

## **Helen Knight**

**Helen Knight** has been nominated for her work with Whitchurch Neighbourcare which offers help with transport to hospital appointments using a network of volunteer drivers, also offering help with shopping, relieving carers, collecting prescriptions and small household jobs.

Helen has been the Neighbourcare telephone co-ordinator for many long years and has been the steady contact for people needing to access Neighbourcare transport to clinics, hospitals and care homes.

This work has been carried out tirelessly despite some periods of her own personal ill health.

## **Brian Cousens**

**Brian Cousens** has been nominated for his work running Brian's Bingo. Brian has been running this popular session for over 20 years and attracts people from as far as Winchester. This offers local people, on a regular basis, an opportunity for mostly elderly people to dress up and gather, sometimes with a nice meal associated. The topic keeps brains active and must be a major preventer of dementia.

It is estimated that Brian gives up at least 450 hours per year running these sessions. With average attendees of approximately 30 per session it is estimated that the community value is over £100,000 (if a price could be put on such a venture).

## **Paul and Jan McGarvey**

**Paul and Jan McGarvey**, of the Bell Inn have been nominated for their help and support to the Royal British Legion.

The RBL in Whitchurch is a small, vibrant branch that is starting to grow in size. The Branch exists without any form of centralised support or funding and is reliant upon money raised locally and support from the wider community of Whitchurch in order to survive.

Jan and Paul McGarvey are at the forefront of the community effort assisting the RBL Branch to remain in existence and continue to provide support to former service personnel and their families across Whitchurch. They have, since 1992 (25 years) made a meeting room available at the Bell Inn free of charge for monthly meetings and other social events. In creating 'a home' for the branch they regularly contribute prizes towards Branch raffles (our main income stream) and provide catering for several functions throughout the year at effectively cost price, making attendance affordable to the majority of our membership, most of whom are retired pensioners.

They also provide support to individual members and are an integral part of the RBL's local welfare monitoring. Having created 'an RBL home' at the Bell Inn they provide a social outlet that facilitates inclusion, a sense of belonging and reassurance for many of our oldest members. They are among some of the first in the community to become aware if members are unexpectedly taken ill or experiencing other difficulties. This informal monitoring of our most vulnerable

members has enabled the branch to respond more effectively than would otherwise be the case when members are in need.

This caring approach was never more evident than during the illness last year of our late President Mr Roy Dykes. They were among the first to detect his hospitalisation – alerting branch members to the situation. They also provided a focal point for Roy's extended family members from Canada when it became clear his illness would inevitably result in death. Their actions and support during this period characterised the selfless commitment and support they have afforded the local RBL for the last 25 years.

Jan and Paul McGarvey ask for nothing but give so much. They are a key factor in ensuring that the RBL Whitchurch continues to survive and go from strength to strength. In recognition of a quarter of a century's assistance to local veterans and their families, we request that their support to veterans community of Whitchurch be formally recognised.

## **Sarah Castle**

**Sarah Castle** has run the community centre since it started (about 10 years ago) and originally got the management side up and running. This is a 5 day a week job which serves the whole of Whitchurch, and the Gill Nethercott Centre is a real hub of activity now.

Sarah set up “Singing for the Mind” and got funding for it. This helps slow the progress of dementia.

Sarah organises annual musical evenings, and coach trips in the summer months which are popular with the elderly and are often fully booked. She also organises the craft fair for the late night shopping evening at Christmas. She is very proactive in organising events for the benefit of the community.

Sarah also set up a Guide Pack which is fully subscribed and has a waiting list. She spends 3-4 hours of her time on this each week.

Sarah devotes a lot of her time acting as a source of information, and is a very welcoming and helpful person in the centre. Her dedication to helping improve the facilities that Whitchurch has to offer deserves recognition.

## **John Clark**

**John Clark** was a long standing Town Councillor for over 30 years and Mayor of Whitchurch many times (in fact he holds the record five times!). His dedication to ensure transparency and with the attitude of doing the right thing for Whitchurch regardless of his personal feelings has always shone through. He is a keen believer in doing the right thing for Whitchurch.

Although as a serving Councillor you are not eligible to be nominated for this award, it is time for the community of Whitchurch to acknowledge his timeless commitment to the town. Even in his work environment he has always kept a keen eye on Whitchurch and openly accepted emails saying, for example, there is a pot hole here can you fix it? When the road flooded at Larks Barrow Hill, just before you join the A34 north, he was asked if he knew when the road would reopen. John always took the time to find out and report back his findings, rather than saying it will be open soon. Just to name a few examples.

You only need to look back at his reports as the Mayor to see that nothing was too much trouble and these are available on the Town Council website for you to read at your leisure. As Deputy Mayor he was also always available to step in if the Mayor was unavailable.

John continues to work with the Festival Committee, always there ready to help out. For example, on the gate with a bucket collecting funds for the fireworks, ensuring no-one is run over at the Christmas lights, through to helping out with the washing up at the 'We'll Meet Again' event.

Although now in retirement, he is still very much a team player, with the British Legion being another example, with John selling poppies in the sun or rain with a smile and a joke. But on a serious note, as we all know, this is an area that we all hold dear to our hearts. If it wasn't for those brave boys we would not have the freedom we have today. It is important that their memories are kept alive. Thanks go out to all those involved with the British Legion.

John has also helped with the planting of the snowdrops along Winchester Road, near the exit to the A34 south, in celebration of the Queen's Diamond Jubilee. Each year it is a delight to see the snowdrops spreading so in time to come there will be a blanket of white little diamonds shining in the sun.

The list goes on and on with what John has done for Whitchurch.

## Whitchurch Scout Troop

**Whitchurch Scout Troop** leaders – **Nikki Farley, John Bentley, Stuart Roshier, Lin Spencer, Scott Hanvey, Fiona Rimmer, Sue Goodall, Michelle Holmes, Max Holmes and Michael Dorey** have all been nominated for a group award for their commitment, hard work, loyalty and dedication to the youth of Whitchurch - enabling them to have respect for themselves and others, teaching skills that will help them become more self-sufficient, providing a fun filled and safe environment to enjoy themselves whilst learning and above all giving them many opportunities to do things, and visit places, they would otherwise not be able to.

Since Nikki Farley took over as Scout leader many years ago, she has built up the troop from 10 - 15 Scouts to approximately 60 today. She has been able to do this with the support of a few like-minded leaders who, in addition to running scouts on two days a week, spend many hours of their spare time planning programmes, attending district events and running extra activities including weekend and summer camps. All this without any financial reward whatsoever.

These leaders each bring their various skills of engineering, creativity, science, sport, and much more, to plan weekly programmes that are fun as well as informative, useful and constructive. Many of the scouts enjoy themselves so much that they do not wish to ever leave and so become junior leaders instead. What more vindication can there be that the leaders are doing a worthwhile and valuable job and should be thanked accordingly.