



No.24 - 18 February 2017

WELCOME

Some weeks there seems to be some big items of news, while other weeks there seem to be numbers of smaller items of news, and such is the case this week. Of course it should not be taken that smaller necessarily means less important. Sometimes it is these "details" that form a very significant and useful part of our campaign. We also have an interesting article that comes to us from Kent showing the corruption at the heart of the STP. We could do with our own investigative journalist to see how the corruption affects our own area.

Do remember to keep sending in articles, but preferably in some kind of prepared format. Unfortunately we cannot just reprint material copied from websites as this would be infringement of copyright.

Welcome to all new subscribers, and thanks for joining us.

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)

Stand Firm

As anyone who is a seasoned campaigner can tell you, the battle can be divided into stages. At the start there is a great deal of enthusiasm, so much needs doing. Everyone is busy, rushing around because there is just so much to do. After a time, things settle down into a pattern: campaigners have a more defined role, perhaps having found themselves a niche: an area which they have made their speciality. In time the campaign then moves into a second phase. The second phase is the most dangerous. By now seasoned campaigners are tired. Some will have found other causes and left, while others, having put off other commitments now have to go and pursue them. The clear vision of phase one, is no longer so clear. Differences of opinion may start to occur, and if things are not going well, then there is a tendency to blame others. We have seen this many times in our political system. After a leader is first elected, there is often a great fervour. It is often referred to as the honeymoon period. Then things settle down into a kind of routine, but cracks start to appear.

Getting through this middle phase is important, because it is

the gateway to the final phase. In the final phase, hopefully, success is achieved. The battle is won.

Having always had a fascination with words, the phrase "war of attrition" always intrigued me. According to the dictionary it can be described as a struggle in which you harm your opponent in a lot of small ways, so that they become gradually weaker. A war of attrition is not quickly over, it is the long-haul fight. It sometimes feels like pounding away at a castle with a pea-shooter.

Perhaps our campaign in SOHS feels to be long, and almost never-ending. We are grateful to those veterans who have worked so hard to get us this far. But many of us wish it was over.

How do we get through to a successful third phase? I would suggest it is summed up in those simple words, *Stand Firm*. Don't give up! Don't lose heart! Of course that is easy to say and hard to do. When the fight is so hard, it is easy to get discouraged and depressed, to think that it is not worth it. That, to me, is what is meant by a war of attrition: something that wears you down

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bit by bit. There must be one thing that holds us true and that is our desire to reach that target and achieve our goal. In SOHS we have always been clear: we must fight to protect our own health, our family's health, and our future.

Stephen

CCG Opt For Discussion

The CCG are hosting three 2-hour sessions in North Devon and Wider Devon supposedly to find out what most matters to people about the STP proposals. Cynically-minded people might feel that this is something of whitewash, but it could be an opportunity to turn it into a *redwash*. To do this we need to have many people attending, and a strategy developed to challenge the proposals. The right questions need to be asked, as well as making our point of view clear to them and the case for retaining all NDDH services. If anyone has any suggestions we might be able to put together a suitable and helpful article.

Things To Do

There are a number of events coming up which need support. Some of these have been mentioned before, while others are new. On Saturday 25 February there is a rally to fight the Paignton Hospital Closure. As is common with The Powers That Be (TPTB) the agenda seems to have been decided a long time ago, with the selling line that there is a move towards community based care. This of course is a great deception, as the move has never been debated, proven or shown to work in any format. Somebody is undoubtedly going to make money out of the plans, and that is the motivation, not providing a greater level of care by adopting an untested, unproven and unworkable plan.

On 4 March there is the national demonstration in London, of which we have been carrying information for some time, and many have already booked their coach tickets. We can only hope that the March march awakens members of the somnambulant public to the dangers facing the National Health Service.

We have our own event here in North Devon on Saturday 1 April, and Redlines last week carried a summary article. For those intending to arrange marches in their own area, a poster blank is available on the website, together with instructions as to how to use it, or you can contact me and I will produce one for you.

We also have SOHS public meetings in Bideford and Great Torrington, and if they are like the other public meetings already held, then we can expect a large turnout.

Lobbying MPs and Government

Part of the strategy used by SOHS has included writing letters to MPs and others. Don't forget though, that some also hold "surgeries" where they can be consulted by concerned citizens. If you have the time, you might like to consider booking an appointment so that you can explain your concerns. It is important that these officials are aware of the validity of our claims, and be made aware of the personal hardship and difficulties the proposed changes will make.

Diary Dates

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

Tuesday 21 February Quiz Night Benefit Event, Cafe Italia Pizzeria, Westward Ho!

Wednesday 22 February 19.00 SOHS campaign meeting, *The Guildhall*. Butchers Row, Barnstaple.

Saturday 25 February Save Paignton Hospital March assemble 10.30 near Paignton Hospital, Church Street TQ3 3AG see Facebook page Save Paignton Hospital.March

Saturday 4 March 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. East Devon coach contact: Robert Crick, ramcrick@gmail.com

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

Monday 6 March 10.30 – 12.30 New Hall, Tiverton EX16 6QP 01392 267642

Tuesday 7 March 14.30 – 16.30 The Great Hall, Lantern Centre, Ilfracombe EX34 9QB 01392 267642

Wednesday 8 March 18.00 – 20.00 Stucley Dining Hall, Stucley Dining Hall, Bideford College, Bideford EX39 3AR 01392 267642

Thursday 9 March 16.00 – 18.00 16.00 – 18.00 Community College, Main Hall, Westville Building, Kingsbridge TQ7 1PL 01392 267642

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

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

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

STP Services Review

The STP "... " is organising a series of meetings. I use the expression "... " as there is no indication who the STP "... " is. They can be found here www.devonstp.org.uk. If you contact them they are addressed as NEW Devon CCG, so that presumably is what goes in the brackets, although the STP NEW Devon CCG only contains a single word, and only a dictionary will recognise all the acronyms (and maybe a couple of wise SOHS boffins), anyway they are holding a series of meetings.

Jolly good, eh?

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Corruption Exposed

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A piece was recently written in the press by Julie Wassner, exposing corruption in the STP. Julie was a writer for EastEnders for 20 years, and has written many other books and articles. She is campaigning in the Kent area, so some of the material in the following relates to their local situation, but much of it is of wider interest. Here is an extract:

NHS campaigners all over the UK are warning of the impact of all 44 secretive STPs - drawn up to achieve drastic "efficiency" savings.

In plain-speak this means "old fashioned cuts": closing hospitals; wringing more "productivity" from already pressured hospital staff; redundancies and dumping more unpaid tasks onto GPs, primary care services and family carers. The door will be opened to the government to sell off NHS estate, as well as enabling further privatisation by contracting out for US-style "accountable care partnerships".

While researching the local Kent and Medway STP, campaigner Diane Langford sent me important material last week which I immediately passed to a very grateful national investigative journalist.

This showed that the Independent Chair of the recently constituted STP Programme Board for Kent and Medway is Dame Ruth Carnall, a former NHS chief named by the Sunday Telegraph as one of the highest paid NHS 'fat cats' who earned more than the Prime Minister.

After leaving the NHS with a pension pot of £1.2 million, Carnall set up Carnall Farrar, a

consultancy that works closely with McKinsey, a global consulting firm, exposed by Jacques Peretti on BBC2's Who's Spending Britain's Billions as having mugged off councils with uninformative template advice.

To find out whether Kent County Council had paid any consultants regarding the Kent STP, Diane made a Freedom of Information request and was "astounded" to discover that: "an external consultancy (Carnall Farrar)... has been commissioned by the NHS to assist in the development of the STP...as a key partner to this process KCC has contributed to this arrangement but does not hold the details as the contract is let by the NHS in Kent and Medway."

Diane says: "I've learned that Dame Ruth Carnall is Independent Chair of at least three STP boards, which, as with Kent and Medway, her own company is also getting paid to advise, so it would be in the public interest for this conflict of interest to be urgently investigated, as huge sums are involved which amount to a drain on our NHS."

Bank accounts are indeed being "swelled". But as there is no overall body responsible for STPs, and therefore no overall accountability, will Sir Julian investigate or simply continue to applaud the policies of the government which has just rewarded him with a knighthood?

The full article will be added to the website, but it tends to reinforce our claims that the motivation behind the STP is the personal wealth of certain people, and certainly not the health of the wider public.

Here's what they have to say:

In February and March 2017 we will be meeting with people to discuss what is important to them about acute services. This feedback will be collated into themes and called **decision-making criteria**. For example, people are already telling us they feel strongly about travel times and distances so we expect this will be an important criterion that lots of people feel should influence our plans.

These discussions will be held across Devon in a variety of formats and settings, from council meetings to specially organised public meetings and questionnaires.

The feedback we receive will be presented to the clinicians in each workstream to ensure that the views of our wider staff, stakeholder and public are incorporated into our planning and thinking at the earliest stages.

Then follows a list of events taking place as stated. Now these events have been sparsely advertised, presumably as they don't *actually* want anyone's views. You'd think, for such a major change, they would be trumpeting it from the roof tops, or at least placing a decent size ad in the local paper, and booking a large hall.

Will they listen? Of course not. The plan has already been made and this is just a PR job, so that they can later claim, "Well we held public meetings..."

Save Paignton Hospital March

A march and rally will be held in Paignton on Saturday February 25, organised by Torbay and South Devon TUC. The march is in protest at proposals to close Paignton Hospital along with community hospitals at Dartmouth, Bovey Tracey and Ashburton. 10.30 Assemble near Paignton Hospital, Church Street, Paignton TQ3 3AG

South Devon and Torbay Clinical Commissioning Group's governing body decided to close the hospitals after a meeting at Newton Abbot Racecourse.