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The following appeal has been made by Wiltshire Citizens' Advice :

31st July 2018

Dear Parish Councillors

“Our Volunteers gave time worth £748,800 last year and made a difference to over 15,000 lives, right here in Wiltshire”

As I write, we have just finished celebrating Volunteers week and acknowledging the fantastic work volunteers do in Wiltshire. Can I take this opportunity to extend our thanks to you as well, because as Councillors you also volunteer your time for the good of Wiltshire and your local community.

At Wiltshire Citizens Advice, our core staff and specialist advisers are lucky enough to be supported by 133 volunteers, which means we can reach many more people in parishes across Wiltshire.

The results are nothing short of amazing. We helped more than 1 in every 25 adults in Wiltshire last year with 38,863 issues, supporting people in every parish. We also gained more than 4 million pounds worth of benefits and other income that Wiltshire residents were entitled to and helped manage or write off £822,857 of debt. Together, that adds up to a huge reduction in anxiety and stress and the alleviation of poverty for many people and families. Longer term, it contributes to more resilient communities, reduces isolation and enhances the local economy.

The impact our services have on the lives of people is also significant.

- ❖ 4 in 5 people said our advice improved their lives, their health and finances
- ❖ 1 in 3 people said we helped them at crisis point, when they needed to take action urgently
- ❖ 8 in 10 said they would not have been able to solve their problem without our support

We couldn't do this without the contribution of our volunteers, who are highly trained and continuously need to update their knowledge to keep up with the latest legislation and changes in government systems. This ensures that the people who come to us get accurate information they can trust and equips our advisers to support people with almost any problem, from debt and benefits, to housing, employment, discrimination, consumer, legal and relationship issues.

Between them, they provide advice to every corner of Wiltshire, so that residents of your parish are never more than a phone call away, 5 days a week 9am-5pm or 30 minutes away

from an office or outreach where they can drop in and talk for free, face-to-face with an adviser.

Every small amount of support will make a big difference to this vital part of our work and will ensure we can maintain our level of service to your residents.

- ✓ £200 will help train a new volunteer to be ready to give advice
- ✓ £100 will ensure an existing volunteer has up-to-date knowledge for a year
- ✓ £50 will help attract and recruit a suitable volunteer

We won't ever be able to predict when difficult life situations arise, but we can make sure we are there to help when they do. One of our clients summed up just how useful our advisers can be, telling us

"Over the years, Citizens Advice have made the difference between life and death for me"

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter, I hope you will consider supporting the work our volunteers do in the community and I shall look forward to your response.

Yours in appreciation

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Suzanne Wigmore', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Suzanne Wigmore
CEO