

Request to Meldon Parish Council for Donation to Citizens Advice Northumberland, 2026–27

From: Suzanne Claassen

<suzanneclaassen@citizensadvicenorthumberland.org.uk>

To: <clerk@meldonparishcouncil.gov.uk>

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Dear Dee

Request to Meldon Parish Council for Donation to Citizens Advice Northumberland, 2026–27

I'm writing to ask you to support the work of Citizens Advice Northumberland in your 2026–27 annual grants and awards. In these difficult times, financial pressures, poverty, and debt are ever-present realities for local people. Citizens Advice Northumberland tackles not only the immediate crisis faced, but the underlying root causes of the problems,

providing your residents with practical solutions to transform their lives and strengthen the communities we call home.

In our diverse county, our commitment is to every resident, whether living in one of our towns or in our rural communities. We offer face-to-face support at our welcoming high-street offices in Blyth, Ashington, Morpeth, Berwick, Amble, Prudhoe, Alnwick, East Bedlington, Cramlington, and Hexham. To cater for the county's unique demographics, we also provide telephone and email support to our remote communities, extending a vital lifeline to residents facing the devastating impact of isolation and rural poverty.

From April 2025 to March 2026, we supported nearly **10,000**

Northumberland residents with over 96,000 issues. Critically, our work secured **£15.5 million in income gains** to local people and helped clients write off over **£4.5 million in debts** across Northumberland. Our communities deeply appreciate the support we provide; 91% of clients reported that Citizens Advice Northumberland helped them find a way forward in tackling the financial worries they faced.

Furthermore, by supporting Citizens Advice Northumberland you can help us facilitate much needed social change. Currently we are conducting research and campaign work into vital issues such as the impact of pension

credits, the council tax support scheme and damp and mouldy housing, using the first hand experience of residents across the county to inform both regional and national policy.

We continue to adapt our services to meet the county's needs. With the particular attention to the diverse and dispersed nature of our communities, we are developing 'MARK', a network of self-service digital terminals that utilise a conversational AI chatbot to triage, inform and refer individuals to the appropriate support. The potential to reach far into remote communities with MARK is immeasurable, and with your support, MARK could soon be assisting residents in a library, parish hub, or village hall near you.

We can provide a detailed report showing our impact in your parish, including anonymised case studies and local data. If this would be helpful to your councillors, please contact Suzanne Claassen (details below).

To discuss or arrange a donation, please email

suzanneclaassen@citizensadvicenorthumberland.org.uk