

## Finance Manager's message

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We are pleased to report a surplus for the third year running, despite the challenges that the Covid-19 pandemic has given us over the past year.

So that we could continue to support those that need us, it was vital that we were secured funding to enable us to expand our remote advice facility. With the grants that we were successful in gaining, we were able to invest in new software and IT equipment so that we could provide a video advice service to clients and expand our ability to give telephone, email, and webchat advice whilst our team worked from home. We also invested in Perspex screens, signage, and PPE to ensure staff and clients were in a safe environment during the periods when we were able to open our offices.

Project funding to provide energy advice and fuel vouchers to our clients was also invaluable, as many faced increasing household bills as they spent more time at home but had less income. These issues were also supported from the Winter Grant Scheme that we received from WSCC/DWP, which enabled us to support those in debt with fuel bills or had issues with boilers. The fund was also used to provide essential items such as warm clothing, bedding, curtains and other household items to clients and their families.

We were also successful in securing funding for a debt advice service which is an area that we knew would be an issue as people were placed on furlough or that may have lost their jobs altogether.

As we all worked from home for the whole of the 2020/2021 period, we were able to make savings on our expenditure and therefore reduce our overheads which contributed to achieving a surplus. We did not have any travel or subsistence costs and had reduced premises expenses.

Going forward we plan to get back to our offices again and have budgeted for this in 2021/2022. However, we know that we will have a team of staff and volunteers both in the office and working from home and therefore we will be able to make further savings over the coming year whilst continuing to invest in making our service as accessible as possible through the numerous channels available.

Finally, as always, we need to thank our staff and volunteers. We are so proud of how they have adapted to a completely new way of working over the past year. They have been amazing and provided an invaluable service to the local community and we cannot thank them enough for their hard work and support



**Tracy Rablin**  
**Finance Manager**