



## Bicknoller Community First Responders

You may have seen a short announcement about this new initiative in Pumpings, or heard about it briefly at the Parish Conference. This newsletter tells you more about it.

Starting on 1<sup>st</sup> July, **Bicknoller Community First Responders**, a volunteer group, will provide a primary response service to the local community in the event of certain 999 Emergency calls. It will operate through, and as a part of, South West Ambulance Service NHS Trust.

The purpose of Community First Responders (CFRs) is to bring initial medical support to certain urgent cases, while an ambulance or paramedic vehicle is on its way. If a 999 call is made, the ambulance controller will decide whether CFR services are needed and, if so, alert the Duty Responder. Using his or her own transport, the Responder is typically able to start patient care within minutes of the call. For emergencies like heart attack, stroke and respiratory difficulties, this speed is critical. In rural areas such as ours, normal ambulance response times can be in excess of 20 minutes. With Responders based in the local community, a patient's chances of survival and successful recovery are greatly improved.

Volunteer CFR teams already exist in many other communities across the South West and the rest of the country.

The Bicknoller CFR team consists of 10 volunteers, all of whom have been trained in Basic Life Support, the use of oxygen and portable defibrillation equipment, and patient care. We receive on-going training to ensure that our skills are maintained. Our allocated area will be a 3 mile radius from the centre of Bicknoller village, thus including Crowcombe, Stogumber, Woolston, Sampford Brett, W. Quantoxhead and Williton.

We would like to draw your attention to two aspects of BCFR operation:

- In an emergency, ALWAYS call 999 and ask for the appropriate service. DO NOT CONTACT A FIRST RESPONDER DIRECT. The decision whether to send a First Responder will be taken by the Ambulance Service controllers.
- To help all emergency services including First Responders, please ensure that your house number or name is easily visible from the road, particularly at night. Critical time is lost if an emergency crew is unable to find the address of a patient needing urgent attention.

### The BCFR Team

Kees ter Braak  
Julian Anderson  
Chrissie Butler  
Stuart Dowding\*  
Susie Dowding\*  
Mary Hill  
Richard Hill  
Sue Ogden  
Marie Robinson  
Gary Sears

\* not in photo

