



Making the difference

Chairman's Report

November 2013

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT to the 2013 AGM

I cannot begin this report without paying tribute to my predecessor as Chairman, Sidney Torlot. Sidney was a remarkable man. His commitment to Vbranch House as a Trustee was evident in his membership of the old Appeals Committee, as Chairman for 10 of our most challenging years and, latterly, as Chairman for a second time. He saw it as his duty to support all the staff in the work of the charity and in all the many years of attending the various management committees of which he was a member or which he chaired he never missed a meeting. Sidney was a gentleman in every sense of the word; literally gentle, invariably courteous, strong in adversity and always patient. He gave to us all an example of dedicated service. Perhaps you would like to join me in a round of applause as a small tribute to Sidney.

You will understand that I took over as Chairman in May of this year – outside the period covered by the reports for this AGM – so I will be reporting on a period from April the 1st to the 26th of November 2012 during which Andrew Barge was the Chairman and then from the 26th of November to the 31st of March 2013 when Sidney Torlot was the Chairman.

I am glad to be able to tell you that your charity has had, in every other respect, possibly the best year of the 52 years since it started in 1961. We enjoyed a cash surplus of income over expenditure of some £123,795. Staff numbers rose to 66, we had 22 school pupils and saw over 2,000 children as outpatients from all over Devon. The Honeylands Assessment Centre is working well and in April of last year we acquired the freehold to the Vbranch House site. The Chief Executive and his staff have continued the process of continuous development to the infrastructure at Vbranch House and the Trustees have authorised further capital expenditure for the 2013/14 year. There have been developments in our charitable services which will be reported to you separately by the Head Teacher, Jane Parsons, and by our new Clinical Director – Dr Ginny Humphreys. Ginny has now reduced her time to 2 days a week, some of which is delivered off-site, whilst many of her regular duties have been assumed by our new Head of Therapies, Kate Moss. At this point and with some sadness I have to announce that Jane Parsons will be leaving us at Christmas as she has gained a position as an Advisory Teacher for children with Visual Impairment and will be moving to Cornwall in the New Year. I am sure that you would all want to join me in thanking her for her wonderful dedication to the children at Vbranch House School both as a



class teacher and later as the Head. We all wish you every happiness Jane. The new Acting Head Teacher will be our own Inclusion Advisory Teacher, Viktoria Pavlics to whom we also extend every best wish.

It is a pleasure to be able to address you as the Chairman and to pass on the good news that your charity is as vibrant and successful as we have become accustomed to it being despite the many challenges it has faced and will continue to face. This is not a complacent observation as I am very aware that our Management Team is always concerned with reviewing and improving everything that Vranck House does. As Penny Hale used to say; "if there is a rut somewhere into which we might comfortably fall – we've never found it!"

Julia Tolman-May

Chairman

