

The Royal Bournemouth and Christchurch Hospitals became a Foundation Trust
Firstly I would like to respond to the article in the last Newsletter headed
Christchurch Hospital.

The Trust carried out a number of activities during the public consultation around plans for Christchurch Hospital, including public meetings, presentations to local councillors and the public, information and display boards in public places such as the council offices and the library. Over 200 stakeholders were sent copies of the consultation document, of which all resident associations were included, and there was coverage in the local media. Our 10,000 plus members were also notified of the consultation. I can only apologise that the electronic copy did not reach the Association in time. Although the date for consultation has closed I would be more than happy to hear the views of residents on future plans for Christchurch Hospital which I will pass directly to the Trust to consider. My email address is susan.bungey@rbch.nhs.uk . The document regarding plans for Christchurch Hospital can be found on the West Christchurch Residents Association website.

The second point in last month's newsletter concerned NHS Dorset (primary care trust) and a review of the provision of endoscopy and dermatology services. This review is something that NHS Dorset felt was necessary, not our hospitals. The Foundation Trust provides excellent services in these areas for local people and we must ensure that they continue to be provided for local people. However I was disappointed that Christchurch Borough Council chose not to make comment but delegate this issue to Dorset County Council Health Scrutiny Committee.

In April 2007 The Royal Bournemouth and Christchurch Hospitals became a Foundation Trust. Instead of being directly accountable to the Department of Health our two hospitals now have more freedom to develop services for the benefit of patients and give local people a greater say. The Trust is accountable to local people through its membership and to the regulator of foundations trusts, Monitor

The Trust's membership is made up of members of the public and staff members from our two hospitals. At present we have about 12,000 public members and 1,000 staff. As a Member of the Trust you receive regular updates from the hospitals and are able to comment on any changes to strategy. As well as receiving our quarterly newsletter, FT Focus, you are entitled to vote, during elections, for Governors to sit on the Council of Governors which all Foundation Trusts must have.

Governors are all volunteers and are the link between the community and the Trust's Board of Directors to whom they have direct access. Governors meet formally five times a year and all members are entitled to attend these meetings, which take place at the Royal Bournemouth Hospital. Our Governors have worked hard to become one of the best performing Council of Governors in the south of England. We regularly go out into the communities we represent; Bournemouth, Poole, Christchurch and Dorset County, New Forest Hampshire and Salisbury, speaking to our members and canvassing their opinions about the services provided in our two hospitals. An example of this can be seen from

the Plan for the future of Christchurch Hospital when, last year, Governors and the Trust sought the views of the local community and acted upon these.

Governors also spend time on the wards engaging with patients and carers. It is also our responsibility to make sure we challenge the Trust's Board on all issues relating to good patient care in our community. To this end we have a Governor Scrutiny Committee which looks at specific issues and report our findings directly to the Board and the Membership. Governors also have statutory responsibilities which include appointing the Chairman and Non Executive Directors, setting their pay levels and conditions of employment, approving the appointment of the Chief Executive and appointing or removing the Trust's External Auditors.

The Royal Bournemouth and Christchurch Hospitals and Poole Hospital have consulted with the public on the governance arrangements for the merged trust, should the merger be approved. The consultation ran from 1 February until 25 April 2012. I have tried to attend as many of the meetings as possible together with my colleagues listening to what was said. Your views are presently being considered by the Board and the Council of Governors.

Should Monitor decide that the hospitals should merge, we would like more people in our local communities to join the proposed new foundation trust. If you are already a member of either Poole or Bournemouth and Christchurch Hospitals we will contact you separately. If you are not a member please register your interest with us and we will send you a membership application form. You can also register your interest online, and watch a short film explaining the proposed merger at www.rbch.nhs.uk/healthyfuture.

If you would like to find out more about your Governors and the constituencies they represent, information can be found at www.rbch.nhs.uk. Click on the Governors and Membership section and then the Council of Governors, where you will find details of how to contact all your Governors. Alternatively you can contact me or my colleagues through the Governor Co-ordinator, Dily Ruffer by email at ftmembers@rbch.nhs.uk or call 01202 704246.

I am hoping to attend the September meeting of West Christchurch Residents Association and look forward to meeting some of you then.

Sue Bungey,
Deputy Chair of Governors and Public Governor for Christchurch and Dorset County