

Northampton Borough Council Northampton Pensioners' Forum

Thursday, 18 September 2014

Present: Cllr Oldham (Chair), Roger Rumsey (RR, Community co-chair), Ann Timson (AT, Independent), Tony Mallard (TM, NFRA&ERA), Brian Nichols (BN, Independent), Jillian Powell (JP, on behalf of Derry Miller Age UK), Veronica Male (VM, Tollers Solicitors), Jean Forrest Smith (JFS, Independent), Jean Anderton (JA, Independent), Harry Tuttle (HT, Northampton Pensioners Voice), Hazel Tuttle (HT, Northampton Pensioners Voice), John Rawlings (JR, Northampton Quakers), D. J. Hewitt (DH, Independent), Alice Morgan (AM, NBC)*

Guests: Gill Shadbolt (GS, Care and Repair), Chris Pallot (CP, NGH).

*Took minutes.

1. WELCOMES, INTRODUCTIONS AND APOLOGIES

Apologies received from Christiana Owusu-Akuffo (Pensioners Voice).

2. MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING

TM - Gerald Davis post has been advertised. Closing date 22nd Sept. Gerald Davis not standing.

AT – p.2. of minutes of last meeting – AT asked whether services are going to be in house and understands that this is still to be decided.

RR – At the January meeting we will be looking for nominations for the community co-chair position, and elections will be held in March. RR stated that he will not be standing, but will most probably still attend forum meetings in the future.

4. CARE AND REPAIR - GILLIAN SHADBOLT

Gill Shadbolt gave an overview of Care and Repair, which is a not for profit home improvement agency that has been in Northampton since 1987. There are three Care and Repair agencies across the county. Care and Repair offers Handyman type services and do work around energy efficiency, fall prevention and home security working with the Police. They have their own in house workshops, and can therefore make and adjust to order for all circumstances

Care and Repair charge £15 per hour plus VAT; this is the minimum appointment charge. The rate charged is subsidised, and due to budget constraints they are not sure how long this rate will be sustained. However there are opportunities for those in need to access funding from their hardship fund

Several forum members gave good feedback from their own experiences with Care and Repair. DH did share with the forum that he had had difficulties with using the service in the past for electrical work. GS apologised for this and advised that they as they have to subcontract electrical work out, they tend not to advertise for this.

GS advised that Care and Repair are now starting to build their links with NBC and the community management organisations that are now running the community centres in the borough. Also, Care and Repair are working on advertising and spreading awareness of Care and Repair countywide.

3. NORTHAMPTON GENERAL HOSPITAL - CHRIS PALLOT (DIRECTOR OF STRATEGY AND PARTNERSHIPS)

Chris Pallot gave an overview of his role, which focuses on negotiating contracts, working with clinical and managerial colleagues for the direction of the trust, and building relationships with other hospitals.

CP gave an overview of some other key areas:

1) Emergency care areas

The Emergency care areas at Northampton General Hospital have seen a growth that exceeds many other hospitals.

2) Death rates.

If the death rates in a hospital are classed as 'poor', a hospital is held up for this. Northampton General Hospital has worked to improve their rate and is no longer an outlier. One element to this has been to prepare patients in a much better way, which in turn enhances recovery.

3) Hospital targets

All hospitals have targets to meet, and if they are not met the hospital is liable for fines. Northampton General Hospital has now met the majority of key targets. There are a few that haven't yet been achieved. Firstly, the 62 day target for some cancer treatments has not been met in the cases of advanced and complex treatments such as neurology, due to sheer capacity and human resource. Nationally, it is thought that procedures such as this will be centralised and NGH will be working with Leicester hospital in the future for patients to be transferred to their specialist cancer unit. Another target not yet achieved is the 4 hour A&E target. NGH are putting ongoing investment into services, such as more A&E consultants, ambulatory care, and additional nursing staff, in order to meet as many targets as possible.

4) Primary Care

An ongoing issue is patients with minor injuries are still going to A&E for care when there are many alternatives that can be used. The hospital can transfer patients with minor injuries back to their GP, but a solution would be to bring all services together in order for all to receive the correct treatment and care. This would also provide a solution for the large population in Northampton that isn't registered at a GP practise, including BME groups etc. This would not take GPs directly out of their existing surgeries, but would look to expand services that are available. NGH has been expanding primary care streaming – some GPs are now working in A&E. This service is currently open only in the day.

CP acknowledged that NGH does still have ongoing issues to be addressed, such as;

- Issues with appointment systems
- Parking issues – would have a second story added if capital was available and permission was granted from the Council
- Dispersed site and old buildings

Due to the increasing demand on hospital services, and public expectations, there is a challenge for hospitals to work in partnership. This would involve centralising services and expertise where possible. There are possibilities for collaborative working with Kettering General Hospital in the future.

DH asked how much work goes to private hospitals through sub-contracting. CP explained that when patients are referred for new operation, the Doctor has a choice of whether to refer to NGH, KGH or private hospitals Three Shires or Woodlands. NGH do outsource on occasions, however the money they receive from the Clinical Commissioning Group for the operation is given pound for pound to the private hospital that performed the operation.

5. COMMUNITY INFORMATION EXCHANGE

HT – National Pensioners Convention are running a campaign called ‘Hands off Pensioners Universal Benefits’. Members of the Northampton Pensioners Voice are holding a publicity stall, which will have leaflets with more information and petitions for people to sign up. Universal benefits include free bus pass, winter fuel allowance, free TV license and free prescriptions. Interests of older and younger people often coincide. This campaign is campaigning for present pensioners and pensioners of future. For more information about the ‘Hands Off’ campaign - <http://handsoff.org.uk/>

6. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

DH – Who levies the fines for riding bikes on footpaths, and how many have been levied. **ACTION: AM to find out and bring to next meeting.**

AT – hazard on Spencer Bridge; overgrown bushes make the paths very narrow, becoming a hazard for pedestrians. Cllr. Oldham advised that the maintenance of greenery by Amey/Enterprise has been under pressure due to the growth of grass, however if the bush is on private land this would be the responsibility of the land owner to maintain. For problems with paths, please report to NCC Street Doctor. For problems with overgrown hedges and bushes, please report to NBC and Enterprise.

HT – bushes at Weston Favell by the B&M store haven’t been cut on the other side of the bush by the pathway. It was asked whether Amey/Enterprise would be going to cut these, or whether B&M should be doing this. **ACTION: RR will email Cllr. Hallam regarding this for a response for the next meeting.**

DH – issues with bushes outside job centre. DH said that there have been a number of trees lost in last 12 months, and just the tree trunks are remaining. Is the borough

going to replace these? **ACTION: AM to follow up.** Cllr Oldham advised that unless a tree is likely to cause structural damage, or is diseased, it is unlikely to be removed.

HT - mobility scooters give way to pedestrians; however cyclists, that can be much faster, are often not giving way. The forum discussed that restriction of cyclists is needed, but who to enforce.

JR – asked whether there is a bylaw to not drink in town. JR said that in Sheep Street and the Market, there are frequently street drinkers. JR also asked what happened to the ‘Street Drinkers Square’ that has been covered up by the bus station. **ACTION: AM to ask for response to question for next meeting.**

RR - previously a Police Sargent used to come to meetings. **ACTION: AM to look into whether someone from the Police could attend meetings again.**

7. SUGGESTIONS FOR ITEMS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS OR FORUM ACTIVITIES

- Police.
- Provision for dementia care.
- NCC - wellbeing boards.

Next meeting – Cllr. Mary Markham (ALMO update)

8. DATE AND VENUES OF FUTURE FORUM MEETINGS

Thursday 13th November, 2-4pm, Jeffrey Room
Thursday 15th January, 2-4pm, Jeffrey Room

The meeting concluded at 4:00 pm