not only in recommending the type of equipment needed, but in helping to sort out problems associated with the introduction of new systems and equipment.

## Volunteers

While we still maintain our excellent record of retaining the services of our volunteer advisers, as witnessed by our long service awards, we do lose some experienced advisers every year. New recruits have to undergo a lengthy training programme, and it is usually in the region of six months before a new volunteer can undertake the full range of adviser duties.

Pat Temple our Training Officer has very successfully imparted an extremely challenging programme of training to 7 volunteers this year.

## Friends of EDCAB

Three years ago the Friends of EDCAB was set up, and has raised over £20,000 for our funds. All the

volunteers, under the Chairmanship of the indefatigable Margaret Lewis, are to be congratulated and given a hearty vote of thanks, for all their hard work, dedication and enthusiasm, and I should point out that many of them are also volunteer advisers with EDCAB.



*Diann March, Mayor of Wimborne, with Margaret Lewis, Chairman of the Friends of EDCAB*

## Finances

Funding for an organisation such as ours will always be a challenge, but now that the EDDC has agreed an inflation-linked grant with us for the next two years, for which we are very grateful, our Treasurer has the opportunity of preparing a reasonably realistic budget up to March 2007. Problems will arise however in 2006 when our Lottery Grant ceases: this has been used to cover the salaries for additional posts, which were necessary to meet the changing and increasing workload within the Bureau. We are therefore, actively seeking additional funding sources to address this shortfall when it arises.

## Treasurer

Our Treasurer, Geoffrey Partington, has indicated that he now wishes to relinquish that office as soon as a replacement can be appointed. Geoff has been our Treasurer over the past 7 years, and we owe him a debt of gratitude for all his hard work, and the knowledge and expertise he has made available to the Bureau during that time. I would also add my thanks for the co-operation and assistance he has given me personally.

## The Team

I am very fortunate as Chairman of the EDCAB, to work with a very dedicated team, staff and volunteers both advisers and trustees, who all give their time and their not inconsiderable knowledge and expertise, for the benefit of our clients, and to help solve the wide ranging and varied problems facing these clients. I think all of us concerned with the EDCAB would acknowledge the particular contribution made by our Manager – Hilary Forrest – who not only keeps everything running on a day to day basis, but who also undertakes a wide range of additional responsibilities which also need to be addressed, if we are to maintain our reputation for the high level of service we offer to the residents of East Dorset.

Finally our thanks to EDDC, Dorset County Council, Town and Parish Councils and other organisations such as the Lions and Rotary, whose continued financial support remains vital for the future of our Bureau.

**Alan Honnor**

*"Congratulations to Steve Potts on election to the Citizens Advice (NACAB) Trustee Board".*

# Manager's Report

**Two factors have affected work this year more than any others: the shortage of volunteer advisers, and CASE.**

It has taken longer than anticipated to build up adviser numbers this year, and two advisers have undergone surgery, but thankfully there is now light at the end of the tunnel. Over the same period we have been learning to work with CASE the computerised case management system, which takes longer and has been unstable at times, causing much frustration and extra work.

## Drop in numbers

The net result has been to reduce client numbers by over 20%, while at the same time increasing the length of the working day for advisers and staff alike.

## Changes

Nora Hall took over as Money Adviser in April and is kept busy! Gillian Dawson relinquished her paid post during the year, but continues as Assistant Manager on a voluntary basis, dividing her time between Social Policy and Tribunal

work. In September we welcomed Roz Watts as Supervisor on one day a week.

## Supervision

Heartfelt thanks go to all the volunteer advisers this year for their resilience under pressure - it has been a testing year! Thanks also to Chris Fisher, Jane Green, Jenny James and Eddie Hawkins who after extra training take the role of Supervisors when needed, or act as Assistant Supervisors. Special thanks go to Pat Anderson who supervises every Friday in Wimborne, which is a much appreciated.

## Thanks

As always I have relied on the support of Maggie Pope, Fiona Wilkinson, Pat Temple, also Lucy Campbell and her volunteer administrative team. This year I must also thank Steve Potts for research and development work on funding bids. Finally my thanks go to our excellent Chairman Alan Honnor for his unfailing wisdom, and to Margaret Lewis for her splendid work with the Friends.

**Hilary Forrest**



*Morning Briefing: Supervisor Pat Anderson briefs Advisers John Moore, Helen Leavens and Katy Norman (all volunteers)*

# Treasurer's Report

The income of the Bureaux is primarily funded by East Dorset District Council, Dorset County Council, the Big Lottery Fund (formerly Community Fund), the

Legal Services Commission, Citizens Advice and Primary Health Care Trusts. These are supported by local Town and Parish Councils, Community Service Clubs such as

the Wimborne and Ferndown Lions Club, donations from the public and funds raised by the Friends of East Dorset CAB. We thank them all for their support.

2003/2004 (£)	INCOME	2004/2005 (£)
<b>Grants and Donations</b>		
50000	East Dorset District Council	72809
5171	Dorset County Council	4700
0	Citizens Advice	3125
14889	Legal Services Commission	19394
12287	Primary Health Care Trusts	11629
32766	The Big Lottery Fund	33547
9332	Friends of East Dorset CAB	8227
750	Wimborne and Ferndown Lions club	750
200	Ferndown Rotary Club	0
495	Friends of CAB Trust	0
500	The Community Foundation	0
2049	Client and general public donations	1827
305	Training and room hire fees	990
<b>Town Councils</b>		
3500	Wimborne	3500
4000	Ferndown	5000
1100	Verwood	1500
<b>Parish Councils</b>		
1000	Colehill	1000
250	Corfe Mullen	250
200	West Parley	200
150	Holt	150
500	St.Leonards and St. Ives	300
100	West Moors	100
60	Sturminster Marshall	0
50	Sixpenny Handley with Pentridge	60
100	Vale of Allen	50
0	Cranborne	25
139754		169133
3912	Bank Interest	5294
143666	<b>Total</b>	174427
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>		
99006	Salaries, Pensions, National Insurance and Other Staff Costs	104214
1203	Training	1806
6379	Travelling Expenses and Car Parking	7928
5636	Telephone	5290
2257	Postage, Printing and Stationery	3374
1588	Wimborne Premises	1531
8133	Ferndown Premises	9011
1674	Insurance	2425
2715	Equipment, Repairs and Renewals	1882
2145	Citizens Advice and Leaflets	2697
1028	Computer equipment	13625
386	Audit Fee	430
631	Miscellaneous	614
132781	<b>Total</b>	154827
<b>SURPLUS OF INCOME OVER EXPENDITURE</b>		
15826	Increase in General Reserve	21180
-4941	Decrease in Restricted Reserves	-1580
10885	<b>Total</b>	19600
31 March 2004	<b>BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31 MARCH 2005</b>	31 March 2005
<b>Current Assets</b>		
67000	COIF deposit fund account	75000
10148	Cash at bank	21169
1564	Debtors	1971
-2197	Creditors - amounts falling due within one year	-2025
76515	<b>Net Assets</b>	96115
<b>Represented by:</b>		
55433	General Reserve	76613
5342	Premises Reserve	5342
0	Computer Reserve	0
800	Telephone System Reserve	0
19	Welfare Benefits Project Reserve	4293
14921	Advice & Administration Project Reserve	9867
76515	<b>Total</b>	96115

During the year ended 31 March 2005, the Bureaux achieved a surplus of income over expenditure of £19,600 made up of an increase in general reserves of £21,180 less a reduction in restricted reserves of £1,580.

During the year, East Dorset District Council increased their core funding grant from £50,000 to £60,000. In addition, they allocated the Bureaux a specific grant of £25,000 from the Council's Implementing Electronic Government Grant to be spent on information technology to assist the electronic government initiative at the Bureaux. At 31 March 2005 £12,809 of the total grant had been received and spent. We would like to express our sincere appreciation to East Dorset District Council for increasing their core funding grant and for the specific grant of £25,000.

The year ended 31 March 2005 was the second year of the 3-year grant of £103,000 from the Big Lottery Fund. Grants of £33,547 were received and £33,602 was spent to fund a number of job roles within the Bureaux related to the provision of advice and administration services.

The Big Lottery Fund grant has eased the short term funding problems of the Bureaux. However, the difficulty of replacing this source of income at the end of the 3-year period, in order to maintain the services so badly needed by the citizens of East Dorset, cannot be underestimated.

Princecroft Willis are our auditors and we are grateful to them for their assistance and support.

**Geoff Partington FCA**  
**Honorary Treasurer**

*"I always ring you as you are so helpful and am greatly relieved by advice you are able to give me."*

## Administrator's Report

It has been another busy year. We have produced over 1600 letters to, or on behalf of, clients; 30% of which have been sent by the specialist debt caseworker.

To continue with some figures, we now have 28 desk top computers, 3 laptops, 24 telephones, 8 printers, 2 photocopiers and 2 fax machines, some of which are inconsiderate enough to stop working at crucial moments!

When anything goes wrong, I am lucky enough to have a 'help wizard' in the form of Alan Hart, who puts things right again. Thank you, Alan, for all that you do for us.

The main change this year has been the up-grading of our computers, monitors, and other equipment, due to a generous grant from the East Dorset District Council for IT purposes. This means we are now able to run Windows XP and Microsoft Office on all the computers, creating uniformity for the advisers and others who use them. We are most grateful.

Finally, thank you to the willing band of 18 admin helpers who provide the backup to enable the advisers to spend their time advising.

**Lucy Campbell**

*"Congratulations to Gillian Dawson on re-election to the Citizens Advice South West Regional Committee"*

# Client Statistics

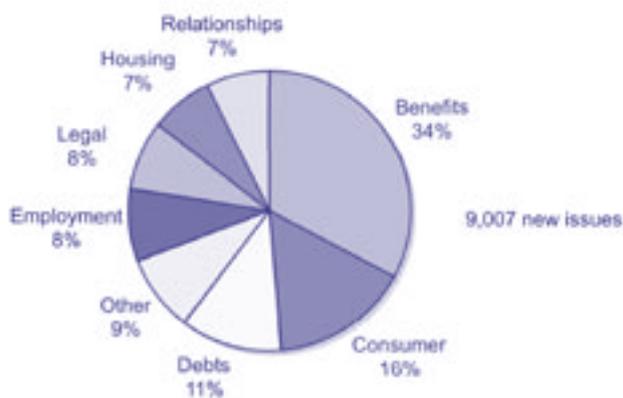
The basis of recording client numbers has changed this year with the use of CASE. This means that direct comparisons with the old figures are not possible. However there would appear to have been a drop in numbers of clients together with a corresponding rise in the number of issues dealt with for each person.

Three factors are relevant to this

- We were short of advisers for most of the year.
- It takes longer to record each client using CASE, especially during the learning period.
- Clients' problems are increasingly complex, requiring time-consuming casework. This is a national trend.

All of these mean that we are able to deal with fewer clients, and some are turned away or cannot get through on the phone.

New Issues in 2004-5 by category

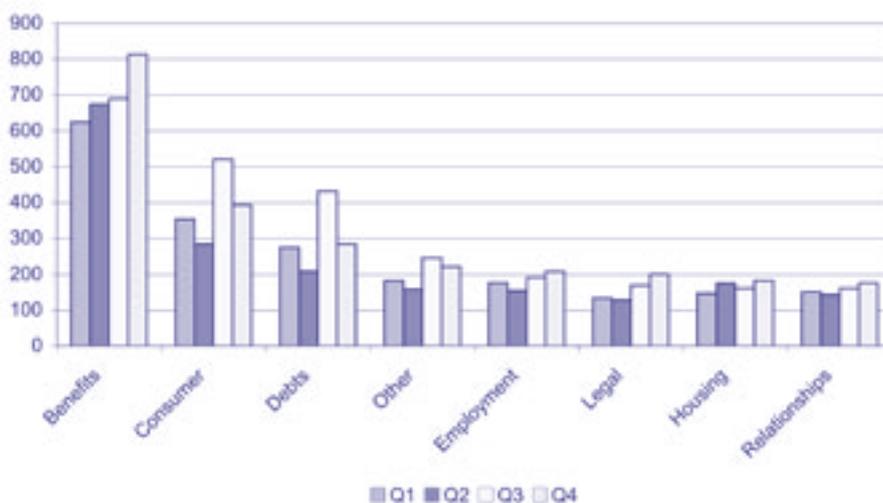


Total unique clients 2004/5

Ferndown	1103
Wimborne	2482
<b>Total</b>	<b>3587</b>

<b>Total client contacts</b>	<b>6652</b>
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New issues in 2004-5 by quarter and category



# Friends of EDCAB

The Friends have had another busy and successful year and raised £8,227 for the work of CAB.

## Profile-raising

We were delighted when Councillor Diann March, the Mayor of Wimborne Minster, chose the Friends as one of her two charities for her year of office. This has not only helped with funds but has also given our profile a most welcome boost.

Another boost to our profile comes on the third Friday of each month from the Book Sale at the Wimborne Bureau. This has raised £800 in a year, so spread the word!

I am very grateful to Advisers who have accompanied me to give talks to organisations to give up to date information on the work of the bureaux.

## Committee

The committee has continued to be most enthusiastic, organising events and coming up with ideas that will have to wait until we have more people who are willing to be involved. Sadly, Ray Smith and Helen Leavens have had to leave the committee, but Helen continues to be involved in other ways. We are delighted that Dana Procter, who brings experience from outside CAB, has decided to join us.

## Supporters

Lord Salisbury continues to be a most supportive Founder Chairman and I am always grateful for his advice and comments.

I am particularly grateful to present and former CAB staff and their families, who are the Friends' main supporters. It is obvious that they know how valuable their advice work is to the CAB clients. A number of them have organised events quite separate from those run by the committee and this extra effort on their part is greatly appreciated.

The number of Subscribing Friends has decreased slightly during the year though we do have a few new members. Our new introductory leaflet is headed 'You Can Make A Difference'. Anyone can do this by making an annual subscription to the Friends and making a difference to the work that can be done by East Dorset CAB.

## Farewell!

The Friends of East Dorset CAB have come a long way since we started just over 3 years ago and I am very grateful to all those who have helped in any way. Now, as the time comes for me to cease being Chairman, I am pleased to be able to hand over a successful organisation to the person who wishes to take it forward to future growth.

## Committee

02.03.05

### Chairman

Margaret Lewis

### Vice Chairman

Derek Gorman

### Minutes Secretary

Rosemary Rawlings

### Asst Secretary

Christine Pacey

### Advertising

Christine Pacey

### Acting Membership Secretary

Derek Gorman

### Cab Manager

Hilary Forrest

### Press Secretary

Tess Moberly

### Events Team Co-ordinator

Vacancy

### Bookstall

Pat Anderson

Helen Leavens - Part Year

Ray Smith - Part Year

Dana Procter

### Ex-committee

#### Bookkeeper

David Lewis

#### Newsletter

Bob Moberly

#### Newsletter Distribution

Jill Floyd

#### Cab Treasurer

Geoff Partington

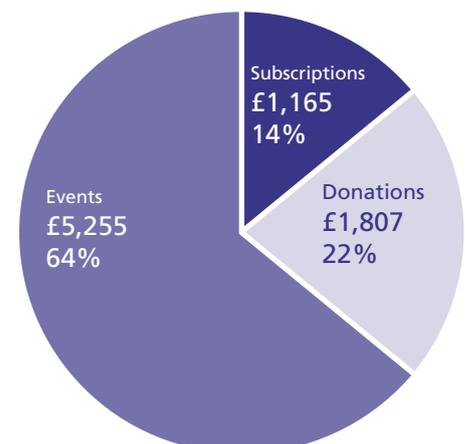
#### Sales Co-ordinator

Pam Parker

## Third Anniversary Lunch

*What a lovely day!  
Sun and quiche and flowers and cake  
Wine and conversation  
Councillors and ex-advisers  
Mayors and animated ladies  
Patron and committee members  
Old and new  
Celebrating one and all  
Three splendid years of  
Fun and funds and Friends of  
East Dorset CAB*

How the Friends Raised  
£8,227 in 2004-5



# Donors 2004-5

We are most grateful to organisations and individuals who have given money and/or time to the Friends of EDCAB

- The Mayor of Wimborne Minster
- Present and former CAB staff
- Private Individuals
- Barclays Bank
- HSBC Bank
- St John Ambulance
- The Minster Press
- Safeway plc
- Verwood Rustic Fayre
- Verwood Carnival
- Lord and Lady Salisbury
- Rotary Club of Wimborne
- Lumiere Photographics
- Davelin Purification
- St Nicholas Church
- Wimborne Model Town
- Dreamboats
- Hamworthy Club
- The Tivoli Theatre



Edward Floyd, retiring Adviser, cuts the cake

## FUNDRAISING EVENTS IN 2004 - 5

<i>Each month</i>	<i>Book Sale</i>
<i>May</i>	Bridge Day Open Garden
<i>June</i>	Folk Festival Stall at Minster Fair Book Sale Mayor's Stall
<i>August</i>	Dog Show
<i>October</i>	Coffee Morning Half Marathon - 3 people
<i>November</i>	Quiz Night Stall at Charity Fair Stall at Heatherlands Teams in Rotary Swimathon
<i>December</i>	Sale of Christmas Cards Christmas Tree Mayor's Collection Christmas Eve, Mayor's Collection
<i>January</i>	Jive Night
<i>February</i>	Film Night showing 'GIGI'
<i>March</i>	3rd Anniversary Celebration

## Social Policy

The Citizens Advice service has a duty not only to our individual clients but to improve problems on a wider level. We call this social policy work: "to exercise a responsible influence on the development of social policies and services". It is achieved by working in partnership with other organisations locally, regionally and nationally.

Social policy highlights of the year:

- National recognition for our local action on "Aim to Sustain" last year which was part of the National project on preventing evictions from social housing. Citizens Advice National Social Policy has published "Success Stories" using the Dorset Social Policy group's work as an example of success. Fame indeed!
- Racism in the South West "What the Papers Say". East Dorset Bureau participated in this project designed by the South West Region Social Policy Co-ordinating group. Its main aim is to send a clear signal to the black and minority ethnic communities that the Citizens Advice Bureaux take racism seriously and that the CAB is a service for them.
- Working with MPs – We were very pleased that our local MPs took up the issue of information leaflets on employment being withdrawn by the DTI. The aim is to prevent increasing social exclusion for people without access to the internet.
- Difficulties for people on Housing Benefit getting private tenancies – a new Dorset-wide project in partnership with private landlords and letting agencies.

*Gillian Dawson*

## New Session Minder

*"I can't actually come in on the next 8 Tuesdays, I have never used CASE before and I'm really rusty on benefits – are you really sure you want me to be your new Session Minder for Tuesdays?!"* Such was my response when Hilary rang to offer me the job I'd been interviewed for earlier that day. Somewhat to my surprise she assured me that she did and I was delighted to accept!

I started at the beginning of September - so I've been part of the EDCAB team for 6 months now. Despite my 10 years experience in another bureau it felt a bit like a baptism by fire at the beginning - learning new systems and procedures and especially getting to grips with the computer programme (CASE). Many a time I have had to ask where things go, how things are done etc and I am indebted to everyone for their time and patience with me.

As East Dorset CAB is located in 2 places (Wimborne and Ferndown) learning everyone's names, which days they are in, which bureau they (tend to) work in and what degree of support each person wants/needs has been a bit of a challenge but it's been great to get to know and work with so many dedicated and skilled people. It's also good to catch up with everyone at the regular adviser meetings which are usually very well attended.

Everyone has been so welcoming and helpful that I feel very much part of the family that is East Dorset CAB even though I am only (generally!) in once a week.

**Roz Watts**

# Employment work and Tribunals

The central focus of employment work this year was the new Statutory Dispute Resolution regulations, which became effective in October 2004; see the separate item on our work with local small employers on this.

How has it affected clients? From October onwards advisers reported a sudden increase in clients who had either lost their jobs or were facing dismissal. Employers, it seems, took fright!

There is no doubt that the intention of the regulations is that it should force employers and employees to be open with each other about their differences so that they can work them out without needing an Employment Tribunal. It has opened up a new facet of work for advisers at a level appropriate for experienced generalist and specialist advisers. This is in the role of companion at a grievance or disciplinary hearing. CAB advisers are not named in the legislation as being allowed to accompany an employee at these hearings, but employers have been willing on seven occasions during the year to have us fulfil this role.

TOTAL WON FOR CLIENTS AT EMPLOYMENT TRIBUNALS - £32,692.00

Number of clients : 15; 4 were awarded by Tribunal (one of whom had to obtain the money in the small claims court) and 11 by negotiated settlement.

**Gillian Dawson**

*"I would like to thank you and your team for your support and assistance in this matter.*

*"My thanks are especially extended to Ian whose determination, kind support and efforts are very much appreciated.*

*"It has taken over four years to bring matters to a satisfactory conclusion and this would not have been possible without the support and dedication of you and your team."*

We raised a total of £13, 240 for six clients this year as a result of Welfare Benefits Tribunals for Disability Living Allowance. John Moore, Peter Harvey and Sue Lynch were the Advisers involved.

*"Very grateful and can't thank you enough for helping me."*

## Money Advice

**I took over from Maggie last April, a very hard act to follow, but the good news is Maggie is still around. Our aim has been to make the Money Advice service more accessible, increase the number of clients seen and to help the clients take greater responsibility for their problems.**

To make the service more accessible I have changed the name from Debt Advice to Money Advice to reduce any stigma and am available for the Generalist Advisers to refer to me for specialist advice. I have dealt with total debts of over £1.5m in the nine months between April and December 2004 and sent 845 letters. My current caseload is 67 clients.

I am advising on mortgage and rent arrears, assisting clients in talking

to landlords, both social and private and supporting clients to stay in their homes. I am assisting clients in preparing and acting on structured



plans to prevent their debt problems getting worse and repay their debts and negotiate on their behalf with creditors. Clients are encouraged to work to a budget that is both within their income and is realistic enough to be sustainable while keeping creditors aware of their situation. I feel that this is the way forward.

I am happy to speak to people before problems arise e.g. when a tenancy agreement is taken up. This will help in making people aware of the financial implications so that they are less likely to put their homes at risk and their utility supplies will not be discontinued. I look forward to continued success next year.

**Nora Hall**

*"I can't express my gratitude enough to you for your kind help, understanding and support with your knowledge and professionalism bringing this horrid situation to a successful closure."*

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## The Cranborne Practice

Demand for CAB appointments within these two GP's surgeries at Cranborne and Verwood Lake Road remains fairly consistent. There was a temporary lull in the summer for about a month – annual holidays maybe? Subsequently picked up again and on average there are 2/3 in Cranborne: often 4, even 5 (if they squeeze them in without me noticing) in Verwood! At least 50% are still referrals from the doctors, which is a good sign that the service is still valued by them. I also, from time to time, get enquiries from both staff and the GPs on a personal level, which I hope is appreciated by all concerned.

Enquiries remain varied – still very seldom debt. However, one client I referred on to Nora for some specialist debt advice and I believe such situations serve to demonstrate the complete and professional advice service now offered by CAB. Very few consumer issues are brought to the surgeries. Benefits still make up a large portion of the work. In excess of £40,000 was claimed during the last 12 months. Another topic frequently covered is separation because those involved have seen their GP for advice in coping with the situation. Advice is then needed with the direct issue, and often with the inevitable knock-on effects regarding housing, benefits and other matters.

The only slight problem which has manifested itself is using CASE from the surgery. I'm unable to plug into their phone system, so case recording cannot be done whilst there. This means that any spare time between appointments cannot be used constructively to enter case records. This aside, I believe the whole service is running smoothly and effectively and will continue to do so for some time to come.

**Sue Lynch**

## A New Adviser

Hard to believe that it is less than 6 months since my interview as a would-be trainee adviser. I remember Alan Honnor asking, Have you got a sense of humour? What makes you laugh?

I decided to volunteer because I thought it would be worthwhile and challenging. It is definitely satisfying to see clients go away from interviews reassured, or better informed, or understanding options which allow them to take action.

As for the challenge, Hilary warned us that we should expect to spend 16 hours a week on training sessions, self-study and observing interviews. The shock was that she meant it!

Three of us stayed the course, Jeff, Pat C and myself. The mutual support was important, especially when it seemed as if the only way to cope with the current week's topic was to forget what we had studied the week before! Our tutor, Pat Temple, kept the pressure on but was always encouraging – thank you Pat! She also organised enthusiastic presenters to take us through their specialist subjects: Nora on Debt, David on Employment and John Moore on his invaluable Benefits Calculating spreadsheet. There were plenty of anecdotes to bring the material to life.

Everyone was also very patient and helpful when we sat in the bureau or observed interviews. Following the initial intensive training I now have 6 solo client interviews under my belt. I'm glad I have stuck with it so far and am grateful to everyone who has helped.

*Kathryn Finn*

## Sixpenny Handley

**I started as CAB adviser at Sixpenny Handley Surgery in late June, taking over from Chris Pacey who left earlier last year. (An added attraction of the appointment is the drive to the surgery, through countryside delightful virtually year-round but especially so in summer).**

Sixpenny Handley was the first practice in Wessex to be given The Quality Practice Award. This recognises general practice teams who provide an exceptional service, in fields ranging from clinical care to health and safety. In addition to the usual NHS services the surgery also holds an Ante natal clinic, and clinics for Asthma, Diabetes, Family planning, Mother and baby, Well man and Well woman.

The practice has made me feel most welcome, appreciates the CAB presence, and the recently appointed Surgery Manager (Paul) is keen for us to continue our work there. I have a refurbished work/interview room, and together we have changed and streamlined the appointments system. Many clients are referred by the doctors, others respond to new CAB advertisements, placed (free) in local publications.

Prevalent among the issues are sickness and disability benefit claims, but I have been surprised by the wide variety of matters raised by clients from this relatively small rural community. Addressing a popular and successful Patients' Group Meeting at Broadchalke surgery (same practice as Sixpenny), listeners were astonished by the range of issues Bureaux help with. The Sixpenny contract is renewed annually and we hope funding will allow us to continue across 2005/6.

*Gilly Crompton*

## Ferndown

**2004 has been another busy year in the Ferndown Office, with Benefits, Debt and Employment being the most frequent enquiries. We have been very pressurised for appointments, clients sometimes having to wait up to 10-14 days to be seen. Appointments relieve the waiting room pressures, but lengthen the delay for clients. We have been giving greater priority to telephones, by having an adviser assigned to 'phone only' on certain days. Telephone advice is important for clients who are not able to get into the Bureau or cannot wait for an appointment.**

General Debt work is done by all advisers, but we have specialised debt appointments for more complicated cases on Tuesdays. Generalist appointments are now on a Monday and Thursday.

We were very excited to get new computer equipment last summer, making the job of researching information for clients much more efficient. CASE is now more reliable after some very testing times last year. The upgraded photocopier and new fax machine are also much appreciated.

None of the bureau work would be done without the support of the volunteer advisers and administration staff. Thanks to all of them for their continued dedication.

*Maggie Pope*

# Welfare Benefits Home Visiting Service

**The two major and rather worrying features regarding this project during the last year have been that:**

1. Demand is ever-increasing
2. Community Legal Service funding to continue the service appeared to run out!

Thankfully at the eleventh hour, so to speak, sufficient monies were found to guarantee the continuation at current levels until the end of June 2005. East Dorset District Council have now agreed to support this project next year and we are most grateful for this.

Both benefit claims and awards average approx £25,000 per month, which demonstrates the need for this project to continue. It not only enables the elderly and housebound to access an initial benefit entitlement, but often identifies associated entitlements. Without sound benefit advice, it would be impossible for clients to know just what they can claim, such is the complexity of the benefits system. The disability reduction on Council Tax is something I have often identified as being unclaimed.

To most clients, the fact that the CAB is totally impartial and able

to offer advice on all their benefits is crucial. Claiming processes are ever more complicated. The DWP and Local Authorities do offer home visits, but this entails several different people visiting. However pleasant these may be, it all becomes confusing and distressing. You might say I try to be the 'Lynch-Pin'! I can co-ordinate things, and offer support and continuity.

It is to be hoped that future, long-term funding can be found, to ensure this valuable service continues.

*Sue Lynch*

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## Training

**Training of CAB advisers is a continuous process and a great deal has been undertaken in the past year.**

**The new law concerning Dispute Resolution at work, which came into effect in October 2004, entailed both external and in-house training as all advisers had to be aware of the new regulations. Four experienced advisers undertook training to become advice session supervisors and are now performing this role in addition to their usual advice sessions.**

General and trainee advisers have attended courses run by Citizens Advice on subjects concerned with housing, employment, benefits, debt, immigration and consumer issues. In addition we have received training from external bodies on Domestic Violence Awareness, Bankruptcy and Individual Voluntary Arrangements, Tax Credits and forthcoming benefit changes.

Of the thirteen new volunteers who began training in 2004 seven are now advising on a regular basis with appropriate degrees of support.

The early training to become a trainee adviser is a much greater undertaking than some new recruits expect and there is an inevitable dropout problem. Well done to Robbie, Brian, Chris, Anna, Kathryn, Jeff and Pat who have succeeded in getting through the process.

Congratulations are also due to Katy who received her Certificate in Generalist Advice Work this year. I am grateful for all the support I receive from colleagues who allow very new trainees to observe their work and offer them support when they begin to see their own clients.

I would also like to thank Nora, David and John, Gillian, Roz and Fiona who have delivered training this year in the areas in which they specialise.

*Pat Temple*

## CONTACT US

### WIMBORNE

Hanham Road, BH21 1AS

MONDAY	10am - 3pm
TUESDAY	10am - 3pm
WEDNESDAY	Debt clients only
THURSDAY	10am - 3pm
FRIDAY	10am - 1pm

Telephone

**(01202) 884738**

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and  
Friday between 10am and 3.45 pm

### FERNDOWN

1A Princes Court, Princes Road,  
BH22 9JG

MONDAY	10am - 3pm
TUESDAY	10am - 3pm (Debt)
THURSDAY	10am - 3pm

Telephone

**(01202) 893838**

Monday, Tuesday and Thursday  
between 10am and 3.45pm

### VERWOOD

We hope to resume our service in  
Verwood as soon as resources allow

[www.adviceguide.org.uk](http://www.adviceguide.org.uk)  
[www.eastdorsetcab.org.uk](http://www.eastdorsetcab.org.uk)



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## STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

### MANAGEMENT

Bureau Manager	Hilary Forrest	(F/T)
Deputy Manager	Maggie Pope	(P/T)
Administrator	Lucy Campbell	(P/T)
Advice Session Supervisors	Roz Watts	(P/T)
	Fiona Wilkinson	(P/T)
Assistant Manager	Gillian Dawson	(Vol)
Debt Caseworker	Nora Hall	(P/T)
GP Adviser	Gilly Crompton	(P/T)
GP/ Welfare Benefits	Sue Lynch	(P/T)
Training Officer	Pat Temple	(P/T)

### VOLUNTEERS

Advisers

<b>Pat Anderson</b> (SM)	<b>Jenny James</b> (SM)	In Training
<b>Mary Angus</b> (M)	<b>Anna King</b> (TA)	<b>Pat Campbell</b>
<b>Gilly Crompton</b> (M)	<b>Brian Kinge</b> (TA)	<b>Jeff Davies</b>
<b>David Cummins</b> (M)	<b>John Laidlaw</b> (M)	<b>Ruth Bush</b>
<b>Jan Dobree-Carey</b>	<b>Helen Leavens</b> (M)	<b>Jill Cullen</b>
<b>Dorothy Dodman</b>	<b>Ian Lee</b> (M)	<b>Gail O'Neill</b>
<b>Jean Durant</b> (SM)	<b>John Moore</b> (M)	<b>Rose Turner</b>
<b>John Egan</b> (Debt)	<b>Judy Moore</b>	<b>Ann Walker</b>
<b>Kathryn Finn</b> (TA)	<b>Robbie Morgan</b> (TA)	
<b>Christine Fisher</b> (SM)	<b>Katy Norman</b>	Resigned During the year
<b>Anita Ford</b> (TA)	<b>Christine Orange</b> (TA)	<b>Brigitte Donald</b>
<b>John Gibbons</b>	<b>Christine Pacey</b> (M)	<b>Edward Floyd</b>
<b>Jane Green</b> (SM)	<b>Margaret Stevens</b> (TA)	<b>Derek Geldart</b>
<b>Peter Harvey</b> (tribunals)	<b>Joan Taylor</b> (SM)	<b>Tamsin Lucchesi</b>
<b>Eddie Hawkins</b> (SM)	<b>Sue Taylor</b> (M)	<b>Diana Mogg</b>
<b>Chris Isaac</b>	<b>Patricia Temple</b> (SM)	

Counsellor  
**Carol**

IT Consultants  
**Alan Hart**  
**Steve Potts**

Administration  
(Wimborne)

**Audrey Beall**  
**Jan Burford**  
**Viv Chapman**  
**Paul Cripwell**  
**Diane Justice**  
**Lynda Lake**  
**Claire Parker**  
**Tony & Pam Parker**  
**Jean Richards**  
**Avril Rutland**  
**Don Symonds**  
**Jill Vasey**

Reception  
(Ferndown)

**Margaret Allard**  
**Graham Williamson**

Administration  
(Ferndown)

**Pam Chapman**  
**Dorothy Cook**  
**Dorothy Kenney**  
**Judith Ranger**

Key: (M) = Minder (SM) = Session Minder (TA) = Trainee Adviser