



## **JUMPERS AND ST CATHERINE'S HILL RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION**

[www.wcreidents.co.uk](http://www.wcreidents.co.uk)

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**12<sup>th</sup> January 2019**

### **Chairman's Report for 2018**

A happy and prosperous New Year to all our members and other readers.

There is an important issue concerning the future of the Residents Association to be addressed in this report. First, we'll get the mandatory housekeeping piece out of the way.

Your Association remains in sound financial condition as will be confirmed by our finalised annual accounts which will be posted on the website once all the figures are verified. They will show a surplus of £500 in 2018 and assets of over £8,100. Our membership is over 1,400 households representing around 2,500 local people.

Our thanks go to our collectors without whom we would struggle to survive. If we had more of them, we could expand our membership. If you could assist us by collecting subscriptions from your neighbours, please get in touch.

2018 was a demanding year for your management committee and I must thank them for their hard work throughout the year. They consistently maintained their perspective of putting the long-term interest of our members before all else whilst retaining a keen and necessary sense of humour. If you feel you could contribute to the running of the Association, please let us know.

### **Keeping in Touch**

The monthly circulation of our e-newsletter remained at over 1,600 e-mail addresses. It continues to provoke responses from members and this enables us to engage in dialogue with you. With Local Government reorganization finally resolved we may lose some of the people (particularly from outside of the Christchurch area) who read it during 2017 and 2018 to keep in touch with what was happening.

We were heartened by the steady flow of thanks we received from people who felt that our newsletter represented a factual, unbiased source of information. Not just for the reorganization but also on such matters as the financial problems experienced by DCC. Producing those newsletters requires a lot of hard work by a dedicated team of people and your thanks is much appreciated.

We still have around 500 households that don't take the e-mail news and we produced several versions of the paper edition during 2018. Our thanks to the tireless volunteers who help us to distribute them.

### **Our Future Role as a Residents Association**

In April we will have a new unitary authority that will be responsible for the whole of Christchurch, Bournemouth and Poole.

In the past we have played an active part in dealing with a somewhat remote DCC run by people based in Dorchester who often had only a superficial knowledge of Christchurch. In future main council activity will be run locally, primarily by local people.

Our new town council based in Christchurch (which will cost about £342,000 a year to run and which will add about £3 a month to your Council Tax) will be more akin to a Parish Council and will potentially do many of the things we used to do.

Those changes raise a significant question – **what role we should play in this new set up.**

Our sister organisation, Stanpit and Mudeford Residents Association (SAMRA), has decided to call it a day and to cease operations. We also considered that path but concluded that it would be premature. We came to believe that a change in the way we operate could bring benefit to our members and **we would like now to hear your opinions.**

We considered the new local parish council and it seemed to us that the best way for us to participate in its work whilst representing your interests **would be to have an elected representative on that Council.** A Residents Association Councillor who would be wholly independent.

From that line of thought we then considered the main Bournemouth Christchurch Poole unitary authority and concluded that the same logic applies. **The very best way for us to represent you would be to have an elected independent Residents Association Councillor for this area** (known as the Commons Ward of Bournemouth Christchurch Poole and comprising Jumpers, St Catherine's and Hurn).

We must stress that both of our candidates would have absolutely no political affiliations. If they were fortunate enough to be elected, they would report only to you through these newsletters and you would be able to reply to us and let us know your views on any and all topics. We would always aim to be constructive and progressive to bring maximum benefit to our residents.

### **Who Would Stand?**

If the feedback that we receive from you now is positive then I'm delighted to say that one of your committee, Sue Fotheringham the lady who organises our collections, has agreed to stand for election to the new parish council next May. If one of you reading this would also like to be considered as a candidate, please get in touch with us.

Subject to the same caveat of your approval, I have agreed to stand for election as our candidate in the May council elections for the new Bournemouth Christchurch Poole unitary authority.

**This new direction would represent a challenge for us. Please don't hesitate to tell us what you think.**

On **Thursday March 20<sup>th</sup>, 2019** we will be holding our AGM at 7.30pm in the Hall on the Hill, Marlow Drive. If we do proceed, then that will represent an opportunity for you to meet Sue and I and to express your views.

We believe the time has come to look forward. We residents of Christchurch must put all the negativity behind us and look positively towards the future. In April we will have a new unitary authority that will be responsible for the whole of Christchurch, Bournemouth and Poole. That will represent an opportunity for Christchurch to act constructively and to play a proper part in shaping our futures and those of our children and grandchildren.

**Jim Biggin**

**Chairman**