

COUNTY COUNCIL - GARTREE NEWS COMMUNITY HOSPITAL AXED

The Leicestershire County and Rutland Primary Care Trust Board met on Thursday 5th April and accepted the recommendations to axe the plans for a new £30m Community Hospital on the site of St. Luke's Hospital in Market Harborough.

I have arranged for a public meeting to be run by the Patient and Public Involvement Forum. The meeting will be held in the Methodist Church Hall on Northampton Road in Market Harborough (parking at rear) for 6pm on Friday 27th April. I urge as many people as possible to attend this meeting to which have been invited the Secretary of State for Health and Leicester West MP, Rt. Hon. Patricia Hewitt, the chief executive of the PCT, Catherine Griffiths, PCT board members and our local MP, Edward Garnier QC.

The Government's intentions are to bring healthcare services closer to local communities, so this decision is disgraceful after 9 years of waiting and countless false dawns. Plans for a new hospital had already been prepared for tenders, and would have involved moving the services from the Coventry Road Cottage Hospital up to the Leicester Road site. Now no new hospital is to be built, instead some refurbishing of the current Edwardian St Luke's accommodation is proposed and the Cottage Hospital will still be closed.

The news of the hospital plans being scrapped comes on the back of changes to the Out of Hours provision by local doctors and a lack of dentists offering NHS treatment to adults. Although we have fantastic support from our local GP practices, they are clearly not getting the necessary commissioning support from the new PCT, who state that financial pressures have forced a re-think.

What can you do? An e-petition has been launched on the Number 10 website (<http://petitions.pm.gov.uk/list/open?cat=557>), and search for "Market Harborough". There is also a paper petition in circulation widely across the district. If you are concerned about the healthcare deficit in south-east Leicestershire, please support the campaign by signing the petition and coming to the meeting on 27th April. I will be pleased to

raise points from anybody unable to go to the meeting.

ROADSIDE DUMPING

I investigated a report, over the Easter weekend, of rubbish dumped on Mere Road (Carlton Curlieu to Shangton). Mindless fly-tipping of packing materials, broken chairs and bedroom furniture in a gateway to a field have totally spoiled the view of the wonderful Leicestershire rolling hills and doing nothing for our environment.

Fly-tipping legislation states that it is the responsibility of the landowner to clear fly-tipping on their own land, but on publicly owned land, including roads and lay-bys, both the District Council and the Environment Agency have powers to tackle fly-tipping. On phoning the Environment Agency out of hours freephone, I was informed that the fly-tipping had to be major or hazardous and that on this occasion the problem should be reported to HDC when their offices re-opened after the Easter Bank Holiday period, which I did first thing on the Tuesday. Why is rubbish fly-tipped like this? Was it from a house clearance by somebody without the necessary permit for taking it to one of the Recycling and Household Waste sites?

I am perplexed that anybody would deliberately befoul our wonderful countryside by such a selfish act. What are your thoughts?

KIBWORTH SAFETY SCHEME

Parish and district councillors met as arranged on 28th March with the Highways engineers who proposed a number of modifications following their scheduled review of the scheme, comments received and the level of speed reductions already being achieved by the measures.

A report by the engineers will be in next month's *Chronicle* giving the details and timing of the modifications, which I'm sure will resolve some of the concerns raised with me over the last 5 months. I have asked for the changes to start being put in place by the end of May, with the remainder when staff are available during the summer.

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