

CAB Annual Review of 2006

It has been an interesting year for Sevenoaks CAB, with many successes and considerable progress on many fronts. We have also had our difficulties; we were very sorry that our manager, Matilda Buckley, became unwell during the year and left us in December. We hope that Matilda makes a speedy recovery and wish her well in the future. Matilda served the bureau tirelessly and set very high standards for the advisers and the Trustees.

This was confirmed when our bureau performed very well in the audit carried out on behalf of Citizens Advice. We were one of a very few bureaux in the country to be given a completely clean bill of health and passed on all counts. Well done to all concerned.

In my last report I said that our bureau was an oasis in a building site, but we are through that now. The new Library is up and running and our working conditions are much improved. Our entrance and signage need some attention but at least we have relative peace and quiet, and we have gained some extra space. We worked with KCC to find a way to release a room to allow us to have some quality office space for meetings and training. This will greatly improve the working environment for our staff, advisers and clients.

We continue to attract volunteer advisers and we have a full training programme. And we do need a full team. With appointments, telephone enquiries and drop-in clients, the bureau is very busy.

Our thanks to all who have helped us with our funding. Sevenoaks District Council continues to support us as does the Town Council and many local organisations, and we have a number of service agreements: with West Kent Housing Association, Sevenoaks District Council and DEFRA. But we continue to need considerable extra funding and would be grateful for help from local businesses. We are a stand-alone charity and would benefit from a more regular income flow.

The trustees continue to help us with guidance and wisdom. We are sorry to lose our President, Ian Anderson, who has staunchly supported us over the years and also Leon Baker who has moved to Scotland. We are delighted that Holly Hearle has accepted the appointment as our new manager. Holly trained in our bureau and we look forward to working with her.

Finally a huge thank you to Gill Clayton, Susie Stripp and Pat McGregor who have worked tirelessly to keep our bureau running in difficult conditions. I am sure that Sevenoaks Bureau is on a firm footing for the future.

David Small
Chair