



No.21 - 28 January 2017

WELCOME

Sometimes it seems like time has just vanished, and it must feel a little like that to our Red Line Warriors who have been through a hectic round of public meetings and events, probably hardly having time to draw breath. Now it is time to think, "where do we go from here?" This question is also relevant to all the new people who have joined, and I have come up with a few suggestions, which I hope will help.

In any campaign, with limited resources, strategy is very important. We have to evaluate and adopt the most effective proposals and ideas. So far this has worked well, and now there is a growing concern, not just locally, but nationally. Our task now is to mobilise and utilise the energies of new campaigners joining us. If you are one of those, then welcome into our ranks.

Material for future newsletters editor@sohs.co.uk by Thursday SOHS-Save Our Hospital Services (A non-party group whose aim is to campaign to protect our health services in North Devon)

What Can I Do Now?

With a number of new supporters joining through the many public meetings I thought that perhaps a practical article might be in order. It is a natural thing that having been aroused to want to do something, that the question of what? arises.

As SOHS is a collection of volunteers and has no central organisation, it has no defined training plan, or induction programme, so the newcomer might feel a little lost. To make matters worse the issue on which we are fighting sometimes seems complicated and confusing with acronyms abounding. Of course, it becomes clearer as time goes on, and there are many things you can be doing right now. Here's a few ideas, in no particular order. You won't be able to do them all, but you should be able to find something that suits you and enables you to get involved.

Finding Information

Redlines is our weekly (generally) magazine and contains useful articles. We try in Redlines to bring you encouragement, information and round up all the important points. For those who want to have a more immediate dialogue with other supporters, our Facebook page has lively content and you can quickly engage with others. The website is a repository of information.

Many documents are found in our downloads section. These include reports and information, publicity materials, and back copies of Redlines. The news section lists current items and generally any changes to the website are mentioned in the news pages. There is a link to the online calendar, in which SOHS events and other important events are listed.

Going to Meetings

A campaign meeting is held generally once a fortnight. This is open to all to attend, and the general business of SOHS is discussed. Anyone attending can contribute to the discussion, or even nominate items to be added to the agenda. Of course not everyone can attend meetings or wants to attend meetings, but if you are the type that likes to have a say in things then you will be made welcome.

There are also public meetings, not just the ones organised by SOHS, but meetings held by other groups. For some of these it is important to have a good representation and from time to time we will send out appeals for people to come to meetings and events. If you have registered for Redlines you will automatically get these appeals.

Writing

Some of our supporters are

Continued on page 3. >

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B • R • A • U • N • T • O • N

So many people turned up for a Save Our Hospital Services (SOHS) public meeting in the Parish Hall in Braunton on Friday night (January 13th) that the Rev. Robert Manning, Minister of Christchurch, kindly agreed to open his church for a parallel meeting. Both venues were filled, with over 400 residents attending.

"The amazing turnout shows just how shocked and angry people are about the probable loss of acute and other services at North Devon District Hospital in Barnstaple," said Liz Wood, organiser of the meeting. Both Ms Wood and Netti Pearson, an Ilfracombe Town Councillor and SOHS campaigner, were interviewed by BBC Spotlight television in the parish hall as residents were diverted to Christchurch.

"As the smallest acute service district hospital in Devon, NDDH is the most vulnerable to plans to concentrate services in this county," said Ms. Pearson. "As the

most remote acute service hospital in England, it is also by far the most needed."

The meetings were addressed by Sue Matthews, former sister at NDDH and RCN representative, Barnstaple Town Councillor Ian Williams, Ray Ashman, who has analysed the plans in detail for SOHS and Phillip Wearne, who was brought up in Braunton, as well as Ms. Pearson herself. They were chaired by two Braunton Parish Councillors, Gwen de Groot and Brad Bunyard.

Ray Ashman explained the likely impact on North Devon of the Sustainability and Transformation Plan (STP) currently being implemented by the Success Regime, which was put in charge of our health services in 2015. All acute services at NDDH - consultant-led maternity, neonatology, paediatrics, stroke - could be cut back or leave Barnstaple altogether, he said. The A&E service we currently have would be drastically impaired as a result.

Netti Pearson said that stroke victims, sick children, women with complications in labour, their babies, and others would die or be left seriously disabled as a result of having to travel to Exeter or Plymouth if these plans went ahead. She highlighted plans to cut a further 590 beds in Devon and hundreds of nurses' jobs.



Commenting on ITV News' interview earlier that evening with NDDH Medical Director George Thomson, who stressed that no decision had been made, Phillip Wearne stated: "Specifically that is true. Generally it is not. The parameters and confines within which this review is taking place means that cuts and cutbacks are inevitable."

There was palpable anger in the audience. "It's our NHS not theirs!" one member of the audience shouted, saying that, having paid for it all her life, she could now see that it might not be there when she most needed it.

Former Braunton Councillor, Marguerite Shapland remembered that in 2002 North Devon had had to fight off a takeover of NDDH by the Royal Devon and Exeter (RD&E) hospital, and that Angela Pedder, formerly CEO of RD&E, had said that the takeover would have reduced NDDH to a mere community hospital. Angela Pedder is now STP Lead for Devon.

Report from Liz

Diary Dates

Visit the diary page on the website for more dates, details and maps.

Wednesday 8 February 19.00 SOHS campaign meeting, The Castle Centre. Castle Street, Barnstaple EX31 1DR

4 March 2017 Health Campaigns Together
IT'S OUR NHS DEMONSTRATION, London, Coach tickets: £15, DEPOSIT £5. Available at SOHS Devon meetings and events or contact Dave Tel: 07887 650671. Coach pick-up points: 6.00am Ilfracombe: Petrol Garage, High Street, 6.15am Braunton: Car Park next to SQ Bar, 6.25am Barnstaple: Old Town Station, North Walk, 6.50am Bideford: Kingsley Statue, 7.40am South Molton: The Square.

Don't forget to send us your dates to include in the diary. If people don't know, they won't attend

Continued from Page 1

fantastic and diligent writers. There are many people who can be sent an email or a letter, and there is generally a lively correspondence in the local newspapers. It helps the campaign when you write to local politicians expressing your views and making your opinion clear, although do remember to keep the letter polite, as this is more effective. Again, from time to time, there will be appeals for people to write addressing some particular issue. These are sent out to all those on our email list.

Prefer Talking?

Writing is not for everyone, but there are opportunities to express an opinion on local radio on phone-ins. These are perhaps more spur-of-the-moment, and less easy to co-ordinate, but can be a very effective means of communicating and engaging others. You might also be able to make a few phone calls to friends and tell them about the situation, or invite them to an event.

Petitions

From time to time there are petitions that need signing. These usually appear on the website.

Distributing Leaflets

We have been a little erratic on this, but now there are a number of leaflets available on the SOHS website. Certain SOHS members will also hold a stock of them. You can also download and print your own copies. Some of these are designed so that even timid people can distribute them. For example the new mini-booklet is a handy size and can be carried in a pocket or handbag, and can easily be left in carefully selected places where people might pick them up and read them. Perhaps leaving one on train or a bus, or on a seat in a waiting room would be easy to do. There are probably many places where they could be left, without littering or causing a nuisance. Of course, if you are bolder, you can hand out the leaflet to someone, and it is intended to produce a number of different types of leaflets that will suit various situations.

Displaying Posters

We must have around ten or so general posters now, as well as posters for specific events. Please display them in your own home, but also remember that there are many places they can be displayed. There

are community notice boards for example (please ensure you have permission), and also some shops will display posters free of charge if they are asked. It would be great to see posters going up all over the area. The posters reinforce other aspects of the campaign, and are a very important tool.

Join the Champions

We have been working towards setting up a Champion in every locality, although we are not fully populated yet. The idea is that a Champion will be joined by others in their community so that they can work on promoting the campaign locally. To find out if you have a champion in your area, email champions@sohs.org.uk. Linda has worked very hard on this project and will be encouraged if more people join in. We are stronger working together, and each community may have different needs and require a different approach. The champions might work together on distributing publicity, organise a coffee morning or a public meeting, or perhaps just be available at a certain time for local people to ask questions.

Local Events

That brings me to local events. I am using the word local to distinguish from larger events that are likely to involve all supporters. An event does not need to be large to be effective. If one person tells two and they each tell two, in ten steps over 1000 people will be informed. So perhaps you could consider hosting a simple event, a coffee morning, for example. Just invite a few friends around for coffee and have a few leaflets around. You could also show the SOHS video or something similar. It doesn't need special equipment, you could put it on a tablet or laptop computer. If you wanted a more formal style meeting, then this would also be possible, and I'll come onto that under "public meetings". What about a mums and toddlers group, for a few parents to meet up? Perhaps you could persuade a local meeting such as a WI or committee meeting to allow you to give a short address. If you were more adventurous, then perhaps a musical event could be arranged. Of course there are lots of other things you could do, and at the risk of singling any out, I must say Santa's sleigh must rate among the

more imaginative. Even a car boot sale or similar event could be an opportunity for a display of material or distribution of leaflets.

Public Meetings

SOHS has held a number of successful public meetings, and these have all been very well attended. The format is to have a speaker to present the case, then invite and answer questions. There is a certain amount of organisation needed, but there are more experienced members of SOHS who can help with this. If you have not had a public meeting in the area you live or work, you might want to consider working with others to organise one. The public meeting might be extended into other areas such as for colleges, schools, or in businesses. The format is simply to present the facts, the case is easily made and the support is enormous.

Wear it!

This is something anyone can do. Simply choose to wear something in support of the campaign. It might be something like an SOHS badge or t-shirt. These are usually available at meetings and will be added to the website shortly. It could also be something red that you wear on a regular basis. A red tie or scarf, for example. In time people will ask, why do you always wear red? For the more technical minded, maybe an SOHS screen saver or something similar could be a means of subtle promotion. Even a sticker on your brief case or school bag, is a means of getting a message across.

Social Networking

We have already mentioned Facebook, but there are many other online possibilities for networking. What about blogging? Maybe participating in a forum or local discussion website would present opportunities to put the facts.



Santa came to help. One of the ways the SOHS campaign was promoted

PUBLICITY

Having been hard at work producing new materials, and being aware that they are not always easy to find, I want to introduce you to three ways of spreading the SOHS campaign message.

READING THIS
BOOKLET
COULD SAVE
THE LIFE OF
SOMEONE YOU LOVE

Low cost booklet

This booklet is designed for mass distribution and is very inexpensive to produce. As it is only a very small size, about the size of a credit card, the booklet can be carried in a pocket or handbag. It can easily be left in places where people would pick it up and look at the simple message. It is intended that the booklet is a teaser to get people to look at the website and find out more. It is also useful for presenting the case one-to-one.

If you would like a sample copy email your postal address to webmaster@sohs.org.uk. Enquire if you need a quantity to distribute.

As with the Health Scare leaflet, if enough people want to use them it might be possible to get a larger quantity printed.



Video

A video presenting the facts from the STP plan can be viewed on Vimeo and Dailymotion. The Vimeo version is a "small" copy which is in a lower quality and is suitable for sharing on mobile devices and social media. The high quality version is on Dailymotion and this is suitable for desktop computers or for showing at public meetings. Please share this video. To make it easier I have added shortlinks as follows:

Small version www.sohs.org.uk/1

HD Version www.sohs.org.uk/2

How easy is that! Just a forward slash and then 1 or 2 after the usual SOHS web address.

The video can also be supplied on a CD if you need it in this format. Please enquire. You can also download it from the SOHS website.

Health
Scare

The NHS
in North
Devon
is UNDER
ATTACK!



Health Scare Leaflet

At the moment this three-fold leaflet is only available as single sample copies. If enough people are interested in using it, then a print order could be placed. You can download and print off copies from the SOHS website (choose the publicity option from the menu), or email to get a sample copy sent to you (webmaster@sohs.org.uk)

The leaflet is designed to be used for presenting the campaign and is suitable for a cross-section audience. The inside of the leaflet can be used as a poster or on a notice board.

Coach to London

(Note: Amended details)

IT'S OUR NHS DEMONSTRATION,
Health Campaigns Together Dem-
onstration 4 March
COACH TICKETS £15 DEPOSIT £5
Available at SOHS Devon meetings,
Public meetings, Benefit events
Contact Dave Tel: 07887 650671
Coach Pick-up points:
Ilfracombe: Petrol Garage, High Street,
6.00am
Braunton: Car Park next to SQ Bar,
6.15am
Barnstaple: Old Town Station, North
Walk, 6.25am
Bideford : Kingsley Statue, 6.50am
South Molton: The Square, 7.40am

Labouring the Point

A senior NHS official has sug-
gested women in labour could
safely travel four hours without
increased risk to their babies.
[www.newsandstar.co.uk/news/NHS-
chief-Women-in-labour-can-safely-
travel-four-hours-without-risk-
to-their-baby-85bd2f99-62af-4adc-
9425-93708b3b65f7-ds](http://www.newsandstar.co.uk/news/NHS-chief-Women-in-labour-can-safely-travel-four-hours-without-risk-to-their-baby-85bd2f99-62af-4adc-9425-93708b3b65f7-ds)
We have to fight these people!
PLEASE support the campaign in
Cumbria and sign the petition
below which closes on 10 Febru-
ary.
[www.change.org/p/vote-of-no-
confidence-in-the-success-regime-
in-cumbria?](http://www.change.org/p/vote-of-no-confidence-in-the-success-regime-in-cumbria?)

Research

Barbara asks: How many staff are there in the stroke unit at RDE and Plymouth? Have they been built up for a reason? NDDH's acute stroke unit is at risk...why bother going to an effort recruiting staff when you know that it is important to run it down in order to say that it is not viable? Not safe? Of course you could move consultants if there are loads in Exeter. Does anyone know about the staffing levels?

Any info should be sent to admin@sohs.org.uk or via Facebook.

Continued from Page 3

Special skills

We have mentioned in past Redlines some of the specialised skills that would be helpful to SOHS, so I am not going to go through the list again. However if you have skills, why not offer them to the group?

Use your wheels

Obviously a car-sticker is a way to promote the campaign, but there are better, and more effective ways. Some years ago we used our van very effectively as a promotional tool. We made a number of posters which were attached to the van (after parking) with strong magnets. By parking the vehicle strategically in chosen car parks, a lot of people saw the message. It is not even necessary to man the vehicle, but it is important to ensure it is parked legally, and that the posters are not distasteful or excessive. As with all these things, an "in-your-face" approach tends to be ineffective, whereas subtle and professional-like works well.

Fund-raising

Raising funds is a very important part of the campaign, and we need money to pay for printing leaflets and things like insurance expenses. It may not have occurred to supporters that fund raising can actually also be a great promotional tool. You could include a small SOHS logo on your craft item that you have made and are selling for fundraising purposes. You should check your plans with the committee before using the logo in this way, to ensure standards are met. You might also consider selling an item and gifting the proceeds to SOHS. A sale of work can also be a means of promoting SOHS and even if you were to sell items on a stall at a car boot sale, you can put some leaflets on the table or with the items you sell.

We have been rather



behind with fund-raising, just because our attention has been elsewhere, but it would be great if some of our newer supporters were to make this their niche.

Administrators

Wow this sounds boring! Maybe so, but as SOHS expands the administrators facilitate the growth. Someone needs to keep track of the meetings, book halls, answer questions sent in by email and deal with the dozens of other things that are happening. If you are a good administrator, there is a role for you.

Sponsorship

Sponsorship is another subtle way of raising awareness of our campaign. As you ask people to sponsor you, it gives an opportunity to speak about why you are doing the event. Remember SOHS is not a registered charity, so it should not be presented that you are raising funds for charity. Perhaps you could cycle to every hospital in North Devon. I'm still hoping for a sponsored bed push. What about a mums and toddlers walk to draw attention to the changes in child care and support? I'm not quite sure how that would work, but someone can come up with a plan, I'm certain.

Public Events

Yes, of course we need people on the marches and rallies carrying banners and placards. This is the more exciting front face of the campaign. Details of the events appear on the website and in Redlines.

This is not an exhaustive list, and there may be lots of other things you can think of. We welcome people to submit new ideas, but remember that in order to carry out all the suggestions we need a lot of workers, more bodies to carry them all out. It always seems a good place to start with "I could" rather than "you could". Not all of us can give out leaflets, speak at public meetings, or even talk to a friend about the campaign, but this list should give everyone an idea of something they can do, and if not, contact us and we can make further suggestions.

What really matters is this. If we don't do something, then the battle could be lost, but if every one of us does our best, and plays our part, then surely we will succeed.

Health Views on the Radio. Your input needed

Anyone who has comments or questions on, or experiences of, the NHS, 111, 999, GPs etc, for the panel on a live political NHS debate programme on Mon 6 February in London, during the day, can email details to **Sarah Stock** on fighting4lifelincolnshire@outlook.com including your name and contact details. Let's get our voices heard! It is to be a debate with an interesting panel of political people making decisions about our health care.

There also appears to be a different programme to the one above: *Join us in the BBC Radio Theatre in London on 8th February 2017!*

BBC Radio 4's **Inside Health** is hosting a special debate on the current state of the NHS. **Dr Mark Porter** and guests discuss what needs to give.

The last few months have seen the service creaking under unprecedented demand, and there is likely to be worse to come. Something needs to give. Is it simply a matter of more resources, or do we also need to change our expectations of what the NHS provides? Is rationalisation and rationing the way forward?

Mark is to discuss the issues with a panel including regular contributor **Margaret McCartney GP**, **Claire Marx**, president of the Royal College of Surgeons, and **Chris Hopson**, chief executive of NHS Providers.

Tickets can be requested at www.bbc.co.uk/showsandtours/shows/inside_health_8feb17 You can submit a question for the panel by emailing InsideHealth@bbc.co.uk or via the *Inside Health* programme page.