



*Making the difference*

# Chairman's Report

November 2012

## CHAIRMAN'S REPORT to the 2012 AGM

This is my seventh and sadly last report to an Annual General Meeting as Chairman of the Society. As with previous years, it's my pleasure, once more, to report that the charity is in excellent health and continues to deliver first class services as we continue to navigate the difficult economy and ever changing public sector landscape. Once again, I'm delighted that we have enjoyed another monumental and indeed historic year in the history of the charity and Vranch House.

In our 51<sup>st</sup> year we have maintained our excellence in all that we do as proved by our 'Very Good' rating at our most recent Ofsted Report earlier this year and by the seamless way in which we have expanded our clinical work. My thanks go to the Head Teacher and Head of Therapies for leading this excellent work.

I have said since the downturn in the economy started in 2008 that Vranch House could very easily have been a victim of these unprecedented circumstances that the country has faced. It is because of our strong relationships with our partners, NHS Devon and Devon County Council, built up over many years of delivering excellent services at extremely competitive value for money that we are still here and as strong as we have ever been. We should not lose sight of this nor take it for granted and as before my thanks go to all of you for the part you have played, however large or small, in ensuring Vranch House continues to provide such a valuable service to the wider community of Devon.

I reported last year, in our 50<sup>th</sup> year, how we had successfully built the new Children's Specialist Assessment Centre. I'm pleased to say that this facility is operating well and providing a superb location for Integrated Children's Services to deliver their services.

If that was not exciting enough, then this year, an even better and more extraordinary development occurred when we purchased the freehold of the site here at Vranch House. This site and all of its buildings are now owned by your charity, guaranteeing its long term future in a way it has not known before. My thanks go to our Chief Executive for completing a 20-year strategy to develop the funds and then negotiate this transfer of ownership.

As with last year I want to pay tribute to our staff. We should not forget that we still have staff working for us who are now in effect in their third year of very low pay inflation due the 0% settlement from both our health and education partners for the last four years. As I have said over the last few years, we here at Vbranch House deeply value their amazing dedication and loyalty to Vbranch House and the Chief Executive will continue to do everything he can to reward that loyalty and dedication.

Before I finish I want to pay tribute to one individual or should I say two individuals who left the service of the charity this year. For many years, Sue Gould worked tirelessly as our Marketing Manager along with her incredibly supportive husband, Peter to raise both the profile and valuable funds for Vbranch House. Their contribution to the success of Vbranch House cannot be measured in pounds and pence alone. Vbranch House would be a very different place without their contribution over so many years. On behalf of you all I should like to thank them both for all they have done to support the charity over those years and wish them a well earned retirement from their commitments to the charity.

As I said at the start of my speech, this is my last report, to the AGM. I am very sad to be standing down from my role as Chairman but it is only because I am shortly to take on a paid role at Vbranch House as the new Marketing Manager. Due to charity law I cannot be both an employee and volunteer. It has been a fantastic privilege to hold this position, one which I would never have imagined I would do when I first left here as a ten year old boy. These last seven years as Chairman have seen the charity make massive strides forward as we have gone from strength to strength. I want to thank Graeme, Ginny, Jane and Maureen for helping to make it such an easy but thoroughly rewarding and enjoyable role to undertake. Though I am stepping down as Chairman I can assure you that my dedication to the charity and most importantly the children we serve is as strong as ever and I look forward to working with my new work colleagues in taking us forward to more success in 2013 and beyond.