



No.26 - 4 March 2017

## WELCOME

When putting together Redlines it is always my aim to keep to a balanced and reasoned view-point, and not to present too many extreme articles. Yet it becomes very difficult in the face of the unrelenting stupidity and duplicity. Such a case is Holsworthy Hospital, featured in our main article.

At least the news of the march in London has been good and the message Save Our NHS has been echoing clearly. The strength of support is growing daily, and it needs to, with pressure kept up from all sides. An astonishing number of marchers, including our own thin red line! As SOHS consists of many people of differing outlook, it means that all kinds of things are going on all the time: leafleting, writing letters, speaking, public events, fundraising and so on.

Again we welcome some new subscribers, thanks for joining us. Don't forget all the past editions of Redlines are available on the website if you want to catch up with the background to the campaign.

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)

# Hospital Beds Lost!

## Proves The Powers That Be Are Liars

### Massive Protests at Holsworthy

The SOHS case that The Powers That Be are lying has been proven spectacularly this week. Remember they have been telling public meetings and the press that no changes are being made until after consultation. This is a lie, and is part of a deliberate and cynical deception concocted by heartless and mercenary people who have absolutely no care about the people of our community. They will stop at nothing to inflict their misery on the public.

Fortunately SOHS has been trumpeting this message loudly and clearly, and we would urge all those who have yet to spring

into action to get involved immediately. I cannot emphasise strongly enough how urgent this is. If you want to protect your loved ones, your family, your own health, you cannot afford to sit idly by. The campaign must be stepped up. The lying, deceit and treachery must be exposed. I will suggest ways later in this article. First we must turn our attention to Holsworthy.

Holsworthy Hospital currently has 16 community beds. It used to be 24, but was cut down, although the population is increasing in size. According to an

*Continued on next page*

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announcement by NEW CCG these beds are being “temporarily” shut down. The announcement was entirely unexpected and Alison Diamond made an extraordinary apology for not informing stakeholders such as the mayor and council who, we understand, learned about it via leaks to the local media.

This is a shocking act which has been perpetrated by evil people, and the fact that public officials have been deliberately deceived and misled shows the extent to which these dreadful people will go to satisfy their puppetmasters.

We have heard of this type of “temporary” closure before. It is a euphemism for permanent. The scheme of things is such that they are “temporarily” closed, the word being bandied as a sop, only for the closure to be quietly made permanent when nobody is looking. They have used this method time and time again. The initial closure brings protests which are deflected with the words, “but it is only temporary”, then quietly temporary is made permanent and the goal is achieved.

Over the last four years Devon has lost more than one third of its hospital beds.

Protests have already been started at Holsworthy, although as the deed was done at short notice it has made campaigning more difficult to organise and less effective. Perhaps that explains why it was all kept secret.

One of the reasons being given for the closure is lack of staff. The staff shortage is engineered as has been done many times previously. They are following a tried and tested plan here. The employed staff are replaced by bank staff. Duty rosters are made more difficult. Budgets are invoked. Tasks are left undone. Then everything hits a “crisis” and urgent changes have to be made. This is classic crisis engineering, used throughout the world to force through unpopular changes. “We



couldn't do anything about it, there was a crisis...”

**Sorry, this patient has seen through your deceptive bitter pill.**

This very same management, who “cannot” manage to recruit staff, and don't have the funds to do anything else, are the same people who are telling us that buying in commercial care in the community will save money and work better.

Now here is the killer blow that explains why the closure of Holsworthy beds was rushed through. New rules about bed closures are being introduced on 1st April. These rules will mean more consultation and make it harder to arbitrarily close facilities. Is it a coincidence the Holsworthy beds are being withdrawn on 31 March? I'd say there is more chance the moon is made of green cheese than that this is a coincidence.

Holsworthy is not the only place where beds are being lost in Devon. At the NEW CCG board meeting Devon lost 71 more community hospital beds Thursday afternoon as all beds at four more community hospitals are being eliminated (Whipton in Exeter, Honiton, Seaton and Okehampton). Okehampton's case is particularly tragic and appalling. Even as *their* beds were removed they were told they would still have Holsworthy for beds. Yet more lies.

What can you do? There are lots of things, some of them the

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## Diary Dates

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

**Monday 6 March** 10.00am Alison Diamond will present Future Provision of Acute Services in North Devon. Cedars Suite 1, Cedars Inn, Bickington Road, Sticklepath, Barnstaple EX31 2HE. Public Welcome.

**Wednesday 15 March** 19.00 SOHS Bideford Public Meeting, Bideford College.

**Thursday 16 March** 19.00 SOHS Torrington Public Meeting, Torrington School Drama Hall.

**Tuesday 21 March** 19.00 SOHS Public Meeting, Grosvenor Church, Barnstaple EX32 8PB

**Thursday 23 March** 19.00 SOHS Public Meeting, Christ Church, Bear Street, Barnstaple EX32 7BU

**Saturday 1 April** *You Can't Fool Us* 10.00am Red Lines at the Community Hospitals and 1.00pm at North Devon District Hospital.

**STP/CCG Acute Services Review** discussion events. Register to guarantee a place. 01392 267642

**Monday 6 March** 10.30 – 12.30 New Hall, Tiverton EX16 6QP

**Tuesday 7 March** 14.30 – 16.30 The Great Hall, Lantern Centre, Ilfracombe EX34 9QB

**Wednesday 8 March** 18.00 – 20.00 Stucley Dining Hall, Bideford College, Bideford EX39 3AR

**Thursday 9 March** 16.00 – 18.00 Community College, Main Hall, Westville Building, Kingsbridge TQ7 1PL00

**Monday 13 March** 18.00 – 20.00 The Canteen, The King's School, Ottery St Mary EX11 1RA

**Friday 17 March** 11.30 – 13.30 Stanbury Hall, Petroc, North Devon Campus, Barnstaple EX31 2BQ

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

same things we have been saying throughout our campaign, however first a VERY important opportunity you will not want to miss.

**VITAL MEETING**

Alison Diamond, Chief Executive of North Devon Healthcare Trust will be making her **Future Provision of Acute Services in North Devon** presentation to the Executive of North Devon Council in public on Monday March 6 at 10am.

It will be at Cedars Inn to accommodate all the public who want to attend. We encourage those who can to do so. **Cedars Suite 1, Cedars Inn, Bickington Road, Sticklepath, Barnstaple EX31 2HE** (off Roundswell roundabout).

Get along to that meeting if you can. Get all your friends there. Wouldn't it be great if the meeting was packed to capacity and overflowing? We need to ensure that Ms Diamond and others are aware of the public anger and dismay at their desperate proposals.

If you can't get in, take banners, wear red, protest outside. The more protests that are made the more effective the campaign is. We know that our campaign is having some effect. Let's turn the heat up.

**Other Public Meetings**

There are other public meetings (see diary) that are being addressed by the STP with Alison Diamond and Staff. Let's repeat the protests and make sure they are getting the message loud and clear.

They claim they want to hear public opinion, but as so far they seem to be singularly deaf to our complaints, let's ramp up the volume.

Let's ask the awkward questions and punch through their carefully prepared words and statements. Remember every oily word will have been carefully screened for its effect on the public. They will be mouthing, no changes, more consultation, we are listening.

Every oily word is part of a potion to lull us into false security. These are witch doctors, attempting to cast a magic spell.

**HERE IS PROBABLY THE MOST IMPORTANT THING YOU CAN DO**

Tell others and ask them to join in the campaign. The people at work, the people on the bus, shopkeepers, people on social media, the guys down the pub or the gym, the mums at the baby club: they all need to know. The enemy of our campaign is inertia. Someone else will do it... I was going to do it... Do IT! Do it now. Get involved and get others involved. Your action might just save someone's life.

**Sign the Petition**

Petition signing alone may not have much effect, but the Holsworthy petition sprang from a handful of signatories to hundreds within a couple of hours. You can sign here (links to change.org):

<http://tinyurl.com/h6oetk9>

**Get Writing**

Write to MPs, and visit them in their surgeries. Not just the local ones, but write to people in government. Teresa May, Jeremy Hunt, anyone who will listen, and anyone who won't listen.

Write to newspapers, ring phone-ins, use every possible method to get people involved and to put your point across. TPTB want your

views, don't disappoint them.

**Publicity**

Don't forget to display posters and, if you can, make banners. There are lots of posters that are available on our website, and you can download and print them yourself. If you want quantities for distribution around your area then contact us.

**Get involved**

Engage with us. Read Redlines. We work hard to bring you the latest news and ideas without it being too complicated. You can join in discussions on Facebook or come along to our campaign meetings.

There are lots of other things you can do, but I am not going through them all as I have covered many of them in previous issues.

Finally, keep up with what is happening. We need to be better informed than TPTB. We want to be at least one step ahead. Here are links to some news articles to get you going:

February 25, 2017 Paignton Hospital closure protest (news) <http://tinyurl.com/z6reb74>

Torbay hospital closures (news) <http://tinyurl.com/jhocm5k> (petition) <http://tinyurl.com/j6rh549>

Local Press Reports <http://tinyurl.com/jxq4fov> <http://tinyurl.com/jr2h8om> <http://tinyurl.com/hqld97q>

*Stephen, with additional material from Irene*

**Publicity Materials on our Website**

Please use them. Email if you need printed copies



# Whose NHS? Our NHS!

This is the text of Phillip's speech at the London rally. It was slightly modified when presented.

Fellow defenders of the NHS – I am here today on behalf of Save Our Hospital Services Devon and in particular from the remotest, poorest part of that county, North Devon. Like most of you, we face massive cuts in services, staff and beds.

Unlike many of you we have no alternatives if they make those cuts. For us the defence of all our hospital services at North Devon District Hospital in Barnstaple is literally a matter of life and death. Our hospital in Barnstaple North Devon is the most remote acute service hospital in mainland England.

In our scattered communities, local hospitals are vital. Yet in the past two days we have lost all inpatient services and 93 beds in four individual community hospitals in Seaton, Honiton, Exeter and Holsworthy.

Eight months ago a group of us came together in North Devon to form Save our Hospital Services. Today it is no exaggeration to say that we are a mass movement in the whole of Devon.

The Success Regime management consultants parachuted into Devon last year and, paid massive six-figure salaries to cut our services, said there were no "red lines." Any service could go. So last August we formed a red line of people around our hospital in Barnstaple. Red clothes, red placards, red ribbon. A Red Line to say *yes* to protecting what we have, *no* to what you are planning.

**In October** we put nearly 5000 people on the streets of Barnstaple. **In December** we got a unanimous vote through our County Council to halt the STP in Devon. **By February** we had put so much pressure on our two Conservative MPs that they got a private meeting with Jeremy Hunt.

Today we are here – in force, in red, a red line of people from Devon in central London.



So I have a message for you colleagues. If you haven't done it already – you can do what we have done. We learned from fellow campaigners in Banbury, West Cumbria and Shropshire. And we learned on the job.

And colleagues the main thing we have learned is that in an age when they seek to slice and dice and divide and rule us by geography, race, religion, gender, age and income **on this issue they cannot do that.**

This campaign, this movement, this struggle is everyone's. In defending the NHS, in reclaiming it as ours, we are defending the last institution in Britain seeking to uphold the NHS's founding principle – that

provision should be based on need not money.

This country has more than enough money for a properly-funded NHS – and you know, we all know – this country needs nothing more urgently than a properly-funded NHS.

So to close, I have **three messages:**

**I have a message** for those seeking to cut our hospital and health services in Devon. Those services will be defended. North Devon District Hospital in Barnstaple will be defended. It will be defended by its staff – some of them here with us today – from inside. It will be defended by us from outside, on our streets and in our council chambers. And it will be defended in the courts if necessary.

**I have a message** for our wonderful NHS staff back home in Devon. Those of you on duty today, those of you who could not travel today, those doing what you do best, caring for others, today: **Please know you were represented here today.** Your voice was heard here in Central London just yards from the Department of Health down there and NHS England over there.

**And finally I have a message** for the people of Devon back home. You have risen up, you have turned out, you have spoken out. You have forced your councillors and MPs to take positions they never wanted to, say things they never intended to, answer questions they never like to. Keep it up. Because it really is your NHS. You know that. We know that. Let them know that.

WHOSE NHS? *Our NHS!*

WHOSE NHS? *Our NHS!*

WHOSE NHS? *Our NHS!*

## March Reports News Links

Evening Standard:

<http://tinyurl.com/z8utwoa>  
BBC

[www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-39166247](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-39166247)

The Independent

<http://tinyurl.com/j22e9tc>  
ITV

<http://tinyurl.com/hsdv89d>  
The Sun

<http://tinyurl.com/hab3wfv>

Daily Mail (lots of pics.)

<http://tinyurl.com/hj3qfv8>

The Guardian (lots of words)

<http://tinyurl.com/j79kwfh>

## More About Hospital Bed Closures

Although TPTB have been trying to hoodwink people into believing that nothing is happening yet, behind the scenes a great deal is going on. A statement appeared on the NHS Torbay and South Devon website on 6 February from Liz Davenport (Chief Operating Officer).

I won't quote all the entire statement, but you can read it on the NHS website here:

<http://tinyurl.com/zhbs2nk>

There are some parts of the statement that are particularly interesting, however.

*We now believe that the time is right to plan to close 32 acute beds... Although we have now started planning for the safe closure of Dartmouth, Ashburton, Bovey Tracey and Paignton community hospitals, no dates have yet been set for these closures.*

Once again, it can be seen that, whilst reassurances are given that plans have not been made, it is quite clear that plans *have* been made, and are quietly being carried out behind the scenes.

Reference is made to "care in the community", the unproven plan that outsources care to private commercial contractors. This is being trialed in the Torbay area and is proving to be very unpopular and poor. Contractors often turn up late or not at all, and many of them lack even basic care skills.

Remember this is for the flagship plan of the STP that is supposed to save the NHS money, although nobody ever explains how private contractors can afford to provide at a lower cost a service that the NHS is struggling to provide. Even a fool can see the sums don't add up.

## Statement from Peter Heaton-Jones

*This is a statement which appears on the MPs website*

Northern Devon's two Members of Parliament have today joined forces and met the Health Secretary to raise serious concerns about the future of services at North Devon District Hospital.

Peter Heaton-Jones MP (North Devon) and Geoffrey Cox QC MP (Torrige & West Devon) met Jeremy Hunt and senior officials at the Department of Health. They arranged the meeting to coincide with the current review of Devon's health services under the Sustainability & Transformation Plan and Success Regime processes. Although no proposals have yet been made, it is known that the accident & emergency, maternity and stroke departments in Barnstaple are part of the county-wide review.

Peter Heaton-Jones MP said, "We made very clear to Jeremy Hunt that there is a great deal of concern across Northern Devon about any possibility of reduced services in Barnstaple. I told the Health Secretary that the long distance to alternative hospitals means that any loss of the A & E service in particular would be unacceptable.

"We asked unashamedly for North Devon District Hospital to be treated as a special case, not merely for a national formula to be applied. The Health Secretary gave us that assurance. He stressed that the process is being led by local clinicians and NHS managers. However we wanted to ensure that Mr Hunt was in no doubt about the strength of feeling across the area, and told him we are determined to fight on, with the community, to safeguard local services".

Geoffrey Cox QC MP said, "Peter Heaton Jones and I have made it powerfully clear to the Secretary of State that the removal of services such as A&E from Barnstaple is unacceptable and that denuding all local community hospitals of their beds is equally disturbing.

"We held a long and detailed discussion of the process of change in health services in North Devon and stressed the imperative need to treat a rural general hospital and its dependent communities differently from those of major population centres."

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Comment from the Editor: Some of our SOHS members are not convinced that Mr Jones and Mr Cox are doing as much as they claim. It is not appropriate to make a debate here, but I am sure some of you will take to Facebook to express your views.

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## Lots of Petitions to sign

New petitions for signing:

<http://tinyurl.com/jqs412j>  
<http://tinyurl.com/zp4unap>  
<http://tinyurl.com/j5z1j5x>  
<http://tinyurl.com/j8rhafn>  
<http://tinyurl.com/j29prra>  
<http://tinyurl.com/hx8rf8c>  
<http://tinyurl.com/zlctc8j>  
<http://tinyurl.com/hljw7j4>

## What Are TinyURLs?

You may notice that we have used short website links. This is to save space and make things easier for those who can't click the link or copy and paste, but have to type them in. Some of the website links are very long when written in full. The links are safe to use, and there is no cost or advertising annoyance.

# Save Our NHS



A strong contingent of SOHS Devon supporters joined thousands on the march to Parliament Square. The march was organised by Health Campaigns Together and was to draw attention to the desperate plight of the NHS which is on life support as it is being strangled to make way for profit-making concerns to take over.

First reports indicate that the crowd has been estimated at 250,000, although accurate figures are impossible.

People came from far and wide, from the north, the south, the east and the west. Some had made long and difficult journeys and must have started out in the early hours. It was heartening to see that ordinary people care so much.

The march was so long that the front contingent had arrived before the back of the march had left.

Phillip spoke at the event, and the text is given elsewhere. Of course, there were many other speakers including Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn. Although the march was supported well by the Labour party, there were people of many different political persuasions, joining together in an effort to protect our NHS.

Jeremy Hunt was noticeably absent, as were our own local MPs. The medical profession was well represented, as were the unions, but the majority of people were ordinary people concerned about the future of health care. All ages were represented with some very young, and some older. There were complete families who had all decided to join in.

Marchers were imaginatively dressed, with a huge array of banners and posters on display. Perhaps my favourite was the one that said, "The Blood on my Hands Will Wash Off". A message that TPTB need to take to heart. This fight is not about a few figures on paper, it is about real people and real lives.

The march is thought to be one of the biggest NHS rallies in history,

*From the Health Campaigns Together Website:*

Our National Health Service is at breaking point.

On the backdrop of continued cuts and closures, private companies seek to gain even more of a foothold within the NHS.

Continued pay restraint has seen the value of NHS staff salaries reduce by 14% since 2010 and there are now 25,000 nursing and 3,500 midwifery vacancies in NHS England alone.

Theresa May's demands for yet more austerity in the NHS represent a real risk to the safety of patients and the service. The Government's latest Sustainability and Transformation Plans (STPs) are in reality just a smokescreen for further cuts and are its latest instrument of privatisation.

The NHS is the single greatest achievement of working class people in Britain. We cannot allow it to be undermined and ultimately destroyed. We must march together, sending a clear message to the government; "the NHS will last as long as there are folk with the faith to fight for it."

*There are many other pictures. I'll try to get some on our website shortly, meanwhile there is a selection on Facebook*