

Health Services in Emsworth – What we need

We have been hoping for a new community hospital for years, and I still believe that is what we should have. The trouble is the NHS is in such a financial mess that they tell me they have not got the money to go. But no final decisions have been taken - a review report is due to be discussed in public on 28th January when it is formally considered at the NHS Hampshire Board Meeting. I will continue to energetically campaign for our community hospital, working with Councillors and the local Residents Association.

The recent new build at the Queen Alexandra Hospital is of course a massive investment quite close to us. But it is not always as easily accessible as it should be. For too many people there is no straight-forward bus journey and they instead have to change buses at Havant. I will continue to press for an easy to use 'hop on/hop off' bus service linking QA directly to Emsworth.

Not everyone should be having to go to QA which is already under pressure from the range of cases it is seeing. There are some really

valuable out-patient services which we need much closer to home. We need more facilities for X-rays locally for example. The same goes for blood testing and a range of diagnostics and therapies which do not need a bed overnight. We need to expand these important services, regardless of what happens with the community hospital.

Above all however, we need beds for some overnight care in Emsworth. There are some at the Havant War Memorial Hospital but it is hard to ensure single sex wards there, and it does need extra investment if it is to keep going for a lot longer. There is also a need for beds for older people with mental health problems such as Alzheimer's. The NHS must find new beds for these services in either the Emsworth Victoria Cottage Hospital or elsewhere in Emsworth.

I will be attending the Emsworth Residents Association AGM on Monday, 25th January. NHS representatives have also been invited to attend and will be able to give us all an update then.

David Willetts MP

Emsworth's First Health Show - 23 January 2010

The people of Emsworth will be able to find out how they can enjoy better health and prevent illness at the first Emsworth Live Well Health Show. Local chiropractor, Sheila Stakim, has organised this event because she knows that many people are suffering unnecessarily with health problems, simply because they do not know who can help them. This is a great opportunity for everyone to come and find out what is available.

We are extremely fortunate to have a wide range of health professionals working in our town. Many of them will be at the Show and will be happy to give advice on matters such as healthy eating, exercise and how to stay well. If you have a health problem, which is not getting better, come and see if anyone can help you. The Show is being held in The Pastoral Centre, The Square, Emsworth on 23 January from 10am to 4pm. Admission is free.

For more information, please contact Sheila Stakim at Emsworth Chiropractic Clinic 27 North Street, Tel: 01243 373721.

The continuing saga of Oak Park Hospital

The recent Ems Valley Gazette headline and article entitled "Hospital blow hits Emsworth" made worrying reading with its implication that plans for the Oak Park Community Hospital appear to be scrapped for NHS budgetary reasons. Let's stop this half-truth before it becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy. The actual situation is that the final decision not to proceed with Oak Park has not been reached as yet, because there is no costed alternative - and no timescale for its provision.

It is staggering that such a long-promised and planned project could be considered for cancellation. The "unaffordable" £75M (£3M a year over 25 years) estimated cost of Oak Park represents a mere 0.171% of the £1.758B PCT annual budget. The PCT is currently considering its options - hopefully providing an opportunity for local people to give their feedback. It will be interesting to see the NHS establish the cost of alternative provision before binning Oak Park. The financial considerations surely cannot take precedence over the PCT's obligation to meet the needs of the population it serves. The turnaround of the long-planned project in the space of just a few weeks looks like an opportunistic financial short-term measure.

The bottom line is we mustn't give up fighting for the Community Hospital we have for so long been promised. Reflecting what we know to be the strongest local feelings, the ERA's Tony Lowes continues to use his encyclopaedic knowledge to brief Emsworth's Councillors who are working to ensure the decision to cancel the Oak Park project is not made without full local consultation and a costed, full and undiluted alternative identified.

Watch this space!

Lorraine Clode

A Note from Emsworth Surgery

The Emsworth Surgery has been looking to expand services and improve our facilities for many years. It is widely known that we were keen to develop the site of the Victoria Cottage Hospital but unfortunately this is unlikely to be available to us for use in the foreseeable future as a result of the possible postponement of the Oak Park development in Havant.

We have been in discussion with Linden Homes to plan a larger branch surgery on the site of the Hampshire Farm development at the top of New Brighton Road. This would replace our current small branch in the centre of Westbourne.

Our plans currently, which are still in their infancy as planning permission is still pending on the site, would be to build a custom surgery, in which we would hope to attract other complementary health professionals. We also plan to negotiate with the Primary Care Trust regarding bases for the district nurses, health visitors and other allied health professionals.

We would always plan to keep a substantial surgery in the centre of Emsworth and would plan to move much of our administration work to the new branch surgery. We will endeavour to provide as much car parking as possible for the new surgery but feel that it is a sensible site as it is already on the bus route and is more central to our northern catchment area.

Linden Homes have been extremely forward in their approach to our requirements and we support their plans to convert the easterly section of the land to a public area and green walkway to allow access for residents from the centre of Westbourne.

Dr N Woodruff

Citizens' Panel asked to comment on a scandalous range of 'Hobson's Choice' options.

Whilst the furore over Oak Park continues Havant Citizens' Panel have been asked by NHS Hampshire to comment on two options for outpatient care.

The options are to add 'out-patients diagnostics and rapid assessment and treatment for older people' to either Havant Health Centre or the Oak Park Children's Centre. In either case they would gain space for clinical services by moving admin staff into nearby offices. From the viewpoint of Emsworth residents, the Havant Health centre is marginally more accessible but hardly worth a consultation.

This panel of residents have also been asked which of a range of Minor Injuries facilities they were likely to use. The facilities listed are: St Mary's Treatment Unit in Southsea or Petersfield Community Hospital or the Major A&E facilities at St Richard's in Chichester or Queen Alexander Hospital (QA) in Cosham.

All of which are undoubtedly fine facilities but the major A&E facilities are often very overloaded with major emergencies, additionally QA is very difficult for parking. All the others are at least 9 miles away from Emsworth. An unacceptably long way to go for a minor injury by car, let alone by public transport.

Richard Jannaway

Havant Borough Council Citizens' Panel is made up of 1,500 members of the public who tell HBC what they think about their services so that they can make improvements.

If you want to become part of this panel, you can apply through the HBC website at: <http://www.havant.gov.uk/havant-9195>

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