

70th Birthday for the CAB

Epsom & Ewell Citizens Advice Bureau held its 70th anniversary celebrations at the Town Hall on Thursday 18 November. Lady Toulson, High Sheriff for Surrey gave a short speech followed by local MP Chris Grayling. The event was attended by past and present staff of the bureau plus Mayor Jan Mason and consort, local councillors, local business people and stakeholders.

In his introduction, Shaun Jones, Chair of the Trustees, recounted how Epsom and Ewell CAB was one of the first bureaux to be set up at the outbreak of the Second World War, the premises then being in Waterloo Road. The bureau was staffed largely by dedicated volunteers, just as it is today. There was no training for the volunteers to start with – they just got on with it. Since then things have changed enormously in the area of training, which is now very thorough and comprehensive with the quality of advice subject to regular and rigorous audit. The demand for advice today is roughly three times the 1940's level in terms of the sheer number of enquiries, and individual cases are much more complex. The need for the service today is as pressing as it ever was.

Lady Toulson praised the work of the CAB as a vibrant and essential part of the voluntary sector, and indispensable to the community. The issues it faces are a mirror of the economic situation in our homes and on the High Street but the CAB remains constant in its service and professionalism. These sentiments were echoed by Chris Grayling MP in his words of appreciation and encouragement.

Epsom & Ewell CAB is a charity dependent on donations and fundraising to supplement the grant it receives from the council. It now has over 60 staff and trustees of which the vast majority are volunteers. They handle over 8,500 client cases a year and in response to the economic downturn the bureau in 2009 appointed two specialist debt advisers.



Presentation to
Lady Toulson,
High Sheriff of
Surrey