

## Chairman's Report

Before the last ERA AGM in January this year, it was suggested that I might like to stand as Chair. Planning is an important part of the ERA's work, and my knowledge was limited. I was reluctant, but agreed to do one year, rather than the usual three years. My one-year ends at the January 2010 AGM - and now I realise that I will miss it!

What has the ERA achieved in 2009 and what have we still to tackle? The Emsworth Design Statement (EDS), launched in 2008, is now an essential aide for assessing and responding to planning applications. Predictably welcomed by the ERA committee, it is also appreciated by HBC Officers and Councillors as it also helps them. We now have a common language, and are trying hard to work successfully with the community we serve.

Ray Bolton, County Councillor for Emsworth & St Faiths, has energetically joined the team of Emsworth Councillors and has been a committed supporter in the 'hospital battle' described below.

We have become more involved in transport issues and special thanks are due to ex Committee Member Chris Suter, who has been very successful in challenging HCC about bus services and South West Rail and Southern Rail about train services. He is also working with Emsworth residents to improve bus services and bus shelters and there is now closer cooperation with the service providers.

We have lost Emsworth Cottage Hospital and the promised commitment to a new hospital in Havant seems to be evaporating. Chris Curry, Lorraine Clode and particularly the indefatigable Tony Lowes, with great support from our local councillors, including Ray Bolton, have worked energetically to keep Hampshire Primary Care Trust aware of our urgent need for a new local hospital in Emsworth, or more realistically in Havant. In the January 2006 EMS, the then ERA Chairman David Jones wrote of 'the long drawn out saga of our Cottage Hospital, the Post Office, the Food Festival and the Emsworth Design Statement'. He added that 'we have lost the in-patient facilities at our Cottage hospital with little expectation of having the new hospital in Havant before 2010'. Wise words, even if the timescale is worse regarding the hospital.

### Bad Weather affects Santa

Sunday 29th November was a complete washout. Heavy gales and driving rain dramatically affected proceedings. The Sunday market went ahead and true to form many people braved the weather and supported the event.



Wet but not disheartened: RNLI and Emsworth Museum stall holders shelter from the rain

All entertainment that was taking place in The Square had to be moved into the Pastoral Centre for safety reasons. Many, many thanks to the Pastoral Centre for allowing the 17-piece band to play in the centre.

Father Christmas finally arrived at 2.30 pm and entertained the children inside along with two street entertainers and a face painter. All the Christmas lights were switched on, mulled wine and mince pies were given out to the brave community who remained upbeat although rather wet and cold.

Apologies for any disappointment but in twelve years of running the Xmas event, this is the first time that we have been washed out by the weather, but the EBA remain unbeaten for another year! Whatever is thrown at us we will Endeavour to carry on!

Dave Wagg - Acting EBA Chairman

The need for the successful resolution of this issue will be a major task for the 2010 committee, and I am sure we wish them well.

As I stand down at the end of January, I want to thank all the ERA Committee members and our four Councillors for their constant support for the ERA - I remember only one committee meeting in the last eight years without one of them being present for the regular 'Councillors Forum'.

Thanks also to John Mant, our treasurer who has 'kept the books' and seems to be able to answer any question anyone asks about anything to do with the ERA; Michael Ponsonby, our long serving minutes secretary; Denys Riley, who has reviewed and dealt with every HBC planning application for at least the last ten years; Richard Jannaway - editor of the best newspaper of its type that any of us have ever seen; Chris Curry, my predecessor and supplier of answers to all my questions, and Lorraine Clode who has made a real impact as vice chair.

Ken Gilchrist

## News from Winchester

In my work as your County Councillor, I attend as many Emsworth Residents' Association (ERA), Emsworth Community Board (ECB) and social meetings as possible to listen to residents' points of view, concerns and issues. From my knowledge of other Wards in the Borough, I can most definitely say that the ERA is the most effective residents association in Havant Borough. I see your hard working ERA Officers and Committee Members at many of the meetings which I attend.

As a result, the reports from other contributors to this newsletter cover topics and issues which I am also involved in progressing/resolving e.g. improvements to the infrastructure of Emsworth, such as the station, the provision of more bus shelters on route 700 bus service along the Havant Road and provision of improved school cycle ways. To achieve these improvements requires me to act as a catalyst to achieve partnership working and to present Emsworth's case for the necessary financial funding. I am also working hard, in this era of very tight Local Authority budgets, representing Emsworth's need for improvements to the highways and maintenance of footways. I am pleased to be able to address the imminent widening of the carriageway in Ward Crescent to address the problem of vehicle over-run and the planned resurfacing/surface dressing of footways in Westbourne Road, Lewis Road and Brook Gardens. I will continue to work hard at trying to get other highway and footway needs in Emsworth pushed up the priority list.

On the subject of Local Authority finances, I have recently attended Hampshire County Council (HCC) meetings on the 2010/11 budget cycle which will lead on to the setting of the County Council Tax rate for next year. HCC continues to be faced with an increased demand for social care in Adult and Children's Services as well as the higher costs of waste management. Despite these financial pressures, but with no growth in other service budgets and a programme of efficiency improvements, HCC will be able to plan its budget for the next financial year showing a similar low level of Council Tax increase as seen in the current year.

In my last news article, I mentioned the overwhelming concern we all share over the NHS Hampshire's decision to stop development of the long awaited Oak Park Community Hospital. The HCC Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC) are continuing to pursue the issues of loss of the planned local health services and a lack of local hospital care beds as vigorously as possible. Should NHS Hampshire decide in January for the definite cessation of the Oak Park Hospital Project, then HOSC will be looking at preparing a case to put to the Secretary of State for Health.

On Sunday 8th November, my wife Pat and I attended the Remembrance Service in St. James' Church and it was lovely to see so many Emsworth residents of all ages in the congregation, particularly parents with their children. I also attended a seminar with Jean Tier, held at the Brookfield Hotel on 11th November, of Emsworth school pupils who attend St. James', Glenwood and Warblington schools. The purpose of this seminar was to encourage our young people to work in teams to consider the strengths of Emsworth and also the aspects they would like to see improved, leading to a picture of their 'ideal Emsworth'. It was very pleasing to see Emsworth school pupils working together in this seminar and I look forward to seeing these ideas being used to inform the ECB work taking place to provide improved youth facilities in Emsworth.

Finally Pat and I would like to take this opportunity to wish all residents a Healthy and Happy New Year.

County Councillor Ray Bolton



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